

EMBROIDERY FOR THE BLOUSE OR DRESS WAIST

Now that embroidered decorations enter so largely into every article of dress it behooves a woman to consider whether she can afford to purchase her gowns from some fashionable dressmaker, already embroidered in the latest style, or whether she must do the work of ornamentation herself. The greater part of the price of a handsome gown is saved when its owner is able to do the necessary needlework upon it herself, so far as braiding, embroidering or making decorative designs in fancy stitches is concerned. It is always possible to do this, and the kind of stitches used in making the designs must be regulated by the knowledge which one possesses of needlework and the time at one's disposal. Work done in chainstitch, for example, takes less than half the time that the same design would require were it worked in satin stitch embroidery. At present chainstitch is very fashionable, but satin stitch is, if anything, even more smart, and it is something that never goes out of style, and carries with it a look of exclusiveness and costliness. Sometimes a judicious mingling of stitches can be effected with a most pleasing result, as when chain, satin stitch, couching and seeding are combined in a pattern, so that one gets the impression of a handsome piece of work.

The pattern presented in this issue affords most beautiful possibilities in the way of combining stitches and mingling and shading colors. The use of silk, satin and net blouses and waists with winter dresses, to say nothing of short, hanging empire waists and decorative satin coats, as well as of wash blouses, calls for embroidered decorations, and the same pattern is equally beautiful upon all these garments, although the difference of the materials with which it is worked and upon which it appears make the design seem different in each one.

The large flower in the design is intended to be edged with padded satin stitch, in varying widths. To one unaccustomed to this stitch and eager for results, the double outline of the flower may be done in either outline stitch or snail-trail stitch, which is much like it, and as easy to make. Double lines of chainstitching may also be employed. Suppose the design to be of shaded blues, with a bit of other colors introduced, and with a background of cloth, silk or satin, according to the material of which the dress may be made; the outer edges of the large blossom could be worked in a light shade of blue filo silk, if satin stitch be selected, otherwise rope silk would do better for outlining purposes. The long stamens in the center of the flower would be worked in very light or very dark blue. Other shades of blue silk should be employed to make the seeding with which the large petals are filled. This seeding is rapidly accomplished, since it is no more than a mass of tiny knots, and any one can make those. The smaller petals, after being bordered like the large ones, would be pretty done in couching, catching down the lengthwise stitches, which extend from edge to edge of the petals, with a darker or lighter thread. Couching in colors mingled in this manner is very attractive, and nothing could be easier, since to do the work merely means to lay a series of long stitches close together and stitch them down in position with a crosswise thread. Usually the crosswise thread is thinner than the other.

Solid discs or dots of another shade of blue or of gold, or some other contrasting hue, may be so tinted as to make the smaller petals very rich in effect. A design of this sort permits of a good deal of color contrast in the borders, seeding and dots, and may be made exceedingly beautiful by any one with a taste for mingling colors. A combination of gold with browns and greens could be made very lovely, for instance, and look equally well upon a bodice of any one of these colors.

Even greater enrichment may be given the large conventionalized design of grapes, or seed pods, which forms the dominant note in the decoration. The outlining would be charming if a dark tint of the selected color were chosen for the lower motives and lighter shades were used towards the top. The center of each oval might then be

filled in with seeding, couching or long and short stitch. The centers may be shaded, or not, but would be more artistic if shaded, although the centers of the ovals which make up the design should not be of the same tint as the border, if the pattern is intended to be very effective.

The accomplished needlewoman does not need suggestions as to how she may best carry out this decoration, but the amateur would find these of help. First, outline all the lines of the pattern with thick outline thread of cotton or mercerized silk, if satin stitch is to be the border (and it makes the richest edging). Fill in the spaces between the double outlines with long stitches of filling, or padding thread. Using a crewel or milliner's needle—the latter is not so good for this bit of work—stitch across the padded outline with even, close stitches, over and over, till all is smoothly and beautifully covered. Then seed the center of each petal, or work it around and around with chainstitch, or else couch down the long, lengthwise stitches which may be employed to fill in the petals. It may be that nothing more than an outline design is wanted, if so, omit everything else.

A third motive appears in this handsome pattern; a cornflower, which may be worked in long and short stitch, or in any of the other stitches mentioned. It would look best in long and short stitch or chainstitch. These stitches should be made lengthwise of the petals and the calyx and sepals of the flower may be worked in any of the desired stitches and in contrasting or shaded colors. They should not be worked in the same shades of color unless the design is white.

The small leaves used in the design and intended for collars, cuffs, corners of revers and small panels and tabs, should be worked in satin stitch if a very handsome effect is desired. They might also be worked in Kensington embroidery and in chainstitch. All the stems and spirals may be worked in stem stitch, rope stitch or satin stitch. The latter takes a good deal of time and, unless the material is white and the embroidery of the same hue, it would not be worth while.

Fancy stitches rarely look well in white embroidery unless the material is very sheer and the threads for working rather heavy. Satin stitch and seeding form the prettiest combination for designs upon white goods of all classes, from a white broadcloth afternoon gown to a satin dinner dress or a sheer mousseline or chiffon.

It will be noticed how readily the motives in this shirtwaist or dress bodice lend themselves to use upon all the portions of a dress. The little sprays of leaves are suitable for borders upon any part of a dress or dressy coat; the design, as a whole, would be beautiful in the front of a dress and as a finish to its decorative panels; the separate blossoms could be stamped in the corner of any coat point or tab—and new dress coats have all sorts of angles that require decoration—while they serve as well to adorn cuffs, collars, and sleeves.

The value of a good design lies in the possibilities which it presents for many uses. The one illustrated not only serves to adorn any part of a dress or wrap where a large pattern is required, but its small motives serve to fill in any corners that need beautifying with the needle. They also make pretty ornaments for neckties, Empire sash ends, and for household articles, such as scarfs, runners, table covers, hangings, bedspread decorations and pillow sham and sofa cushion centers, to say nothing of wrist bags, opera bags and fancy work bags which have to be ornamented with needlework.

Those waists which particularly call for embroidery are shirtwaists or, to be more accurate, blouses, made of fine wash materials; of lace, net, silk, satin and variations of fine dress goods. These blouses are often made in Empire style for very dressy gowns and extend only to the top of the long Empire skirt. Very often the Empire waist consists of a fitted top, or yoke, with a broad band of embroidery which hangs loose to the top of the Empire skirt. This band must be embroidered or it isn't considered very smart. The same motives which adorn it have to be repeated upon the sleeves and neckpieces of the garment, which has no special seams or lines but the straight, short round ones of bodice and sleeves.