

## AN OLD PIECE OF STITCHERY.

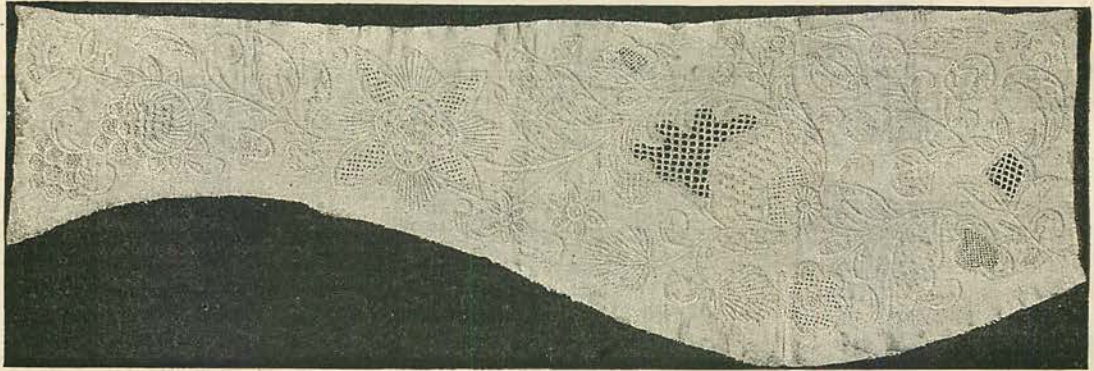


FIG. 1.—AN OLD PIECE OF STITCHERY.

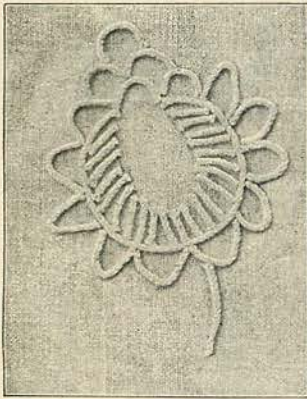


FIG. 2.—DETAIL, SHOWING THE CORD IN PLACE.

erred satin of which these waistcoats were at that time made, but at present no embroideress seems to have thought of utilising any of the old quilted designs for such a purpose. Most practised workers know the value of even the smallest scrap of antique embroidery, from which they may obtain, if not hints for stitches new to them, at any rate suggestions for the arrangement and disposal of old and well-known ones which will serve to make their own achievements less commonplace than they otherwise might be.

The exhibitions held annually in London are of great use in this respect, as small scraps of this kind are often to be had for a few shillings. Last year, in particular, there were some fragments of Rhodian embroidery costing half a crown or thereabouts, which

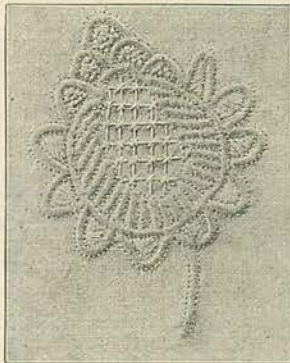


FIG. 3.—COMPLETE DETAIL, SHOWING QUILTING AND FILLING.

JUST now, when the so-called Louis Quinze waistcoats are considered in correct taste for ladies' wear, much attention is directed to the originals from which this fashion has been copied, and which were, in their day, worn only by the sterner sex. It is no difficult matter to procure excellent imitations of the brocades and of the embroidered

were valuable models of fancy darning stitches. The waistcoat of which one of the front pieces is given in Fig. 1 (the neck piece being to the left of the illustration) is of fine white linen quilted in a conventional but effective floral design. Most of the embroidery is centred in the fronts, which form a veritable encyclopædia of useful fancy stitches; the pockets, collar, and cuffs display similar but less elaborate workmanship. Judging from a few simpler embroideries of the kind preserved in the South Kensington Museum, this waistcoat must be at least a hundred and fifty years old. Although somewhat time-stained, the stitches are as even and as firm as if they had but yesterday left the worker's hands. The quilting is not managed in the usual way over an interlining of wadding, but is rendered doubly effective by being executed in certain parts only of the pattern, instead itself forming the design as in ordinary work of this description. The quilting here is made

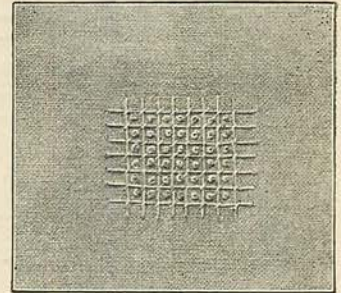


FIG. 4.—FILLING OF LATTICE-WORK AND KNOTS.

with a fine cord, something like our piping cord, which is cut into the lengths required and laid on a piece of fine, soft linen. Over this is placed the cambric, the cord being held in position by a line of back-stitching worked on each side of it. This style of quilting is supposed to have been introduced from Italy, where, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is said to have been popular for blinds. It is well suited for such a purpose, as the pattern shows to far greater advantage when held up against the light than when the work is made up opaquely. A description of a similar kind of quilting will be found under the head of "Piqué Embroidery" in the "Encyclopædia of Needlework,"



by Thérèse de Dillmont, but neither the details of the design nor the stitches are so elaborate and varied as in the English example.

