

HINTS FOR SUMMER FANCY WORK.

BY ELEANOR CORBET.

WITH the near approach of long lazy summer days, and consequent idle lounging on hotel piazza or in cottage parlor, comes the question as to what kind of fancy work will be most in vogue this season. For an average woman, when starting out for her few weeks of change and relaxation, is almost as much concerned with the means whereby to while away her time as with the wherewithal to clothe herself; and what with needlework and knitting materials, and a good supply of reading matter, her labor in packing is materially increased, as are the number and size of her trunks. The younger ones among the pleasure seekers, have their tennis and bathing and dancing and other amusements, and are therefore little addicted to fancy work; and here and there one comes across an exceptional individual who can contentedly sit a whole day with folded hands, resting busy fingers and tired eyes, or who can take solid comfort in lying in a hammock and just dreaming away the slumberous hours. But taking them one with another, I don't think American women have a genius for loafing. There's too much nervous energy in them to allow of their being happy without at least some pretense of occupation; hence the various kinds of so-called fancy-work, the materials and designs for which constitute a regular and flourishing business in all the large cities.

Once, some twenty or thirty years ago, when the above words were spoken, they signified a home-made and on the whole, rather coarse embroidery; and O, what mountains of ridicule have been heaped by cynical members of the other sex, upon this propensity of women for "punching holes in cloth and then sewing them up again." Those who did not indulge in this kind of amusement, devoted themselves to the crocheting in thick white cotton, of big cart-wheel abominations called tidies; which would never "stay put," and were therefore the cause of much internal, if suppressed profanity in the husbands, brothers and other male belongings of the makers of said abominations. Worsteds lamp mats, hoods, etc., were also part of the fancy (?) work which occupied our grandmothers and were complacently regarded by them real achievements. But we have changed all that, and in this year of grace, 1890, we are nothing if not artistic, so we work on "art" linen, with "art" silks, after South Kensington designs, and really produce some very pretty, if rather inutile trifles.

Among the most desirable of these, as being something that can never come amiss, are the covers for sofa pillows and hammock cushions. For the summer cottage these are worked on strong art linen, in wash filoselles which are warranted not to fade. The designs are in leaves, flowers and arabesques, done in various large bold stitches which produce a good effect without necessitating any great amount of work or strain on the eyes. As these are inexpensive and easily washed, it is quite possible to have some half dozen covers for the same cushion and thus avoid the monotony of one unvarying slip of plush or silk. But for those who do not tire of seeing the same objects day after day, there is another kind of work of which the background is a figured satin-like fabric in a single tone. Over this is laid a coarse threaded canvas upon which a tapestry design is worked in cross-stitch, in silks and worsteds. When finished the canvas is drawn out, thread by thread, leaving the pattern in relief against its silk background. It will be seen that the worker must take great care not to split the canvas, or she will play havoc with her design, in trying to draw out the split threads.

A very bold and effective idea of ornamenting the ends of bureau or buffet scarfs, or for the entire cover of a cushion is the appliqueing of a large design of linen figures upon a founda-

tion of wash net, or illusion, as it is frequently called. This is done by means of narrow braid, which is sewed upon the stamped lines in the pattern, and thus serves to outline the different portions of the design, the intervening parts being cut away to show the transparent background. When intended for a sofa pillow it will be a good idea to have several under-slips of colored silk, or even silesia to set off, by contrast, the white leaves and flowers of the linen and net cover. Placed over orange, apple green or spring pink, this work shows to great advantage, and as it is very easy to do, will doubtless be much affected by dilettant summer workers.

The Roman embroidery, although not strictly new, is still attractive enough to win admiration this season. It is worked on linen sateen in the fadeless wash silks and filoselles in showy arabesque designs or in conventionalized leaves which are outlined in button-hole stitch, the spaces between cut away and partly filled in with some of the easier lace stitches. A very handsome table-square of white art linen, almost as lustrous as satin, has a border of large maple leaves, the edges outlined with gold tinsel cord, couched on with white filoselle, and the veins and other portions worked with the same silk in long and short satin stitch. Such a cover completed sells for ten dollars, but, of course, the materials for the home-worker cost less than half that sum. A slip-cover for a baby's pillow is of fine firm white linen, and has a hemstitched border, with a row of drawn work above it, while the corners are decorated with embroidered sprays of forget-me-nots, with single buds and blossoms scattered at random over the centre. These are worked in wash filoselles—blue for the flowers and shaded greens for the leaves and stems. On the bureau scarf of heavy linen, which has hemstitched ends with drawn work, there is embroidered in silk, great white daisies whose stems are tied with a true lover's knot of pink. Another, and more elaborate one, is of bolting cloth with Valenciennes border, and is embroidered with daisies all along each edge. It is lined with orange satin and has long bows of ribbon in the corners, and upon the pincushion which accompanies it. Speaking of this ever useful bit of bureau furnishing, do you know that very pretty and gay little covers are made of linen fishnet lace, darned with colored silks and finished with tiny colored tassels all around the edges? A whole scarf of this would be very charming and could be much diversified in effect being used over pongee or silesia linings of different hues; for I think one tires as much of seeing always the same ornaments as of wearing the same gown or bonnet; and it is always a mistake too, to crowd too much decoration, too many knick-knacks into one room. The Japanese are wiser than some of us, when they put away some of their artistic trifles, bringing into service but a few at a time, and changing these before the eye wearies of them.

But this is a digression from the subject in hand. For the woman who likes to achieve considerable effect at a minimum of trouble, here is a new style of sofa cushion which is exclusive with a fashionable New York shop. It is made of honey-comb canvas, stamped in bold graceful design in such a way that the outlines can be followed by darning either with wools or the beautiful wash silks. Another material offered here for hammock pillows, etc., is the lustrous silk fabric, called Hindoo cloth.

Many workers still incline to the knitting and crochet needles, and to them is offered a great variety of imported patterns, suitable for pillow-slips or for trimming underclothes. Afghans are one of the useful and ornamental household belongings which never lose their popularity; and I noted the other day a very handsome one, in which the stripes were black and embroidered in a design of fleur de lis in shaded double zephyr, illuminated with touches of twisted silk cord. These are worked in the single cross-stitch, which is regaining some of its former vogue.