

poverty. My answer to that question he has accepted as final: for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part, I am his and he is mine.

But although we are disturbed by no shadow of distrust, a great sadness steals over us. We are relinquishing so much—so much. True, riches are not everything; of themselves they cannot bring happiness; but, rightly used, they may be the source of much joy.

It is not greed that makes us sigh as we watch the evening lights appear in many a labourer's cottage.

"Poor fellows!" Clarence murmurs. "I fear it will go hard with them. Richard, I hear, talks of engaging Stephenson as steward."

"Oh, Clarence!"

"My people will feel it. Poor Uncle Eaton! He was such an easy-going man. I wonder how he would feel if he knew there was a prospect of Stephenson collecting the rents on his estate."

"It is no use grieving over it, Clarence; we cannot do anything."

"No, we can do nothing—nothing."

"Clarence, it is just as well Gracie has gone away. She is better off than if she had remained here."

"I hope so—most sincerely I hope so."

"Do you doubt it?"

"Love, I cannot say. God forgive me if I was unjust to him, but I had a very poor opinion of Anstice."

"It is fortunate that they did not accept your offer of the Gate-house. I suppose they must have vacated it now, had they been living there?"

"Unless Richard Fane allowed them to remain on. After all, Anstice was his friend."

"I wonder why they had such a rooted objection to taking up their quarters at the Gate-house. I never could understand it. I have often——"

But the sound of approaching footsteps on the gravel pathway below causes me to stop short in what I am saying.

In another moment, although the twilight is deepening, we have espied a closely veiled figure coming rapidly up the drive.

"Clarence, who can it be?" I whisper. Everyone in the neighbourhood knows that this is our last evening at the Manor House, and would hesitate long before intruding on our privacy.

But the figure is advancing rapidly—it is coming up the terrace steps.

Instinctively Clarence's arm steals round my waist.

"Courage, love, courage!" he murmurs.

The figure is coming nearer—nearer; it is standing before us with bowed head and supplicating gesture.

"Gracie!" I cry. Everything seems running away from me, until Clarence catches me in his arms and holds me fast.

END OF CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

NEEDLEWORK FOR BUSY FINGERS.



TIME and tide wait for no man," and before very long we shall, in the natural order of things, have said "Good-bye" to the long and pleasant winter evenings, and gradually have changed our lamp-lighted, fireside occupations for the attractions held out by that charmer, Spring. Let me, while the nights are still long, and fingers elastic through much intercourse with the work-basket and its contents, offer my readers a few more homely hints on the making of sundry articles which will, I hope, be deemed not only novel, but utilitarian in numerous ways, and particularly for the increasing of the comfort and beauty of the kingdom (or queen-*dom*—or both?) called Home, and bestowing upon our relations and friends at those seasons when we are called upon to give presents.

A very handsome cloth for a large hall table may be made by taking a piece of cloth the required size, of a dark crimson or dark green shade, or even using a real table-cover, provided it is not figured in any way. On the centre of the cloth a design of four

racquets and sundry tennis-balls has to be worked. The racquets are to be arranged in couples, crossing each other's handles, and, together with the balls, must be the ordinary size. The design has to be worked in the ordinary embroidery stitches used in crewel work, the parts describing the handles and all woodwork to be filled in. The balls must also be filled in with stitches, and two shades of gold wool of a coarse make may be used throughout. The seams on the tennis-balls will thus be clearly defined by the worker, and a very novel table-cover will be produced. The border of the table-cover could be overcast with very coarse amber wool or silk, after the pattern of a blanket edge, or in many other ways easy to think of.

A drawing-room bracket for the side of the fireplace, to hold keys or other things, may be manufactured by taking a piece of wood—square, shield, or any shape preferred by the worker—and covering it with silk or satin, very neatly turning the edges and securing it at the back. A band of velvet or plush is next needed, and upon this some pretty design (*e.g.*, a spray of ivy, or Virginia creeper, or poppies) must be worked. The band is then fastened *slantwise* across the front of the board, and finally about four fancy brass hooks

are screwed into the face of it, and two rings added at the back to receive a silk cord, or a ribbon and bows, to hang the rack up by.

