

No. 5.

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Embroidery.

Q ANY of the stitches described in these pages are used also in plain needlework. There they are for utility only, and should be inconspicuous ; it is when stitches are arranged with a view to decorative effect that they constitute embroidery.

No fixed rules can be given for the sizes of stitches, which must vary according to the materials used. They must all be worked just so loosely as not to pucker the background, yet just so tightly that they do not set in loops.

Short needlefuls should be used ; even when large spaces are quickly covered the thread must not be so long that it cannot all be drawn through at once with the needle.

Do not make a knot in the end of the thread, but begin by making a few running stitches on the wrong side of the material, working these where the beginning of the subsequent embroidery on the right side will cover and hide them.

After thus attaching the thread, pass the needle through to the right side of the background material, and begin to work. When each needleful is finished push the needle back again and fasten off, also with a few running stitches worked back on the wrong side of the work over the last stitches.

These general principles apply to all stitchery, and will not be repeated. In describing each stitch it is supposed that the threaded needle is ready in position on the right side of the work.

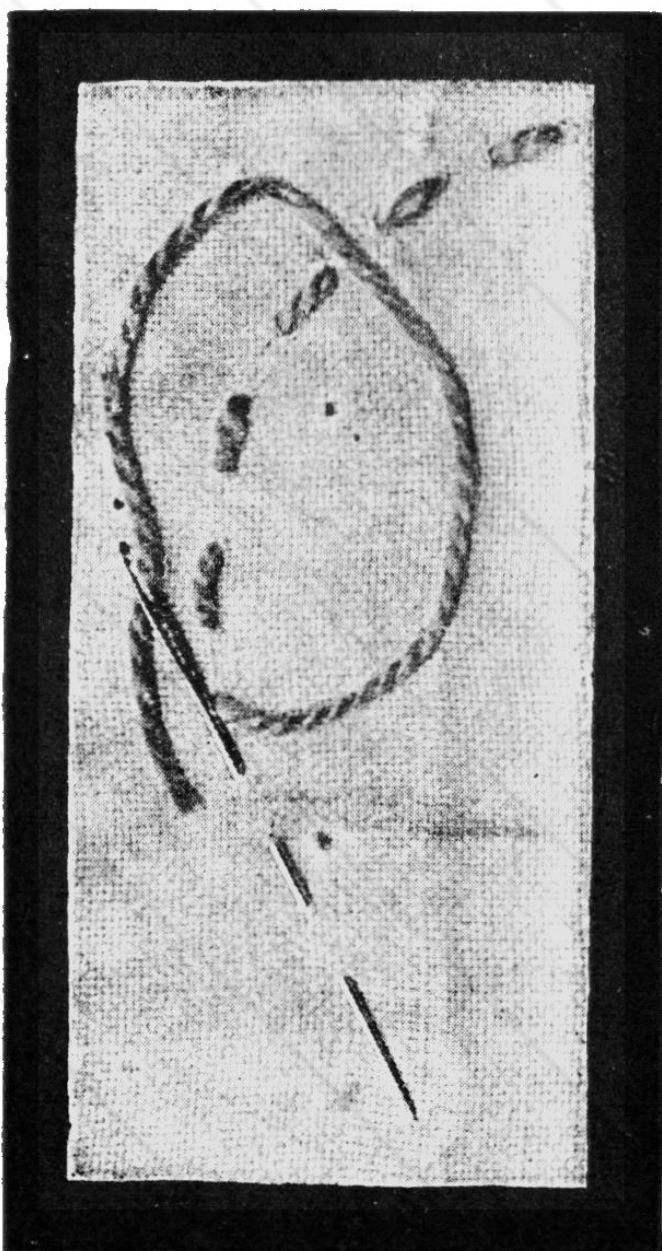


FIG. 1—RUNNING.

RUNNING.

This is the easiest stitch of all. After beginning as described above : *put the needle in some distance below its starting point and bring it out on the right side again at an equal distance still lower down*. This makes one stitch on the right and one on the wrong side of the work ; both stitches of exactly the same length. Repeat from the first to the second*.

Running is worked in lines, straight or curved, sometimes singly, sometimes in rows, and is used for general outlining, for working the stems and tendrils of plants, and when such light stitchery is needed as where clouds or water have to be indicated. It is also seen in simple figure subjects to suggest the folds or shadows on a dress, or the curve of a limb.

The running stitches mentioned before as being used to start and fasten off needlefuls are worked as just described, but need not be exactly regular.

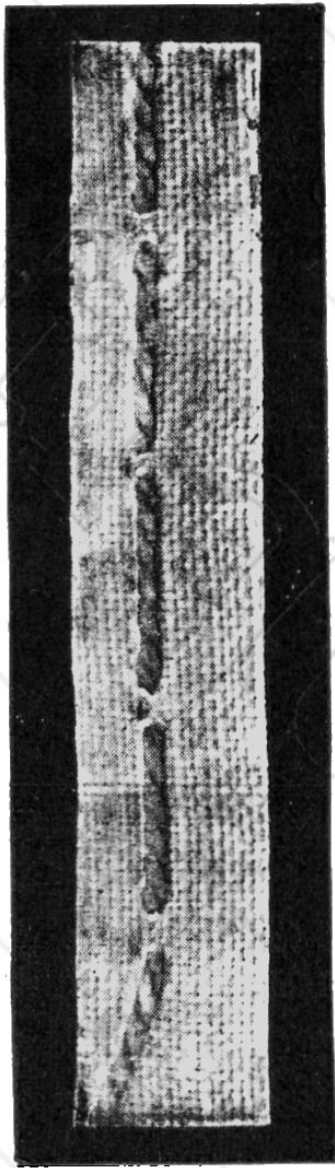


FIG. 2.
DARNING.

Start as usual ; put the needle back $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch above where it was brought out, and bring it out again the same distance below the starting point ; * put the needle in again exactly at the bottom of the last stitch, and bring it out again the usual distance below. Repeat from *. The result is an unbroken line of stitches that are all of equal length.

Back stitching is suitable for formal outlines straight and curved, for working letters, and for the stems of flowers ; one line of it is usually sufficient. The size of the stitch must vary according to the work in hand. Many designs can be worked entirely in Back stitch, and if two or more materials are laid together the result of working Back stitch in a design through all the layers is a sort of thin quilting.

DARNING.

This picture shows a straight line in the simplest form of Darning. It is worked exactly like Running (Fig. 1), but instead of the stitches being of the same length on the wrong side as on the right side of the work, here only a few threads of the material are taken up on the needle each time. When a fine and nearly unbroken line of stitches is needed only one strand of the background is picked up.

Darning serves the same purposes as does Running, but gives a heavier effect, as more thread is seen on the right side of the work. It is sometimes used to cover rather large surfaces, and the stitches should then not be arranged in exactly even rows but less formally.

BACK STITCHING.

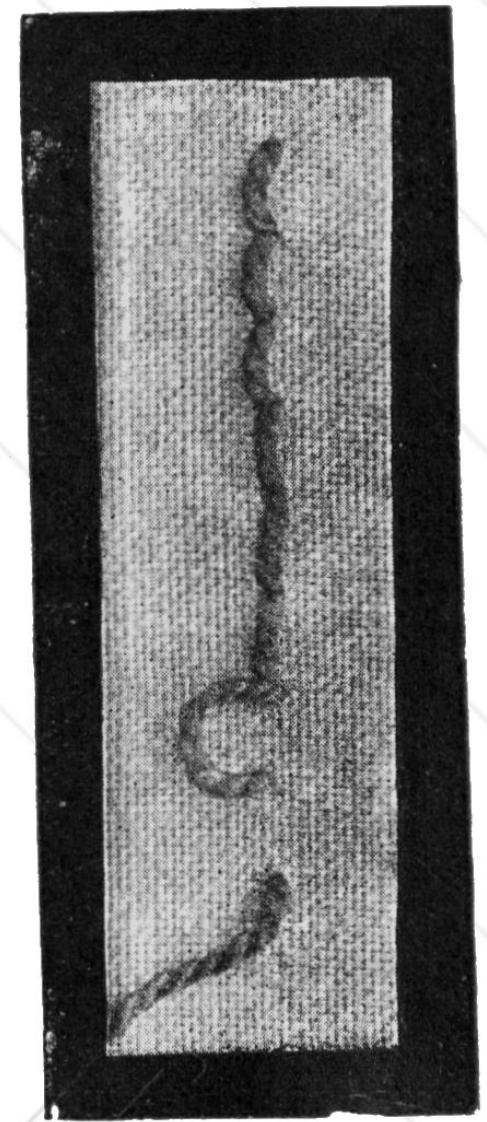


FIG. 3.
BACK STITCHING.

TWISTED BACK STITCHING.

