



DETAIL OF THE LOWER BORDER OF THE HANGING, SHOWING HERALDIC MOTIFS.

A MEDIAEVAL EMBROIDERY FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. MURRAY CRANE

THE large panel of German fourteenth century embroidery now in the collection of Mrs. Murray Crane was formerly in the possession of the Prince of Sigmaringen, and is of a type of which there are a few other examples such as those among the groups of mediaeval embroideries at Wienhausen, the Museum in Brunswick and at Halberstadt. This piece is shown on Plate 181 of L. de Farcy,—*La Broderie*, and similar pieces are illustrated by Marie Schuette in her monumental work on German embroidered wall hangings; but such pieces are extremely rare and this one is certainly almost, if not quite, unique in this country.

Designed as an altar hanging, the piece is made up of twelve square panels between an upper and a lower border bearing the Arms of the family for whom it was made. The figures in the borders carry scrolls; some of these are knights and ladies, others wear the habits of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders.

The heraldic devices shown at the left of the borders have been identified by Mr. R. T. Nichol of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who describes them as those of the ancient Landgrave of Hesse; "azure

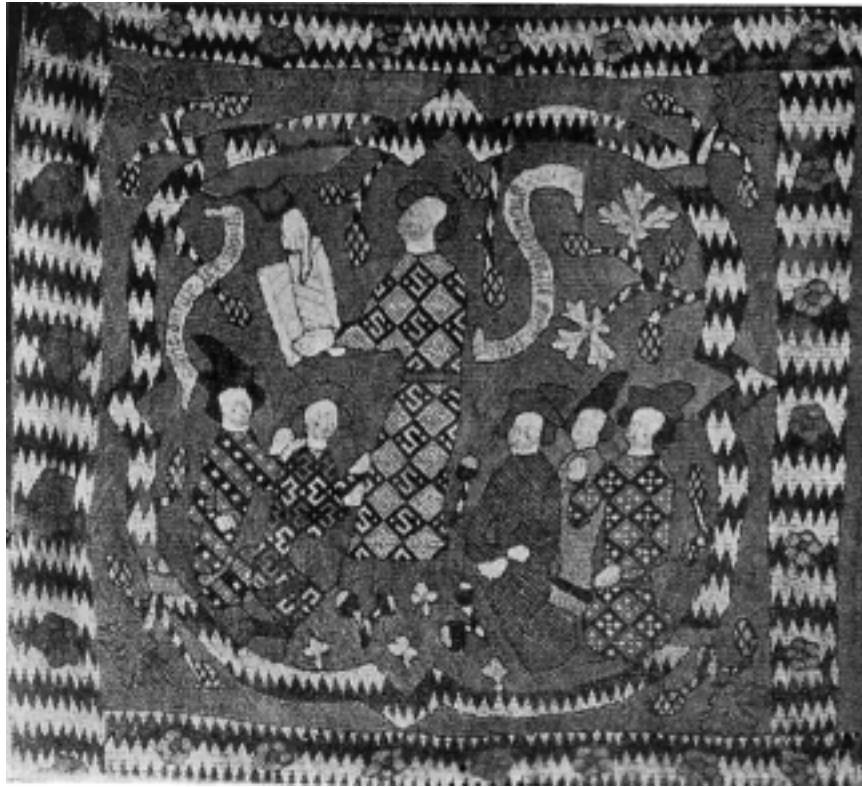


FIG. 4

MOSES RECEIVING THE TABLES OF THE LAW

a lion Barry silver and crowned gold”; and of the House of Lichtfuss (Prussia and Poland) “sable a bear’s head silver.”

Six of the twelve scenes depicted represent subjects from the Christian tradition; the other six, their Old Testament antetypes: a typical pair,—the two panels at the right of the middle row,—being the Sacrifice of Isaac followed by Christ on his way to Golgotha.

The entire surface is worked in counted canvas stitches, the greater part of it in what is called “cushion stitch” by Lewis F. Day, and “Florentine stitch” by Mrs. A. F. Christie. It is worked vertically, each stitch covering three holes so that in the next stitch the needle can be brought out half-way along the side of the first. In occasional spots this stitch has been varied by stitches half the size or, on the faces, by a more closely worked surface stitch in finer silk on which features could be in-

dicated, apparently drawn in by a fine brush. Some portions of the design are outlined with a dark thread in a free, uncounted stitch which in many places has almost entirely disappeared because of the black dye.

