

A GROUP OF SOFA-CUSHIONS

By Maude Haywood

THIS is decidedly an era of sofa-cushions. Their popularity seems ever increasing, their decorative possibilities are great, and the comfort of them is undeniable. Where they might formerly be counted by twos and threes, they can at the present time be reckoned by the dozen and the score. It is apparently almost impossible to have too many of them in order to be "in the fashion." They may be seen in every conceivable shape, size and style—good, bad and indifferent. No limit except that of personal taste is

very newest style is undoubted. Puffings are also inserted in the seams, large ribbon bows are often tacked on to one corner of the pillows, which, unless they have the fringe, are very frequently finished off quite plainly. Soft thick silk fringes are, however, employed with good effect as an edging.

Where the house-wife does not possess the requisite skill in embroidery, or where her ambition is for many cushions without much expenditure of time, it is a good plan to purchase pretty art silks with which to cover the pillows.

The foundations made of down can be bought in all sizes, at any large dry goods store for very reasonable prices. The patterns may be outlined with rope-silk and their beauty much enhanced, but in many cases this is not necessary. Almost any material may be used for sofa-cushions according to what room they are intended for; plush, velvet, silk, satin and cotton goods in their various qualities are each in their turn suitable. Mail cloth is much liked, especially for darned work, and makes a handsome background.

A PRETTY DECORATIVE DESIGN

IN all kinds of decorative work at the present time, various arrangements of floating ribbons, together with garlands of flowers or leaves, are specially favorite subjects. The first two illustrations show examples of this style and may be carried out in several different ways, although whatever method is chosen it seems essential that the coloring and general treatment should be kept rather delicate. Illustration No. 1 may be charmingly executed for a blue couch by choosing a soft gray or drab-colored ground, and making the garlands in shades of gray-green, and the ribbons in the design, as well as the bow on the corner, of blue. If well chosen, the use of these related tones will be found delightfully harmonious. The leaves should be embroidered, the ribbons may also be worked in the same way, or may be applied, or else tinted and outlined according to individual preference. Upon a cream or pale grayish blue ground, the leaves being in natural colors, the ribbons might be in graduated tones of the yellows and reds seen in autumn foliage, making the tints either very light and delicate or extremely rich in color.

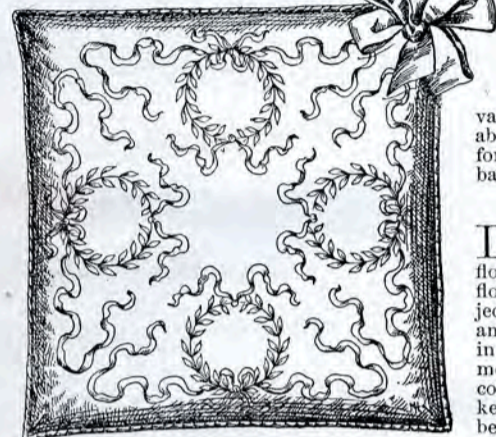
FOR TAPESTRY PAINTING

THIS cushion (Illustration No. 2) is suitable for tapestry painting as well as for embroidery. In either case the silk tapestry canvas of an ecru shade will prove a pretty ground. The blossoms will look best made of a pinkish color, and the ribbons of the favorite Gobelin blue; the leaves should be treated simply, but varied in tint, some being yellowish, others of a gray or bluish-green. The stems can be made effective by introducing browns of a sienna tone. Where a cheaper material is desired, the tapestry linen may be employed, and this will prove a most satisfactory ground for either painting or needle-work.

PRETTY FOR A MUSIC ROOM

THE cushion represented in Illustration No. 3 is suitable for use in a music room, or the musical corner of an apartment. It is designed specially for treatment with the tapestry dyes, by means of which a good effect can be gained with little labor, whereas to embroider such a subject would prove a longer and more difficult task than the majority would care to undertake. To carry this out in delicate coloring, which nine people out of ten would probably prefer, make the flowers pink, or pink and yellow, the ribbon pale blue, the lyre a light mahogany, and the other instruments of a golden yellow; graduate and vary the leaves in tone.

