

BLACK SILK, JET, AND GOLD EMBROIDERY.

## LACE-MAKING AT HOME.

A REMUNERATIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR GENTLEWOMEN.



ALL means of earning money in a quiet, stay-at-home, womanly fashion, needlework is the oldest, and commends itself most strongly to those who have lived retired lives, and rarely rubbed shoulders with the outer world. It is also, for the most part, ladies of this stamp who are the best needlewomen, for they have been brought up in the traditions of those who taught the youthful mind to believe that whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well, and applied that precept to the hemming of a duster just as strictly as to the stitching of a shirt-front. There is no push about such women as these, but there is often plenty of industry. They would rather undergo manifold privations than leave their own homes in pursuit of even the most congenial occupation, but if they could have some exquisitely dainty and elaborate work to do in their quiet parlours, among their sisters and cousins and aunts, they would take the greatest pride in doing it as well as it could possibly be done, and feel happy in the thought of earning money which would often make all the difference between comfort and penury.

Well-meaning people have of late years been apt to scout the notion of this quiet, unobtrusive mode of increasing narrow incomes, and this has added to the disrepute into which needlework has fallen, but at the present time it seems extremely likely that the few who have cherished the accomplishment which our grandmothers regarded as something very much akin to the whole duty of woman may be able to exercise it in a new field, and find it very remunerative.

Some five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, a husband and wife, who were mutually skilled in making the very best and richest trimmings ever turned out by

Coventry in its palmiest days, settled themselves in Bethnal Green among the silk-weavers, whose trade was just then languishing. Both possessed the most wonderful eye for colour, great taste and ingenuity, and indomitable industry and perseverance. They applied themselves to making small quantities of very elaborate trimmings, and were soon known among Court milliners and similar persons, to whose customers expense was no object, and beauty and rarity in the accessories and embellishment of their apparel was a *sine quò non*. While the husband attended to the out-door portion of the business, his wife trained young girls and women at home, teaching them how to work buttons, how to clip and finish fringes and gimps, and add ornaments to trimmings that seemed already to be sufficiently ornamental.

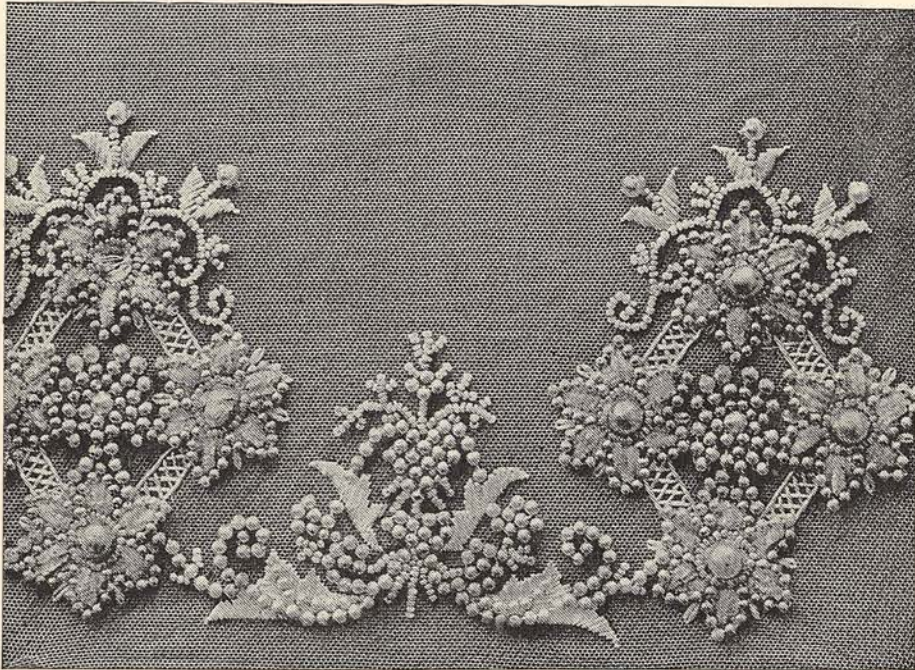
It was all done at one or two tables in a good-sized room, and while the mistress sat at one end, and had all her assistants round her, they sang in unison, and sometimes even in parts, all sorts of simple songs and hymns, on the principle that the fingers flew faster when there was no gossiping and "larking" going on. It might thus be said that this clever little woman made and developed a good business; and though all her children were boys, she kept one always by her side, sending them to a good school, turn and turn about, so that each had the best education the parents could secure for them, and at the same time they were practically initiated into every process through which the silk passed from its raw, colourless state, till it went out in the form of rich chenille or glossy cord and fringes. That busy wife and mother has long slept the sleep of the just, but she lived to see her sons taking the keenest interest in the business under their father's direction, continually bringing in new ideas which were quite after her own heart, and cutting down the mulberry-trees in the old garden, on which



they built two long workshops, and furnished them with looms and machinery of various kinds, which, without superseding hand-work, did a vast amount of preparation for it.

In process of time fashions alter, and the luxuriousness of dress has enormously increased within the last ten years. Silk, plush, and chenille trimmings are in great demand, and there are various new openings. The lovely pearl embroideries for wedding and party dresses that have become the vogue are made in France, perhaps chiefly in Paris, where women still excel in delicate needlework of every kind.

an easily adjustable frame, such as was formerly used for Berlin wool-work, or many years ago for tambour-work. On these, beads must be securely stitched in given patterns, about tracing which there need be no difficulty. Each bead must go on with a separate stitch, which may be either a back or a chain stitch; the right hand must be above and the left below the frame, and the best way of picking up the beads is from shallow trays, on which they are placed in assorted sizes. If done with a crochet-hook, the beads must be threaded in a certain succession, according to the requirements of the pattern, and the back of the work



WHITE PEARL AND SILK EMBROIDERY.