Very dainty ornaments for the corners of a room may be made with the straw cases used to pack bottles. The most perfect ones must be picked for the purpose, and some tinsel thread, and two or three colours or shades of ribbon about an inch wide, according to taste and surroundings, will be needed. The tinsel is put on the side of the case which will form the front, strands of it being fastened in an upright manner until the surface of the straw is prettily ornamented. A dainty bow of ribbons is made and fastened at both top and bottom, the one for the latter having rather long ends. This simple article is a change from the corner wall bracket, and will be appreciated as a receptacle for holding teasel heads, bulrushes, oats, or wild grasses in winter time; and in the summer a crock to hold water may be concealed inside, and freshly cut flowers, such as large branches of poppies, moon daisies, ferns, &c., will make a corner very charming. It is needless to remark on the simplicity with which the case is fastened on the wall.

A drawing-room work-bag is always a useful article, and a satisfactory way of making one is after the pattern of the very old-fashioned knitted purses, with a slit left in the middle, and a couple of rings added for fastenings. It is needless to say that the bag is a purse on a very gigantic scale. In regard to materials used for this, a host might quickly be suggested. I have seen very pretty bags made with nothing but figured cretonne, the ends being drawn up and finished off with a bow of silk cord and tassels or hand-made balls, and a couple of large mahogany curtain rings slipped on for fasteners. Bows of ribbon will decorate the ends as well as cords and tassels. These bags should be about two and a half feet long and twelve inches wide. A piece of crazy patchwork the required size will make a handsome bag if lined with silk or satin, and so will a piece of velveteen relieved at the ends by a little embroidery. This bag might be also made in knitting or crochet.

A newspaper rack, bracket, or bag is always a useful concomitant to the furniture of "the room of the household." I recently saw one in size twelve inches by eighteen, made of brown plush for the front; the back was of stout cardboard to act as stiffener, covered on both sides with brown sateen. The sides of the bag were made purse fashion. The worker will do well to study the sides of the pocket-part of a pocket-book, taking it for a model in miniature. Of course a newspaper bag must have some pretensions to beauty, and the front of the one already alluded to was very handsomely worked. Two inches from the edge all round, a line of gold was worked with silks. The centre was a design of wheat-ears and oats, richly contrasting with their background of dark brown plush. Gold silks were used in embroidering the oats and the straw part, and for "touching up" the wheat-ears, which were very naturally represented by the use of

melon-pips fastened on in the required position of the corns of wheat. The awns were composed of threads of silk. A thin gold cord added round the edges will be a great improvement, and some cord may be used to hang the case up by.

A music-case may be made as follows:—Procure a piece of cardboard that will easily bend, and cut to a size of about sixteen inches by fifteen. Fifteen inches is the measure of the case from end to end. Leave one fifteen-inch side of the card straight, and at the other round off to form the flap, or round it in three ovals, the central one to project farthest. A piece of crimson cloth, slightly larger than the card to allow for turnings-in, is next needed, and upon that portion which is to be the overhanging flap of the case, a design of daisies and ferns, or a bit of colour in the shape of autumn leaves, or anything else preferred, may be worked in silks or filocelles. The inside of the card is lined with crimson sateen, and the two ends of the case are composed of cards about four and a half inches wide and five inches deep, with the bottoms rounded off at the corners, covered with cloth and lined with sateen inside. In making up the music-case, the edges are stitched in strongly with silk, and all the edges and joinings hidden by a fine silk cord, crimson to match the cloth. At the middle of the flap underneath, a buttonhole should be worked, and a button put on to fasten to. A handle should also be made at the top of the flap, by plaiting a piece of the cord or making a strap of the crimson cloth, and neatly stitching it on, or passing the ends through a hole previously made in the cloth and buttonholed round. Instead of a floral design on the case, a great many ladies will prefer a boldly worked monogram, which always looks effective, as does also the word "Music" in plain or fancy letters.

Novelties in pincushions are many. I have seen two unique ideas recently. The first was a receptacle for pins, formed by making a small, round, plush-covered cushion, and gluing it securely into the bowl of a large wooden spoon (costing so little), which was first covered with gold or bronze lustre paint. A dainty bow of ribbon, to harmonise with the other colours used, is attached to the handle of the ladle. The pincushion itself may be pleasantly varied in shape and colour, and embroidery, patchwork, &c., may be introduced for it.