Nearly all these subjects in tapestry require much the same treatment as to color, certain shades of pink, blue, yellow, green and mauve of rather subdued tones being used over and over again, arranged in a slightly different manner, but giving always that peculiar tapestry effect which stamps them as imitations of the woven pieces. Where the surroundings would render a deep rich scheme of color more suitable, this design will be found readily adaptable for the purpose. Deep sombre reds, yellows and browns, gray-greens and purple-blues, with rich wine-colored shades, should then be the scale of tones chosen. Any desired color, if sufficiently light to allow of the design being painted over it, may be obtained by laying a flat wash upon the material, and allowing it to become thoroughly dry before drawing in the subject.



A PRETTY DECORATIVE DESIGN (Illus. No. 1)

put to the choice of fabrics and to the manner of decoration. Sometimes it is to be feared that the aim is apt to be for the multiplication of their number at the sacrifice of individual merit, whereas the excuse for possessing so many cushions and pillows should be that each in its way is a work of art.

Suitability should also be studied in selecting materials, remembering that they should be adapted for use, and that a cushion that is merely ornamental and too beautiful or delicate to be employed for its legitimate object, is as a matter of fact rather a meaningless affair, and therefore from the true standpoint has no right to existence, having no real value as an example of decorative art, the highest aim of which is to add beauty to that which is useful, and not to destroy its utility. In studying the history of art it will be invariably seen that meaningless decoration is a sure sign of the decadence of a national art. Some



A DESIGN FOR TAPESTRY PAINTING (Illus. No. 2)

women, in the matter of their over-elaborate or dainty cushions, strive to steer a middle course, by manufacturing for them pretty covers of cotton goods or of wash silk, which are removed only on state occasions—when, to be consistent, they really ought to be labeled: "Please do not handle!"

The best way, indisputably, is never to make a sofa-pillow that is not meant to be leaned against, and, on the same principle, not to use tinsel cord or raised appliqué work, and not to decorate them with oil painting, the only kind of painting allowable being with indelible dyes in imitation of woven tapestry. The cushions may be trimmed in various ways. The latest and most fashionable method, seen on the newly imported cushions, is to put a very full frill all around them, measuring at least six inches in depth. Whether this is pretty in the abstract is an open question, but that it is the



PRETTY FOR A MUSIC ROOM (Illus. No. 3)

SUITABLE FOR TINTING AND EMBROIDERY

THE octagonal cushion (Illustration No. 4) may be carried out effectively by means of a combination of painting and needle-work. This is, at least, one of the quickest methods, and therefore, naturally, with workers of our day, a favorite one. The large forms should be tinted in, and the outlines made with stem stitch in rope-silk. If preferred, the flowers and leaves may be applied in the requisite colors, with a couched line, the stamens and tendril forms being, however, in the stem stitch.



FOR TINTING AND EMBROIDERY (Illus. No. 4)

Suitable coloring would be of rich, subdued tones—not necessarily dark, however—in simple shades of red, blue, yellow and green.

AN EFFECTIVE ROUND CUSHION

A SOMEWHAT similar treatment is suitable also for the round cushion (Illustration No. 5). In this case the outlines are of cord, and the small leaves should be worked in satin stitch. Very little tinting is necessary, but what there is, should emphasize the color scheme of the whole. Another pretty way of carrying out this design would be to fill in the forms with a couched of heavy silk, instead of tinting them. If preferred, the whole design might be very effectively executed in outline only, with the exception of the small leaves, which look best worked in the satin stitch. The puffing, which forms the finish, is of thin silk, such as India or China silk, and may either match or form a harmonious contrast to the material used for the cushion itself.



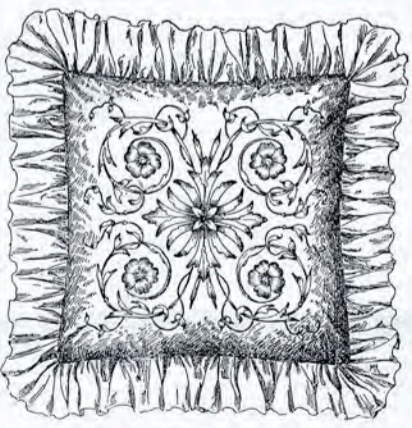
AN EFFECTIVE ROUND CUSHION (Illus. No. 5)

Very small pillows, either round or oblong in shape, are quite popular, and where they are used in numbers, it is a relief to the eye to see variety in form and size. The very prettiest and most dainty are frequently entirely home-made, in which cases the stuffing of down should be put into a strong casing and securely sewn up first. Care should be taken in making them up that the covers fit nicely. There is no reason why amateur needle-work should not be as good as professional, the chief quality required being that of neat fingers and careful execution. Really good work must not only be well finished, but should bear no marks of the handling it has undergone during the process of its manufacture.

