

SOME GRACEFUL EMBROIDERY DESIGNS

[AS WORKED AT THE CHICAGO SOCIETY OF DECORATIVE ART]

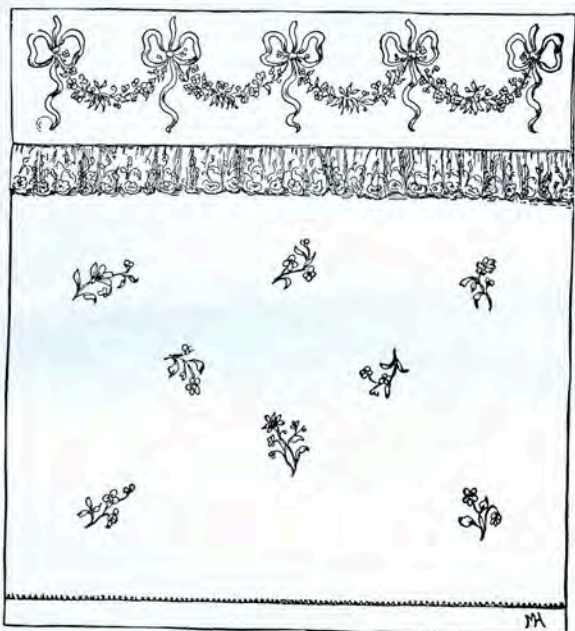
By Maude Haywood



THE Chicago Society of Decorative Art was organized in 1877, upon the same plans as those already being successfully carried on in eastern cities. It is not revealed that there is any particular story or romance to be told in connection with its origin, rise, or progress, but its principal difficulty may be considered not uncharacteristic. The situation of its rooms, looking out as they do upon the lake front, with its network of railroad tracks, necessitates a constant warfare against enemies in the shape of smoke, coal dust and grime, and renders it extremely difficult to preserve the work as spotlessly pure and clean as delicate embroideries should be kept, for in the summer, of course, windows must be thrown open. The work shown by the Society is of the most varied kind, including specimens of many different styles and branches of embroidery. A few only of the pieces are here presented.

A PRETTILY DESIGNED BED-COVER

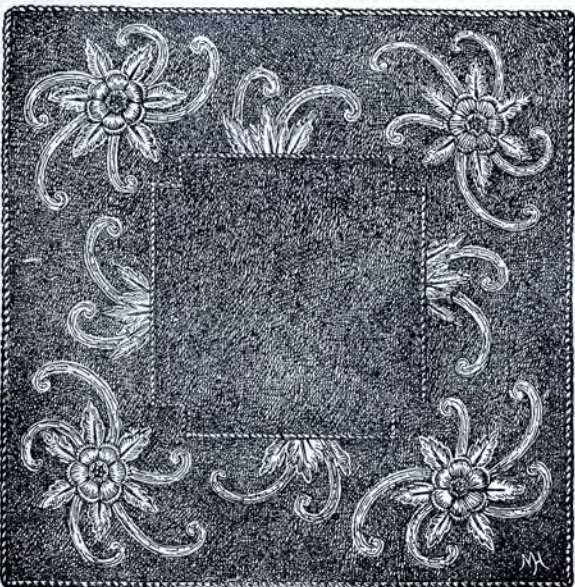
SOME of the finest and most noticeable pieces recently were some prettily rendered designs for bed coverings and a very daintily executed spread and pillow for a child's crib, which have been chosen as illustrations for this paper, and will be carefully described further on. According to the usual custom in these societies, orders are executed on the premises by regularly employed embroideresses, and the bulk of the work on exhibition is offered for sale on a ten per cent.



