CHAPTER III

SHIRRED FACINGS AND CHILDREN'S BONNETS

SHIRRED HATS

ANY woman who can sew nicely can make "shirred" hats and bonnets. The principle of making tucks, be they plain and flat, or fulled up, is just the same as in plain sewing or dressmaking. You measure the place or space to be covered, decide on the number and size of the tucks, and add this to the actual measure, allowing for the edge turning, and one inch always to turn up against the crown inside and out, if the work is to reach to the head size. If the tucks when made are to be plain, i.e., not ruffled, we allow ten inches to every forty for ease; otherwise, when put on the frame the tucks will lie flat instead of standing out nicely. If the tucks are to be full, ruffled, allow as much more in length as you wish fullness; of course, sheer materials should have more than thicker
ones, but it is a matter of choice; and sometimes of necessity, when one has only so much to make a hat of. The correct allowance, however, for fullness is:

For velvet, half as much again.

For silk, from two thirds to twice as much according to the thickness of material.

Chiffon and mousseline de soie two to three times.

Tulle or maline four to six times, according to quality.

The same proportions apply to shirred hats without tucks.

When measuring and marking for either plain shirrings or tucks, pin the line, and, if possible, crease it; when too soft to hold a crease, pin or baste carefully, as the beauty of the work depends on its being accurately done, and finely run. Take care not to make any backstitches, and avoid knots; some thread and silk knots more than others. The work must be kept flat until all the runners are put in, and if the piece is very long, or the material harsh, it is best to divide it into even halves, or quarters, and take each thread a little longer than these sections, beginning and ending all threads at the same place, or it will be
difficult to get the fullness even when the work is drawn up.

Toques and bonnets are frequently made entirely of shirred silk, velvet, or sheer materials, also children's hats and caps; but in hats the shirring is more often confined to the under facing of the brim, and occasionally shirred trimmings band a plain crown.

SHIRRED FACINGS

When a shirred under facing is put on a brim, the upper side is covered first, the under facing prepared, shirred, divided into eight equal parts, marked with pins, and the edge of the brim divided by measurement in the same way, then the facing is put in place pin to pin. Now we draw up the thread, or threads, at the edge, make the fullness even, which is quite easy when the piece and hat have been equally divided into eight parts; a few more pins secure these sections in an even line around the hat, and we are ready to sew. If the hat is of braid, straw, or winter braid, the stitches may be taken through, a tiny stitch in the fullness of the material, just on the shirring line; then, putting the needle through at a slant, we come back with a slant, making a small stitch on
the outside also; neither of these stitches may show. If the hat is of velvet or some other material on top, the stitches that secure the facing cannot be taken through, and it must be slip stitched on. To do this, take the tiny stitch in the full shirred line as before, and slant the needle through into the material of the upper brim, which is turned under over the edge of the brim; slant in such a way that the sewing shall form a straight line about one eighth of an inch below the edge of brim. Having sewn our facing in all around the edge, we secure the threads neatly and invisibly.

Now pull the work down into the head size, run a gathering thread in just inside the turn of the crown, draw up and sew down, taking care that the flutes of fullness run in even lines from the edge to the head. Last we draw up the threads that come between the edge and head, draw them to shape and size of brim, secure and neatly fasten off each thread, but they need not be sewn round on the brim.

This method applies equally to hats for children, when made on frames.

When a frame is much wider in front than at the back the shirring lines must be graduated in
proportion to the shape; this is easily done by dividing the measures in three or four equal parts, and graduating the shirring lines accordingly, always having the edge straight, however. For instance, say the front of brim is five inches deep and the back four inches, and you wish three lines of shirring; that gives you the edge tuck, then a space of one and one third inches between each set of shirring lines, and one inch spaces at the back; the spaces being gradually narrowed from front to back (Fig. 22).