The whole surface of the embroidery is very lustrous, as the silk thread which was used is only slightly twisted and rather thick so that the strands catch the light with more gleam than in work where twisted silk is used. There is no gold thread in the work, but the quality of the silk is so luminous and the colors so clear that there is an effect almost like stained glass.

The accompanying cuts illustrating the stitchery of the piece, give working details of the patterns shown on some of the garments of the



FIG. 5

GROUP OF FIGURES SHOWING WOMEN'S COSTUMES OF THE PERIOD.

figures. These are typical geometrical motifs familiar in thirteenth and fourteenth century work (especially German),—crosses, interlaces, the gammadion or fylfot symbol and various other devices, all of which are readily adaptable to many forms of needlework. The costumes, with their different forms of quaint head-gear, furnish valuable data as to dress in mediaeval Germany.

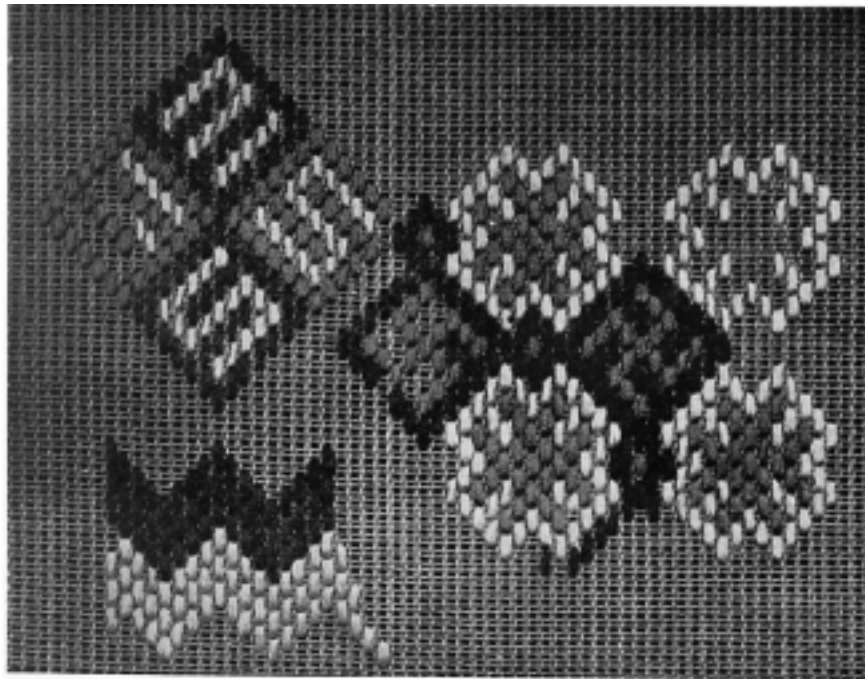


FIG. 6

WORKING PATTERN SHOWING DETAIL OF STITCHES IN THE EMBROIDERED COSTUMES
OF FIGURES 2 AND 4.



FIG. 7

WORKING PATTERN SHOWING DETAIL OF STITCHES
IN BORDERS FRAMING THE DIFFERENT SCENES.

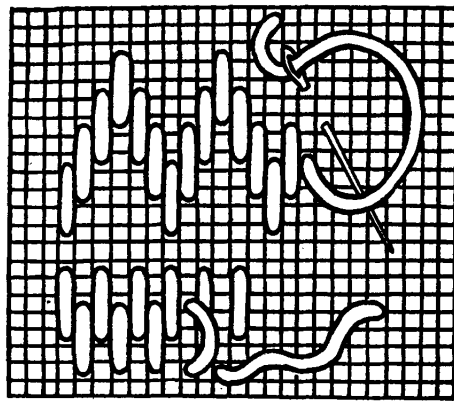


FIG. 8

"CUSHION" OR "FLORENTINE STITCH." FROM
"SAMPLERS AND STITCHES" BY MRS. ARCHIBALD CHRISTIE.



FIG. 1

WEDDING EMBROIDERY IN POLYCHROME SILKS, FROM JANINA. IN THE COLLECTION OF MRS. ROBERT MONKS.