A SPREAD FOR A BABY'S CRIB (Illus. No. 2)

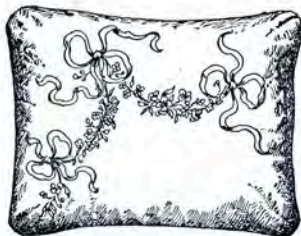
commission, work being also taken from contributors living in all parts of the United States. About two thousand women have their names on the books as being benefited in this way. All work has to be examined and passed by a committee before it is accepted, and in order to be pronounced eligible must reach a required standard of excellence.

As already indicated, the variety of bedspreads shown may be considered somewhat of a special feature. A certain demand for them has led to considerable attention being paid to their design and execution. Many materials are employed, but on the whole fine white linen seems to have the preference. The one pictured in Illustration No. 1 is worked entirely in yellow silks on a firm round thread French linen, with very happy effect. The scalloped edge is worked in button-hole stitch in the yellow silk.



AN EFFECTIVE TABLE COVER (Illus. No. 5)

FOR THE CRIB OF A LITTLE KING  
THE spread and pillow for a baby's crib in Illustrations No. 2 and No. 3 are charmingly dainty pieces of work. The material used is white Chinese linen. It is just a yard wide, and the whole length of the spread is about a yard and three-eighths, a quarter of a yard being turned over as shown in the drawing. On this flap the chief part of the design is placed. Each end of the spread is fin-



A PILLOW FOR BABY (Illus. No. 3)

ished with a hemstitch, the flap having also an edging of whitelace. The garlands are worked in delicate coloring, the flowers being principally roses, violets and forget-me-nots. The ribbon bows are made of pale blue on both spread and pillow. The scattered sprays on the lower portion of the spread harmonize with the tones used in the garlands.

THE BABY'S BELONGINGS

AN extremely pretty sachet, which would prove a most suitable and acceptable gift to a young mother, might be rendered either in pale blue or pink. The foundation is simply a square of the colored watered silk, lined with white China silk, and interlined with a thin layer of perfumed wadding. The four corners are tied together with a knot of ribbon to match the tone chosen for the sachet, and inside various articles used for an infant's toilet are fastened in place by more of the same ribbon, a brush, comb, powder-puff and package of safety-pins being provided in the particular example just described. Strips of flannel ornamented with feather or brier stitch in colored embroidery silk and tied with a ribbon bow make pretty and useful cases to be kept filled with safety-pins of assorted sizes. Crib blankets of fine soft material are button-holed around the edge either plainly or in scallops, and marked with the child's initials or monogram, either in the center or across the corner. The simpler kinds of drawn-work stitches are much liked for the decoration of infants' belongings. Sheets and pillow-cases, where made quite plainly, ought always to be hemstitched by hand, and, if possible, marked with the initials in white embroidery cotton.

AN EMPIRE SPREAD AND BOLSTER

THE spread and bolster in Illustration No. 4 were made for a room furnished in the Empire style. The design was embroidered in delicate shades on a handsome, soft, cream-colored satin, and finished simply with a cord around the edge. The bed itself was gilded, and had embroidered panels inserted at the head and foot. Among others was a very harmonious, handsome and effective spread, the coloring being made to match some Empire brocade used for the hangings. A conventional tulip design was rendered in light gold silks, and the background darned in dull reds. The leaves were outlined, and the flowers worked in long and short stitches, the material being of a rich cream color.

These spreads are intended not to hang down straight as in Illustration No. 1, but to be tucked in all around, in some cases the Empire beds having ornamented sides with carved decorations, and in others a festooned valance being provided in materials and coloring to harmonize with the spreads and curtains employed. In this style of decoration the plain bolster, as illustrated, is always provided, which is, of course, together with the embroidered covering, removed at night. The pillows are frequently kept in a long-shaped ottoman box, placed at the foot of the bed, and which is itself amply provided with cushions in order to form not only a handsome but a comfortable lounge.

