

sconscious of a coming Christmas, for the present holds all the world to them. With the butterflies, the wild flowers, the whortleberries and pond lilies, with the dangers of a water snake, Christmas is very far from them. Mamma may be working on the most curious of stuffs, but it will all pass unheeded if she is only an interested listener to the wonderful stories they have to relate. There are many gifts one can prepare while away.

A hand-made letter portfolio for the half-grown daughter, who is becoming such a dainty amanuensis for her busy mother, is easy of construction. The task of writing for mamma will become one of love and pride, if a lovely portfolio is the writer's own property. Heavy cardboard or the old covers from an atlas are just the thing. These are to be covered with heavy gray linen, plush or satin, whilst chamois is also very appropriate. The inside boards are not quite so wide, and are fastened to the outside ones at the front edge, while the ends have folded pieces, generally of ribbon, like the partitions of a pocketbook, and open in towards the center like a card case. The back is of the goods padded with cotton and interlined with canvas. One pocket will hold letters, the other the necessary writing material, with a blotter caught to one side. The covering is neatly overhanded, and is ornamental in a variety of ways, painting of course being the quickest and prettiest. A band of the crocheted rings finishes it in a good style, and with plush is quite sufficient for adornment.

Chamois can have the iridescent paint applied in all odd geometrical figures. A companion gift for the promising lad of the family is one of the beautiful blotters. Gay lacquered rings some six inches in diameter, come for the fancy towel holders. They originally made their appearance with large-

sized curtain rings. The new ones are an improvement over the first for being so large, a towel is easily drawn through. Three rings form the set, one for the main and two for the suspended ones, intended for the towels. With their gay ribbon, they prove a bright addition to the guest chamber. Speaking of towels reminds one of the elegant ones that adorn the linen department of our large stores. Some have hemstitched and drawn work ends, and such beautiful vines, and if one yields to the temptation and invests in a couple of these elegant articles, the monogram can be stamped and embroidered in colors.

Aprons are always pleasant work. One new and dainty style is one of fine nainsook with tucks across the bottom. These are cut into squares by slashing up to the stitching, then the corners of each slash are drawn up till a point is formed. If the apron is a yard wide, then thirty-six slashes can be made in the lowest hem, and in the next, one less every seventh interval; the second two, the third three, and so on to the seventh or top hem, where there will be just one opened slash, which will form the point, there being five large upward points of smaller ones.

Another apron easily made is of large-sized polka dot Swiss muslin, and several rows or one or two diagonal corners are brightened by the dots being embroidered over with bright silk, red, yellow or blue. Some use the dots as dark centers to yellow daisies, which they form by radiating petals from them. Yet another pretty style is a simple, plain white apron, with a three-cornered silk piece, painted of course and faced, lightly tacked on the lower left-hand corner. When a bit of feather stitching, a few yards of delicate ribbon and a yard of sheer muslin can form an apron, there is no excuse for being without these feminine adjuncts.

BUTTON-HOLE STITCH, AND SOME OF ITS USES IN DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY.

ELLEN GALUSHA SMITH.

A FEW years ago, button-hole stitch was regarded as belonging exclusively to the useful, rather than the ornamental depart-

ment of the needle-woman's art, its only adaption to decorative purposes being found on the edges of the sensible and serviceable

"scallops" with which our mothers ornamented their children's underwear.

Possibly it is because machinery has encroached, of late, upon its original use as a strengthener of button-holes that it has been found possible to put the stitch to other uses, far different from its first purpose. Whatever the reason, it is certainly true that this simple stitch is now applied to many and various styles of decorative designs, some of which we shall consider in this article.

