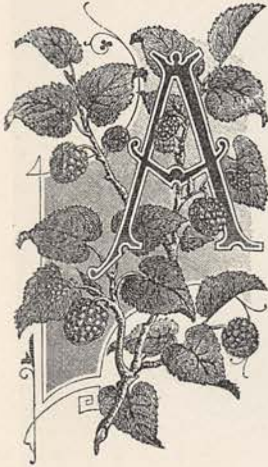
lesson that taught her to discern dross from gold was a sharp one, but she is far and away the better woman for it.

Helen Freer is sound and strong again now. The slight traces of her accident do not afflict that strong-minded young person in the least. Happy in the mistress-ship of a flourishing high school, she never visits the Fergussons without telling them they ought to be profoundly grateful to her for the change she helped to effect in their destiny.

And grateful they are beyond words, although Clarice will persist in saying she is not one-quarter good enough for her husband.

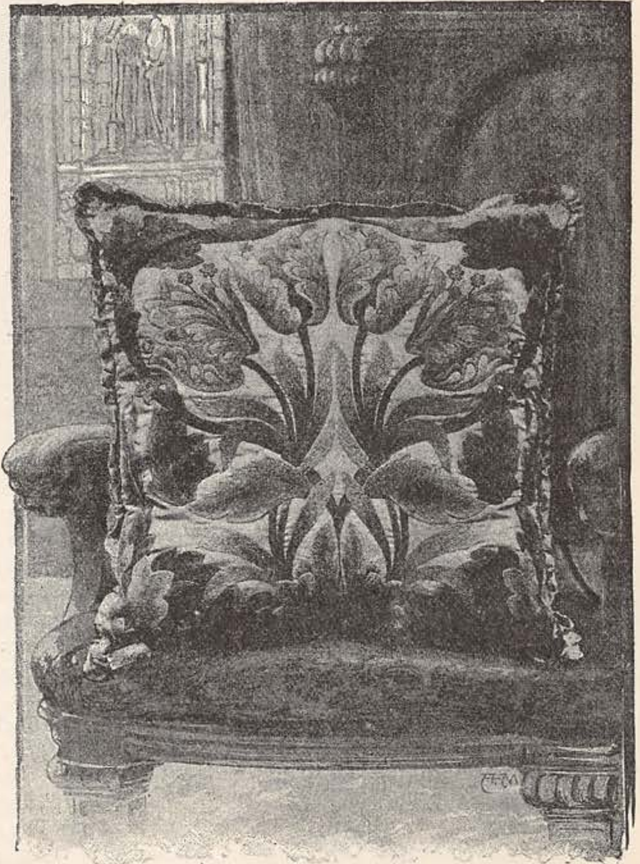
But he is of an entirely different opinion

ON COLOURING AND MATERIALS FOR EMBROIDERIES.



A TREATISE on embroidery, or an attempt at a condensed dictionary of needlework, would both be utterly out of place in the pages of a family magazine, and I have no intention of trespassing even on the extreme limits of either. Just a popular paper on the most fashionable embroideries—skimming the surface of the subject, as it were, and giving some practical hints to workers — is, in all probability, what most of our readers will infinitely prefer. For those who wish to make deeper study of the subject, there are books treating exclusively of embroideries—the various schools, the stitches: in fact, the history of needlework. But to redeem my promise without further delay; for there is plenty of cream to be got off the surface, and valuable space must not be wasted in preamble.

