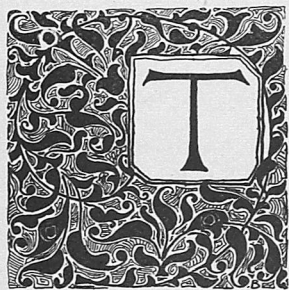


DECORATIVE TEXTILE FABRICS

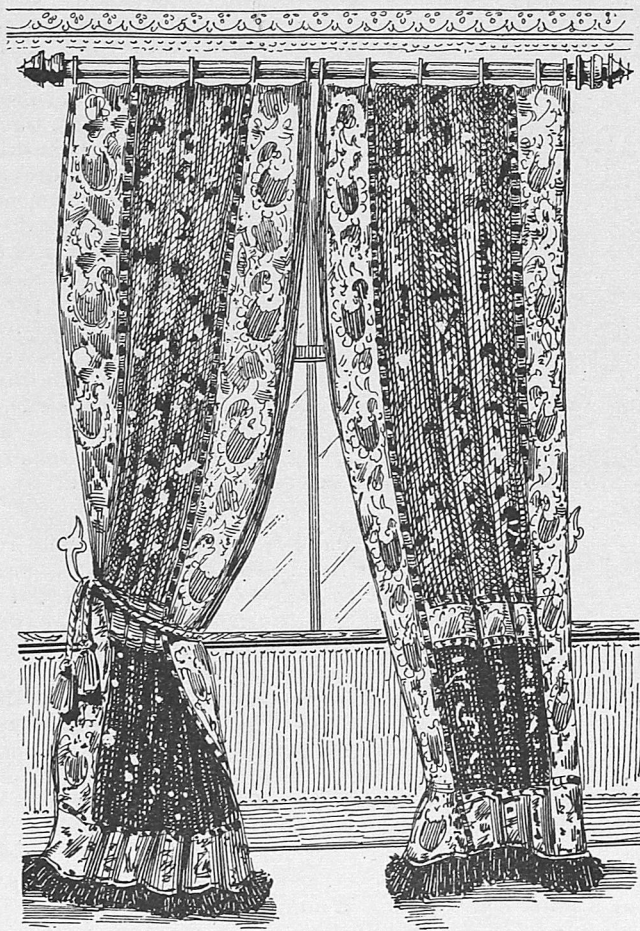
EMBROIDERY.

BY MAY MORRIS.



THE technicalities of embroidery are very simple, and its tools few—practically consisting of a needle, and nothing else. The work can be wrought loose in the hand, or stretched in a frame, which latter mode is often advisable, always when smooth and minute work is aimed at. There are no mysteries of method, beyond a few elementary rules that can be quickly learnt; no way to perfection except that of care and

patience and love of the work itself. This being so, the more is demanded from *design* and *execution*; we want also complete triumph over the limitations of process and material, and what is equally important, suitability of purpose. The latitude allowed to the worker; the lavishness and ingenuity displayed in the stitches employed; in short the expression of the workers' individuality, form a great part of the success of needlework.



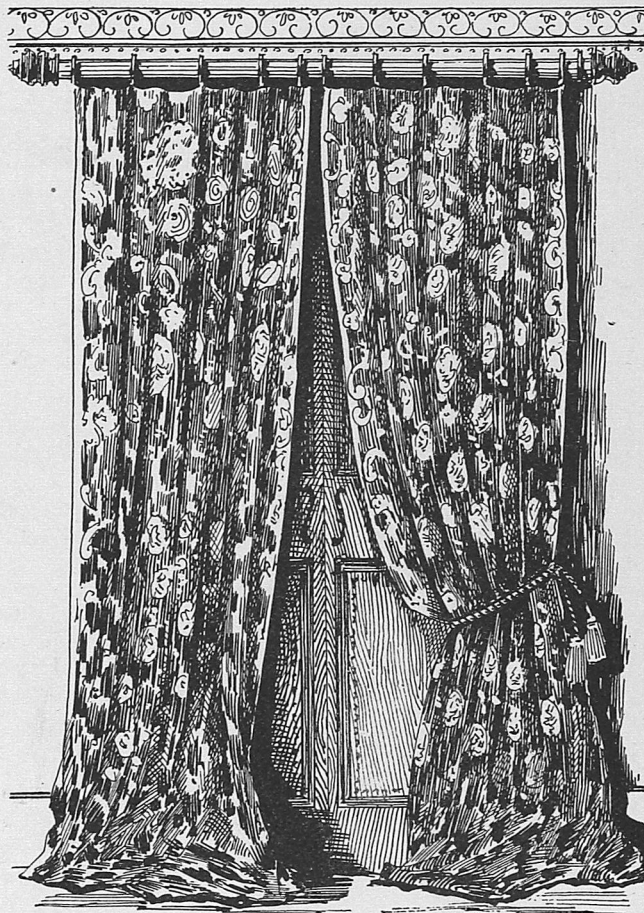
SIMPLE WINDOW DRAPERY.

