

## PRACTICAL PAPERS ON PLAIN WORK.

By JOSEPHA CRANE, Author of "Winifred's Home," "Beautiful Sewing," etc.

## PART I.

## GENERAL HINTS.

## PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF PLAIN WORK.

THAT this is of great use to every woman is undeniable. Although you may be rich and never require actually to sew for yourself you may at some time or other be very glad to have this knowledge to impart to others to whom it may be of much value. Of course the improved state of needlework instruction in schools has done a great deal towards better sewing being produced, but still you will often, among the poor, find more who do not know in the least the right way to do very simple things in plain work, and if you know how to do them yourself—practically, not only in theory, please!—you can impart your knowledge to them.

Then too, among my readers may be girls, who for one reason or another do not sew neatly, and yet have no idea where and how they can learn, so perhaps these papers may help them. Only let me give you a hint! Take a piece of old calico or linen, and when you come to instructions how to do this or that stitch, get a needle and thread and work the stitch until you do it well.

## EDUCATION OF THE HAND.

How many girls, I wonder, remember that learning and practising good sewing is an excellent means of training their hands and eyes? A writer says:—"Of all the human powers, the hand is that, perhaps, which admits of the most cultivation, because its education is twofold; it may be educated in knowing and educated in doing. We absolutely have a mine of wealth in those ten fingers, which the longest life cannot exhaust. We multiply it in the same proportion as we use it, and the hand, which can do the most, is the readiest in the performance of anything new." Does not this spur one on to making real efforts to learn what is of so much better worth learning than it at first appears to be?

## RIGHT POSITION FOR SEWING.

Some people say that it makes their backs or heads ache to sew, others that it hurts their eyes, and neither of these complaints are strange if one notices the way in which so many set about it. The position of the body is one of the first things to be thought of in the matter.

It is not at all necessary that you should sit all cramped up or stooping very much over your work. Get your table and chair the right height, and get into the way of so holding your work that you are not obliged to bend your head much if at all. Do not fasten your work to your knee. That plan, ugly as it is, has the disadvantage of making you stoop. If you want to fasten your work to anything, then make a lead cushion for yourself. The French often use one. It is nothing but an ordinary pincushion with a heavy piece of lead in it which suffices to keep it in place, and to which you can pin one end of your work and have it kept steady.

## GOOD LIGHT FOR SEWING.

This is also very important. To sew by firelight, in waning light, by bad artificial light is all the very best way of doing bad work and spoiling your eyesight. For sewing at night remember that a small light close to you is better than a stronger light which is diffused over the room.

## CONTENTS OF WORK-BASKET OR BOX.

Keep your materials for work in some receptacle for the purpose. A nice well-furnished work-box or basket should contain all you need for sewing. A great many of these things which cost so little in themselves have much to do with the correctness and excellence of your work.

Two pair of scissors are necessary. A large pair used for cutting out with a blunt as well as a sharp point, and a smaller pair with both points sharp. Take care that the handles are large enough, as small handles are so very uncomfortable and leave an ugly mark on your hand. If you can have a pair of button-hole scissors as well, you will find them most useful. A thimble that fits you is necessary. Steel lasts longer than silver.

Of course you will have a needle-book with needles of various kinds and sizes in it, and an assortment of sewing cottons, darning cotton, woollen "mending," and black and white thread, tapes, hooks and eyes and buttons of different kinds and sizes. A box of mixed pins is necessary. For very fine work I always use some tiny pins called dolls' pins.

A yard tape measure marked with inches is absolutely necessary if you do any cutting out. An emery cushion removes the rust from your needles, and a piece of wax strengthens cotton or thread.

A stiletto is much nicer for making eyelet-holes with than the point of your scissors; you will find a sharp penknife very useful in unpicking, and of course you must have a bodkin.

If you have an open basket make a cover of some kind to keep out the dust, and if you keep your basket in order all the better for your temper when you are in a hurry to mend a glove or sew on a button.

## MATERIALS.

Let me tell you as briefly as I can a little about the various materials used in plain work. Good calico should be free from dressing, which some manufacturers use so as to whiten the material. This preparation of lime only tends to rot the calico, so that it is to be avoided. Rub the calico in your hands and if there is any dressing in it, it will fall out, and it is well to remember that good calico should not be too closely woven or very fine. Long-cloth is better made and altogether a superior article to calico.

Look at the selvages of your calico or long-cloth and see that they are even, and if you notice any little knots or spots they are defects.

Twill calico is very nice and soft. Before you work at any calico or linen let it be thoroughly scalded, and soaked just as if it were dirty so that every scrap of dressing is removed from it. Let it soak well and then have it pulled quite straight and mangled or ironed before it gets quite dry, or you will not be able to cut it out neatly.

It is most important to get good calico or long-cloth, as if you do it will wear well for many years. But good does not necessarily mean very fine or very white. Unbleached calico if you have not much to spend on your underclothing is most durable, and after a few visits to the wash-tub it becomes very white. Linen is very little used in this country for underclothing, but it still obtains for sheets, pillow-slips, mens' shirts, etc. It is very much stronger than calico, but is most unsuitable as underwear, and particularly in very hot climates it is so, because it is cold and checks moisture.

