ROUMANIAN WORK.

By JOSEPHIA CRANE.

The idea of Roumanian work is usually associated in the minds of people with cross-stitch, and it is true that a great deal of work correctly called by that name is done in this way with the admixture of a little gold. But many people do not love cross-stitch at all, and I can sympathise with those, for I dislike it exceedingly myself. It is to me very troublesome and interesting to execute, and I am not in love with the effect when it is done. The perpetual counting is troublesome, and I doubt whether, in spite of all efforts to introduce it into this country it will ever "catch on" to use a telling Americanism.

There is another variety of Roumanian work which is absolutely different, and to my mind very much more fascinating and artistic. It is also easy to do, and as several stitches are used, it gives plenty of scope for the exercise of individual taste. For some respects it resembles old Hungarian work, the three colours, dark blue, red, and ochre being used, and the cotton employed is cotton à repriser, D. M. C. make. There however all likeness to Hungarian work ends.

The designs for Roumanian work are different from Hungarian; the stitches are not the same, and it is done upon a dark-coloured linen, something between grey and brown. There is gold mixed with it, and it is seldom used for articles which are intended to be washed. If you choose however to use washing gold, of course it will wash, for the cottons and linens stand the water well, but I never advise any but Japanese gold being used, as that is much cheaper and answers as well. The latter will not wash, but it does not tarnish, and the linen and cottons will really last a long time even in smutty London without looking at all dirty. For hollowers, graphic and book covers, Boswellian cases, sachets for gloves, handkerchiefs and nightdresses, for tea cosies, table and mantel borders, work-bags, etc., etc., Roumanian work is very suitable.

The cottons cost but a few pence a ball, and as the linen is not dear, those who wish to execute this work will find that they can do it at a wonderfully small cost. If my readers write to Miss Baker, 5, Clifton Gardens, Chiswick, W., enclosing stamped envelope, she will forward them a price-list of articles of all kinds which have good designs on them suited for this work, and she provides all materials at very moderate prices, as well as beginning work when desired.

The blotter cover in our illustration is a very good specimen of Roumanian work. The bold design with its perfect curves and graceful lines is carried out in the three colours already named, and it is worked chiefly in a stitch called Indian filling, the method of working which will be described later on. All the petals of the conventional flower are done in this stitch. The curved scroll is done in two rows of cross-stitch worked closely, side by side, and the entire work is outlined in nearly every portion with Japanese gold of a rather coarse number, sewn down with the cotton.

As my readers may like some guide as to the using of the colours, I must tell them that though they can of course please themselves, it is better not to mix the colours about haphazard. The way in which the latter are used here may serve as some guide. The rope-stitch scroll is done in red and blue, the gold being seen in red. Two of the corners have the colours in the petals arranged thus: the centre petal yellow; a red on each side of it, and then two blue again on either side. In the other two corners the middle petal is red with one blue on each side of it, and two yellow on either side of that. The colouring thus will harmonise and please the eye, for the opposite corners are alike, and the two centre clusters of petals are also alike. If you were to do each petal indiscriminately in red or blue or yellow, whichever came first, the effect would be as bad as this is good. The smaller details of the design are worked in the colours used throughout, each part corresponding with the rest.

These three colours, however though they seem, go wonderfully well together, and the gold outline gives a richness to the whole and makes the work as beautiful as it is uncommon.

About the gold, I must not forget to tell you that this is sold in skeins, and that when you work it you should first pass the end through the large eye of a coarse tapestry needle. Push this through from the right to the wrong side of the material, then withdraw the needle and secure the gold firmly at the back with a few stitches. Then return to the right side of your work, and sew your gold down with cotton à repriser of one of the three colours. I seldom use the yellow, as the red or blue, particularly the former, look very much better. Leave about an eighth of an...
inch between each stitch, and as you are working twist the gold with your left hand. This must always be done, as if you do not do it, the gold paper curls and spaces are left showing the red cotton or silk upon which it is placed, and this is extremely ugly. I have seen work done in this gold which was quite spoilt because of carelessness in this respect. Another hint I may give you is to give the gold a slight pull, particularly when going round curves, as it should lie quite close to the cotton embroidery and perfectly flat, any unevenness or looseness being very ugly indeed. Make your stitches at equal distances, and build up the gold as you begin, by pushing the end through from the right to the wrong side when threaded into a tapestry needle.