In Fig. 2 is shown, slightly enlarged, one of the details of the design with the cord in place. The pattern is marked on the lower and thinner material, which is then spread lightly with paste. Before this has had time to dry, the cord is laid over the design wherever required, and cut into lengths as it is placed

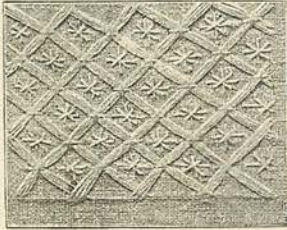


FIG. 5.—FILLING OF LAID THREADS AND LEVIATHAN CROSS-STITCH.

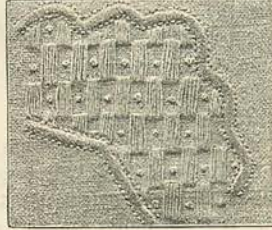


FIG. 6.—FILLING OF "BRICK" STITCH AND KNOTS.

on the linen. A small portion of the linen only must be pasted at a time, as the paste becomes absorbed very quickly. When all the cord is in place, the second material should be very thinly coated with paste and laid over the first piece of linen. It must be thoroughly pressed down over the cord, then put under a pile of heavy books till it is quite dry.

Fig. 3 gives the detail shown in Fig. 2 completed, and from it should be clearly understood the method of working the lines of fine stitching and the way of filling in the leaves with satin-stitch. Clusters of French knots fill the upper part of this conventional fruit, while the lattice-work in the middle is easily copied. In the original this is worked with an exceedingly fine and crisply twisted cord, unlike anything we have nowadays. The nearest approach to it is fine crochet cotton, but it may be still more closely imitated by overcasting each stitch, as it is made, with fine cotton. The worker will find that no tracing of the design is necessary upon the second material, for the ridges made by the cord define it sufficiently. Should any doubt arise, she can at once verify the design by holding it up to the light. It is advisable to begin the work as nearly as possible in the middle of the material and to work gradually outwards, putting in none of the fillings till all the stitching is completed. Some of the most effective of

the fillings found in different parts of the waistcoat are given slightly larger than the original size in Figs. 4, 5, and 6.

That in Fig. 4 is principally used for some of the smaller parts of the design, such as buds and leaves. It consists of two sets of straight

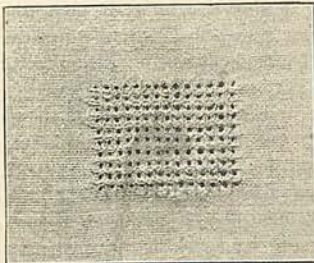


FIG. 7.—FILLING OF OPEN-WORK AND CROSS-STITCH.

threads which divide the linen into squares like a miniature chessboard. These lines are kept in place at each point of meeting by a tiny slanting stitch, worked like the half of a cross-stitch, and in the middle of each square is placed a small French knot.

A similar network is shown in Fig. 5, but here the lines are laid diagonally and in sets of four. These threads are held down with a cross-stitch worked straight according to the threads of the linen. The space between them is of course larger than in the foregoing example, and therefore it is filled with what we now know as a Leviathan cross-stitch. This arrangement of stitches can only be used as a covering for a wide expanse of material, and is here employed principally as a filling for a large scroll-like leaf. Several of the other leaves are powdered with Leviathan cross-stitches without the lattice-work, and in others again their place is taken by groups of French knots.

A very large and bold filling is that in Fig. 6. Here the corded outlines of the design are shown, the space between them being filled with groups of

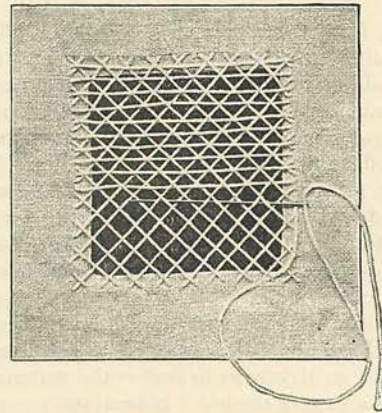


FIG. 8.—SIMPLE LACE-STITCH.

six long straight stitches, alternating with French knots, and resembling what is known in modern canvas embroidery as "brick"-stitch. This filling would be effective upon much of the linen embroidery at present popular if worked in two colours, or in two shades of the same. The worker must notice in copying this arrangement of stitches that each group is commenced rather above the bottom of those in the preceding row. This is an apparently trifling matter, but it tends to raise the stitches into rather high relief, and consequently to depress the space reserved for the French knots.

