

JEWEL, CORAL, BULLION, AND ARABIAN EMBROIDERIES.



NEEDLEWORK as an art is no new invention of the modern decorator, as there is hardly an ancient nation whose records have come down to us that has not been distinguished for some description of embroidery. This art is found among the Egyptians before the time of Moses, and the minute description in the Bible of the work on the hangings that veiled

the Ark in the wilderness shows how much hand embroidery was appreciated by the Jews.

Even before this period the Chinese, Indian, and Persian nations were distinguished for their richly-embroidered robes, golden textures, and brilliant colours; and their kings were noted for the splendour of their dresses, embroidered with artistic and fanciful designs in which gems, pearls, and other ornaments were interwoven with gold and silver threads.

With the Oriental, in the days when he was undisturbed by Western ideas and Western dyes, colour was an absolute science, and all the work of ancient days that has been spared bears evidences of the national taste for harmonious colouring, as however bright the shades and contrasts of shade they exhibit, the colours themselves are so arranged that they never offend good taste, never bewilder or dazzle the eye, and are never more admired for the richness and costliness of the materials used than for the beauty of their design or workmanship.

This true test of art is one that should always be present to the modern embroiderer, and should be her shield against what Ruskin aptly calls "the intemperance of ornament," as we constantly find people led away by the costliness of an article, or by the expense incurred for decorating it, from the fact that the thing is ugly and inartistic; and if anyone suggests a disapproval on these grounds, they are silenced by the tone of satisfaction that its price or its ornaments are referred to.

The love of good patterns and good workmanship has certainly revived in our nation, as no one can dispute who has the *entrée* to any of the well-arranged homes that belong to the artists of the present day, where beautiful modern or ancient needlework is to be found as part of the chief adornments, and where it is treasured not for the materials used, but for its beauty of design, colour, and workmanship. Although we do not insinuate that all homes are to be decorated in the costly manner of these typical houses, we think that if our girl readers will educate themselves a little in the art of distinguishing between what is good and bad in design, and will copy good examples, they will be able by their needlework to make their homes beautiful with but little actual expense, but with the expenditure of their time and good workmanship.

In submitting to them the designs of jewel and other embroideries which we illustrate, we are showing how the ancient types of Oriental needlework can be adapted to modern requirements, and worked out with materials that are obtainable at any art shop. In these designs the colours are mostly positive, but they are broken up into small spaces, and the same richness of tone given to each, so that instead of their producing a painful and glaring design, they blend imperceptibly together, and the complicated and intricate pattern is rendered clear.

Fig. 1 is an example of jewel embroidery in combination with silk work. The design is an Oriental one, and should be traced upon a coloured background of fine cloth or rich silk—it is shown upon a light ground in order that the pattern can be more clearly seen. Each design takes, when worked full size, a square of three inches, and can be used as a bordering to a chair back, etc., by being worked in lines with a space of two inches between each. As a table-cloth design, the material used should be of dark blue or ruby silk (the soft foulard is the best), and the pattern placed as a powdering all over it—not in straight lines, but thrown upon the grounding with the stem sometimes horizontal, at others perpendicular and diagonal; in fact, the design should be thrown down upon the ground as if it were a quantity of single flowers scattered carelessly upon a table, but a certain uniformity of distance between each repetition should be observed, as without this method (which is always observed in all powderings) the unity of the whole will be sacrificed.

The colouring is as follows: Use two shades of green Oriental silk, and one shade of a dull ruby-red; and for the jewels, a pale clear green, opaque and clear amber, opaque and clear reds, clouded and clear blues, and clear terra-cottas.

Work the stems thick with raised satin-stitch for the broad parts, and plain satin-stitch for the little thin branches. Raise the thick stems by padding them with strands of silk until they stand out from the grounding, and then cover with a close and even satin-stitch. Work the stems with green silk until close to their points, and then introduce the ruby-coloured silk, thus giving to the ends the appearance of a just-bursting-forth bud. Use one shade of green for the whole of one pattern, and work alternately with the light and dark shade. In the flower part of the design use both jewels and silk, with the latter working the outer parts and between the jewels in satin-stitch.

