

THE · BULLETIN · OF  
THE · NEEDLE · AND · BOBBIN  
CLUB

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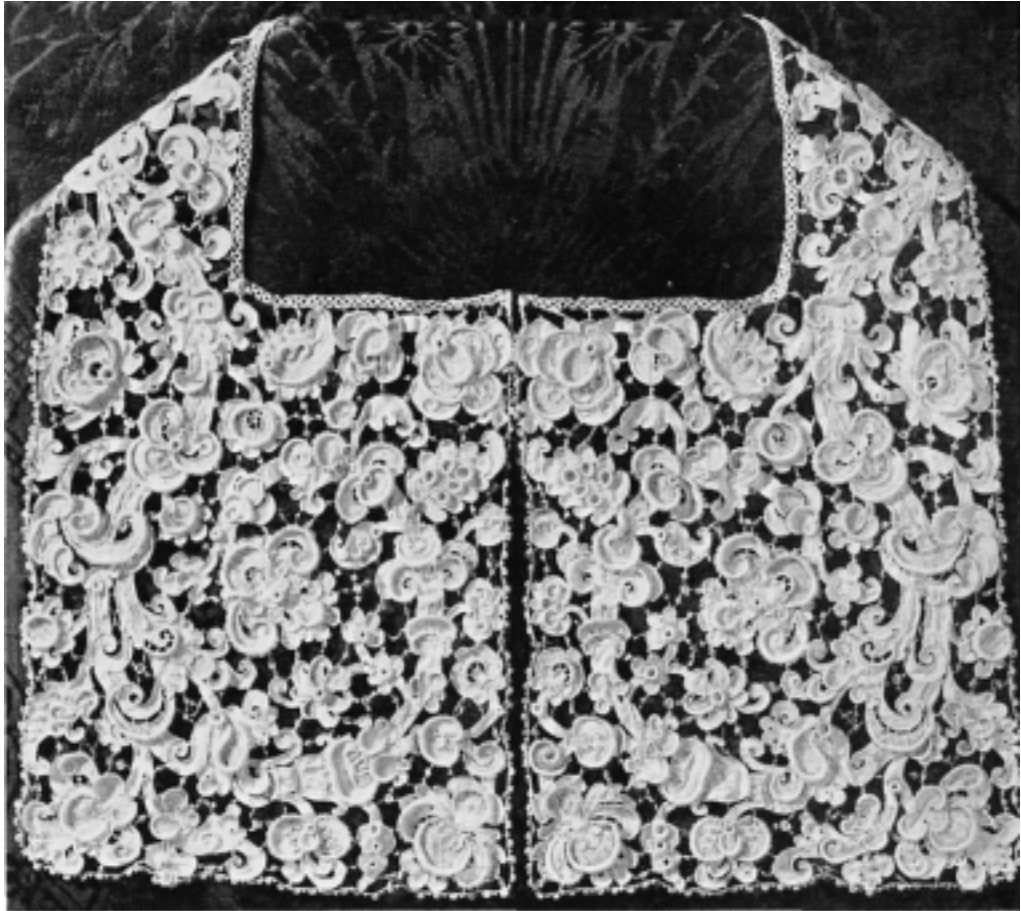
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FRONTISPIECE  
COLLAR OF VENETIAN NEEDLEPOINT LACE.  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

## SOME UNPUBLISHED LACES

*from the*

COLLECTION OF RICHARD C. GREENLEAF

By MARIAN HAGUE

THE BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB is very fortunate in being able to show a group of laces of outstanding quality which Mr. Greenleaf has recently added to his already superb collection. The owner's interest in lace is of many years' duration, and he has built up the collection with keen discrimination and sagacity. He has had the good fortune that comes to those who have patience and a watchful readiness to take advantage of opportunity. To make such a collection requires a familiarity with the most important museums as well as the treasures of private collectors and a knowledge of where the great historical pieces are held. One must know, as well, the history of lace making and its techniques and design.

Mr. Greenleaf long ago decided that he would gather only perfect specimens and his preference has been for finished pieces such as *rabats*<sup>1</sup>, collars, cap crowns, lappets and sleeve garnitures, pieces complete in themselves rather than mere lengths or yardages, although his collection contains also some beautiful flounces and narrow laces distinguished for their quality of design and workmanship. Thus the first two pieces of this group are collars and the third is a flounce.

It is interesting to remember that in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lace was as much a man's necessity as a woman's. In the seventeenth century, especially, when it was employed so lavishly by the court and clergy, men made more use than women of the richest and most important laces. The portraits of great prelates, such as Fénelon and Bossuet and many of their contemporaries, show albs with wide borders of the most splendid types. The most exquisite of the *rabats* or cravats that remain to us were those made for the young princes, the duc de Burgogne and the duc d'Anjou, the grandsons of Louis XIV, and

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<sup>1</sup> A square of lace gathered at the throat and used as a cravat.

collars such as that shown in the frontispiece appear in portraits, not only of the king and his brother, but of courtiers and others as well. Colbert, in particular, the celebrated Minister who established the great lace industry in France, is shown in many portraits wearing such collars as these.

The subject of our Frontispiece, which the owner holds in highest esteem, is a man's collar of the most beautiful quality of Venetian needle-point dating from the middle of the seventeenth century. It is of the same *rich and splendid quality as the superb collar in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London*. The arrangement of the design is similar, a scrolling stem of foliated and floral ornament, although in our piece the units of design are on a somewhat smaller scale, the open spaces of the field slightly greater, and the tie-bars or *brides* more numerous.

The magnificent collar of like shape and period in the Cluny Museum in Paris is very close to ours in richness of sculptural forms and in the structure of the design. The main difference is that in the Cluny collar there are no *brides*, the forms of the pattern touching each other and needing no other connection. This very skilful arrangement of the pattern is considered by some a mark of slightly earlier workmanship. As for pure pleasure to the beholder it is difficult to choose between the two pieces.

The second specimen is also a man's collar (Plate I), similar in form and design but of more delicate texture; it is a bobbin made fabric of Flemish or Italian origin. In this piece the pattern is accented with gold thread, a very rare feature which suggests the possibility of Spanish influence. Collars of similar shape and technique are preserved in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris and in the Amélie Piot collection in Geneva. Neither of these, however, shows the addition of gold thread.

It is interesting to note that among the settlers in the early American colonies were persons of means both able and inclined to bring with them from their native country such luxuries as lace collars. This is evidenced by a portrait in the Art Museum at Worcester, Massachusetts, painted about the middle of the seventeenth century, of John Freke (1635-1675), attorney and merchant of Boston — a handsome figure in a long, buttoned coat with elaborately puffed undersleeves and holding gloves — who wears a collar which, to judge from its design, might be of bobbin workmanship.<sup>2</sup> It is of the same shape as the one here shown. A companion portrait of Mrs. Freke shows her quite as elegantly dressed, wear-

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<sup>2</sup> Known to the writer only by a photograph.

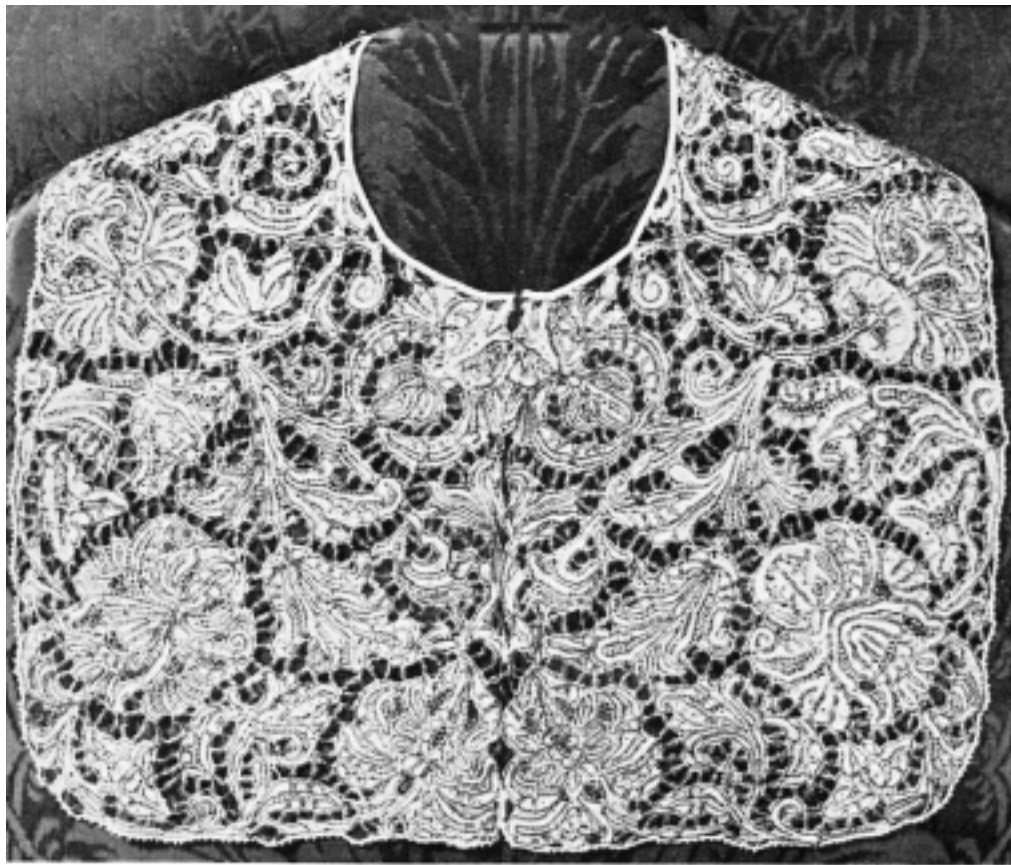


PLATE I  
COLLAR OF BOBBIN LACE, FLEMISH OR ITALIAN.  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

ing, and her child as well, a collar and head kerchief or whisk trimmed with laces of the various types fashionable at that period.

