



HAPPIER HANDICRAFTS.

2. SCHOOL FOR NEEDLEPOINT

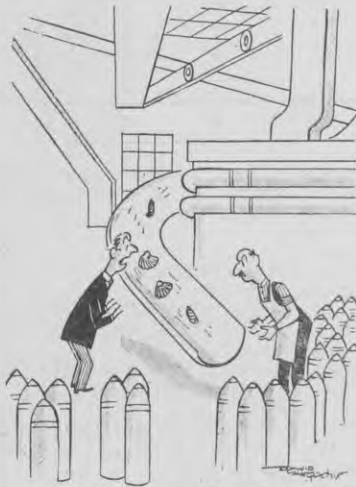
Way back in the Middle Ages, when castles were fortress homes, the womenfolk would sit weaving warm hangings to keep their draughty rooms warm and cosy. They chose subjects from the stirring events of their times, so that to-day we have a clear idea of not only their dress and customs, but also of the more chatty details of their affairs. These D.O.L.'s (dear old ladies) covered most of the world's history in wool and threads. They pictured fierce looking gendarmes like Alexander registering passion with the whites of his eyes, Charlemagne looking like a big stiff in shining armour mounted upon a snow white charger; Hercules with a horrid looking club standing between a lion that symbolizes Bravery and Cupid who symbolizes love. A patch hides the Cupid scene, which is probably fairly immodest. Even the Homeric Greeks considered it a feminine duty and accomplishment to weave. The prim and proper Penelope is pictured weaving a shroud for Laertes on an upright loom. Each night she would secretly unravel her tapestry for she must remarry as soon as it was finished. Husband Ulysses was already ten years overdue from battle, so if she really believed all his excuses when he finally did show up she must have been covering up on a few odd moments when she hadn't stuck too closely to her weaving.

They wove on large upright looms strung with hundreds of strong warp threads, using bobbins of silk, wool, gold or silver thread. The picture or cartoon was marked on the threads and worked from the wrong side. To see what they were doing they had to run round the front. Slits or holes were left to strengthen straight and curved outlines and give the impression of shadow. This gave the tapestry a fine lace-like quality.

Tapestry as Furniture Coverings.

In the eighteenth century two Frenchmen named Oudry and Boucher set the pace in the designing of furniture tapestries. Oudry based his designs upon the fables of La Fontaine. They contain only animal and floral patterns, which are indescribably rich in colour and unsurpassed in design. Even his cows are said to have striking character and individuality.

Instead of using the older method of working with the loom, modern day workers copy the old Babylonian method of embroidering on fine linen. From this has developed the needlepoint upholstery, consisting of loosely woven linen or canvas worked in gaily coloured silks, wools or cottons, with a blunt needle, in a slant over one thread. This is called the petit point or tent stitch. If in a rush use the Beauvais or Florentine stitches worked upright over two or four threads of canvas.



"Good heavens, Thistledown, it's sabotage!"

Do you wish to leave a stool or picture to posterity? Tell your U.E.O. about it. In due time she will produce the materials. Most W.A.A.C.'s show a marked preference for pink roses, large and cabbage-like, or cottages ringed with hollyhock. So be original, have purple petunias or puce portulacca. If you find the ground work tedious give it to the boys on sentry-go. They'll finish it up or off in absolutely no time. So join the school of needlepoint now.

A HORROR STORY.

This might happen to you! Your teeth may loosen and fall out, your limbs may become paralysed, your skin may harden and flake off, your eyes may dry up, you may become blind—you may, eventually die!

Some of you may be suffering from the first symptoms already. Are you subject to headaches? Disinclined to work; are you afflicted by nerves, indigestion, loss of weight, general depression? Then look out! Your system is warning you. You are suffering from the scourge of modern living—vitamin starvation.

A Fad?

The older generation says: "What rot! We got along all right without vitamins." So they did, but they ate only unrefined foods. To-day we employ intricate and extensive machinery to devitaminise foods and then pay half guineas for tins of white ascorbic acid or B1 pills. The advocate of wholemeal bread or unpeeled potatoes or green vegetables daily is dubbed a crank. Actually he is a very wise guy and will be, if he isn't already, a very healthy man.

It's Easy.

Vitamin concentrates should be entirely unnecessary in N.Z. We have natural foodstuffs that will supply all essential vitamins with the possible exception of D in winter. For instance 2 ozs. of orange, lemon or grapefruit juice (daily) guarantees a good intake of ascorbic acid (vit. C), and a teaspoonful of dried yeast (B1) in a glass of water tones up the nervous system for the rest of the day. Simple, isn't it?

Strawberries and Asparagus.

Sounds pretty good. When you pay extraordinary prices for strawberries and asparagus tips it may give you some little satisfaction to know that they are both very good sources of C, but it's much cheaper and twice as nutritious to chew parsley.

SUSPENSION.

This foundation garment problem is becoming acute. It is very difficult for a good WAAC to know what to do with her hose, isn't it? Eezies are out, so they tell us, for the duration, sus-pender belts likewise. That leaves corsets and the garter, both relics of the gay nineties, which brings us to the modern contraptions for stocking control, the safety pin, and latterly—chewing gum.

Or just discard the stockings.