French knots were apparently thought as effective and useful a century and a half ago as they are at the present day, for they are used here as powderings, both singly and in groups, and are massed to serve as fillings for small leaves and flowers. Our workers may well take a lesson from the old embroideries and make their knots not only tighter and closer, but far smaller than they generally do. To be well made, each knot should set as closely and firmly as a bead against



the material. Those in the waistcoat are as compact and tight as when they were first made, in spite of wear and tear and washing.

Another feature of this piece of embroidery is the clever way in which certain details are filled in with open work. In Fig. 7 are shown a few stitches of an open pattern which fills the petals of some of the

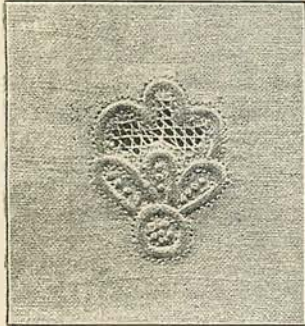


FIG. 9.—DETAIL, SHOWING USE OF LACE-STITCH (SLIGHTLY ENLARGED).

smaller flowers and other details. At first sight, and especially just now when drawn thread work is so much executed, the worker would think that this has been used to produce the open effect on these portions of the design, and, indeed, "drawn thread work" is described as being included in the similar vests at South Kensington. Here, however, from the slope of the designs filled with it, the stitch could not be executed in a line with the threads of the linen, as drawn thread work must be. A number of holes were therefore made in straight rows, one below the other, across the space to be filled, so that the surface of the linen becomes regularly pierced, like a coarse kind of perforated cardboard. Between these holes is stretched a set of straight stitches much like those shown in Fig. 4, and over them is worked a series of cross-stitches made exactly as in the usual way over canvas. The stitches are drawn up rather firmly, so as to keep the holes as open as possible, but, of course, not so tightly as to pucker the material. The difficulty of getting the holes to keep open goes far to prove that the waistcoat when new was worked upon a tolerably stiff make of linen, for upon a soft quality the threads fall together long before the filling is finished. It is a good plan to use a small carpet needle while making this open work after the straight lines are laid, thus piercing the holes and working the cross-stitch at the same time.

The other two open-work stitches are similar to many that are used in lace-making, that shown in Fig. 8 being by no means tedious to execute. The portion of linen to be replaced by the network is first of all covered with a lattice of straight threads made exactly like those in Fig. 4, except that they are laid upon the material diagonally instead of vertically and horizontally. These are then crossed horizontally by a set of straight threads darned

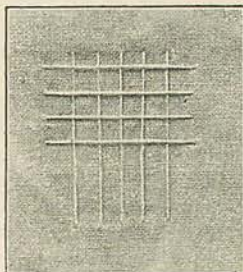


FIG. 10.—METHOD OF WORKING LACE-STITCH IN FIG. 13.

alternately over and under the lattice just where the two sets cross one another. This is readily understood from the working detail, Fig. 8, where the needle is shown in the act of making one of these horizontal lines, the manner of placing the diagonal threads being seen in the lower portion of the illustration.

Fig. 9 shows the application of the stitch to a conventional bud slightly enlarged. Considerable care is needed in cutting away the two layers of linen beneath the lace, for a sharp pair of scissors is wanted, and no little inconvenience is caused should these chance to sever either of the threads. The worker must allow a narrow margin of linen beyond the corded outlines of the network, or there will be nothing to support the threads, and they will become pulled away from the foundation the first time the embroidery is cleaned. This stitch is very little more trouble to execute than the ordinary plain darning which occasionally finds a

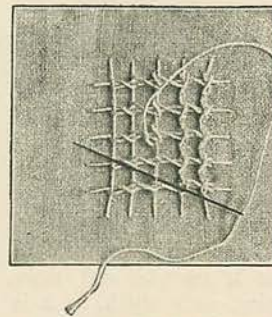


FIG. 12.—METHOD OF WORKING LACE-STITCH IN FIG. 13.

place in linen embroidery. Some of the new designs brought out for ladies to work have flowing streamers and bows and ends of ribbon amongst the floral sprays, and these lend themselves well to the use of this stitch, either with coloured threads or silks or with washing tinsel. The latter reproduces almost exactly the appearance of a semi-transparent gold ribbon.

The second lace stitch is rather more elaborate, and is one which I have been unable to find in any handbook on the subject. It is even more effective than the other. A finished detail, somewhat enlarged, is shown in Fig. 13, the three working details being given in Figs. 10, 11, and 12. In the first (Fig. 10), the ordinary square lattice is shown which divides the space to be covered into a number of small squares. These are worked over in each direction with cross-stitches, the needle in Fig. 11 being in the position required for making the first half of one set of these stitches. The needle, it will be noticed, is passed upwards under the straight threads at the points at which they cross. When all the stitches have been made along the line from left to right, the second half of the cross-stitch is made by working back in the same manner in the opposite direction.

