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ALBANY ENGRAVING

AN HISTORIC STUDY OF CROSS-STITCH AND  
ITS ADAPTION TO PRESENT DAY COSTUME

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AN HISTORIC STUDY OF CROSS-STITCH AID  
ITS ADAPTION TO PRESENT DAY COSTUME

By

RUBY FAYE McCARTY

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

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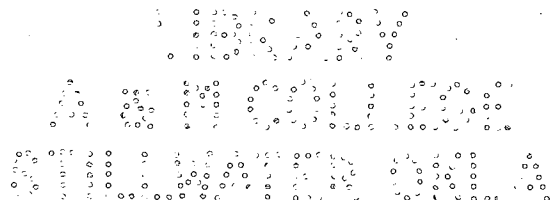
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For the degree of

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APPROVED BY:

M. Blanche Cade  
Chairman, Thesis Committee

Ruby J. Johnson  
Member of Thesis Committee

Stanathy Deville  
ad. Head of the Department

D. B. M. Intosh  
Dean Graduate School

137083

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## INTRODUCTION

Cross-stitch proper is really a stitch used in Needleweaving. Needleweaving itself is of very ancient origin, and was the mother of the different embroidery stitches employed through the ages.

Cross-stitch reached its zenith in the middle of the nineteenth century, but, like so many other crafts, it began to lose its charm because of the ugly designs employed, and thus became unpopular in the last decades of the century. Now, however, there is a revival of the work, and many lovely old patterns are being copied and new ones, equally beautiful, are being created, according to Vera Alexander in her book, "Cross-Stitch."<sup>1</sup>

Cross-stitch, like every other art needs to be understood to be enjoyed. Once the rules of the game are known, there not only comes the urge to create with needle and thread, but a knowledge which brings a better appreciation of the old masterpieces, as well as those produced in our own day. The world is enjoying a revival in all arts and crafts. It is fashionable to be dextrous, and since, "it is better to be out of the world than out of fashion," it is well to know something of the art which is the pastime of so many women.<sup>1</sup>

Anne Knox Arthur says as a domestic art, cross-stitch commends itself to many of us on account of its adaptability to the conditions of life, as well as for its decorative value.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vera Alexander, "Cross-Stitch," (1932) p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> A. K. Arthur, "An Embroidery Book," (1931), p. 1.



Cross-stitch has been women's art through innumerable ages; how long may only be surmised. Cross-stitch was well known to the Phrygians and Egyptians, and was used in the curtains of the Tabernacle. The work was prevalent during the thirteenth and following centuries. There is a fine example of a church vestment still left, "the Cion cope," date 1225, the border of which is worked in cross-stitch. The best example of cross-stitch embroidery is believed to be the type which comes from the Slavonic countries of Eastern Europe: Roumania, Bulgaria, Russia, Jugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Macedonia where the adornment of clothes and household linens with this form of work has been a peasant industry for years. However, there are many beautiful examples from the Orient.

There may appear less time today than of yester-years, in which to reproduce works of elaborate nature; but there is always time to produce good small pieces. In her embroidery book Mrs. Mary Thomas says: "Count the assets of modern civilization. Materials already woven, fast dyes, threads, inexpensive and perfect needles, transfers with designs ready prepared, shops with demonstrators, museums free of access where the best works of any age may become designs for reproduction, and libraries where books may be read free of charge. Half the work is already done!"<sup>3</sup>

Those embroideries worked on counted threads offer the best beginnings and should a transfer pattern ever be used for cross-stitch, then it is better to use a fine or silk material, to give reason for the method.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> M. Thomas, "Mary Thomas's Embroidery Book," (1936), p. ix.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, *Ibid.*, p. xii.

Embroidery is the art of enriching a fabric. Only the best fabrics are worth this trouble. Good materials inspire good work, and if these are really "embroidered" and not just covered with thoughtless stitchery, the result is one of lasting joy and satisfaction.

After one has decided how, where, and how much to emphasize, the shape of the decorative units must be chosen. The shape of the design should appear to grow out of the structural design, and not look as if it had merely dropped there, or had been grafted on from some foreign source. The purpose of the dress and the materials of which it is made will influence the choice of materials for the trimmings. The design and the stitches should be in scale with the material used.<sup>5</sup>

In this investigation an attempt has been made to emphasize through a study of historic examples a means of decoration of costume; to discover by experiment some designs which are suitable to the materials, and to find processes by which they are constructed; to aid in the development of taste, in the selection of materials and designs suitable for various types of ensemble, and finally to give the reader a better appreciation of beauty as related to usefulness in cross-stitch embroidery.

Since original historic collections were not available, the writer has made use of historical costume books, histories of embroidery, magazine articles, pamphlets from the D. M. C. Library, and other publications for historical information and for some of the illustrations.

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<sup>5</sup> H. Goldstein and V. Goldstein, "Art in Everyday Life," p. 278

## HISTORICAL REVIEW

## A Detail Study of the Historic Use of Cross-Stitch in Some European and Asiatic Countries and Mexico

Austria-Hungary. The women of the several races of Old Austria all wear blouses distinguished by remarkable sleeves, which are far from a uniform pattern. Some are of considerable length and fullness while others are much shorter and puffed and usually finished with one or more frills at the wrist and elbow.

The blouses themselves are richly embroidered, and the motifs used in the design include stage, birds in pairs, flowers, vases (usually heart-shaped), and in the old days, double eagles were used. These motifs were used not only for designs on blouses but for almost all embroidery; and for the heavier pieces, religious symbols also were introduced, such as the pelican, the Crucifixion, and the Lamb.

In the Alpine districts the technique of the embroidery is simple, cross-stitch and flat-stitch being the most popular.<sup>1</sup>

Bulgaria. The fancy work of Bulgaria and some other Balkan countries chiefly takes the form of dress embroideries for use on national costumes, especially sleeves. Borders and patterns are worked in closely set rows and panels on white or black materials. Bright colors, such as blue, green, and a characteristic gay orange red are used, and are often outlined with or separated by lines of black. Cross, tapestry, and back-stitches are much employed. Patterns embodying the Cross are greatly used. The keynote of the work is vividness.<sup>2</sup>

China.

'There love is for little things every one of which has

<sup>1</sup> K. Mann and J. A. Corbin, "Peasant Costume in Europe," Book I, (1935), p. 67.

beauty, if you hold it sufficiently close to the eye.'  
Kipling

Little maids in China, as well as their mothers, work in fine silk on fairy-linen webs, the age old cross-stitch patterns of their ancestors.

In the past some fine examples of this work, which are treasured heirlooms, have been brought to this country by travelers from the Orient, but comparatively little of it found its way to American shores.

From time immemorial, in every land, embroidery in its various forms has been women's chief form of expression, and China has been no exception to the rule. True Chinese cross-stitch is done in fine dark-blue or black silk on hand-woven round thread linen. It is done wholly by the thread, never on canvas.<sup>3</sup>

As wide as the cloth came off the loom, so wide was the embroidery. Cross-stitch, the simplest and rudest technique, was the favorite means of embroidery. Yet with these simple materials and technique, to which they brought an infinite patience, the country women produced designs which were always masterpieces of decorative art.

The articles upon which these designs are embroidered include the whole range of household and personal "linen." The little coats, jackets, bibs, and trousers for children are especially amusing, but the finest designs are reserved for the decoration of a kind of bedsheet. Here in all thriving agricultural communities such designs are the common property of the peasantry and the small townsfolk.

Only young girls have sufficiently keen eyesight to develop designs

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<sup>2</sup> A. M. Miall, "The Everyday Embroidery Book," (1936), pp. 182-83

<sup>3</sup> F. O. Nelson, "Cross-Stitch an Ancient Art of China," House Beautiful, Vol. 59, p. 444, (April 1926).

of superlative fineness.<sup>4</sup> Each woman has her own ancestral patterns, and it is with reluctance that she consents to do those of any other woman, still less those of foreign origin. When the recent vogue for everything Chinese swept over the country, cross-stitch began to be imported in large quantities. China, a land of time-honored customs whose people do not readily adapt themselves to haste, did her best, nevertheless, to meet the sudden demand. Sweatshops, operated under conditions inconceivable to the Western mind, hummed merrily, turned out nondescript and inferior work on sleazy linen. Many designs of really great beauty, depicting Chinese life and scenery, which had been evolved in gay colorings by foreign designers, were now pushed to the utmost. These designs with their arches, bridges, towers, and gorgeously caparisoned animals, straying amid historic landmarks where their ilk never before had trod, were picturesque in the extreme.

The situation was saved by the foresight of some of the founders of the Mission industries, who saw grave danger of the loss, through foreign influence, of many of the most interesting of the old patterns, and setting their faces against popular demand, encouraged the workers to produce their own designs.

China, one of the most ancient of civilizations, is peculiarly rich in symbolism which is unique. She glorifies nature and the common things of life, endowing them with deep esoteric meaning. In cross-stitch, as is but natural, the Phoenix takes precedence over all other creatures of the first magnitude.

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<sup>4</sup> C. Schuster, "Peasant Embroideries of China," *Asia*, XXXVII, p. 26, (January 1937).

In any article on Chinese cross-stitch mention may properly be made of the intricate and elusive delicacy of the reversible work which has become almost a lost art. Much of this beautiful, scroll-like work—which is done with two needles—is of unimaginable fineness and, as its name indicates, is identical on both sides.

The rich, soft texture of these hand-woven linens, combined with the dull-blue silk with which the designs are worked makes them peculiarly adapted for use with Early American furniture. A few launderings give them the feel of the old linens.<sup>5</sup>

The art of cross-stitching is held in varying degrees of contempt by the younger generation, who regard such things as absurdly old-fashioned. The fact that the Chinese people are willing to part with these embroideries is in itself an indication that they are disappearing from use. The impoverishment of the people may be responsible for the neglect and destruction of the old work, and the intrusion of foreign materials and ideas has had a detrimental effect upon their pride in their own handiwork. Only occasionally one finds an older woman whose sentiment for the past is stronger than the prevailing fashion. She is half-ashamed of her taste, when she cherishes a fine old piece.<sup>6</sup>

England. It is difficult to determine the most typical form of English embroidery. The three favorites are: samplers, smocking, and quilting. Samplers seem to be entirely and wholly English in their motto and cross-stitch form. The keynote of English embroidery is simplicity.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Nelson, op. cit., p. 444.

<sup>6</sup> Schuster, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Miall, op. cit., p. 184-185.

The English tradition of cross-stitch design, which may be studied most easily in numberless samplers, particularly of the seventeenth century, is based on a simplification of obvious and pleasing natural forms into rectangular and square-diagonal forms, the double merit of which is their easy working and the simplicity of their pattern. Such forms lend themselves to an artless symmetry and repetition; and the beauty of English patterns, even if elaborated may be seen at a glance. The natural forms are mostly flowers and trees, but abstract forms are used as accessories and sometimes, with excellent effect, for whole designs. The essential of such designing is that it should be done on the square. The strict and orderly convention of the square and true diagonal precludes an undue degree of "realism" in interpreting Nature, secures a marked and lively rhythm, and itself helps the imagination to invent motives suitable for a diagonal technique.<sup>8</sup>

Finland. Red appears to be the predominating color in the household effects of the Finnish people, and it is used to a large extent in their embroideries. Geometrical designs are often worked in red on white or cream material; a certain quality in design is gained by the fact that cross-stitch and back-stitch are worked by means of counting the threads of the ground material.<sup>9</sup>

Germany. Kreuzstich Stickerei is cross-stitch on thick materials. It has always kept its place among needle work on the Continent, particularly in these countries: Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Spain. It is also well known in Morocco. It is known, but little practised in England. Its

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<sup>8</sup> L. F. Pesel and R. M. Y. Cleadowe, "Cross-Stitch," (1931), p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> K. Mann, "Peasant Costume in Europe," Book II, (1936), p. 21.

present revival in this country has been due to the exertions of Mr. Julius Lessing, who has collected and published quaint old-world patterns found by him in German country houses. Kreuzstich Stickerei presents no difficulty to the worker beyond the counting of the stitches on a pattern and its quaintness and adaptability to the decorations of articles in daily use. The work is of two kinds, one in which the pattern is filled in with stitches, and the other in which the pattern is left plain and the background filled in. The Germans generally work the pattern, the Spaniards and Italians the ground. It is particularly useful for decorating white articles, as when worked with ingrain cottons or silks it may be washed without detriment and the stitches worked both sides alike. The materials best suited to it for washing purposes are the various kinds of German canvases, which are woven so that each individual thread is distinct and perfectly regular, and Java and honeycomb canvas, coarse linens and linens divided into squares. For articles not intended to wash, silk sheetings, plain cloths or serges, and fine white silk canvases are used. Strips of the work done upon satin sheeting look well placed between velvet or plush, and form handsome chair backs or mantel borders. Good dress trimmings are made by working it in yellow or blue floss silks upon black satin. When heavy materials are used as the backgrounds, and not materials in which the threads can be counted, the work has to be done over ordinary wool work canvas, the threads of which are drawn away when the stitches are all made. The materials used are either embroidery silks or cottons. The peasants of Spain and Italy use the colored cottons, but the Arabs use a kind of coarse knitting silk. The cottons known as Brodera la Croix come from abroad, and only three shades of blue, four of red, one of



amber, one brown, two chocolate, and one green can be relied upon as really ingrain. The embroidery silks may be had in a much greater variety of shades.