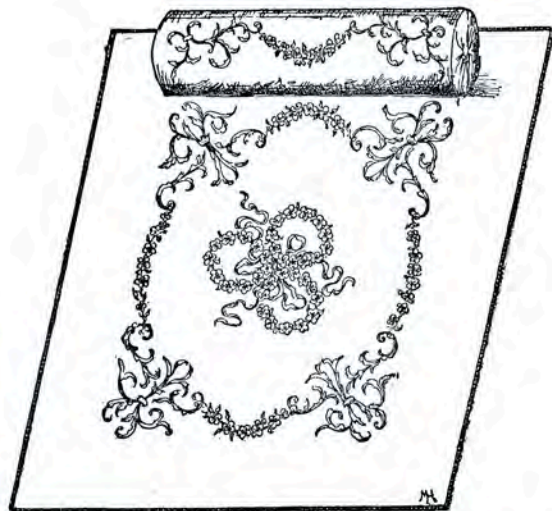
CURTAINS AND PORTIÈRES

THE work exhibited includes quite a number of pretty and handsome hangings well worth description. One entailing comparatively little labor was worked entirely in shades of green, with Japanese gold thread introduced. The ground chosen was crinkled tapestry of rather a dull, metallic green, and the design was a bold spray of large leaves and flowers extending far down the curtain. Some of the leaves were embroidered solidly, and some were of green plush applied and worked in long and short stitch in silks either of a lighter or a darker shade than the plush, in order to gain variety of effect. The flowers had radiating lines extending from them rendered in green silk and gold thread worked side by side. The whole design was also outlined in the gold thread. The curtain was interlined with Canton flannel to give it substance. Another portière was of écaru-colored silk, with a lattice work across it and up the sides, applied in green plush, a design of ivy being twisted about it and embroidered in silks. A border of conventional tulips extended across the lower part. Some curtains were made of a plain, heavy material and turned over at the top, the design being worked on the frieze formed in this way. One in gobelin cloth had large roses for the subject. A hanging which was a harmony of yellows and browns had marshmallows powdered all over the ground, and yet another, effective in dull, quaint coloring, had a band of Venetian embroidery placed about one-third up the curtain.

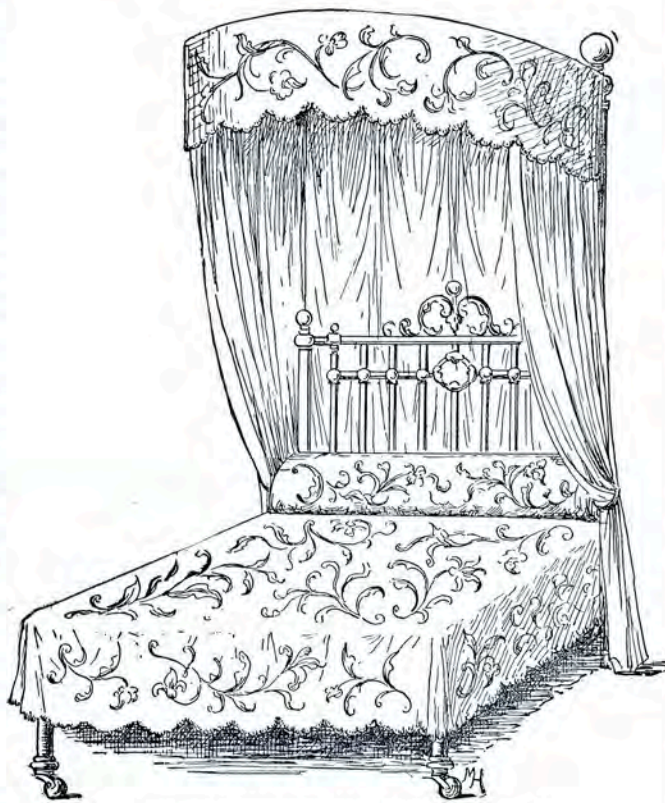
One curtain shown was, perhaps rather for admiration than for actual imitation by American hands. It was a Spanish design of native execution on Tussore silk. It was exhibited just as it was imported, the idea

