

# MARIE ANTOINETTE EMBROIDERY

By Helen Mar Adams

DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

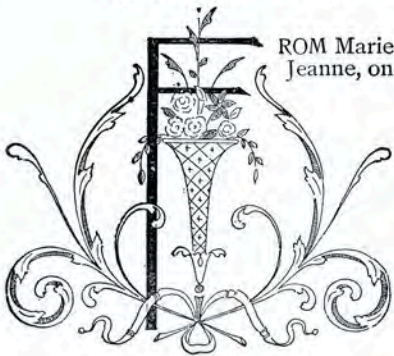


ILLUSTRATION No. 1

FROM Marie Antoinette Josephe Jeanne, once Queen of France, and of historic fame, a beautiful style of simple and graceful design takes its name, and since about 1775 has been adopted and carried out to adorn the exteriors and interiors of both public buildings and private dwellings. That it is a style admirably

adapted to embroidery work may be discerned at a glance, as the accompanying illustrations afford a fair idea of the many beautiful designs that are available for fancy-work of every description. To the extravagant and lavish ideas of Marie Antoinette we owe a debt of gratitude, for it was solely through her passion for play, her love for amusement, and to gain a point beyond that which had already been achieved, that led to the birth of this style. It is somewhat surprising that so closely following the irregular lines of the Louis XV style one of this order should have been adopted, as the feature of the French decorations at that time seemed to have been the broken and irregular line, as the foundation of both the Louis XIV and Louis XV styles show. It was to depart from this feeling of irregularity that Marie Antoinette chose to have her rooms decorated in an entirely original manner.

Of the many beautiful centrepieces that could be designed two are shown on this page. Illustration No. 1 is a simple and easy arrangement of scrolls, rosettes and pearls, to carry out a light and graceful arrangement for either open or solid embroidery. A desirable and perhaps the most useful size for a centrepiece of this description will be eighteen inches square to outside edges. One inch in from the edge a line of hemstitching may be worked, and inside this, at the proper distance, the half-circular and half-square line may be buttonholed. This should not be more than three-sixteenths of an inch in width, and to insure its good appearance care should be taken to work it very evenly so the straight line will be straight, and the segments a part of a true circle, and not irregular nor with ragged edges. Inside the buttonholed line the scrolls, rosettes and pearls are to be arranged in an easy and graceful manner as the illustration shows. Either the solid or outline mode of embroidery may be employed, and if it is desirable to work the pattern solid, one-half of the illustration is lined in, suggesting the most advantageous way to embroider the several members of the design. This same pattern, if worked on a larger scale, is a very good one for a sofa-pillow or table-cover. For a sofa-pillow the various shades of denim, worked in buff, cream or white linen, result satisfactorily, and for a table-cover cream-white cotton goods, or white linen, worked in any of the light shades of pink, blue, brown or green, will be found attractive.

To those who enlarge these over designs from small illustrations similar to these, perhaps a few words of advice would be acceptable: In the first place, to lay out the full-size pattern, such as the centrepiece just described, obtain a smooth piece of paper at least two feet square, and pin it to a lapboard. Then draw a perfect square of eighteen inches, and draw lines diagonally across, from corner to corner, and other lines at right angles through the square; the last lines will pass through the lines of pearls that point toward the centre, and all the lines will cross or come together at the middle of the square. Draw one side of an ornament, and by tracing this and duplicating it in relative positions all around the square, you will have as a result a full-size pattern of regular design and symmetrical appearance. It will then be found an easy matter to trace the entire pattern and transfer it to the desired material in the customary way.

A centrepiece of more intricate design is shown in Illustration No. 2, and if worked in three or four colors, such as light green, pink, blue and a light straw color, on a white ground, a very attractive piece will be the result. One color on a white ground is a very good treatment, but the most pleasing results are obtained by happily

blending several light, harmonious shades together. From eighteen to twenty-four inches across is a good size for this octagon piece, and if it is to be fringed the edge may be run on a machine first, then buttonholed all around, after which the fringing is to be done in the same way that a round centrepiece is fringed. A good quality of round thread or antique hand-spun linen makes the best body on which to embroider designs in this style, as its slightly rugose surface lends to the appearance greatly.