## A FEW PRACTICAL DON'TS.

Don't tear lawn or linen but cut it by the thread. Don't tear calico, flannel or long-cloth if you can avoid it, as doing so is apt to pull the materials out of shape if they are thin. Don't forget that if you cut out one entire set of underclothing at once that it is an economical plan and prevents waste. Don't have any hard seams, buttons, etc., on baby clothes where they will have a chance of irritating the skin. Remember a baby's skin is very delicate and tender.

Don't sew with a bent needle. You cannot possibly do good work with it, and it is well to note that the eye of your needle should always be large enough to carry the thread easily. Don't bite your cotton, please, cut it off with your scissors, having first threaded your needle with the end from the reel.

Don't pull your cotton in working, as you will only succeed in puckering your work.

Don't push your needle in with your thimble only but help it through with your thumb. Don't be lazy about pinning, tacking or basting—as it is sometimes called—your work. The more attention you pay to this and all measurements as well, the better your work will be.

## DAINTY UNDERCLOTHING.

There is no reason at all why any working girl should not aim at having nice underclothing. It is quite within her power to sacrifice a little finery so that she may have everything concerning her underwear as good and lasting as possible, and if she has a desire—and a very laudable one—to be refined and womanly let her remember this is one of the most important ways. There is truer refinement in clean, dainty underwear than in smart dresses. Many girls think nice underclothing means articles covered with lace and embroidery. Now if you can afford good lace and embroidery have it by all means, but let me assure you that the cheap finery of this description generally found decorating poor materials is most objectionable.

Then are we not to have any trimming? Yes certainly, but let it be simple and good. You can get torchon lace good, cheap and lasting that looks and wears well. Coventry frilling can be had in many kinds and always looks pretty. If you cannot get either, then a little simple coral or feather-stitch done with crochet cotton will give a finish to hems, etc., and you can do that very easily yourselves.

## NEAT WORK.

Annie Keary, a well-known authoress of some years ago, said: "I am very fond of sewing myself, and I think there is so much pleasure in learning to do anything with one's fingers really well and beautifully. Do you remember my showing you the beautiful way in which the wild-flowers were made? All the little leaves finished off with such delicate fringes of soft hairs, and the blossoms so carefully fastened on to the stalks, and the seed-vessels fitted so neatly; and we said it was a lesson in finishing off work well, which God gives us in every little flower and leaf. He never leaves anything half done; not the tiniest little moss or weed has an end or an edge that is not beautifully ornamented and finished off. It is the same with shells, even with rocks and stones. God makes everything perfect to its last little atom, to show us how carefully we should work. We should not be satisfied with the things we make looking well in a rough, outside way. We should find pleasure in turning out work that will bear looking at all through, as His work will."

(To be continued.)

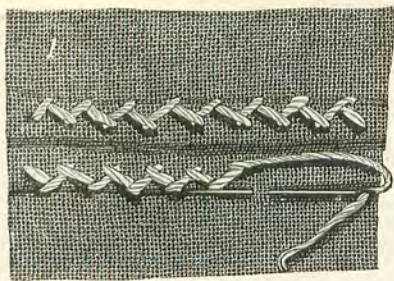


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## PART II.

## FLANNEL WORK.



*About Flannel.*—There are different makes of flannel which often take their name from the place where they are made, and it is well to know their distinguishing characteristics.

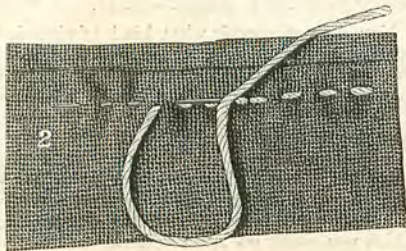
Welsh flannel, which is generally of a blue-grey colour, has a wide grey selvedge, and unless you choose a good quality in the flannel, it is very rough in appearance.

Saxony flannel, which is soft, fine and very white, has the reputation of not shrinking in washing. This flannel is used for the clothing of infants and women's vests, though for the latter purpose woven underwear is obtaining more and more.

The selvedge on Yorkshire flannel is very narrow, and the flannel itself is of fine texture and quite smooth.

What are called Lancashire flannels are not always pure wool, cotton being sometimes mixed with them.

*Herring-boned Seam.*—All seams in flannel are sewn down with a stitch called herring-bone, but there are two or more ways of arranging the seam. In Fig. 1 is one method



which I like much less than Figs. 2 and 3. However, I give it here, as it makes a very flat seam, and some people prefer it. Run your breadths of flannel together about a quarter of an inch or more below the edge. Make a good many back-stitches in your running, which must be pretty close, as you must remember that it has the whole strain of the seam to bear.

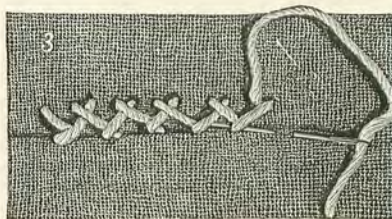
Next open it out and herring-bone down each side with stitches, which should look like those seen in Fig. 1. Let the stitches be even and regular, working always from left to right.

In Figs. 2 and 3 you will see the way still better, and which is certainly stronger.

Run your widths together, placing one a little below the other and making occasional back-stitches in the running.

Then turn down the upper edge over the under and herring-bone it down as you see is done in Fig. 3.