Apropos of needles, fine tapestry or coarse crewel needles are the best to use; the cotton will not go well into the eye of an ordinary needle, and unless the latter has a large enough eye it does not answer at all. This blotter should be mounted by turning the edges over two pieces of mill-board, then lining it with silk and placing a gold cord all round it. This design, which happens to be a very perfect one, answers for several purposes besides a blotter. It makes a charming end for a piano-cover, it serves for a sachet and many other things. Borders of curtains embroidered in Romanian work and mounted on plush look very well, and the work repays mounting in this way. For example, you could embroider a centre for a sachet, and making the latter of plush or satin, lay the piece of embroidered linen on it and appliqué it with gold thread. A work-box made of plush or silk, any one of the three colours, would look very handsome with a band of Romanian work at the bottom.

In Fig. 1 you will see samples of various leaves, etc., showing how much the work can be varied. a is a leaf done in two lines of red herring-bone stitch with a centre vein and outline in gold sewn down with blue; b has a red rope-stitch outline, with long yellow transverse stitches fastened down with red, the whole being bordered with gold sewn down with blue; c is a small spray, the upper leaf of which is done in red Romanian stitch, bordered with gold, sewn down with red, the lower leaf being in red stem-stitch, outlined in gold, sewn down with blue, and red French knots being down the middle; d is a blue leaf in plate-stitch, outlined with gold, sewn down in the same colour; e is a very pretty border done thus. A deep yellow satin-stitching has two lines of red couched down in brick-stitch. This red is done in the red cotton, about four lengths being taken together, and then sewn down as you see in the illustration with yellow. Above that is a row of yellow cording-stitch, and above that again is a deep row of blue in plate-stitch. The top and bottom of the embroidered border is outlined in gold sewn down, the upper in red, the lower in blue cotton. A border such as this would look very handsome round a small table-cover. It can, of course, be varied by using the stitches in other colours, placing more lines of gold, etc. f shows another border of red and blue points done in rope-stitch with gold laid in between and sewn down in red. The circles are done in yellow, bordered with gold sewn down in blue, French knots of the same colour being placed in the centre and sides. The gold at the edge is sewn down with blue; g is a leaf in red herring-bone, or as it is sometimes called Turkish stitch. The gold is sewn down with blue; h is a round done in rope-stitch. Red, yellow, red, blue, and then a round in red cording-stitch with a centre wheel of red. The border below it is of red scallops done in simple flat-stitch—or satin-stitch as it is more often called, outlined in red sewn down with blue; i is a leaf in cording-stitch done rather far apart with a gold outline sewn down with blue. j is done in red button-hole stitch with red cording-stitch outline. k is a red palm in Romanian stitch, outlined in gold, sewn down with red, with gold French knots in the middle. l is a leaf done in gold, simply laid down, and kept in its place by red herring-bone done over it. The
knots are blue. Shows two plaited useful for borders and placing round sachets, etc. The upper plait is done in a couple of strands of blue, a couple of red, and two lines of gold plaited in three. The lower plait is thicker and done in the cotton alone. Do not mix the colours, but keep the three parts of the plait each in one colour. is a border, the lower part of which is done in Romanian stitch in blue, above it is a line of gold sewn down in red, with another line of gold above that fastened down with herring-bone stitch. Then a line of blue cotton couched down and an upper edge of cording-stitch in red. is a leaf of gold outline kept in its place with blue cording-stitch. is a circle of gold sewn down with blue, a star of the same colour being placed in the centre.

Fig. 2 shows a sunflower, which is most effective, and as it is quickly and easily worked I think many will find it a favourite design.

Take a length of blue cotton, double or single as you prefer. Bring it across all one way, just going in and out at the edge of the flower. Then cross it again in the opposite direction. Fasten the crossings with a small red stitch. All these stitches, I must remind you, that secure the cotton where it crosses must go the same way. Then make yellow French-knots in each space.

The points of the flower are worked in simple satin-stitch, yellow cotton being used, and they are all outlined with gold. A line of gold is sewn down in red cotton between the centre and the pointed petals. Sun-flowers worked in this way and placed at intervals over a cushion are very pretty, or they form capital edges for tables or mantel-borders.

Fig. 3 is a design worked altogether in red Romanian stitch, outlined in gold sewn down with blue.

Fig. 4 is a conventional spray, the flower of which is done in gold, crossed and secured with white stitches, red French knots being placed in the spaces. The whole is outlined in gold sewn down with blue, and the three top petals are done in an outline of gold and French knots.

