

graceful shawl. In fact, shawls are already now more popular than they have been for years. They certainly afford a better protection to the chest in cold weather than a mantilla; are much more economical; as the styles, though varying, are not so changeable as those of mantilla.

HINTS ON BRAIDING.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

A GREAT French authoress once observed—*“La simplicité est charmante—mais il n’y a rien de si difficile!”* We are almost inclined to make the same observation regarding the very pretty, very easy, yet difficult mode of decoration termed BRAIDING.

Nothing can be prettier, more effective, or more simple, yet there is hardly any sort of ornamental work so rarely well done. Its apparent easiness leads people to think that there is not, in braiding, as in most other things, a right way and a wrong; and, consequently, for want of asking or receiving a very few hints as to the proper mode of procedure, ladies frequently find their braiding most unsatisfactory: the braid looks jagged and uneven—sharp points become curves, greatly wider at the extremity than anywhere else—and curves lose altogether the flowing grace that ought to distinguish them.

The articles most frequently braided are sofa-cushions, ottomans, mats, smoking-caps, slippers, cigar-cases, shaving-books, and handkerchief-cases, with silk or fancy braids; and sleeves, collars, d’Oyleys, bread and cheese cloths, with white or woollen braids.

Russian braid should always be run on with a thread of the silk of which it is composed. A length of about half-a-yard should therefore be cut off to begin with, and the strands drawn out as required. The nature of this braid makes it easy to coax it into curves, in forming the pattern, and if the stitches are taken *across* the braid, (and not, as too frequently is done, along the centre) there will be little fear of its presenting the variation of width which so spoils the appearance of this sort of work. Points should always be very sharp. To effect this, draw the braid rather tightly, and take a stitch completely across it, to confine the width. Then turn the braid over, as it were, on the wrong side.

The ends of braid should always be drawn on the wrong side of the cloth.

Russian braid is the only kind that can properly be employed with an edging of gold thread, as no other sort has a flat surface and even

border. When gold thread is employed, the end should first be drawn to the wrong side, and then the stitches taken, with China silk of exactly the same shade, *not straight across*, but slanting, in the same direction as the twist of the gold thread itself, and so that the fine silk blends with it.

Two new sorts of braid have been introduced within the last year or two to the public. They are the Star and the Eugenie braids. The Star braid has the edges in minute Vandykes. The Eugenie has the appearance of Russian braid, but crimped as with a crimping machine. To preserve this crimp, yet not allow the braid to spread, is rather difficult, and we do not think the Eugenie braid will ever be very popular. The Star braid is very firm, and easy to put on; and a pretty variety of it, termed *Alliance* braid, containing two or three different colors, is just now popular.

All these are especially adapted for articles of dress; for sofa-cushions and seats nothing is either so pretty or so durable as the *Albert* braid, or cord—which, in fact, it is. It looks best in shades of orange, or blue; the greens are also pretty, and the crimson is very rich. For sofa-cushions two shades of orange Albert, laid side by side, on certain *nuances* of brown cloth, with amber trimmings, are as rich as any braiding can be. Albert braid is also the most suitable for edging velvet *applique* on cloth, as being thick and raised it forms a better edge to the thickness of the velvet.

The stitches must not be taken *through* but *across* this braid; and, as it is not so flexible as the other kinds, it will be necessary to pinch it to make it form sharp points. This braid may also be edged with gold thread, which must, however, be thicker than that used for Russian braid.

Among the purposes for which this braid is peculiarly appropriate, we must not forget to mention children’s dresses. The pink and blue tints, for trimming, white cashmere; and the white, for either of the above colors, looks truly beautiful.

Though although black is the usual accompaniment of scarlet cloth, we greatly prefer a rich Napoleon blue: it subdues the glare quite as much, without being so sombre. Trimmings, especially for sofa-cushions, should be ordered, at least, when the cloth and braid are purchased; and should, if not of the plain tint of the braid, combine *both* colors—or, in fact, all the shades used.

White cotton braid is used for the muslin sleeves now so fashionable for morning wear. The sleeves are in two forms: the Mandarin and the Bishop sleeve. The edge of the former should be finished in button-hole stitch, with embroidery cotton; and a narrow Valenciennes edging will make it perfect.

D'Oyleys and bread-cloths, marked in braiding patterns, we greatly prefer done in chain-stitch, with scarlet embroidery cotton. The borders must be worked in button-hole stitch.

The Eugenie tape—used in some embroidery

designs—is a fancy tape, nearly half an inch wide, and crimp like the braid. It makes some designs, for petticoats and such articles, very strong and durable.

We will conclude by observing that a long, fine needle is better adapted for putting on flat braids than any other.

The broad silk braids are so little used, we have said nothing about them. They are, however, extremely beautiful, especially for working aprons in bold and graceful designs. They should be run on at both edges, and the points carefully *mitred*; that is, the braid so folded, as to have a line down the centre.

Of gold braids, the Parisian is by far the purest as well as the most flexible. There is a *soutache* made of gold and silver, which looks very brilliant, and if not so lasting as pure gold braid, has the merit of not being above a third of the price.

VENITIAN POINT-LACE COLLAR.

MATERIALS.—Three yards of Italian braid, with Point-lace threads and cottons. For illustration see front of number.

The outlines of this collar are done entirely in Italian braid; the double lines which form the diamonds are connected by a series of Raleigh bars, and in the small lozenges are Mecklin wheels. All these are done in thread, No. 80. The line forming the outer edge of the collar is

finished with a row of Sorrento edging, done in No. 100 thread. The principal points of the cross are filled in with foundation stitch, and No. 70 cotton; the Mecklin wheel, in the centre, and the plain button-hole bars which connect it with the sides are done in No. 80 thread. The other crosses are worked in the same way. The Brussels lace which fills in the spars round the neck, are done in cotton No. 90.

EDGING AND INSERTION.