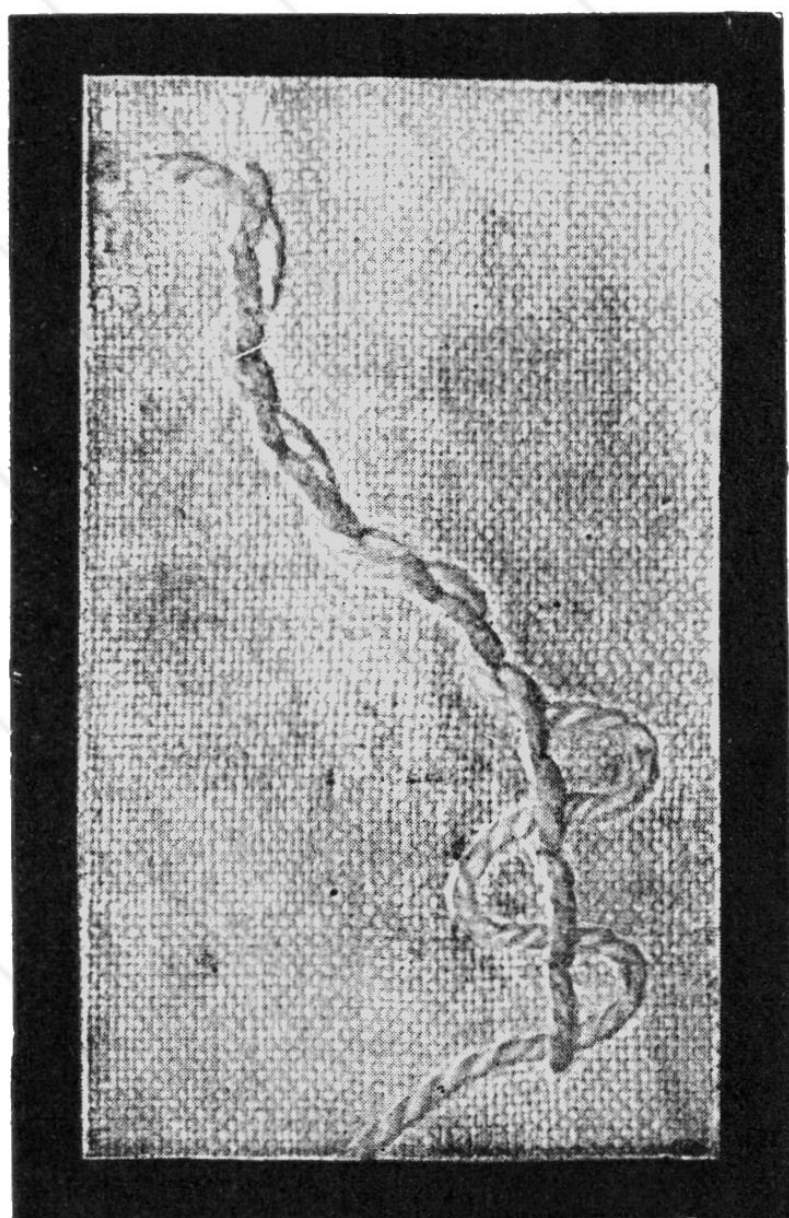


FIG. 4.—TWISTED BACK
STITCHING.

Fig. 4 shows Twisted Back stitching ; a very useful and easy variety. A line of ordinary Back stitch (Fig. 3) should first be done, then, with a second needleful of thread, the work is continued thus, beginning at the left side of the top stitch : *pass the threaded needle under the nearest Back stitch and from left to right, then under the next lower Back stitch and from right to left, repeat from*.

This forms a pretty cord-like stitch handsome and thicker in effect than simple Back stitch.

Single lines of plain darning, of running, and of outline stitches can also be thickened in this way. The second working thread may be of the same colour as the first or in contrast to it, according to the effect desired.

Another way of enriching the above stitches is to work each stitch over with a second working thread but to pass this always in the same direction (instead of first to the right and then to the left) so as to over-sew the line first put down.

BACK STITCH AND RICE STITCH.

By Fig. 5 is seen how an entire piece of work such as a blotter, tea cosy, or other article can be worked wholly in Back stitch. The petal of the flower is outlined with plain Back stitching, such as was shown in Fig. 3, and the centre is filled in with scattered back stitches.

This kind of filling is called Rice stitch, because each stitch should be the length of a grain of rice. In small details of a piece of embroidery, it is sometimes worked on a tiny scale, and is then known as Seed stitch or Mignonette stitch.

In very dainty work Seed stitch frequently covers only one thread of the background material.

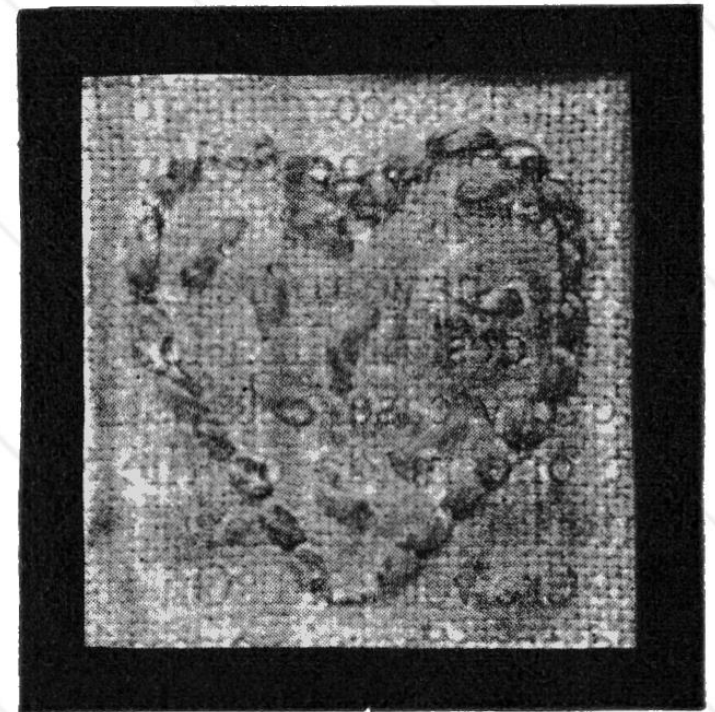


FIG. 5.—BACK STITCH AND RICE STITCH.

CREWEL STITCH.

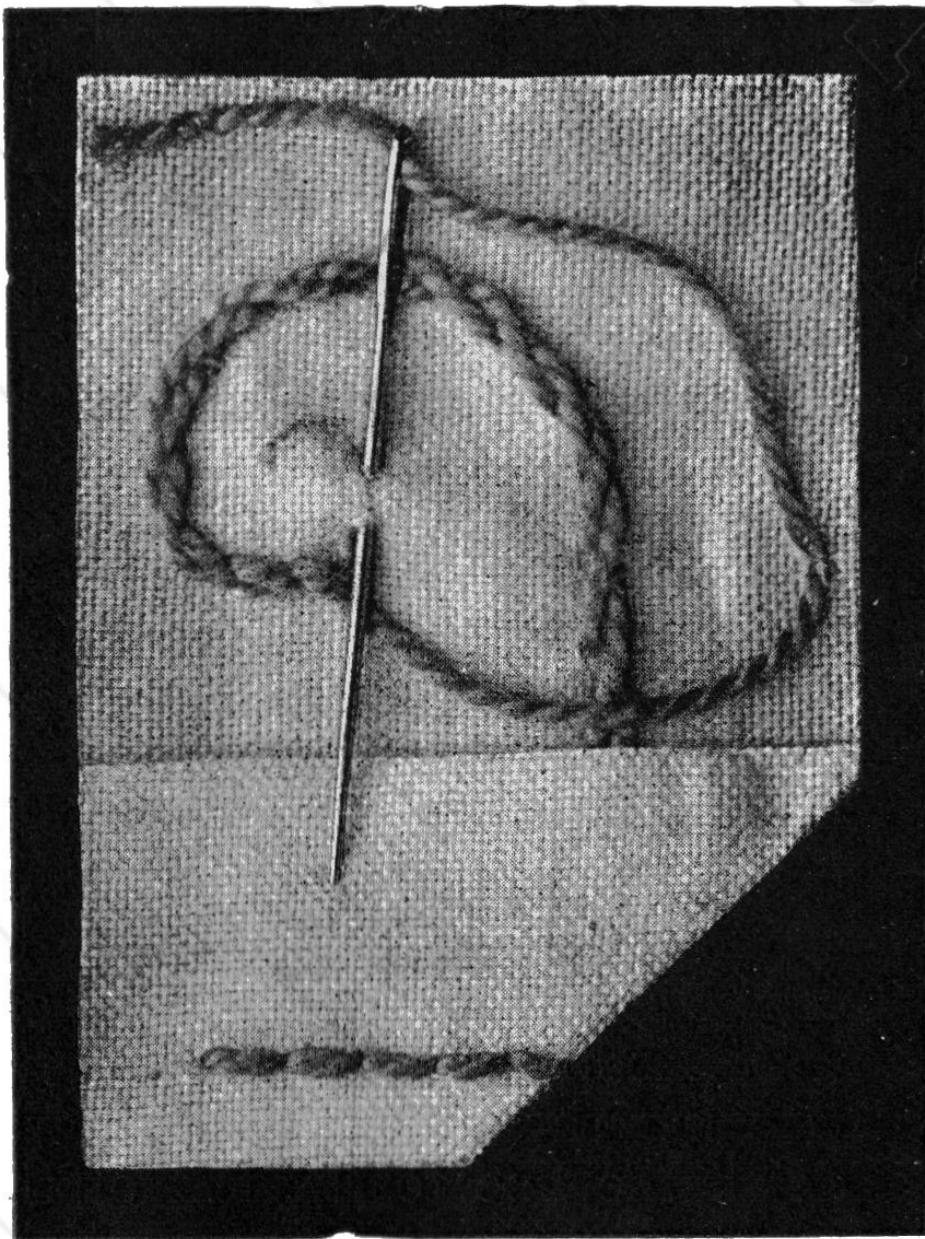


FIG. 6.—CREWEL STITCH.

Showing also the wrong side of stitch.

Many workers are confused between Crewel stitch and Outline stitch and think that they are alike because they are somewhat similarly worked.

For true Crewel stitch begin at the bottom of the line. Suppose that each stitch is to be $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch long: put the needle back to the wrong side just that distance above the starting point, and bring it out only $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch above the start and below where it was put in. Always keep the working thread on the right-hand side of the needle, or, in other words, always put the needle in and out to the left side of the loop of working thread. After the first stitch as described above: * put the needle in again $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch above where it came out, and bring it through again at the top of the stitch last finished, and of course to the left of the thread and of the stitches; repeat from*.

