CHAPTER I

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR WORK

Sit erect in a comfortable, straight-back chair, with the light falling over the left shoulder. Bend the body from the hips, if necessary, but avoid allowing the head to hang forward. Before beginning to sew, see that all necessary articles are conveniently placed. Hands must be kept as nearly clean as possible to prevent soiling the thread and materials; if they perspire freely, keep a small towel near with which to dry them.

The work basket should contain: pins, needles (Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), white thread (Nos. 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100), 60-inch tape measure, thimble, emery ball, stiletto, tracing wheel, and scissors. Use as fine a needle as the thread will permit. Length of thread in needle should be 15 to 20 inches. Thread the needle with the end hanging from spool when cotton thread is used, and the opposite end for silk. This helps to prevent snarling because of the direction in which the threads are twisted.
To make a knot, which is a mode of fastening, wind the thread one and one-half times around the first finger of the right hand, roll so as to twist the two threads together between thumb and finger, and draw into a hard knot under the nail of the second finger. Knots are used only where they can be concealed. To secure the other end of the thread fasten it to the material by two or three small stitches, one over the other. Do not break or bite the thread—cut it; biting injures the teeth and soils the thread.

Cloth is composed of two sets of threads: the lengthwise or warp threads, and the crosswise or weft threads. The term woof is sometimes used instead of weft. It is an older term, weft being more commonly used at the present time. Warp threads determine the length of the cloth, and the number of warp threads determine its width. Weft merely plies back and forth and fills in the warp.

**How to Cut and Tear Cloth**

There are four ways of dividing cloth:
1. Torn or cut with warp.
2. Torn or cut across warp.
3. Cut on bias.
4. Cut on true bias.

To tear across the warp or with the warp, clip into the cloth about one-fourth inch, take
the cloth in both hands and tear, with equal tension, to within one-fourth inch of the end, then cut. This prevents the raveling of threads.

A bias division is made by cutting across both threads. A bias fold is made by laying the warp thread over parallel on the weft thread, making an angle of 45°. Cut on fold—this makes a true bias.

When placing pins preparatory to basting or stitching, always insert at right angles to the seam, since they may then be removed more easily. The above method of pinning may be used instead of basting for all straight machine work. After a little practice the pins can be removed with the right hand, the work guided with the left while the machine is being run continuously. There are times when basting is necessary for accurate work and it should then be done carefully. Much time is wasted by basting when pinning would be sufficient, and judgment should be used to avoid this waste. When teaching beginners it is well to have them baste, since the practice of spacing is excellent training and they need to have the work held securely.

Symbols used in directions:

Inch = "
Foot = '
Yard = yd.
Read over directions carefully before attempting the work.

**Needles.**—Needles have been used for centuries, crude ones of ivory and bronze having been found in an old Egyptian tomb, and they are known to have existed in early Greek and Roman life.

At the present time a needle passes through many different stages before being completed. Steel wires are made in two-needle lengths, then the ends are pointed, the eyes punched in, and they are cut apart, tempered, and polished. After they are finished, they are sorted and put up in chemically prepared papers to prevent rusting. Because of the rapidity with which needles can be made, they are very cheap.

**Pins.**—The pin of ancient times was merely a thorn from a bush, or a fishbone. Gradually pins were made from gold and silver, but they did not become a manufactured article until the sixteenth century and were then very expensive. Now, pins, after the wire has been reduced to its proper size and condition, are all made in one machine. They are neither tempered nor polished as are needles. After being finished they are sorted by hand and then put in papers by machinery.

**The thimble.**—The thimble, a cap used to protect the finger from the pressure of the
needle in sewing, is made of gold, silver, steel, brass, aluminum, or celluloid. The metal is rolled out in sheets, cut into round disks, and given the correct shape over a die. The edge is next turned up, and the indentations, which prevent the needle from slipping, are made upon the top and sides. The metal is then tempered, polished, and decorated.

Even Basting

Stitches. — *Basting* is used to hold together two or more pieces of material until a strong stitch can secure them. It is sewed from right to left. Begin with a knot and keep it on the right side; fasten by sewing over and over in the same place once or twice. In even basting, stitches and spaces are of equal length. This is used for seams where there is any strain, as in garments to be fitted. Uneven basting is

1 All stitches are made sewing from right to left, unless directions are given to the contrary.
done by taking long stitches with short spaces between; it is used in preparing for further sewing as it holds the material in position. (See illustration.)

