manhood, rather than the type with which Almighty God stamped him from the birth. No man can add an inch to his stature, and there are certain ingrown peculiarities of temper and character in a man which no power can change any more than a block of granite can become a block of sandstone. For a wife to display a forward zeal in endeavouring to remove such peculiarities, is to do something to alienate her husband's affections, while she can do nothing to change his character; for, whatever his faults, a man naturally expects sympathy from his helpmate in the first place, and not criticism.

(XII.)—If your husband is a weakling, and cannot manage his own establishment properly, you are entitled to assume the reins by the law of the stronger; but in doing so be careful to use this superiority wisely, and to display it as little as possible, lamenting the necessity which secures to you power at home only in proportion as your husband forfeits respect abroad. No proper woman should wish to exercise any power over her husband save that which is the natural and quiet result of conjugal love and loyalty, acting in harmony with the graciousness and the tact which are the characteristic excellences of the sex.

J. STUART BLACKIE.

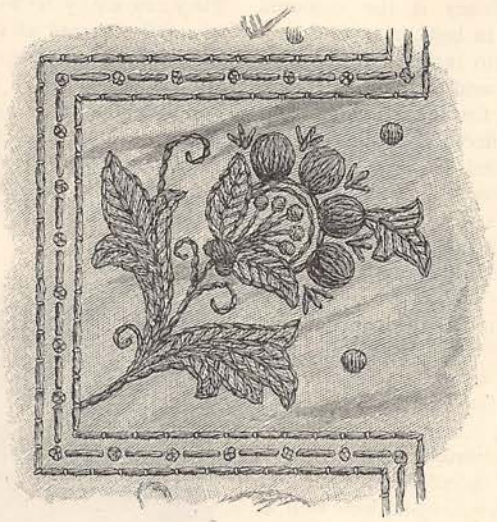
NEW WORK FOR THE NEEDLE.

BY ARDERN HOLT.

"Yes, till the world be quite dissolved at last:
So long, at least, the needle's use shall last."

THESE lines were written many, many years ago; and although the interests and pursuits of life have greatly increased, the needle holds its own the same as ever.

Its history dates from the earliest days. The Israelites in Moses' time had learnt from the Egyptians the art of embroidering in gold, silver, and precious stones. Homer and Pliny have recorded what the women of their day accomplished, and the exploits of many husbands have been perpetuated in the chamber hangings wrought by their wives. A Grecian widow could take no second spouse unless she had worked the gravecloths for her deceased lord; and good needlework has in all days been held in honour by women.



FLAX THREAD EMBROIDERY.

Embroidery is defined to be "the art of adding to the surface of woven textures representations of objects we wish to depict," and it is to the subject of embroidery that most of the new notions in modern needlework are directed. There are almost as many kinds as there are days in the year, but at the present moment designers and manufacturers would seem to be turning their attention specially to two classes—chenille and linen embroidery.

Needlework is the sister art of painting, and as far back as the old Egyptian days weaving was supplemented by the needle, applied with silk, flax, and cotton.

In this year of grace 1888, we have a large choice in the matter of threads, by which term I mean materials to embroider with, whether of silk, wool, or linen. Many of the new kinds stand the test of washing if fairly treated. Pure curd soap and rain-water are best to use, made into a lather. The article under treatment should be rubbed as little as possible, rinsed in clean water, squeezed, but not wrung, dried quickly, and mangled rather than ironed, for great heat is detrimental to the preservation of colour.

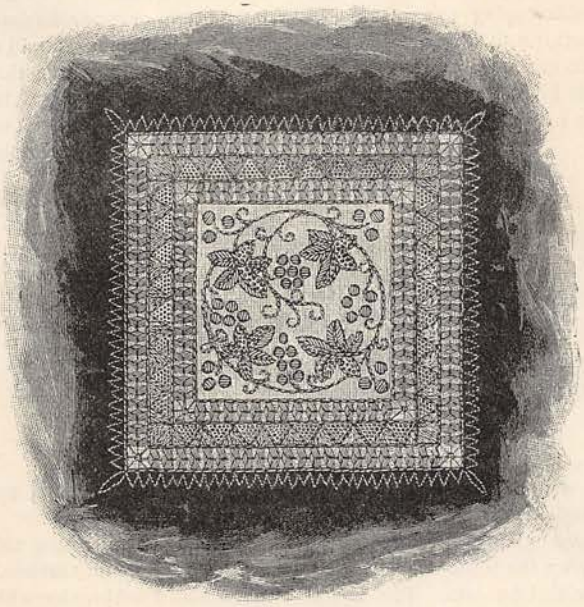
Filo floss silk, which is a make between floss and filoselle, twisted embroidery, rope silk, filoselle, and tussah can all be had in the Eastern unfading dyes, which last for centuries, and are the same by gas or daylight. There are some two hundred shades, but they are, perhaps, not quite so bright and brilliant as silks—which will not so surely stand the test of time. Crewel, crochet, and purse silks are well known, and, as also the Imperial knitting silk, are often used in embroidery; indeed, even the ice silk is sometimes called into play.

Decca silk—like floss, but with a finer twist—is proved to be extremely useful; and for flannel there is

a special make called flannel silk, loosely twisted and to be had in various thicknesses.

Tapestry and crewel wools, together with Berlin, are the kinds most used for embroidering. Ingrain cottons are for the moment yielding the palm to the flax or crewel linen threads.

Flax thread embroidery looks equally well on silk, satin, woollen cloth, or linen. The old kinds have survived the changes of dynasties and generations. It cannot be given to us to know whether modern flax thread will be equally fortunate with the Persian and Egyptian specimens handed down to us. But it is cheap, yet has all the gloss of silk.



