

WASHABLE GOLD EMBROIDERY.

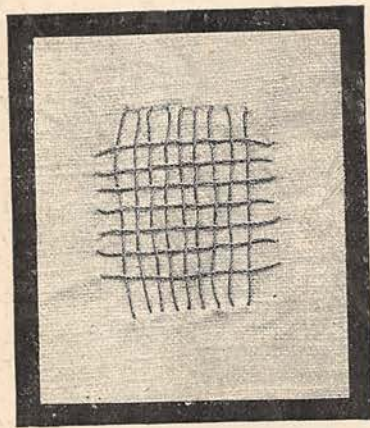


FIG. 1.—DARNING WITH GOLD THREAD.

ONCE the prejudice against the use of tinsel upon linen and cotton materials is removed, there are many effective and handsome embroideries to be executed with the new washable gold thread, but the best advice I can give those who are proposing to employ this thread is, "See that you get it," as the advertisements say. It is not every shop that supplies this particular make of gold thread, and in many places, owing more to the ignorance of the shop assistants themselves than to a desire to impose, the purchaser is put off merely with a finer make than usual of the Japanese or Chinese threads. By the exercise of a very small amount of intelligence it will be seen that these threads cannot possibly bear any rough wear, much less washing, for many of them are made simply of gilded paper twisted over a core which is cotton in the commoner sorts, silken in the better. Of course the first time this is wetted, the paper becomes reduced to

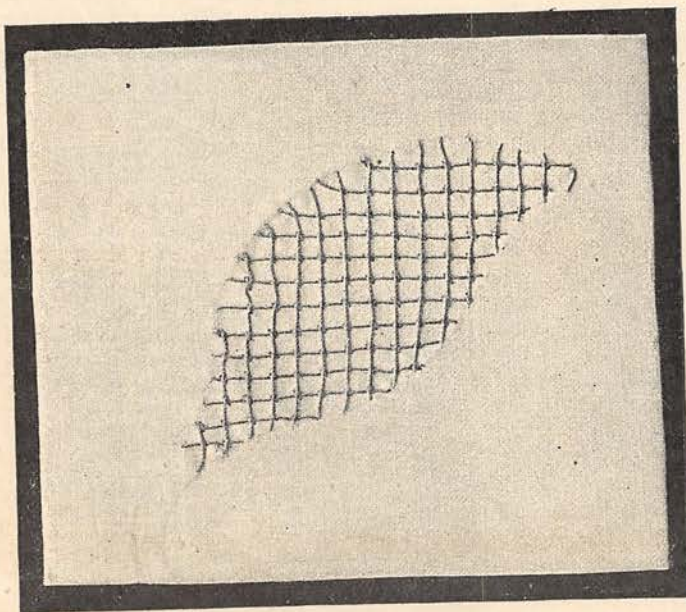


FIG. 2.—SIMPLE LATTICE STITCH.

pulp. The washable gold thread, when closely examined and unravelled at the end, will be found to consist generally of three strands, which, when they are untwisted in their turn, will be seen to be composed of a very slender metal wire wound round a silken or cotton core. The Comptoir Alsacien de Broderie, of 15, Avenue de l'Opéra, Paris, and late of New Bond Street, supplies a specially good make of these washable threads, which generally costs about two-pence or three-pence a yard, according to the number, there being three sizes. The postage of sample skeins costs but little.

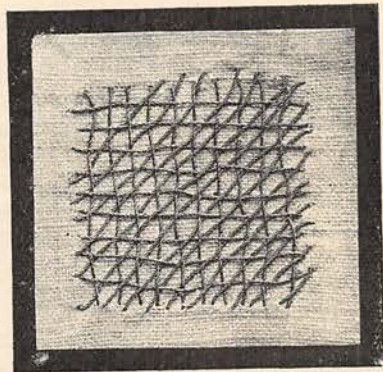


FIG. 3.—LACE DARNING.

It is very pure, and so can be depended upon never to tarnish unless brought into contact with sulphur. For this reason it is better to employ it upon linen that is unbleached rather than upon such as is dead-white in tint, as the chemicals used in the bleaching are very apt to disturb the brightness of the metal. To use with this, the same firm provides spangles which are also guaranteed to wash, and, as everyone appreciates a certain amount of brilliancy in fancy work, they are likely to become very popular on embroidered tea-cloths, table-cloths, dainty serviettes, pillow shams, and sideboard slips.