Running stitch is made by running or weaving the needle through the cloth, taking a number of stitches at a time which are of equal length on each side. Beginners usually push the cloth on to the needle instead of forcing the needle into the cloth. This point must be carefully watched to avoid the formation of a bad habit. The size of the stitches depends on the material and strength desired but they are usually made as small as possible. (See illustration.)

Backstitching is the name given to a stitch resembling machine stitching. It is formed by taking up a short stitch back on the upper side, and one twice its length forward on the underside of material, which will bring the needle out
a space in advance of the stitch on upper side. Next, insert the needle to meet the last stitch, passing it under the material and out again as before. Continue. This forms a continuous line of stitches. Fasten with two or three small stitches. (See illustration.)

*Half-backstitching* is a strong seam stitching done by hand, and should never be placed where it shows. It is made in the same manner as backstitching except that it is taken half the distance back instead of all the way, leaving a small space between each stitch on the right side. (See illustration.)
Combination stitch, as the name implies, is a number of running stitches combined with occasional half-back or backstitches for added strength. For example: three runs and a back-

**Half-backstitching**

stitch is done by taking three small running stitches and then bringing the needle back over one of the spaces and out ahead one stitch. This brings a backstitch after every third stitch.

**Overhanding or French Hemming**

*Overhanding* may be begun at either the left or the right of the material—the name of the stitch is determined by the mode of using it. It is usually found most convenient to begin at the right side. The thread is more easily kept
out of the way. It is used in making seams on sheets, pillowcases, underwear, patches, etc. The stitch is made by holding folded edges or selvages of material together and taking a small stitch through both thicknesses, pointing the needle toward the chest. This makes the stitches straight on the right side, running parallel with the warp or weft threads of the material and, therefore, inconspicuous. Sew with close, even stitches, taking up as few threads as possible so the seam will be smooth and flat when finished. (See illustration.)

French hemming is the overhanding stitch used on table linen or towels. An ordinary hem is folded in the material and then folded back on the right side. The two folded edges are then overheaded together with fine stitches showing as little on the right side as possible. The hem in table linen should be about 1/8" wide under ordinary circumstances, since the narrower the hem the less conspicuous it will be.

Overcasting is a larger and looser stitch than overhanding. It is used to secure raw edges and so prevent raveling. Authorities differ as to whether overcasting should be done from left to right or right to left, so either method may be used as desired. The needle should point either toward the right or left shoulder according as the work is done from left to right or right to left. Keep the stitches parallel, equal
distances apart and the same depth. The distance between the stitches and their depth depends on the kind of material. They must be deep enough to prevent pulling out and close enough together to look neat and prevent raveling. (See illustration.)

*The blanket stitch* is used for finishing raw edges to prevent raveling and at the same time furnish a simple decoration. It is usually worked from right to left. Hold the work over the first finger of the left hand with the raw edge toward you. The upright part of the stitch is at right angles to the raw edge; the loop goes over the edge. To fasten the thread, use a knot or the following method: make a row of fine running stitches at right angles to the edge and directly under where the first stitch is to come, beginning as far from the edge as the depth decided upon for the blanket stitches. With the thumb on the thread insert
the needle again at the same place as before and take one stitch toward the edge bringing the needle out over the thread and so forming a loop. Insert the needle at the same height as the last stitch and as far to the right as desired. Again bring the needle out over the thread to form another loop. Continue the stitches the same height and the same distances apart. In

![Blanket Stitch](image)

a corner three stitches should come in the same hole to make a neat turn. When a new thread is to be taken, fasten off the old thread under the last upright stitch. Begin the new thread by running stitches under the last stitch; catch the new thread through the loop and proceed as before. (See illustration.)

**Hemming stitch.**—Hold the work with the hem in a vertical position; place the hem over the forefinger and under the middle finger, and
hold it down with the thumb. Begin at the top and insert the needle through the fold, leaving a short end of thread to be folded back and caught under the hemming stitches. Pointing the needle toward the left shoulder, make a slanting stitch by taking up a few threads just under the edge of the hem of the material and one or two threads at the fold of the hem. To fasten thread at end of hem, take two or three
stitches, one on top of the other. Should it be necessary to use a new thread, leave a short end of the old thread, and, starting as in the beginning, tuck both ends of the new and the old thread under the fold of the hem and secure them with hemming stitches. Keep stitches even and small. (See illustration.)