The varieties of stitch are too many to be described closely without diagrams, but the chief are as follows:

Chain-stitch consists of loops simulating the links of a simple chain. Some of the most famous work of the middle ages was

worked in this stitch, which is enduring, and of its nature necessitates careful execution. We are more familiar with it in the dainty work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the airy brightness and simplicity of which lies a peculiar charm, contrasted with the more pompous and pretentious work of the same period. This stitch is also wrought with a hook on any loose material stretched on a *tambour* frame.

Tapestry stitch consists of stitches laid one beside another, and gives a surface slightly resembling that of tapestry. I give the name, as it is so often used, but it is vague and leads to the confusion that exists in people's minds between loom tapestry and embroidery. The stitch is particularly suitable for the drapery of figures and anything that requires a slight amount of shading or "painting."



SIMPLE DOOR DRAPERY.

Applique has been and is still a favorite method of work, which Vasari says Botticelli praised as being very suitable to processional banners and hangings used in the open air, as it is solid and enduring, also bold and effective in style. It consists of designs embroidered on a stout ground, and then cut out and laid on silk or velvet, and edged round with lines of gold or silk, and sometimes with pearls. It requires considerable deftness and judgment in applying, as the work could well be spoilt by clumsy and heavy finishing. It is now looked upon as solely ecclesiastical, I believe, and is associated in our minds with garish red and gold and white. Another form of applied work is done by laying down gold threads or silken ones directly on the silk or linen ground work to be decorated; the effect of this tracery, with a little closer work here and there, is very delicate.

Couching is an effective method of work, in which broad masses of silk or gold thread are laid down and secured by a network or diaper of crossing threads, through which the under surface shines very prettily. Of this work there as many varieties as the worker has invention for.

Patchwork. The ingenious coverlets of our grandmothers, formed of scraps of old gowns pieced together in a certain symmetrical form, constitute the romance of a family history, but this method has an older origin than would be imagined. Queen Isis Kheb's embalmed body went down the Nile to its burial place under a canopy that was lately discovered, and is preserved in the Boulak Museum. It consists of many squares of gazelle hide of different colors sewn together and ornamented with various devices. Under the name of patchwork or mosaic-like piecing together of different colored stuffs, comes also the Persian work made at Resht. Bits of fine cloth are cut out for leaves, flowers and so forth, and neatly stitched together with great accuracy. This done, the work is further carried out and enriched by chain and other stitches. The result is perfectly smooth flat work, no easy feat when done on a large scale, as it often is.

Darning and running need no further explanation. The former stitch is familiar to us in the well known Creton and Turkish cloths. The stitch here is used mechanically in parallel lines, and simulates weaving, so that these handsome borders in a deep, rich red might as well have come from the loom as from the needle. Another method of darning is looser and coarser, and suitable only for cloths and hangings not subject to much wear and rubbing; the stitches follow the curves of the design, which the needle *paints*, as it were, shading and blending the colors. It is necessary to use this facility for shading temperately, however, or the flatness necessary to decorative work is lost.

