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 glistening 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 designs 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,
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. 3 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 foliage, 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 butternut, lesser celandine, and dog-rose, while a few leaves are employed 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.
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 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.

**THE DOG OF MONTARGIS.**

The fame of an English dog has been so little transmitted that it is difficult to trace it, although a monument in brass relief, which still remains on the chimney-piece of the grand hall, at the Castle of Montargis in France. The sculpture, which represents a dog fighting with a chamois, is explained by the following narrative.

As the de Mondildier, a gentleman of family and fortune, travelling alone through the Forest of Bondi, was murdered, he lay under a tree. His dog, an English bloodhound, would not quit his master’s grave for several days; till at last, by hunger, he proceeded to the house of an intimate friend of the unfortunate Aubri, at Paris and by his melancholy howling, seemed destitute of expressing the loss they had both sustained. He repeated his cries, ran to the door, looked back to see if anyone followed him, returned to his master’s friend, pulled him by the sleeve, and with dumb eloquence entreated him to go with him.

The singularity of all these actions of the dog, added to the circumstance of his coming there without his master, whose faithful companion he had always been, prompted the company to follow the animal, who conducted them to a tree, where he renewed his howl, scratching the earth with his feet, and significantly entreating them to search that particular spot. Accordingly, on digging, the body of the unhappy Aubri was found. Some time after, the dog accidentally met the assassin, who was styled, by all the historians that relate this fact, the Chevalier Macaire; when instantly seizing him by the throat, he was with great difficulty compelled to quit his prey.

In short, whenever the dog saw the chevalier, he continued to pursue and attack him with equal fury. Such obstinate virulence in the animal, confined only to Macaire, appeared very extraordinary, especially to those who at once recollected the dog’s remarkable attachment to his master, and several instances in which Macaire’s envy and hatred to Aubri de Mondildier had been conspicuous. Additional circumstances created suspicions, and at length the affair reached the royal ear. The king (Louis VIII.) accordingly sent for the dog, who appeared extremely gentle, till he perceived Macaire in the midst of several noblemen, when he ran fiercely towards him, growling at and attacking him as usual.

The king, struck with the production of circumstantial evidence against Macaire, determined to refer the decision to the chance of battle; in other words, he gave orders for a combat between the chevalier and the dog.

The lists were appointed in the Isle of Notre Dame, then an unenclosed, uninhabited place, as Macaire was allowed for his weapon a great cudgel.

An empty cask was given to the dog as a place of retreat, to enable him to recover breath. Everything being prepared, the dog no sooner found himself at liberty, than he ran round his adversary, avoiding his blows, and menacing him on every side, till his strength was exhausted; then, springing forward, he gripped him by the throat, threw him on the ground, and obliged him to confess his guilt, in the presence of the king, and the whole court.

In consequence of this, the chevalier, after a few days, was convicted upon his own acknowledgment, and beheaded on a scaffold in the Isle of Notre Dame.

The above recital is translated from "Memoires sur les Ducs," and is cited by many critical writers, particularly Julius Scaliger, and Musset, who has given an excellent representation of the combat between the dog and the chevalier.