*Catchstitching* is used to finish flannel seams and hems, to fasten down linings, etc. Hold down the seam or hem lengthwise in front of you. Begin at top of seam. Take a small stitch a little to right of the seam through both thicknesses of material. Cross to the other side of raw edge. Allow thread to fall under the needle from the right, and again take a small vertical stitch. Cross again to the right, letting thread fall under the needle from the left, and so continue with alternating stitches, being careful to catch through so few threads that the stitches are not noticeable on right side of material. A
similar result may be obtained by beginning at the bottom and working up. The needle may be brought out either over or under the thread. Try both methods. Which do you find the easier? (See illustration.)

*To crease a seam* place the work on the table with the seam up and placed vertically in front of you. Turn seam to the right and crease, using the thumb nail. Turn seam to the left and do the same. This should make a distinct crease along the line of the stitches.

**Hem.**—Material is turned back upon itself and stitched with the machine or hemmed by hand.

**Faced hem.**—A bias, shaped, or straight piece is sewed on to the garment and then folded back, bringing the seam at the fold.

**Extension hem.**—The entire hem is a separate piece fastened to some part of the garment. Use a piece of the material twice the width desired when finished plus allowance for seams. Stitch one edge to garment with the seam on the wrong side. Fold under the raw edge of other side and turn back upon seam, hemming or stitching so as just to cover the first stitching.

Another method is to again use a piece of the material twice the width desired when finished plus allowance for seams. Fold the raw edges toward the wrong side, creasing well $\frac{1}{4}$" from
the edge. Place folded edges together and crease well on the new fold. Slip the edge of the garment, to which the hem is to be attached, between these folded edges, pin in position, and then stitch on the machine.

French seam.—A French seam is a twice sewed seam, so made to cover the raw edges and make a neater appearing finish. Place the two pieces with wrong sides together and pin. Place pins at right angles to the edge with heads to right so that they may be easily removed while stitching.\(^1\) Stitch \(\frac{1}{8}"\) from edge, and trim raw edges, leaving seam about \(1/16"\)

\(^1\) This method of pinning instead of basting is a practical short cut. After a little practice the pins can be removed with little loss of time while stitching.
deep. Fold right sides together and crease, having the seam exactly at the folded edge. Pin and stitch so that the edge of the seam is entirely covered. (See illustration.)

_Felled seam._—Stitch ordinary seam a little more than $\frac{1}{4}''$ deep. This seam should be on the wrong side. Trim off one side, leaving not more than $\frac{1}{8}''$. Baste the other side down flat, turning under the raw edge. Hem down by hand or stitch on the machine. The finished seam should present a flat surface on both right and wrong sides, and should be from $\frac{1}{8}''$ to $\frac{1}{4}''$ wide when finished. The felled seam may be stitched the second time by using the hemmer. This is a short cut in that it avoids basting.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGY**

A study of the child is essential. We must understand the stages in her development and plan the work accordingly if it is to be most
effective and not injurious. During the early grades the child is not able to make the fine adjustments necessary in fine sewing. The teacher, therefore, who understands the physical and mental development of the child will not require fine work before the fifth grade. By that time the child is capable of more accurate work and greater neatness. If this is not expected and demanded, slovenly habits may be formed which will follow the child through life. In very many cases the young child will do just as poor work as will be accepted. The question asked is, "Is this good enough?" The child's ideal is not the best of which it is capable, but something good enough to be accepted. In the lower grades is the place to begin to give children a higher ideal. The impressions of childhood are lasting and will in most cases remain through life—a great responsibility, yes, but a great privilege as well to mold aright the characters of the young lives entrusted to your care. Such work should be given in each grade as the normal child is capable of doing well. Poor work means, in most cases, that the teacher has not taught the correct method and insisted on high standards, or that the problem is too difficult for the child. By all means, work which is beyond the capacity of the child should not be expected, or the result will be disastrous. Until about the eleventh
or twelfth year the nerves and muscles are not sufficiently developed so that fine work may be required. After that time reasonably fine sewing is possible without injury in most cases. Exceptions will always be found where allowances must be made. If the child, after faithful effort, has not reached her ideal, she should not be censured but rather commended if she has done her best.