

## EMBROIDERY ON NET.

DARNING on net is the oldest style of embroidery, and, being strong and bold, it was much employed in church ornamentation. A few rich specimens are still extant. The work consists in representing a pattern by taking up and leaving down a given number of meshes or holes; very often two kinds of thread are in requisition—a coarse one for outlining and a finer one for filling in. These patterns of yore, too complicated and tedious, did not suit our love for railroad speed; they therefore fell into oblivion.

However, quite lately, Parisian ladies have revived this branch of embroidery, and have improved upon it. Light and easy designs are the only ones in favour, some being darned, but many being copies of the stitches familiar in canvas, crewel, and linen work. With these stitches lovely things are made, both for furniture and dress; for instance, curtains, holders, blinds, chair-backs, and cosies, valances, quilts with coloured linings, covers, fronts and backs of pianos, etc.; also ball-dresses, jerseys, dainty aprons for tea and lawn-tennis, fichus, capes, prettily lined satchels, etc. As the vogue of many of these items may change, I have selected for your first attempts charming little patterns, which, while effective, are easy enough to be worked, "almost in the twinkling of an eye." Ah! that is capital, is it not? What a pity all other work cannot be done in the same way!

To begin at once. Do not trouble yourself with either frame or traced pattern; merely look at the cut and reproduce it exactly on the net you have chosen. When I say net, I use the word here in a broad sense, as including any open-meshed material, such as mosquito net, black and white, hand or machine-netting gauze, grenadine, muslin, *toile Colbert*, or the new single-thread canvas, called darning canvas. This coarse fabric has square meshes formed with stiff twisted thread; sold only in cream and black. It measures about 27 in. across, and costs but 1s. 3½d. per yard. Hence, you see, you are not at all restricted as to stuff, and even now I have not named half of those that could be used. With regard to the thread, you have darning cotton, but, far better, Trafalgar thread, coarse and fine, crewels, single Berlin wool, embroidery silks, arrasene, and, of course, to follow fashion closely, you may indulge in the metallic threads, or the new gold and silver braids at 1d. per yard. Indeed, though I have not yet tried it, I should think China ribbons would be very handsome, provided they are judiciously employed according to the mesh. The size and length of the needle will necessarily answer to the fabric and kind of pattern. An ordinary blunt wool needle will be the very thing for our simple illustrations.

Just try this little meandering border (Fig. 1), darning over and under two, three, or four threads, according to the intended width. Worked in white floss silk it would be a



FIG. 1.—BORDER OR STRIPE.

tasteful finish to the hem of a bridal veil.

A tiny star gives a most delicate powdering for fichus, caps, tunics, &c.; it is composed of six darning stitches branching from one centre hole. Grouped in sevens, as in Fig. 2, it affords a heavier powdering, very suitable to aprons, chair "night-caps," and antimacassars. Perhaps before going further I had better explain to you what is meant by a "chair

night-cap." As its name implies, it is a cover to be slipped over the top of a chair and a straight-backed sofa. Sometimes it merely consists of a doubled rectangular piece tied

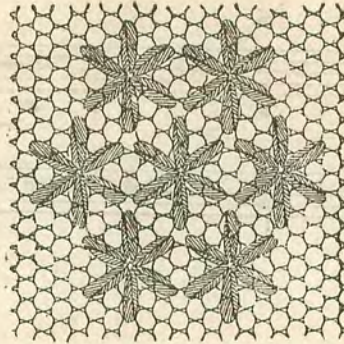


FIG. 2.—DARNED STAR.

at the sides by ribbons, but in most cases it must exactly fit the furniture; therefore you need to be very particular in first cutting out a pattern in brown paper of both the front and the back, which, when put together, generally give the impression of a tea covey. From these two pieces you shape your stuff, but stay—are you going to cut it "tight size," as upholsteresses say? That, indeed, would be a great mistake. Not only must you allow for turnings, but also for ease, and to remove it at will even for lining, when any. But, to return to our tiny star, it may be enlarged or diminished at will, and fancifully placed in various figures. In Fig. 3 it encircles the

