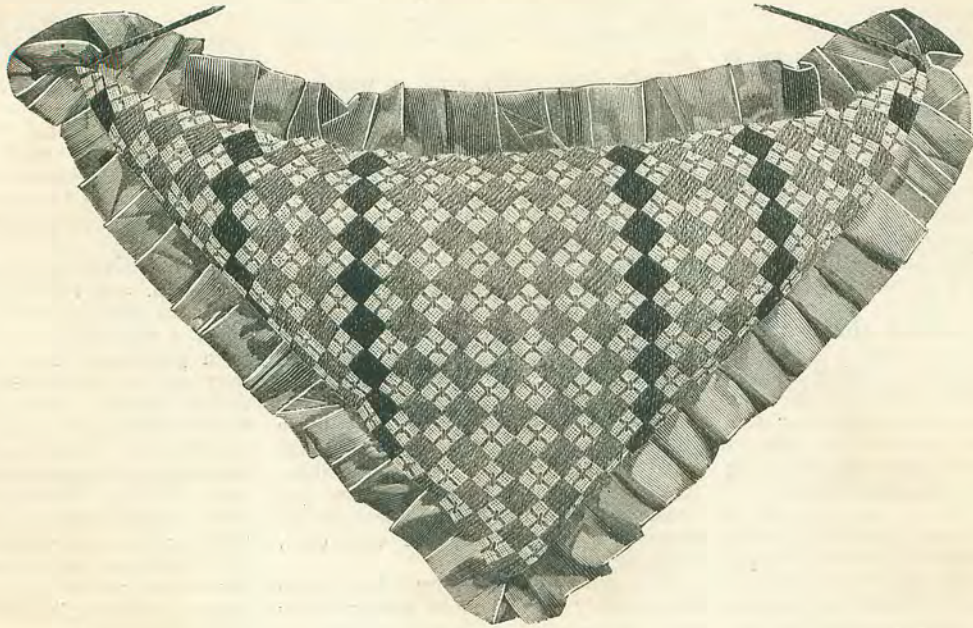


DUSTER WORK.

By JOSEPHA CRANE.



THE common check duster which can be procured anywhere, can by the exercise of a little taste and care be converted into many charming articles of household use.

If anybody is inclined to inquire why dusters should be used in preference to any other kind of linen or material, I would reply that it is simply because they can be had anywhere, which puts the work within the power of all, and secondly, because the correctness of the squares makes it possible to do a great many patterns and be certain at the same time that they are quite straight. To work a flower or spray on a plain ground is easy enough, but those who like doing squares and bars would find it somewhat difficult to get the lines quite straight. A third reason why duster work is to be recommended, is that it is inexpensive. The dusters cost only a few pence each, and though you can work in silks if you prefer it, cottons do quite as well.

Embroidery cottons, flax-thread and especially the soft D. M. C. *coton à repriser* all answer the purpose, and as these can be had in various shades of many colours very charming effects can be produced. Always get the best dusters. The cheaper kind are thin, and it is not worth while working upon them.

If you will examine the illustrations given here you will easily see how to work upon dusters, and it must be borne in mind that neatness is necessary, for simple as are the stitches employed, and easy as are the patterns, neither look well unless carefully executed. Fig. 1 is done upon a section of common red and blue check duster, the piece used being near the border, along which is a thick line which serves as a foundation for the bar of satin-stitching.

The colours used here are terra-cotta and claret, and the material is *coton à repriser*.

Above the bar of claret satin-stitch are vandykes of terra-cotta. As you will see by examining the illustration, half of each vandyke is done at a time.

Above the vandykes are alternate blocks of the two colours, a line of stem-stitch running down the centre dividing them off.

At the top are large blocks covering four small squares and worked diagonally. The two colours are employed, and then the diagonal bar from corner to corner is worked thus:—Take a long stitch across, doubling your cotton and not allowing it to be drawn too tightly, or, on the other hand to lie loosely, both being faults which make the work look bad.

Across the claret your thread should be terra-cotta and *vice versa*. Then place two back stitches to secure the long thread. These can be in the same colour as in example, or in a contrasting colour. By way of variation you could put more back stitches.

