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Chapter XXI

**SHIRRINGS, PUFFINGS, RUCHES
AND PLAITINGS**

Gathering—Shirring—Scalloped or Snail Shirrings—Cord Shirrings—Simple Ruche—Three-Tuck Ruche—Box-Plaited or Gathered Ruches—Ruche of Frayed Taffeta—Double Ruche with One Cord Shirring—Double Ruche with Two Cord Shirrings

FOR the shirred trimmings given in this chapter the softest materials should be used.

Plaited trimmings may be made of very soft materials or of materials with more body.

Soft ribbons requiring no finish at the edges may be used effectively for these trimmings.

Most materials for the ruchings and puffings may be cut bias or straight.

Chiffon should always be cut lengthwise or crosswise, never bias.

Silks and satins lie in softer folds if they are cut bias or crosswise.

If the edges are to be frayed, the materials must be cut lengthwise or crosswise. Crosswise is preferable, for the warp threads are usually closer and make a thicker fringe.

If net is to be used with raw edges, it should be cut on the line of the straight threads which run lengthwise, or bias. You can easily determine the direction of these threads on the piece you are using by stretching the net a little in different directions. Net is more easily hemmed if cut as above, but for a double ruche it may be cut lengthwise, crosswise or bias.

Different materials require different amounts of fulness for shirred ruches. A soft fabric such as chiffon requires three times the length of the finished ruche. Taffeta and such materials which have a little more body require only about twice the finished length.

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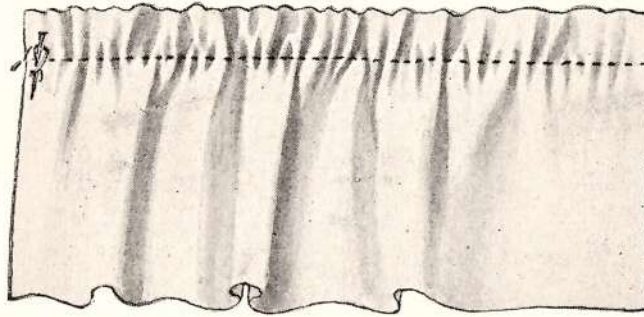
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Gathering

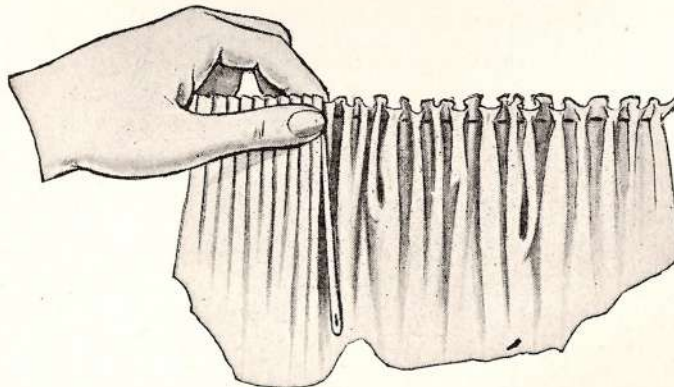
For gathering make a row of small running stitches. The stitches may be the same length as the spaces, or the spaces may be twice the length of the stitches. Always begin by inserting the needle from the wrong side to conceal the knot. It is better to slip the stitches along on the needle and not remove it from the material.



348—Plain gathering

With a single row of gathering it is necessary to stroke the stitches in order to make them lie straight. When the gathering is completed, remove the needle and draw the gatherings up tight. Place a pin vertically, close to the last stitch, and wind the thread several times around the pin in the form of an 8. (Illustration 348.) This holds the gathers firmly together.

Hold the work between the thumb and fingers of the left hand, with the thumb below the gathering-thread. Put the side of the needle well above the gathering-thread and press the little plait



349—Stroking a single row of gathers

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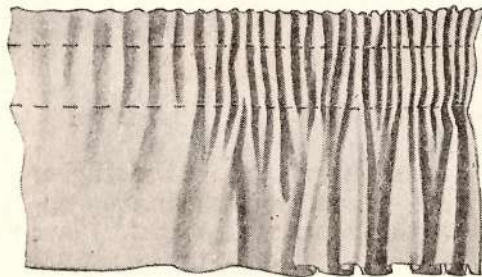
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under the thumb, drawing the needle down. (Illustration 349.)

Do not turn the point of the needle toward the material, as it scratches and weakens the material. Continue entirely across the gathers, putting the needle under each stitch and holding the plait firmly with the thumb. Stroke the material above the gathering thread as well as below it to make the gathers firm and even.

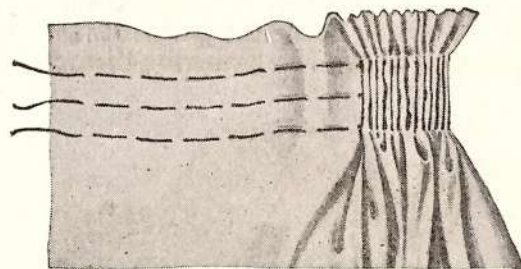
Two rows of gathers are often used in dressmaking and do not need stroking. A skirt joined to a band, a sleeve set in a cuff or sewed into the armhole, should be gathered twice so that the gathers will stay in the proper place.