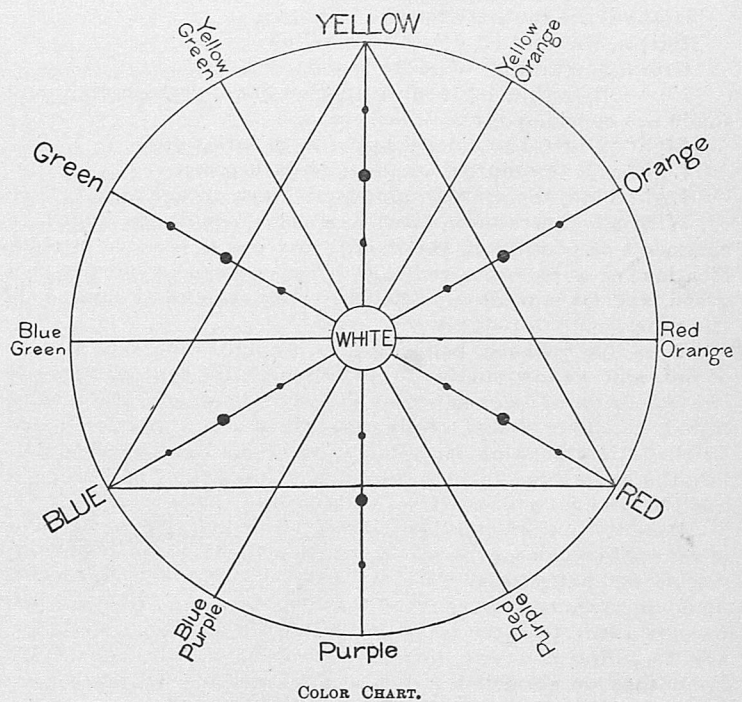
The foregoing is a rough list of stitches which could be copiously supplemented, but that I am obliged to pass on to another important point, that of *design*. If needlework is to be looked upon seriously, it is necessary to secure appropriate and practicable designs. Where the worker does not invent for herself, she should at least interpret her designer, just as the designer interprets and does not attempt to imitate nature. It follows from this, that it is better to avoid the designs of artists who know nothing of the capacities of needlework, and design beautiful and intricate forms without reference to the execution, the result being unsatisfactory and incomplete. Regarding the design itself, broad bold lines should be chosen, and broad, harmonious color (which should be roughly planned before starting work), with as much minute work, and stitches introducing play of color, as befits the purpose of the work and humor of the worker; there should be no scratching, no indefiniteness of form or color, no vagueness that allows the eye to puzzle over the design—beyond that indefinable sense of mystery which arrests the attention and *withholds* the full charm of the work for a moment, to unfold it to those who stop to give it more than a glance. But there are so many different stitches and different modes of setting to work, that it will soon be seen that these few hints do not apply to all of them. One method, for instance, consists of trusting entirely to design, and leaves color out of account; white work on white linen, white on dark ground, or black or dark blue upon white. Again some work depends more on magnificence of color than on form, as for example, the handsome Italian hangings of the seventeenth century, worked in floss silk, on linen sometimes, and sometimes on a dusky open canvas that makes the silks glow and gleam like jewels or stones.

COLOR CHART.

THE points of the triangle show the three great primaries from which all other colors are produced. Diametrically opposite these are placed their perfect contrasting colors. The points on the circle situated midway between the primary and secondary colors show the middle tones, or half colors, with their true contrasts directly opposite. To better show the use of the chart, we will take the upper point, yellow; in opposition to it we find purple, its contrast, and the same with the other primaries. The half-way color, between the primary yellow and the secondary orange, which is yellow-orange, finds its perfect contrast on the opposite side of the circle, which is blue-purple, and so on all round the circle.

To show the use of the chart as a determiner of harmony we will take as an example purple. The dots marked on the line towards the center, white, denote the various tones of purple produced by its admixture with white; any of these tones form a harmony with pure purple. Moving along the circle on each side of the purple, we find its harmonies decreasing as we leave it, until we reach its most imperfect tones, blue-green and red-orange. Continuing the round of the circle we approach its contrasting colors, gradually getting more pleasing until we reach its perfect contrast in the primary yellow.

A study of this chart will greatly assist the decorator in the grouping of colors, and it will be useful if kept as a reference.



COLOR EFFECTS IN DRY GOODS.

BY ALEXANDER D. GRANT.