Turning now to the use of the tinsel threads, I will give first a few details of the stitches for which they are most suited. There is the ordinary lattice-work darning (Fig. 1), which serves as a filling for almost any size and shape of design. The strands may be put nearer together or further apart, as desired, according to the size of the pattern, the lattice being sometimes large enough to admit of a small spangle being sewn in the middle of each square. Then there is the lattice given in Fig. 2, where an agreeable touch of colour is added by the stitches which secure the strands and in the French knots which may be placed, if space permits, in the middle of each open space. In Fig. 3 is given yet another form of darning, in which three sets of threads are interlaced instead of two. The two sets of horizontal and vertical threads are here laid first,

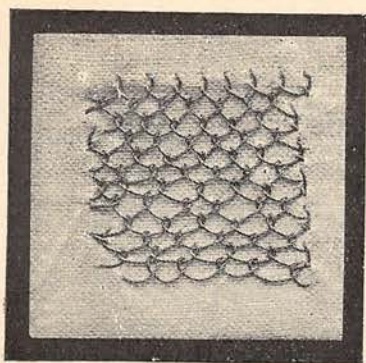


FIG. 4.—POINT DE BRUXELLES.

common appearance is given to the work, as of a gold gauze ribbon among the more solid portions of the

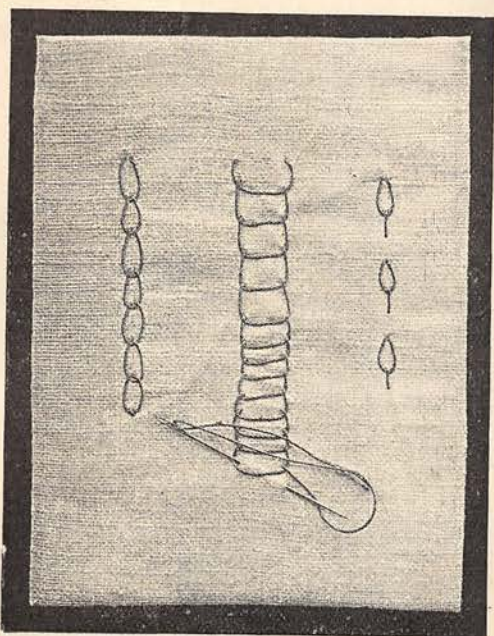


FIG. 5.—CHAIN, OPEN STEM, AND PICOT STITCHES.

embroidery. It is a pretty idea also to use one gold strand only in the darning, and to alternate this with a thread of colour.

Few fancy stitches are more effective than the simple lace filling, point de Bruxelles, given in Fig. 4. Most workers know how to work this, but when gold thread is employed, it must be left even looser than when silk or cotton is used. Instead, too, of taking each buttonhole stitch through the linen, it is better only to catch it through those in the preceding row, securing, of

and are crossed with lines taken across them diagonally. All these varieties of simple stitch lend themselves as well to the filling of a ribbon-like design as to that of any particular leaf, scroll, or flower, and, when evenly executed, an un-

course, the end loops in the usual way. Should the work seem at all likely to slip out of place when thus executed, it is easy to catch the gold down here and there with an invisible stitch of gold-coloured horse-tail silk. Chain-stitch loosely worked answers well in gold thread, because the wiry nature of the tinsel allows the stitches to set well open, like miniature rings upon the work. A few chain-stitches are worked towards the left of the detail in Fig. 5, and picot stitches, which are executed in the same way, are given at the right. Open stem-stitch, as in the middle of Fig. 5, is similar to chain-stitch and more effective in certain positions. It is worked somewhat in the same fashion, but, as shown in the example, the needle is put into the loop, and brought across diagonally at the back