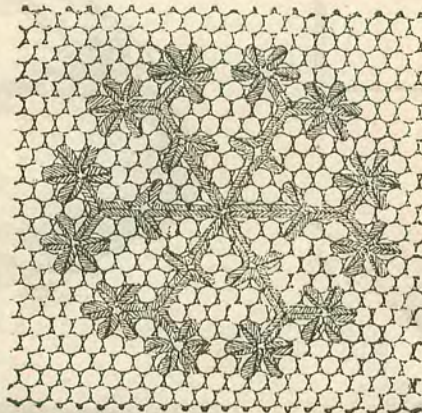


FIG. 3.—WHEEL WITH STAR TYRE.

spokes of a wheel, which are made by two rows of straight darning.

I particularly recommend you this wheel dotting, for I have been able to judge of its exquisite effect on boudoir curtains, when worked singly in pale blue, gold and soft green filoselle, and again, on other hangings, wrought with multi-coloured crewels.

Next to powdering, delicate stripes are the most pleasing, and you will find in the following diagrams five quick stitches, which may moreover be utilised as edgings. The Knot Stripe is easily executed by passing the wool, silk, &c., diagonally downwards, over several meshes from right to left, up again half way, then, after coiling round the long stitch it is continued slantwise upwards till two meshes to the left, ready to pass out and commence the next stitch.

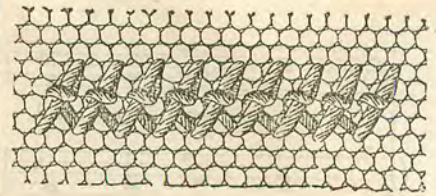


FIG. 4.—THE KNOT STRIPE.

This stripe is a variety of herringbone, made with the needle held perfectly straight,

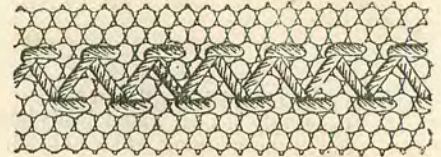


FIG. 5.—FANCY STRIPE.

while in the next, the Fishbone Stripe (Fig. 6), the needle is inserted on the bias.

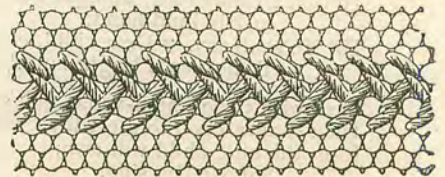


FIG. 6.—THE FISHBONE STRIPE.

The Double Cross stitch, or, as it is sometimes called, the *Point de Diable*, will surely offer no difficulty to any of our readers, being so popular for grounding. After having made the ordinary cross on four holes, instead of two, you bring the needle out between the two arms, and cover your first cross with another one, the Greek cross.



FIG. 7.—DOUBLE CROSS.

Whenever a closer kind of stitch is required, or there is a join or defect to be hidden, the feather stitch stripe (Fig. 8) will be found invaluable, either in plain or shaded colours.

Do not confound this stitch with the two other feather stitches, associated with crewel and linen embroidery. The one here shown is only intended for stripes or groundings on

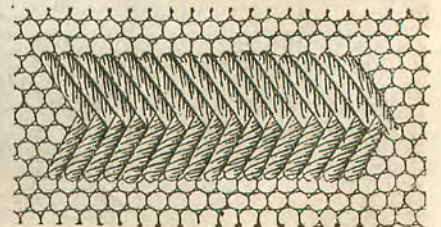


FIG. 8.—THE FEATHER STITCH STRIPE.



canvas work. It represents the barbules of a quill as well as one made of straw-plaiting.

The stitch has only two moves, viz., upwards slanting to the right over 4 threads, then downwards over the same number in the opposite direction, the needle being slipped under at the centre, so that the branches dovetail.