It is generally acknowledged now by the best embroiderers that the most effective and pleasing harmonies of colours are produced by the judicious use of bright colours in suitable proportions. Some persons have a natural feeling for colour; they can tell at a glance, without seeming to give a thought to the choice, what tints will accord best on a given ground. Others have acquired the art of blending colours artistically, either by studying painting or by a continual intelligent examination of pictures by first-class artists. Our picture-galleries are of immense assistance to us. There we learn more of the theory of colour than many of us have any idea of. We get to understand somewhat of the value of certain colours, of the balance which secures a perfect harmony, of pleasant contrasts, of the simplicity of some of the richest tones of colour, of the effect of gentle gradations, of the value of half-tones. But, more than aught else, an observant eye to catch the sweetest of all harmonies—those of Nature—will help us to realise the possibilities of colour as we never could by any study, however profound and long-continued, of human work. Nature will teach us more in a week than we shall learn in years if we shut our eyes to her beauties, though we follow ever so diligently the old paths trodden by the best workers that ever lived. Not that I would say for an instant that it is useless to study the principles and methods of all the various schools, that we miss originality when we



CUSHION—TULIPS WORKED IN CREWELS.

tread partially in others' footsteps, that we get to work in stereotyped fashion, and to mark out no new departures, when we admire the antique embroideries. No; we must learn the art of embroidery, as we must all other arts, from those who have gone before us, but we can gather fresh ideas ourselves from Nature hourly. An error into which many fall—and especially novices—is that of using too many silks, crewels, or flax threads of varied shades in one piece. The delicate tints which are laid out before us on the shop counter when we are making purchases are most seductive. We fancy we cannot fail to produce a lovely piece of colouring if we become possessors of several of these exquisite shades. We are like the tyro at painting, who buys innumerable tins of colours, with the vain idea of equalling a master in the art, whereas the latter will probably use one colour to the former's three or four, and his picture will be a success, whilst the other's is a failure. The beauty, then, of embroideries does not depend on the number of tints, hues, and shades employed, but on the artistic arrangement of a few.

The colour of the material is as important as those used in its decoration. To my mind, the ground should be subordinate to the scheme of colour chosen for the decoration; but certainly tastes differ greatly here. The most brilliant colours are now very often chosen for grounds, such as crimson, bright green, or yellow. This, I should say, is one of the latest fads. Some time back such grounds would have been voted horrid. For public buildings, splendid striking effects are appropriate, and here brilliantly coloured materials are not objectionable; but for home use I cannot recommend them, unless in small quantities. We not only tire of pronounced showy pieces, but they are detrimental to far lovelier harmonies, and mostly kill all their surroundings. A small piece—for instance, a book-cover, a pin-cushion, a work-bag—glowing with colour, is sometimes an immense gain amid quiet surroundings; it gives just the touch needed to brighten, intensify, or relieve a scheme which is dull, wanting in force, or insipid. Used with discretion, such "bits" are the life of uninteresting decorative arrangements.

Many and varied are the materials now used by embroiderers. Each worker probably has her favourite one, and some will condemn as unsuitable a fabric that others admire. There are two fabrics I consider as about the least suitable that can be found for embroidering; but I differ from many workers, for these two are—or, at least, have been—very popular of late. One is plush. Beautiful as this is in itself, it does not show off embroidery to advantage; the stitches are lost in the high pile, and they indent the soft surface, and so detract from its beauty. There are some who will embroider plush with *crewels*, which is adding insult to injury. The other material to which I have an objection is felt. This is just as too hard and severe

SACHET—DESIGN OF NARCISSUS.

in appearance as plush is too soft, so far as regards the pile.

A certain amount of substance is required in a perfect ground for embroidery, to carry the weight of the decoration without seeming to droop under it. This is an important point where draperies are concerned; where the work is used to cover any surface it is of much less consequence. A damask may be—in fact, always should be—of pure silk, but it will have substance enough to carry rich embroideries. Not so the thin Indian silks which we now often see embroidered. The decoration on these, to be fitting, must be of the lightest description—mere sketches rather than well-wrought-out elaborate designs. I grant that old workers used, and modern workers in Bulgaria and elsewhere are still using, with the best results, the thin, open-webbed muslins; but the decorations are so closely worked that *they* give the needful substance.

Satin is fast becoming a fashionable ground for embroidery once more, but it is not entirely satisfactory. The shine on its surface rather takes from the effect of silk embroidery. Arasene or chenille work, perhaps, may be said to look best upon it, but of this we are likely to tire soon. Plain ribbed pure silk is excellent.