To a needle-worker looking for a stitch at once simple, effective, and rapidly executed, there is, perhaps, no one that, used alone, will better answer all these requirements, than this same old-fashioned button-hole stitch. Its advantages are perhaps best seen in large conventional designs, where it is not

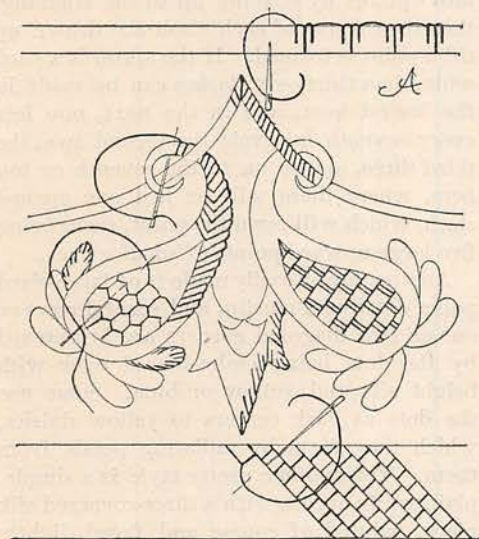


DIAGRAM A.

desirable to entirely cover the surface included within the outlines of the design.

Such patterns for draperies, table or bed-covers, or sofa pillows, worked with rope silk, rope linen or Begarren linen, either on heavy cotton or woollen goods, are handsome, and do not require one-quarter the time for their execution that solid work in finer threads would take.

In the design lettered "A," is illustrated a pattern that shows a number of different adaptations of button-hole stitch, as follows: The cord from which the main figures appear to depend is worked in the simple stitch, the

same as a button-hole would be, only that the stitches are put a little distance apart, instead of being set closely together.

The narrow border above the design is also the plain stitch, except that the stitches are set in trios, the longest stitch of each trio being in the center, with a shorter one on either side of it. These center stitches should be of the same length throughout the border, and the shorter ones about two-thirds the length of the longer ones. Whenever this arrangement is used, the trios should have a space between them that is equal to the center stitches.

The center space of the figure at the left is filled with an adaptation of button-hole stitch called "honey-comb stitch," or "box stitch." The manner of working it is easily taken from the engraving. It is simply rows of button-hole stitches, one above another, with the stitches separated in each row, and alternated with those of the row previously worked. The six-sided effect, which gives it the resemblance to a honey-comb cell, is made by drawing the loose thread that is left between the stitches, up a little, when the row above is worked. The narrow space outside the center is worked with simple button-hole stitches taken diagonally across the space.

The center of the right hand figure is filled with an adaptation of the stitch a little different from the honey-comb stitch in the center of the first figure. The button-hole stitches here are made in couples, with a little space between each two pairs. These spaces should always alternate, as the effect is lost if they occur one above another.

The leaf-like projections near the bases of the figures have a row of button-hole stitches around their edges. These stitches should have a little space between them, and should be of uneven lengths—alternate long and short stitches. When completed, the effect is much the same as that produced by the stitch called variously "half Kensington stitch," or "long and short stitch," only that there is a button-hole finish at the edges.

The edges of the small figures below and between the two larger ones, are finished the same as these leaf-like projections.

The stitch used in the border at the bottom is like that in the center of the right-hand figure, except that but one stitch is taken in

a place. This style of button-hole stitch is sometimes called "brick stitch."

Design "A," as shown here, is of a size suitable to form, by repetition, a border for the end of a sideboard or bureau scarf, or small table cover.

The colors chosen for the embroidery should harmonize with the color of the material on which they are used, as well as with the other furnishings and decorations of the room.

On white or cream-colored cotton, or linen bolton sheeting, or momie cloth, or butchers' linen, an appropriate combination of colors would be old blues and golden browns. On the Florence shade card these are numbered, for the blues, 736, 737 and 738; browns, 646, 647, 648 and 649. Use the darkest shade of blue for the cord, and fill the centers of the large figures with the other shades, putting but one tint, however, in a center. For the narrow button-hole stitch around the center, use either the lightest or darkest shade of brown, and the other three shades for the leaf-like projections at the sides, putting the darkest of the three remaining shades at the bottom, the medium one in the center, and the lightest in the top leaf. The edges of the little figure in the center should be of blue.

The borders at top and bottom may be of either one of the colors used in the main part of the design, or of a gold-color that blends with the browns, as No. 507. If a warmer effect is desired, terra cottas may be substituted in place of the blues. Of course the design could be carried out in a single color, or in but a single shade of the colors given, but a more pleasing variety is given by using several tints of the colors, as suggested.

This design, enlarged by two, is suitable for a border to a portière, bed-spread, or large table-cover. In this size, the best threads with which to work it, would be rope silk or Begarren linen, and it could be carried out in any harmonious combination of colors, either on heavy cotton or wool.