The third piece in this present group, unlike those preceding, is a flounce, twenty-four inches wide, of Brussels bobbin lace of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, which, in contrast to the two preceding specimens, must have been designed for ladies' use. (Plate II.) Its little figures, nymphs and amorini, of which there are seven in each repeat of the design, certainly have no connection with any church use or masculine activity. It is of Brussels technique, the ground being of the type known as *bloemwerk*, but the figures among the floral forms reflect the French influence of that time for they strongly resemble those in *Points de France* of the period of Louis XIV. In the pattern the posture of the figures suggest garden activities. At the top is a nymph who seems to be seated above a fountain or little waterfall, holding a cornucopia of flowers in her arm. Below her are two winged cherubs, one with a bow, the other with arrows, while below this group, in turn, is a tree in a pot balanced on either side by a figure wearing a feathered head-dress and bearing a watering pot from which a stream pours onto the roots of the tree. The most important figure in the design, both from size and position, is another nymph in fluttering draperies posed in an almost dancing position with hand at her breast from which a copious spray falls into a cup held by a cherub at her feet. As she stands on a small pedestal she probably represents a little fountain. In classic times such figures often represented the divinity of a source. (Plate III.)

In its supple texture and quality of workmanship this flounce is typical of fine Flemish lace making and its ground as well is characteristic of the work produced in that area. But the figures, so characteristically French in style, are superposed on the well known Brussels background.

As our article deals with laces hitherto unpublished in Mr. Greenleaf's collection, a list is appended of pieces appearing in well known lace publications before they had become a part of his collection.

RABAT — Point de Venise à Réseau, Venetian, First Half of the Eighteenth Century. Illustrated in *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace* by Alan Cole, London, 1874. At that time this rabat was owned by Mr. Dupont-Auberville.

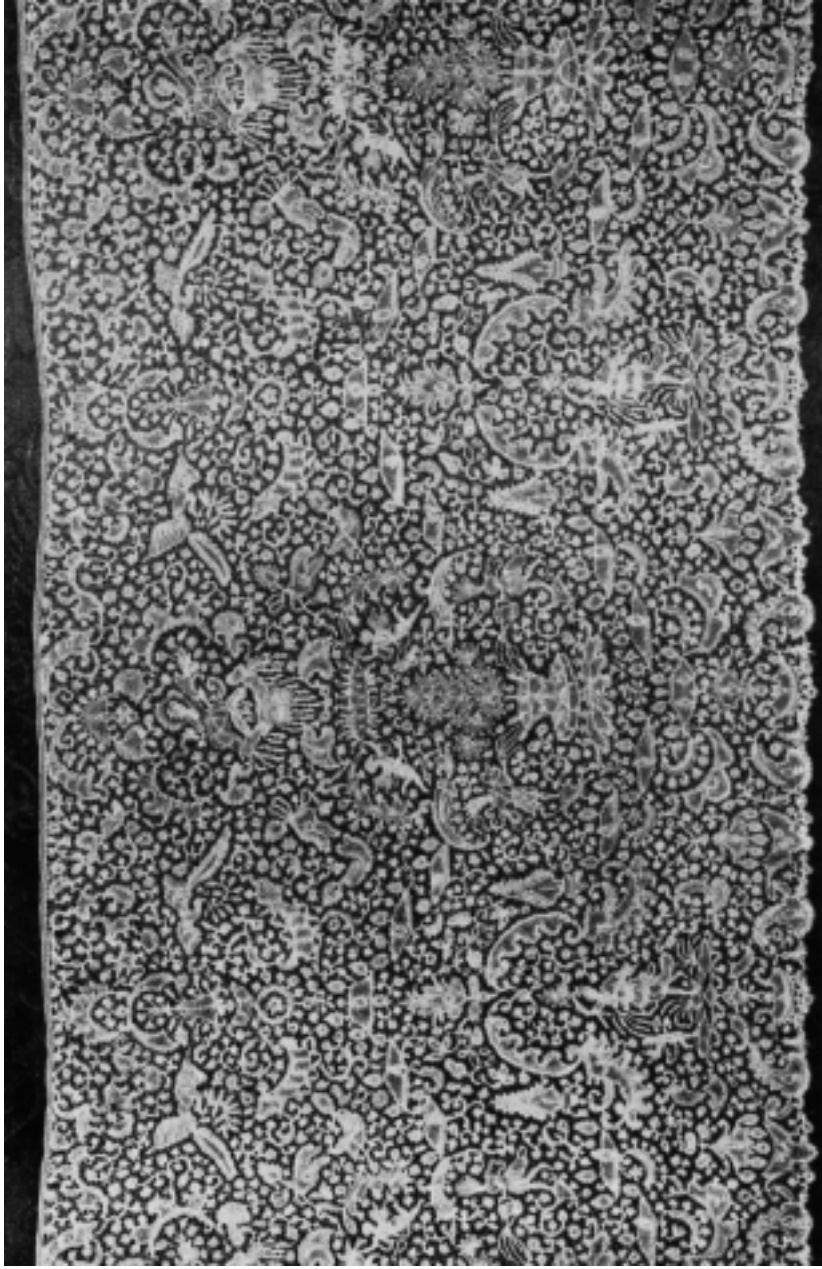


PLATE II  
FLOUNCE OF BRUSSELS BOBBIN LACE.  
LATE SEVENTEENTH OR EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.