The stitches used are Cross-stitch, or Point Croise San Evers, if both sides of the material are to show.<sup>10</sup>

Italian. Cross-stitch seems to have been well known from a very early date by all needle-workers. It and many other varieties of a similar nature were worked on canvas or linen in patterns where the threads were counted. At one time these embroideries were so characteristic of the various countries that their origin was generally recognized by the pattern and the color in which they were worked. The Italian cross-stitch, embroidered on a very fine linen, was mostly done in a reddish-purple, and frequently worked in a two-sided stitch. Red, blue, and yellow were the predominating colors of the Slav, Hungarian, and Swedish peasantry. Very large pieces, destined for wall hangings, were worked in tent stitch or cross-stitch, in designs suggestive of those used for tapestry weaving. These have even been called tapestries on that account. The famous Bayeux tapestry represents an interesting series of events of English history from the accession of Edward the Confessor to the death of Harold at Hastings; it is worked in colored wools on linen canvas; this is, of course, not really tapestry. A true tapestry is formed by the interlacing or weaving of warp and weft threads by means of a needle or a shuttle.<sup>11</sup>

Assisi work is a very effective form of cross-stitch dating from the Middle Ages. It came from Italy, gaining its name from the town of Assisi

<sup>10</sup> S. F. A. Caulfeild and B. C. Seward, "The Dictionary of Needlework," (1824), p. 313.

<sup>11</sup> A. K. Arthur, "An Embroidery Book," (1931), p. 130.

(associated with the great St. Francis) in that country. The original designs used dated centuries back and were mostly of imaginary birds and dragons such as were believed in centuries ago.

In Assisi work the usual plan is reversed and the background is cross-stitched, so that the design is thrown up boldly against it in white, or whatever shade of material is used.

If possible, a white or light natural material should be chosen, the cross-stitch background worked all in one rich color; for clear definition the unworked design is outlined, after the cross-stitching is done, with back-stitch made as a double running stitch. Black or a very dark shade is best for this outlining, which some people prefer to do first of all.<sup>12</sup>

Jugo-Slavia. In Croatia, a province of the kingdom of Jugo-Slavia, the garments of both sexes are of white wool—spun and woven in the homes, or of snowy linen, and embellished with applique or embroidery in bright colors.

Sparkling cross-stitch embroideries are the attractive features of the long, full blouse, short and billowy skirt, apron, and coquettish cap of the Croatian maiden.<sup>13</sup>

Mexico. The curved horseshoe line that might be the plumed serpent, Quetzatl of Mexico, and also the turkey or peacock known as Tlaloc, the God of Fertility, may be found in the huipils, the belts, and the napkins. In other patterns, plants may be seen growing out of a small vessel on which perches a bird which may easily be the Bird on the Tree

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<sup>12</sup> Miall, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>13</sup> M. Evans, "Costume Throughout the Ages," (1938), p. 253.

of Life. Human figures holding feathers may have some reference to the ceremonial feather dances. The designs are never put in with curved lines but in cross-stitch effects. Sometimes the object is completely covered. Again, it may be decorated with dramatic economy.<sup>14</sup>

Persia. Embroidery in Tent and Cross-stitch was at one time used for the wide trousers worn by the ladies of the harem, and though no longer in demand, many specimens of it are still to be found. The foundation is moderately coarse cotton, which is entirely concealed with patterns worked in tent stitch with fine wools and silks of many colors; one thread only of the foundation is covered each time a stitch is made, and the result of such work is so minute that, unless closely inspected, it looks like a finely woven material. The same background is employed when the needlework is done with cross-stitch, but the appearance of this is slightly coarser, as coarser silks are used, and the stitch is not so minute.<sup>15</sup>

Poland. The notable characteristic of the peasant art of Poland is the unusual color sense which the Poles exhibit in connection with their craftwork. They seem to be quite fearless in the colors they produce and place together. For example, in their embroideries we find most unexpected color combinations—orange reds, violet reds, vivid, bright purples, and warm browns are used together most successfully. The results, though dazzling in their brightness, are not only gay but have a peculiar depth and richness. The same great variety may be found in the designs and motifs used for their embroidery. Designs are often worked in cross

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<sup>14</sup> C. Oglesby, "Modern Primitive Arts of Mexico, Guatemala, and the Southwest," p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> Caulfeild and Seward, op. cit., p. 389.

and back stitches in red threads on grounds of cream or white linen. Apart from this form of design, there are many others based on conventionalized forms of birds, animals, and human figures.<sup>16</sup>

Roumania. Stitchery in gold, black, or red thread is prevalent about the collarless neck, down the front, along the seams, and in large masses on the sleeves of the woman's long white dress, and her linen or soft cotton blouse that accompanies a long skirt of blue or the favorite white cloth. This latter garment also has its share of embroidery about the lower edge, likewise the soft veil, the broad belt, and the jaunty sleeveless jacket of silk, velvet, or lambswool. The designs are chiefly characterized by their geometric form and are worked in cross-stitch with the addition of beads and sequins.<sup>17</sup>

Cross-stitch is found among the Savons and to a large extent among the Hungarians more than among the Roumanians. The Roumanians are a little contemptuous of this somewhat monotonous stitch, which is coarse and ill-suited to the more supple winding pattern of Roumanian work.<sup>18</sup>

Russia. The vast and varied country of Russia produces several characteristic kinds of embroidery. All are of definitely peasant character, worked with simple stitches in large, bold designs and on some kind of linen. The designs are mostly geometrical or stylized, and are frequently filled with lines of close darning. Cross-stitch is sometimes seen as a rather coarse satin-stitch in color, finely outlined with black backstitch.

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<sup>16</sup> Mann, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>17</sup> Evans, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>18</sup> G. Oprescu, "Peasant Art in Roumania," (1929), p. 69.

The colors used are definite and well contrasted, but not gaudy, as in most peasant embroideries.

The keynote of Russian work is boldness.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

Plate I

A Czechoslovakian Cap

Courtesy of Miss Louise Whitchurch



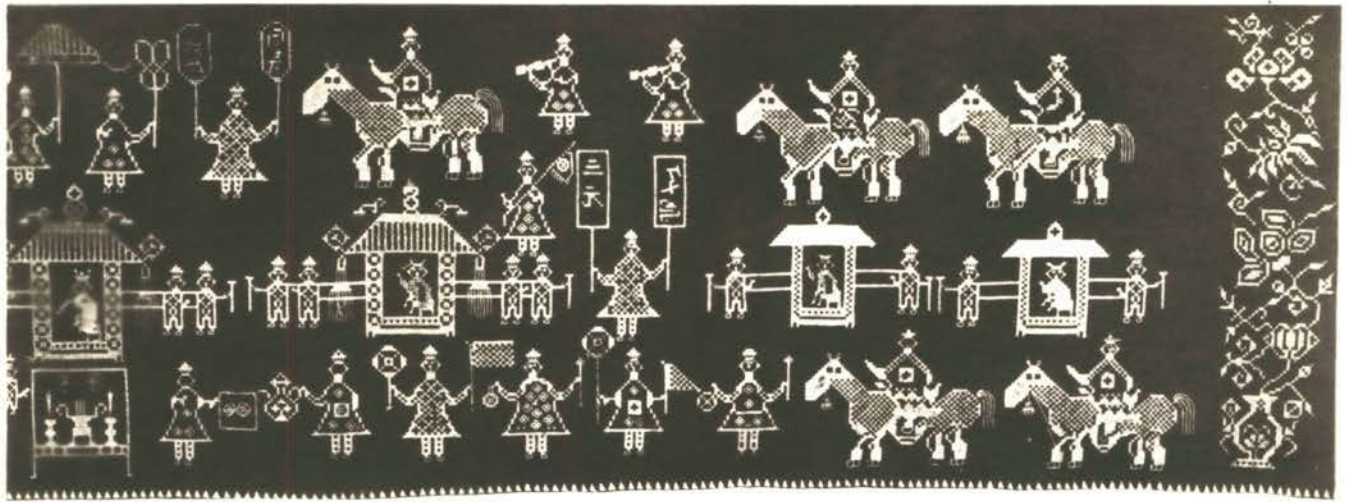
Plate I

Plate II

Chinese Cross-stitch

Courtesy of Asia Magazine





4786 FROM CARL SCHUSTER

The embroidery above, worked in white thread on blue cloth, was used in a Yunnan town as a hanging over a doorway. This design is one of the favorite motifs, centuries old: a wedding scene, in which each detail corresponds to a feature of the wedding ceremonial in real life.



The medallion to the left, a detail from a bed valance, depicts a leaping hare. Flowers, fruits and a bird are the filling ornaments which complete the pattern. On the page opposite is a medallion from another valance with similar central design but with different detail.



Plate II

Plate III

English Purses

Courtesy of The Manual Arts Press

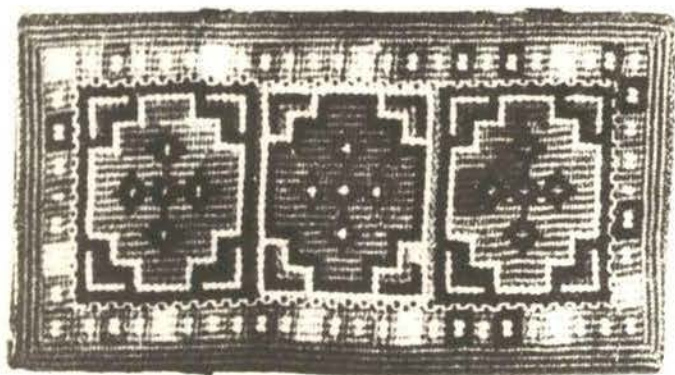
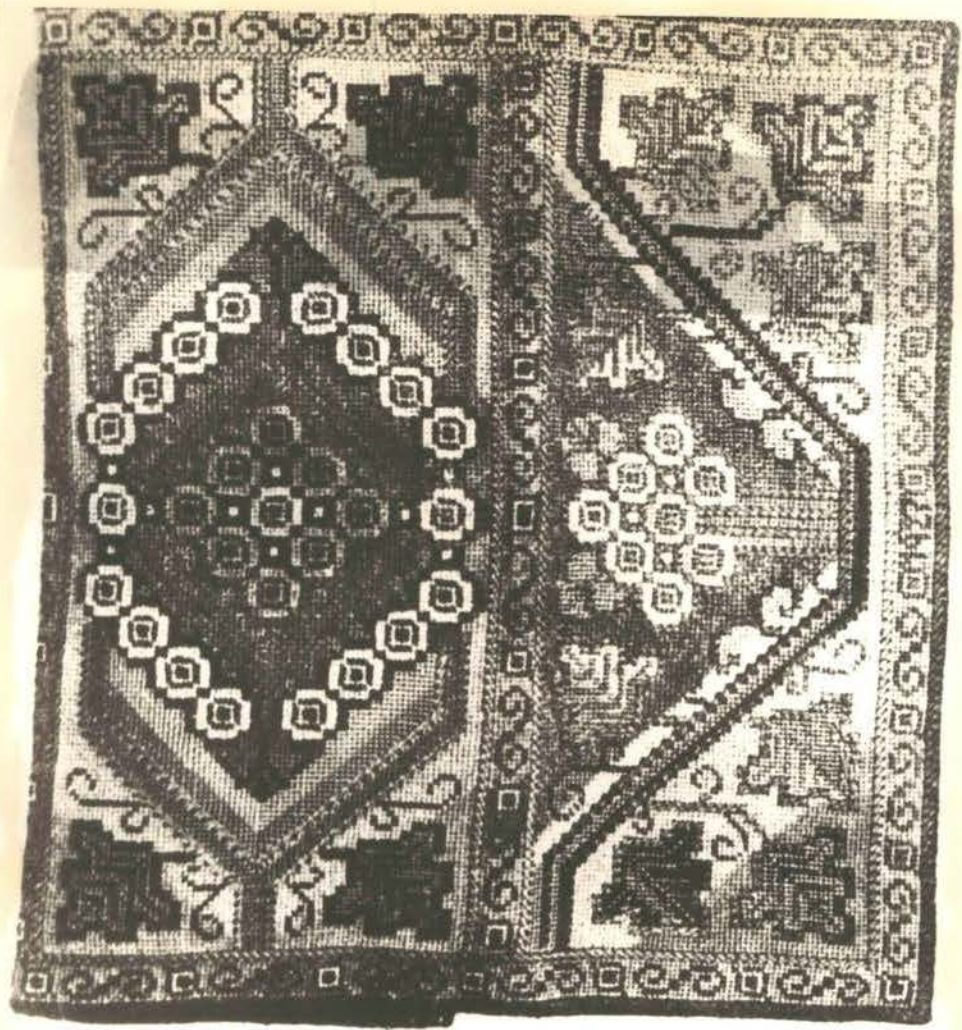