*A Flannel Hem.*—A flannel hem has only one fold turned down, and it is then secured by close herring-bone stitch. Many people prefer having a scalloped edge to their petticoats, and the pretty finish it makes is certainly worth the extra trouble. Always mark your scallops before you begin to work, and this you can do very easily by drawing a pencil round half or three-quarters of a penny or shilling placed about half an inch from the edge. Or you can cut out scallops in cardboard and then pencil round them. For the inner row move up the card or coin. Use in-grain embroidery cotton or flannel silk for the embroidery, and if you wish to have the scallops a good deal in relief run the outlines first of all, and fill in between them with running stitches placed as much as possible on the surface.



Keep your thread under your needle and work as you see in Fig. 4. Iron out your scallops before cutting them out. Suit the length of your stitches to the depth of your scallops.

Scalloped edges are used for flannel dressing-jackets, knickerbockers, etc.

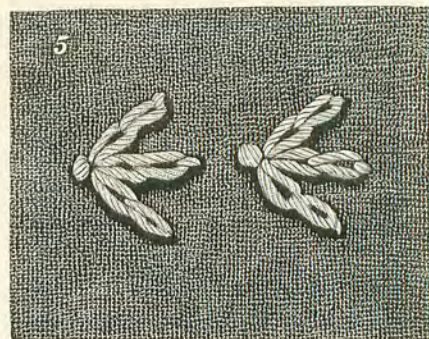
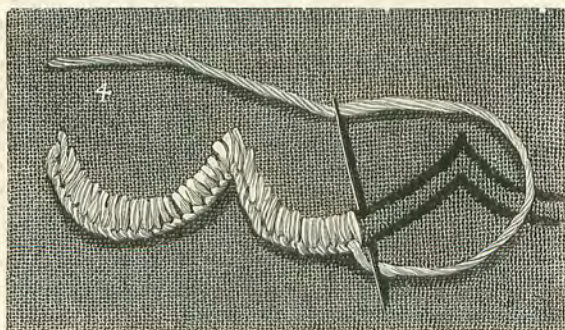
*A Fancy Trimming.*—Beyond the ordinary scallop there are many ways of decorating flannel-work, and two very favourite stitches are ordinary coral and feather-stitch, which are so very well known that it does not seem worth while to give up any space to their description.

In Fig. 5 you will see a very pretty German stitch which can be used in lines or above scalloping, just as you prefer.

Bring your needle up to the right side of the flannel and make one chain-stitch, then a second, and with a single stitch keep that down.

Make three branches arranged as you see in the illustration, and place a French knot at the base.

*A new Feather-Stitch.*—This is seen in Fig. 6. Work your feather-stitch in the ordinary way, but allowing the branches to be much further apart than usual.



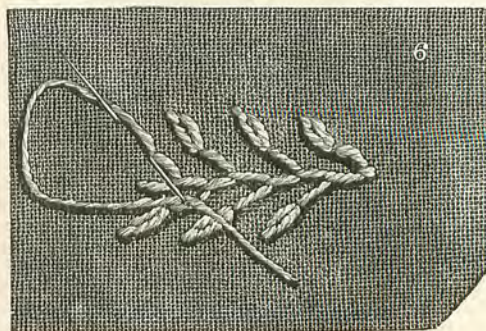
At the end of each spike of the feather-stitch add a loop stitch made as you see in the example, and then kept in place by a single stitch.

*A Flannel Patch.*—Patches in flannel can be round, square, triangular or any shape you like, square being the most usual.

Choose flannel of the same quality as the article on which you are going to place the patch. Never fold under the edges of your patch, but herring-bone down the worn flannel edge upon the patch, and then do the same to the other side.

You must lay your patch on the same way of the flannel as the article itself, and let the patch be large enough to cover the hole and any thin part there may be beyond it.

*Choice of Flannel.*—Fine, closely woven



flannels are not good, for when they are washed they become very hard and thick.

*Yard Measure.*—In a reliable book we read the following *re* the yard measure:—

"The standard of England, with its accredited portions, may be seen embedded in the wall at Greenwich, under the Observatory. It is also at the Houses of Parliament. A curious ceremony takes place from time to time to test these measures. As many are not as familiar as it is desirable in cutting out to be with the fractions of a yard, they are here inserted:—

1	yard,	36	inches,	called	a	yard.
$\frac{3}{4}$	"	27	"	"	three-quarters.	
$\frac{1}{2}$	"	18	"	"	a half-yard.	
$\frac{1}{4}$	"	9	"	"	a quarter.	
$\frac{1}{8}$	"	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	an eighth.	
$\frac{1}{16}$	"	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	"	"	a nail.	



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## PART III.

## GATHERING AND GAUGING.

*Uses of Gathers.*—In these days, gathers are not as much used in underclothing as formerly, as a great deal of fulness is done away with by means of goring and shaping. But all the same, it is quite necessary for any one who wishes to know how to do plain work well to understand running, stroking and setting in gathers, for they are used in aprons, petticoats, babies' robes, chemises, night-dresses, etc. Whether a girl can set gathers which have been properly prepared is rather a test as to whether she is a good work-woman or not.