PARTICULARLY SUITED TO EMBROIDERY

ILLUSTRATION No. 6 may be carried out in any of the above methods already described, but would look particularly well embroidered, partially filling in the design with long and short stitch. It is finished off with the fashionable deep frill. The material suggested is heavy silk or Roman satin. The color scheme is entirely a matter of individual taste and requirements. It is often very effective to make the whole in graduated tones of one color, for instance, working the design in shades of yellow and brown upon a cream or buff ground, or in blue upon a white, light blue or gray material.

Now-a-days cushions or pillows are not employed merely to lean against, but also to sit upon, or as footstools, being thrown down in twos and threes upon a divan or upon the floor. When intended for such use, they should be made of heavier, stronger materials, in order to be suitable for the rougher wear they experience. For a girl's own room, a pile of comfortable cushions before a cheerful fire in a good, old-fashioned open fireplace, will, especially toward twilight, be in themselves an invitation to a cosy half-hour's chat with a dearest friend, or to a well-earned rest in welcome solitude, when the flickering firelight tells strange stories and assumes weird shapes, the brain, meanwhile, weaving queer fancies, and all that is commonplace banished for the time. While on a summer afternoon, deep window seats with the addition of plenty of cushions form the most luxurious lounge imaginable.



PARTICULARLY SUITED TO EMBROIDERY (Illus. No. 6)

A QUAINT DRAGON DESIGN

ILLUSTRATION No. 7 shows a very quaint and original design for a cushion, which will amply repay the careful work it demands. The material is of mail cloth on which the background may be darned or left plain. The dragons are worked solidly in gold thread together with silk in various shades of red, green and yellow, arranged in most places so that the threads of gold and silk lie one against the other in alternation, the silk in this way giving the requisite local coloring. A little silver thread may be introduced in parts with excellent effect. The scales are embroidered in silk, each one being outlined with gold thread. The Japanese background lines are of cord, and a heavier cord in dull gold seems the most appropriate finish for the edge.

In working this design the expression and drawing of the dragons should be followed very carefully, for if the spirit of the whole is lost, it ceases to have any meaning or character, and what should be quaintly grotesque becomes merely ugly. An appropriate backing to this cushion might be of a decorative arrangement of the scales, shown on the dragons' bodies, worked upon silk. A very handsome and effective material for the pillow is of plush, in a soft artistic shade, and for some purposes it would be preferable to mail cloth. For use on a yacht, a pretty and suitable design may be made of dolphins, or some queer sea creatures, with waving lines in the background as a conventional suggestion of water. If the needle-woman is also an artist, and equal to the undertaking, a mermaid or water-baby subject can be chosen, in which cases the flesh



A QUAINT DRAGON DESIGN (Illus. No. 7)

should be painted, preferably in tapestry dyes, tapestry canvas being used as material.

THE COMFORTABLE DOUBLE CUSHION

THIS double cushion (Illustration No. 8) is the shape used for steamer-chairs, and in suitable materials proves an acceptable parting gift to a Europe-bound friend. An outline design in heavy white outline upon blue denim is both pretty and effective. This style of pillow will be found also very comfortable for use upon the piazza, when many would prefer to choose a handsomer material and to put more elaborate needle-work upon it, especially in cases where, as is so frequently seen, piazzas are furnished so much like dwelling rooms, where lunches, teas or other social entertainments are given. In the illustration the design is outlined with cord, and the background darned. These darned backgrounds are very popular, and with a little practice do not take so very long to execute, especially upon mail cloth, where the texture of the material enables the lines to be kept perfectly even without any trouble whatever.

Those who wish to work out the designs given on this page for themselves, should notice how that in making the large drawings of the requisite size for their cushions, in nearly every case a section only need be drawn and the rest traced from that. In No. 8, for instance, one-eighth of the lower part repeated makes the whole design, and, with a slight alteration, is adapted also for a quarter of the upper portion of the pillow. It is necessary, however, in enlarging designs in this way, to be extremely accurate, and it is usually best to get the whole design made out on paper first before transferring it. The most usual method adopted is to perforate the design, and to transfer it by means of pouncing, going over the outline with pen or fine chalk.



THE COMFORTABLE DOUBLE CUSHION (Illus. No. 8)