

Needlepoint

Needlepoint, or tapestry, has been a favorite art for many years. Any form of embroidery that is worked on counted threads or where the stitches completely cover the material on which work is done is classed under needlepoint or needlework tapestry. One finds a great variety in this field. Several kinds of stitches and variations are used in making needlepoint. Screens, rugs, chair seats, footstool and bench covers, pictures, pillows, wall hangings, bags, doorstops, eyeglass cases, billfolds, change purses and many other needlepoint articles can be made.

Needlepoint canvas may be purchased by the yard in varying widths and degrees of coarseness. There is the standard size mesh which comes 10 squares or openings to an inch. This is usually a two-thread canvas which means the threads are laid two by two and is sometimes called penelope canvas. Plain or congress canvas, which is woven with single threads, is also available. Coarser needlepoint canvas comes 8 meshes to an inch. Petit point canvas, 15 meshes to an inch, is also available. The choice of canvas will depend upon the stitch to be worked, however, most stitches can be worked on either kind. Needlepoint canvas may be purchased with a stamped design. Others come with design already embroidered or filled in and all you need do is fill in the background with a simple stitch.

Tapestry may be worked either in a frame or in the hand. Adjustable, smooth polished wood frames may be

purchased for around one dollar at most art needlework and craft shops. If work is done without a frame, be careful and do not pull out of shape. Weighting the canvas down might be advisable.

Select a tapestry or worsted needle that is smooth, high grade, blunt point with an oval eye wide enough to thread easily. In some needlework departments they are called crewel needles.

Needlepoint cotton thread or yarn lend themselves best for working needlepoint. Six-strand mercerized cotton is suitable for fine needlepoint pieces. This is available in a variety of boil-proof colors; comes in skeins of about eight yards. There are many kinds of tapestry wools on the market. Authentic tapestry colors may be had in skeins varying in yardage from 32 to 100 yard skeins. Some of the mail order companies have color cards of tapestry wool available for a very small sum. This enables you to select just the right colors for the delicate shading which makes outstanding needlepoint pieces. Remember dye lots vary, so buy enough yarn at one time to complete the piece. Full skeins can usually be returned for credit. Nearly all needlework catalogs list a chart of needlepoint yarn requirements according to size of canvas and stitch used. The continental stitch always takes more yarn than the half cross stitch. One must remember to choose a thread carefully so that the stitches made will completely cover the canvas; the canvas threads must never be visible between rows of stitches.

In all stitches, when beginning work, leave about an inch length of thread on



PLAIN CROSS STITCH



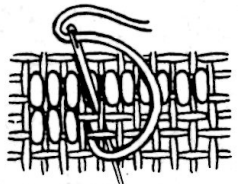
HALF CROSS STITCH



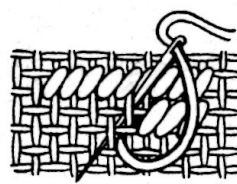
CONTINENTAL STITCH



SPREADING DOUBLE CANVAS



STRAIGHT GOBELIN STITCH



OBLIQUE GOBELIN STITCH

wrong side and "catch in" by stitches as you continue. At the end of thread, run needle through several stitches on wrong side to fasten. Never use a length of thread longer than thirty inches as it has a tendency to work thin and tangle. If the yarn curls while working, allow thread and needle to dangle, thus allowing yarn to untwist.

Stitches Commonly Used

Plain Cross Stitch—This is also known as the marking stitch and is the basis of all tapestry stitches. Draw needle through a square of canvas, insert needle into next square above and draw it through square directly below. This forms the first slanting stitch. Continue in this manner, always move over one square to the right and keep needle in vertical position which forms a straight stitch on wrong side. Working back, the same stitch is made from right to left in same manner; these crossed threads form the cross stitch.

Half Cross Stitch—This is made the same as first half of cross stitch. When row is finished, turn work up-

side down. Thread and work is now in position to work toward right. Practically all stamped, or tramé (underlaid) pieces are worked in half-cross stitch. If design is underlaid, bring needle and thread up through canvas from right hand side. Carry it across top between the narrowly spaced threads of the double thread canvas to the left side. This process of laying threads across the lines to be worked is called tramming.

Continental Stitch—Also known as petit point or tent stitch. It makes a small slanting stitch on the front and a longer slanting one at the back. At the end of row, turn work upside down and take a small upright stitch in order to bring needle in position to begin next row as every row is worked from right to left. This stitch is usually made on a single thread canvas. If same portion of the design planned for double thread canvas is to be worked in continental stitch, work stitch over just the single thread of canvas. You will find it helpful if the desired section is dampened and the horizontal and vertical double threads are separated, forcing the threads into even rows as shown in illustration.

Gobelin Stitch—The Gobelin stitch has many variations. It is most commonly used for backgrounds and worked over more threads in height than in width.

Straight or Upright Gobelin — This is worked in horizontal rows. The thread is passed vertically over 2 single threads of canvas with one thread between the stitches, thus forming a slanting stitch on back.

Oblique Gobelin Stitch—Worked over 1 vertical and 2 horizontal threads of canvas. If working on double or penelope canvas, a thicker needle is required for forcing apart the double threads and also helps to prevent thread from fraying.