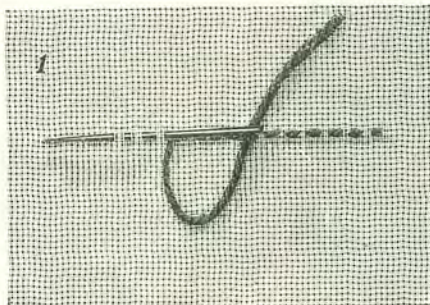
*Fulness.*—The amount of fulness to allow for the material which you wish to gather should be twice or perhaps a little more the length of the band into which you are going to place them. Of course you cannot always do this, and if in doubt whether to have a scanty supply of material or not, err on the side of too much rather than too little.

*Marking Divisions.*—This should be done on the material to be gathered as well as on the band, so that an equal quantity of fulness may be set into the band-yoke, or whatever it may be. Gathers are always made across the material and on its right side. Divide your stuff into halves and quarters, and, if very long, into eighths as well. This can be done by a stitch in coloured cotton, a pin or a pencil-mark on right and wrong side. Do the same to your band, having the same number of divisions on it as on the material. The ends of a band should be sewn over before adjusting the gathers to it.

*Running.*—The running for gathers differs from ordinary running in two respects. One is that no back stitches are ever put in it, for the obvious reason that you could not pull the thread if you did, and the other is that in ordinary running you take up as much material as you leave in the stitches, and in running for gathers you proceed thus:—

Look at Fig. 1, and you will see that less is taken up by the needle than it goes over. Two threads are taken up and four passed over.

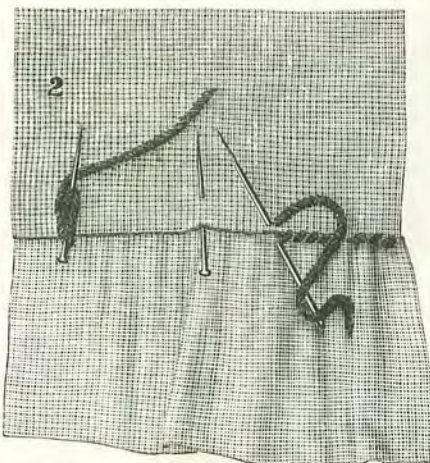
Run thus the entire length of the material on its right side. The running must be in a perfectly straight line from the edge of the stuff. Make this straight line by folding down the top edge and letting the crease guide you, for it only weakens the material to draw a thread. If a very long piece of stuff only run one section at a time.



Begin your running close to the hem but not on it. Twist the cotton round a pin at the end or section you have run. Use coarse cotton for running with. Some people use double cotton on the ground that if one thread breaks there is the second to fall back upon; but the double cotton is very apt to get twisted and to entangle.

*Stroking Gathers.*—This must be very carefully done, especially if you have a fine material. Draw your gathers up pretty tightly and wind cotton round the pin. Stroke your gathers on the right side of the material thus:—

Stroke every gather carefully downwards



with the point of a pin or the eye end of a needle. This should be done to about half an inch below the gathering cotton. Push each gather as you stroke it under the thumb of your left hand. When all your gathers are

stroked below the gathering thread, turn your work round and stroke them above it. It is just this last detail which bad workers constantly omit and which makes a *great difference* in the work.

*Setting Gathers.*—Look at Fig. 2, and you will see how the gathers are to be set into the band. When you have done the right side, then do the wrong, and be careful to see that the divisions of band and fulness are kept accurately. Make your stitches on the wrong side exactly on, not above or below, the gathering cotton.

*Gauging.*—This is used on pinafores, aprons, children's dresses, etc. For the execution of five lines of gauging, an authority gives these directions:—

"The stitch is precisely the same as that used in gathering; in fact, there are here five lines of gathering ranged one below the other and equi-distant one from the other. The stitches are exactly the same size in every row, stitch under stitch, taking up as nearly as possible the parallel threads of the fabric. A guide to ensure the evenness of the lines must be contrived with cardboard. When the five lines are gathered the several cottons must be drawn up tightly so as to press the rucks closely together; then, if the gauging is rightly done, a pull of the material above and below the gauging will straighten the rucks in their place and cause them to sit regular without any stroking. Now loosen the gaugings and arrange it on a foundation in the way most suited for the purpose for which it is required. Other varieties of gauging are produced by grouping the lines in wider or narrower spaces; for instance, two lines may be grouped a quarter of an inch one from the other, followed by a half-inch space, and then two more lines corresponding to the first two, and again a space, and the two lines repeated."

*Origin of the word Sew.*—"To sew," we read in Lady Marion Alford's book on needlework, "in contradistinction to the word to 'embroider' is derived from the Sanskrit *su*, *suchi*, and thence imported into Latin *suo*. The word in Sanskrit for a needle *suchi*, and from such to sew and pierce. This is the same word as the Latin *suo*, to sew, so probably the common word used by the Aryans in their primeval habitations was *su*, and they clearly knew how to sew at that remote period. Eve sewed fig-leaves together, Adam sewed also. The Hebrew word is *lafar*, and clearly means sewing not pinning together with thorns. Sewing is the first recorded act of our forefathers."

## VARIETIES.

## THE COOK'S MESSAGE.

*Messenger:* "I want two pounds of fresh sausages, and cook says will you be so kind as to wrap them up in a newspaper containing a good love-story."

## HER SORROW IS NOT DEEP.

Her father dead—alone no grief she knows;  
Th' obedient tear at every visit flows.  
No mourner she who must by praise be  
fed  
But she who mourns in secret, mourns in-  
deed.