Almost any conventional design containing large spaces can be effectively worked by a judicious combination of the various button-hole stitches shown in engraving "A."

Decoration for Dress.

In diagram "B" is shown a design, executed for the most part in button-hole stitch,

that is appropriate for the decoration of a dress. By the judicious selection of colors, and a careful use of gold thread (not cord), or bullion, it very closely resembles the Persian embroideries that are so handsome, and so expensive.

A very delicate effect, suitable for an evening dress, can be produced as follows: Tan shades 689 and 690, old blue 736 and 737, and terra cotta 718 and 719 of the Florence shade card. The thread to be used is a half strand of filoselle.



DIAGRAM B.

The large curves in the center are worked with the light shades of tan and blue 689 and 736, by a double row of button-hole stitch, one row worked towards the top, and the other towards the bottom of the pattern, as shown in the engraving. The goods should show between each two pairs of stitches, but not between the two colors of each pair. These curves should be edged with gold thread, in outline stitch.

The round dots just above these curves should be embroidered in satin, or laid stitch, with their little stems in fine outline stitch, with the darkest shade of blue.

The small curves below the larger ones may be worked either in satin stitch, or in solid button-hole stitch of the light terra cotta, 718.

The scallops at the sides should be of the darkest tan, and the darker terra cotta, or tan and blue, as desired. One row of one color, and the other of the other shade. These scallops should be outlined with gold thread on their outer edges.

If gold thread is thought to be too expensive for a large piece of this embroidery, a hard-twisted etching silk of gold color may be substituted.

This design is equally appropriate for dark material in suitable colors. The richness of the effect it produces when worked can hardly be realized from the outline pattern.

As a dress trimming, it may form the vest, collar and cuffs of a basque; and it can be used as a skirt decoration, either perpendicularly or horizontally. It is also appropriate for the full length of the front of a "directory coat."

Cord and Button-Hole Stitch.

Design "C" shows another use of button-hole stitch that may serve as a decoration for anything that needs to be laundered.

It consists of a linen cord button-hole stitched down with some one of the various wash silks. The silk used can be of any color, and this style of decoration can be put to a variety of uses. For instance, all kinds of household linen can be ornamented in this way, and it also forms a charming trimming

for dresses of firm wash goods, such as sateen and piqué.

The dots are worked in satin stitch, and their stems in outline stitch.

If the button-hole stitches are set tolerably close together—one-sixteenth of an inch

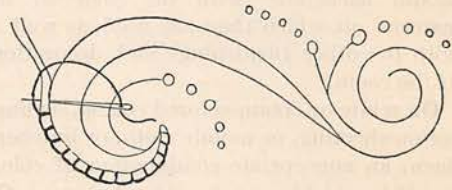


DIAGRAM C.

apart—the goods can be cut away outside of them, just as was done in the case of the old-fashioned scallops. The effect of work on heavy linen, with the edges finished in this way is very beautiful and commands a high price.

These are a few of the decorative uses to which button-hole stitch may be applied.

From these hints an ingenious needlewoman can find many other effective ways of using it.

WATER FOR THE BABY.

A PHYSICIAN being called upon to visit a sick child, found the babe in apparently good health, but crying and struggling continually as though suffering extreme pain and anguish. The mother stated that the child seemed to be hungry continually, and in order to quiet him she had been obliged to let it nurse as often as the crying paroxysms came on. When that failed to quiet it, paregoric or soothing syrup had been administered.

"When did you give the babe a drink of water last?" inquired the physician.

"I do n't remember," replied the mother. "I seldom let him drink any water. Does he need it?"

"Need it!" exclaimed the doctor. "Why should he not need it as much as you? The child is suffering from thirst—nothing more."

He accordingly called for cold water, gave the infant a few tablespoonfuls, and it immediately ceased crying and fretting, and soon went peacefully to sleep, enjoying a long, refreshing slumber, the first for many hours. Mothers and nurses should remember this. Infants who nurse may often suffer torment for the lack of a drink of water. Often a child cries from nothing but thirst; therefore, use common-sense, and instead of dosing it with poisonous compounds, give the little sufferer all the water he wants.

—Lillian Thorne in *Sanitary Volunteer*.