Some of the many uses of Crewel stitch are mentioned under Outline stitch (Fig. 7).

OUTLINE STITCH.

Outline stitch is worked exactly like Crewel stitch, with the important exception that the needle is here always kept to the right not to the left of the needleful of thread.

The wrong side of properly worked Crewel and Outline stitches shows Back stitching, and the best way of judging if the embroidery is being properly done is to turn it over and see if it looks as at the bottom in Fig. 6, where the linen is folded over to show the wrong side.

Crewel and Outline stitch are both of great value to fancy workers and are used in single lines or in closely set rows and worked with fine or with coarse materials according to their positions.

Care is needed when working round a scroll as in Fig. 6, and often smaller stitches have to be used for intricate parts of the design than for bolder outlines, but in every case each stitch must meet the last one made or the wrong side of the material will show the defect.

Crewel and Outline stitch may be used together in one piece of embroidery, but must never be mixed: in other words, in each line of stitches the needle must be kept always to the right or to the left of the thread, but on no account be brought out first on one then on the other side of it, or a ragged uneven effect will result.

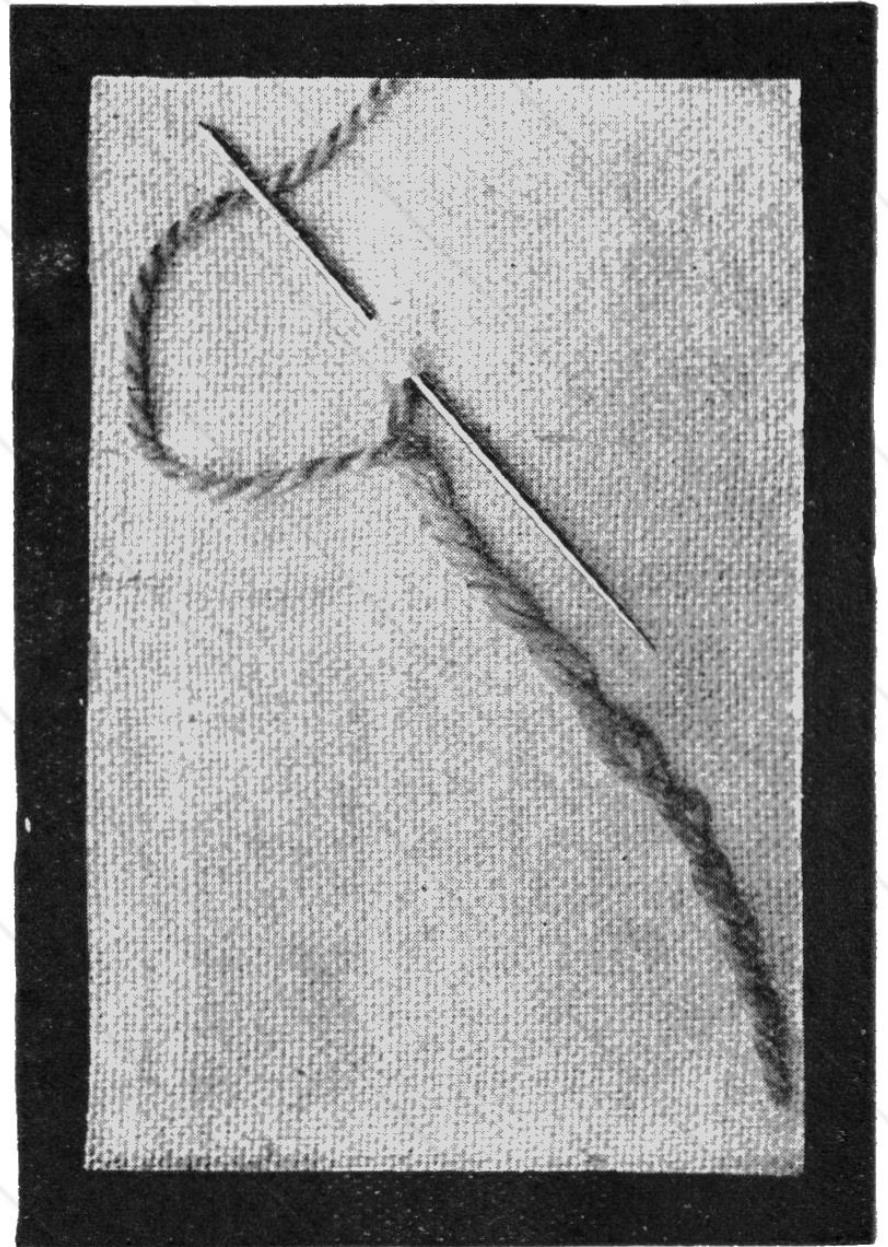


FIG. 7.—OUTLINE STITCH.

COUCHING.



FIG. 8.—COUCHING.

Couching is used for outlines or for filling in large spaces. Two threads are required and one may be much coarser than the other, or several strands of it be used instead of one only. Work Couching thus:—Start the fine or working thread as usual, put down the second strand on the line to be covered to the right of the starting place, and push the needle back again to the wrong side of the work just over the coarse strand and so as to enclose it in a loop or stitch. *Bring the working thread out again lower down the line to the left of the second strand, and again put the needle through on the other side of it. Repeat from * along the line, making the stitches at equal distances apart.

When worked in rows as seen in Fig. 8, the couching or finer stitches in this work should

be set not side by side in each line, but alternately, so as to justify the name, sometimes given, of Brick Couching.

When fine threads are sewn down the needle can be brought out and put back again in the same place, but with coarser work a few strands of the material must be passed over.

One of the most familiar forms of Couching is that wherein several strands of silk (Filoselle for instance), or of wool are sewn down with fine and small stitches that draw the strands in very tightly and let them spread out to their full width between these stitches. This form of Couching is used in single lines only.

CROSS STITCH.

This is one of those simple stitches that loses half its value if carelessly worked. It should be started as seen in Fig. 9, with a single diagonal stitch and finished with a second diagonal stitch made across the first in the opposite direction.

In Leviathan Cross stitch, seen to the right in the illustration, two further stitches are added, one upright and the other lengthwise.

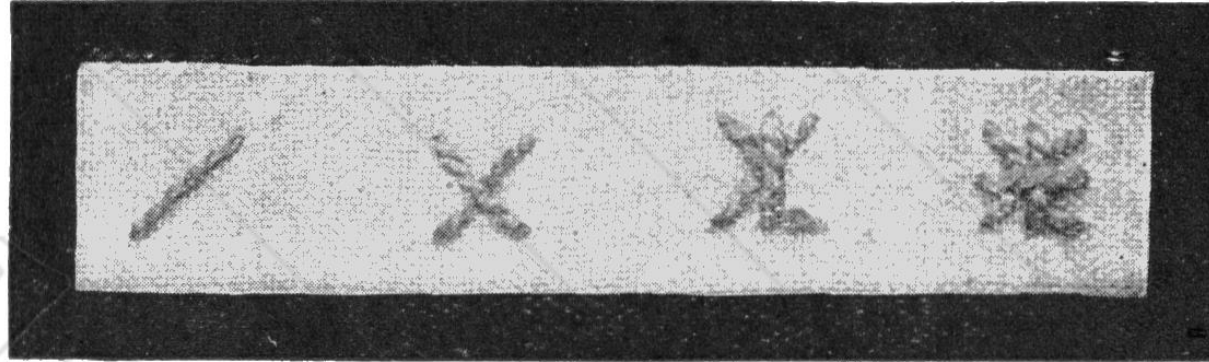


FIG. 9.—CROSS STITCH.

The order in which the first pair of stitches (the simple Cross stitch) are worked is of no consequence ; that is, the first stitch may be from the upper right to the lower left-hand corner as in the diagram, or at just the reverse slant like the second single stitch seen.

So too in the Leviathan stitch ; it matters nothing whether the upright or the lengthwise stitch be made first. But it is of great importance that in every article embroidered in cross-stitches all the stitches are made in exactly the same sequence. Nothing looks worse than to see some stitches crossed in one direction and others the reverse way.

Similarly, in the Leviathan, all must end with an upright or with a lengthwise stitch ; not some stitches with one and others with a second kind.

Strict workers also insist that Cross stitch must be worked in rows carried all in one direction, and that a pattern is spoiled if a line of stitches is carried downwards, then along, then up or down diagonally. However far apart the stitches may be in parts of a design, the whole must be worked—woven as it were—in straight rows carried down or across from edge to edge.

Cross stitch is worked on many varieties of canvas, for which the Needlecraft Practical Journal on Cross Stitch and Canvas Embroidery should be consulted.

It is to be seen on cloth, silk, felt, and velvet, and is often used for marking on damask and linen. In these cases, where it is impossible to count the threads of the fabric, single thread canvas is stretched very evenly over it, and the stitches are worked through both materials. The strands of the canvas must not be pierced with the needle, as when the embroidery is done these are pulled away thread by thread, leaving the Cross stitch on the fabric underneath.

In this form the embroidery should be rather tightly worked, or it will set too loosely when the canvas is drawn away from under it.

It should be added that Cross stitch designs can be obtained in Briggs' transfers and also traced upon linen, cable cloth and other materials in a variety of articles. On these the position of each stitch is indicated, and the lines have merely to be covered by the worker, who runs no risk of making a mistake when everything is made thus easy for her.

CHAIN STITCH.