Plate III

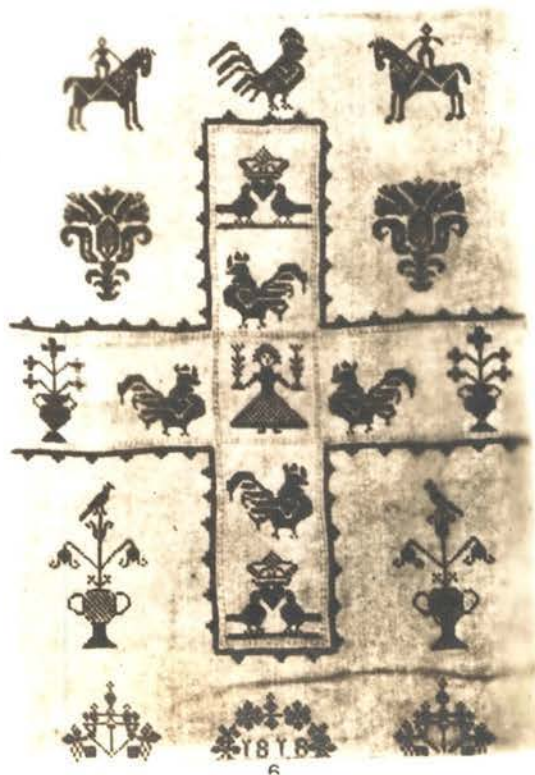
Plate IV

Denmark Cross-stitch on a Towel

Courtesy of E. Weyhe Company



5



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Plate IV

Plate V

German Linen Towel

Courtesy of E. Weyhe Company



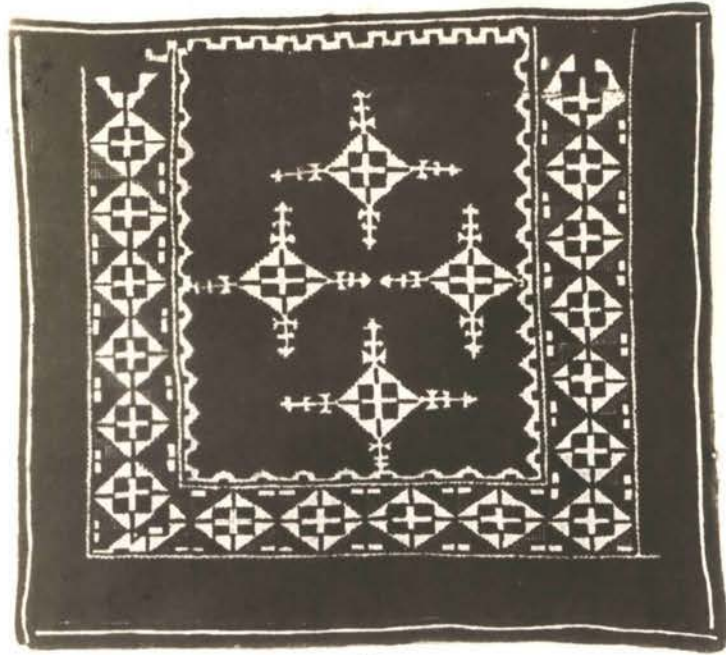
Plate. V

Plate VI

Greek Woolen Apron

Courtesy of E. Weyhe Company





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Plate VI

Plate VII

Italian Acacia Resinoides

Courtesy of The D.K.C. Corporation

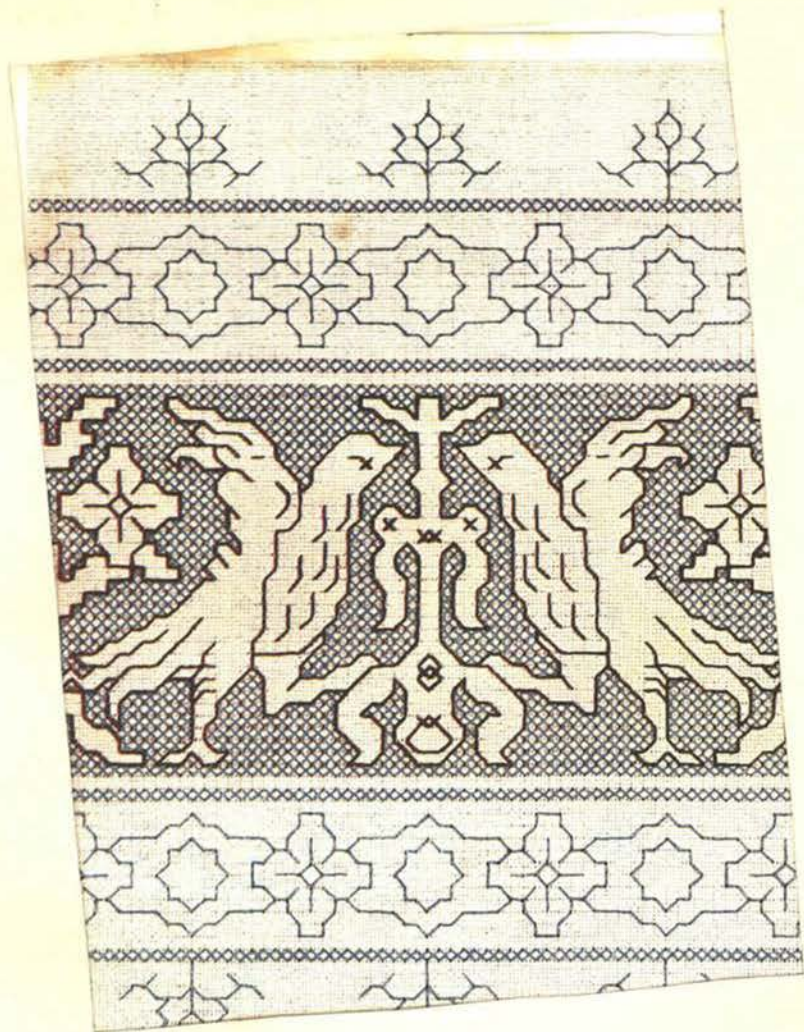


Plate VII

Plate VIII

Jugo-Slavia Cross-stitch Borders

Courtesy of The D·M·C· Corporation



No. 1. Place of origin: Neighbourhood of Bitolj.



No. 2. Place of origin: Neighbourhood of Zara.

Plate IX

Morocco Embroideries

Courtesy of The D•M•C• Corporation

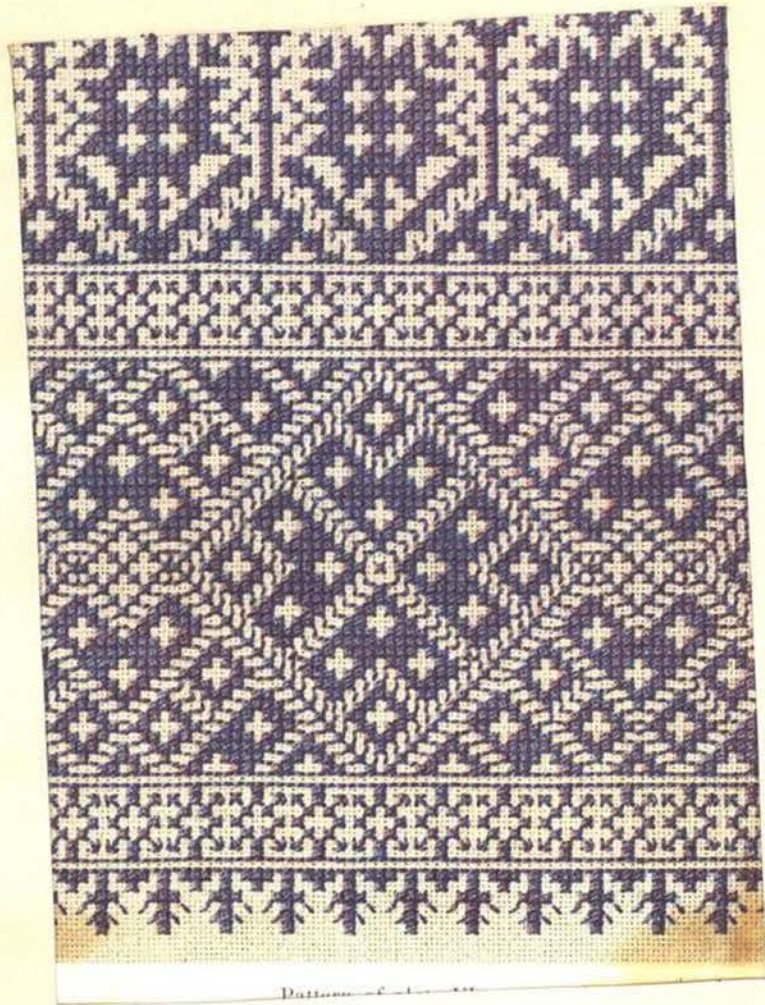


Plate IX

Plate X

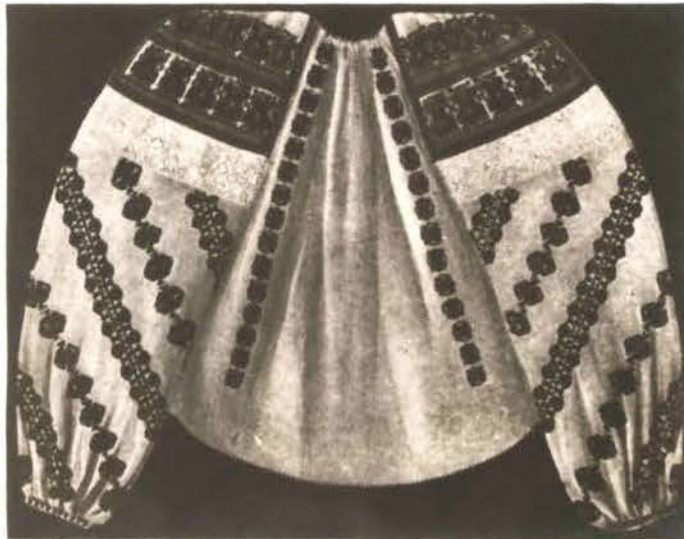
Roumania Blouse

Courtesy of E. Weyhe Company





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Plate X

Plate XI

Russian Peasant Apron

Courtesy of Miss Louise Whitchurch



Plate XI

Plate XII

Spanish Cloth for Religious Services

Courtesy of E. Weyhe Company

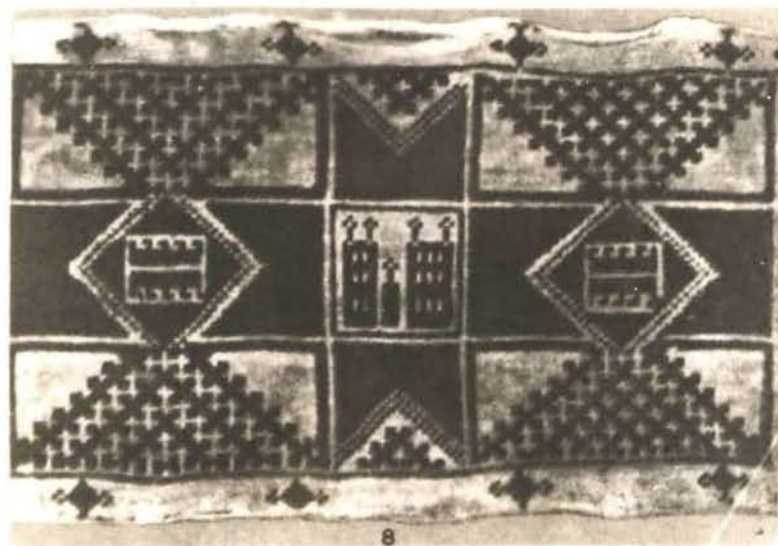
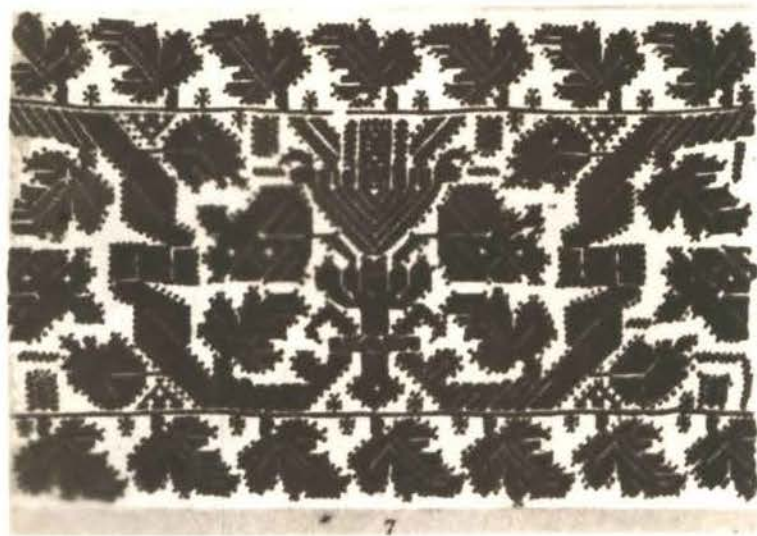


Plate XII

## EXPERIMENTAL

### A. Method of Procedure.

The experimental part of this thesis consists of a short study of a few of the principles which govern design for costume. The articles of costume in this investigation are classified as spectator sports wear. The simplicity of the cross-stitch lends itself well to the plainness and durability of sport clothes, just as was true of the cross-stitch on the simple clothing of the peasant. Materials for each article of costume were selected. The decoration was planned for each article of costume in accordance with the structural lines and the materials used. The cross-stitch designs selected as the means of decoration were worked out on paper before actual construction was begun. In planning these designs, ideas were obtained from the historical study of cross-stitch.

On Plates XV to XIX may be found the photographs of the completed articles of costume showing the results of the cross-stitch experiment.

A discussion of the methods of the processes by which the designs were applied to the articles of costume and their particular materials for construction may be found in the discussion of the originals on pages 61 to 75.

### B. Factors Which Govern Design in Costume.

An attempt should be made to secure something distinctive in a dress, to lift it out of the commonplace, and make it individual. Distinction may result from the cut of the dress, or from a decorative note. To enhance the attractiveness of the costume, it is

necessary to know and to follow certain art principles. There should be good structural design. Decoration should follow the structural lines and fulfill its purpose of enriching the surface of the structural design. There should be a center of interest. There should be a feeling of orderly arrangement. The colors should be so placed that they produce a pleasing relationship. There should be good proportion, balance, rhythm, unity, and harmony.

There should be coordination between the material of the costume, its structure, its purpose, the kind of decoration, and the method of decoration.