The doily shown in Illustration No. 3 is designed to match either centrepiece and can be made from five to eight inches square. If to match Illustration No. 2, and it is desired to have them eight-sided and fringed, the rosettes at the corners may be left off and the corners cut. It will not make a perfect eight-sided affair, but there will be four sides, each of two lengths alike. By using the same materials for both centrepiece and doilies, and embroidering them in the same shades, a very pretty set will be the result.

For a corner to a table-cover or lambrequin the design shown in Illustration No. 4 is very appropriate, and may be offset at the centres, between corners, by some little ornament taken from the members of this corner pattern.

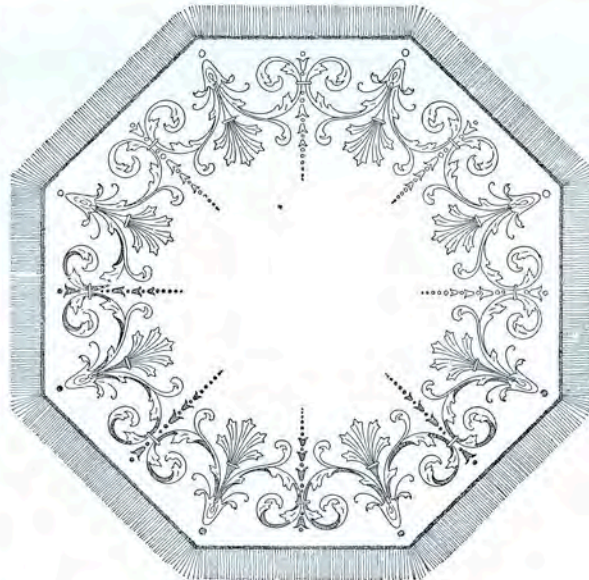


ILLUSTRATION No. 2

Corners of small dimensions may be used also, and will be very attractive for centrepiece corners, for carving-napkins, pillow-shams or portiere ends.

The uses to which a corner design may be put are almost without limit, so in illustrating one it is not drawn to be adapted to any one or two pieces, but may be applied to almost any article of fancy-work desired.

For the end of a table or dresser scarf a design is shown in Illustration No. 5, and can be worked nicely from a width of fifteen to twenty-four inches. A scarf measuring eighteen inches in width from edge to edge is, perhaps, the most useful size, as the tops of dressers in use are from sixteen to twenty inches in width; few are more than twenty-two. Occasionally, however, they may be built with shelves at least twenty-four or twenty-six inches wide, but these are the exception. A hemstitched edge with an inch margin and a wide hem at the ends is desirable, as the illustration suggests, and if made with a hem three inches, or even four, at the ends, the vine design can be worked nicely, as shown in the drawing. A deep fringe at the ends might be an improvement, but this is a matter of choice. It is suggested, however, if a fringe is used, that it be made of the body material and not a purchased and applied edging. An attractive color scheme for this scarf end would be to work the basket in a shade of two or three shades of light soft green, and the stems in brown of one or two shades. The small pearl garlands may be a very delicate shade of blue, and the ribbons of light pink. If care is taken in the selection of the various colors, and they blend nicely, a very pleasing result will be obtained.

For the centre of pillow-shams to match the scarf end a centre design is shown in Illustration No. 6. It can be of any desired size, but the most useful is seven or eight inches across from outside to outside of the scrolls at the bottom of the design. The color scheme can be carried

out in the same manner as described for the scarf end design, and if well done an equally good result is sure to follow.

It is clearly a matter of choice, however, as regards color schemes, and for those who desire colors on bed linen and toilet sets it may be stated that any of the light pleasing shades of filo and wash silks may be advantageously employed, but for those who do not care for colors plain white is always satisfactory. When embroidering in white it is always best to use pure white and not cream color, as in time the pure white silk becomes slightly yellow from frequent laundering, so that to use a cream white instead of pure white would insure the entire design in a light buff after a little use.