Although thick, it is both soft in appearance and in reality, and it is pleasant to use. Damask is popular, as indeed it is likely to be, since the woven pattern gives an "under effect," which adds much to the richness of the piece when embroidered. Of brocade the same may be said, though the mixture of wool used in weaving detracts from the lustre which is so delightful a property of damask. There are three ways in vogue of embroidering these fabrics. One plan is to accentuate a flower and leaves, or a portion of the design, of whatever kind it may be, by working it out with silks, and to repeat this accentuation at long intervals on the brocade. The second plan is to work out all the design with silks ; and the third plan is to embroider a totally different design on the brocade ground, merely letting the brocade pattern give the "under effect."

A superadded decoration is occasionally seen on printed velveteens. The pattern is outlined, leaves are veined, petals shaded, and so on. After all, though pretty, it is only an imitation of velvet, and is made of cotton. Some may say, "Linen is not rich or handsome, so why does that deserve such elaborate decoration as is often to be found on it?" Because linen is just what it claims to be—that is to say, *real* linen is—it is not a pretence. Then it is so unobtrusive that it gives the fullest value to the decorations. There will be rejoicings when the *beau ideal* linen is discovered. To mention all materials used for embroidery would be tedious for my readers, for their name is legion. Of woollen materials, fine plain French cloth is about the best, though the diagonal cloths run it close. Serge is greatly used, but I do not admire it. For footstools it is useful ; for cushions I consider it too rough, and it catches the dust. White flannel is pretty for cot-covers and bedroom-sachets. The washing materials are as numerous. Oatmeal-cloth still holds its own, and fine jean is being used very generally. But though I need hardly enter more fully into this part of my subject, I must notice the fashion of using vellum and kid for small articles. Net is another ground that is likely to become popular, for the embroidered net chair-backs are pretty, and they will probably have a good run. White Indian muslin, with the threads far apart and uneven, is very attractive when embroidered; it is well suited for covering photo-frames. Gauze is not often employed, possibly because it is not the pleasantest of grounds to work on. It is utilised for fan-leaves, but these are done by professionals. I have seen a specimen of embroidered gauze which would be lovely for dress trimmings, if one had patience enough to execute sufficient of it for an evening costume. It was made of three layers of different coloured gauzes; the top layer was white, and the coloured ones beneath gave the effect of a shot material. The silks were carried through the three thicknesses of gauze, and the work formed an insertion.

Our readers will, I am sure, appreciate the excellent designs which the managers of the Royal School of Art Needlework have kindly lent us for illustration. Coming as they do from the fountain-head of modern embroideries in England, there is no question as to their merit, whilst their "fitness" and beauty commend them to us at the most casual glance.

The first illustration is of a cushion of white linen, worked with crewels. It is needless to describe the manner of working, as it can be learnt from the illustration itself; but I will give the colouring, as this will enable readers to get a more complete idea of the piece. The tulips are worked with shades of pink, and the foliage with shades of green, gold, and bronze. This design I chose as illustrative of the conventional floral style.

In the group of narcissus which forms the ornamentation of a soft grey royal silk sachet, we have a good example of the naturalistic designs. Even to the colouring, nature is followed closely. The flowers are white, with yellow centres tipped with red, and the foliage is carried out in quiet grey-green shades. Crewel-stitch is employed throughout the decoration.

The photograph-frame is a modern adaptation of rococo decoration to a fashionable article of the present day. The pure white vellum covering of the frame is simply worked with French knots and stars in greyish-green silk, and the outlines are of double rows of gold thread.

PHOTOGRAPH-FRAME.