The primary and secondary colors were used extensively in the costumes of the peasants. The pure basic colors are more suited to the active or spectator sports costume of today. Although articles of costume change from year to year, there are certain traditional bases established by custom on which one may safely make plans.

There should be enough background space to give an effect of simplicity and dignity to the design. The motif for the design should be conventionalized sufficiently to suit the material used and the processes followed in making it.

## THE MAKING OF CROSS-STITCH PATTERNS

Cross-stitch is a high-ranking favorite with needleplyers because it is easy to make. It may be adapted to varied types of designs and threads, and it blends well with Early American furnishings.

The design is first marked out on cross-section or graph paper; each little square represents a single cross-stitch.<sup>1</sup> Any pattern worked out on check paper is adaptable. Animal patterns are interesting and quaint. Flowers are equally interesting and are often conventionalized to use between animal designs. Any drawing may be changed into a cross-stitch or Assisi pattern by tracing it on checked paper, then the checks that are closest to the lines of the drawing are outlined with a pencil. Any characteristic parts may be emphasized by making them a trifle larger. To get the effect of the pattern, the design or its background may be painted in with ink.<sup>2</sup>

Cross-stitch has a long history and in bygone times it was always worked on material with countable threads, such as linen or canvas. Good examples of this are the old samplers which we treasure as antiques today. Patterns and designs may be bought, printed in colors on paper with a tiny check.<sup>3</sup>

All kinds of articles with cross-stitches in pattern stamped on them for working may be obtained. They are very useful to the worker who likes to make up her own designs, as often she may form from them other designs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Ferry, "Cross Your Stitches," *Better Homes and Gardens*, Vol. 18, p. 58, May 1940.

<sup>2</sup> O. P. Couch, "Embroidery in Wools," (1933), p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> A. M. Miall, "The Everyday Embroidery Book," (1936), p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> V. C. Alexander, "Cross-Stitch," (1932), p. 5.



## MATERIALS

Any material with the warp and weft threads well defined is suitable, but canvas is best for all-over cross-stitch. Canvas is made of a loosely woven linen, so that the stitches may be easily counted. There are two kinds of canvas, Penelope or double thread, and single thread. Both may be had in various meshes from very fine to coarse, and it depends on the piece of work as to which should be used. Cross-stitch may be worked on either kind of canvas, but petit point is worked on single canvas if the proper effect is to be obtained.

Hardanger cloth or linen, Turkish towelling, a good Hessian and a coarse linen are all suitable for single and double cross-stitch. Care must be taken that the same number of threads is picked up for each completed stitch, otherwise the work will look very ragged and amateurish. This does not mean that the same size stitch should be used for the entire piece of work. Crosses of an eighth of an inch may be worked on the same material or article as smaller ones, but they must be made by counting the threads, whereas in canvas the mesh is already made. Therefore, canvas is obviously the material on which to learn.

Sometimes it is desirable to work cross-stitch on materials with very close threads, such as silk, satin, velvet, or even materials where the threads are well defined. When the worker does not wish to spend the time in counting, it is permissible to put a piece of canvas or of squared net over the material, and work as for cross-stitch. Only the crosses are taken through to the material, and the canvas is afterwards pulled away. Care is needed in removing the canvas threads, but, very large crosses may be obtained which would not be possible otherwise.

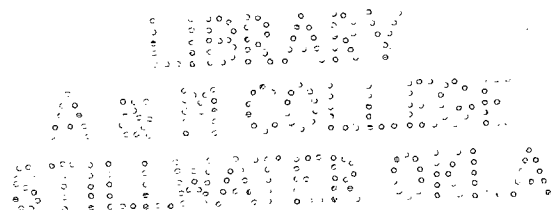
When a stiff canvas is used over a soft material care must also be taken that the latter is not pulled too tightly.

BRITISH  
 AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL ENGINEERS  
 LONDON  
 OCT 6 1941

Another method is to place the canvas at the back of the material to be worked and make the stitches through both materials. The canvas thus acts as a stiffener, and is not removed. This method takes much longer than the previous method since the needlewoman has to turn the work over after each stitch.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 3.



## MATERIALS--KINDS

Square-mesh textiles used for cross-stitch:

- A. Penelope canvas (6 blocks to inch). Penelope canvas is used as a guide for working cross-stitch on closely woven textiles; the threads are drawn out after the embroidery is finished. It is not sturdy enough for upholstery purposes. It comes in various counts.
- B. Scrim (18 threads to inch). This type of canvas is useful for chair sets, place mats, and other similar articles.
- C. Light-weight cotton drapery fabric of firm texture (6 blocks to inch).
- D. Stiff double-thread needlepoint canvas (11 squares to inch). It is used for upholstery and cross-stitch.
- E. Linen Aida canvas (11 squares to inch). This canvas is excellent for cross-stitch ornament, and it has many other uses. It costs more than cotton.
- F. Cotton Aida canvas (7 squares to inch). Cotton aida canvas is stiff, and of heavy texture.
- G. Monk's cloth (7 blocks to inch). Monk's cloth is a heavy, supple basket weave used for hangings, bedspreads, couch covers, and for cushions. It is suitable for yarn embroidery.
- H. Smyrna canvas (3 blocks to inch). It is a foundation canvas for rugs and chair seats. It takes heavy rug wool or tufting cotton.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Perry, op. cit., p. 59.

Figures 1 and 2

Square-meshed Textiles Used for Cross-stitching

(Figure 1, Needlepoint Canvas)

(Figure 2, Penelope Canvas)



Figure 1

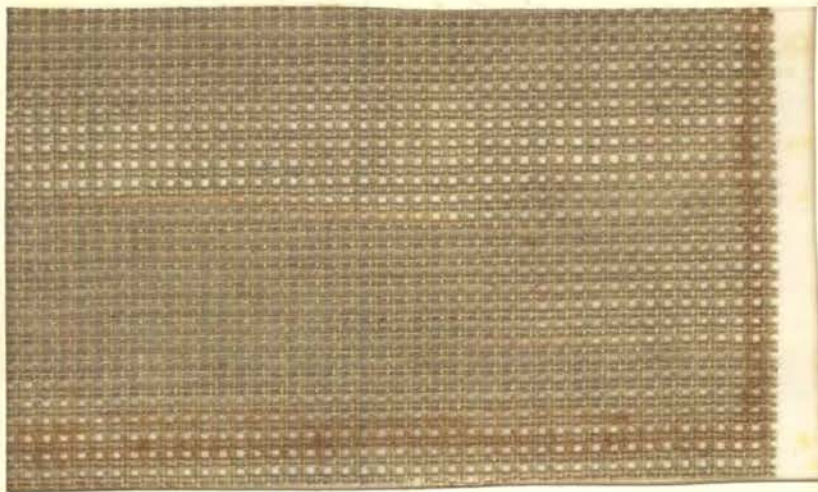


Figure 2

Figures 3 and 4

Square-meshed Textiles Used for Cross-stitching

(Figure 3, Scrim)

(Figure 4, Cotton Drapery Fabric)



Figure 3

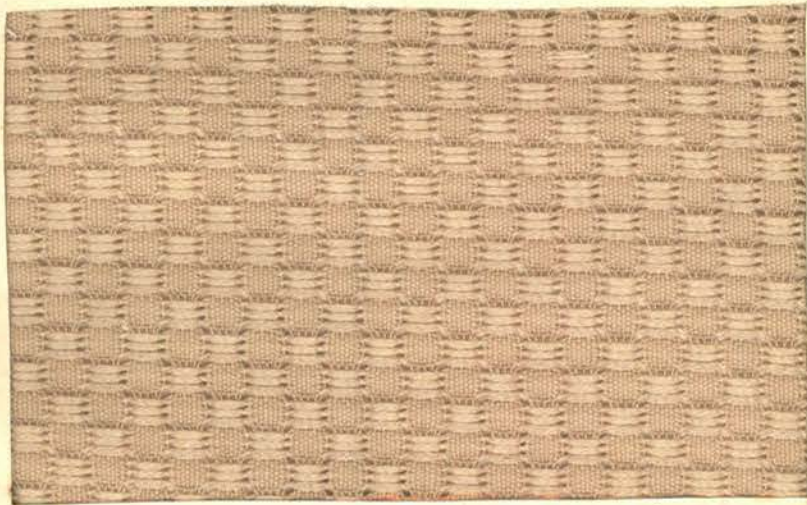
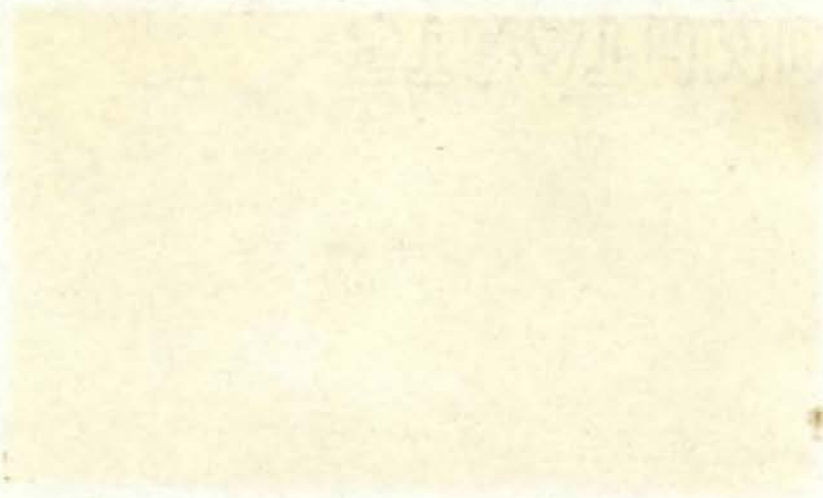


Figure 4



Figures 5 and 6

Square-meshed Textiles Used for Cross-stitching

(Figure 5, Monk's Cloth)

(Figure 6, Smyrna Canvas)



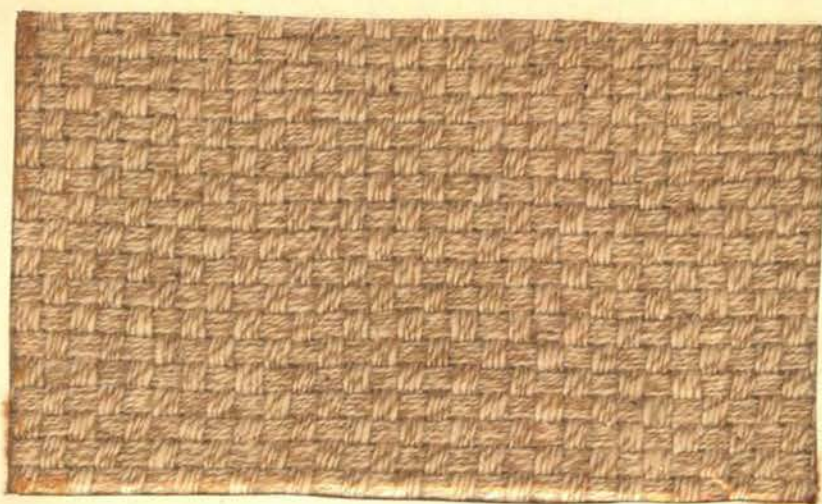


Figure 5

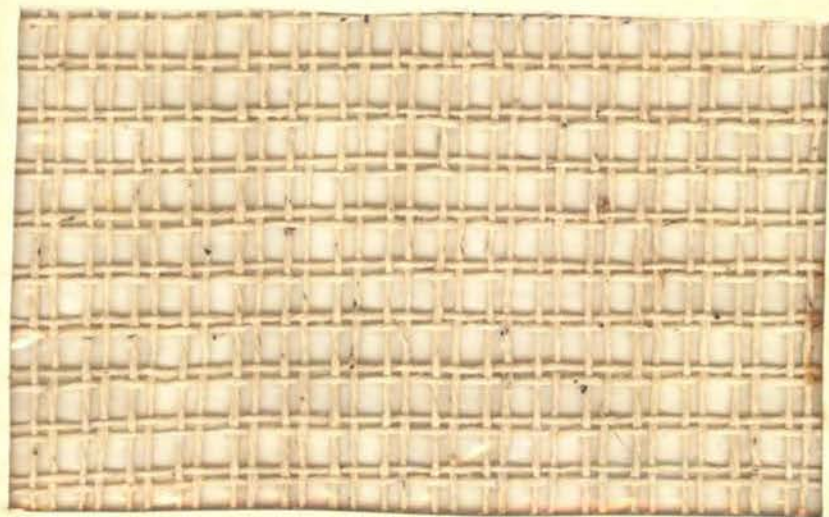


Figure 6

## THREADS FOR WORKING CROSS-STITCH

Threads for working cross-stitch depend entirely upon the materials used and the purpose of the article. All threads should be smooth, and knots should not be made. In order to avoid using a knot the thread should be run through a hole or two of the canvas and then worked over.<sup>7</sup>

Any thread, mercerized, silk, wool, or linen, may be used provided a balance is maintained with the background material. A coarse material necessitates a coarse thread and vice versa. Stranded cottons are useful, as they may be divided. If embroidery wools are used, the stitches should not be pulled as tightly as when cotton threads are used.