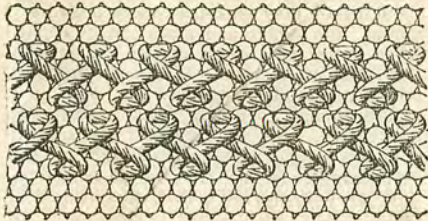


FIG. 9.—HERRINGBONE INSERTION.

The ever-useful herringbone is too well-known and clearly illustrated in Fig. 9 to need any special remarks. I will merely state that its effect is enhanced by the use of two contrasting colours. The same can be said of Fig. 10, which presents a good combination of chain-stitch and darning.

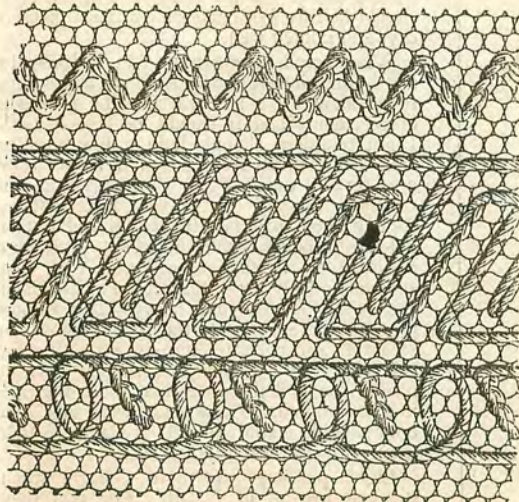


FIG. 10.—CHAIN-STITCH AND DARNING.

The chain is introduced as the vandykes, the thorns, and one side of the turrets. In making the latter be careful to bring the thread out properly, so that it does not twist at the corners. Indeed, the old tambour-stitch is very often the sole ornament of the net, and by its means regular pictures are, so to speak, painted on the surface, to be afterwards mounted as panels, blinds, etc.

But, as I told you at the beginning, almost every kind of stitch is applicable to net embroidery. Besides those already exemplified, and the satin stitch, the feston or buttonhole stitch must not be forgotten. The loose-spread one in the Whitney style, termed abroad the *point Mexicain*, has no rival for its rapidity. (See Fig. 11.)

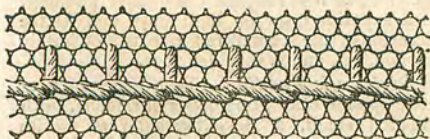


FIG. 11.—LOOSE BUTTONHOLE EDGE.

To take off the flatness of darning, and to obtain a pleasing play of light and shade, the

workers can have recourse to three different methods—two sizes of cotton, chain, and raised buttonhole stitch. Therefore, before commencing, the eyelet-hole, Fig. 12, trace the circle by rows of running stitches, which form a kind of padding over which the feston stitch is made.

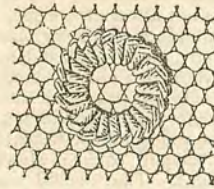


FIG. 12.—RAISED EYELET-HOLE.

PUDDINGS.

By PHILLIS BROWNE.

PUDDINGS are by many supposed to belong especially to children and young people, but there are to be found here and there in the world "grown ups" who say that they, too, are very fond of them. By this they mean that they are partial to particular puddings that have taken their fancy. There is pudding and pudding; and we may enjoy one kind and be very decidedly indifferent to another kind, and puddings are of all sorts.

It would be a very disgraceful thing if, after all the talk we have had together about cookery, the girls belonging to our cooking class were not able to make puddings. I propose, therefore, that we give a little attention to the subject, and discuss the general principles connected with their concoction.

Puddings may be rich and expensive, or they may be plain and economical; but if they are to be good and wholesome, the ingredients used in making them must be fresh and of good quality. If one of the articles used in making a pudding be in the least tainted and musty, the pudding into which it enters will be spoilt.