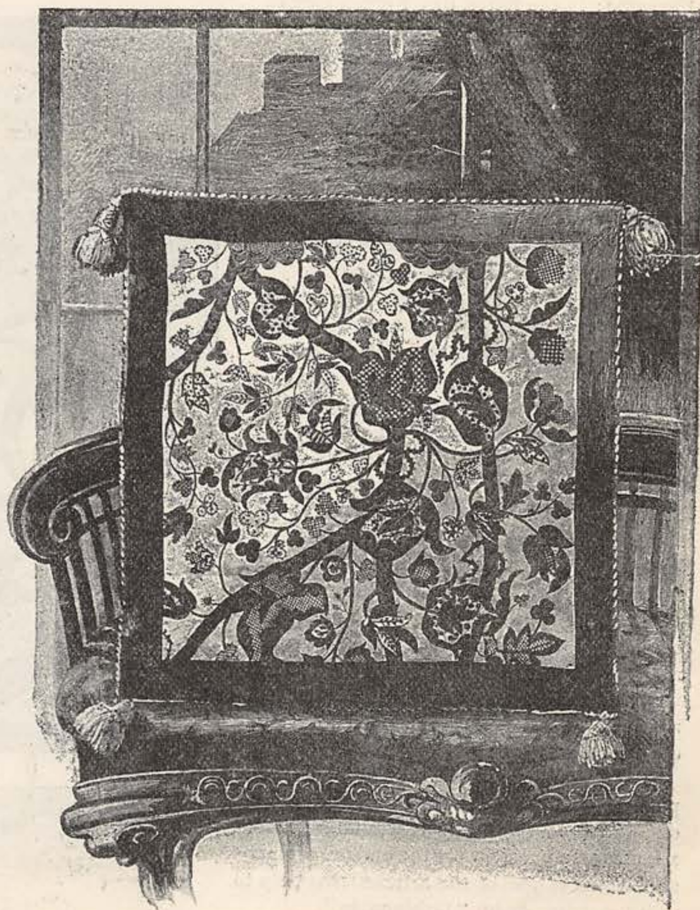
SUGGESTIONS FOR FASHIONABLE EMBROIDERIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ON COLOURING AND MATERIALS FOR EMBROIDERIES."

LL embroiderers know the value of a good design. One-third of the battle is won when we have secured that; the colouring and the workmanship are the remaining two-thirds. Old English designs have been revived of late—called again into favour on account of the furore existing for Sheraton and Chippendale furniture. The designs are worked principally in crewels on white linen of a coarse make, the colourings chosen being the old greens and browns found in antique embroideries, relieved with flowers of dull red, blue, and yellow. Silks are also employed, but usually on small articles made of finer white linen, and often crewels and silks are combined.

The couvrette we have selected for illustration is a clear exponent of the principles and methods of the old English school. Most of the work handed down to us from Elizabethan times is based on the same lines. Naturally, there are variations in the manner in which the work is accomplished, but this is a fair type of the general style. In this clever reproduction by the workers at the Royal School of Art Needlework, the design is entirely carried out in shades of brown, green, and indigo. The material is coarse Kerriemuir linen, and the border is of dark green plush. The application of *motifs*, copied from specimens done in Queen Mary's reign, to curtains, cushion coverings, and so on, is one of the latest fashions in decorations. These are done on squares or oblongs of canvas. When the *motif* is finished the canvas beyond the outline is cut away, only a thread or two of it being left all round the work. This is for strength, and the threads do not show, as the *motif* is finally outlined with fine silk cord. The *motifs* are then appliquéd on to an appropriate material. It is easy to see the advantages of working in this manner—it obviates the necessity of having large pieces about, it is less tiring for the hand than holding a heavy curtain or table-cover, and the fabric itself does not run so great a chance of getting rubbed or crushed. Another method of producing the *motifs* is to lay the traced canvas in position on the fabric and to work through it, afterwards drawing away the threads. This is the more correct mode, since no outlines of cords are then needed. The floral forms of the *motifs* are mostly copied from growing plants, and are arranged in a formal, stilted style, after the manner of the artists of those long-gone days. They are plants of the old-world garden and the fields and hedge-rows. We find primroses, cowslips, violets, and foxgloves amongst them, and even a few blades of grass. A footstool covered with cloth or serge will be decorated with a centre of violets growing, and the corners will have separate little *motifs* of grass or leaves on them.