For coarse Penelope and single canvases, wool is most popular. Wool is made in all colors and shades, and many lovely effects may be obtained. For very coarse Penelope canvas a four-ply super fine wool gives a very bold and pleasing finish when used double. Twice the quantity of wool is used in this case, but the result is well worth the extra expense.<sup>9</sup>

Cross-stitch patterns in wools are effective on backgrounds of coarse linen, burlap, monk's cloth, or any other mesh material. Assisi work is equally attractive with just one color used for the background, which accents the light-colored design space left on the material. The colors to use against a cream or neutral background are bright red, blue, brown, green, and purple. Touches of black always add character.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> M. Thomas, "Mary Thomas's Embroidery Book," (1936), p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Couch, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

Synthetic yarn, single four-ply wool, and mercerized cottons used in various strands are very effective upon medium thread canvas; whereas, for fine work, suitable strands of silks and stranded cottons are more suitable.

When canvas is used which is to be pulled away, the selection of threads depends entirely on the size of the cross and the ground. This, therefore, must be left to individual taste.

Cross-stitch yarns (crewel) are made in all sizes to suit all canvases, and it is well always to use those needles which have large eyes, so that there is no trouble with the threads being forced through and thus becoming unravelled.

The best materials should always be used. Cross-stitch is a form of needlecraft which lasts many years with a minimum amount of care. It is therefore worthwhile to put the best materials into it, as these will be more satisfactory in the long run.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander, op. cit., p. 5.

## Plate XIII

**Cross-stitch and Its Variations in Wool Yarn**

- Row 1. Plain Cross-stitch
2. Double Cross-stitch
3. Assisi Stitch
4. Tent or Petit Stitch
5. Gros Point

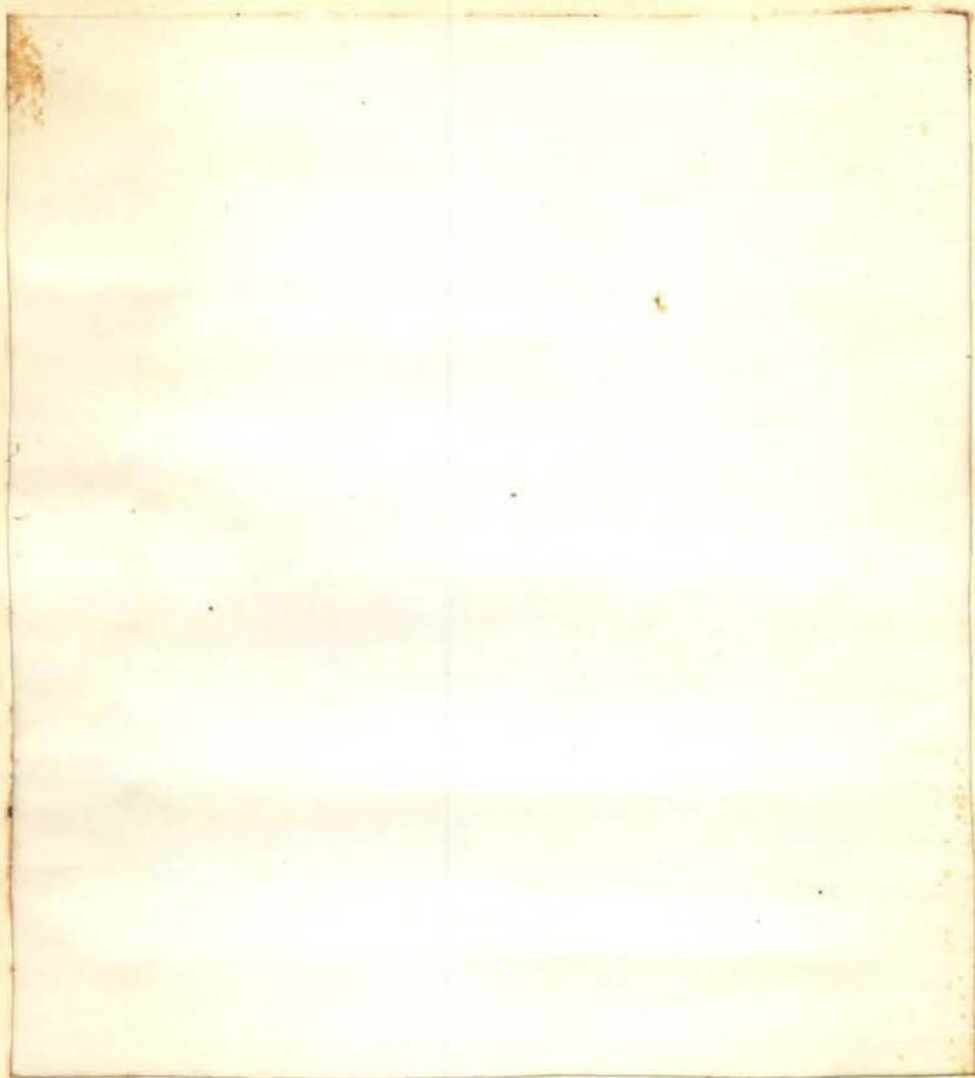


Plate XIII

## Plate XIV

## Cross-stitch and Its Variations in Silk Thread

Row 1. Plain Cross-stitch

2. Double Cross-stitch
3. Assisi Stitch
4. Tent or Petit Stitch
5. Gros Point

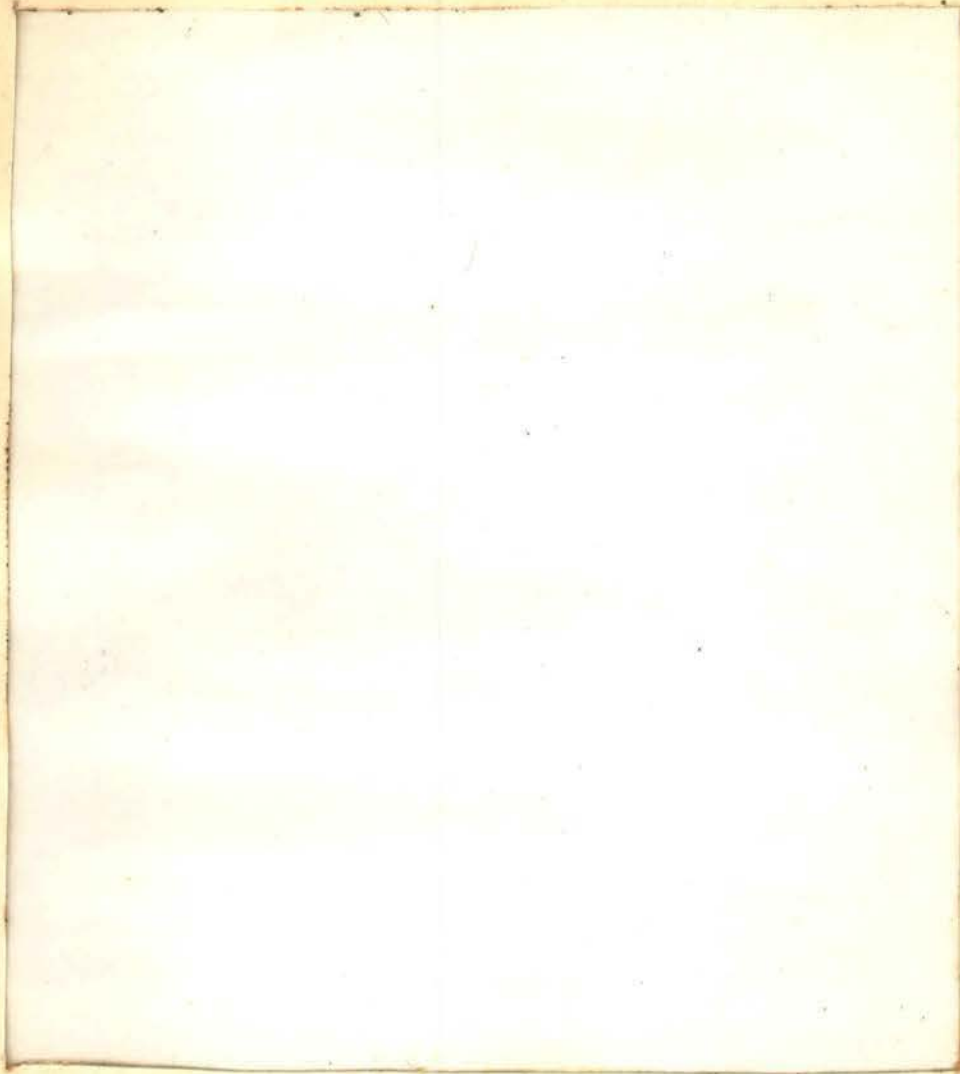


Plate XIV

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES INVOLVED

By observing the principles of art one may learn to make orderly, acceptable designs. Since design is a form of self-expression, one may expect to add quality and individuality to his work in the measure of his appreciation and his imagination. There is no better way to develop imagination, good judgment, and fine standards of taste, than through the study of good designs and the conscious application of the art laws and principles.

There are two considerations in every design: First, the shape of the object itself, called the structural design; second, the enrichment of that structure, or the decorative design.<sup>12</sup>

Structural design is the design made by the size and shape of an object, whether it be the object itself or a drawing of that object worked out on paper. The color and texture of the object are also a part of the structural design.

Requirements of a good structural design are:

- (1) That it be suited to its purpose, in addition to being beautiful.
- (2) That it be simple.
- (3) That it be well proportioned.
- (4) That it be suited to the material of which it is made and to the processes which will be followed in making it.<sup>13</sup>

Decorative design is the surface enrichment of a structural design. Any lines, colors, or materials which have been applied to a structural

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<sup>12</sup> H. Goldstein and V. Goldstein, "Art in Everyday Life," (1932), p. 227.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 6



design for the purpose of adding a richer quality to it constitute its decorative design. The decorative design or enrichment of an object should be consistent with its use.

No matter what the problem may be, the decorative design should fulfill all the following considerations:

- (1) The decoration should be used in moderation.
- (2) The placing of the decorative design should help to strengthen the shape of the object.
- (3) The decoration should be placed at structural points.
- (4) There should be enough background space to give an effect of simplicity and dignity to the design.
- (5) Surface patterns should cover the surface quietly.
- (6) The background shapes should be as carefully studied and as beautiful as the patterns placed against them.
- (7) The decoration should be suitable for the material and for the service it must give.

The designer whose work shows real quality adapts or conventionalizes his design to suit the material he is using. He does not attempt to deceive by imitating real objects, such as flowers and fruit done in wood, clay, or threads, but having decided to take a flower or leaf idea as the theme of his decoration, he alters it to suit:

- (1) The shape of the object.
- (2) The purpose for which the object will be used.
- (3) The limitations of his material.
- (4) The tools and processes he must use.

The purpose of decoration is to enrich the background for the expression of personality. When decoration is used sparingly, when it is

harmonious, and stresses the beautiful lines of the figure artistically, it is pleasing and gives the ensemble an air of richness and refinement.<sup>14</sup>

The person who makes an intelligent selection of any article needs to have as good a judgment of structural design and decorative design as does the designer.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> F. W. McFarland, "Good Taste in Dress," (1936), p. 93

<sup>15</sup> Goldstein and Goldstein, op. cit., p. 66.

## SUITABILITY OF DESIGN FOR THE COSTUME

Effective costume decoration, such as seam lines, lines of stitching, various forms of trimming, unusual shapes in the design, if used properly, enhance the dress and individual charm. The kind of trimming to be used depends upon the personality of the wearer and the materials of the dress. A rich textured material expresses sophistication, and calls for only a small amount of decoration, simple in shape and large in scale.

Decoration on a dainty dress is used less sparingly, and is made of light, delicate material. It is much smaller in scale, and probably is slightly elaborate in shape. To be effective, it is simple. A dress becomes commonplace if contrasting colors and materials, bows, buttons, stitching, handwork, and seaming have been used to trim it. Many different forms of decoration on one garment not only spoil its style but suggest an ignorance of good taste and frequently of good workmanship.<sup>16</sup>

In order that the design may be dignified enough for the dress it should simply resolve itself into a group of beautifully related shapes and sizes. There may, perhaps, be a reminiscence of a flower idea, but it is well that one should have to search for the original source. The purpose of the dress and the materials of which it is made will influence the choice of materials for the trimming. If, for example, a beaded design is chosen, beads of different kinds may be used; the vast difference between the textures of wooden and pearl beads must be considered. Without regard to size or color, the pearl beads would be suited only to fine materials and to evening gowns, but wooden beads are suited to many

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<sup>16</sup> McFarland, op. cit., p. 91.

occasions, and are particularly good for simple dresses.

After having decided how much decoration should be used, one must plan the relationship of all the parts within the design. The stitches should be in scale with the material used. Heavy materials suggest a free, bold treatment, and delicate designs suggest a correspondingly finer texture. Care should be taken that threads and stitches are not so fine that the result looks too thin and weak for anything so large as a dress. Large women should avoid very delicate designs, which by contrast would emphasize their size. The position of the decorative designs on the dress should help to preserve the balance of the whole costume. With a view to making the design of the dress as a whole appear unified, rather than spotted or confusing, the decoration should be so planned that the eye will be carried to the different parts of the dress in the order in which it is desirable to emphasize them. The distinctive note should serve the purpose of making the dress appear smart, and should make it seem definitely to belong to the owner.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Goldstein and Goldstein, op. cit., p. 267.

## CROSS-STITCH

Cross-stitch embroidery is as its name implies based on a stitch made in the form of a diagonal cross and is the simplest of all embroideries.<sup>18</sup>

Cross-stitch is merely two slanting stroke-stitches laid over each other at right-angles to form a multiplication cross (X). It is so simple that one needs no instructions for working it, except to remember to cross all stitches over the same way.<sup>19</sup>

Except when cross-stitch is done by the counting method on canvas, little effort or thought is required. It may be worked on most materials and may be made large or small. There are two methods of working it: First, by working one stitch directly along a row, and then returning with the other thread to make the cross. This is a quicker way. The second method is to complete each cross as one proceeds. This gives a more even look to the work, but it is necessary to have the same thread uppermost throughout, otherwise the even effect will be spoiled. It is however, quite permissible in some instances to work one row with the upper thread going toward the left and the next row with the same thread going toward the right.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> A. M. Miall, "The Everyday Embroidery Book," (1936), p. 139.