The arrangement of the jewels should be different in every pattern—in one the dull opaque shades used, in the next all clear colours, thus amber, pale green, and terra-cotta will work in together, or two shades of amber only; in a second, deep ruby reds and dull turquoise blues; in a third two shades of blue, two of red, and a few pale yellows.

There is no limit to the variety of the colouring that can be used in this design, and as the tones of the jewels bought are very varied, the best manner of arriving at a satisfactory result is to lay the jewels out and arrange them according to fancy, and try different combinations before sewing them on. The jewels are easily sewn on, as they have holes drilled through them for that purpose.

Jewel embroidery is used for various purposes:—when worked upon coloured velvets or upon dull shades of Oriental silks it is most effective. It is also used for the ends of chair-backs, for glove and handkerchief sachets, for book-covers, and for ornamental covers to jewel and other boxes. Any one with a little neatness of execution can work this embroidery upon pieces of velvet or silk, and make herself a handsome box with its help out of any of the many wooden boxes with lids that are bought with sweets, etc.

The embroidered material is not put on to the wood without a foundation underneath, as it would then wear badly and look common; but folds of ordinary house-flannel are placed between the satin cover and the wood. Round the sides and back these are drawn quite tight, and carefully stitched down; but on

the top of the box successive layers, forming a cushion well raised in the centre and thin at the edges, are made by cutting the flannel in smaller and smaller pieces. The ornamental top is laid on this padding, its edges turned in under it, and quite made up before it is attached to the box. The ornamental top is cut with an extra piece to cover the back of the box, and with enough margin round the three sides to turn in under the lid.

A thick gold cord is sewn round every edge and corner of the box to hide the necessary stitching, and where it is necessary to use an adhesive, the following preparation is recommended as being colourless: it will not stain the material should it come through. Put a heaped-up tablespoonful of Glenfield starch in a teacup, and add sufficient cold water to make it into a thick cream free from lumps, then fill up the cup by slowly pouring in boiling water and stir well until the liquid is clear. Let it cool, and it is ready for use. Le Page's fish-gum is also a good adhesive, and is used for fixing velvet and plush to wood, and the Glenfield starch for silks and satins.

The coral and bullion embroidery which is shown in our second illustration is an old Cretan design, and is intended for working over a tablecloth (the bordering and centre being both given), or for a mantel-piece border, or the front of a work-bag. Its foundation should be of foulard silk, or rich Oriental silk, pale green, sky blue, or lemon-yellow in tone. The materials used are small coral beads, the wire bullion in gold, red, silver, pink, and bronze colours; spangles, gold beads, a few jewels, and rich Oriental working silks, bright and dark green, royal blue, and a rich red. The only two embroidery stitches worked are the Oriental and satin, and as the former goes very quickly, the embroidery, though seeming to be complicated and tedious, is far from being so.

To colour the design:—Work the thick stars in the border with light and dark green Oriental silk and in Oriental stitch, the oval-shaped part of the border with royal blue and in Oriental stitch, and the sprays chiefly with green and blue silk and an occasional red spray and in Oriental stitch. The outline of the round in the centre part of the table-cloth work in satin stitch with blue silk. Oriental stitch, as most of our girls may know, is nothing but herringbone stitch worked very closely, with its stitches overlapping so much that they form a plait.

Great variety can be given to this design by altering the ornamental centres of the stars in the border and the rounds in the centre part. In the design given, the round is worked as follows:—An opaque white jewel surrounded by 5 rounds of pink bullion in the centre, then 7 spangles secured with a gold bead in their centre, and a double row of gold-coloured bullion as a finish to the blue silk outer round. In the half-completed star—Centre—a blue jewel surrounded by spangles, which are interlaced with fine gold cord; star made with pale green silk. Corner star—Centre, a green jewel surrounded with 7 very small spangles and 3 rows of gold bullion; star made of pale green silk with extra rays of coral beads. Side star—Centre, pale pink jewel surrounded with 3 rows of deep red bullion, 3 of silver bullion, and 2 of bronze bullion; star made of 2 shades of green with coral beads sewn on in a half-circle. The ovals on the border are outlined with Royal blue silk, and their centres filled with green silk. Where the coral beads and the spangles are arranged upon the rest of the design can be seen from the illustration.