For a border four or five inches wide a good open design is shown in Illustration No. 7, and as both the

solid and outline treatment may be used to equally good advantage, the drawing suggests the mode of embroidering it either way. The most satisfactory results are obtained by working parts solid and leaving others in outline, and this will be found particularly so when two or more colors of silk are employed. This design may be carried out in almost any width, but the most desirable will be from three inches and a half to six inches.

For table-covers, large centrepieces and sofa-pillows a very attractive running border and corner is suggested in Illustration No. 8, and while the beauty of it can hardly be judged from the small illustration, it is one of the most attractive running borders worked in three colors that can be arranged for this style of embroidery. The running vine and harp corners, with the laurel branch and leaves, together with the pearl line around the entire outer edge, form one of the most pleasing of design construction, and should not fail to give entire satisfaction.

With the motives given in these few designs it should not be a difficult matter for any one to combine the features in such a manner as to produce almost any design of the Marie Antoinette style that may be desired to adorn a piece of fancy or useful linen other than those mentioned, and for any use whatever the required members for a new design may be drawn from some one or all of these illustrations, with the full assurance of artistic results.

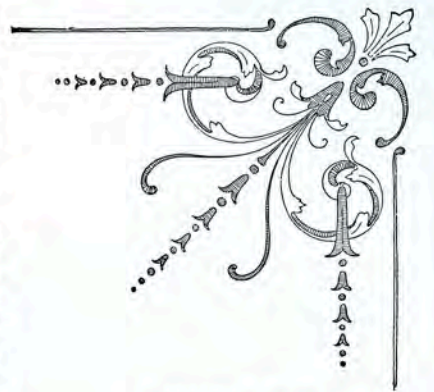


ILLUSTRATION No. 4

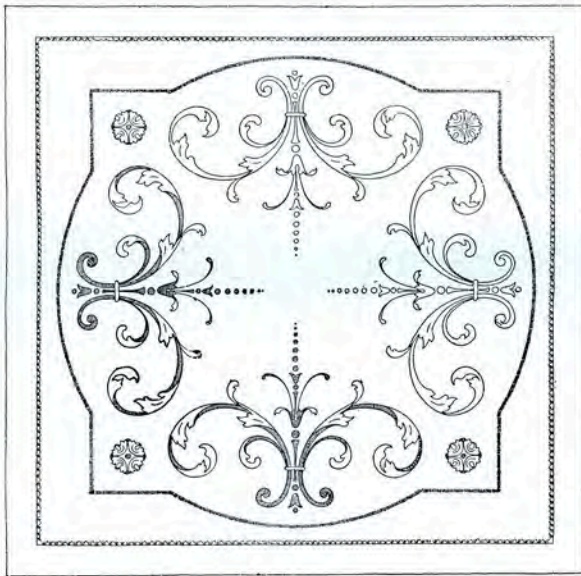


ILLUSTRATION No. 1

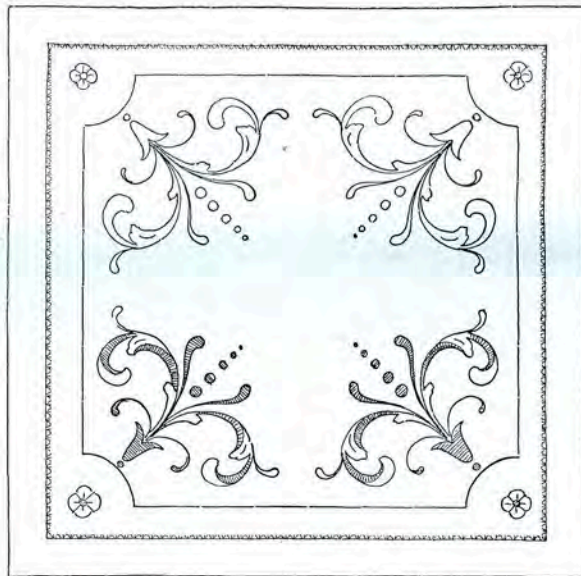


ILLUSTRATION No. 3

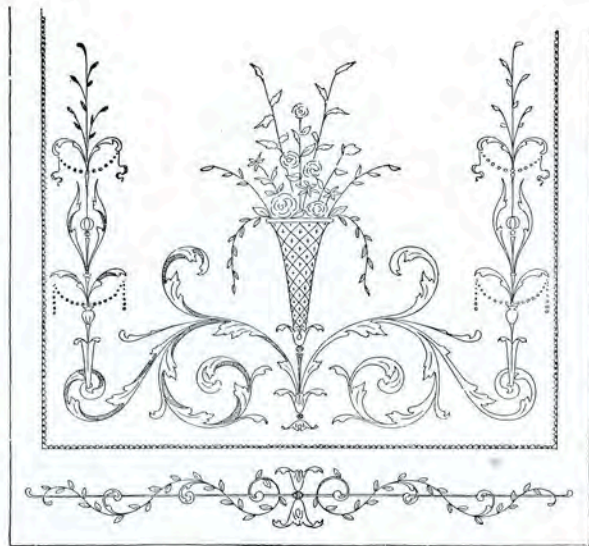


ILLUSTRATION No. 5

They will be worked in, of course, with the boundary line that extends all around the square or oblong, as it may be, the beginning of which is shown on the outside of the corner design. A good size for this corner is six or seven inches long on one of the straight sides, and if seven inches long the angle measurement from the top pearl to the end of the fan ornament will be seven inches and a half.

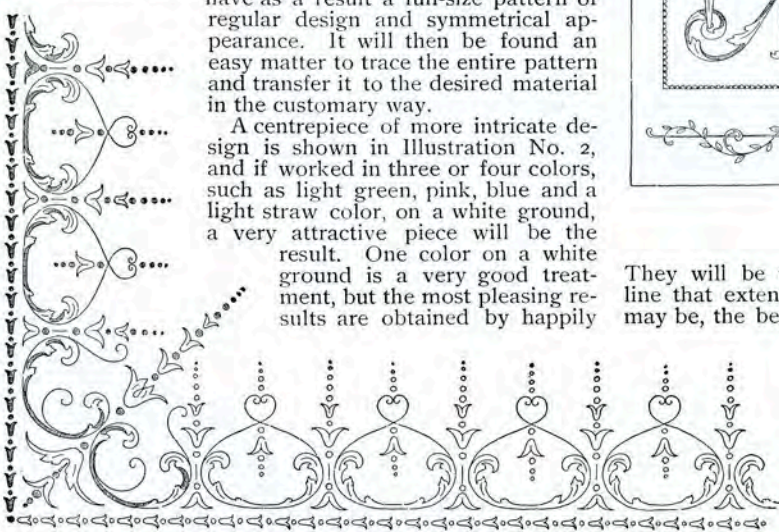


ILLUSTRATION No. 7

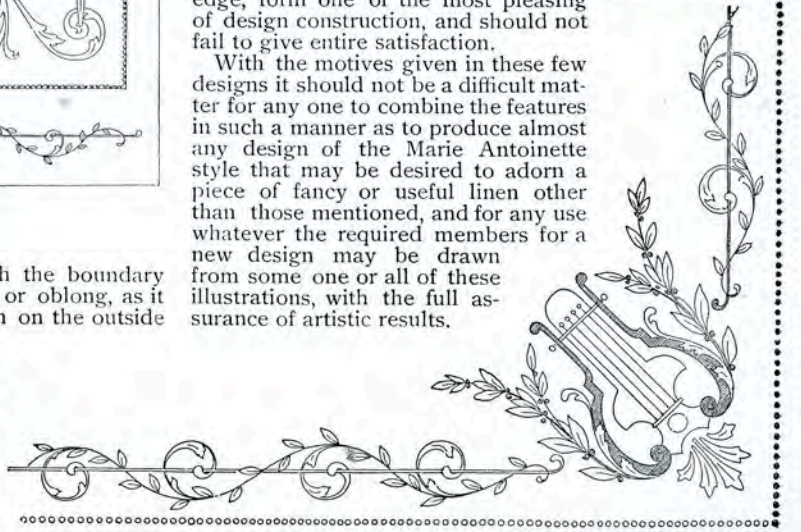


ILLUSTRATION No. 8