OLD GERMAN LINEN THREAD EMBROIDERY.

It can, of course, be adapted to almost any class of embroidery where silk or wool is used; but what is now understood by flax thread embroidery is the coloured thread applied to white linen in bold, open, and continuous patterns, many of them inspired by antique models. The ordinary laid and stem stitches are used, and here and there feather stitching and French knots heighten the effect. For the bordering a good result is produced by couching—that is, using two threads of different colours, fastened down by a third. Bed-quilts, tea-cloths, and sideboard cloths in this flax work are the newest kind for the moment. When flax thread is applied to silk or satin, the effect is greatly heightened by the addition of gold thread. But on linen this flax thread is found to be invaluable for reproducing the fine Hispano-Moorish, Slavonic, and other embroideries which are of ancient date. It can be worked in the ordinary crewel or tapestry stitch, but then it does not represent these antique embroideries. There is ample scope for industry and invention; all the fine darning and diapered groundings would look well in this work.

The old linen thread German work can be carried out in the pure white flax, which has all the appearance of silk, or in coloured flax together with, or instead of silk. All the various stitches that I have enumerated are used in it, but the thread is generally employed double.

The Russian crash and coarse linens used are very often fringed at the edges and knotted. A well-tempered needle should be selected, whatever the material, which is frequently damask, with the pattern outlined by stitches; just as the Egyptians accentuated the designs made in weaving by subsequent hand-work in coloured threads. It is easy labour, and yet has a great effect when completed.

In searching for novelties, I am always confirmed in the opinion that there is little really new, and that what we call novelties are simply revivals. Such is the case with Holbein embroidery, which is ancient thread stitchery revived and made easy for us now by ready-prepared braids, that, when sewn on, are ornamented by additional stitches. Queen Anne cross stitch and Russian cross stitch are both also most successfully revived in the present day, the patterns mostly borrowed from the Renaissance period. They can easily be worked on coarse materials, but where the thread of the weaving is not a sufficient guide for the stitches, canvas is tacked over, and the threads drawn away after the work is completed. Red and blue tones last best. In very old specimens, greens, yellows, and blacks are found to be rotted away, perhaps by the dye as well as by time and use.

Another revival that deserves all English patronage is the Limerick embroidery, which half a century ago was a productive industry in Ireland. The design is first traced on linen, over which fine Brussels net is laid and well tacked down. The outline is worked in chain stitch with fine lace thread, and various lace stitches complete the pattern, which is generally floral. It can be worked (appliqué) by

HOLBEIN EMBROIDERY.

LIMERICK EMBROIDERY.

laying muslin over the net, and darning the thickest portions of the leaves and flowers, but the work savours more of lace than embroidery.

Chenille is described as "*un tissu de soie velouté qui imite le chenille*," for the word means caterpillar. It is soft and velvety, and can be had in many kinds and sizes. Arrasene—which, like chenille itself, makes a great show with very little work—is untwisted, and is fabricated both in silk and wool ; but the chenille now employed is either very fine or strong and coarse. A new work, quite recently brought out, is the application of a strong woollen chenille to canvas. Only the single uncrossed stitch is required, so that it suits admirably those whose sight is not very good, and those who like to have great show with but little work. It makes capital rugs and carpets, footstools, and ottoman covers : the patterns are the same as for Berlin wool work, geometric rather than floral, and the range of colours are fully equal to the requirements of the worker.

The finer makes of silk chenille are being applied to the new Arras embroidery. The word calls up visions of antique tapestry, the art of working which was lost in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire, until it was re-introduced from the Levant by the Crusaders. Flanders established a reputation for tapestry-making unequalled elsewhere, and the town of Arras came boldly to the front, and gave a name to the wall coverings made there. The present Arras embroidery, however, is not tapestry, but rarely has anything more soft and lovely in needlework been brought before the public. The chenille applied to the work is of two sizes, and it is supplemented in the Arras work by silk. It is carried out principally on satin in long continuous sprays of flowers and leaves, coloured faithfully after nature ; the leaves are outlined in filoselle, but such flowers as heliotrope or such fruit as blackberries would be produced, with French knots, on chenille. Cushions, mantel-borders, table-cloths, and screens, high and low, have been and are being most successfully worked in this Arras embroidery. The chenille is also applied to a tapestry work, the foundation being canvas ; but the stitch, instead of the single one used for the coarser make of chenille, is a double tent stitch, and filoselle is used for groundwork.

ARRAS EMBROIDERY.

No notice of novel introductions in needlework would be complete without a reference to the embroideries carried out at Leek, which utilise the wild silks of India. These are produced by the common or wild silkworm not feeding on the mulberry-leaf, and

LEEK EMBROIDERY.

the resulting tussah silk, as it is called, is dyed with Indian dyes, which are varied and most delicate. The foundation is the woven tussah silk in many plain colours, the patterns printed upon them in black. Nearly every kind of embroidery stitch is introduced, outline buttonhole, stem stitch, French knots, and crewel, but the design is almost invariably outlined with gold thread. The beauty of this work is in the perfection of the colouring employed, and the patterns are mostly of Oriental origin, though by its means some very fine old Italian embroideries have been reproduced. It is not work that can be quickly done ; it requires good execution, time, and care.

We desire to make the very most of our leisure ; hence a great deal of the needlework of the day aims at combining various materials so as to give a great effect with little labour ; and appliqués of several materials would seem to find special favour. Quite recently a number of chair-backs, cushions, bags, and similar articles were prepared with an appliqué of leather on velvet ; heartsease, lilies of the valley, and roses were thus produced, with some silk embroidery to complete the pattern.