<sup>19</sup> V. C. Alexander, "Cross-stitch," (1932), p. 2.

## TENT OR PETIT POINT

Tent stitch or petit point is a much finer stitch than cross-stitch. It was used on most of the old tapestries, especially those of the seventeenth century. This is a stitch which is best suited to single canvas, and the stitch is taken over a single thread of the canvas only, preferably from right to left, therefore, the work must be reversed when the return row has to be completed. One may work from left to right, but the more common practice is to work from right to left.<sup>20</sup>

Couched tent-stitch is the half cross-stitch worked over a separate matching laid thread, which it couches down. It is used when the wool is not thick enough to cover the canvas well and double wool is not used.<sup>21</sup>

Petit point has come back into favour remarkably during the last few years. It has various names such as tapestry, petit point, (French, little stitch) and needlepoint. The point of the last two names is difficult to see! Even the name "tapestry" is rather misleading, for this is, of course, properly a woven fabric. However, needlepoint is called by the woven fabric's name after the famous Bayeux tapestries, which were embroidered in petit point.

A clear idea of tapestry is gained if one thinks of it as a quicker form of cross-stitch, carried out in heavier canvas and wools so that it is suitable for furnishing purposes. It is naturally not a quick form of embroidery, as it is used for large things, such as chair seats,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 140.

footstools, and cushion covers; fire-screens and even rugs. It is necessary to work the entire fabric, the background as well as the design. A single piece of tapestry may be worked on for many years. However, a beautiful finished product may justify the time spent in making it.

Practically without exception, tent stitch is worked in wools on canvas. Occasionally a handbag may be done in silk, but only wool is hard-wearing enough for chair and footstool covers. Victorian workers often mingled beads or touches of silk with their wool work. Special large-meshed Penelope canvas and special tapestry wools are sold for tapestry use; but the wools are not essential.

Old tapestry, like old cross-stitch was copied from a chart and counted out stitch by stitch on plain canvas. At slightly more expense, one may buy a sheet of canvas ready stenciled in the correct colors, with an attractive design. Each canvas square is worked over with a stitch of the same color as that of the canvas pattern. The background is worked in whatever color preferred. Any tapestry that is not washable should contain little light color that may soil quickly.

Shops sometimes sell ready-worked designs in which one has only to fill in the background. Of the great range of designs there may be some of geometrical repeat, others may have Victorian floral sprays; or they may be of the picture type, perhaps showing an old-world garden bright with flowers, or a lady in crinoline and poke-bonnet.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

## GROS POINT

Gros point is worked in the same manner as petit point, but over two threads of the canvas. It is usual with this stitch to lay a thread of the wool or cotton thread employed over the line of canvas and to couch the gros point over it. A very pretty effect with two colors may thus be obtained, the running thread showing between the threads of the tant stitch.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Alexander, op. cit., p. 2



## DOUBLE CROSS-STITCH

Double cross-stitch looks well on a very coarse mesh. Simple cross-stitch is worked in the usual way, then a St. George's cross is put over the first cross. These stitches may become too clumsy if used too closely together, but they look very well on hardanger cloth.<sup>24</sup>

Rice or double cross-stitch is an effective two color stitch used in both tapestry and cross-stitch embroidery. Large cross-stitches are worked covering four squares each way. Then, preferably with a finer thread and of another color, a small cross-stitch is made over the intersection of each large one.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Miall, op. cit., p. 140.

## ASSISI WORK

This is a very effective form of cross-stitch dating from the Middle Ages. It came from Italy, gaining its name from the town of Assisi (associated with the great St. Francis) in that country. The original designs used dated centuries back and were mostly of imaginary birds and dragons such as were believed in centuries ago.<sup>26</sup>

In Assisi work the outline of the design as well as its background is stitched in with wools, using a running stitch. Each check or square in the patterns shown represent the space allowed for a cross-stitch, and each cross-stitch on the pattern is transferred to the cloth by counting off threads, as just described. Each cross-stitch also takes up the same number of threads as that allowed for an outline stitch. An extra line of cross-stitching at top and bottom is effective, with a blank row left between it and the main background.<sup>27</sup>

Usually the cross-stitch background is worked in one rich color on a white or light natural material. For clear definition the unworked design is outlined, after the cross-stitching is done, with back-stitch made as a double running stitch. Sometimes this outlining is worked in black or a very dark hue before the cross-stitching is done.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>27</sup> Couch, O. P., "Embroidery in Wools," (1933), p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> Miall, op. cit., p. 133.

Figures 7, 8, and 9

Commercial Transfer Designs for Costume

Courtesy of McCall Corporation



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Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

## CROSS-STITCH DESIGNERS

The following people have either written books or articles on the subject of Cross-stitch, or have made designs for the carrying out of cross-stitch embroidery.

Vera C. Alexander, "Cross-Stitch," English.

A. I. G. Begg, "Needlework Stitch by Stitch," English.

M. Clutton, "Canvas Stitches," English.

Christeen Ferry, editor and writer, various articles on cross-stitch, American.

Georgiana Brown Harbeson, "American Needlework," American.

J. Moh, "Principles and Stitchings of Chinese Embroidery," American.

Ann Orr, has designed and published cross-stitch designs in the form of booklets, American.

Louisa F. Pesel, "English Embroidery--II, Cross-Stitch," English.

F. G. Payne, "Samplers and Embroideries," English.

Margaret Techy specializes in needlepoint designs.

Mary Thomas has done research in cross-stitching, English.

Ethel McCunn Walker was a former editor of Needlecraft Magazine, and made many cross-stitch designs while holding that position; American.

Dilmont, in France, known as the D. M. C. Company, has made and published more cross-stitch designs than any other firm or society.

## MACHINE EMBROIDERY

Huge machines averaging sixteen yards in length and set upon a concrete foundation embedded six feet in the ground embroider intricate designs while operating at top speed.

A device similar to a giant magic lantern is used to enlarge tiny designs which are often no larger than those on a letter head and the image is then copied in its original colors. Patterns are made from this large drawing by skilled technicians who, seated at a stencil cutting machine, follow the lines of the design with a pantograph type of stylus. The resulting pattern is similar to the music roll of a player piano.

The rolls are then placed in the embroidery machine and the needles go to work. The mechanism stops automatically when a change in color of the thread is called for. When a thread is broken the empty needle is rethreaded with the aid of a barbed wire without slowing down the speed of operation. To form the design, the whole massive frame which holds the fabric is moved back and forth by an adjustment so fine that the width of a piece of paper, inserted under any of the cams that control it, would jam the mechanism. Each machine is capable of operating a maximum of 1,020 needles, for which there must always be a corresponding number of shuttles.

Gold and silver embroidery is done by hand.

Among the most ornate of all the designs are those embodying griffins, dragons and other heraldic devices used as adornments on Russian style pajamas. After being pressed, each emblem is cut out, usually by means of a die upon a chopping block and packed for shipment.



Remains of Egyptian embroidery as ancient as the days of Jacob still exist, and some of the patterns that were found in King Tut's tomb are being copied today.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the embroideries today are either copies of ancient ones, some intended for sale as antiques, or conventionalized patterns produced in quantity on the bonnaz or the schiffle machine. In the latter part of the nineteenth century such distinguished artists as William Morris, Burne-Jones and Walter Crane supplied English embroiderers with original designs. However, too much cannot be said in praise of some of the petit point and crewel work now being done by hand in England. It is faithful in spirit as well as in letter to ancient traditions, and, like the best work of old, is based on or adapted from ancient models.<sup>30</sup>

Imitation embroideries, as well as laces, are made in old centers of real embroidery and lace. The St. Gall district of Switzerland, Plauen, Germany, and Carlsbad in Czechoslovakia had almost a monopoly at one time, but the work has spread all over Europe and into the United States. Hand directed machinery was invented as early as 1850 to facilitate parts of the work and enable the workers to make more money. Machinery run by power, but much like the hand machines, followed. In the workrooms all three can be seen in various stages. Yarns of silk, rayon, linen, and cotton are used in the manufacture of machine embroidery. Much of the work requires the burnt-out method of finish, which is done on a background that is later destroyed by a chemical bath.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> S. A. Tierman, "Business Tends to Its Embroidery," *Nation's Business*, Vol. 26, (July 1938), p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> G. L. Hunter, "Decorative Textiles," (1918), p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> M. S. Woolman and E. B. McGowan, "Textiles," (1929), p. 355.

Figure 10

Cross-stitch Designed for a Wool Jacket

(Original Design by the Author)

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% RAG U.S.A.

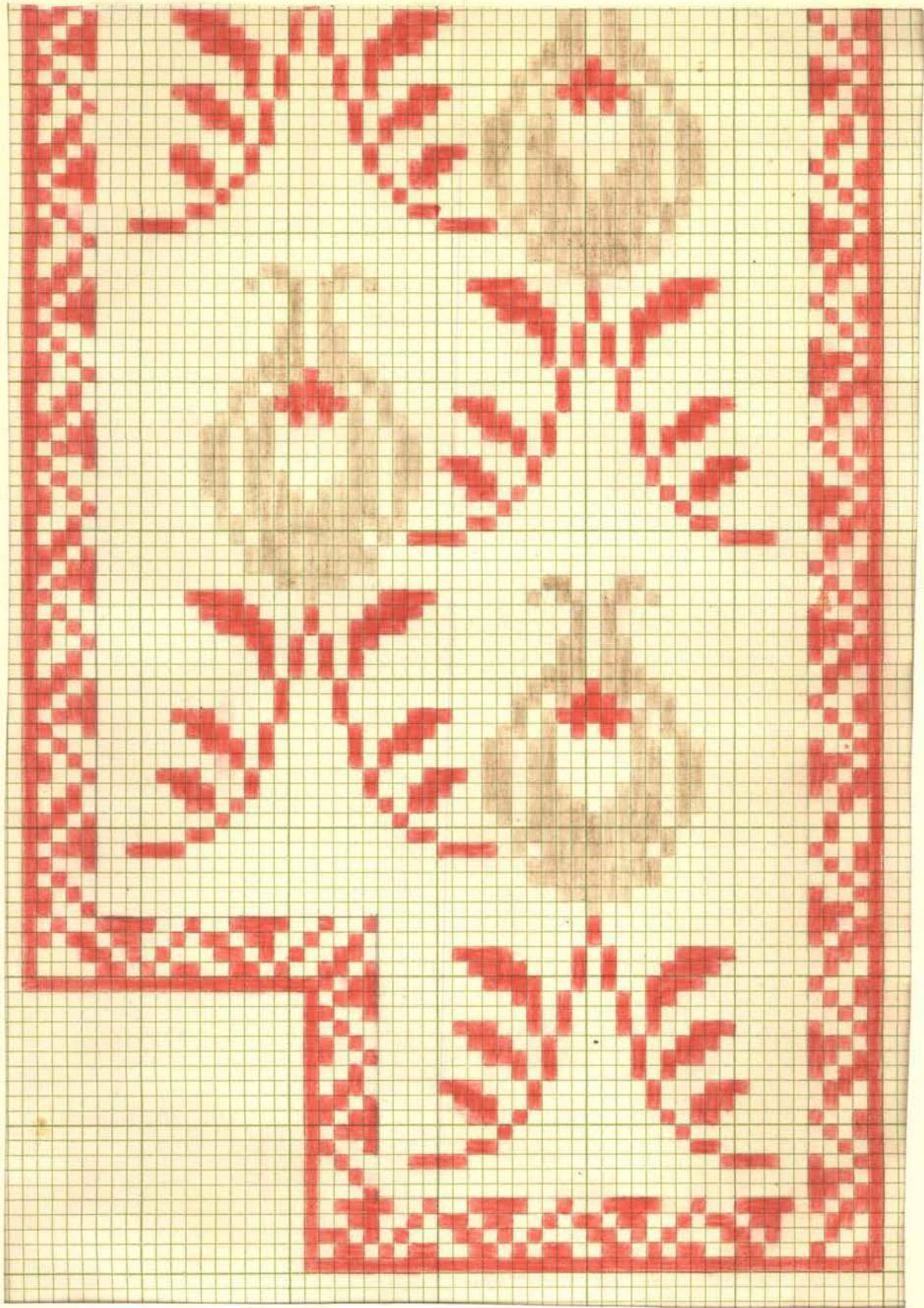


Figure 10

Plate XV

Cross-stitch Design Applied to a Wool Jacket

(Original Design by the Author)



Plate XV

Wool Crepe Jacket. Plate XV.

Structure.

The jacket is constructed of fine, light-weight, black wool crepe, boxy effect, with simple, straight lines and loose sleeves. The jacket fastens at the neck band with two red buttons and loops.

Decoration.

The decoration consists of stitchery done in light weight two ply yarn. The two front panels of design on the jacket are composed of a border and abstract floral forms following a line of growth. (Fig. 11) The same border is used in double rows around the neck band and near the bottom of each sleeve. The colors used are red for the borders, centers of flowers, and line of growth; and beige for the flowers. Cross-stitch was used for the entire design.

Design Analysis.

The larger areas of decorative design were placed on the front of the jacket in two panels as the main center of interest around the face. The border was repeated in two rows around the neck of the jacket and near the edge of the sleeve in the red yarn to give unity and balance to the decoration and yet be subordinate to the main design.