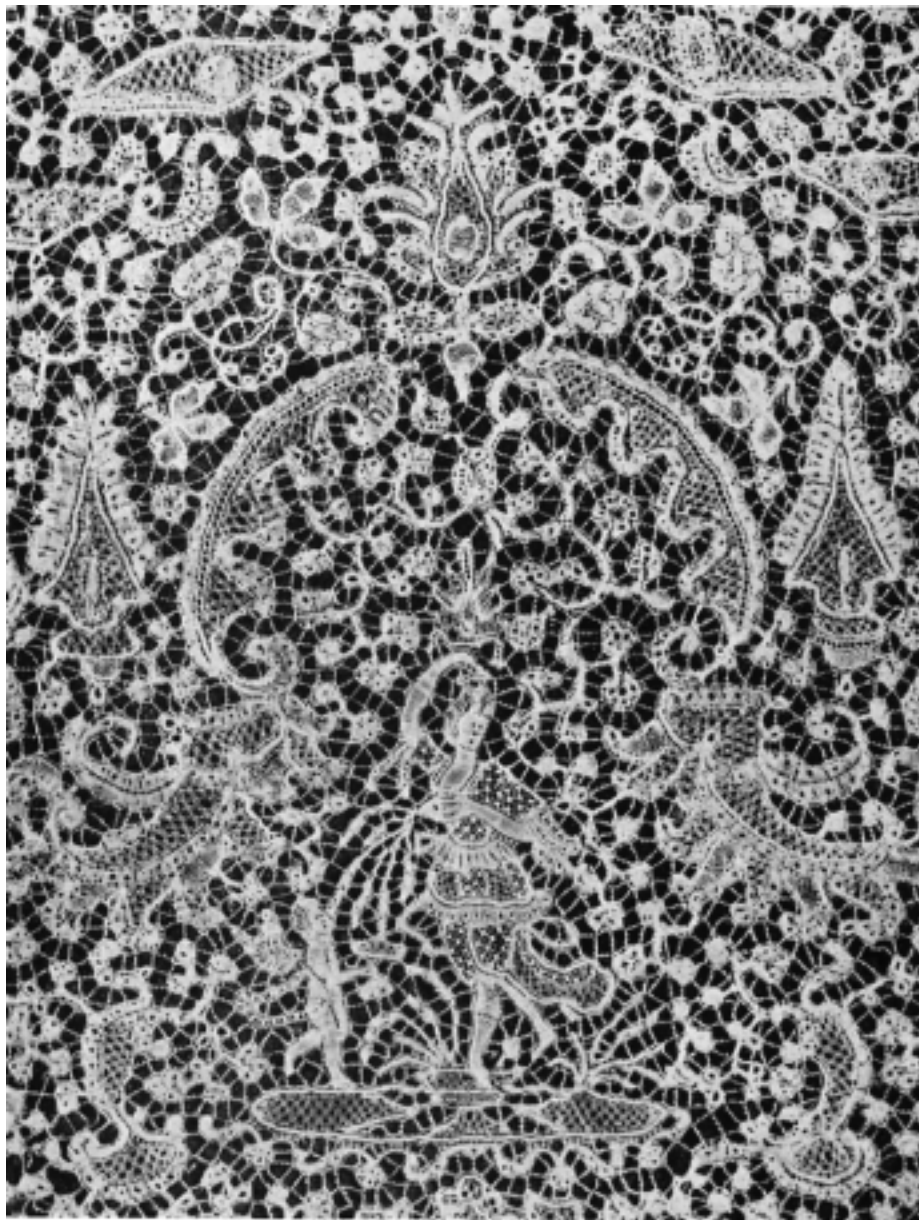


PLATE III  
DETAIL OF PLATE II.

RABAT — Point de France, French, Second Half of the Seventeenth Century. Small figures playing on musical instruments. From the Leopold Iklé Collection. Illustrated in *Les Points de France* by Lefébure, translated by Margaret Taylor Johnstone. (Plate VII.)

RABAT — Point de France, French, Second Half of the Seventeenth Century. Small figures dressed as Roman warriors, angels, dolphins, a figure of Bacchus, etc. From the collection of Mme Porgès. Illustrated in *Les Points de France* by Lefébure, translated by Margaret Taylor Johnstone. (Plate VIII.)

RABAT — Point d'Angleterre, Flemish, Early Eighteenth Century. Regency period. The figure of Minerva in a formal garden. From the Lescure Collection. Illustrated in *Dentelles Anciennes de la Collection Alfred Lescure* by E. van Overloop. (Plate V.)

APRON — Punto in Aria, Italian, Sixteenth Century. Birds and Flowers. From the Antolini and Leopold Iklé Collections. Illustrated in *Old Italian Lace* by Elisa Ricci. (Detail shown) Plate 266.

SMALL ALTAR FRONTAL — Gros Point de Venise, Italian or Spanish, Seventeenth Century. The figure of Saint Theresa in the center. Illustrated in *Les Points de France* by Lefébure, translated by Margaret Taylor Johnstone. (Plate VI.)

FLOUNCE, GARNITURE, BORDERS and LAPPETS — Illustrated in *Antique Laces of American Collectors* by Frances Morris and Marian Hague.

FLOUNCE — Plates LX, LXI.

GARNITURE — Plate XCIV, fig. A.

BORDERS — Plate XIX, fig. B, Plate XXI, fig. A, Plate LVII, fig. B, Plate LVIII, fig. B, Plate LXVI, fig. C, Plate LXXXIII, fig. D.

LAPPETS — Plate LVI, fig. A, Plate LXXXVI, fig. A.



FRONTISPIECE  
BEDSPREAD (WO-TAN) OR QUILT-COVER. TZULIUCHING, SZECH'UAN.  
58 x 83 IN. (148 x 210 CM.)

## STITCH-RESIST DYED FABRICS OF WESTERN CHINA

By CARL SCHUSTER

AS THE NAMES commonly associated with various types of textile resist-dyeing — *batik*, *ikat*, *plangi*, *tritik* — are derived from the Malay language of Indonesia, we are apt to think of these techniques as primarily or originally Indonesian. However, though such techniques are widely practiced in Java and other islands of the East Indian archipelago, and though the various resist techniques of Indonesia have probably received more, or at least earlier, attention from scholars than those of other regions, actually the practice of resist-dyeing is very widely distributed throughout the world, both in ancient and modern times. Recently, a Swiss scholar has made an essay at classifying the various resist techniques, as applied to textiles and to other media as well, and has assembled a large body of data demonstrating the world-wide distribution of these techniques.<sup>1</sup> One of the interesting results of this study is the observation that such techniques seldom occur singly in a given area. Once the principle of resist-dyeing is grasped, people are apt to apply it in various ways; so that instances of various resist techniques tend to appear in clusters on the map.

In Southeast Asia, for example, both the *batik* and the *ikat* methods (respectively, wax-resist dyeing of the finished cloth, and tie-dyeing of the threads of a fabric before weaving) are fairly widely practiced; though there is a tendency for certain peoples to specialize in certain techniques. Thus, various groups of the Thai race make use of *ikat*, while the chief (but not exclusive) practitioners of *batik* are the Miao, who live in the mountains of Southwestern China, Northern Indochina and Siam, and Eastern Burma. As for the Chinese people of the present day, until now there has been but little published evidence of the occurrence of resist-dyeing among them.<sup>2</sup> In view of the wide general distribution of such dyeing methods, and of the great technical accomplishment and complex cultural history of the Chinese, it seems reasonable to expect that they should make use of some of these techniques. According to the

present knowledge of the writer, the evidence for *ikat*-weaving among the modern Chinese is doubtful, while the Chinese use of *wax-batik* seems to be restricted to a small area, or even a single town, on the south-east coast of the country, where it is practiced not as a folk art, but rather as a commercial industry.<sup>3</sup>

There is, however, one form of resist-dyeing which is widely employed by the common people of a large part of China as a traditional folk art, rather than as a localized commercial industry. This is a group of techniques for which we suggest the general name of "stitch-resist dyeing," which is practiced as a household art by the women of Western and Southwestern China — chiefly in the provinces of Szech'uan, Kweichow, and Yünnan.<sup>4</sup> The accompanying illustrations from the writer's collection, made between 1932 and 1938, offer a selection of specimens exemplifying these procedures. As for the uses to which such cloths are put, they include wrappers for bundles, bedspreads or quilt-covers, curtains or hangings, and bed-valances. Not illustrated, but equally common, are various articles of clothing, especially for children, such as bibs, aprons, trousers, jackets. The dye used in almost all instances is indigo blue.<sup>5</sup> A red dye occurs occasionally; but I have never seen a piece dyed in more than one color.

The methods used in producing the designs of these cloths do not correspond exactly to the concepts of *plangi* or tie-dyeing, nor of *tritik* or "shirr-dyeing," though they partake to some extent of the nature of both, and include, besides, the use of other means not understood under these terms. Perhaps the chief technical devices which give these designs their distinctive quality are the highly specialized use of *folds*, and the use of *stitching*, partly to hold the folds in place during dyeing, but also as a means of effecting a dye-resistant cover of small areas of the material; and finally the application of dye-resisting *CORDS*, which, again, are held in place by stitching. As it is stitching which forms the indispensable binding of both folds and cords, it seems justifiable, for brevity's sake, to designate this entire complex of procedures by the name of their final phase. It should be said at once that none of these methods of resist-dyeing — by means of folding and of stitching, and by means of applied foreign bodies, such as dye-resistant cords stitched to the surface of the material — is unknown elsewhere in the world. Every technique used in this Chinese work can be duplicated, at least in principle, in other traditions. And yet this work stands apart from, and in many ways above, the resist-dyeing done by similar methods in other

parts of the world. What distinguishes our Chinese work is the elaboration of simple means — most strikingly, perhaps, the clever exploitation of the principle of folding — and the skillful combination of these methods to carry out complex and highly organized schemes of design.