## FELLOW FEELING.

To feel with and for others—what a glorious widening out and enriching of one's life that is! How it increases our joys because of the pleasure that we take in the joys of others. How it renders selfish brooding over our own woes impossible because of the sympathy we must give to the sorrows of others.

## NO MATERIAL.

"How is it I never see you killing time?"  
asked the idle person.  
"I can't find the time," said the busy girl.

## FOUR REQUISITES.

A Chinese proverb says: "We ask four things for a woman: that virtue dwell in her heart, modesty in her forehead, sweetness in her mouth, and labour in her hands."

*GOOD THOUGHTS.*—"A good thought," says an old writer, "is a great boon, for which God is to be first thanked, then he who was the first to utter it, and then in a lesser, but still in a considerable degree, the man or woman who was the first to quote it to us."



Elton is an old favourite for late fruit and preserving, but the two first-named are sufficient for the present. Should the weather be still open and mild when you are ready for the plants, send me word at once, for I intend to get them for you from a reliable nursery in Kent. I shall order them to be in readiness for despatching at the first opportunity, and shall buy rooted-runners grown in pots, which are now nice strong young plants in the open or under cold frames. They will of course, cost more than ordinary runners would have done, perhaps 6s. to 7s. 6d. per hundred, but

will give better results next season. If frost comes the planting should be delayed until the ground is fit again, perhaps until February or March, but the land will take no harm by lying fallow, quite the contrary.

And now I think I have given you enough to do and to think about in this long letter, so shall reserve a talk about mushrooms for my next. Keep up your courage, dear. I know that the work of preparing the ground is not the most interesting part of "gardening for profit," but it must, nevertheless, be well and faithfully done, and at the right time too.

Many amateur gardeners shirk this preparatory work, and then lay the blame upon the soil, declaring it unproductive and unfertile, which is wrong, since the fault lies entirely with themselves. Is it not Keble who tells us that the earth is—

"True to her trust, tree, herb, or reed  
She renders for each scattered seed,  
And to her Lord with dutious heed  
Gives large increase!"

Ever your loving  
AUNT AMY.

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### PART IV.

#### RUNNING, FELLING AND SEAMING.

**Run-and-Fell-Seam.**—Seams made by hand are nowadays nearly always done in run-and-fell fashion.

Look at Fig. 1 and you will see how the running is done.

Take one piece of your material and fold it down so as to form a crease, just under which you lay your second piece.

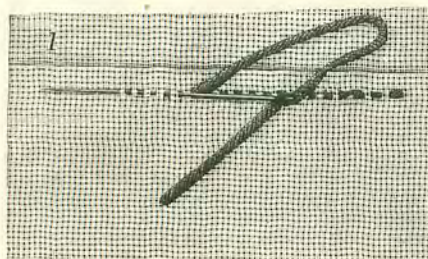
Run closely, taking a back stitch every now and then, and being very careful always to go through the two layers of stuff.

When this is done turn down the upper edge twice, as if for a hem, and tack down neatly.

If the running is done badly it leaves spaces in the seam with no stitches.

**Felling.**—In Fig. 2 you will see the felling down of the turned-over folds.

The stitches are made V-shaped, exactly as in hemming. Make your stitches evenly and



regularly, avoiding all split hemming and straight stitches.

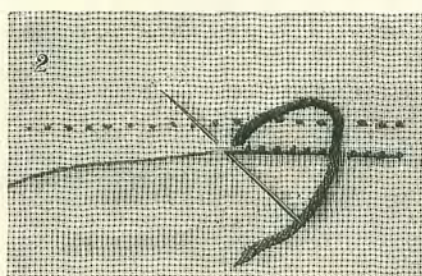
**A Seamed Hem.**—This hem is very much used in France, and also in this country for house-linen, etc.

In Fig. 3 you will see how it is done, but you must bear in mind that when you are holding the hem to work that it is not spread open as seen in the illustration. It is doubled back and the edges held between finger and thumb.

To prepare turn down your folds as if for a hem and tack down. Then bend back as I have already said and seam the three folds together, keeping the hem away from you and the article itself next to you.

**Ordinary Seaming.**—The use of ordinary seaming or "top-sewing" is to join two selvages together. These are found in shirts and pillow-cases. It is also employed to join two folded edges of material together as in patch-work, and the ends of bands for drawers and petticoats, etc.

A technical work on sewing enumerates the following most common faults in seaming.



"1. Slip-stitches, i.e., taking only one top-edge at a time instead of both.

"2. Puckering, by misplacing the work, and drawing the cotton too tightly, and making a slanting stitch instead of a straight one.

"3. Putting the needle in too far down from the top-edge, and thus making a deep hard ridge most difficult to flatten.

"4. Putting the stitches too close together, thus marring the shape of the stitch, which ought to be slanting on the top-edges on the right side of the work and straight on the wrong side.

"5. By omitting to flatten the sewing when the seam is finished."

From this you will see what to avoid.

**Flattening Seams.**—All seams should be flattened, whether sewn or run and felled.

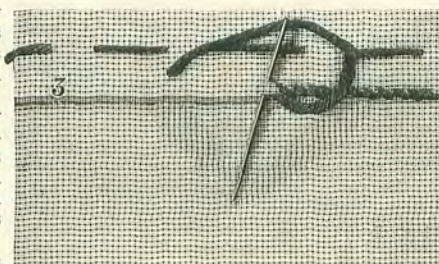
The plan of flattening seams with the thumb-nail, as advocated by some workers, is a very ugly one. The best way of flattening out seams is to lay them on the table and then to press them smooth by passing the handle of a toothbrush heavily along them.