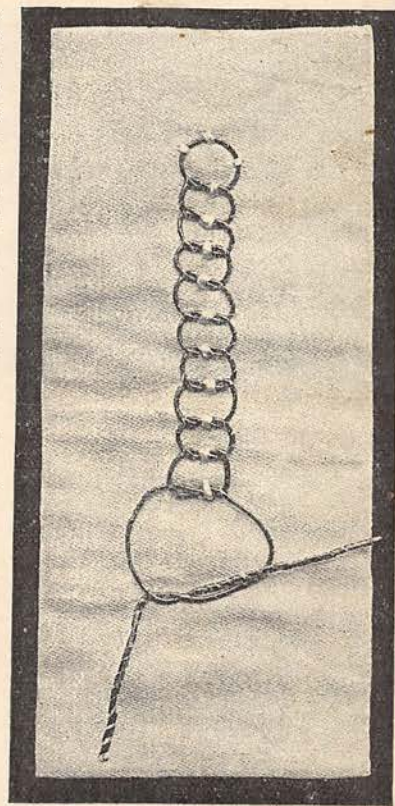


FIG. 6.—THE LINK STITCH.

of the work. Some little practice is needed to get the stitches all of the right degree of tightness, but they may be placed quite close together, as shown in the lower end of the detail, or far apart, as at the top. They may also be worked of almost any width. Hence the stitch may be employed for broad stems, for narrow leaves and petals of flowers. In leaves that are wide

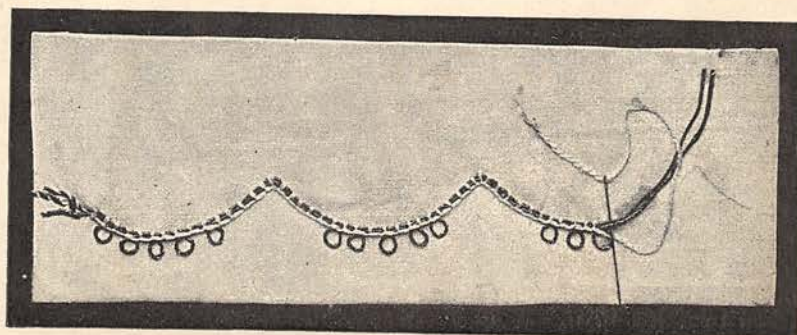


FIG. 7.—SCALLOPS EDGED WITH PICOTS.

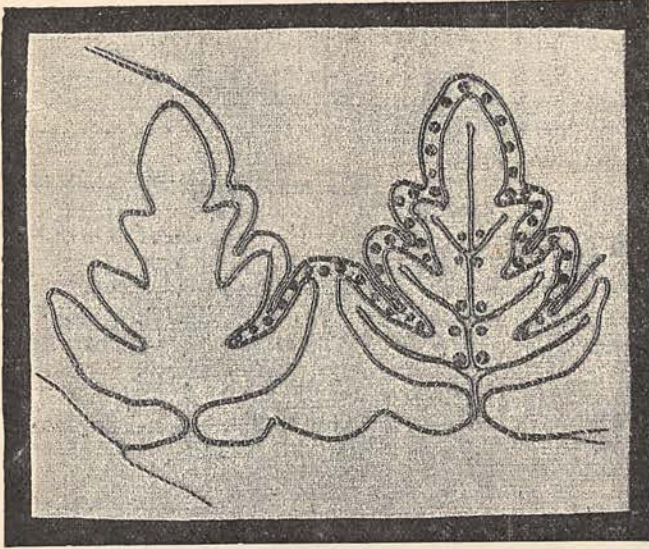


FIG. 8.—BRAIDING DESIGN EXECUTED WITH SPANGLES AND GOLD THREAD.

enough to allow of it, a great improvement may be made by running three lines of darning down the middle by way of veining, and if the stem-stitches are rather wide, these will help to keep them in place.

A very pretty and simple stitch, for covering narrow stems and straight bands along the edge of a piece of work, is that in Fig. 6. To work it, it is advisable to pin out the material taut to a heavy cushion or to execute it in a frame. Use two strands of gold, and sew down the ends about a quarter of an inch apart, but side by side. Then take a thread in each hand, and tie them once as if an ordinary knot were to be made. Draw up the tie till it is about a quarter of an inch from the beginning of the work, and, after seeing that it is even on each side, catch it down with a stitch worked with gold-coloured horse-tail silk. Then make a second tie a quarter of an inch from the last; sew this down, and continue till sufficient are made. Some care is needed to get the links exactly even and all the same size, and twisted in the same direction, but otherwise there is little difficulty in the matter. A variation may be made by leaving larger spaces between the rings, and sewing a spangle in the middle of each.