Any conventional pattern can be used for

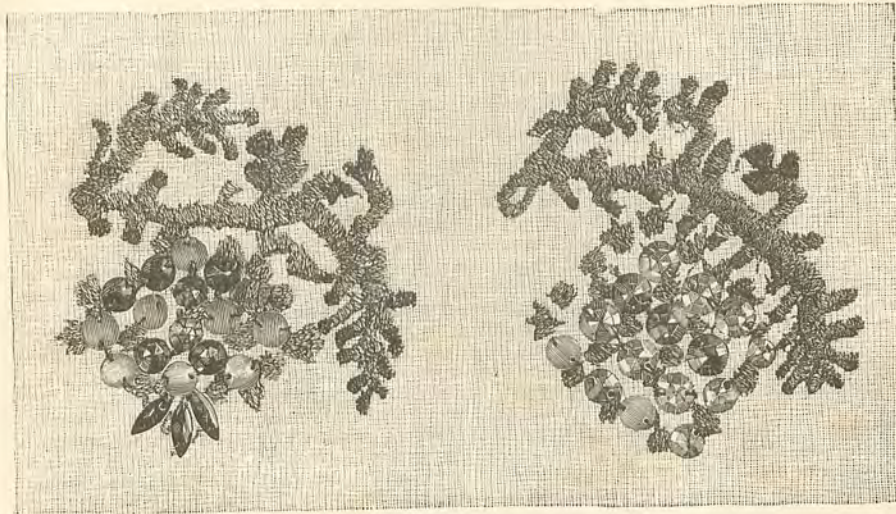


FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

this description of embroidery, and it can be altered by using gold thread as well as bullion, and the jagged pieces of coral (sold in strings) as well as the round coral bead. The design, outlined with two lines of gold thread and filled up with satin-stitch instead of Oriental, is another variety.

Arabian embroidery has only lately been introduced into England from Algiers, and is not much known. It is worked with Oriental untwisted silks upon strong white linen backgrounds, and is used for the ornamental covering to long wide sofa-cushions. It is worked in an embroidery frame, and is entirely executed with couching-stitch—the same stitch that church work is done with. Only Oriental colours are used; these are ruby-red, black, bright green, and royal blue. Any handsome

Oriental pattern is used, the peculiarity of the work being that, instead of filling up every part of the pattern, every alternate space is left unworked. Thus, if a conventional flower forms the design, and has four distinct sections from its centre to its outline, the outline section would be filled with laid stitches, the next left unworked, the third filled up, and the centre left plain. The whole design is done with this peculiarity, and it will be found upon examining Oriental patterns that it can be easily carried out. Stems and tiny leaves are filled in. One colour is used for each section of the design, and never more than three colours (not counting black) employed upon one piece of work. For the couching-stitch, the silk is laid in horizontal lines, and secured with Oriental silk laid in upright lines over it, and stitched down

with fine purse silk. The whole design must have the laid lines and the couched lines going the same way, but it is at the option of the worker to select the direction before commencing. Lines of close stitching made with the black silk are worked round the outline of every little bit of the pattern; sometimes two lines of black are worked round the larger pieces, but always one.

These cushions are made up with open sides, which show the under-cushion.

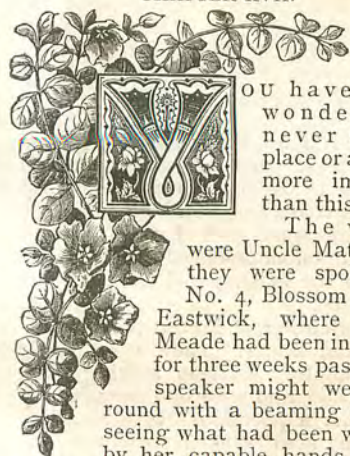
They are finished off with gold braid loops and gold buttons, the loops meeting in the centre of the open space, and there buttoning together. The manner of making up these cushions was illustrated in a recent article upon "Pillows, and How to Make Them."

B. C. SAWARD.

SACKCLOTH AND ASHES.

By RUTH LAMB, Author of "One Little Vein of Dross," "Work, Wait, Win," etc.

CHAPTER XVII.



YOU have done wonders. I never saw a place or a family more improved than this."