**Terms used in Needlework.**—There are some terms used in needlework the meaning of which everyone should understand, as failing to do so you do not know how to take advantage of written directions for work of all kinds.

I am indebted to a technical glossary for the information given here.

**Bar.**—The working across of a button-hole.

**Baste.**—This word is not so much used now



as tack. Both denote the long stitches used for fixing work.

**Bias.**—Material cut on the cross.

**Casing.**—The cover for a ribbon, string or bone.

**Cobble.**—This is used to mean untidy, slovenly work.

**Gusset.**—A small piece of material let in to give ease to some part of an article or for enlarging it.

**Mitre.**—The cut given to corners of patches to enable them to be sewn down well is called to "mitre" the corners.

**Nap.**—The woolly or hairy surface of cloth.

**Nick.**—This denotes a snip or notch.

**Pile.**—The pile is the fine hairy substance on cloth and the silk of velvet that rises up.

**Piping.**—A cord covered with material cut on the cross.

**Placket.**—The opening of a skirt.



**Pucker.**—To draw up your stuff in irregular "furrows."

**Ravel.**—The fraying out of material that is very loosely woven.

**Self-edge or Selvage.**—The woven edge of any material.

**Slot.**—A casing or running into which tape or ribbon is run. Often found in loose blouses for gathering in the fulness.

**Stiletto.**—A sharply-pointed instrument used for making eyelet holes.

**Warp.**—The selvage way of the material.

**Woof.**—The threads woven across the material; often spoken of as "the wrong way of the stuff."

**Cutting Out.**—Always cut out articles of clothing in the length of the material. This is a very important thing to remember as it makes a great difference in the look and wear of the article.

Shoulder-straps, waist-bands and wrist-bands should always be cut lengthways of the stuff.



indefatigably, greeting their more intimate friends with marked favour, the princess and duchesses kissing the ladies and motioning them to the places of honour near them, while the less distinguished company hovered about like so many human butterflies.

It would certainly give the crowning touch to this paper were I able to say that I personally was one of those singled out for special notice, and nothing would be easier if this

were imaginary, but truth compels me to admit that I have no exciting or flattering experiences to relate as this is all sober fact and not fiction.

After a time the royal host and hostess, with their relatives, descended from the daïs and mixed freely with their guests, dispensing gracious words and smiles, as our royalty well know how to do, so that no one could feel neglected or out in the cold.

The rest of the afternoon passed in a happy mixture of merry talk, light-hearted laughter, music, sunshine and flowers, and forms one of the many bright pictures hung in the mental picture-gallery, which is one of my favourite apartments in my castle in the air.

When at length we took our departure I felt that the third important social event in my life had been as *unqualified a success* as the others I have already described to you.

## PRACTICAL PAPERS ON PLAIN WORK.

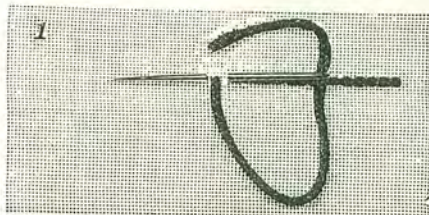
By JOSEPHA CRANE, Author of "Beautiful Sewing," "Winifred's Home," etc.

### PART V.

#### STITCHING AND BACK-STITCHING, ETC.

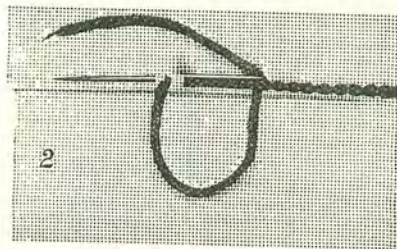
*Plain Work.*—It is interesting to note what Lady Marion Alford says *re* plain work:—

"Plain work is that which is necessary. As soon as textiles are needed for covering and



clothing, the means are invented for drawing the cut edges together, and for preventing the fraying where the material is lacerated by the shaping process. Hence the 'seam' and the 'hem' and all the forms of stitches that bind and plait. These necessary stitches constitute plain needlework, and are closely followed by decorative stitches, which in gradation cover the space between plain work and white embroidery.

"Semper has given us his archaeological theories for the origin of needlework and its

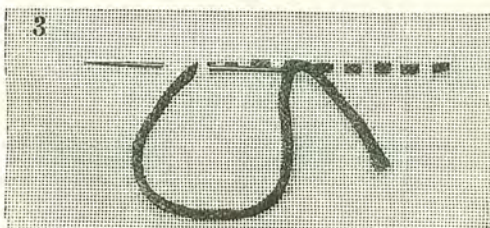


stitches. These are his arguments if not always his words. He says:—

"The seam is one of the first human successful efforts to conquer difficulties."

"A string, a ribbon, a braid may serve to keep together several loose things; but by means of the seam, small things actually become large ones. For example, a full-grown man can by its help cover himself with a garment made of the skins of many small animals."