Next we come to designs of the Italian school. There is a certain grandeur, stateliness, gorgeousness about these, not to be found in those of any other school. The work is rich, glowing, fervid, and yet, withal, entirely harmonious. Brilliant without question are the colours of the old work, but so wonderfully blended as to produce reposeful effects. Of quite late days, the blending of colours and the most subtle gradation of shades appear to have been made a matter of infinite study. The workers at the Royal School of Art Needlework have certainly become adepts in the art. The screen which



COUVRETTE (OLD ENGLISH SCHOOL).

we illustrate shows how admirably the designs of the Italian school lend themselves to the decoration of modern fashionable articles; but black and white, unfortunately, can reproduce but the design and the stitches; the colouring and gradation of shades must be left to the imagination. The ground of the screen is white satin. The centre rose and tulips are represented in shades of old rose, the two lower blossoms in shades of gold, and the upper ones in shades of blue, with gold centres. The foliage is done in tender yellow-green shading to blue-green. Crewel-stitch is employed for the work, and the centres of flowers are couched. The blending of shades depends greatly upon the skill with which the worker puts in her stitches. To secure perfect gradations, the stitches must lie evenly and follow the curve of each leaf, petal, and scroll. Crewel-stitch is used for the most delicate blending of colours.

A charming design after the French school forms the subject of our last illustration. We all know how light, elegant, graceful, *chic*, are the designs created by our French neighbours, and this is an especially pleasing example. The ground is white satin; the flambeau and quiver are done mostly with gold thread. In the former, single gold thread is waved between double rows of the same; in the latter, tiny French knots of grey-green silk are worked between the double rows of gold thread. A blue ribbon ties the flambeau and the quiver. The roses are done in soft salmon-pink, primroses in natural colour, wild roses in soft mauve-pinks, jasmine in shades of the faintest yellow, and the foliage in the most delicate tender shades of green. It is an exquisite piece of work—so dainty, fresh, and sweet in colour.

The old English design is taken from a couvrette made to accompany bed-hangings worked in the same style. These form the draperies of a pretty light Chippendale four-poster. The furniture is all in keeping, and a great "ear-chair" is covered to correspond. We may object to four-posters now, but our ancestors' bedsteads were not all as funereal and sombre as we are sometimes inclined to believe. This particular one, to be seen at the School, is a proof of my statement. The posts are thin and prettily carved, and the draperies of white linen, richly worked in coloured crewels, make it quite an elegant affair. The same pattern can be adapted for cushion and chair coverings, also for portières.

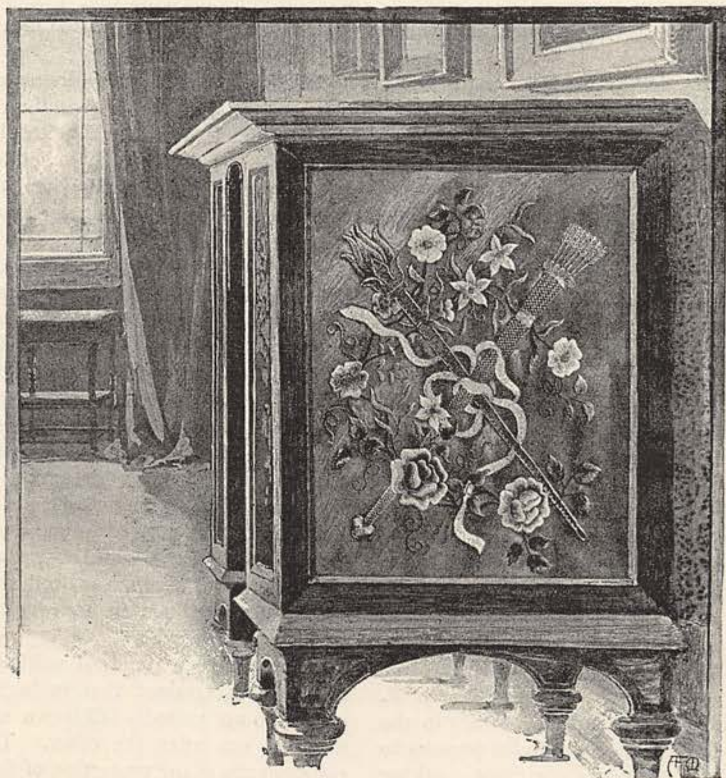
The Italian design is arranged for a screen panel, but it is equally suited for a cushion decoration or a blotter. It would also make a handsome broidery for the ends of a piano-slip, which is one of the articles that help to dub a drawing-room "fashionable."

