

A GROUP OF DATED EMBROIDERIES*

THE embroideries shown in the accompanying illustrations are the products of different epochs, but all are of interest to students for each has its date worked into the design.

The oldest is dated 1617, and is of French origin (Pl. I). It was probably a cushion cover, its dimensions being seventeen by twenty inches. It is made of a heavy white woollen serge-like material with the embroidery done with wools and silk. The colors, including the white of the serge ground, are somewhat softened by time, but yellowish greens and yellow predominate. There are also blues, greens and rose color as well as touches of gold thread, and an outline worked in blackish brown.

Some bed hangings, of which a detail is shown in Plate II. are worked on white linen in colored crewels. These hangings, of especial interest due to the appearance on them of the name of the worker and the date (Miriam Webb, 1756) were found by Mrs. Sullivan in the neighborhood of Hartford, Connecticut, and they are an added witness to the prevalence of these gay and decorative furnishings in the homes of our colonial forebears. They are the same type as the hangings made by Mary Breed in 1770, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the set made by Mrs. Mary Bulman, now in the little museum in York Harbor, Maine, and many others in private collections and treasured inheritances. They make us wonder how these colonial embroiderers in isolated settlements, as well as in the larger sea coast towns, developed such a distinct style. Of course they had brought some patterns and traditions with them from the old country and they certainly used the printed India cottons as inspira-

*From the collection of Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan.



PLATE I
EMBROIDERED CUSHION COVER, FRENCH, DATED 1617. FROM THE
COLLECTION OF MRS. CORNELIUS J. SULLIVAN

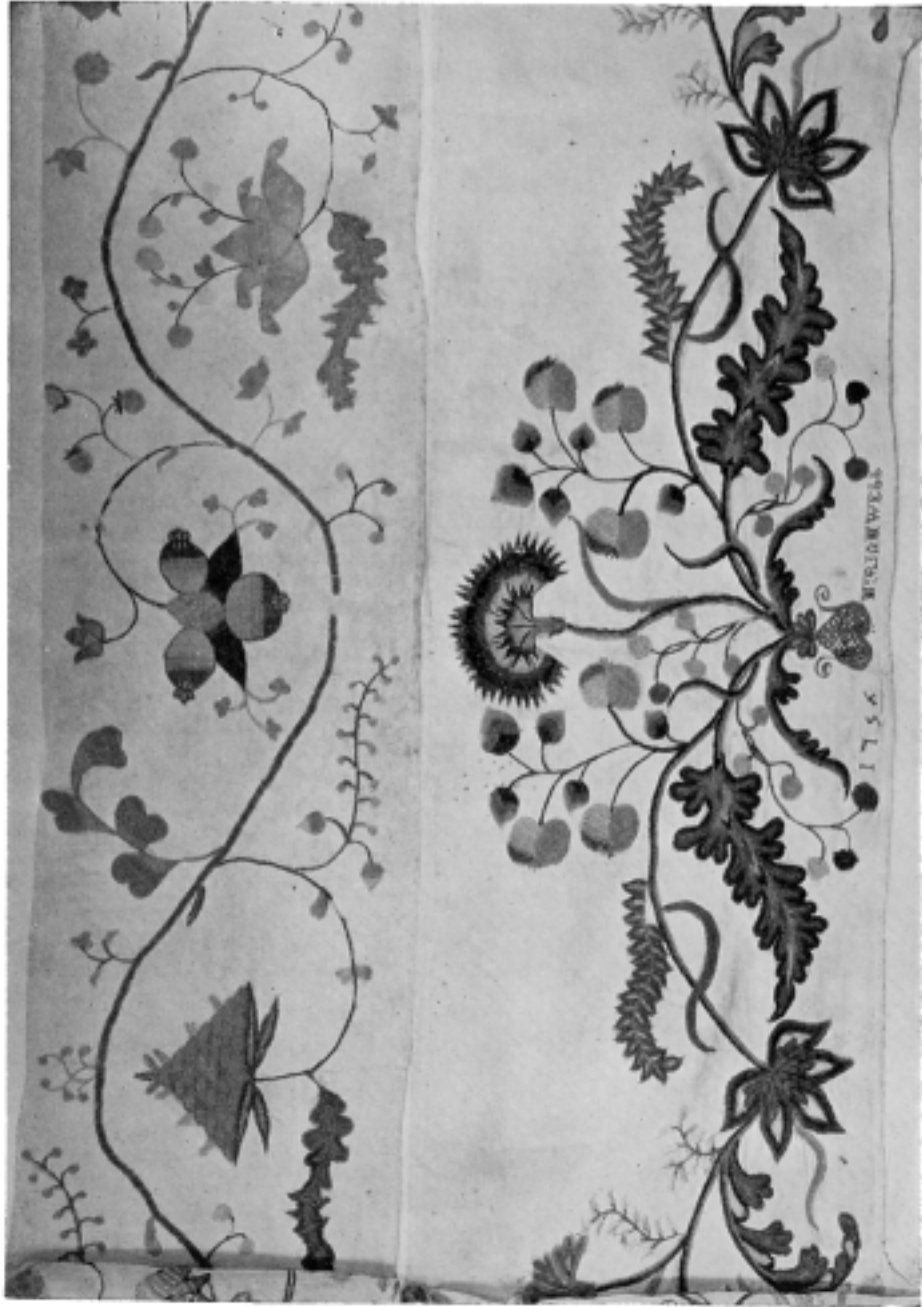


PLATE II

DETAILS OF VALANCE FOR A SET OF BED HANGINGS. AMERICAN, SIGNED, MIRIAM WEBB, 1756.
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. CORNELIUS J. SULLIVAN.



EMBROIDERED PIECES INTENDED FOR A POLE SCREEN. AMERICAN, SIGNED, R. I. 1804.
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. CORNELIUS J. SULLIVAN.

tion for details, but even so it is interesting to see what a sisterhood of workers there must have been.

Some of the pieces that remain to us are worked only in shades of blue, dyed with indigo, while these in our illustration and many others used a large variety of colors. Miriam Webb used a lovely crimson dye (madder?) with lighter tones of pink, a clear yellow, and two greens which seem to have lasted very well, besides many shades of blue, a tan, greys and a gold color.

The principal stitch is the one that was so generally used in the colonial embroideries that it has been called "New England Stitch," although if you look for it in such books as those of Mrs. A. Christie, *Samplers and Stitches*, Thérèse de Dillmont, *Encyclopedia of Needlework*, or Lewis F. Day, *Art in Needlework*, you will find it called "Roumanian Stitch." Outline stitch, long-and-short, cross-stitch, feather-stitch, various filling stitches and French knots also occur.

There are three pieces of the original set remaining: a curtain, 81 by 48 inches, and two valances, one that measures 56 by 8 inches, and the other 58 inches long and varying in depth, 12 inches at the deepest part and shaped in the manner of a lambrequin to hang at the top of the bed-posts.¹

The two sides made for a little pole-screen marked R. I., 1804, and shown in Plate III, are diverting little bits worked in silks, one side on canvas, the other on a quartering of black and white silk.

The design on the canvas is similar to those found on chair-seats, pocket books, etc., the background being bluish green, and the pattern combining rose color, gold, blue and a sort of orange-red. The other side is worked mostly in outline stitch in more or less naturalistic colors.

MARIAN HAGUE.

¹For further material on colonial crewelwork see the Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin, Vol. VIII, No. 2, 1924; Vol. IX, No. 1, 1925 *American Colonial Needlework* by Mrs. Luke Vincent Lockwood and Vol. XI, No. 2, 1927 *Crewel Embroideries* by Frances Little.