In plain shirred facings, which are more usual for adults, especially for velvet and silk hats, it is best to finish the edge with a cording rather than with a tuck. This is done by cutting a thick silk wire the length of the brim edge, and lapping the ends about one and one half inches, sewing them firmly together. After the flat shirrings are
done, fold the edge over the wire ring and shirr the material together under the wire, fulling it up, and drawing the thread up as the work proceeds, till the material is all on the ring; then even the fullness, pin in place on the brim, and sew or slip-stitch on and finish the brim, as before directed (Fig. 23).

A CHILD’S BONNET

Children’s bonnets are not made on hard frames; crown forms, and net shapes for “Granny” bonnets can be purchased, and may be used for winter bonnets, but shirred bonnets and hats are made over shirring cord, or featherbone reeds; so that the work can be cleaned or laundered without ripping, as would be the case in using wire.

The bonnets illustrated are fairly representative; some years the brim will have more flare,
sometimes fashion decides the upper part shall be bent down and the sides thrown wide, and the crown have no puff, and there shall be more tucks and ruffles at the edge. Then the curtain, which was put on to protect baby’s neck from sun and wind, comes in for its share of change, and is frequently replaced by a mere twist or plaiting of ribbon. Whatever the shape may be, from the flaring “picture” bonnet to the neat close “Dutch” bonnet or cap (Fig. 27), if shirrings are done at all they are done in either of the following ways: The material is used double, the shirrings run in such a way that one can run the reeds in between them (as shown in Figs. 24 and 26, which has the under fold plain, with a tuck above each
reed casing on the upper side); the tuck can be omitted, leaving a plain shirred effect, drawn to shape on the reeds.

The other method is the one used for the bonnet (Fig. 25), which is of two shades of gray silk, used singly on the straight. The edge tuck is two inches deep and is turned in and shirred along twice to hold the first reed; here a one quarter inch tuck is shirred in, then there is a space of one and one half inches, and another tiny tuck is run, and at equal distances below two more; the reeds are then pushed into these tucks, the brim drawn to shape on them, the ends firmly sewn inside the ends of the brim piece, and all threads drawn up and fastened off.

The crown of this bonnet is a mere cap, fitted to the child's head, of stiff muslin; you can shape it by any child's cap, or over an old lady's close bonnet frame. Around the face and neck sew a piece of tape wire or flat featherbone, and bind
over with a bit of the silk. Flat on the back sew a piece of silk; next, take a strip of the silk, on the bias if possible, but on the straight will do, measure off a piece of reed to form a horseshoe or ring, turn one edge of the strip over this and shirr along below, in the same way as directed in Fig. 23, fulling up the silk and drawing up the thread till all is on, then fasten off; pin in place and sew on, allowing much more fullness and width at the top than at the side to get the puff, which must be arranged, pinned, and sewn in place about two and one half to three inches from face edge of crown.

The band of lighter silk that goes around the crown neatens the puff edge, and the edge of the brim where it is sewn on to the crown; it has a cording at each edge, and two between, shirred, and pushed on reeds like the brim; the two edge cordings are firmly sewn in place all around, but the two middle ones are only sewn down at either end, above the back binding, with a bit of silk bound over to make all neat. If a curtain is wanted, shirr on reeds same as brim, finishing the edge that comes on the bonnet with a cording like the crown; but the back may be finished by a twist or fold of ribbon, which is in one with the ties. 

A
pretty fashion is to have rosettes on each side where the ties are sewn.

Such a bonnet needs only a big bow of ribbon on top, but may have lace plaited on to the crown edge inside, and a bow over the left eye; the fullness of the lace can be kept in place by tying it every couple of inches with fine thread tied in a knot and cut off.

Fig. 26 is a similar bonnet, but with double brim carried all round and flaring more.
The same crown can be turned into the "Dutch" (Fig. 27) form by making the brim half the width and contracting the reeds till they are but little larger than the face edge of crown; and also lowering the crown puff to about the fullness of the sides. Such a bonnet must not be trimmed with large bows, but small rosettes, a cluster of very small feathers, or flowers, and a full ruche of narrow lace inside.