The other pincushion was made with the immense, hardened capsules of the opium poppy, or perhaps garden poppy, freed from its seeds by a neat oval aperture being cut in one side. The edge of this hole was then apparently perforated with small holes for a needle to pass through, and the inside of the poppy-head stuffed with sawdust or bran. The exterior of the capsule was enamelled brightly. The opening in the side of the poppy was neatly covered with a piece of silk, satin, or plush, any plain or fancy stitch preferred being used to sew it over. This piece of plush receives the pins. I should have remarked that the poppy-head must be perfect, and have at least a couple of inches of strong stem attached, and this stem is also enamelled, and finished

by a knot of narrowest ribbons, in harmony with the other colours. Two of these pincushions, which I saw at a bazaar, were as follows:—A poppy-head painted a rich heliotrope or pansy, trimmed with ribbons and cushion of primrose silk; another painted a dark slate-colour with crimson accompaniments. Bronze-green and pale pink would also look well.

A linen cover for a tea-cosy is a useful article to make in these days when a cosy itself is often a costly and elaborate piece of work, only fit to serve for "state purpose," and too precious to be lightly used. How well do I see with my mind's eye one such perfect piece of work on satin, water nymphs and riverside scenes in painting and embroidery mixed, too beautiful for fingers to touch! A choice cover for such a thing of beauty, keeping it a "joy for ever,"

may be made by taking pieces of white linen, slightly larger than the cosy sides it is to fit over, and working thereon a design in Mont Mellick embroidery, which is now so popular, and rightly too. The pattern may be worked with white linen thread, or white mixed with light blue, and the cover made up in the ordinary way. Of course this will wash and retain its new appearance.

Readers who have friends in far-away lands over the great and wide sea will be glad of a hint of something which is often acceptable, and is so light in weight it can travel in the home-letter. It is a name, worked in satin stitch on a little band of silk, suitable for stitching inside an overcoat or other garment. I have made many for a brother in the far West, and they have been always appreciated.

ELEANOR E. ARCHER.

THE LAND OF LORNE.*

BY BENJAMIN TAYLOR, F.R.G.S., ETC.



DUNSTAFFNAGE CASTLE.

THOSE who laughed with Professor Aytoun over the "Glenmutchkin Railway" thirty years ago may see the realisation of the project which then excited their mirth, as they are whirled across Argyllshire and through the Land of Lorne. The objective point of the railway—although it is not now known as the "Glenmutchkin" line—is Oban, variously called the Charing Cross of the Highlands and the Brighton of Scotland. To most tourists Oban is known only as a halting-place for the night, and a starting-place for somewhere else. All the lines of Highland coaches and steamers radiate from Oban, which during the season, at early morn, and again at dewy eve, is daily the scene of almost frantic bustle and excitement, as train upon steamer, and steamer upon coach, pours its stream of tourist-life upon the shores of the beautiful bay. But we go not with these, who in the haste to cover distances and to complete a programme of tour miss all the bountiful harvests that a quiet eye may reap in dallying by the way.

What is the nameless charm which binds for ever to the West Highlands anyone who has once felt its

influence? It is not altogether one of scenery, although that is magnificent. It is not altogether one of physical sensation, although the atmosphere is invigorating and the mountain odours are delicious. It is not altogether one of climate, although even the mists and rains are dear to the healthy lover of Nature. It is all these, and something more. There is a psychic spell, an irresistible spirit of the past, which pervades the present and suffuses the whole region with romance. Even the shriek of the locomotive as it rushes down the winding incline of Glencruitten—to the disturbance of the soul of Professor Blackie—cannot break for us the mystic charm which envelops these Western hills and lonely moors and wine-dark waters. Perhaps the flying steam-ribbon, as it undulates down the mountain-side and along the valley, might provoke the enthusiasm even of the phlegmatic Boswell, who has little more to say of Oban, where he and the great Doctor halted during their famous tour, than that it has "a good inn."

A good inn! what would the shade of the amiable "Bozzy" think if he were to re-visit this place now, and find no fewer than thirty-two fully equipped hotels, some of them of enormous size? It is a town of inns and lodging-houses, for, as Professor Blackie sings in his joyous fashion:—

"Oban is a dainty place;
In distant or in nigh lands,
No town delights the tourist race
Like Oban in the Highlands."

But old Samuel Johnson felt none of that nameless charm to whose spell we succumb. He saw no beauty in these mountains; he looked at the rivers only to see if they held fish for food, not for sport; he compared the royal stags with the English fallow-deer; he even spoke disrespectfully of the size of the waves; and while he praised the politeness

* The illustrations to this paper are engraved from photographs by Messrs. Valentini and Son, Dundee.