

FIG. 1.—PASSION FLOWER BORDER.

CREWEL EMBROIDERY FOR DRESSES.

THE selection of the material for a new dress should always be made with great care. Washable dresses are, of course, better for household work, cleanliness being all important; but in our best dresses a more expensive fabric is desirable. All woollen materials and cashmeres are preferred to silks and satins, being softer to the touch, more harmonious in colour, and easily growing, as it were, to the figure, and nothing can exceed the beauty of the folds of a woollen fabric. Silk and, more especially, satin are harsher, and, having a glazy surface, catch the glare of the light somewhat disagreeably. Neither do they fall so gracefully as woollen garments, the folds of silk and satin more resembling crumpled paper. Velvet and plush are handsome, though somewhat heavy and hot looking, and are, perhaps, more fitted for the matron than the maiden.

Dress should always be suitable to the position of life we occupy, and also appropriate to the duties we have to perform. It would be as inappropriate in a housemaid to wear velvet as for the daughter of the house to perform her domestic duties in satin. A simple dress should be ornamented with other

materials, such as lace or embroidery; or, as a designer would say, by surface, rather than constructive, decoration. For instance, if, instead of a frill or flounce attached to the dress, we worked a border of embroidery upon the dress itself, we should thus beautify the surface without altering its shape. And, as most girls nowadays can embroider in crewels, we present our readers with a few illustrations of specially-executed designs. These designs are drawn the sizes they might be worked, though they can easily be enlarged by the usual method, and can be executed in either silk or crewels. Without going so far as to say that embroidery is the only legitimate kind of dress decoration, it is, nevertheless, one of the most appropriate and at the same time most beautiful. Among the many advantages it possesses over other trimmings may be mentioned—1, it can be worked on parts of the dress where other trimmings would be out of place; 2, it gives a girl scope for originality, as she can work her own designs and arrange the colouring to suit her taste and her dress; 3, it gives individuality to a garment, for, if all girls worked their own embroidery, no two dresses would be alike; even if the de-

signs used were the same, the colouring could be different; while a girl with any invention could always design her own. As embroidery for dresses generally takes the form of borders we have given five designs of various widths and styles, suitable for all parts of the dress, and which we here proceed to describe.

Fig 1 is founded upon the common passion flower, and can easily be made continuous, the position of the second flower being shown at the edge of the design; the work between the third and fourth flower being merely a repetition of this illustration, and so on to any length. All these designs should be traced on tracing paper and pricked on the *wrong* side. Then, with some powdered charcoal, in a piece of muslin or old stocking, if on a light material, or chalk if on a dark one, the design, on the *right* side should be gone over, and the powder passing through the holes will leave an impression, which must be marked over with a brush and Indian ink or Chinese white to fix the design upon the material to be worked.

The petals of the passion flower are creamy white, the five smaller petals being somewhat greener in tone; the centre of flower purple,

