

sweet ; behind the hills the June moon was rising round and red.

"Oh, Sylvia," said Lancelot, "you do make me so happy ! I keep on wondering why I should be so much happier than other men ! And I *will* try to make your life happy, too, for I do love you so."

He put his arm round her, and bent down his face to hers. In his passionate delight, he did not perceive the shudder that ran through poor Sylvia ; if only she could have shrunk down into the earth, or torn herself from his embrace, and run away ! But that was impossible ; she *must* play her part ; she must force herself to endure. Till this moment, she had at least

liked Lancelot ; she had just been feeling very grateful to him for his considerate kindness ; but now, all of a sudden, something like a passion of abhorrence and hatred swept over her. She clenched her hands together, till the finger-nails almost ran into the flesh, as if she were schooling herself to bear sharp physical pain. At last she could bear it no longer ; she sprang up, and said, with a sort of a gasp—

"Mother will be wanting me, I'm sure. We must go in."

The poor girl blamed herself afterwards for having told a lie, but in the extremity of her humiliation and horror she really did not know what she was saying.

END OF CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

MOUNT MELICK EMBROIDERY.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE, AUTHOR OF "POCKET-HANDKERCHIEF WORK," ETC., ETC.

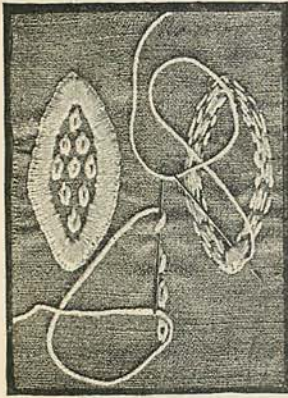


FIG. 1.

AN Irish locality, where the work originated, gives its name to this beautiful embroidery. In the neighbourhood of Mount Melick the Industrial Association makes a *specialité* of this work, and thereby are enabled to help many distressed Irish ladies and others. It may be remembered by some that in 1885 this association pre-

sented a beautifully embroidered toilet-cover to the Princess of Wales when she visited Ireland.

Some people do the Mount Melick work on coloured materials, but this is really incorrect, the distinguishing feature of the embroidery being that it is white worked upon a white foundation. A thick material should always be selected, for the work is heavy, and requires a substantial foundation. White satin jean is often used, so also is linen, plain or twilled, and the objects decorated with this work are tea and sideboard cloths, toilet-covers, night-dress sachets, bed-spreads, and a variety of other articles in kind, the great charm being that it washes again and

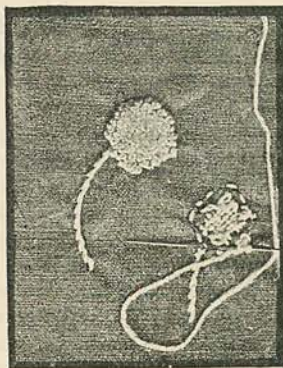


FIG. 2.

again, and still preserves its beauty. Thick "between" needles are used to work with, but a special needle, called Bartleet's Superior Mount Melick needle, is the most satisfactory of any, the eye being well adapted to holding the cotton, which is Strutt's knitting cotton, the sizes varying from six to fourteen in number.

In choosing a design, you must bear in mind that the work is bold and striking rather than fine and delicate in detail, and a design where the leaves cross each other and branches interlace, or in which there is any crowding whatever, is most unsuitable, and the result very ugly. You will sometimes find a transfer pattern very useful, but if you can draw yourself you will be independent of any of these. Among the various flowers, etc., which are particularly well suited for this work are mountain-ash berries, acorns, blackberry flowers and leaves, passion flowers, conventional pomegranates, wheat, barley, grapes, lilies, hops, etc.

If you do not draw, and yet are in possession of a good design, you must put it on the material you are going to work. One way is to use carbonated paper, which can be obtained at any shop for drawing materials. Another is to prick the pattern all over, and then lay it upon the material, and secure it by drawing-pins, so that it may not slip. You next make some pounce, which is nothing else but finely-powdered and dry pipeclay and charcoal. Then you take a strip of flannel, about four or five inches wide, and roll it up tightly until you have a roll about the diameter

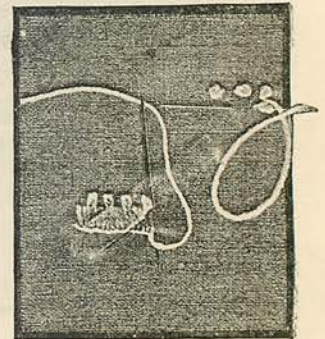


FIG. 3.

of a halfpenny; cut the edge quite clear and even, and then dipping the end into the pounce, you apply it to the pricked surface, rubbing it in well. After this is done, lift off the pattern, and you will find

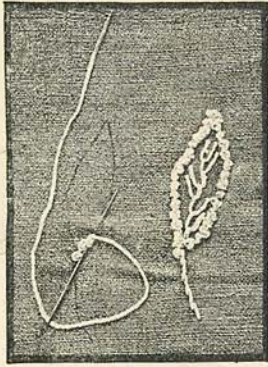


FIG. 4.