This is how Chain stitch is worked : having brought out the needle as usual put it back in the same place and *point it out again $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch or more below the starting point. Meanwhile hold down a loop of the

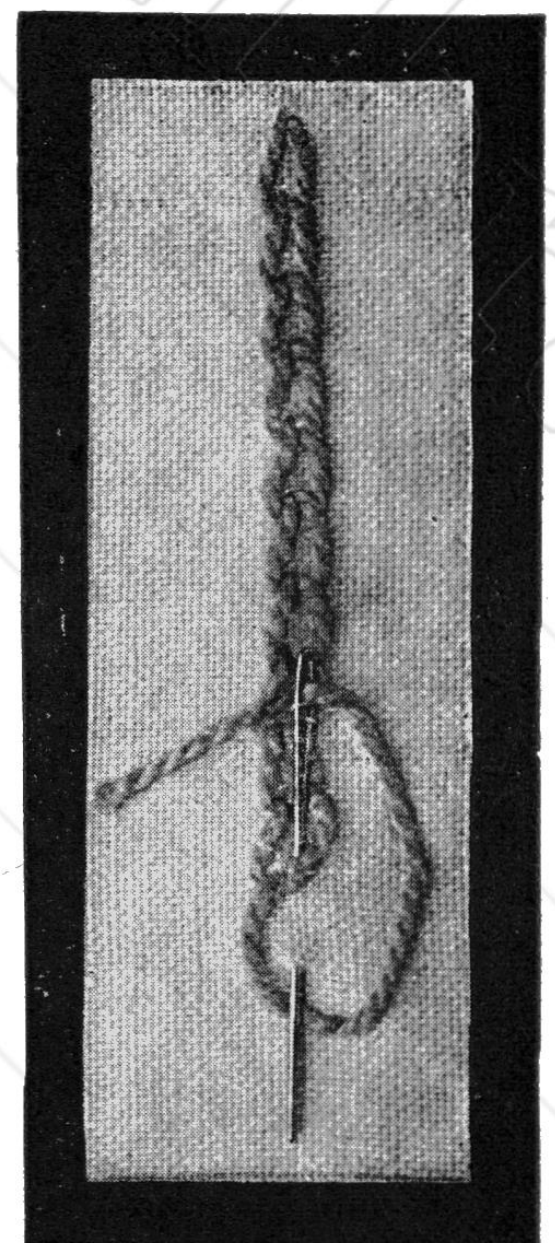


FIG. 10.—CHAIN STITCH.

working thread with the left thumb until the needle and some of the thread are drawn out. Then free the loop under the thumb, and draw the stitch up closely but not too tightly. Put the needle back inside the loop and just where it was last brought out, and repeat from *.

After the last stitch is drawn up push the needle straight back to the wrong side of the work, but outside instead of inside the last loop and fasten off as usual. This secures the row of stitches.

The wrong side of chain stitch is exactly like Back stitch. To test if it is properly worked, unfasten the last stitch and pull the end of thread, the whole line of stitches should then come undone exactly as does the work of a chain stitch sewing machine.

Chain stitch is applied to many purposes. It serves for straight and curved outlines fine and coarse, and can also be used as a filling or covering stitch.

Amateurs might work it thus far more often than they do. It can be arranged in lines running closely side by side and, to brighten the effect, a French knot (see Fig. 22) of some contrasting colour, or a back-stitch can be put in the centre of each chain stitch.

PICOT STITCH.

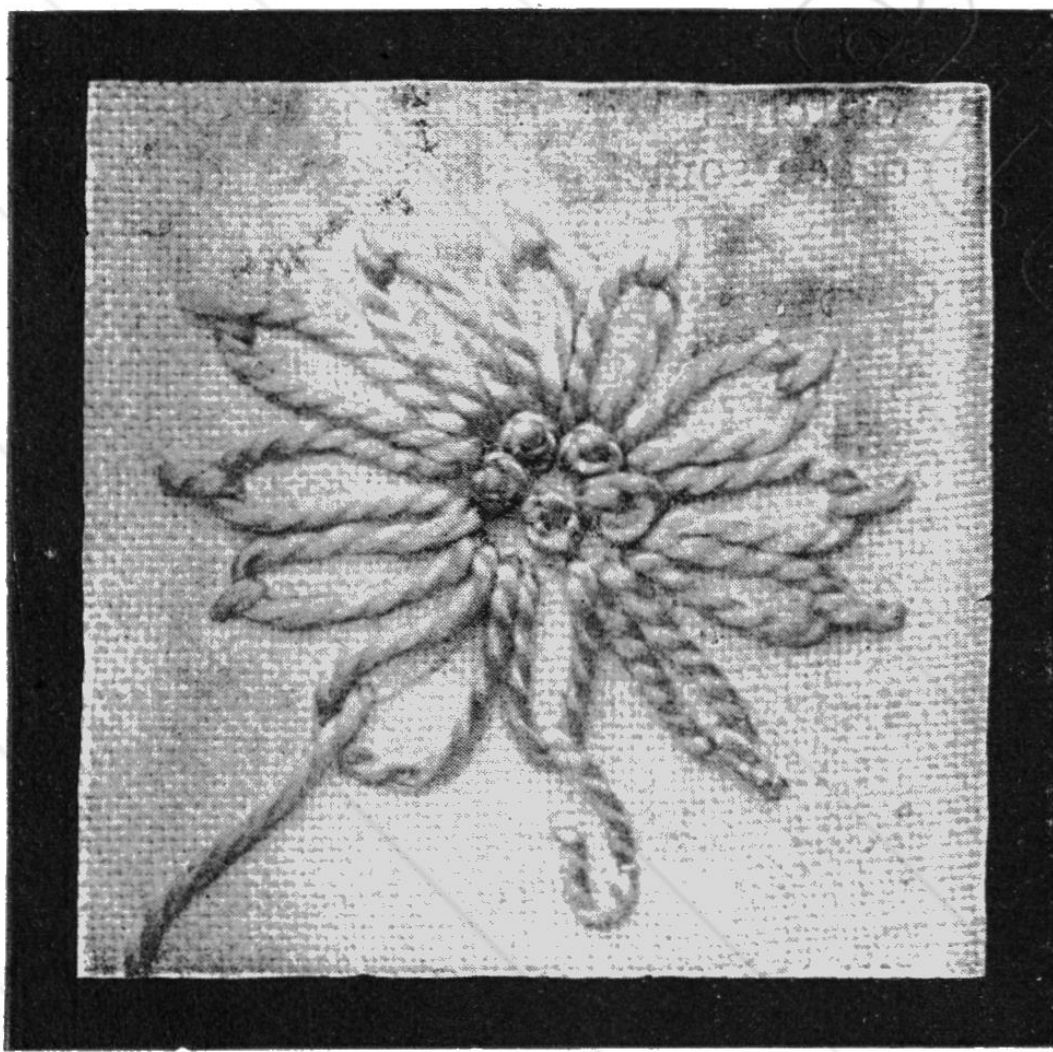


FIG. 11 —PICOT STITCH.

Picot stitch is somewhat like Chain stitch worked singly instead of in a row or line.

After starting put the needle back in or close at the side of the place whence it came out, and bring it out again below that point and in a loop of thread held down by the left thumb. Finish the stitch by pushing the needle through to the wrong side again, some distance below the place where it last came out, thus making a straight stitch that holds down the loop or picot.

Picot stitches are sometimes powdered, formally or informally, over a wide space of background, and are used also to make the petals of a daisy (as in Fig. 11), the rays of a star and similar devices. In Fig. 11 the last stitch but one is left loose to show how it was managed,

and in the last stitch this is still more clear. A few French knots (see also Fig. 22), have been put in to form the centre of the flower. This style of working flowers is called the "Lazy Daisy" stitch by American needlewomen.

HERRINGBONE STITCH.

Herringbone stitch is worked from left to right. It may be fine or coarse according to its destined purpose; for the sake of practice let it be $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch wide, and take up $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch at each stitch, leaving about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch between the stitches.

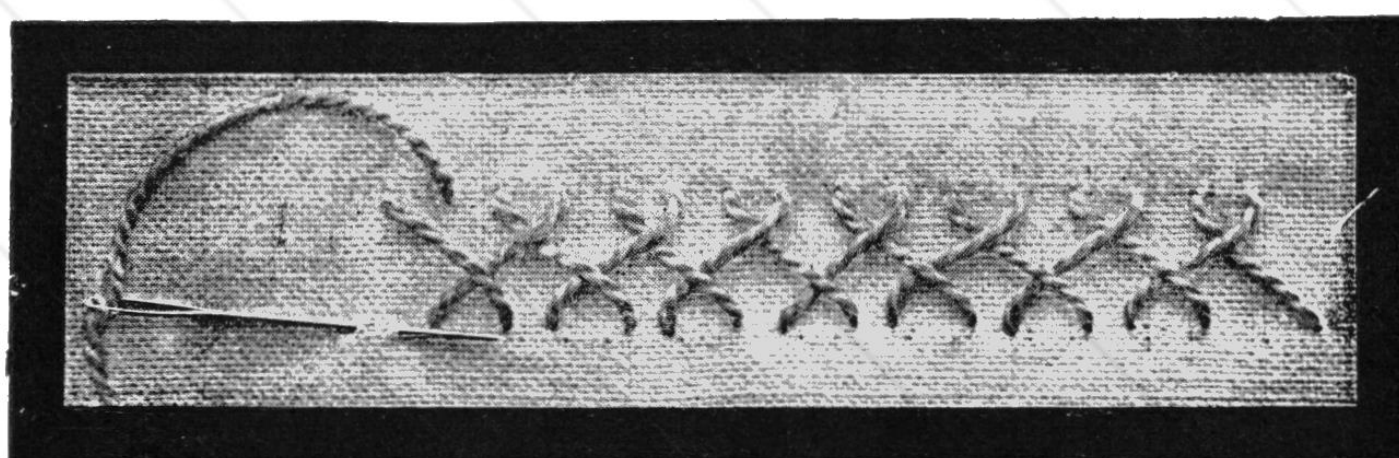


FIG. 12.—HERRINGBONE STITCH.