The second row is made with the stitches directly in line with those of the first row and one-quarter or three-eighths of an inch below them. (Illustration 350.) If there is much fulness to be gathered, the spaces between the stitches may be lengthened.



350—Two rows
of gathers

351—Gaging or
French gathers



Gaging or French gathers—This is a style of shirring generally used where a quantity of material must be adjusted to a comparatively small space. (Illustration 351.) The stitches in this case are made unevenly: long ones on the right side and short ones on the under side of the material. Each successive row of gathers has its long and short stitches parallel, respectively, with those of the preceding row. The threads are all drawn up evenly and fastened at the ends.

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Shirring

Shirring is made of successive rows of gatherings. It is used as a trimming. There are several different kinds of shirring, the use of which must be determined somewhat by the character of the material and the style of the garment. Before beginning, it is best to mark the sewing lines with a colored thread to be sure to get the rows even. This thread can be drawn out when the shirring is finished.

A simple shirring is shown in Illustration 352. The top edge is turned in and the first row shirred in close to the edge. The thread should be amply strong, with a good big knot at the end; for if the thread is weak and breaks, or the knot pulls through, the shirring will progress slowly, and the material will suffer unnecessarily in the working.



352—A simple shirring

Scallops or snail shirrings are meant to be used as a band trimming. Make a narrow fold of the material, and run the shirring thread zigzag across from edge to edge. (Illustration 353.) As the work progresses, draw up the thread and the fold will acquire a scallop edge on both sides. If a wider fold is used, two threads may be run in close together. This will produce a more even trimming and one that will be less perishable.



353—Scallops or snail shirrings

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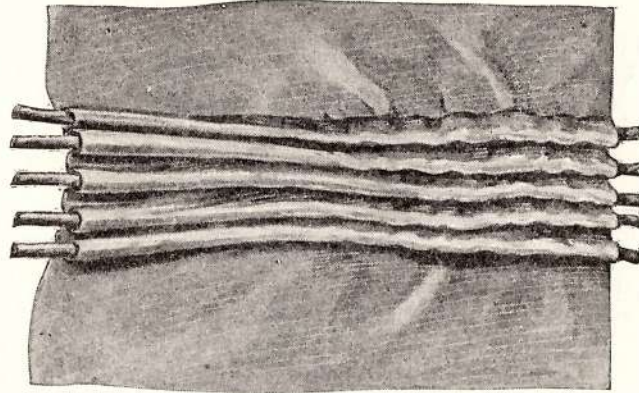
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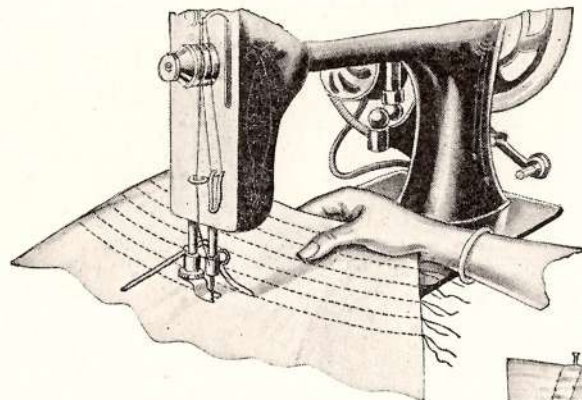
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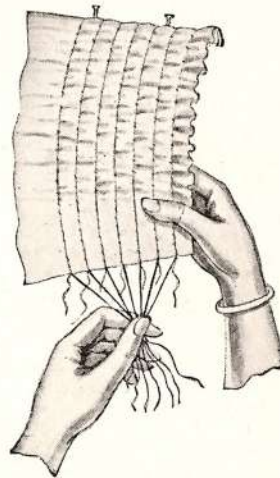
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354—Cord shirring



355—A method of shirring that may be used with any two-thread machine by loosening the tension



356—Drawing up the tighter under threads and pushing the material along to form the shirring

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Cord shirring (Illustration 354) is made by sewing tiny tucks with a cord enclosed from the underside. When all the threads have been run in, draw up the fulness.

Shirring by machine—Shirring can also be done very successfully on the machine by using the gathering attachment. In that case it is especially necessary to mark the first sewing line before beginning, as the machine does the work so rapidly that one is more apt to get an irregular line. Successive lines may be put in accurately by using the gage that comes with the machine.

Another method of shirring by any machine that has a double thread is to stitch in the ordinary way with a rather loose tension on the thread.

Use a medium-length stitch. If the pattern has no perforations to guide you; use the gage for spacing stitchings evenly. (Illustration 355.)