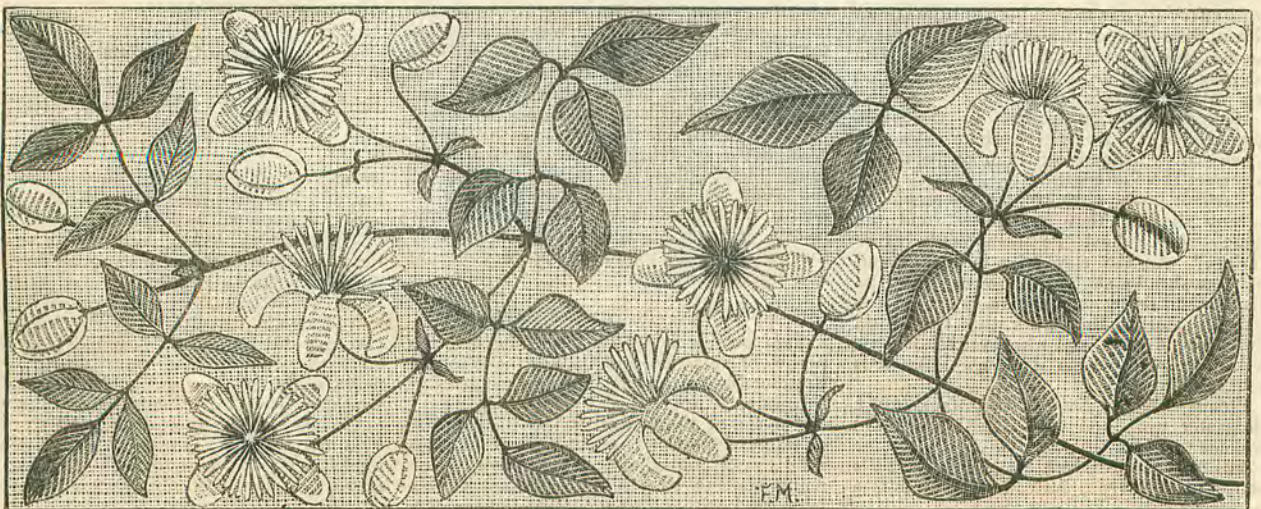


FIG. 2.—WILD CLEMATIS.

stamens and pistil yellow; the leaves are a warm green; the bud reddish pink, inclining to cream. The tendrils of the plant will be found to give delicacy to the design, and should be lighter than the leaves. This design would be more effective on a dark than on a light ground.

Fig. 2 is founded on the wild clematis, or traveller's joy, as it is commonly called. It is very delicate in form, and would do for either a light or dark ground. The flowers are creamy white; the stamens, which are very numerous, as will be seen, are greenish yellow in tone; buds, same colour as stamens; leaves, yellowish green; stems, slightly brown. In making a continuous design, it will be necessary to run a main stem at the back of the design, towards the lower part of the design, to connect one section with another.

Fig. 3 would make an exceedingly handsome border for the front of a dress, and would be effective worked on a cream-coloured ground, though a dark one would look perhaps as well. Everyone will recognise it as the honeysuckle, a plant frequently introduced by the Greeks into their architecture. The opened flowers are creamy white, inclining to pink. The buds are a delicate warm pink, such as would be produced in painting by glazing a wash of yellow with one of rose pink. The smaller buds are deeper pink, as the flower lightens as it arrives at maturity. The peculiar oval leaf growing at the base of the flowers should be a nice green, rather darker than the rest of the leaves. The flower stems are green, while the main stem at back might be brown green. This pattern can be made continuous by reversing every alternate section, so that the two unopened flowers growing together will come first on the right hand of the design, and then on the left, and so on.

Fig. 4 requires little comment. It is drawn from the bryony, one of our familiar creeping plants. Here, again, the tendrils form a great feature. This plant changes to the most beautiful shades of yellow in the autumn, and with its orange berries is full of suggestion to the designer. It would look effective on a dark red or brown material.

Fig. 5 is merely a conventional border, and can, therefore, be worked in any colours. Tones of yellow and brown, white and yellow-green, blue and olive would all be suitable, according to the material.

Fig. 6 is given more as a suggestion of how plants may be treated in crewel work. It is intended to show how to draw "sprigs," as they are usually termed, to "powder" over a surface, very much after the fashion of the pompadour dresses. An apron, the body, or the entire front of a dress could be treated in this way, providing the colouring be harmonious and the work delicate. The flowers used as "sprigs" in fig. 6 are familiar ones, comprising, as they do, the hepatica, wood-sorrel, or shamrock, water buttercup, lesser celandine, and dog-rose, while a few leaves are employed



FIG. 3.—HONEYSUCKLE DESIGN.

to fill up the gaps in the illustration and also to show how leaves could be treated as a design. An easy way to make a pattern of leaves is to get such plants as the Virginia creeper, one of the most gorgeous of

autumnal plants, the blackberry, bryony, maple, &c.; and by brushing a little Chinese white or Indian ink over the leaves, and then pressing them upon the material to be embroidered, an impression can be obtained



FIG. 4.—BRYONY.