As with all work a little experience will soon render measurements and guide lines unnecessary.

Starting on the left-hand side then, and on the lower of the two parallel lines * take the needle half an inch to the right and upwards, and there make such a stitch as is seen on the needle in Fig. 12, taking up $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch of the material. Keep the thread always to the left of the needle. Pass down to the lower line again and towards the right, and there make a similar stitch; repeat from *.

Herringboning makes an ornamental border for such articles as tea-cloths, cushion covers, and on flannel goods. It is also used in appliqué work (that is the laying pieces cut out of one material on to a background of another), round the cut edges of the applied pieces to secure them to the foundation and to prevent them from ravelling.

The stitches are in this case made one through the background, then one through the piece of stuff laid upon it, and so on.

CORAL OR FEATHER STITCH.

This stitch is closely related to Chain stitch, and considering that it is almost equally easy to work is well worth learning as it is more ornamental.

It is well at first to pencil or to trace with a coloured thread three lines, to mark the centre and the right and left outer edges of a row of this stitchery. After a little practice the worker will learn to do without these guide lines.

To work Coral stitch, bring out the needle on the middle line, * put it back again by the side of this point and on the right hand guide line, bring it out on the middle line again, some $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch below the starting point and in a loop of thread held down with the thumb, exactly as when working ordinary chain stitch. Next put in the needle on a line with where it came out last, but on the left hand guide line, bringing it out another $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch lower down the middle line and of course in a loop of thread as before; repeat from *.

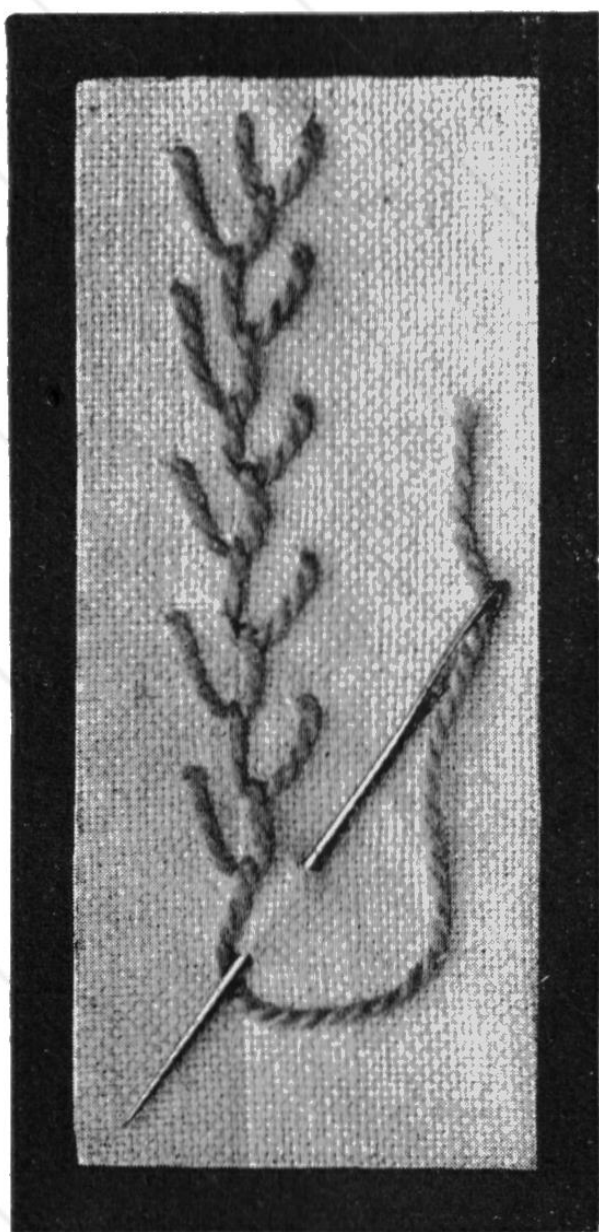


FIG. 13.—CORAL STITCH.

It should be noticed that Chain stitch showed straight stitches on the wrong side of the work, whereas on the reverse side of Coral stitching a double row of little slanting stitches is to be seen, all sloping down to the middle line and arranged alternately.

Coral stitch is chiefly used for wide outlines, and for stems, and also as an ornamental finishing along the hems and frills of fancy articles.

Feather stitch is a name sometimes given to this stitch but not quite correctly. True feather stitch is seen in elaborate and in ancient embroideries, and is very differently worked.

FANCY CORAL STITCH.

Plain Coral (or Feather) stitch was worked first on one side then on the other of a centre line.

Fancy Coral stitch, as shown in Fig. 14, is managed in the same way with two differences.

First each stitch is here made straight, not slant-

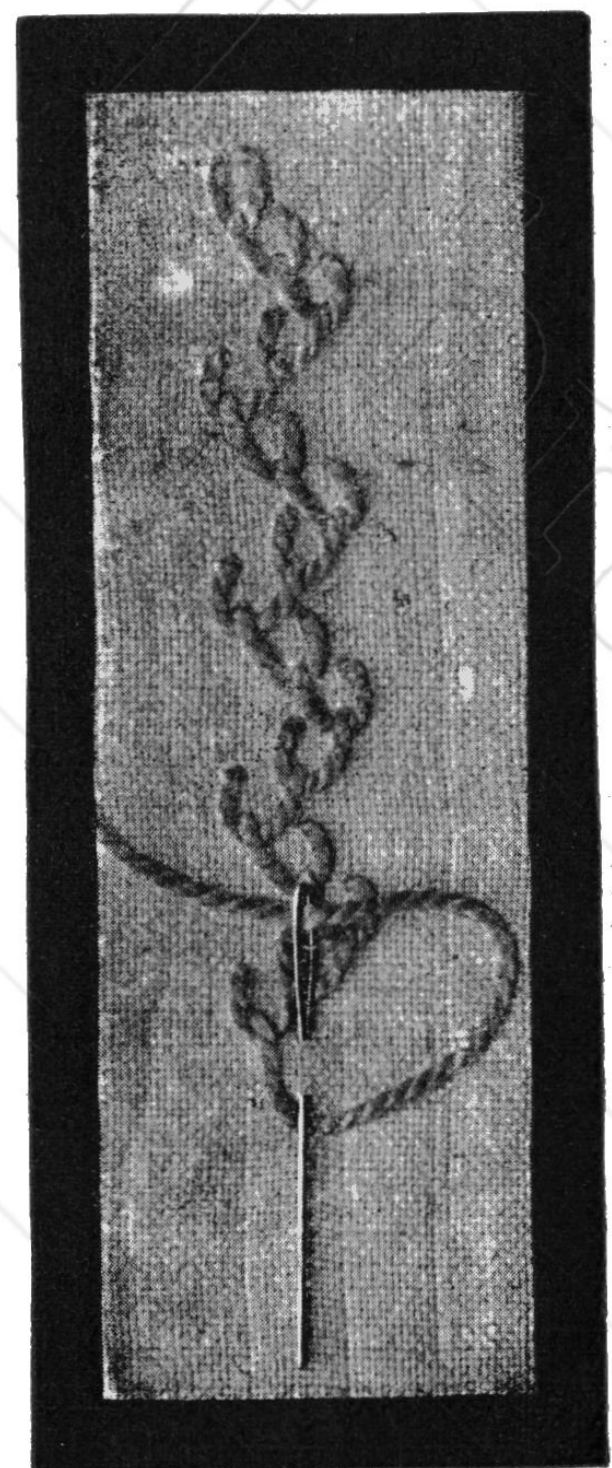


FIG. 14 —FANCY CORAL STITCH.

ingly, and the second thing to notice is that, after the first or starting stitch, two stitches are worked to the right and down, then two stitches to the left and down, and so on. How these should look can be plainly seen in the picture.

Fancy Coral stitch is used for the same purpose as in the ordinary variety, but is rather more elaborate and ornamental.

CLOSE BUTTONHOLING.

Buttonholing in its simplest form is seen in Fig. 15. It should be worked along traced lines until so much skill is attained that these are no longer necessary.

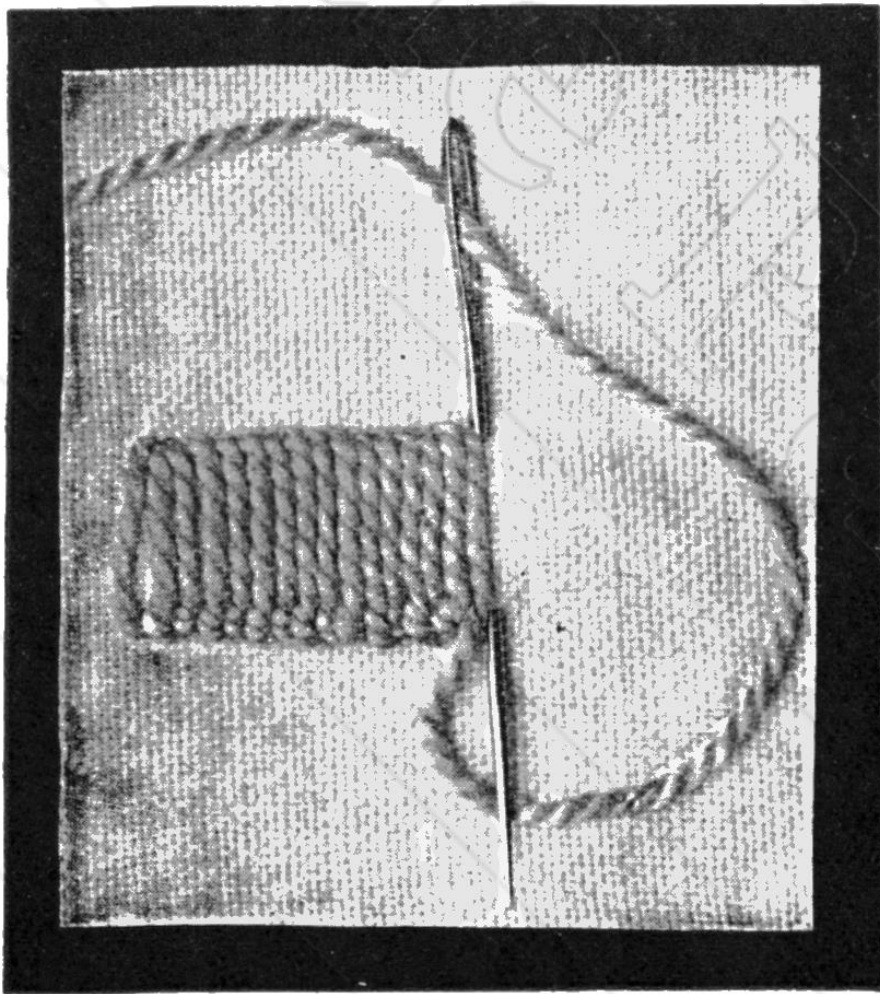


FIG. 15.—CLOSE BUTTONHOLING.

