

Needle-Work for the Home

Hand-Woven and Hand-Embroidered Articles Now Decorate the Home

FASHION'S latest decree is for handwork in the home, and every needleworker or amateur weaver is busily weaving draperies or working designs upon those already woven. The fad grew out of the knowledge that nothing was as beautiful and durable as the hand-made fabric and its hand-worked decoration. The fancy spread until now all who can afford them possess hand-woven carpets and hand-spun draperies and linen. Those who cannot afford to purchase the more expensive floor coverings save their old sheets and hosiery, and tear and cut these into long narrow strips. They sew the ends together, dye the sheet strips into red or blue or yellow, and send all the strips to some weaver of rag carpets. The cost of weaving is only thirty cents for quite a large rug, and three pounds of strips is sufficient for such a floor covering. A rag carpet of this sort is very pretty, exceedingly durable, and especially sanitary, because it may be washed easily.

One might think that hand-woven portieres were hard to make, but they are not. The open, loose mesh is very fashionable, and for decoration nothing could be more beautiful than the pattern of the sofa cushion illustrated repeated upon the border of the portieres. The pattern could be traced upon the draperies and outlined with coarse outline stitch. A bold line done with rope silk or yarn of the same thickness would be handsome, and then the rest of the design might be stencilled in with any color desired for the decoration. Stencilling is immensely popular, and very easily and quickly accomplished.

Another pretty way to work the design on portieres and side draperies for windows is to outline it with outline stitch—a neat, long backstitch which everybody knows how to do, and then darn back and forth in the foliage with the same thread. Often handsome results are obtained by shading the leaves and flower petals; using several shades of a color in the working threads. Brown and gold and red, as well as green or purple tones, lend themselves admirably to shading and are all fashionable at present.

If handsome fabrics are employed for the draperies, it is better to embroider the pattern in raised over-and-over embroidery, or satin-stitch. The bolder the work, the handsomer will it appear, and one may fill in the design at pleasure. First run a thick outline thread all over the tracery of the decoration, making long running stitches. Then pad each petal with a number of fillings, making each filling stitch extend from end to end of the leaves, and terminate just on the inner edge of the outline thread. Run several thicknesses of thread along the stems and spirals, which make this pattern so light and graceful in appearance, and also render it very easy to complete rapidly. Work with embroidery floss, crosswise over the filling threads, laying the stitches evenly, and drawing them firmly but not tightly in place. If you pull your thread tightly the design will look uneven and the fabric will be more or less puckered. The stems and spirals may be worked either in this manner or in stem stitch, which is much more rapidly accomplished, and, in a measure, resembles outline stitch. One who understands the latter will find it easy to do stem stitch, although they are not the same, and do not look alike. Where leaves are wide they are effective when the outer work is done from the outer edge to the center of the leaf, leaving a depressed line in the center which resembles the vein in a natural leaf.

Where this pattern is embroidered upon table covers, scarfs, and lambrequins, as well as sofa pillows, the work may be done in any of the styles described, or in Kensington stitch. This flat stitch is very attractive upon smaller objects, but, except when the decora-

tive pattern is big and bold—as in a lotus design—it is not effective upon large draperies.

Everybody collects sofa pillows and cushions for every variety of purpose. We want them to pile on window seats, and make cosy corners deserving of the name. Every college boy wants his den stacked up with such evidences of his popularity among his girl friends and relatives, and every college girl loves to heap pretty cushions in her den. Nobody lives who is proof against an attractive cushion.

Just now it is fashionable to make serviceable pillows of crash, which comes in charming loose meshes, and a choice of colors for such purposes. Upon this material the fashion of the day is to darn the decorations. The pattern illustrated, for instance, would be traced upon the crash, outlined with coarse silk, and then darned back and forth, with large stitches, worked in rope silk.

Denim, and heavy fabrics of a smoother surface, would have the pattern worked in either Kensington or satin-stitch. Rich pillow fabrics, such as satin, silk tapestry, and the like, would appear perfectly exquisite if the work were done in raised embroidery, working in satin-stitch over a well-padded filling. Stem stitch and Kensington would also look well upon such fabrics.

A nice stuffing for pillows is silk floss—which is not the kind used to embroider with at all, but a sort of silk waste which is fluffy and light, and much like feathers. It is said to be more hygienic than feathers. Pillow moss and pillow hair are also good to put in pillows. Cotton is used for this purpose, too, but cotton becomes packed and hard, as well as lumpy, after a time. When feathers are employed to stuff the cushions the bag must be of very thick, closely woven material, or the feathers will work through and spoil a handsome cover. Down, too, has a way of working through its coverings, and one should always put an extra and thick bag over feather and down pillows purchased in stores.

Cushions depend upon the way in which they are finished off for some of their beauty. The design given in this sheet is so decorative, although so simple, that it does not require much of a finish, and would look well without any trimming upon the pillow edge. A thick cord, repeating one of the colors used in the embroidery, would make a handsome finish around the edge of a cushion. Another fancy is to sew a narrow border of old-gold or old-silver gimpe around the edge. This is usually decorated with a tracery of ribbon run in a spiral pattern through the open meshes of the gimpe. Often a narrow braid gimpe is employed, and a pretty fashion is to sew up the cushion without any border, and to pull in the corners, making a dent in each which gives a sort of round appearance to the cushion. Sometimes tassels finish these indented corners, and tassels often finish cushion corners, anyway, when a girl feels that something belongs to the undecorated points of the pillow.

In making a cushion for a friend, first learn what room it is likely to be used in, and what colors are harmonious in that room. It is no pleasure to receive a pillow that does not look well with its surroundings. Purchase colors that will either contrast prettily with or merge into those in use upon the sofa or window seat. Where it is not possible to find out the color scheme of the cushion's prospective resting place, choose dull tints of gold, or soft tans, greens or old rose. Such hues are apt to blend well with others. Work with contrasting, but dull hues, and the result is likely to be not only lovely, but entirely harmonious anywhere.

Cushions to be used in boudoirs and bedrooms demand other things to match, such as a scarf or table cover; a piece of drapery or a dressing table scarf. One does not need to supply all these dainty articles with a pillow, but it is graceful to give them if one likes and, when the cushion is being worked for home use, it is very easy to do all the other things as well.

This design is particularly effective as a border for runners and table covers. These might be made of delicately tinted linen crash and darned, or of other kinds of linen, when the work could be done in satin-stitch, Kensington embroidery or stem-stitch. If the work is white, on white material, the embroidery should be filled in and raised, but if contrasting colors are used, flat embroidery is just as effective, and more quickly and easily accomplished.