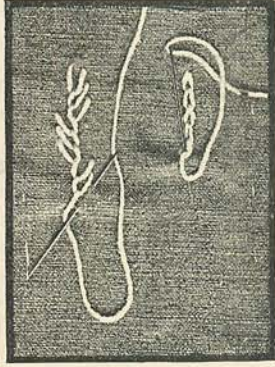


FIG. 5.

the design lying on your material clearly outlined in the pounce, but so lightly done that a breath will damage it. You next go over it all carefully with a thick pencil or pen and ink. You will do this better if your hand is resting on a firm flat piece of wood or a thick book. At any artist's shop you will be able to get, at a very small cost, a little wooden bridge, or "hand-rest," which is extremely useful.

It would be impossible in the space of one article to enumerate all the various stitches which can be used in Mount Melick work, but if those given here are mastered the worker will find herself possessed of sufficient to make great variety in any piece of work she undertakes, and the more of the embroidery that she executes the longer will be her list of stitches, which she will invent as she goes on, and yet which are all more or less offshoots of the ones named here.

Use coarse cotton for padding, finer for embroidering, but do not mix two sizes for the latter—the result is not satisfactory. Remember that though the cotton

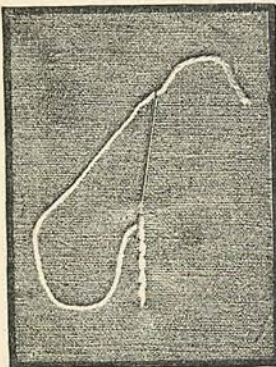


FIG. 6.

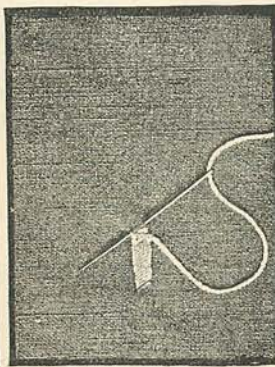


FIG. 7.

you use is coarse, finish is absolutely necessary for good work. By this I mean that your outlines must be perfectly true, your stitches even, your satin-stitch smooth, with no inequalities of padding or gaps

caused by loose stitches. I am not going to give you long directions about "holding your cotton under one thumb" and "slightly slanting" your needle, because I have very small faith in these written directions. I am, however, convinced that if you study carefully the figures illustrating this article, and place needle and cotton as you see before you, that you will learn how to do the stitches, though, of course, practice alone will secure excellence in the workmanship. As to which kind of stitches apply to particular patterns, no general rules can be given; you must be guided by your eye and the general effect. For example, satin-stitch, as in Fig. 1, is adapted more particularly for conventional designs; the rough outline leaf, done in French knots (Fig. 4) for blackberry leaves.

But before I go on I have something to say about the padding, which is a very much more important part of the embroidery than many workers have any idea of. The stitches of the padding should lie on the surface of the part to be worked, consequently as little as possible of the material should be taken up with the needle. If you wish the embroidery to be very much in relief, then run a second or third row

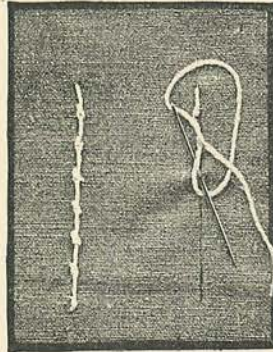


FIG. 8.

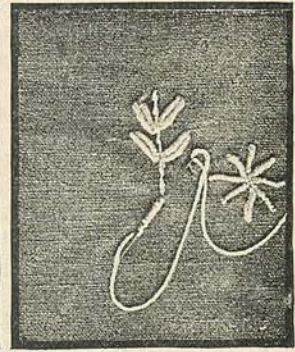


FIG. 9.

of lines, keeping the thickness perfectly equal, and always padding in the opposite direction to which the embroidery stitches are to go.