Start as usual, and on the upper of two parallel lines : * put the needle in to the right side of and close to the place where it started, and bring it out again on the lower line exactly under the last point ; with the left thumb hold down the thread (as in Chain stitch, Fig. 10), so that it forms a loop inside which the needle comes up. Draw the thread up closely and gently, freeing the loop before all of it is pulled through ; repeat from*. Continue to work thus from left to right.

Buttonholing can be arranged to form straight, curved, or vandyked bands, circles, curves, and ovals.

Flower centres, for instance, are often outlined with Buttonholing.

But the most frequent use of the stitch is as a covering over cut or turned up edges, and to give firmness to work. When employed as a bordering it is usual to stitch not over the raw edges but into the material, which is afterwards cut away beyond the work, as shown in Fig. 17.

Buttonholing can be varied by making the stitches of different lengths, always keeping the lower edge even, but working perhaps five stitches, each one a little taller than the last stitch, and then making them shorter and shorter in the same proportion. This forms a little scallop which is to be repeated all along the work.

SPACED BUTTONHOLING.

Spaced Buttonholing is worked exactly like the plain Buttonholing just described, but has a lighter appearance as the stitches are set further apart. The distance between them must always be the same.

As in spaced Buttonholing the foundation material is seen between the stitches, this must be kept straight and neat.

Sometimes one French knot (see Fig. 22) is worked between each stitch or after every few stitches of both close and spaced Buttonholing, and this gives it a more fanciful look. Thread of some sharply contrasting colour can be used for the knots with good results.

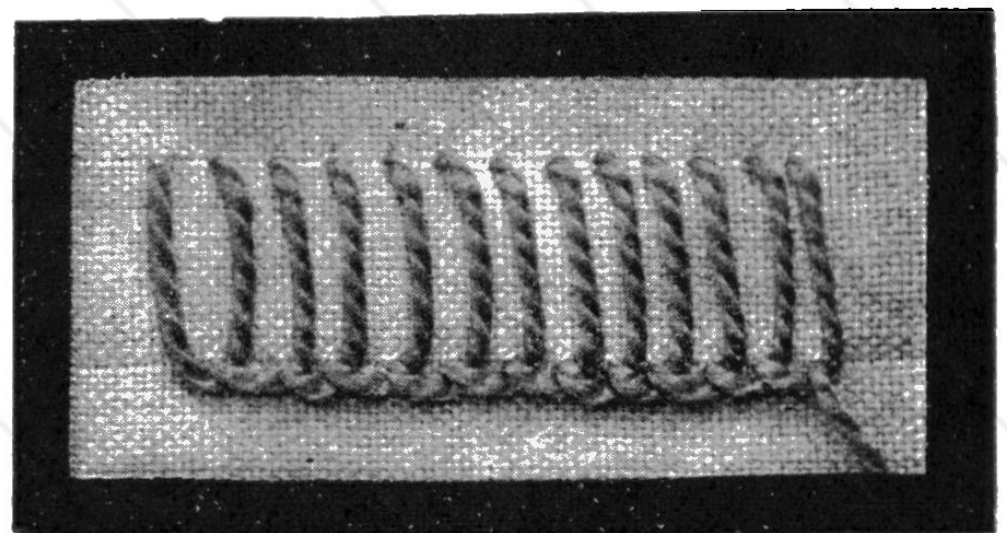


FIG. 16.—SPACED BUTTONHOLING.

SCALLOPED BUTTONHOLING.

Either Plain or Spaced Buttonholing can be used when working scallops. There are many kinds of scallops and vandykes that can be outlined thus, and as it is best to work them within guide lines, Briggs' transfers may be recommended. In these there are many varieties of scalloped edgings available.

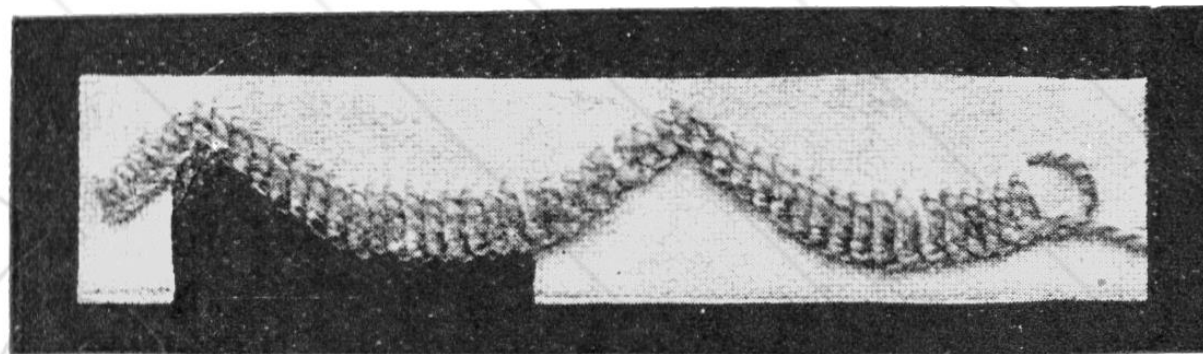


FIG. 17.—SCALLOPED BUTTONHOLING.

It should be noticed that in the example illustrated the stitches increase in size towards the deepest part of the scallops, and are shortest between them. The linen is shown cut away beyond the lower or corded edge of one scallop. This is a very usual way of finishing linen and other articles, as the close stitchery prevents the cut edges from fraying.

SATIN STITCH.

Satin stitch is a succession of Back stitches (Fig. 3) put side by side instead of in one upright line. It is a simple handsome stitch for entirely covering leaves, flowers, scrolls, squares, rounds, and many other shapes; all that is required is to set the stitches at even distances apart and to keep the outlines true.

Satin stitch is usually worked from left to right, as seen in the illustration, and the needle must always be kept to the right of the loop of working thread.

When high relief is needed, some running or darning stitches in soft cotton are run in and out before the embroidery is begun, and these form a padding for the ornamental stitchery over them.

On very large leaves and other details several bands of Satin stitch are required; these must all be of the same width and follow the same outline.

When Satin stitch is worked in a tiny straight band it is known as Overcasting, and is used for stems and tendrils and for outlining when a rather heavy border is required.

Satin stitch is used largely for marking linen with names or with monograms or initials. In this variety of the work stitches of all sizes and carefully graduated are needed.

Good marking of this description is often enriched with sprays of leaves, flowers, etc.; the whole carried out in Satin stitch and in Overcasting.

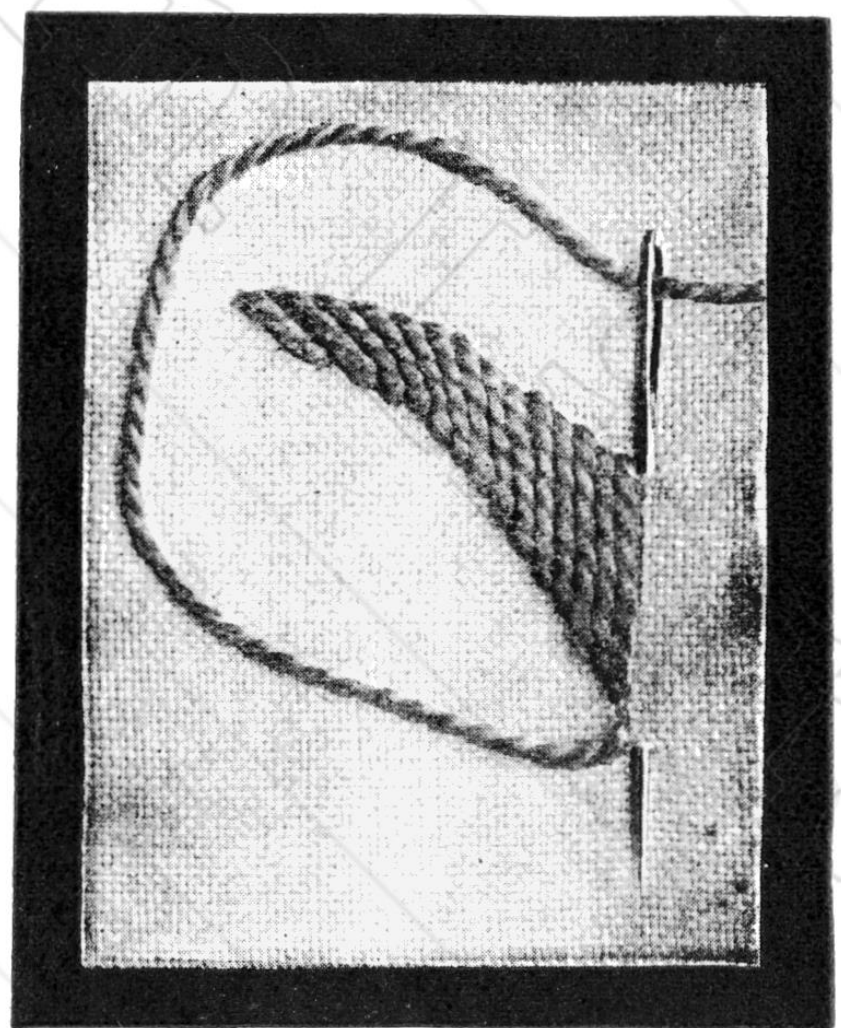


FIG. 18.—SATIN STITCH.