Fig. 12 shows the manner of making the second set

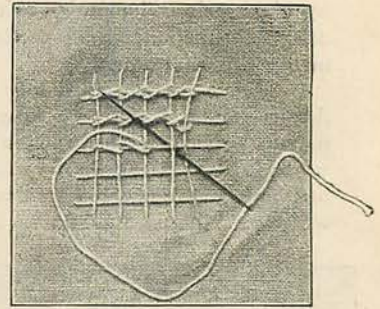


FIG. 11.—METHOD OF WORKING LACE-STITCH IN FIG. 13.



of cross-stitches. These are taken over the vertical threads of the lattice and the needle is passed

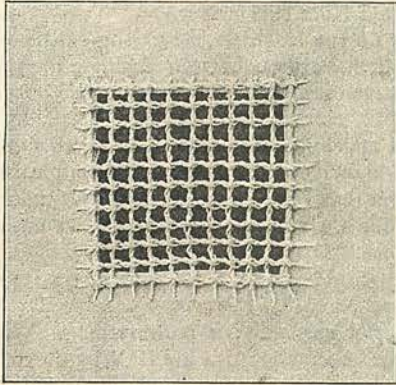


FIG. 13.—LACE-STITCH COMPLETED.

under the straight threads which lie between the previous set of stitches. They are made first downwards, then back again up the line. At the end

the needle is passed down through the linen and brought up again where it is necessary to begin the next set of stitches.

It is needless to say that the same precautions must be taken here in cutting away the double layer of linen as in the first example. In one place in the original the worker has apparently forgotten to cut away all the linen beneath the lace network. Such imperfections—if indeed they are to be called imperfections—are valuable in the eyes of a connoisseur, who becomes truly weary nowadays of the faultless regularity of machine-made embroideries, besides which they are of great utility in showing how the stitch was originally executed. The lace stitches should be made loosely rather than tightly, as it is not advisable that they should set too formally.

The worker will find that fine flax or lace thread is most suitable for the open-work stitches; fine embroidery cotton answers well for the fillings, and ordinary sewing cotton for the stitching. It will be seen that the execution of such a piece of work as this depends more upon the time than upon the money the embroideress has at her disposal, but when once done it is practically everlasting, and hence will amply compensate her for the pains she has taken.

ELLEN T. MASTERS.

## A GUARDIAN OF HONOUR.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.



"H, Nora, don't cry! Whatever is the matter? Quick! stop crying, and tell me, for I shall be caught if I stay long; only don't cry!" And the inky school boy hand stroked her hair—the wrong way—and the boyish voice was full of that anxious helplessness that

develops so soon in the masculine mind when confronted with feminine tears. But as no answer came from the bowed head, the rough fourteen-year-old comforter went on—

"I came to wish you many happy returns; and oh, I'm so sorry I haven't a present for you, but my pocket-money was stopped this week! I'll get you one next; only, what are you crying for? Do tell me."

"These!" said a choked voice, and she pushed a pile of books away from her.

"Lessons!" exclaimed the boy incredulously. "What on earth makes you cry over them? You never have before. And oh! I forgot I was to tell you that Morton will give you the translation if you will meet him in the wood between the schools this afternoon."

"You don't understand," said the girl, looking up with tearful eyes. "It's not the hardness, but it's the lessons at all. You know I am eighteen to-day, and I always thought that when I was eighteen he would let me come out, and have fun, and be like other girls. But to-day he said that I was much too ignorant."

"That's stuff!" broke in her brother, "and nothing to do with it. It is the ignorant girls that do come out." Wherein he spoke truly.

"And so he says I must work for another year, and then he will think about it," and she relapsed into fresh sobs.

"Beast!" ejaculated the boy. "But you can have lots of fun here, you know, watching the matches and larking about. I must go now—only don't cry!"

"He doesn't understand," mused Nora sorrowfully, as the door banged. "He is so young, and he has his school-fellows, and he loves cricket; but it is different for me. I am so tired of being scolded: other girls never are; and I do so want to enjoy myself while I'm young. I know he will keep me in school till I'm too old to have any fun." She wondered then whether she should ever live to be thirty—on the whole, she thought not—but even if she did achieve so ripe an age, she had a vision of bath-chairs, and shawls, and old-maidhood. So life looks through the delusive glasses we wear in our teens.

The name of this sorrowing individual was Nora Danvers, and some years before, on the death of her parents, she and her small brother had been handed over to the guardianship of the Reverend Edward Fagan, Head Master of Woodcote School, whose mother was their father's cousin, and their nearest living relative: hence the formidable "he" of her conversation.