

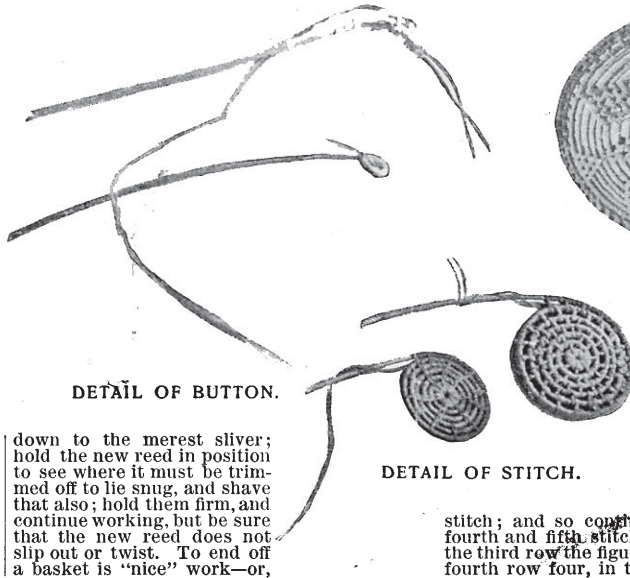


SIMPLE DESIGNS IN RAFFIA WORK.

Many would like to make the so-called Indian baskets, but think the work is too difficult. Here are a few designs simple enough for the beginner. First, one should be equipped with reeds—long, even reeds, number two is the usual size; raffia—soft, cream-white, silky-looking raffia—the very best that you can procure; tapestry needles—number twenty-three or number twenty, whichever you like; scissors; a sharp penknife and a measure. Some people use a thimble, top; and for very tight work it is necessary.

Plain Stitch. Insert the end of your reed in hot water, and soak it until you can curl it. While it is soaking get your raffia ready. Curl your softened reed-end up tightly, hold it firmly, and draw the raffia through, with the needle coming toward you, and work over and over the curled reed, going from right to left, until it is covered and makes a little "button." Still working from right to left, and holding your reed so that it coils as you go, carry your raffia over the reed,—from you, and then put the needle through the hole,—bringing the thread toward you; make one wind round the reed; take another stitch from you over the reed, and toward you back through the hole; make another wind; and so continue until you have gone round the button. This is the first row. To make the second row you wind once, and then instead of putting the needle through the hole put it under the row now formed, between the first two of those long stitches, bringing the needle toward you, as before. Continue thus: Each succeeding row made by sewing over the reed and under the row last formed. Do not skip stitches, and be sure to put your needle between instead of through the stitches of the preceding row. As your round grows larger you will sometimes have to take two stitches in one place, but be careful to keep the work flat. Be careful, also, not to draw the thread too tight. And look out that it does not twist, for twisted stitches make slovenly work. To splice the raffia—and as soon as your thread begins to wear you should take a new one: Cut off the hard end of a strand, and

thread the other end; place the new needful along the reed, and work over the clipped end for three stitches. Then hold the old thread along the reed and work on with the new one for three stitches, and then trim off the old thread and go on with the new. To splice the reed is hard at first, but soon you will not mind it. When you have nearly reached the end of your reed, trim it off to a flat point, beginning about one and one-half inches from the end and running gradually



DETAIL OF BUTTON.

DETAIL OF STITCH.

down to the merest sliver; hold the new reed in position to see where it must be trimmed off to lie snug, and shave that also; hold them firm, and continue working, but be sure that the new reed does not slip out or twist. To end off a basket is "nice" work—or,

at least it should be "nice," although it is often done carelessly or clumsily. End it on a straight line with the last stitch of the button—that long stitch which was taken just before beginning the first row. If you end anywhere else the basket will be uneven. Cut the reed off one-half inch beyond this point, and trim it (as you did when you spliced it) for one and one-half inches, down to a flat point. Work on, to this point of ending; then bind it down tight, carry the thread neatly over and under several rows, and cut it neatly on the wrong side of the basket.

Table Mat. Number five reed; white raffia. Diameter, seven and one-half inches. Five diamonds, arranged star-wise round the button, make the middle of this mat. The foundation stitches of four of these diamonds are taken through the hole of the button, and the stitch that commences the fifth diamond begins the second row. That is to say, make the first row by winding several times and taking a stitch through the button, winding again and taking another stitch, winding and taking the stitch a third and a fourth time, winding a fifth time and making the fifth stitch the foundation of the second row as

TABLE MAT.

well as of the fifth diamond. Be sure that the stitches are equally distant one from another. As you coil hold the reed loosely—about the width of its own bigness away from the preceding row. This gives an open effect. Then wind again, and take a stitch at the right of the first stitch; wind once, and take a stitch at the left of the first stitch; and so continue until the second, third, fourth and fifth stitches are so accompanied. In the third row the figures take three stitches, in the fourth row four, in the fifth row five; and these

five stitches make the broadest part of the diamond. But in this row, midway of the figures, introduce a single stitch, to form the base points of another series of diamonds. In the next row narrow the first series of diamonds to four stitches, and put two stitches in the second series of diamonds. And continue the figures until the first series are completed. In the next row—which forms the broadest part of the second series of diamonds—put one stitch through the middle of the stitch that forms the top point of the finished diamond; and in the next row put a stitch through the middle of this stitch to form the base point of another diamond. You can make your mat as large as you wish. This one ends with the completion of the second series and the four-stitch line of the third series—its finish being a row of lace stitch, and then a row of plain stitch. These mats look pretty on a polished wood table.

Large Work-Basket. Number four reed; raffia—white, shaded dark green, pale yellowish green. Diameter of bottom, six and one-half inches; of widest part, ten and one-half inches; of aperture, seven and one-half inches; of cover, eight and one-quarter inches. The bottom of this basket is commenced like the design of the table mat shown, with five diamonds (five stitches broad) round the button. The diamonds are, however, put in irregularly—the second set beginning with the eighth row, and the third set with the tenth row, which gives a pretty effect, but requires an artistic eye, as the figures are inclined to run into each other. The groundwork of the basket is white, and the diamonds use the two contrasting greens—the first three rows of the pale green, the second three rows of the deep green, and the third three rows of the pale green. As both greens are variegated, the effect is of soft, rich shading. The bottom takes seventeen rows; turn up with four rows; flare sharply with ten rows; turn up, and flare again, gently, with an inward curve; this flare takes nine rows; turn in and slope up (a slope to correspond with the first flare) for eleven rows; turn up, with a slight inward slant, for three rows. The cover takes twenty-five rows, and is made like the bottom. The ring is two and one-quarter inches in diameter, and is wound with the dark green.



LARGE WORK-BASKET.