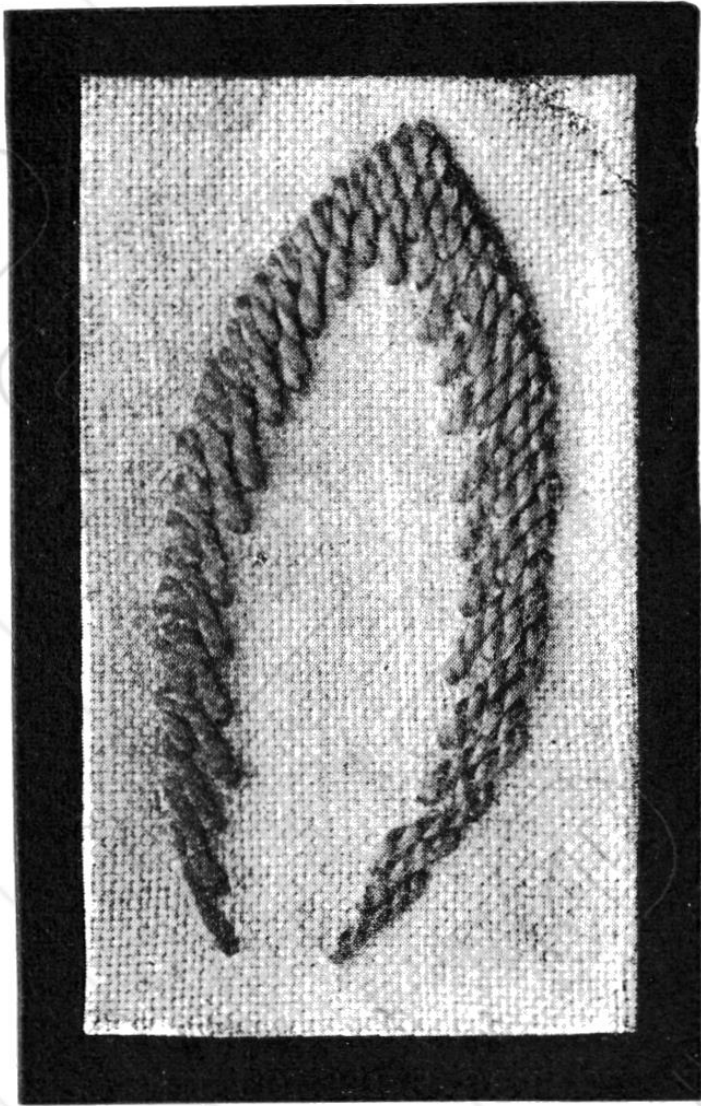


FIG. 19.—LONG AND SHORT STITCH AS AN OUTLINING.

LONG AND SHORT STITCH AS AN OUTLINING.

Long and Short stitch makes a heavy outlining when used for leaves, such as the one illustrated in Fig. 19, and Fig. 20 shows how whole spaces may be closely covered in this way.

Long and Short stitch is just Satin stitch worked with one straight edge only; the stitches are set closely side by side, a long and a short one alternately. The small stitches are sometimes $\frac{1}{2}$, sometimes $\frac{1}{3}$ the length of the long ones, according to the work that is being done with them; there is no rule about this.

Much of the effect of Long and Short stitch (and indeed of Satin stitch also) depends upon the way in which the stitches are slanted. They are hardly ever sent straight, but always sloped, usually towards a real or imaginary centre line. In this way the stitches resemble the strokes used by artists to shade a drawing.

LONG AND SHORT STITCH AS A FILLING.

The last illustration showed Long and Short stitch used as an outlining, and it serves equally well as a filling or covering stitch. Had it been required to fill in the whole of the leaf shown in Fig. 19, further sets of stitches would have been worked inside those already in place and fitting closely in; long stitches touching the short ones and short stitches on the long one already worked.

The diagram, Fig. 20, shows more clearly how this dovetailing of the stitches is managed; the under row of dark stitches being partly filled in with an upper band of stitches worked with paler thread. In this way a straight edge top and bottom is secured. It is but rarely that so formal a use as this is made of Long and Short stitch; it is generally varied in lengths that it may fit into shape outlines.

Advanced workers use this stitch much for shading, as when fine silks are chosen and carefully graduated tones, there is no abrupt change of tint to be seen.

Those of us who do not attempt elaborate embroidery can yet appreciate this stitch, and by getting familiar with it are learning much that will be of great assistance to us in our later more ambitious work.

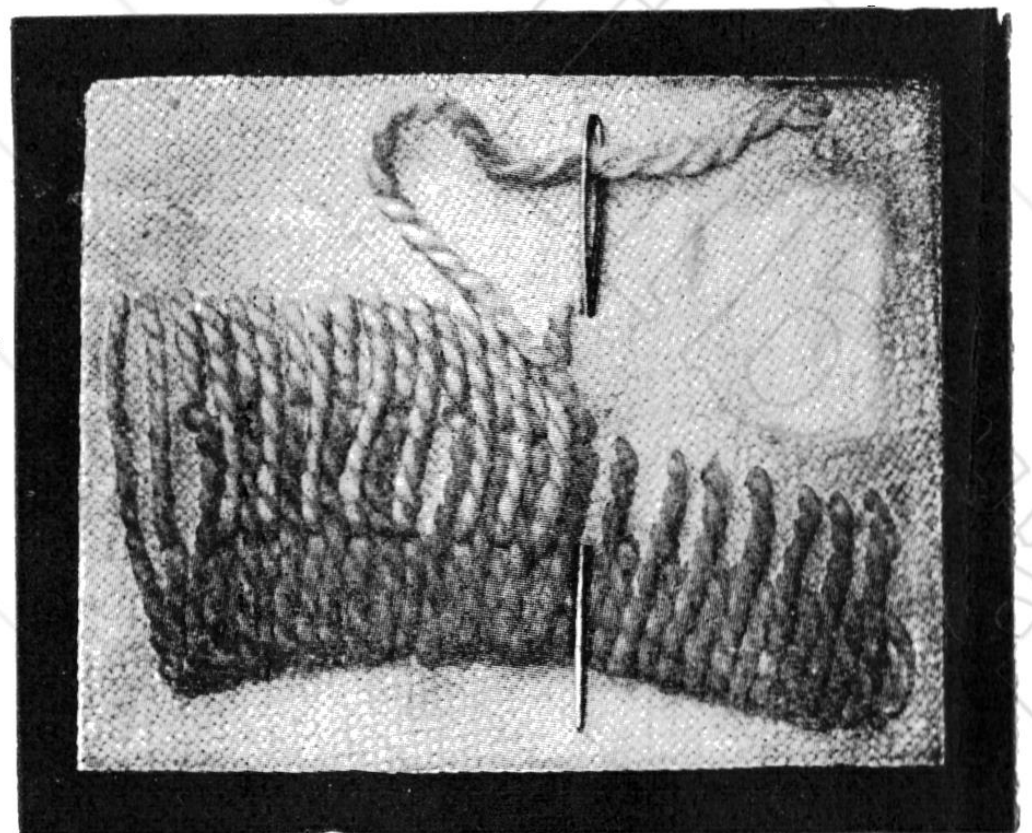


FIG. 20.—LONG AND SHORT STITCH AS FILLING.

ORIENTAL STITCH.

There are several kinds of Oriental stitch, which is so named because it is much used on embroideries that come to us from the far East.

One of the easiest and handsomest is seen at Fig. 21. It is worked from left to right, and like Herringboning, except that the stitches are upright not lengthwise.