Especially is this the case with eggs, suet, and milk. The taste of suet that is not perfectly sweet is particularly disagreeable. The taint may seem very slight before the suet is mixed in the pudding and cooked, but if it is there at all, heat will bring it out, and it is sure to be obtrusively evident when the pudding is served. In the same way, milk that shows a very feeble disposition to turn when cold will act in a more decided manner when mixed with eggs and baked, and will curdle and spoil the pudding altogether.

As to eggs, their condition is perhaps more important than that of any thing that can be used. One bad egg introduced into a pudding would spoil the effect of a dozen new laid ones. However anxious a girl might be to mix a pudding quickly, I would advise her never to allow herself to break a number of eggs into a basin without first trying them separately in a cup. She may have bought them at the best shop in the town and paid the highest price for them, but there is an element of uncertainty about eggs that no good cook can afford to disregard.

There is one thing connected with eggs that always astonishes me very much, and that is, how few cooks trouble to remove the "speck," or thick knotted substance that lies by the side of the yolk. When the egg is turned into a cup, the speck can be taken out easily with the point of a fork, and it is very unpleasant to come into contact with it while eating. We are often told that, "in delicate cookery," the specks should be removed from

eggs. They should be removed in all cookery, for they never improve a dish, and they are always objectionable.

When there is time for it the whites and the yolks of eggs should be beaten separately, the yolks put in first and the whisked whites dashed in at the last moment before cooking the pudding. The reason of this is that white of egg can be so easily whisked into a foam, and if this can be introduced into the pudding before it has time to fall, the little air bubbles that were beaten in it, and that made the white of egg rise, will expand still further with the heat, and will lift up the pudding in the same way that they lifted up the white of egg, and so make it light.

When suet is used in making puddings it should have all the skin and fibre taken away, and be chopped till it is as fine as oatmeal. If we have a machine this can be easily done, but if not it is rather a troublesome business; nevertheless it must be well chopped, for we should never be willing that our puddings should have large lumps of fat in them. If a knife must be used in chopping suet, it should be a very sharp one; and we shall find that the best plan we can adopt is to shred the suet finely first, then turn the pieces round and chop them with the point of the knife, raising the upper part so as to make the knife a sort of lever. We must, of course, remember to sprinkle a little flour over the suet every now and then to keep it from being sticky.

Sometimes it happens that suet is objected to altogether. When this is the case, butter or, for plain puddings, sweet dripping may be substituted for it. A smaller quantity of butter than of suet will be needed, so that if we were going to use half a pound of suet we should find that six ounces of butter would be amply sufficient for our purpose.

Currants are a particularly dirty fruit. They should, therefore, always be washed before they are used. The best way of doing this is to put them into a colander, sprinkle a little flour over them, then rub them round and round for a minute or two, shaking the colander vigorously every now and then to detach the stalks and make them fall through the holes. When this is done we may pour cold water gently over them, drain them, lay them on a towel, and dry them gradually at the mouth of a cool oven or before the fire. When quite dry, spread them on a white cloth or on white paper, and look over them carefully to discover the stones if there are any. As currants must be dry when used, they should be washed as soon as they come in from the grocer, and be put into jars for use. If they have not been washed it is better to content oneself with sprinkling flour over them and rubbing them, a few at a time, between the folds of a soft cloth, rather than to wash them and to use them wet, for they will be very likely to make a pudding heavy.

Sultanas should be prepared like currants. Raisins should have all stones taken from them and be chopped small before being used. Sultanas are not nearly so full of flavour as ordinary raisins.

Candied peel should be freed from the sugar and cut into very thin strips before being used. There are three sorts of peel ordinarily used. The thick green peel is citron, the dark peel is orange, the light peel is lemon. Orange peel is not so hard and difficult to cut as lemon peel.

When fresh-orange or lemon peel is used for flavouring, it should be grated off on a coarse grater so as to leave the bitter white part of the fruit untouched. When this method is not convenient the thin yellow rind may be cut into thin strips for use. When flavouring essences are used they should be dropped into a small portion of liquid before being added to the pudding. It is not safe to drop them at once into the pudding mixture.