In Fig. 2 a blackberry is given completely worked in French knots. The method of padding the centre, as you would darn, is by far the best. The French knots are made as will be seen in Fig. 3. Although I have said that the same size of cotton should be used throughout the embroidering of one piece of work, yet, as every rule has its exceptions, I will admit that for French knots I generally use a coarse number. The other drawing

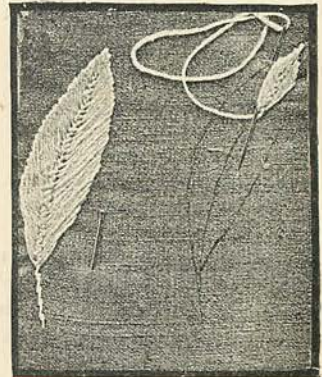


FIG. 10.

in Fig. 3 is the saw-tooth button-holing, useful for the edge of work. This, of course, can be varied in many ways.

From the blackberry fruit we turn to the leaf on Fig. 4, or rather the section of a leaf, which it will be seen is worked simply in a row of French knots outlining the whole, and the centre having some feather-stitching. Every one almost knows how to do feather-stitching, and is also acquainted with the plan of doing two or three branches, according to fancy. Care must always be taken to keep it straight, and the length of the

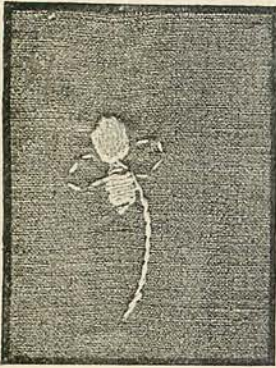


FIG. 11.

stitches equal. Simple chain-stitch is found on Fig. 5, and that comes in usefully in many ways. The small loop-stitch, which fills the centre of Fig. 1, is very easy and effective. If the loop taken is made larger, then it serves for wheat-ears, daisies, and tiny sprays of leaves.

Fig. 6 is common stem-stitch, which all who do crewel-work will know quite well. I so often, however, see it so very badly done that I may as well give the hint that perfection in this stitch very much consists in taking each stitch precisely opposite the former one, and not allowing your needle to slant at all. In direct opposition to this is the overcasting stitch, which Fig. 7 shows us. There the knack is to get your stitch always slanting, working from right to left or *vice versa*, as you please.

Fig. 8 is called snail-trail-stitch, and is very useful in various parts of Mount Mellick work, for when the pattern is of large bold leaves, embroiderers often vary the effect by filling in surfaces with snail-trail, chain-stitch, or else crossing the leaf with stitches fastened down where they meet, and producing an effect like trellis-work.

Bullion-stitch is given on Fig. 9, and here I must ask my reader to observe carefully exactly how the needle is placed before the cotton is rolled round it, for if the needle is drawn out as the tyro generally

does, and the cotton then twisted, it is most troublesome, and almost impossible to result in a good stitch. Bullion-stitch serves for a great many purposes. In our illustration it is used for wheat-ears, and the star at the side shows another way of using it. It also answers for accentuating the veining of leaves, the anthers of lilies, etc.

One of the easiest, and perhaps the most effective ways of embroidering leaves is shown on Fig. 10. It is simply feather-stitch done closely together, always taking care to work one stitch to right, the next to left alternately. If two are made on one side to one or three on the other, the centre veining, which should be pretty and even, is spoilt.

In Fig. 11 you will see a small flower, about the size of a blackberry flower, and the method of padding will be easily learnt. Another way of doing this flower is to button-hole each petal to the edge, having carefully padded it first, and letting the outline of your padding be well within the line of the petal, so as to permit of each petal being clear and distinct. In either case a few French knots are made in the centre.

In Fig. 12 I have given a leaf which should be worked in satin-stitch. Again I must remind the worker of the need of evenness in padding.

In ironing Mount Mellick work care should be taken to have a thick piece of flannel or blanket under the ironing cloth, so that the raised work may not be flattened. Although, as I have said, true Mount Mellick work is done on white material in white cotton, still I will whisper in confidence to my readers that I have done it in filosele silks on Roman satin, and that the effect was extremely handsome. In purse twist and knitting silk much may be done in the same way, and the idea of doing it thus will, I feel sure, be new to many readers, as it was until recently to myself.



FIG. 12.

AN OLD-TIME SONG.

Blow, softly flow, thou murmuring stream !
 Nor dare disturb my loved one's dream :
 With lulling sound glide past her bower,
 Nor wake her in this happy hour.

Blow, softly blow, thou balmy air !
 The rudest winds would hush to spare

So dear, so sweet, so bright a flower,
 Blow softly past her tranquil bower.

Breathe gently o'er her rosy cheek,
 Lest thou her happy slumber break :
 Perhaps of me she dreams to-day,
 Her exiled lover, far away.

WILLIAM COWAN.