The weight and the color of the black wool crepe suggest the lighter two ply yarn in the bright red and the light beige colors for the cross-stitching. The size of the cross-stitch and of the yarn used for the decoration are in scale with the texture and the weight of the fabric used in the jacket.

To carry out the embroidery on this jacket, the design was made on graph paper in two colors and then the paper pattern was basted to the garment. All the stitches of the cross-stitching were made in one

direction, then the remaining stitches were worked in the opposite direction. The problem of removing the paper from these fine cross-stitches after they were completed was difficult. However, the diagram for making the stitches was easy to follow.

The simplicity of the structural lines of this jacket and plainness of the neutral beige and black material form a pleasing background for the elaborateness of the decorative designs.

This jacket may be worn for spectator sport with perhaps a skirt or a dress of the same fabric, or for greater contrast a red or a beige colored skirt may be worn.

Figure 11

Double Cross-stitch Pattern Designed for a Silk Crepe Blouse

(Original Design by the Author)



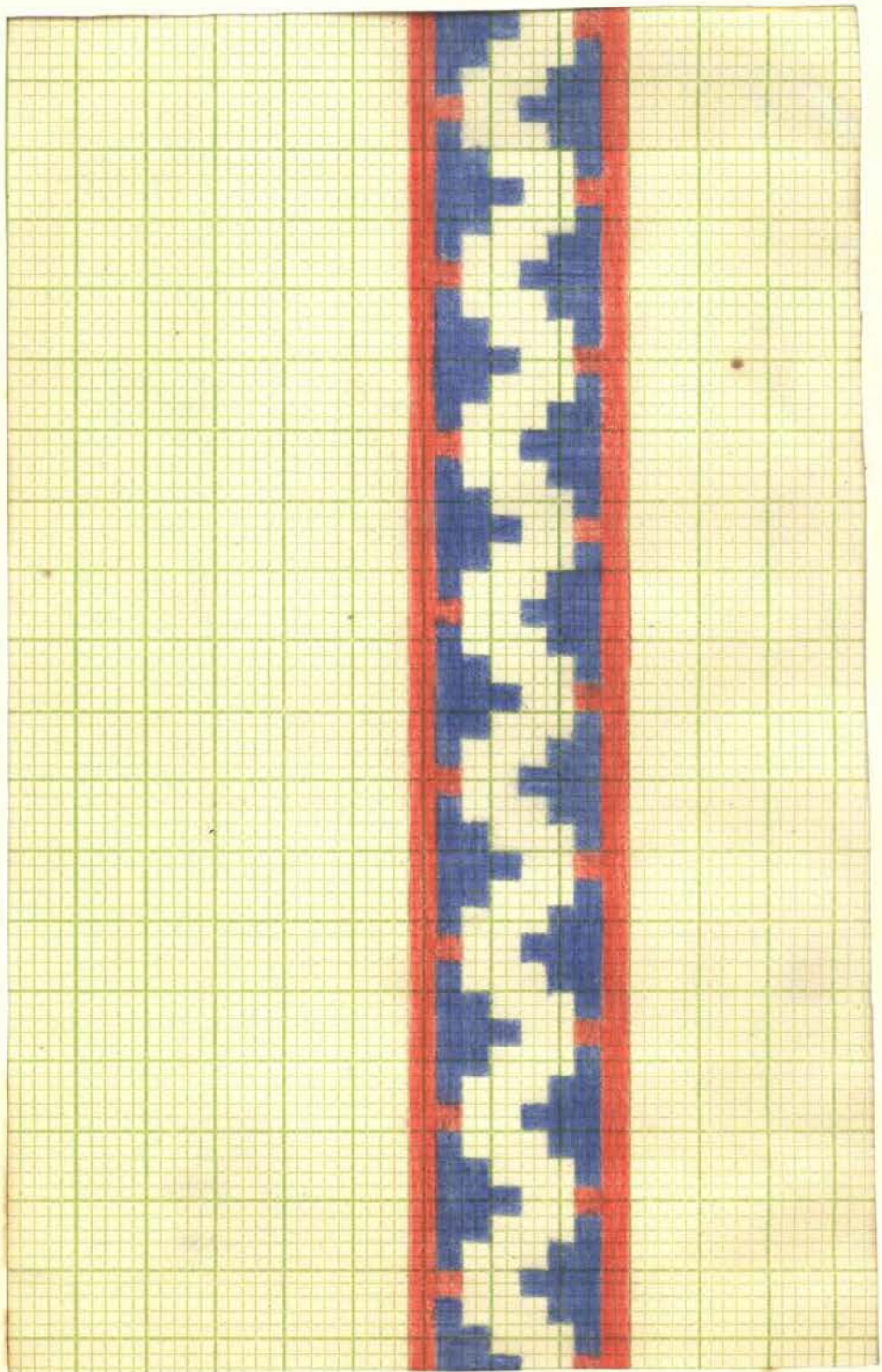


Figure 11

Plate XVI

Double Cross-stitch Design Applied

to a Silk Crepe Blouse

(Original Design by the Author)



Plate XVI

Silk Crepe Blouse. Plate XVI.

Structure.

The blouse is constructed of white silk crepe. A band two inches wide extends around the square neck and bottom of the sleeves. At the top of the sleeves are gathers to give fullness as in a peasant blouse. Gathers are also inserted in the front of the blouse to form a yolk and give fullness. The placket in the back is fastened with white pearl buttons.

Decoration.

Figure 12 shows the original design which was used on the blouse. A border repeat design of geometric form was carried out in double cross-stitch with silk thread. This border design was placed upon the neck and sleeve bands of the blouse. Red thread was used for the outer border and blue for the geometric form.

Design Analysis.

The use of vivid colors in this blouse was inspired by the embroidery of the old peasant blouses. The large area of neutral white helps to balance and key the smaller areas of blue and red. The patriotic color scheme in red, white, and blue of the blouse looks well with either a black or navy tailored suit.

To carry out the embroidery on the bands of the blouse, the design was made on graph paper in two colors and then basted on the garment. The cross-stitching was worked in one direction and the paper guide was then removed, after which the second row of stitches was worked. This is an easier method for removing the paper than that used for the wool crepe jacket in which the decoration was completed before the paper was removed.

Figure 12

Assisi Embroidery Pattern Designed for a Dress

(Original Design by the Author)

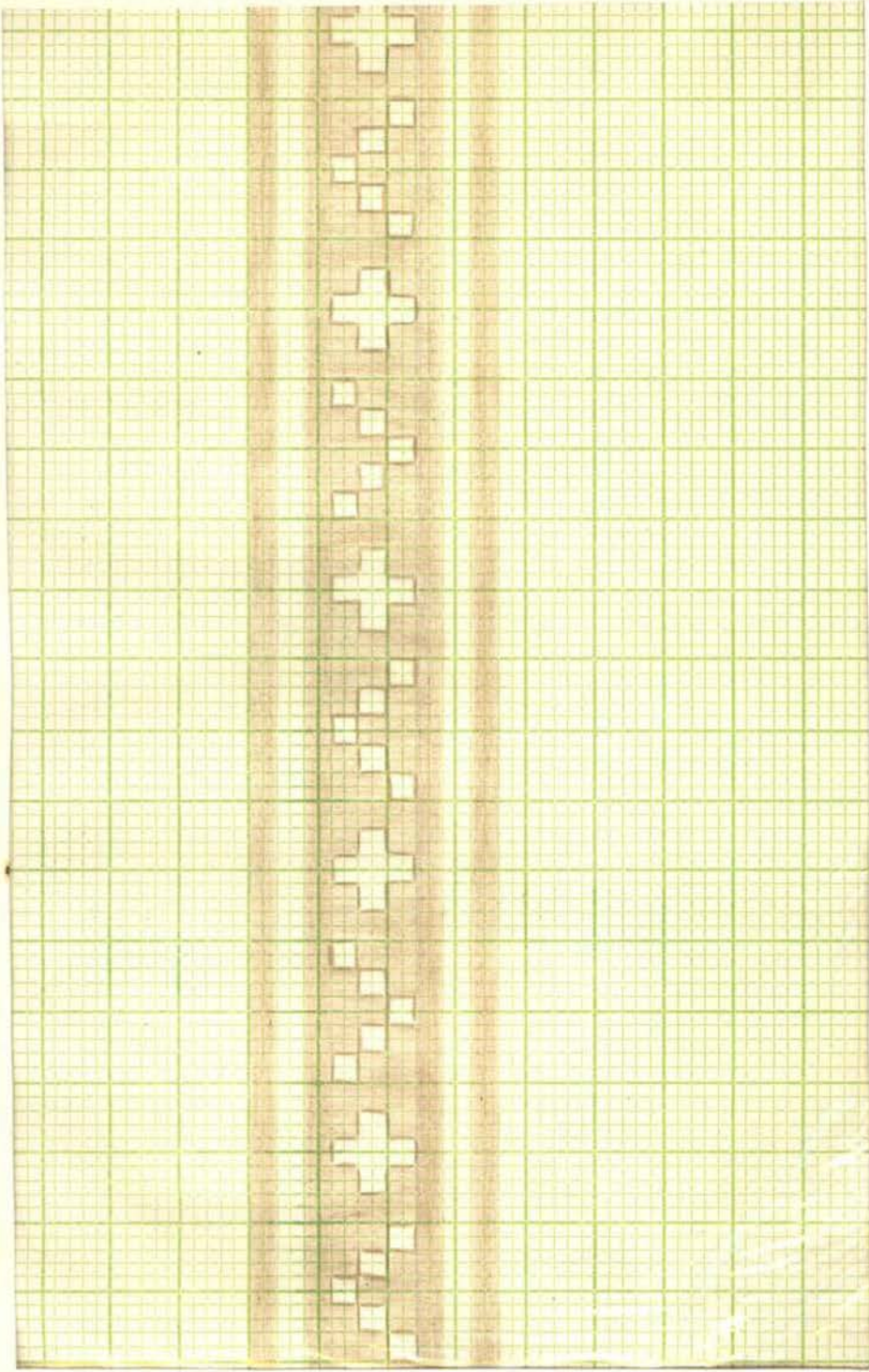


Figure 12

Plate XVII

Assisi Embroidery Design Applied to a Dress

(Original Design by the Author)



Plate XVII



## Assisi Work on a Dress. Plate XVII.

Structure.

A two-piece sport dress of rich brown non-crushable linen is used for the Assisi embroidery. The blouse-like jacket with its plain lines has an inset belt. Gathers inserted in the front of the blouse form a yoke. The beige colored buttons used in the front for fasteners on the jacket repeat the color used for the cross stitching. The four gored skirt when worn with the blouse completes the dress.

Decoration.

The decoration consists of Assisi work on the inset belt of the jacket in cotton beige embroidery thread. The design consists of geometric shapes and a cross repeated at regular intervals around the belt. The background was cross-stitched, so that the design was thrown up boldly against the color of the material used. For clear definition the unworked design was outlined, after the cross-stitching was done, with back-stitch made as a double running stitch. Each outline stitch took up the same number of threads as allowed for each cross-stitch.

Design Analysis.

The usual method of Assisi work is to use a neutral background and a dark thread, but the reverse was tried, that of a dark background and a neutral thread. The size and texture of the embroidery thread is in harmony with the threads of the dress fabric.

An extra line of cross-stitching at top and bottom is effective with a blank row left between it and the main background.

The design of the geometric shapes and crosses would appear more distinct if their size was enlarged; this, however, would have necessitated making the belt wider and changing the proportions of the design.

Figure 13

Tent Stitch Pattern Designed for a Purse

(Original Design by the Author)