Our young trimming manufacturers have hitherto met the demand by importing this bead and silk embroidery, but remembering their mother's skill and her cleverness in teaching others, they feel confident that it could be produced in England, and done by ladies at their own homes.

The mode of producing it can hardly be formulated, but some idea may be gathered from our illustrations. The chief qualifications necessary are neatness, firmness in fastening on and off, smooth soft fingers that will not catch in the silk, and that unspeakable knack, possessed by some, of leaving all work when completed in a state of dainty freshness that looks as though it had never been touched by mortal hands. The greater part must be done with needle and thread, but expert workers can do some kinds with the aid of a crochet-hook.

The ground, or foundation, is a good silk net, black or white, as the case may be, and it must be placed in

held uppermost. Where silk is introduced, it is used much in the same fashion as the crewels in crewel-work; fine chenille may be either manipulated in the same way or else caught down to form the petals of flowers, and the crucial points are the absence of all pulling or dragging, and accurate fastening of the ends.

If ladies can be found to undertake and satisfactorily accomplish this embroidery, they will be paid for it by the yard, and if skilful, may earn from a pound to thirty shillings a week, working on an average eight hours per day, though this very much depends on individual quickness. All materials will be provided and patterns given out, so that what is earned will be quite clear. Every one who wishes to undertake it will have first of all to copy a scollop or two as specimens of skill and neatness, and a little practice will soon enable workers to say how much they will be able to accomplish in a week. In doing embroidery



with black and gold beads on black net, the frame ought to be so arranged as to have a white sheet or some white paper below it. This makes the net stand out distinctly, and not only prevents weak eyes from being over-tried, but enables the work to be easily done by artificial light, and that in long winter evenings is a consideration.

Women who undertake work as a means of earning money must remember that it is simply a commercial transaction. Neither embroidery nor any other work will be given out and paid for merely because the candidate for employment is the victim of sadly reduced circumstances, or is an orphan, or has a parent depending on her. Value must be given for money received, and if the value deteriorates, the money ceases to be paid. This must always be recognised by those who undertake any kind of work for remuneration.

There is also another class, and those are the girls who fill up their spare time "just for the sake of a little pocket-money." They fancy that in the intervals of playing lawn-tennis, attending choral societies, and improving their minds, they can successfully accomplish this pleasant and desirable result, but it is a great mistake. Business is business, and must be undertaken as such or left alone altogether, because employers must be able to reckon with confidence on their sources of supply.

Steady diligence will prove its own reward in the branch of needlework we have described, because, though bead embroidery may go out of favour, those who make it will be able to undertake other branches which will from time to time be introduced, rather than good workwomen should be left lamenting that their occupation is gone.

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## BRAIN WEARINESS AND BRAIN TONICS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



CHOOSE the title Brain Weariness in preference to Brain Debility, or Asthenia, because I have not the wish that those who suffer from the complaint I am about to discuss should—as they are very apt to do—imagine themselves to be affected by actual disease. I do not deny that in some cases

of debility of the brain there is a condition of the frontal lobes which merits the name of specific disease, quite as much as inflammation of the lining membrane of the bronchial tubes does, and that this condition demands a systematic course of treatment, supervised by a medical man. But, on the other hand, there are many men and women who suffer from a state of brain weariness which may be successfully treated at home, if taken in time.

There is one thing I should mention at the very outset, viz., that we hardly ever find a case of the ailment in question uncomplicated with something else. This something else may be a chronic cough, or dyspepsia, a troublesome liver, or a weakened heart. But whatever the complication be, it is aggravated and kept on by the debility of the brain, and the asthenic condition of the whole nervous system.

Patients who suffer from brain weariness, then, are usually very fanciful, and easily given to imagine that they are the subjects of organic disease of the brain, such as softening or tumour. People who consult medical men about their mental or cerebral condition are seldom diseased, although I am bound to confess that long-continued brain excitement or debility might end in something serious.

Now for the symptoms of the functional complaint which I have called brain weariness.

But here I labour at a great disadvantage, because hardly in any two cases will the symptoms be precisely similar.

There is, however, usually a marked deviation from the straight road of health, of which the patient is himself perfectly conscious, whether his friends be so or not. He does not feel his "old self;" he experiences greater nervousness; he cannot settle so long and so well to business as he used to do; he cannot grasp calculations so well; he loses taste for any kind of work, whether intellectual or otherwise, which necessitates the least degree of thought. He would fain work as of yore, and tries hard to do so, but the power to continue at it does not really exist in the brain, and he is vexed and worried, and rendered worse in consequence. His memory assuredly fails to a great extent, and his intellectual powers are reduced to a lower ebb than formerly, or they but flare up occasionally, and die away again. There is, to use homely language, "no stay" in the nervous power.

I do not wish to draw too dark a picture, but must add that people who suffer from the complaint in question have many of what I might call private mental worries—little distresses of mind, of which they are so heartily ashamed that they would not breathe a word about them to their dearest friends.

Sleep, if it can be obtained, even for an hour or two, tends greatly to refresh people suffering thus. They awake, and rise more hopeful and more full of strength, but, alas! the first excitement blows it all away.

Another symptom is this: the sufferer is in the habit of chiding himself for being ill and nervous; it was something he did that he ought not to have done, it was some error of omission or commission, that