The French "flambeau and quiver" is equally suitable for the ornamentation of a cushion, a panel, or a blotter. I prefer it done on satin ground, but it is very charming on white vellum, or even on tan kid. The two latter grounds serve principally for writing-table requisites; for menu and name cards vellum is decidedly suitable, and for card-cases and note-books kid is appropriate. Silk-covered books are becoming rather general; the embroideries are often copies of those belonging to royalty in past times. Brilliant colours are chosen for some of these covers. One is a vivid yellow, enriched with gold thread embroidery; another, green worked with coloured silks. Most chaste of all is the white-ribbed silk cover, elaborately embroidered with silver thread and silver cord.

As to the most fashionable modes of working, I must say a few words that may be of practical use to my readers. When work is outlined with gold thread, it is almost an invariable practice just now amongst the best workers to use two rows, which are sewn on close together. One row, when we do see it, looks quite poor. The thread is sewn down with silks of a contrasting colour; but when a pure gold effect is desired—as in the flambeau mentioned above and the

SCREEN (ITALIAN SCHOOL).

yellow book-cover—then yellow silk is employed. To sew down the thread with red silk gives a rich glowing effect ; soft, bluish-green silk, on the contrary, produces a cool, quiet tone. Silk cord for outlining is greatly in vogue. A simple twisted cord is mostly used, but I see now signs of more fanciful ones becoming popular. I do not find couching is so much used as it was some time back, but it is very suitable for outlining portière and couvrette decorations. The edges of many articles are now cut out rococo-fashion. Afternoon tea-cloths look very well when so treated, and worked with coloured washing-silks and gold thread. D'oyleys, duchess toilet-table slips, sideboard cloths, and table centres, may all be finished in this way. The edges must be overcast to make them strong. Darned grounds are effective for cushions. Take a bold design of thistles, for example. The leaves and the one big centre thistle will be done in green crewels, with the exception of the top of the thistle, which will be put in with mauve crewels. The whole of the ground, which is of white linen, will be lightly darned. Some grounds are closely darned, and the design left plain, except for the veining of leaves, and perhaps a little shading of petals ; the centres of flowers, however, are generally worked rather more elaborately. Much of the embroidery nowadays has intricate and varied point-lace stitches introduced ; these require careful execution, for we often find ourselves comparing them with the originals, and that is a severe test for embroiderers.



EMBROIDERED PANEL (FRENCH SCHOOL).

Our space will not permit of my saying much on the subject of drawn linen work. It is one of the most fashionable decorations for table linen and toilet sets. Ladies are practising it now, and articles can be had with the threads ready drawn, so that they escape the monotonous part of the work. Cross-stitch patterns are to be had traced, to obviate the necessity of counting stitches. This is one of the latest inventions for saving trouble, in answer to the demands of this luxurious age.

SLEEP AND DREAMS.*

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

THE subject of dreams is one which admits of being treated in a sketchy and entertaining way, and is not always handled with the seriousness which it deserves. I hope I may succeed, in the present paper, in being philosophical without being dull; and shall relate curious dreams only to extract meaning from them. As I wish to say what is true about dreams, I shall be obliged to repeat many things which have been said by others ; but, unless I had something new and original to say, I should not be writing a paper at this time. I shall not only have to combat some popular notions, such as (1) that we dream all night long; (2) that common dreams are more mysterious than our waking thoughts ; and (3) that the mind during sleep is peculiarly fitted to receive

* The author is alone responsible for the statements in this paper.—ED. *C. M.*