A pretty way of finishing off the edges of a tea-cloth, or almost any other piece of work, is given in Fig. 7. A series of scallops is traced on the material, and these are followed with a double line of gold caught down with button-hole stitches which are worked from left to right. In the middle of the scallop the outermost strand of gold thread is twisted into

five loops. To do this, after making a button-hole stitch, give the strand a turn to make the loop of the size required and support it under the thumb of the left hand while a button-hole stitch is made close to the loop and on the right hand side of it. This holds it down firmly to the linen. Make another button-hole stitch in the ordinary way, and then another picot, or loop. In the example there are only five picots for the sake of clearness, but they may, if desired, be placed along the whole curve of the scallops, the two which set in the angles between two scallops being interlaced. The button-hole stitches, if worked tolerably close together, give a sufficiently firm edge to the embroidery to enable the linen to be cut away beyond it, when the picots have a very pretty lace-like effect.

Many of these stitches have to be worked by drawing the thread through the material instead of couching it down upon the surface, as is the case with the coarser makes of gold. A large round-eyed needle is required, and not too great a length of tinsel at the time. Also, as it does not very readily slip, only a very short piece of thread need be drawn through the eye of the needle; then if this becomes chafed, and breaks in its passage through the linen, merely a small piece need be cut off when the needle is re-threaded. Economy, even in such a minor way as this, tells in the long run when a large piece of work has to be executed. The ease with which the thread can be drawn through the material enables it to be used for a great variety of the fancy stitches generally worked with silk or flax.



FIG. 9.—TRAY-CLOTH WORKED WITH WASHABLE GOLD THREAD AND INGRAIN FILOSELLE.

A particularly easy way of getting a good effect by the use only of gold thread and spangles is shown in Fig. 8. Here a double strand of tinsel is simply couched down to the material, a design somewhat similar to many used in braiding being selected, and having sufficient space between the outlines to allow of sprinkling the ground with spangles. A good selection of fancy articles traced for working in this way is always to be had from the Comptoir, and the worker may judge whether she prefers such as are carried out merely with gold to such as are mixed with coloured embroidery of the usual kind. Sometimes the metal is itself sewn down with a colour, the stitches being only large enough to cover the two strands exactly.

The spangles are generally caught down with three stitches carried over the edge, and through the hole in the middle. The largest spangles require four of these stitches, or they will be apt to curl up at the edges when they have been in use for some little time.

An example of the use of the washing gold thread with ingrain filoselle is given in Fig. 9. The tray-cloth shown here is one of those to be had at any fancy shop—in this case of Messrs. Vicars and Poirson's design—and has a pattern traced on it that was specially well adapted to the work now under consideration. All the longer stems are followed with a double row of gold, and the little stars that are dotted about the sprays have each a spangle by way of centre. The design requires that these should be graduated in size,

and where they near the tip of the spray the smallest of all are used by themselves without any encircling stitches of silk.

Another pretty embroidery that may be done with these threads is the outlining of the designs on damask. This is a style of work that has been very popular when carried out with silk or flax threads, but a set of fine satin damask doyleys is by no means to be despised when ornamented with a delicate outlining of gold thread interspersed with the glittering spangles. The finer portions of the design need but one row of thread, especially when the damask is of a good and fine make. In the little doyley shown here (Fig. 10) there is no convenient place for spangles, so the gold thread is used by itself.



FIG. 10.—DAMASK OUTLINED WITH GOLD THREAD.

For the more slender veinings and markings of leaves and flowers the gold thread is untwisted and each strand, used separately, is worked in outline stitch in the customary fashion. The gold, from its very nature, can scarcely be expected to set as flat against the material as do silk or flaxen threads, but the work will not be injured by being pressed on the wrong side with an iron.

Yet another washing fabric for gold embroidery is single-thread canvas; and beautiful and artistic handkerchief sachets, book-covers, and other things can be made to look very "old world" and quaint if the gold is mingled with good and subdued colours of silk. The task of drawing the tinsel through the canvas is a very pleasant one.

ELLEN T. MASTERS.

MARGARET'S WAY.

By ANNIE E. WICKHAM, Author of "Two Women," etc.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

HOW welcome that voice sounded in her ears. She could not but be friendly to this friend in need. Indeed, she no longer felt at enmity with Geoffrey Fenham

now that she had escaped from his offers to give her money; she felt that she had conquered—she could afford to be generous.

He appeared at a lucky moment. She was helpless amid the turmoil and bustle of the station. She