Fig. 2 is done on a plain blue duster. The lower bar is done in satin-stitch over one row of checks. The small vandykes pointing downwards are worked as in Fig. 1, but they are smaller as the checks are smaller. The upper band is done in button-hole stitch worked closely together. The stitch should be worked thus:—Run a few stitches along the upper and lower line of the bar, as that gives strength and makes it more solid. Then work from left to right. Bring your needle and cotton up on the outside guiding line, pressing your cotton under the thumb of your left hand. Insert the needle in the upper line of the bar, and bring it up on the outside line and over the cotton held by the thumb of your left hand. Draw it up and continue, setting your stitches in closely together and all of perfectly equal height.

The colour used here is pale blue.

Red and yellow blocks worked diagonally over four checks is seen in Fig. 3. The cotton is the same *coton à repriser*, and a line

of yellow stem-stitch runs down between the blocks one way so as to form lines.

Fig. 4 shows satin-stitch blocks of terra-cotta and claret in the same kind of cotton. The arrangement of the blocks is clearly seen in illustration.

In Fig. 5, red and yellow cotton is used. The stars on the lowest row are in yellow, the long red bars above crossed with yellow and secured with a single back stitch.

Fig. 6 is done in two shades of blue cotton. Fig. 7 is worked in several stitches on a red and blue duster of a different pattern to those already described.

Stars, wheels, and herring-bone, stem-stitch and satin-stitch are all used.

Fig. 8 is a large block of eight squares covered with diagonal satin-stitch in green cotton. This is crossed with pale pink, and secured with a diagonal stitch where the lines cross. This stitch is often called Arabian, and is found in many Eastern embroideries.

In Fig. 9 a deep bar over two blocks of check is worked in green cotton—the same *coton à repriser* which has been used hitherto. This is crossed with *coton cannelé* in two shades of yellow.

The open-work pattern on the rest of the border is worked in the same yellows, simply little crosses in one shade secured by a back-stitch of the other.

Triangular head-rests are very much used now, and can be made very easily by part of a duster folded across diagonally.

The one seen in illustration is worked in lines of blocks of three shades of pink. The spaces between have pale green crosses going over the lines of the duster and secured by a single back-stitch to fasten them in the centre.

The back is lined with pink sateen, and a frill of the same goes all round, while the head-rest is suspended by a red cord. The stuffing is cotton wool.

As will be seen by what I have already described, all kinds of variations obtain in this work.

You can make cushion-covers in it, bedspreads in sections joined together, work-bags, sachels and all kinds of things.

Appliqué is charming done on dusters as a foundation, and flannel binding or ribbon run on can make them very pretty.

Although my readers will be able to get a great deal of variety with the stitches already named I must mention a few more, and will quote the best directions I have come across for executing them.

"Wheat-ear stitch. To work, be guided by three perpendicular lines of the duster, and take the centre line as a guide for the chain-stitch, and the outer lines to regulate the size of the spikes. Bring up the needle on the centre line, hold the cotton under the left-hand thumb, insert the needle nearly in the same place as the cotton emerges from, only a thread or two to the right, and bring it up on the same line, only a quarter of an inch lower down and over the cotton held by the thumb, draw

through; this forms a chain-stitch. Insert the needle on the left-hand guiding-line at the same level as you commenced the chain-stitch, and bring it out on the lower part of the chain-stitch, draw through, insert the needle on the right-hand guiding-line at the same level, and bring it out again in the lower part of the chain-stitch; next work another chain-stitch followed by a spike-stitch, and continue."

"Cable-plait stitch. Be guided by parallel lines and begin on the left-hand side to work from left to right; bring up the needle and cotton on the lower tracing-line, hold the cotton down under the left-hand thumb and pass the needle from right to left under the cotton so held, and draw up till the cotton still held under the thumb is brought to the size of a small loop; put the point of the needle under the small loop, raising the loop level with the top line, where insert the needle, bringing out the point straight below on the bottom line; release the loop from

under the thumb and draw it round the top of the needle, and pass the cotton thence from left to right under the point of the needle and draw through; every stitch is formed in the same way, and the result produces a raised thick plait on the right side of the material, and a series of small perpendicular stitches on the wrong side. A little practice will render this stitch quite easy of accomplishment; but a small knot is formed in the cotton by the process of working it is almost impossible to undo when once the needle is drawn in position, and therefore great attention must be paid to the *twisting of the cotton* right round the needle, keeping the stitches the same even width all along the line."

If my readers like to do the duster work in all kinds of colours, they will succeed in getting a very Oriental effect. Odds and ends can be used up very well here, and a cushion-cover done in silks not two checks alike would be novel and pretty.