DECORATED CHAMOIS SKINS

A METHOD of decorating chamois skins which claims to be typically western, comes to the society from a young woman residing in Indianapolis, who claims the invention of it. The work is adaptable for various purposes to which the leather is suited, but in the best of the examples shown the shape of the skin is preserved, the pieces being either



AN EMPIRE SPREAD AND BOLSTER (Illus. No. 4)



A PRETTILY DESIGNED BED-COVER (Illus. No. 1)

for table mats or to be mounted on plush for screens or panels. The designs preferred are some mediæval and some Indian in character, and are adapted by the artist herself to the shape and size of the pieces. The forms are tinted flatly in subdued "art tones," and then the design is wrought gorgeously in colored silks, tinsel threads, beads and glass jewels.

A considerable variety of bureau covers and toilet sets were shown. Bolting cloth is a favorite material, the design, usually of some delicate-colored flower, being tinted in oils thinned with turpentine, the outlines, veinings and markings being rendered in embroidery silks. The old-fashioned pin-cushion boxes, with little brass feet, embroidered covers and lace frills are much liked. Large, square cushions with tiny bows at each corner, and also those of a long, narrow shape, are likewise used. The number of different styles of work shows what interest is taken in the subject.

Nothing particularly novel is to be seen in table linen. The favorite effects seem to be in white, outlined with yellow or green, and in colors, of delicate pinks and greens in mother-of-pearl tones. Pretty tea napkins in fine linen, twenty inches square, had each a different floral spray worked in one corner in wash silk, and were very graceful.

being that as there is such a diversity of tastes, it should be lined and mounted to suit the individual requirements of its eventual purchaser.

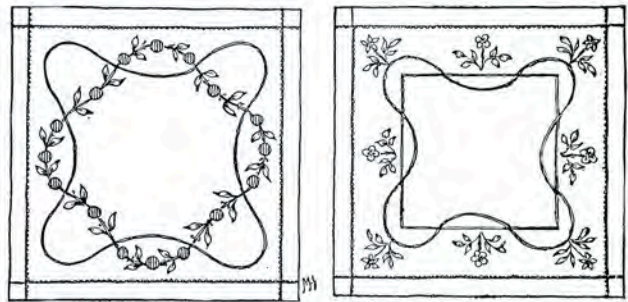
AN EFFECTIVE TABLE COVER

THIS extremely effective table cover (Illustration No. 5) is worked on flax velours, of a warm, golden-brown tone, the coloring used in the design being chiefly in brownish tones, very near the color of the ground; the flower forms are worked solidly in creamy shades, with the centers made of French knots in brown. The leaves are in long and short stitch, of rather an olive hue. The curved forms which characterize the design are couched in heavy silk, and the whole is outlined with gold thread. The line defining the border is a double row of copper-colored cord. The finish is a heavy cord and the lining is of dull old gold.

In many cases double faced flax velours is employed for table covers, curtains, and other purposes, because where the design is applied or couched they require no lining, the material being so thick that the stitches employed for this kind of work are invisible at the back. A very pretty and favorite finish is tassels, manufactured by the needlewoman herself from the silks used in the design.

SIMPLICITY AND TASTE IN DOILIES

AMONG the smaller pieces may be seen some dainty work. A set of doilies, of which two are shown in Illustration No. 6, were simple and effective in treatment. They were on fine, white linen, the edges being hemstitched. The one has little sprays of yellow jasmine in the corners and pink roses at the sides, the square border line being worked in green silks and the curved line about it in



TWO SIMPLE AND TASTEFUL DOILIES (Illus. No. 6)

gold thread. The other has the little round forms embroidered in white, the leaves and stem of delicate green, and the intersecting line of copper-colored thread. Other sets, less uncommon, however, had small sprays and ribbon-forms worked upon them. One dozen had seaweed designs embroidered on pale pink silk, but many would not consider these in such good taste as upon a white ground.