Pin the center of the stitchings to a table, or any flat surface. Hold all the under threads together with one hand. With the other hand, push the material back on the threads to form shirrings, being careful not to break the threads. (Illustration 356.)

Ruches

The width of ruches—For single ruches with cords you must allow from one-quarter to one-half inch for each cord, the amount depending on the size of the cord. If the edges are to be hemmed or rolled, sufficient allowance should be made for that finish.

For a double ruche calculate the width of a single ruche and double the amount.

Clean even edges are important, especially if the ruche is to be frayed. The best way to get a good edge for strips cut crosswise or lengthwise is to pull a thread of the material.

The edges of single ruches may be finished in different ways, depending on the material. Taffeta may be frayed, pinked, picoted or finished with tiny hems.

Crêpe de Chine can be frayed, picoted or hemmed.

Chiffon may have its edges picoted, or rolled and whipped tightly with fine stitches in the same or contrasting color.

Net may be picoted, hemmed with same or contrasting color, or, if it is a fine mesh, cut in such a way that the edge needs no finish.

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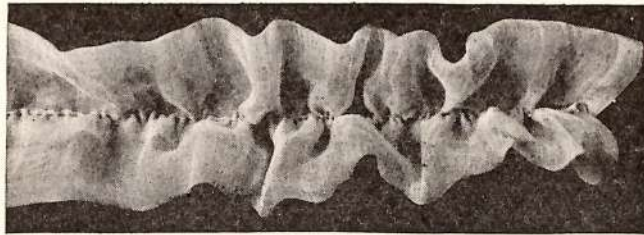
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Strips should be joined as neatly as possible. Some nets can be seamed with an over-and-over stitch, using No. 150 cotton. The joining can scarcely be detected. If this is not desirable for the net you are using, make a plain seam and trim the edges down to within one-eighth of an inch of the stitching. Roll the seam edges down to the stitching and whip them closely.

Non-transparent materials may be joined in a plain seam for a double ruche. For a single ruche they should be joined with a tiny French seam. This can be trimmed away under a frayed edge so that the frayed edge appears continuous. This work must be done very carefully.

In cutting, plan the strips so that as few joinings as possible are required.



357—A simple ruche



358—A three-tuck ruche

A *simple ruche* can be made from strips of the material. Cut off the selvedge, for the selvedge is stiff and would prevent the material from making a soft ruche. Join as many strips of material as are necessary to make the ruche the desired length. Turn under one raw edge of the strip and fold the strip so that it will be double, with the seam at the center of the under side. Gather the ruche through the center just inside the fold edge. (Illustration 357.)

A *three-tuck ruche* is used when more fulness is desired than is given by a simple ruche. This is made by cutting the strips about seven inches wide. After joining the strips as before, fold them

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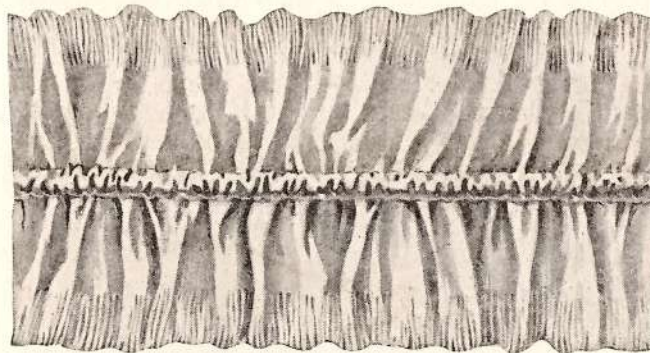
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lengthwise in thirds, bringing the two raw edges together three-eighths of an inch from the folds. Run a gathering-thread through all the layers at one time. (Illustration 358.)

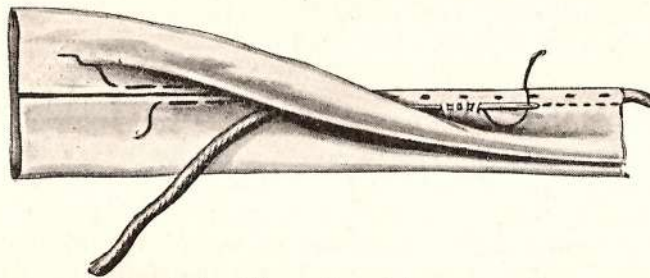
A ruche of frayed taffeta is shown in Illustration 359. The silk is cut single and there is one cord shirring.

A double ruche with one cording—The edges of the material are folded over until they just meet at the center of the strip and are basted in place. The strip is then folded lengthwise through the center and a line of fine running stitches forms a tuck. (Illustration 360.) The cord may be inserted while making the tuck. (Illustration 360.)

For two fine cordings the sewing of each tuck should be about one-eighth of an inch from the center. If larger cords are used, the sewing of the tucks should be a little farther apart so as not to crowd them.



359—A ruche of frayed taffeta



360—A double ruche with one cording

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