The procedure followed in dyeing by the cord-resist method seems to have been about as follows. First, the design to be reserved against the dye by this method is drawn on the cloth in single lines. Then the operator commences to pinch the cloth into a fold, following the drawing in such a way that the ridge of the fold always coincides with the drawn line. Holding a bit of the fold with one hand, she uses the other hand to lay a corresponding length of cord against one side of the fold, then with the first hand rolls the ridge of the fold down, so as to cover the cord with the doubled material. The cord, together with its double covering of cloth, is then firmly stitched in place with needle and coarse thread. As it is impossible to hold the folded material in position for more than a short distance, the operator must repeat this process over and over again, literally inching her way along the predetermined outlines of the design. When the whole design has been thus folded and stitched down over the cord, the cloth is immersed in the dye. After the surplus dye has been washed out of the cloth and the binding stitches removed, the result of this procedure is a broad white band accompanied by a row of little white lines. The width of the band is determined by the circumference of the cord around which the cloth was wrapped; while the little lines represent the dye-resistant action of the binding stitches. The pattern made by the lines is determined by the character of the stitch chosen for the binding. Where the binding was done by means of an overhand or whip stitch, these lines appear as a row of parallel marks, diagonal or roughly at right angles to the broad band (as, for example, in Plate I, or in the fins and tail of the fish in the End-piece).<sup>6</sup> Where the binding was done by means of a simple running stitch, the result is two series of dashes, both running parallel to the broad band (as, for example, in the head, scales, and upper and lower bodily outlines of the fish in the end-piece). Other stitches are, of course, possible. Some specimens, not here illustrated, show evidence of zigzag or criss-cross stitching. Doubling the cloth over the cord before stitching it in place evidently has the effect of enhancing its resistance to the dye, and so insuring a clean white band; while the same doubling also provides a firm body, upon which the binding stitches act more efficiently as a means of reservation against the dye, thus insuring a distinct pattern of little lines.



PLATE I

BED VALANCE (WO-TAN PIEN-TZU). NEICHIANG, SZECH'UAN. 18 X 85 IN. (46 X 216 CM.). NOT SHOWN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH IS THE BED-SHEET (REALLY A SHEET HALF THE WIDTH OF THE BED) OF PLAIN BLUE MATERIAL, 32½ IN. (83 CM.) WIDE, WHICH IS SEWN TO THE TOP OF THE VALANCE.



PLATE II

BED VALANCE (WO-TAN PIEN-TZU). CH'ÉNGTU, SZECH'UAN. 19 X 84 IN. (48 X 214 CM.)

The use of binding stitches as a secondary means of reservation against the dye undoubtedly improves the decorative effect of the designs by softening the broad outlines left by the cords.<sup>7</sup>

If we understand by *plangi* the simple binding (not sewing) of an area of cloth around a hard, round core, such as a stick or nail (Indian *bandhana*; Japanese *shibori*), by which the material at the top of the core may be left free to take the dye, while a "neck" of material, bound closely to the core, resists the dye and appears, after untying, as a more or less regular white ring; then it must be said that this method seems to have been employed only exceptionally by the Chinese in the work here illustrated. Such a *plangi* technique does appear to have been used to make the ring-like eyes of the butterflies at the top of the Frontispiece, and the eye-rings of the lions in Plate II. Again, the noses of the lions in the same piece may have been produced by a *plangi* procedure, in which the entire area intended for the nose has been somehow tied off against the dye. The bedspread in the frontispiece shows a typical *plangi*-ringlet in the extreme upper left-hand corner, which seems to have been produced by tying the end of a stick into the cloth, in order to facilitate its manipulation in the dye-bath. From these instances it appears that the use of *plangi*, if it occurs at all, plays only a minor and incidental role in this work. It is not one of the techniques upon which the Chinese depend for larger decorative effects, as so often do the Indians, Indonesians, and Japanese.

The ubiquitous "butterflies" of these cloths, as they occur, for example, in the central band of the bedspread illustrated in the Frontispiece, again defy classification within the usual categories of resist-dyeing techniques. These motives are produced by a combination of folding and stitching, as shown in Fig. 1. After a preliminary fold is made in the cloth (Fig. 1, number 1), a second fold, meeting the first at an angle of sixty degrees, is made at the operator's right and toward him; then a third fold, beginning at the juncture of the first and second folds, is made at the same angle as before, but on the operator's left and away from him. The resulting point is folded down (Fig. 1, number 4) and secured in place by two stitches which, by their resistance to the dye, leave two white lines representing the antennae of the butterfly. It is obvious that this procedure does not correspond to the definition of *plangi*, since it involves folding and stitching rather than binding. On the other hand, the way in which the Chinese use rows of these "butterflies" to fill spaces, as in the Frontispiece, recalls somewhat the use made of *plangi*-ringlets in other traditions.



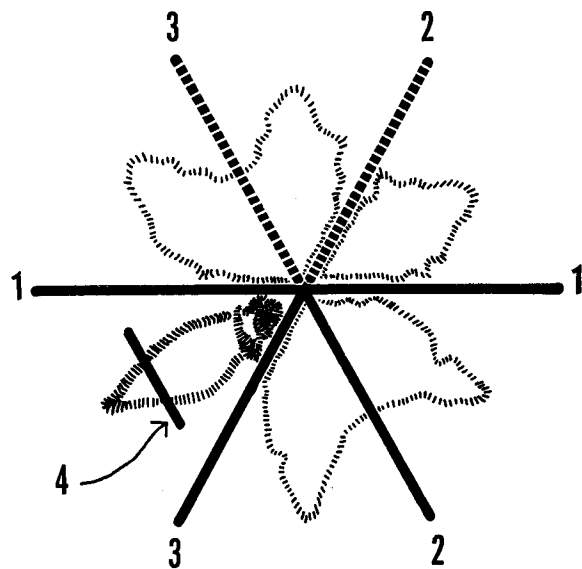


FIG. 1. SCHEME FOR FOLDING "BUTTERFLIES".  
 THE NUMERALS SHOW THE ORDER OF THE FOLDS.  
 BROKEN LINES INDICATE BACKS OF FOLDS.



FIG. 2.

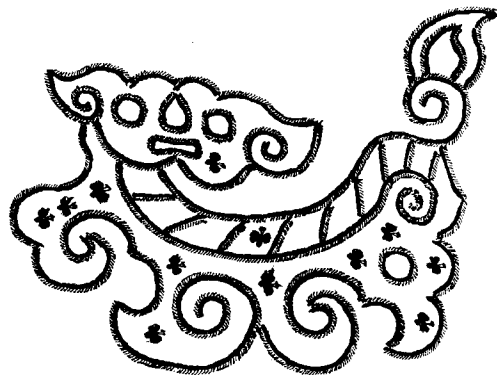


FIG. 3.

The question whether the Indonesian technique known as *tritik* occurs in these cloths may be answered with a qualified negative. As defined and illustrated by Loebèr, and by Jasper and Pirngadie,<sup>8</sup> this technique involves the sewing of a thread through the cloth in a simple running stitch, and the tight puckering or shirring of the material on the thread. After dyeing and opening, a somewhat irregular line of tiny white spots (whence the Indonesian term of *tritik*, meaning "sprinkled") appears along the line of the sewing. In Java this technique is used primarily as a border decoration. Indeed, a rectangular cloth is there generally folded into quarters and the four thicknesses are stitched together in one operation. It is doubtful whether anything corresponding at all closely to the Javanese *tritik* occurs in these Chinese resist-dyed cloths. In the first place, the Chinese cotton cloth is generally so heavy as to preclude its taking the dye evenly if sewn together in several layers (it is, in fact, this relative imperviousness which facilitates the effective use of resist-dyeing by means of cords, as described above). Secondly, in so far as the Chinese make use of puckering or shirring, they tend to treat the puckers as carefully measured and aligned pleats or folds (a treatment which, again, is perhaps conditioned by the relative coarseness of the Chinese cloth), rather than letting the cloth gather in haphazard fashion on the thread. Produced by this quasi-*tritik* method are, apparently, the rayed circles surrounding the butterfly "knots" in Plate III, and also the rayed outlines of the eight-lobed rosettes on the same cloth. The intention and the effect are quite different from those of Javanese *tritik*, even though the two methods may be related technically.

These considerations by no means cover all the technical processes displayed by this type of Western Chinese resist-dyeing, nor even all the techniques of the specimens here illustrated. The method used to produce the outlines of the main design of Plate IV, for example, still eludes us; though it seems reasonable to infer that here again it is a combination of folding and stitching. In summary of the technical question, it should, perhaps, be said that, although none of the procedures here used is unknown in other parts of the world, still this Chinese work is distinguished by an unusual and original combination of such techniques, by their extraordinarily skillful manipulation, and by their adaptation to the forms of a richly evolved and highly imaginative folk art. It is for this reason that, despite the impossibility of explaining every technical detail, it seems advisable to publish at least some examples of