*Stitching.*—In Fig. 1 you will see how



stitching is done. Do your stitching, if possible, on linen or cotton that has been well scalded, rubbed and soaped so that the dressing has been removed. In the case of very fine linen, where drawing the thread is not easy to do even when the above process has been gone through, it is well to soap the place where you wish to draw the thread, as that very much facilitates your doing so.

When you have to do stitching on material which does not permit of your drawing the thread, or if you have to stitch in a diagonal line, run a coloured tacking thread all along the line, which must be measured accurately and be very straight.

Stitching must be done most accurately, each stitch being the same size, and the line on which it is done being kept quite straight.

Stitching is always done upon double material.

Count your threads and make each stitch over the same number.

You can only make one stitch at a time, and you must put your needle in at precisely the same place as where it was drawn out. This forms the preceding back-stitch, and then your needle must come out as many threads in advance as you took in the last stitch.

Thus it is obvious that every stitch meets each other.

*Stitched Hem.*—In Fig. 2 you will see a stitched hem.

Turn over two folds, a lesser and a greater, just as if for a hem.

Draw your thread two or more threads above the edge of the first turning, and then take your stitches through all the three layers of material.

When your stitched hem is done, you will remember that the side on which you have made your stitches is the right side.

*Back-Stitching.*—So many people confound stitching and back-stitching that I have given here an illustration of both, and in Fig. 3 you will see how back-stitching is done.

Put your needle in and draw it out six threads further on. Take your thread back, turn your left to your right, and put the needle in three threads back from the point at which you drew it out, and bring it out six threads beyond.

*Strengthening-Tapes.*—These tapes are often put on different parts of underclothing instead of gussets. They are to be found at the end of slits and seams, more often in flannel under-wear than in any other.

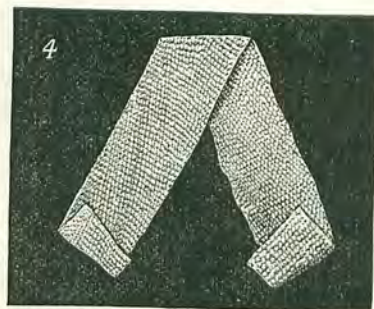
Shaped tapes are also used at the corners of shirts worn by infants, and at the bottom of armholes on pinafores, etc.

Look at Fig. 4 and you will see how the tape is folded for putting on to any of the afore-named articles.

In Fig. 5 you will see how it should be sewn on, the article being flannel as is obvious by the herring-bone stitch on the edges.

You will have noticed in Fig. 4 that one turned-down end is on the wrong side and the other on the right side, and that the tape is crossed at about half its length.

Pin your tape in position, and then fell



it down as you see in Fig. 5. Always fell the part you see is already done first of all before you go on to the sides and the crossing of the tape where the needle is now left in.

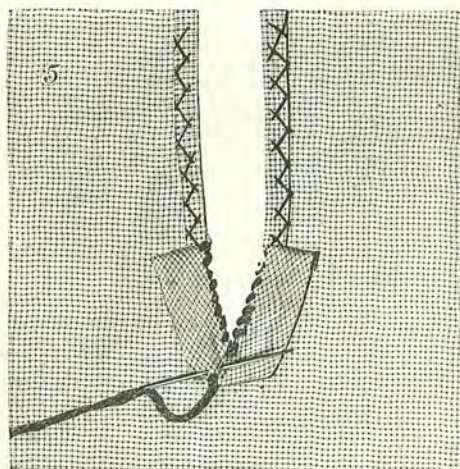
*Straight Tapes.*—Tapes placed at the bottom of a placket hole, the front folds of shirts, etc., are not shaped at all. Place them thus—

On the wrong side of the tape turn down a narrow fold of the tape.

Double your tape and press down a crease half across the width.

Put the selvedge edge on the wrong side of the article over the end of your slit, and see that the line of creasing goes quite over the middle of it.

Fell the tape very neatly to the article and let the corners be carefully done.





## PRACTICAL PAPERS ON PLAIN WORK.

By JOSEPHA CRANE, Author of "Beautiful Sewing," "Winifred's Home," etc.

## PART VI.

## PLACING EMBROIDERY ON UNDERLINEN, etc.

**Insertion.**—In Fig. 1 you will see one way of placing insertion on underlinen. Before giving you a few directions as to how this is done, let me say that in buying embroidery it

Pleats are made on the right side of the article and in the woof way of the stuff. Pleats must be regular in depth, and placed on each side in exactly the same place.

The X in Fig. 3 shows the middle of the length to be pleated.

and pleats together then take out all the pins and fell the band to the article, doing the right side first and then the wrong.

Let the edge of your band on the wrong side rest on the stitches which show through from the right side. In case of an apron the edges of the band that go beyond the pleating must be top sewn (see sewing). Then fell the band to the article.

**Pleating.**—In Fig. 4 you see how single pleating is done. All the pleats are of the same size and all go the same way. Pin, tack and set these pleats as directed for the last-named pleats.

**Three Hints.**—In working always hold your material between your forefinger and your left-hand thumb, and if you find that not sufficiently firm, let it go round the tip of your forefinger and keep it in its place by the second finger placed closely to it.