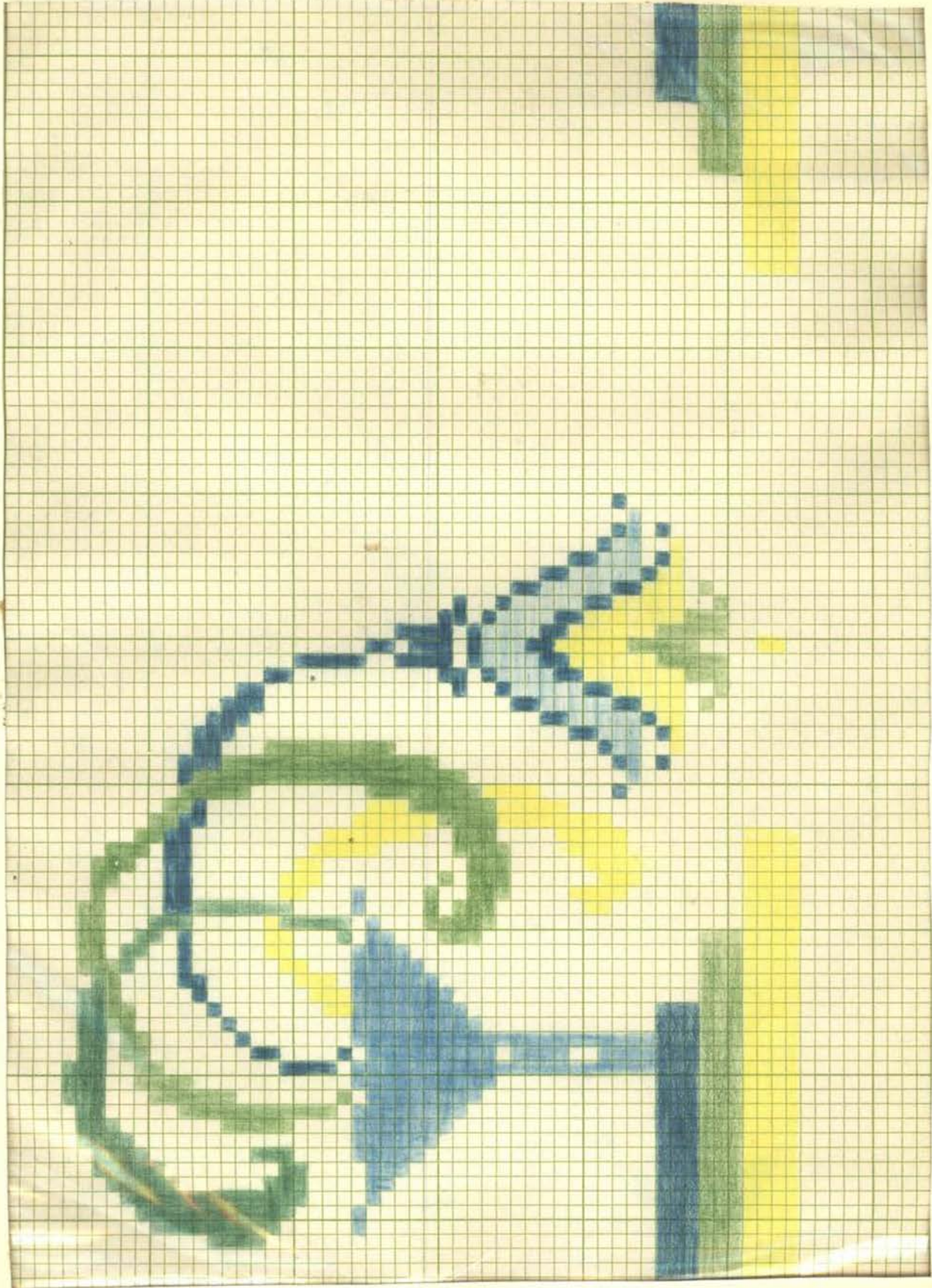
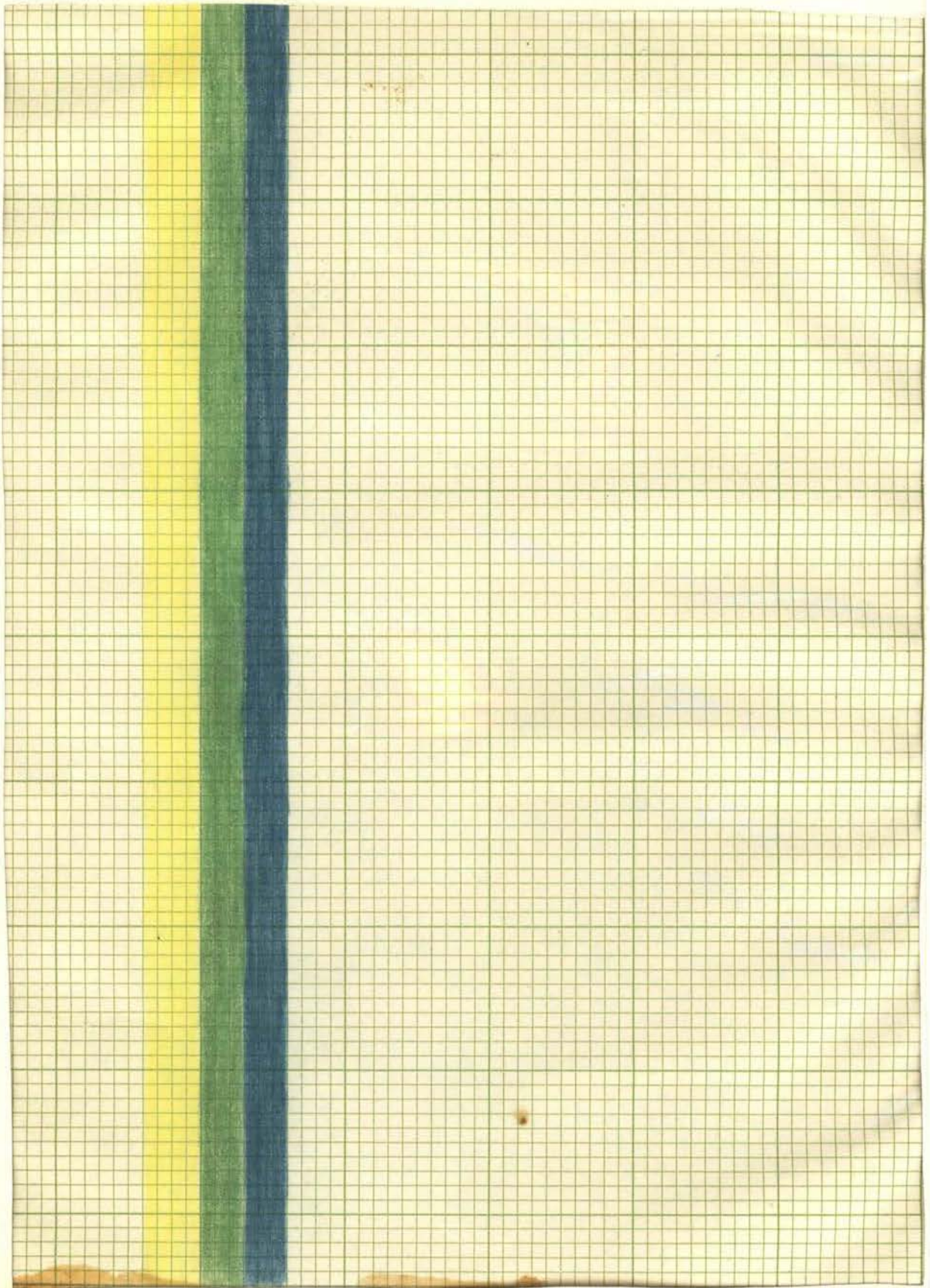


Figure 13



## Plate XVIII

Tent Stitch Design Applied on a Purse

(Original Design by the Author)



Plate XVIII

Tent Stitch Purse.            Plate XVIII.

Structure.

This purse worked in tent stitch may be used with the gros point belt as the same colors were used. The foundation fabric for the stitches of the purse is lined with black taffeta and a black zipper closes the opening at the top. The purse is six and one-half by nine and one-fourth inches in size.

Decoration.

The abstract floral and geometrical designs, as well as the main body of the purse is worked in tent stitch with needlepoint yarn. The color wheel is followed from yellow through the greens to blue, producing an analogous harmony. The background for the design is worked in black.

Design Analysis.

The decorative design for the purse was drawn on graph paper equal in size to that of the needlepoint canvas. The counting method was used for working the design.

The proportions of the purse follow the law of proportion; however, the length of the purse was planned one-fourth inch longer, but after the tent stitch was completed the purse was found to be shorter. The materials of the purse are durable and the colors will not show soil easily. The cool colors used for the design of the purse, the texture of the yarn and stitches make the purse ideal to carry with a wool dress of harmonizing or neutral color.

The base for the design is a gradation of stripes which gives a modern touch. A modern touch is also given to the reminiscence of the flower stand, line of growth, and flower used in the design. Tent stitch lends itself well to the general contour of the design. The yellow yarn

used in the base stripe and repeated in the leaf and the center of the flower gives unity and balance to the design. The repetition of the curved lines in the leaves and flower carried the eye throughout the design. The conventionalized flower design would make more pleasing proportions in background spacing if the flower design had been placed closer to the left margin of the purse.



Figure 14

Pattern Designed for a Gros Point Belt

(Original Design by the Author)

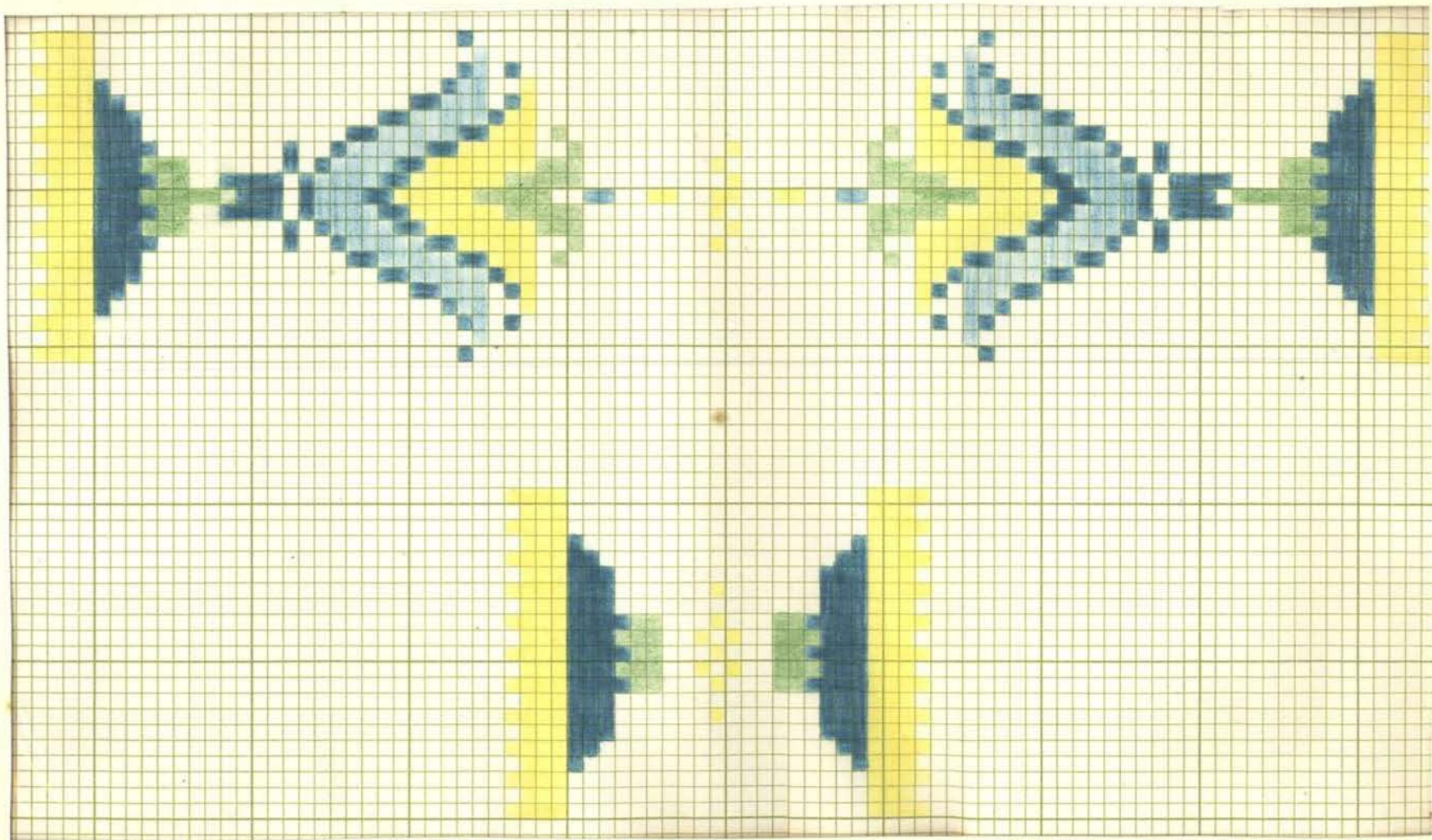


Figure 14

Plate XIX

Gros Point Design Applied on a Belt

(Original Design by the Author)



Plate XIX

Gros Point Belt.      Plate XIX.

Structure.

The gros point belt may be worn with sport dresses that harmonize in color with the colors used in the belt. Needlepoint canvas was used as the foundation for the stitches of the belt. The belt is two and one-half inches in width, and is lined with black taffeta. Black hooks and eyes are used for fasteners.

Decoration.

Figure 15 shows the original design which was developed on graph paper. The design is composed of abstract floral and geometric motifs. The stitchery was worked in gros point with needlepoint yarn. The colors used are blue, blue-green, yellow green, and yellow. Black is used for the body of the belt.

Design Analysis.

The gros point belt was worked by the counting method, using a colored diagram. The stitch was made by laying a thread of the wool yarn over the line of canvas and by couching the tent stitch over it, making the article heavy and very durable. The predominant cool colors with the warm yellow as accent used for the design of this belt were planned to be worn with the same dress as the purse previously described. There is a similarity of motif in the belt to that of the design used on the purse. The columbine flower was the inspiration for the design. This type of stitch in needlepoint yarn is too heavy for use in this particular belt.

## SUMMARY

The historical survey made in this thesis shows that cross-stitch has been a prevalent stitch of embroidery in the past for the adornment of clothing.

The historical illustrations furnish an idea of the typical shapes, color combinations, and variations of cross-stitch that have been used.

The structural and the decorative design of the garments are conservative enough to be worn more than one season, thereby justifying the amount of time spent in the type of decoration used.

Commercial transfers are often too pretentious and too naturalistic in treatment to be used successfully on clothes demanding simplicity of line.

The experimentation served the purpose of using old methods as well as finding new methods of procedures for embroidering without a transfer pattern.

The experimental work demonstrates that by complying with structural requirements of the material, and by applying the art principles, articles of clothing may be decorated with cross-stitch designs which are beautiful and appropriate.

The stitches are well adapted to the demands of durability and plainness of the homespun and linen fabrics of which the peasant costumes were made. The peasant's use of the pure colors in needlework may be portrayed today on clothing of the spectator sport type. The fabrics for the spectator sport costumes, the embroidery threads and yarns are usually rougher and coarser textured than those used for many other occasions. The simplicity of design and ease of construction of cross-stitch make it well suited to the character of modern informal clothes.

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Typist: Jo Morgan