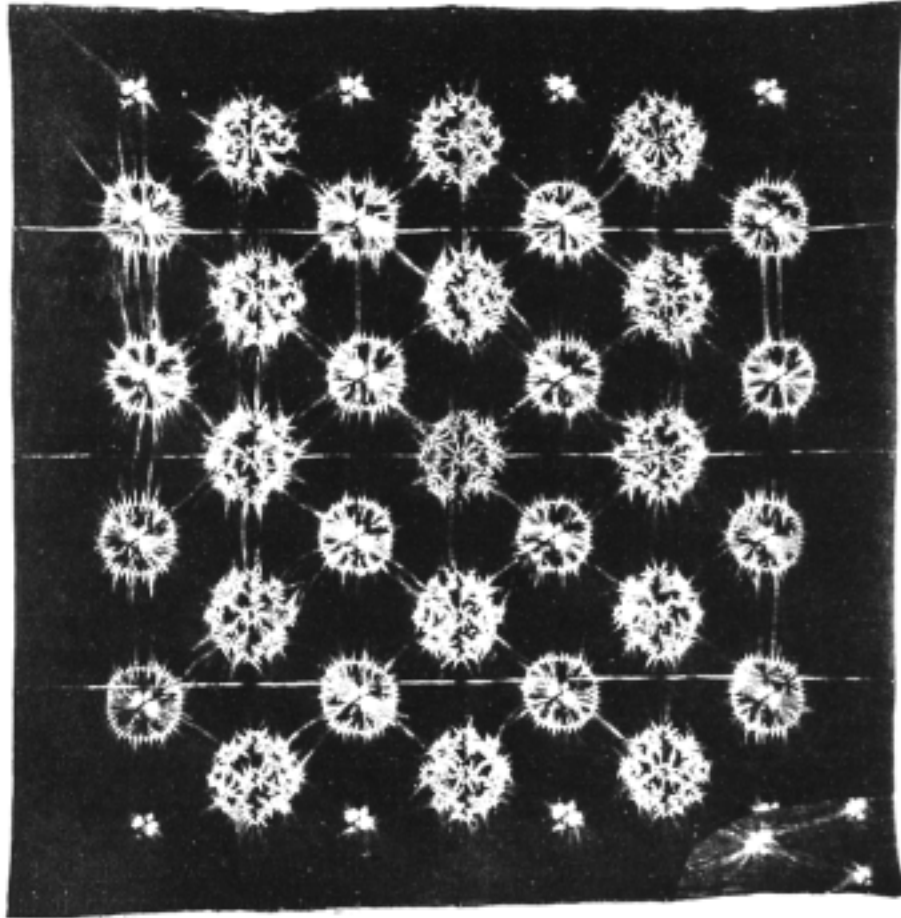


PLATE III  
CLOTH FOR WRAPPING BUNDLES (*pao-fu*). ANSHUN, KWEICHOW.  
52 X 53 IN. (132 X 135 CM.). PATCH IN ONE CORNER.

this work, in the hope that students, and especially observers in China, may be stimulated to further investigation.

Leaving the question of techniques, we turn to a brief consideration of the designs themselves. In general, these may be described as thoroughly characteristic of the folk art of China, especially as it occurs in the western provinces of the country.<sup>9</sup> Whiskered fishes (probably carp) with streamers of aquatic weeds as in the End-piece, are common in Chinese folk art. The scroll in the corner of the same piece is a typical Chinese "cloud scroll" or "*ju-i* scepter's head." A favorite motive in all phases of Chinese art is the lotus, which forms the central feature in Plates I, II and IV. In Plates I and IV the lotus root (in itself significant in Chinese symbolic lore) appears in the form of a three-lobed numeral 8, four times in Plate I, and once at the bottom of Plate IV. The two birds flying toward the central lotus in the former design are intended for herons or egrets. Together with the lotus they constitute a stereotype of Western Chinese popular design, called *lu-szu wo lien*, or "herons settling among the lotus." The design of Plate V can be best understood with reference to the cross-stitch bed-valances widely used in Western China, which are generally decorated with rows of roundels or medallions, interspersed with smaller motives, often sprigs of foliage.<sup>10</sup> The butterflies in the upper corners of the bedspread in the Frontispiece represent a favorite motive of Chinese folk art, while the three vases or jardinières standing before balustrades at the bottom of the same piece undoubtedly reflect the intrusion of urban or professional influence in what is otherwise essentially a rural and domestic art.

In Plates II and VI we see two different ways of treating the popular motive of "two lions rolling the embroidered ball" — a motive which, like many in the modern repertory of Chinese folk art, seems to trace its descent from the T'ang dynasty (7th to 10th century). In Plate II the "embroidered ball," which usually occupies a central position between the two contending creatures, has been changed into a kind of lotus flower, formed around a conventionalized cash or square-holed coin, popularly called a "wheel cash" (*ku-lu ch'ien*). Evidently because of this transformation of the central motive, each lion is provided with an "embroidered ball" of his own, complete with the usual fluttering ribbons. In Plate VI the "embroidered ball" appears in the center of the composition, again in the form of a "wheel cash," decorated by a ribbon with four loops and a dangling end. Flanking this central motive, the two lions, highly conventionalized and almost lost in a whirl of linear



PLATE IV  
CLOTH FOR WRAPPING BUNDLES (*pao-fu*). ANYO, SZECH'UAN  
36 X 37 IN. (91 X 94 CM.)



PLATE V

BEDSPREAD (*wo-tan*) OR QUILT-COVER. NEI CHIANG, SZECH'UAN.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  x  $7\frac{1}{2}$  IN.  
(85 X 202 CM.) PROBABLY REPRESENTS ONE HALF OR TWO THIRDS THE ORIGINAL.



PLATE VI  
CURTAIN OR HANGING. KWEIYANG, KWEICHOW. 46 X 74 IN. (107 X 188 CM.)

ornament, are characteristically shown with bodies in side view and heads in front view, their tails reaching into the upper corners of the cloth. Among accessory elements of the composition we distinguish four auspicious symbols. Most easily recognized is the magic sword of Lü Tung-pin, one of the eight Taoist immortals, above the head of the lion at the left. Beneath the right-hand lion is a gourd, or possibly two telescoped gourds, which might be regarded as the attribute of Li T'ieh-kuai, another of the immortals. The symbol at the lower left may be an inept rendering of a *ju-i* (wish-conferring) scepter, or it may represent the lotus-attribute of the female immortal, Ho Hsien-ku. The motive above the head of the right-hand lion is probably intended for a silver ingot, *ting*, a symbol of wealth. Fluttering bands attached to these four symbols fill most of the remaining space. With simple means the designer has achieved a strangely fascinating composition, challenging the observer's eye like a labyrinth.

An interesting feature of this design is the treatment of the lions' feet as a series of scrolls. Though one might be inclined to credit this arrangement to the caprice of the designer, it appears, in fact, to be based upon an old tradition. For, as long ago as the Sung dynasty (10th to 13th century) we find that dragons were sometimes represented in pot-



END-PIECE

CORNER OF A LARGE CLOTH, PROBABLY A BEDSPREAD OR QUILT-COVER.  
NEICHIANG, SZECH'UAN. 19 X 37 IN. (48 X 94 CM.)  
RECOVERED AS A PATCH ON ANOTHER QUILT-COVER.



tery design with legs terminating not in the usual claws, but in fanciful scrollwork, known to Chinese antiquaries as *ling-chih chiao*, "fungus-legs," or "legs like the fungus of immortality" (Fig. 2). Evidently it is just such "fungus-legs" which lend our lions their rollicking gait (Fig. 3). Indeed, it seems as if both lions, from their ears to their rumps, and even to the tips of their tails, were deliberately composed of the curves of the same mystic mushroom. Just how the modern textile design is related to the old ceramic tradition may be left an open question; though one is tempted to suppose that the sophisticated Sung convention itself rests upon an old popular tradition, of which this motive in the folk art of Western China represents a survival into modern times.

## NOTES

1. Alfred Bühler, "Die Reservemusterungen; Versuch einer zusammenfassenden Betrachtung ihrer Technik, Entstehung und Herkunft," *Acta Tropica* (Review of Tropical Science and Tropical Medicine, Basel), vol. 3, 1946, pp. 242-271 and 322-366.
2. In ancient times, resist-dyeing seems to have been extensively practiced by the Chinese, if not by other far eastern peoples. See the remarks of Charles Iklé, "The Plangi Technique," *Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1941, p. 14. However, the examples of resist-dyeing referred to by Iklé dating from the T'ang dynasty (roughly from the seventh to ninth century), and now preserved in the Japanese Imperial Household Collections, or recently discovered in Central Asia by Stein and others, obviously do not represent a popular tradition. Produced commercially, or made to order for imperial or princely courts, these fabrics, generally of silk, were designed by professionals and dyed, often in several colors, by processes sometimes involving a considerable degree of mechanical complexity. Though they do attest the early occurrence of resist-dyeing in the Far East, these fabrics are so different from the modern work in material, design, technique, and social origin, that they can hardly be regarded as the direct antecedents of the latter. Rather, I believe we must assume that the vigorous popular tradition of the present day goes back to an ancient popular tradition, of which, however, no traces have survived to us. See the development of this idea in my article on "Some Peasant Embroideries from Western China," *Embroidery* (Journal of the Embroiderers' Guild, London), September, 1935, in which the design of a modern peasant embroidery in cross-stitch is compared to a related design in a printed silk of the T'ang dynasty.
3. See Alfred Steinmann, "Batiks," *Ciba Review*, no. 58, Basel, July, 1947, p. 2107. The question of the *batiks* made at the coastal town of Changlok or Ch'ang-lo, near the mouth of the Min River in Fukien province, demands further investigation, especially with reference to the history of the local industry, in order to determine, if possible, whether it is of recent origin and inspired from abroad (i.e., by the example of Javanese *batiks*, which could have been brought back by Chinese colonists returning to this part of the China coast from Java), or whether it represents the survival, and sophistication, of an ancient local folk practice, possibly tribal in origin. The designs of these *batiks* are purely Chinese in character, but of a professional type: they do not look like the product of a popular tradition. Dr. Steinmann is at present engaged in an enquiry into this question, which will probably require the participation of a sinologist, and perhaps of local historians, for its solution.