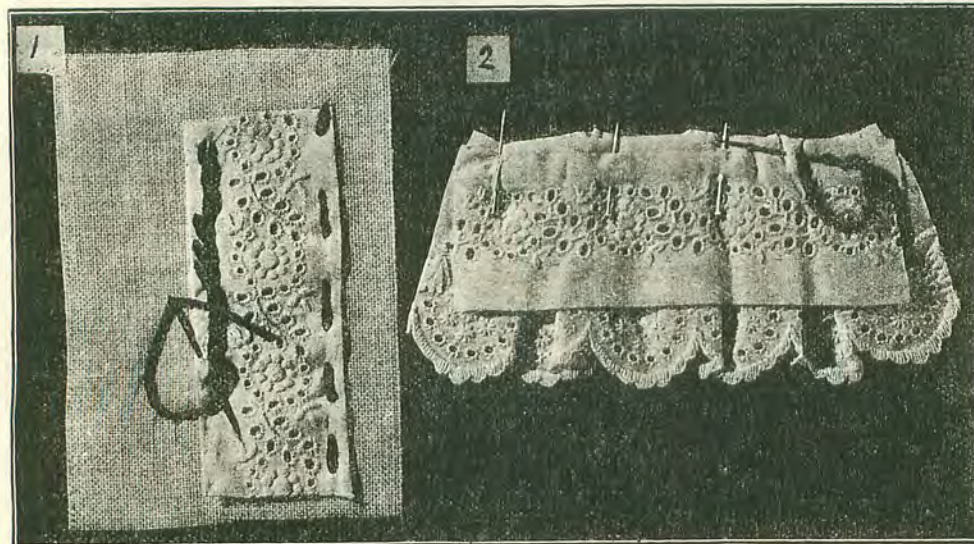
When you are sewing a very coarse material you need not put in very fine work. Larger stitches answer quite as well, only they should not be far apart.

If you want to cut anything on the cross, fold over the end of your stuff in the shape of half a square, letting the cut edge lay quite evenly against the selvedge. Then cut this in half and you will have a triangular piece of material from which you can cut off the strips in the desired width.

In closing let me quote a few lines from Lady Marion Alford's book, which being rather expensive is not in very general use:

"When Eve sewed fig-leaves together, she made of these small pieces a garment of patchwork."

"Acting on the principle of making a virtue



is far better to give a few pence more a yard and have a good in preference to an inferior quality, for cheap lace and embroidery give an air of commonness to underwear. Turn down the edges of the stuff and let these folds lie uppermost. Turn the edge of the insertion down on the wrong side and put these folded edges and those of the material together. Tack these carefully and then work feather-stitching in the way seen in our illustration to form a decoration. This is best done with crochet cotton.

**Insertion and Edging.**—Whip or run your edging, first of all marking it and the insertion into sections as you do for gathers.

Place the right side of the insertion next to the edging as you see in example 2, and sew both together with firm running, giving an occasional back-stitch here and there.

When this is done turn back the insertion and feather-stitch down as in Fig. 1.

**Pleats set for a Band.**—Pleats are used for setting material into bands as in aprons, petticoats, etc.

In Fig. 3 you will see some pleats arranged for an apron, and you would also make them of that kind and in that way when making a flannel petticoat to be set on a straight and not a shaped band.

The amount of stuff must be two or three times the length of the band into which it is to be pleated, to allow for making the pleats. If you pleat towards the middle the fullness will fall towards the front of the article. If you pleat from the middle towards the side, as you see in the example before you, then the fullness will go towards the hips and back.

You will see by the placing of the pins which keep the pleats in place that the pleats are all the same size.

Make your pleats on that principle all the way round, but getting them in the case of a petticoat very much closer together at the back.

In the example here seen the edge of the pleat on the wrong side touches the front edge of the first pleat, no space at all being left between the pleats.

Sometimes it is necessary to leave spaces between the pleats, when there is not enough material to allow of the length being twice or three times as long as the band.

**Setting Pleats into Band.**—Having arranged your band and tacked your pleats firmly together, you next proceed to set the latter into the band.

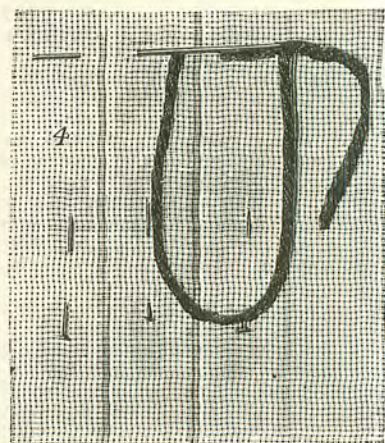
Put the pleats between the edges of the band, the middle mark corresponding to the one on the band.

The band should rest upon the stitches you have used for tacking.

Pin your pleats very carefully into the band and remember as you do so that you must take in all three folds of the pleats. If you are not careful about this the under part of the fold is apt to slip.

Pin every pleat to the band.

Tack the band



of necessity, accepting and adorning the severe things of life, seams come to be an important vehicle of ornament. The Gauls and Britons embroidered the seams of their fur garments.

"We may judge of the antiquity of the seam by its universal mythological meaning. The seam, the tie, the knot, the plait and the mesh are the earliest symbols of fate uniting events." "We find but little mention of plain work in mediæval writings. When linen was worked for some honourable purpose, such as a gift to a friend or a royal personage, it was generally embroidered or stitched in some fancy fashion. Queen Elizabeth presented Edward VI. on his second birthday with a smock made by herself."

