

Mrs. Seymour paused and sighed heavily.

"Do not talk any more," said Mary, "not just now. I long to hear more, but it agitates you, and we shall see much of each other now, I hope. It is indeed strange that we, who have both been so lonely, should have met under the same roof."

"My lawyer comes from a Highborough family; he knew of the Curtices here, and recommended this lodging to me. But they—the Curtices—do not know this," she added hastily. "That is, they do not know that I ever knew Captain and Mrs. Lindsay. It will seem strange to you, and I cannot, at present, explain my motive for concealing the fact from good Miss Curtice, but you must promise not to tell her what I have told you, dear. Will you promise this?"

Mary remembered Miss Curtice's warning.

"Is it possible," she said to herself, "that the poor lady is wandering in her mind?"

"I will not mention it," she answered, "not, at least, until you give me permission to do so. You look very pale now; do rest for a little. Shall I post that letter for you?"

"Thank you, Mary. That was your mother's name, dear, and your father's name was John."

"It was." Then this was no invalid's illusion. Mary's heart quickened and warmed towards the lonely woman, and she bent down and kissed her. "I will look in again this afternoon," she said.

"God bless you, my child. I thank Him that He has allowed us to meet."

When Mary had gone downstairs Mrs. Seymour fell on her knees beside her bed.

"He setteth the solitary in families!" she said. "My God, I thank Thee!"

"But she shall not know all," she added, "not yet. Not unless it pleases Thee to grant success to me in

what is as yet uncertain. If it pleases Thee to prosper me in my suit, then Mary's child—and John's," she added with a sigh—"shall share all."

Dr. Alison marvelled when he looked in early in the afternoon to see how much brighter his patient looked. She kept her own counsel as to Mary.

"I have eaten well, and a kind little neighbour has brought me flowers, you see," she said. "I feel more cheerful."

"I am glad of that. It is more than half the battle won in your case. By the way, I met Goodwin this morning; he was on his way to his chambers. I told him I feared your affairs were not looking very hopeful, and you were evidently more anxious again."

"Tell Mrs. Seymour that I have just had better news," he said. "I shall go round to Morrison Street this evening, perhaps, and tell her our latest reports."

Mary, meanwhile, could not settle to her wood-carving that day. She sent Annie across to a clean little eating-house, where for sixpence she could get a plate of good beef with vegetables. Then she put on her things and walked down Tottenham Court Road and up to Marylebone Road, and into Regent's Park. She wanted a long walk with only grass and trees about her; she needed solitude and space to think out these strange new thoughts that were within her. What could have been this poor lady's connection with her parents? She longed to hear more. But when she went upstairs Mrs. Seymour's mood seemed to have changed. She asked Mary much about her own home life and about her father and mother; but she evaded any conversation as to her own early history or the events which had led her to be alone now in London, involved apparently in a law-suit which did not appear to be promising very good results so far.

(To be concluded.)

CENTRE-PIECE EMBROIDERY.



FIG. 1.

THIS centre-piece (Fig. 1) is thirty inches square. You require a straight piece of linen on which the pattern is traced natural-size, the outlines being defined with blue. The work is done in a frame or in the hand with four shades of blue flax-thread. In Fig. 2 is shown part of the embroidery which is carried out in satin-stitch, brick-stitch, French knots and twisted-stitch. The work is completed by a hem an inch wide, and may be edged with pillow or crochet-lace.

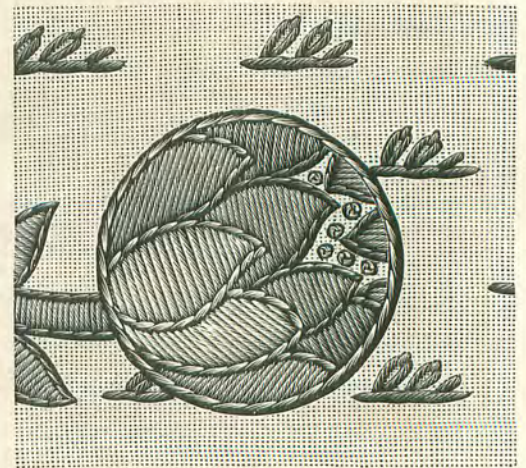


FIG. 2.—DETAIL.