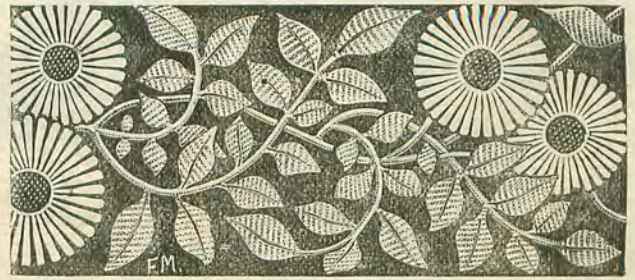


FIG. 5.

sufficient for working from. It will be found necessary to mix a little ox-gall with the colour to prevent the greasiness of the leaves resisting the action of the ink or white.

Before closing this paper we would urge upon all our readers the necessity of selecting such colours, either in their dress materials or their crewels and silks, as shall be quiet and pleasant to the eye, carefully avoiding anything bright and strong. Rather choose neutral colours, such as olives, brown-greens, and greys, than positive ones like red, bright blue, or violet. A colour may be brilliant without being gaudy, providing it be not a pure colour. For instance, blue-greens and peacock-blues are delightful colours, through the toning of the blue with the green, while emerald green and bright blue are far from pleasant, producing on the eye much the same effect as a room painted vermilion. The colours of embroidery must always be regulated by the tone of the dress and made to harmonise

with it. Thus, on a red brown dress it would be out of place to introduce so strong a contrast as blue; but by working such a pattern as fig. 4 in rich tones of yellow, green, orange, and brown, an harmonious and pleasing effect would result, and would greatly set-off the colour of the dress. With regard to black, a colour so much affected by English people, it certainly seems a pity that youth should array itself in what is at best a dismal hue—the emblem we employ to denote grief and death, and therefore quite out of harmony with bright, joyous youth. Dr. Richardson tells us that it is an unhealthy colour, but I am afraid, like much else in ladies' dressing, fashion is paramount; but be assured that those who are slaves to fashion can never dress well, as no fashion can possibly be universal, scarcely three people being able to dress alike without spoiling their appearance. Those are the best dressed people who betray no sign of the milliner or dressmaker about them.

AMBITION

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

HAVING gained the golden opinions of her country world, the season found Mrs. Belmore culling them in town. She was even more admired and followed in London than she had been at Belmore, and her house became the centre not only of fashionable, but diplomatic circles. Constance had returned home, but at the reiterated entreaties of her cousin consented to pay her a visit. It was her first initiation into what is called "The Season," and perhaps her astonishment surpassed her enjoyment. Coming fresh from the country, the bustle and gaiety of London frightened her almost as much as Lord John's wit and talent had done. Still more did Selina's endeavours to bring her forward alarm her. The more she shrank from notice the more her cousin strove to draw her into it.

"I mean to get you off this very spring," said Mrs. Belmore one day. "I don't quite think Lord John would do, but there are Sir James Lyle and a host of others. You are really admired now, and looking your best, so we will not let you get old and *passé* before we establish you."

"I am established already with my mother at Cedarton, and just between ourselves, Selina, I have seen no one as yet that I respect or particularly care for. Besides, I feel old already; still, I am not likely to marry, so pray do not waste your talents on me," replied Constance. "Unless I marry for love I die an old maid."

"That is an extinct animal nowadays. The unmarried women are no longer old maids. They are "sisters," or "strong-minded ladies," or artists, authors, carvers, and gilders—anything but old maids. I believe they have the best of it, and I begin to wish I were single."

"And you have such a kind, good husband, Selina!"

Mrs. Belmore shrugged her shoulders, and changed the conversation. In truth, she was beginning to find her



FIG. 6.