The words were Uncle Mat's, and they were spoken at No. 4, Blossom Street, Eastwick, where Susan Meade had been in charge for three weeks past. The speaker might well look round with a beaming face at seeing what had been wrought by her capable hands. Dirt, disorder, and rags had disappeared. The poor mother was comparatively well, and looking forward with thankfulness to taking charge of her family, and with dread to the prospect of losing Susan, who had been to her and hers a ministering angel in their trouble.

"She has brought me back from death's door," said the woman, looking gratefully at Susan. "Not that I much wanted to live for my own sake, for my life has been an awful hard one for years. But there are the children, and a mother is willing to bear a deal for their sakes."

The speaker said nothing about her husband. He was generally away seeking work, or employed at a distance; and, though the portion of wages he thought fit to send home was small in proportion to what he spent on himself, the great hope of the family was that "father would stay away a long time." There were two boys earning something; and the little with quietness was better to them all than greater plenty and the reign of terror which the presence of the father brought with it. He was clever, but intemperate, rarely kept a situation long, and visited what he called his "ill luck" on wife and children. His violent temper made the house unbearable, and his absence was regarded as the greatest possible relief to each and all. In spite of sickness and suffering,

the time Susan Meade had spent under the roof had been one of comparative bliss to all concerned.

"It will be a trial to say good-bye to you," said the mother. "I can't bear to think of to-morrow coming; but we can't keep you always"—and the tears flowed abundantly down her still pale cheeks.

"Cheer up!" said Uncle Mat. "She leaves you a different woman from what she found you. You'll pull on nicely now, and she must go home for a rest. I shall look in to-morrow morning. We are in a bit of trouble at our place," he added. "The widow woman I lodge with, Mrs. Whaite, has four children, and two of them are rather 'out of sorts,' as they say. She hardly knows what to make of them. I've not seen them myself, but I shouldn't wonder if they were beginning with measles. A few hours will tell."

He told this to Susan at the door; and before he left her, he asked if she had heard anything of her neighbours in Morton Place.

"Not a word. I should wonder at this if I did not know how hard they work and the late hours they are forced to keep. I told you they had got on at Castor and Willockson's, and seemed likely to have plenty to do. I left a month's rent, and told them before the time was out I should either be back or would write again; so they will expect me any day."

"That is all right. All the same, if you had not been going home, I would have gone round to them with a message, and so made sure of them hearing from you."

"Thank you, Mr. Millington. You think of everybody."

"Not quite," replied Uncle Mat, as, with his usual bow and smile, he walked away.

It was no smiling face that Susan saw when he came to Blossom Street the next morning. Uncle Mat would not enter the cottage, and she at once judged that something serious was amiss.

"The children have scarlet fever," he said. "Two are down, and I'm afraid the others are beginning. The mother should let them go to the hospital, but

she will not. A friend of hers parted with three in that way, and she never saw two of them again. She's a soft-hearted body is Mrs. Whaite; and she says, if one of hers were to die away from its mother, she'd never forgive herself. She wanted me to pack up and go; but I shall stand by the poor soul—taking all proper care, of course. Mrs. Whaite is not so badly off as some would be. She has a little income, and she won't lose her lodger; only she'll work herself to death, I'm afraid."

Susan's eyes glistened. Here was another chance of usefulness, and without taking second thought she said, "I will help Mrs. Whaite. I will go straight to her from here. Two are better than one, you know."

"And one like you is better than two ordinary folks; but, remember, you must count the cost in a case like this. Have you had the fever?"

"Yes, badly. Only just escaped with life. The doctors said I was seasoned against another turn, if anybody could be."

"Then come to the help of the widow and the fatherless, in God's name and for Christ's sake; and may He bless you. You know the address. I will go straight back and tell Mrs. Whaite she may expect you."

Before Susan had time to reply, Uncle Mat was gone. Then she wished she had told him that she should like to go to Morton Place first, both to make some little arrangements for her prolonged stay from home and to see the Boothroyds. There could be no meeting with them for some time if she once went to an infected house. She would manage her call somehow. Susan hastened her preparations, sent for a cab, and went straight to Morton Place. Before going to her own door, she knocked at Mrs. Boothroyd's; but, receiving no response, she tried the latch, and found it fast. This surprised her, for mother and daughter rarely went out together, especially so early in the day. Susan then entered her own house, and rapidly did what was needful, keeping the cab waiting meanwhile. When ready to leave, she made another attempt to gain