THE color-effect of color upon its surroundings can be so easily known that no intelligent dry goods clerk should be ignorant of the subject. How often do we hear a customer say, "Oh, I want something clearer in the color than you have shown me; either the light is poor or the colors are dull. I will look a little further." And a sale is lost because the salesman did not have somewhere

in sight the mutual opposite of the color shown.

There are only six distinct colors to consider, yellow, red, blue, orange, purple and green. All other conditions of color are modifications of these, either by admixture with each other, with light or shade, or by admixture with each other and also with light or shade.

In this article we will confine ourselves purely to the color effect of color upon its surroundings.

Place a disc of any bright color upon a white or light gray ground, and let the eye rest upon the disc of color for thirty or sixty seconds, moving the eye a little off and on from the disc of color. It will soon be observed that a phantom color seems to float as a colored atmosphere over the surroundings of the colored disc looked at.

Or, take a piece of plain black goods, say cashmere; lay it flat upon the counter; place upon it a sample of bright orange color. After looking steadily at the orange sample for a minute or half a minute, it will be observed that the black cashmere is a blue black. Take away the orange color and substitute for it a bright blue. Now let the eye rest steadily upon the blue, and the black cashmere will soon seem not a blue black, but a brown black; or take several pieces of some bright red fabric—the case frequently occurs in showing red flannels—after a few minutes

the reds appear dull, and the more we continue to look at them the duller they appear to grow, until we begin to believe ourselves that the shades are not right, and we know that the customer is experiencing the same feeling. Place near these red fabrics a piece of dark green material. If the reds are yellow reds (scarlets), let it be a dark blue green; if the reds are blue reds (crimsons), let it be a dark yellow green; and soon we will experience a new feeling—the reds will become purified and will become bright and clear and beautiful, because green is the mutual opposite of red.

The mutual opposites of colors are as follows:

Yellow, the mutual opposite is purple.

Red, the mutual opposite is green.

Blue, the mutual opposite is orange.

Orange, the mutual opposite is blue.

Purple, the mutual opposite is yellow.

Green, the mutual opposite is red.

Now follow that table with another one, in which light and shade are considered, and it will read:

Light yellow, the mutual opposite is dark purple.

Light red, the mutual opposite is dark green.

Light blue, the mutual opposite is dark orange.

With all the thousand and one color conditions known to commerce or possible to the dyer, every one is possible of classification as a yellow, a red, a blue, an orange, a purple or a green, and its mutual opposite can easily be clearly figured in the mind.

Take, for instance, heliotrope. It is a light blue, plus a value of red, and yellow almost totally absent. Its mutual opposite is a condition of color in which yellow is dominant, plus a value of red, and blue almost totally absent, and the whole dominated by shade to the value of the opposite of the light which qualifies the heliotrope; in plain terms, the opposite of heliotrope is a slight orange, yellow-orange sinking into shade.

Possibly no greater importance of a knowledge of color effect upon color can be presented than in the case of delicate shades for party wear. We are busy showing pale heliotrope upon an unconsidered ground. As the showing proceeds, we become aware that the colors are losing their clearness of tone, are becoming colorless, insipid or washed out in effect. We know that we are drifting toward a failure, and we are becoming nervous and anxious and losing our fine ability and tact, because something is apparently wrong with the colors. Suddenly it dawns upon us that we are showing the colors upon a dark russet ground, the mutual opposite of which is light green, and the mutual opposite of heliotrope being a condition of yellow, we have formed an atmosphere of pale yellow of a greenish cast, through which we are looking at the heliotrope; in fact, we are doing all we can to neutralize the color that we desire to emphasize, so our ignorance of mutual opposites is nullifying our very best efforts of salesmanship.

If we have behind the heliotrope as a supporting ground a neutralized dark yellow brown citrine, then we will have from it an atmosphere of heliotrope, a place in which the phantom color from the heliotrope looked at will sink and the eye will return to the consideration of the color under attention rested and renewed, seeing only heliotrope, but vivified, clarified, purified living heliotrope. Under such conditions salesmanship can be dispensed with, for the satisfaction arising from the beauty of the color looked at will do the selling. This being true, it becomes necessary, in fitting up a room for showing light colors, to arrange it so that six backgrounds are available according to the requirements of the case, for example:

Light yellows, the mutual opposite is dark purple maroon.

