

“The Railway Travelling Bag”

Example Item from the “Needlepoint Patterns” section of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, [July 1864, p. 143](#).¹



Instead of a sofa cushion or slipper, readers are invited to craft their own elaborately illustrated luggage, celebrating the latest in transportation technology.

¹ This pattern, including scans showing its bright original colors, has been charted (translated to a contemporary pattern format) and shared open-access by the *Antique Pattern Library*, and is available at no cost through their website at <https://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/html/warm/F-WC005.htm>

THE RAILWAY TRAVELLING BAG.—Materials: 12 skeins of green; 12 skeins of scarlet; 12 do. blue; 8 do. dark claret; 8 do. yellow, or 2 skeins of filoselle; 8 do. French grey or dove colour; for boiler of engine, a few gold and steel beads; for the engine, a few black and 2 shades of iron-grey beads. This bag can be made in three sizes, according to the wools and canvas employed. Worked in single wool on suitable canvas, the pattern would be large enough for a bag to carry in the hand. Worked in double wool on coarse canvas, the bag would be capable of holding many little things for a journey, but worked in leviathan stitch, the design would answer for a good sized carpet-bag. We give our readers an idea of the dimensions of the work when finished, that they may instantly decide what kind of wool they will use for the pattern. On canvas No. 42, and worked in single wool, the bag would measure 15 inches across; in double wool, on canvas No. 26, the work would measure 22½ inches; and in leviathan stitch, on canvas No. 45, in single wool, the size would be 27 inches. The work may be made up soft—that is to say, merely lined; but we prefer the bags mounted on a frame with steel clasp, over which the work is stretched firmly, thus improving the appearance of it. The design may be repeated for the other side of the bag if liked, or another pattern to correspond with it may be selected. Before the work is mounted, we recommend our readers to nail it (wrong side uppermost) on a board, then to brush the back of the work over with a little gum-and-water, and allow it to dry. When removed from the board the work will be found to have a much more regular and smooth appearance than if the process were not gone into. Mrs. Wilcockson, 44, Goodge-street, Tottenham-court-road, supplies materials for working and making up the bag. Price of materials for working, 3s. 3d.; with filoselle, 4s.; making up with steel clasp, 14s.; in double wool, 7s.; in leviathan stitch for single wool, 6s.; making up carpet bag, 18s.

Transcription: “The Railway Travelling Bag. – Materials: 12 skeins of green; 12 skeins of scarlet; 12 do. blue; 8 do. dark claret; 8 do. yellow, or 2 skeins of filoselle; 8 do. French grey or dove colour; for boiler of engine, a few gold and steel beads; for the engine, a few black and 2 shares of iron-grey beads. This bag can be made in three sizes, according to the wools and canvas employed. Worked in single wool on suitable canvas, the pattern would be large enough for a bag to carry in the hand. Worked in double wool on coarse canvas, the bag would be capable of holding many little things for a journey, but worked in leviathan stitch, the design would answer for a good sized carpet-bag. We give our readers an idea of the dimensions of the work when finished, that they may instantly decide what kind of wool they will use for the pattern. On canvas No. 42, and worked in single wool, the bag would measure 15 inches across; in double wool, on canvas No. 26, the work would measure 22 ½ inches; and in leviathan stitch, on canvas No. 45, in single wool, the size would be 27 inches. The work may be made up soft—that is to say, merely lined; but we

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Questions to consider:

What do you make of a “travelling bag” or luggage satchel being included in the DIY craftwork material for readers of this month’s magazine? (For more context about what makes this unusual, [skim through the volume as a whole.](#))

Is the decorative motif of the railway engine surprising as subject matter in 1864? Compare it to other designs of the time.

Is the description here enough for someone to attempt to build one themselves?

What materials are required? How can they be sourced? What sorts of expertise would be needed? What about the sizes? Do the bright colors in the description surprise you? See the reference below to view this pattern in color.

What about this object offers opportunity for women readers? With what restrictions?

How does this object demonstrate stereotypes of the ideal feminine notion of the time? How might it challenge them?