CHAPTER XIV

FANCY STITCHES

FEATHERSTITCH

The featherstitch is used as a finish in all kinds of sewing and is often used in place of backstitching. The pattern may be varied by taking a slanting instead of a straight stitch; also by making two, three, or even four stitches on each side. The stitch is usually made with either a “sharps” or a zephyr needle, and embroidery cotton on cotton material, silk, or woolen thread on woolen material, and silk, linen floss, or flourishing thread on linen. To make the featherstitch, make a small knot, bring the needle from underneath, work on the right side of the material. Hold the thread down with the thumb of the left hand; take a stitch point-
ing the needle toward you; carry the thread under the needle so as to form a loop stitch; always draw the thread out toward you; take a stitch alternately on the left and right of the thread held down. When the thread needs renewing or mending take the needle down close to the last stitch and fasten it, usually on the wrong side; bring the new thread from underneath inside the notch formed by the last stitch, so that no break will appear in the work.

**CATSTITCH**

This stitch is used principally on the seams of flannel or woolen materials to keep them flat after they have been pressed. It is also used in patching; in sewing on various finishings, such as belt tapes; applying the edge of a velvet skirt binding to the lining; catching the edges of material to the crinoline; also to catch the edge of velvet in place of a folded hem. To make a catstitch, begin with a small knot if it can be hidden, if it cannot, start with a backstitch. Begin at the left-hand side and sew toward the right, always
pointing toward you. Be sure that the needle, when in position, lies in a horizontal line. Fasten the thread on the wrong side by a small backstitch.

The seams on flannel may be catstitched in three ways: by opening the seam and catstitching the raw edges on either side to the garment; by turning both the edges the same way and fastening them to the garment with one row of catstitching; by opening the seam, pressing it flat, and catstitching it down the center.

BLANKET STITCH

This stitch is very frequently called the buttonhole stitch; it closely resembles it, but differs in having a single purled edge. It may be made in various patterns; it is used in embroidering scallops and sometimes is substituted for overcasting. Begin at the left-hand side and work toward the right; on the wrong side of the material make two small stitches; point the needle toward the left; these little stitches should be taken one eighth of an inch above the edge of the material. Bring the needle through to the right.

Fig. 50.—Blanket Stitch.
side (needle toward you); hold the thread down with the left thumb; insert the needle one eighth of an inch to the right, parallel to the first stitch; do not draw the threads tightly; fasten the thread by taking the needle through to the wrong side and making a few running stitches to the left; these should not show through on the right side. Care should be taken, in fastening and beginning new threads, to preserve the regularity of the stitch. The depth of the stitches may vary; this makes the design quite attractive.

CHAIN STITCH

This is a stitch which resembles the links in a chain. It should be made loosely. Work toward you; hold the material over the first finger of the left hand; begin with a small knot, bringing the needle from underneath; hold the thread to the left with the thumb; put the needle back into the same place where it comes out, and take a stitch through and over the thread. In making each new stitch the needle must be put inside the loop into exactly the same hole from which the thread comes out, taking the same amount of
material on the needle for each stitch. Fasten on the wrong side with a backstitch.

**OUTLINE OR STEM STITCH**

The outline stitch is used in embroidery for the veining of leaves, for defining delicate lines, and for emphasizing the edges of a design. To avoid drawing the line so that it looks too tight or puckered, be careful that the material is held over the first finger perfectly smooth. The material must never be held on the bias, no matter what the direction of the line that is being followed. In outlining a circle or curved line work it so that the silk when drawn through lies toward the inside of the curve when you are about to take the next stitch. In making this stitch work from you; hold the material over the first finger of the left hand; make a small backstitch on the wrong side; bring the needle up from underneath and make a slanting stitch, pointing the needle toward you; take a long stitch forward on the upper side and a short stitch backward on the under side; keep the thread to the right of the needle; do not
draw the stitches tightly, and fasten on the wrong side with a backstitch.

**CROSS-STITCH**

This stitch is used for marking undergarments and household linen, and as the foundation for dress trimmings. Begin with a backstitch or leave the end of the thread on the wrong side to be held in place by the first stitches; all stitches must cross in the same direction; have in mind the size of cross-stitch you wish to make; this can be done by counting the threads of the material. Bring the needle from underneath at the lower left-hand corner of the square in which the cross-stitch is to be made; take the needle down at the upper right-hand corner and bring it out at the lower left-hand corner of the next stitch; repeat this operation throughout the design. Be careful to have the back looking neat.

**SEEDING**

This is a simple method of filling in a leaf or part of a design, very popular and effective; it is simply fine backstitching with a space the width of the stitch between the stitches. It is used very
much on embroidered linen waists and gowns as well as in other decorative designs.

COUCHING

This form of embroidery is very attractive and easy to make. Several strands of the embroidery silk, twist, floss, etc., are held together, while another single strand is used to sew these several strands on the line designed for them; this stitch is an overcast stitch; the several strands are raised between the overcasting stitches, making a fancy braid or cord effect. Couching is used to outline designs, borders, and edges, and may be applied in making dress trimmings.

HEMSTITCHING

Hemstitching is a fancy method of stitching lawn in which a number of threads of the material are drawn and separated. The number of threads drawn will depend largely upon the coarseness or fineness of the material. If the fabric has a great amount of stiffness or dressing in it, rubbing it
between the hands will help to soften it, and make the threads easier to draw. Mark the depth of the hem and allow one quarter of an inch for folding in. Draw one thread at a time the entire length of the hem. After the proper number of threads have been drawn turn and baste the hem close to the line thus made. Sew on the wrong side, holding it along the first finger of the left hand with the hem toward you. Begin at the right-hand side and secure the ends of the threads as in ordinary hemming. Point the needle toward you, and take up three or four threads and draw it through. Hold the thread firmly with the left thumb; draw the cotton firmly and take an ordinary hemming stitch to the left, close to the
threads just drawn together. Proceed in like manner the entire length of the hem.

**FRENCH KNOTS**

This stitch is used in embroidery to represent the seeds in flowers, and is frequently combined with other decorative stitches in conventional or other designs. If the material is heavy the threads may be carried from knot to knot without breaking. If the knot is made on sheer material where the thread would show through it must be fastened off at each knot.

To make a French knot, bring the needle up from the wrong side, make a small backstitch, hold the silk in the left hand a few inches away from the material; take the needle in the right hand and twist it around the embroidery silk three or four times; with the silk held firmly in the left hand carry the point of the needle back two or three threads beyond where the silk was first brought through. Hold the knot in place with the left hand and pull the silk quite tight, so as to secure the knot on the wrong side.
EYELETS

An eyelet is a pierced hole worked with an embroidery or buttonhole stitch to prevent it from fraying. Eyelet holes are very much used when a dress is to be fastened by a lacing. They are also much used in embroidering on linen for dress waists and gowns, and they are made in the bosoms of shirt fronts for studs. To make an eyelet push the piercer or stiletto into the material carefully until the hole is made the desired size; bring the needle up from the wrong side and work the edge of the hole over and over with very close, even stitches. If the buttonhole stitch is used, the purl should form a ring around the opening on the surrounding material, and not on the edge of the hole as in a buttonhole. After it has been worked push the piercer again through the eyelet to perfect the shape.

SLIP STITCHING

Slip or blind stitching is a method of sewing a hem or trimming by invisible stitches. The reason for its name is that the needle is slipped between two pieces of material and joined by a long stitch through one piece and a short one
through the other; the edge of one piece of material having been folded in at least one quarter of an inch. These stitches are taken through the fold and the possible thread on the other part.