Light reds (pinks), the mutual opposite is dark green olive.

Light blues, the mutual opposite is dark orange brown.

Light oranges, the mutual opposite is dark blue slate.

Light purples, the mutual opposite is dark yellow citrine.

Light greens, the mutual opposite is dark red russet.

Nothing in our business so thoroughly defeats our best efforts as the indiscriminate use of color as a ground to show color upon. It is not necessary to go into a deep or long study of the subject to master its practical value; all that is necessary to remember is that color produces a color effect upon its surroundings, and that there are six groups of color: The yellows, the reds, the blues, the oranges, the purples, the greens, and that their mutual opposites are the purples, the greens, the oranges, the blues, the yellows, the reds.

So a given color being presented, its mutual opposite class is at once known, and according to the individuality of the

color presented, so will be the individuality of its mutual opposite.

EMBROIDERY NOTES.

LOVERS of decoration who wish to obtain good effects at a low cost will do well to investigate the stamped Japanese cotton crepe drapery. There is also a curious combination of paper and silk imported, which presents such tones as the Japanese alone can give. Madagascar grass is the name given to curtains woven of grass, with ornament of a geometrical character thereon.

BEFORE this date still earlier in the century landscape embroidery was taught in young ladies' finishing schools.

In these landscapes the flesh tints of figures, shepherds or shepherdesses that enlivened the scene, were painted in water color on the silk or satin, the drapery and landscape being wrought in colored silks. Embroidery in crewels on linen was done at a still earlier date, when homespun linen was woven and the four-post bedstead was decorated with embroidered hangings and spread.

THE fashions in embroidery have been as varied as in gowns.

Fifty years ago tent and cross stitch were used on canvas for the seats of mahogany chairs for drawing rooms; and perhaps, a brilliant peacock worked on silk canvas was mounted for a fire screen for the same room. But twenty years ago cross-stitch fell into disrepute. The early work at Kensington, a dozen or fifteen years ago, was mostly color on color. Woolen curtains were embroidered in feather stitch with colored crewels. Table covers of durable woolen stuffs were also embroidered in crewels, crewels being also used, to a considerable extent, on linen.

LAST winter scattered sprays of flowers, like those painted on Dresden china, were much used. This winter the garland designs, with bow knots of floating ribbons, seem to be especially popular. The demand for this work must be great, for our Woman's Exchanges and Decorative Art Rooms have showcases and shelves heaped with linen work simply for the use of the table. There is a large supply of work at the New York Woman's Exchange, some of it very good, both in design and color; but at the Decorative Art Society the designs and coloring rank higher. We wish there might be a literary judge to overlook the mottoes scattered recklessly through this choice needlework. It is startling to find on a doily decorated with a most exquisite French Empire garland design the injunction, in bald English, to eat and have a good appetite. One does not care to be ordered, even on an embroidered splasher, to "Wash and be clean." Such a perversion of Scripture is irreverent.

THE embroidered pillow is found everywhere. As you enter the salesrooms of the Decorative Art Society of New York City, what first strikes your view is a large table heaped high with every possible artistic design and color, the soft tinted mass ready to tumble at a touch. Here is the cool linen or denim outlined with heavy linen floss, just the thing for a summer cottage; here, too, is the richest of silk, embroidered with heavy raised ribbon work in the rarest and softest of colors, not too costly at forty dollars. The white ribbon work has the look of applied lace; but the fine flat ribbon work is the most dainty and attractive. The fine ribbon work is often done on cream-colored satin or silk, for screens. There are also panels for screens in laid work, scroll above scroll, with all the beauty of curve and color, lightened with gold thread. Screens, curtains and wall hangings are not things for a day, changing with the passing fashion, and it is safe to use the best work and materials for such a purpose. The great advantage gained by contributors to the Decorative Art Society of New York is not simply the money they receive for work done, but the educational training given by the society. "I like to send things there," said a young lady, with satisfaction. "Even when they refuse your work you always learn something; for corrections and suggestions are given to contributors." The best work of the society is not always seen in the exhibition rooms. Special orders for curtains, screens or wall hangings are filled in the workrooms.