4. The only published reference to this type of resist-dyeing which has come to my attention is by Inez de Beauclair, "The Keh Lao of Kweichow and their History according to the Chinese Records," *Studia Serica* (Journal of the Chinese Cultural Studies Institute, West China Union University, Ch'êngtu, Szech'uan), vol. 5, 1946, note on p. 19, where the author calls attention to "plangi" which she observed especially at one point in Southern Szech'uan, and again at Tali, Yünnan. Mrs. de Beauclair has informed me that in Kweichow the common Chinese name for cloth decorated by this means is *cha-hua pu* [a], i.e., "cloth decorated with bound or tied designs." In Neichiang, Szech'uan, I was given the name *chiao hua* (presumably [b], with about the same meaning) for this kind of work. In the same place I heard the term *liao hua* (evidently meaning "hemmed designs") applied sometimes to this kind of work as a whole, sometimes specifically to designs produced by the cord-resist method, to be described presently.

[a] 紮花布                      [b] 綴花

The question naturally arises whether this resist-dyeing among the Chinese population of West China can be attributed to derivation from tribal sources—since it is the tribespeople of this region and adjoining regions to the south who now practice other resist-dyeing methods, such as *batik* and *ikat*. The answer seems to be that if these techniques are tribal in origin, the period of their adoption by the Chinese must lie far back in history; for the art at present has a predominantly Chinese distribution (I know of only sporadic and very limited use of the simplest of these techniques among non-Chinese tribespeople of this region), while the designs are, at the present day, purely Chinese and not at all tribal in character. It may be added that this type of work, like the cross-stitch embroidery of Western China, is no longer widely practiced, but represents the accomplishment of a passing, or even of a past, generation.

5. See R. C. Spooner, "Szechwan Indigo," *Journal of the West China Border Research Society*, vol. 14, series B, 1943, pp. 102-118.
6. Strangely enough, a kind of cord-resist dyeing which gives almost exactly the same effect as the Chinese work, and which was presumably produced in exactly the same way (by doubling the material over the cord and stitching it in place with an overhand stitch) occurs in Ashanti, in the Gold Coast Colony of West Africa. See *Atlantis* (Hürlimann edition, Zürich), vol. 18, November, 1946, p. 473. Needless to say, the designs carried out by this method in Ashanti are quite different from those of our Chinese work. In connection with this parallel it is interesting to note that Baumann (as cited by Bühler, *op. cit.*, p. 349) was struck by similarities between whole series of resist techniques practiced in the Western Sudan and those practiced in Southern Asia, similari-

ties which suggested to him the possibility of an actual historical connection of some sort between the Western Sudan and the more advanced Asiatic cultures. For further references to resist-dyeing by means of cords, etc., imposed on the surface of the cloth in West Africa, see Bühler, *op. cit.*, p. 338, under the heading "Schablonenreserven;" and compare J. A. Loebèr, "Textile Verzierungstechniken bei aussereuropäischen Völkern," in C. W. Schmidt, *Moderne weibliche Handarbeiten und verwandte textile Künste*, Dresden, 1908, p. 277, showing two specimens from the Haussa negroes in the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde, one with dye-resistant cords sewn in place but undyed, the other dyed and opened. The material here is evidently not folded over the cords, but the cords are simply sewn to its surface, as in the sampler to be described in note 7. I have not had opportunity to examine the resist-dyed fabrics from West Africa in the British Museum, among which there is evidently significant comparative material. See H. J. Braunholtz, "The 'Charles Beving' Collection of Textiles," *The British Museum Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1934, pp. 151-152.

7. It should be emphasized that the foregoing description of resist-dyeing by means of cords is not derived from the author's own observation, but represents a reconstruction based upon a careful examination of the material, and upon an actual sample of cloth prepared for dyeing by a cord-resist method, which was kindly secured for the writer by Mrs. Inez de Beauclair of Kweiyang, Kweichow, China. As the type of cord-resist embodied in this specimen produces a result which does not correspond exactly to the designs under consideration, it seemed inadvisable to reproduce it here. In this specimen the cord, about two millimeters in diameter, is made of twisted tissue-like paper, which has been soaked in *mi-t'ang* (water in which rice has been cooked) in order to make it impervious to the dye. After drying, the cord is stitched to the surface of the material, and remains exposed to the dye on one side. The result of this procedure is, after dyeing, a single white line corresponding in width to the diameter, not the circumference, of the cord. Since in this case the material is not folded over the cord, there would be no trace, after dyeing, of the binding stitches which constitute such an important feature of our work. As the technique of this specimen, now widely practiced in Western China, is easier to master than the elaborate folding and resist-stitching employed in the work here under consideration, it seems to the writer that it might represent a debasement, in recent times, of the more complex and difficult earlier work represented by our illustrations.

Our understanding of the method of making the bands accompanied by little lines, based as it is largely upon the evidence of this atypical sampler, obviously requires a verification which I regret my inability to supply, and which I hope may eventually be supplied by others. It is perhaps conceivable that the broad bands with their accompanying rows of little lines were produced simply by folding the material on itself rather than on a cord, and

stitching the folds. Though it seems to me unlikely, it is perhaps advisable to mention this alternative possibility, as constituting one of the many problems still awaiting solution by the investigator in the field. It should be said that the type of cord-resist represented by Mrs. de Beauclair's sampler may occur occasionally in the pieces here illustrated: thus, for example, in the simple white lines representing the antennae of the butterfly in the upper left of the bedspread in the Frontispiece, or (apparently) in the eye of the fish in the End-piece. If, however, this manner of applying the cords is used in our work, it is clearly exceptional.

8. J. A. Loebèr, "Textiele Versieringen in Nederlandsch-Indië," issued by the Koloniaal Instituut, Amsterdam, 1914 (reissued as Part V of *Techniek en Sierkunst in den Indischen Archipel* by the same institute in 1916), pp. 51, ff, and plates xiv-xx; J. E. Jasper and Mas Pirngadie, *De Inlandsche Kunstnijverheid in Nederlandsch Indië*, vol. 3, The Hague, 1916, pp. 80-84, and fig. 58.
9. For examples of the folk art of Western China, as represented especially in cross-stitch embroidery, the reader may be referred to my writings, as listed in my article, "Some Comparative Considerations about Western Asiatic Carpet Designs," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 9, 1946, p. 69, note 2.
10. See illustrations in the articles cited in note 9.
11. Incised design on the bottom of a cream-glazed *ting*-ware bowl of the Sung dynasty (960-1280). After a photograph of the original, which forms part of the H. H. Harris bequest to the British Museum. See the published illustration in Hobson, Rackham and King, *Chinese Ceramics in Private Collections*, London, 1931, fig. 222; and compare a similar specimen in R. L. Hobson, *The George Eumorphopoulos Collection of . . . Pottery and Porcelain*, vol. 3, London, 1926, pl. xxix, no. C-140.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am greatly indebted to C. T. Loo and Company, and to Mr. Frank Caro, photographer, for kindly providing photographs of several of the illustrated specimens. Mrs. Inez de Beauclair of Kweiyang, Kweichow, China, kindly secured for me locally a specimen of cloth prepared for dyeing by the cord-resist method, thus greatly facilitating the determination of one of the main techniques used in this type of work. The discussion of technical processes would have been impossible without the keen observations and generous help of Dr. Alfred Bühler of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Basel. For the identification of the four symbols in Plate VI, and for other assistance, I am obliged to Mr. Schuyler Cammann of Washington. To Mr. Walter Hochstadter of New York I am indebted for calling my attention to the Sung-dynasty bowl of which the design is illustrated in Fig. 2; and to the Trustees of the British Museum for permitting me to prepare the drawing for this illustration from a photograph of the original supplied by them. Mr. Osamu Shimizu of Columbia University kindly wrote the Chinese characters in note 4.