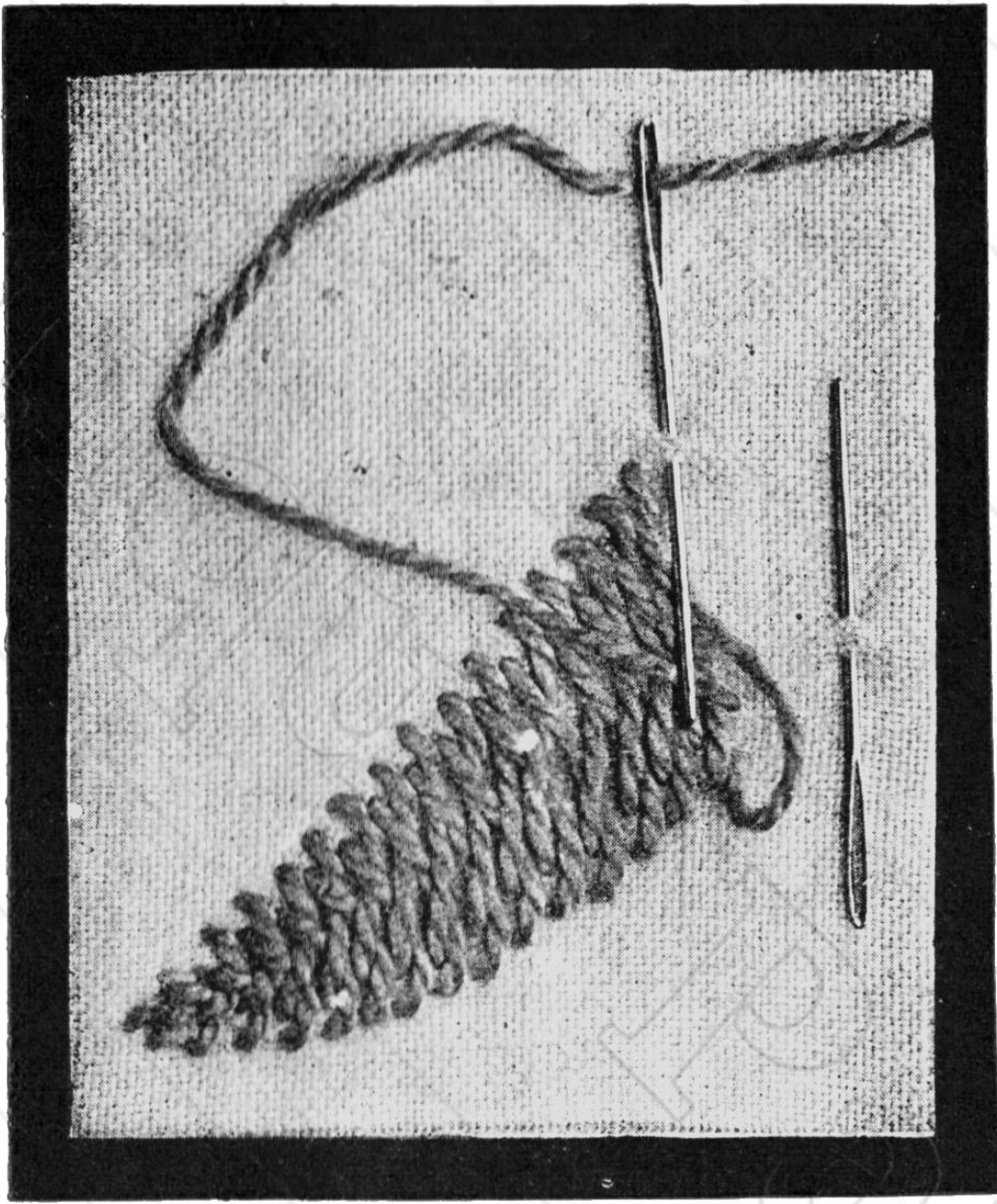


FIG. 21.—ORIENTAL STITCH.

Begin on the lower line and to the left,* move upwards and to the right and on the upper line pick up on the needle about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch of the material, making an upright stitch as shown, by pointing the needle straight down. Always keep the loop of working thread to the left side of the needle. After drawing up the thread closely, but not tightly, move downwards and still to the right, and there make an exactly similar and upright stitch, but point the needle upwards in the way shown to the right of the diagram. The stitches are repeated from*, and if properly contrived, form a plait closely or loosely worked according to the distance apart of the stitches.

Oriental stitch can be used as can Satin stitch, for covering leaves, petals, scrolls ; in fact, any shapes, and can also be arranged in straight

bands and borders. Frequently elaborate pieces of embroidery are carried out entirely in this one stitch, which can be so easily adapted to the most intricate curves and bends.

FRENCH KNOTS.

To work French knots : *hold the working thread out rather tightly an inch or so from the starting point, and with the left hand ; take the needle in the right hand and twist the stretched out part of the thread twice completely round the needle, turn the needle quite upright and insert its point close to where it came out, draw up the thread so that the little coil round the needle is quite at the end of the thread close to the embroidery, and hold it in place until the needle is pushed quite through the material and all the length of thread has been drawn through after it. Bring the needle out where the next knot is to be made, and repeat from *.

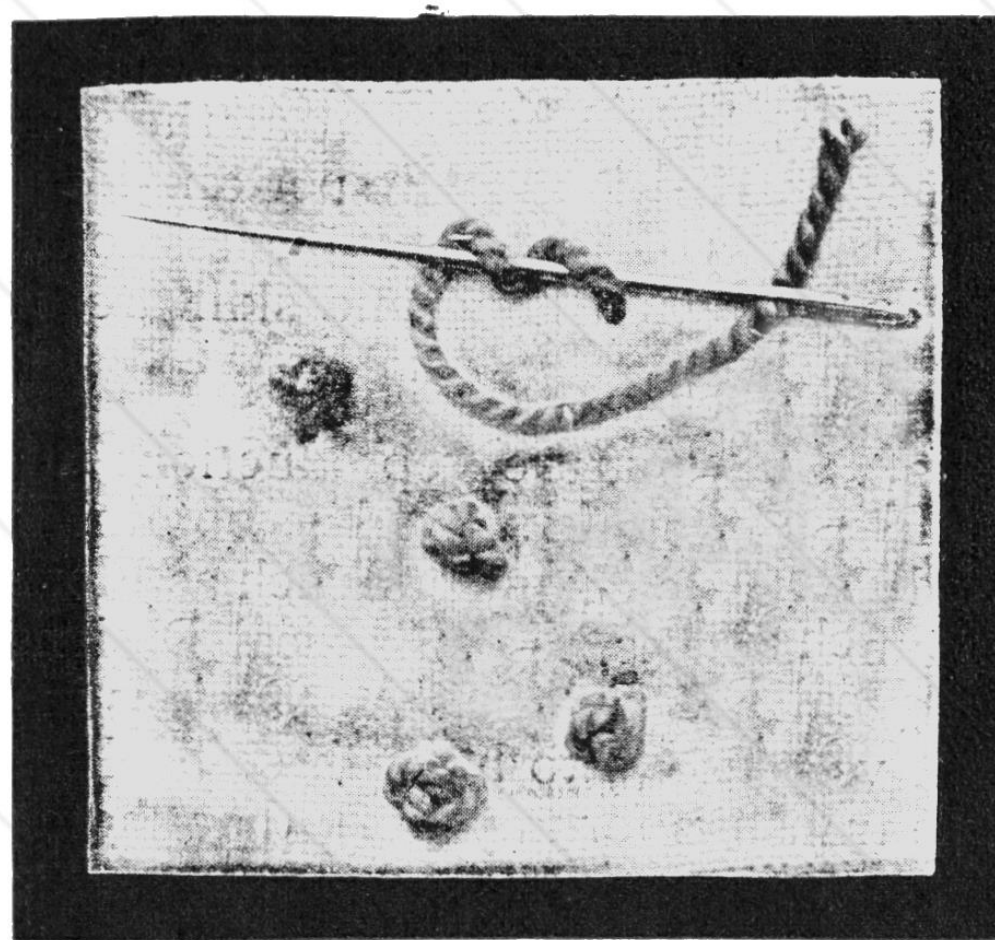


FIG. 22.—FRENCH KNOTS.

French knots can be made with one twist only round the needle, or with as many as four or even five twists according to the size they are required to be. It is best to practise with two twists only as here shown.

This is a most useful stitch to scatter over the background, or with which to fill in such details as the centres of flowers. In fine threads it represents hair on figure subjects (human curls and animals' fur, birds' feathers, &c.). Whole pieces of embroidery are sometimes worked in French knots, which are easy to make, but must be kept even or they will look untidy.

With the stitches described and illustrated in this book almost any of the countless designs now available for embroidery can be carried out. Fancy articles can be worked all in one stitch, or in several, or in many, wisely chosen and arranged so that each serves the use for which it is best suited.

It is not in the number of her different stitches that the worker shows her skill but in the regularity with which she sets them.

One stitch should be thoroughly learned before a second kind is attempted.

Embroideresses who have mastered the simple stitches in this work would do well to consult the Fourth Book of Hows on Embroidery Stitches, where more elaborate stitches and arrangements of stitches will be found. She will then be competent to embark upon the exquisite floral and conventional shaded embroidery, so handsomely depicted in colour, and minutely described in Needlecraft Practical Journals, Nos. 55 and 77, "Embroidery Shading" (2d.)

The needlework student, having carefully followed the instructions given and exercised herself in the various stitches described, may now be considered competent to undertake complete embroidery; but it must be remembered that the truly artistic embroideress never ceases learning. Every piece of work that she does adds something to her knowledge and her experience, something that will come in again to help her in solving the many problems with which important needlework undertakings are always associated. This is especially so in the selection and blending of colours in which there is infinite scope for choice, and in the arrangement and use of different stitches to obtain variety without disturbing the unity and harmony of the whole. Nothing but practice and the study of fine specimens of embroidery will achieve this, and the worker must also possess the determination to do her very best, down to the smallest detail, in every piece of work she undertakes. It would be well if teachers of embroidery impressed this firmly upon all young needleworkers, getting them early into the habit of working conscientiously and thoroughly, and of carefully considering each piece of work when it is finished so as to observe how it could have been improved. In this way steady improvement will come and the needleworker will develop her own taste and good judgment at the same time as her technical skill in stitchery advances. This is most important for one often sees beautiful work thrown away on worthless designs and tasteless colourings, and good designs badly carried out; it is only when taste and skill are combined that good embroidery can result.

Books illustrated with miniature reproductions of the vast numbers of designs obtainable in Briggs' transfers may be obtained for a few pence each; these books are devoted to different subjects, such as Floral Designs, Conventional Designs, Initials, Costume Designs, Ecclesiastical Designs, and every year there is issued at 1d. a little book called Selected Art Designs in Briggs' Transfers. The embroiderer will find it very useful to have these books by her, so that she may make choice of suitable transfers for any work that she may have in hand.

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