

Unless it is exactly what it ought to be perfect overwork cannot be done, therefore the worker will do well to practice it faithfully, and ought not to undertake the overwork until she has a satisfactory preparation. It is very interesting to

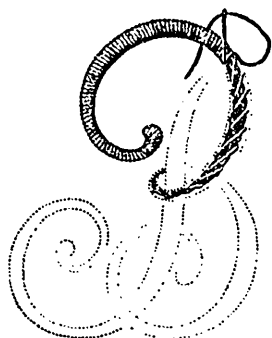


FIG. 32

examine the underfilling in very old work where the finishing stitches have worn away and so exposed it. Its perfection lets one into the secret of the perfect evenness of much of the work in antique embroideries and convinces one that it is indeed worth while to do it well.

There are many designs for white work which may be done by certain methods which make tight framing unnecessary, as will be explained, but for this kind of raised firm work, such as the letters of the bread doily, Fig. 27, the tightest possible framing is absolutely imperative. The hoop is the style of frame to use and it, with the holder, equips one for good work.

A very simple rule embraces the method of the overwork, but it means a great deal and must be accurately followed. The stitches must be laid at right angles to the direction of the forms, that is, straight across by the shortest distance. As the form changes in direction the overstitches must change theirs, gradually if the deviation is slight, abruptly if they are following a curve which suddenly reverses its direction, as at the base of B in Fig. 27. In order to accomplish these turns it is necessary to crowd the stitches on the inside of the curve or angle and spread them a little on the outside. This must be done without being apparent and, in order that it can be, the turn or curve must be calculated on from the start. One must see ahead, slant each stitch slightly so that none will take a decided position in contrast to the others, but all seem part of the whole unbroken series. See curved side of the D in "Bread," Fig. 27. All the stitches in this except those exactly in the center of the curve crowd slightly on the inside and spread the least trifle on the outside. All the stitches then are not at right angles with the upright position of the letter but *at right angles with the direction of the lines and curves which form it*. This is an unerring rule and perfectly easy to apply to all French laid work, whether letters, scrolls, leaves, or ornaments of any sort. It keeps the embroidery absolutely conventional, as it should be, and characterizes it as an especial style. See Fig. 32. To illustrate further by the bread doily, observe how the rule is carried out in the sections of the wheat grains as well as in the letters, and even in the wheat beards and stems.

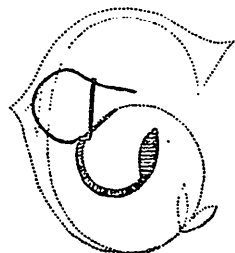


FIG. 33.

Such slender lines as these are not as difficult to work as they seem. They are embroidered over one thread and this, in the lines of the beard for instance, is placed from end to end in one stitch and *drawn to the curve* as the covering proceeds. See Fig. 33. It is indeed easier to keep the stitches of this narrow line even than wider ones; it looks difficult only because it is fine. The long under stitch must not be too tight nor yet too loose. The