MEADOW LARK

BY DAN COOPER. BROWN WITH TOUCHES OF RED ON WHITE GROUND.  
COTTON AND RAYON ANTIQUE SATIN.  
COURTESY OF DAN COOPER.

## AMERICAN SCREEN-PRINTED FABRICS

By ZELINA COMEGYS BRUNSCHWIG

**F**EW PEOPLE, outside the circles professionally interested, realize the important position that America is taking in the field of decorative textiles. By this term is meant the materials used for household decoration that give us pleasure by their color and design and cheer us with their durable qualities and satisfying textures. The purpose of this article is to explain a few of the technical processes involved and to familiarize the reader with the present development in this textile industry.

The two factors that contributed the most to our development as the leading nation in this textile world were the economic depression of 1929 and the recent world war. The depression, by its drastic effect on individual incomes, created a demand for inexpensive fabrics; the war, with its aftermath in Europe of unrest and general disorganization, made necessary some other kind of material to replace the fine fabrics formerly imported from Europe. This was a condition that affected both woven and printed textiles.

Before the depression fine decorators on both sides of the Atlantic were thoroughly imbued with the tradition of elegance and formality. For the houses of discriminating clients damasks, brocades, velvets and chintzes of fine and classical design were the textiles used without question for purposes of decoration. Even decorators of necessity more modestly inclined used copies and adaptations of these fine fabrics. The world was still clinging to the age of tradition.

With the depression a general drop in income resulted correspondingly in a reduction in the funds to be spent on high priced and luxurious textiles. The situation was met, both here and abroad, by the production of inexpensive cotton weaves ingeniously woven from yarns hitherto discarded, to give an extraordinary number of new and delightful textures. Dyed the desired color, these "textured" cottons provided suitable substitutes for the damasks and velvets no longer within reach. As it



happened, a fashion was establishing itself at this time for "off-white" decoration, for which, fortunately, these inexpensive cottons were suitable. As a result they had a tremendous vogue, in fact they developed into a veritable style. Even when the demand for fine materials was renewed, this trend toward simplicity continued, bringing with it an entirely new approach to the manner of decorative textiles. Thus, a textile renaissance was set in motion for it must be borne in mind that the same situation prevailed in both Europe and America.

Far ahead of us in their acceptance and appreciation of the forms of modern art, the French, in relation to textile styles, naturally were in the vanguard. They embraced the new synthetic fibers as they appeared and with their well known ingenuity and taste, created fascinating textures and weaves which were soon to influence textile people in this country and gradually to become absorbed into our own textile pattern. Yarns were twisted and crinkled and looped; cotton and rayon, cotton and silk were combined, thus changing the smooth surface of the fabric and producing textures that were not only a delight to see, but a pleasure to feel. One can scarcely imagine the difference a change of texture can give to even a damask.

Printed fabrics, in company with weaves, responded to this new spirit. Their whole character was simplified by the French through new and fresh color combinations, the introduction of amusing motives and a freer style of design resulting from the developments of screen printing whose technique made possible the bold, large-scaled pattern which had been impracticable for the wood block printer. In fact, in the same way that France had held the lead in fashions, Europe, as represented by France, England, Italy, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries, now was the source and inspiration of the greater part of our decorative textiles.

American producers, during this decade between the two periods, had not been idle. Throughout this time they had been endeavoring to manufacture fabrics similar to those from Europe which were so much in favor. But they had met with little recognition. Had the demand existed in this country for fine domestic textiles of the type being created abroad, America could have produced them. But decorator and client alike were so convinced of the superiority of foreign materials that a domestic piece, appealing as it might be in color and design, would be abandoned in favor of something imported from abroad inferior though it might be in style. This snobbish attitude resulted in a vicious circle.



SPRING GARDEN

WHITE, GREEN AND CORAL ON CHARCOAL GROUND. GLAZED PERCALE.  
COURTESY OF BRUNSWIG & FILS.



PEONIES AND ROSES

GREEN, CHARTREUSE, HYACINTH ON WHITE GROUND. GLAZED COTTON.  
COURTESY OF LEHMAN-CONNER COMPANY.

The fastidious customer would accept only imported stuffs with the consequence that the local producer made little effort to manufacture textiles for a market that had proved itself so indifferent.

There were a few firms, however, shortly before the war, that were beginning to realize the practical value of manufacturing in America. European labor troubles were slowing down production, the time element was becoming important and there would be the ease, in thus changing the locale, of working directly with the factory. All these were considerations that appealed to the practical nature of the American.

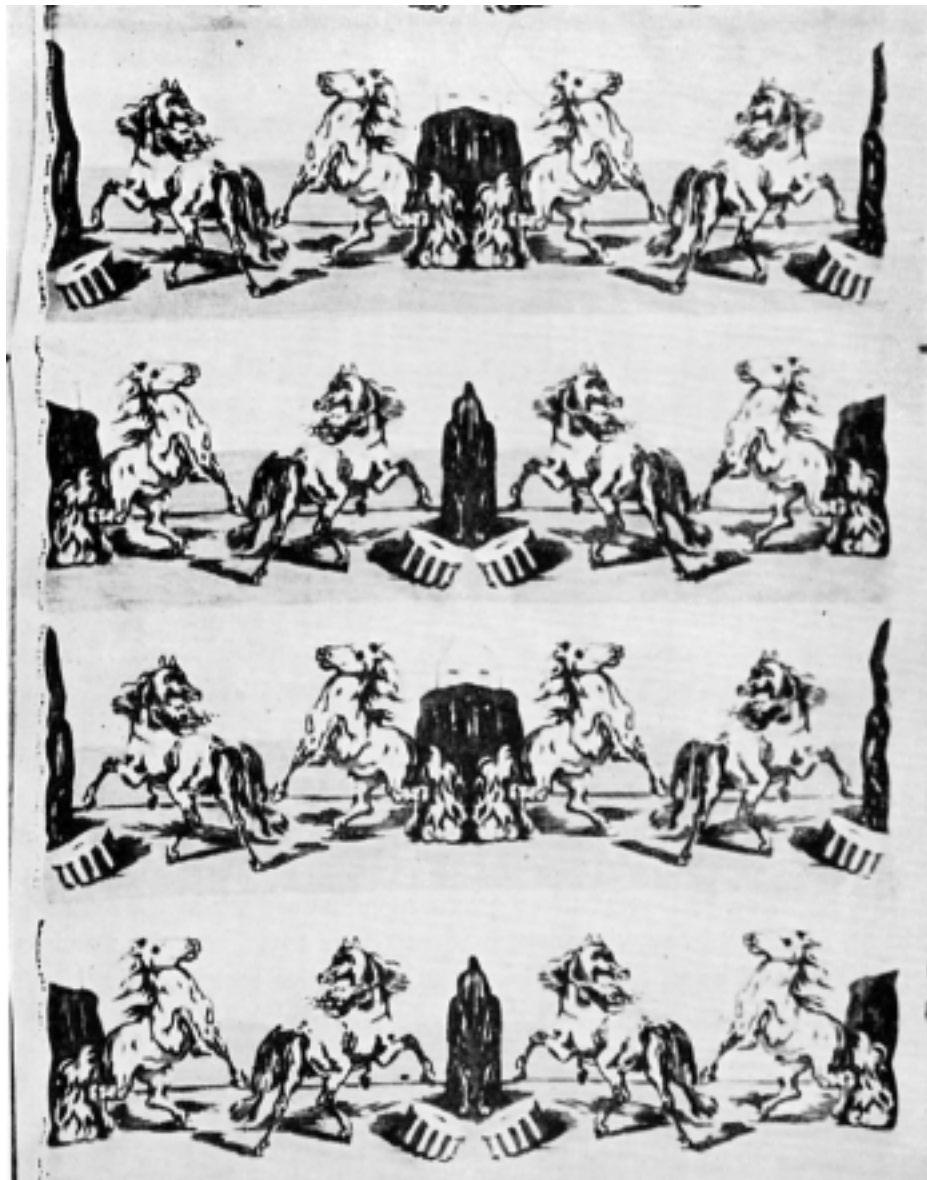
When importers finally turned their attention to American manufacturers they succeeded in directing them along the paths trodden by their European competitors and, as time went on, began to present quietly these domestic textiles along with those that were imported. As a policy this was extremely fortunate for these firms, for with the beginning of the war European importations stopped entirely and these former importers would have been obliged to produce in America or perish.

Although the change from foreign importation to American production was a long and difficult task, it was a very exciting and satisfactory one. It awakened and developed new creative abilities. The importers stimulated the printers and weavers, and they, in their turn, cheered by the recognition that they finally had achieved, bent every effort to improve and develop their techniques, finishes and other features of their craft. Producers, for their part, realized that if they could measure up to European standards, this new business which was making its way so vigorously, would continue after the war. Time has proved the soundness of their judgment. Already three years have passed since the close of hostilities and Europe, due to scarcity of basic materials, dyes and increased costs of production, still is in no position to recapture its former predominant position in the textile industry.

In analyzing the progress made in American textiles, to the writer the most exciting advance has been that of printed fabrics. In Europe the wood-block was the method principally employed.<sup>1</sup> This operation, too costly and cumbersome for our larger production, required skilled workers trained in this tradition. Because it presented fewer difficulties, screen-printing—like wood-blocking a hand process—was developed for both cloth and paper work and has had amazing success. As

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<sup>1</sup> A wooden block on which the design is cut in high relief. Coated with pigment, a stroke of the worker's mallet drives the color into the material. (Ed.)



ANCIENT HORSES FRIGHTENED BY THE VOICE OF THE ORACLE  
FROM A CONTEMPORARY PAINTING BY GIORGIO DE CHIRICO.  
BROWN AND BLACK ON SOFT BLUE, GRAY-PINK AND RESEDA GREEN GROUND.  
COTTON TWILL. COURTESY OF SCALAMANDRÉ MUSEUM OF TEXTILES.

a result, most of the fabrics printed in America are screen-printed. This process, simple in itself, is often used by amateurs and designers to make simple patterns for it really is an extension of the stencil process. But complicated designs, using eight, twelve, fifteen or more colors, present problems that can be handled only by skilled printers and technicians.

The block-print method is so well known that it is not necessary to review it in detail, but screen-printing is fairly recent and a simple explanation of the process may be helpful. Both block- and screen-printing, as had been said, are hand operations. The screen is made of a special type of silk, or substitute material, framed in heavy wood. Its size is determined by the size of the repeat in the design to be reproduced. Printed patterns in America are made on cloth thirty-six or fifty inches in width, hence a screen for printing a thirty-six inch cloth would be thirty-six inches wide by the length of the repeat in the pattern. For a fifty inch design the screen would be made full width and as high as the repeat.

That section of the design to be printed in one color is traced on the silk with a pen. The fine lines, however, formerly achieved by the use of the engraved copper plate, are now produced by the photographic method which transfers them, in faithful representation, directly onto the screen. Then the remainder of the screen is blocked or painted out. For each color a separate screen is used and the process is repeated. Sometimes fifteen or twenty screens are needed for one design. Over-prints, the printing of one color on top of another, cut down the number of screens and give greater depth to the pattern as the dyes used in this kind of printing are partially transparent.

Properly bleached and prepared cloth on which the design is to be printed is placed on a table which is usually fifty yards long, and is either pinned at the sides or pasted over padding to keep it in place. The table has a guide rail to which adjustable clamps are attached. The screen is then placed on the table and each repeat is marked by gages and clamps on the entire length of the table to ensure that each screen will be placed in its proper position for the printing.

Starting at one end of the table, the screen is placed in its first position and the color, whether pigment or dye, is poured on the screen and forced back and forth by an oblong instrument, known as a squeegee, so that it penetrates the fabric uniformly. The screen is then lifted and placed in its next position. This operation is continued the entire length of the table and is repeated for each color used until the pattern is complete. The fabric is then unfastened from the table and lifted into the air to dry.



KENTUCKY CARDINAL  
GREEN, CHARTREUSE AND RED ON NATURAL GROUND.  
COTTON SATINE.  
COURTESY OF BRUNSWIG & FILS.



PANAMA

BY DAN COOPER. SHADES OF BLUE AND GREEN ON WHITE GROUND.

RAYON AND COTTON ANTIQUE SATIN.

COURTESY OF DAN COOPER.



Many other processes are employed after this initial step. Colors must be set either by steam, or by other means, depending on the nature of the dyes used. Further operations are required to finish the cloth of which one is glazing. A large screen-printing plant uses an enormous amount of costly and complicated machinery in the preparing and finishing processes; however, the printing itself is still a hand operation.

Quality of printing, depth of color and delicacy of design can be reproduced quite as well by screen-printing as with blocks, if the screens are well cut and the printer is a person of high technical skill and knowledge. It is as impossible for anyone with a sudden impulse to become a screen-printer to set up a screen print shop and expect to equal or surpass block-printing without such skill as it would be for a youngster in medical school to perform an operation with the perfected technique of an experienced surgeon.

The main problem today is the changing over from imported to domestic dyes, and because of this a great deal of experimentation has been necessary. Large plants employ staffs of chemists and technicians and therefore are in a better position than the small printer to achieve accuracy of color. The tendency is toward what are known as "vat dyes," colors, like the Jouy "*bon teint*", the least likely to fade when exposed to light. The whole vat process, however, is very intricate and color matching has not yet been perfected. Research is being carried on by large chemical companies which are experimenting continuously with the hope of developing in this country fixed colors at reasonable prices. Swiss colors are among the finest produced, but it is impossible to import sufficient quantities as protective tariffs make the price prohibitive.

Roller-printing, another of the principal methods in use today, is not new, but it has been perfected. This is a process by which color is transferred continuously onto a cloth by means of engraved metal rollers.<sup>2</sup> The size of the repeat of the design is limited by the circumference of the roller which is usually from fifteen to eighteen inches. The number of colors also is limited. While the machinery required is very expensive, actual printing costs are much lower than in screen printing as the machines are so constructed that they must print several thousand yards per color combination in one continuous operation. Inexpensive prints found in department stores are printed by this machine method which is the only way in which low-cost production and large volume can be obtained.

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<sup>2</sup> Roller-printing was introduced into the Oberkampf manufactory at Jouy in the last years of the eighteenth century. (Ed.)

The screen process, on the other hand, sets no limitation on minimum yardage and since it is more flexible, experiments can be made and new designs developed without commitment for the large volume of cloth required in roller-printing.

In the last ten years our conceptions of decoration have moved a long way from the European idea. At the present time American made prints and weaves are accepted by American purchasers without question. The point is rarely raised as to whether or not they are imported fabrics. They are sought after because of their merits. In color and style they express our way of living and they meet our need for fresh, strong color and durability.

The photographs that accompany this article are examples of some of the screen printed fabrics shown at the exhibition at the Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich, Connecticut, in the Spring of 1948. They illustrate new trends in decoration and are interesting not only from the point of view of their design and color, but also for the fact that they are printed on types of cloth extraordinarily varied in their composition that give added interest and new dimensional qualities to the design.



ENDPIECE

SILK SCREEN SHOWING GROUND BLOCKED OUT  
COURTESY OF F. SCHUMACHER & COMPANY



## CLUB NOTES

*The first meeting of the year*, through the courtesy of Mrs. Cochran Supplee, was held on Thursday, January the fifteenth, at three o'clock, in the Small Ballroom of the Colony Club, 51 East 62nd Street. The speaker was Dr. Phyllis Ackerman, who talked on the Apocalypse Tapestries on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Exhibition of great French tapestries shown there from November 22nd, 1947, to February 29th, 1948.

*On the afternoon of Tuesday, the twenty-seventh*, in the same month, Dr. Ackerman, with great kindness, invited the members of the Club to visit for inspection the splendid new quarters of the Asia Institute at 7 East 70th Street.

*The annual meeting of the Club* was held on Thursday, February the twenty-sixth, at three o'clock, at the apartment of Mrs. William Bamberger, 525 Park Avenue. After reports read by the Directors and the announcement by Miss Elizabeth Haynes, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, of the election of the ballot, Miss Marian Powys spoke on her recent visit to England and Belgium where she went to inspect the lace centers of these countries.

*On March sixteenth*, the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration, as it has done so often in the past, extended its hospitality to the Club for the lecture given by Professor Arthur Jeffery on the dramatic subject of the Qur'ān.

*For its spring meeting*, through the generous invitation of the Washington Headquarters Association, Club members, on Wednesday, April 28th, visited the historic Roger Morris-Jumel Mansion, at 160th Street and Edgecombe Avenue, where they were shown the interior of his beautiful old house and given an account of its history.

*Through the kindness of Mrs. John Gerdes*, the first meeting of the autumn was held at her apartment, 4 East 72nd Street, on Wednesday, November seventeenth. At three o'clock Mr. John Kent Tilton, the Director of the Scalamandr  Museum of Textiles, gave a talk on silk and textile designs.

*In place of the customary December meeting*, a Bring and Buy Sale was held this year on December second for the benefit of the Needle and Bobbin Club Bulletin. For this sale Miss E. Mabel Clark, with the greatest generosity, opened her house at 831 Madison Avenue, where, from twelve till six, Club members came in number, acquiring virtually all the objects that had been donated.

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