The uppermost leaf is yellow, and done in plait-stitch, the gold outline being sewn down
in red. The open fold below the other side is done in long red stitches sewn down in yellow, and with a gold outline sewn down in blue. The lower leaf is red flat-stitch, the outline of which, like the stem of the whole spray, is done in gold sewn down in blue.

Fig. 5 is Turkish stitch. It looks like herring-bone, and so it is in a sense, only as you will see in the illustration, the needle is placed between the two last stitches and not in front of the last. A careful examination of the illustration will explain my meaning better than pages of letterpress.

Fig. 6 is rope-stitch. Form a loop as for chain-stitch, and when you do the next and succeeding stitches place the needle behind the loop, not into it.

Figs. 7 and 8 are Indian filling, the stitch in which the flower is done in the heavier parts. As it is by no means an easy stitch to learn unless you actually see it done, I have given two illustrations. In the first, Fig. 7, you will notice that a very small piece of the material is taken up by the needle at the top edge of the leaf, which is held before you lengthwise, as in illustration. Also notice that your working cotton lies to your left. Having made your loop, you place it as you see in Fig. 8. After that is done, place your cotton to your left as in Fig. 7, and go on in the same way.

Fig. 9 is basket-stitch, and I will quote here some directions for working it which are very good and clear.

"You insert the needle from left to right, pass it under, from three to six threads of the foundation, according to the stuff and the material you are using, then downwards from left to right, and over, from six to eight threads, into the stuff again from right to left; then you push it under the stuff in an upward direction and bring it out on the left in the middle of the space left between the last stitch and the top of the second."

"Bring out the needle on the left, two or six threads beyond the line your embroidery is to follow; with regard to the number of threads you take up you must be guided by the quality and stuff and material you have selected: put the needle in on the right, the same distance in advance of the line as before, and bring it out in the middle of the stitch; then passing the needle over the first stitch, put it in again, one or two threads in advance of the point where it came out, and draw it out close to where the first stitch began."

"As you have here two illustrations, it will be easy to leam how to do it.

Flat-stitch is seen in Fig. 12. This is done like feather-stitch, only the cotton is kept over instead of under the needle, and the stitch is taken in such a manner that the cotton comes at the centre. By bringing out your needle, not in the middle, but a little at one side of the last stitch, this effect is gained.

Fig. 13 shows how the crossing is fastened down.

Fig. 14 is simple flat-stitch — or satin-stitch.

Fig. 15 is cording-stitch, the way to do which is simple to work, as it for coral-stitch, only more closely together, keeping the cotton under the needle.

Fig. 16 shows how the cotton is cored down.

Fig. 17 is a fancy pattern of gold crosses, with two blue stitches instead of one.

Button-hole stitch, or honeycomb as it is sometimes called, and which you see in Fig. 1, is worked as follows: I quote from a very good authority:

"This covers the surface of the material like a network, and is one of the prettiest stitches for filling in. Begin by drawing up the needle and cotton through the material at the left-hand top corner of the space to be filled in, insert the needle in the material one-eighth of an inch above the place you have just brought it out, and bring it up again to the same place as before, forming a simple perpendicular stitch; hold the cotton under the left-hand thumb, and about one-eighth of an inch to the right take another stitch similar to the last, bringing out the point of the needle over the cotton held by the thumb, like working a button-hole stitch, and proceed then to the end of the space; then work another button-hole stitch and one below this row, proceeding from right to left, making the stitches come immediately between the stitches of the last row, and inserting the needle above the horizontal threads of those stitches, and bringing it out one-eighth of an inch below, and over the cotton held by the left-hand thumb, and continue forwards and backwards thus till the filling-in is completed.

Roumanian work has all the charm of novelty, and I am sure my readers will find it very fascinating and easy to do.

THE SAD STORY OF BLOBBS AND HIS PULLET.

In a tiny country villa lived our Blobbs, but all alone;

Never wife or chubby children this staid bachelor had known.

Yet—for hearts must cling to something—he had himself a pet.

Of a little snow-white pullet, with her wings just tipped with jet,

Daily feeding and caressing, these had won the pullet's heart;

Following her master's footsteps, seldom they were far apart;

And his love grew deeper, stronger, with the passing of each day—

"Wiser far than any woman," wicked Blobbs was wont to say.

Near by rose a wondrous structure—architects their brains had racked—

Cross between a Chinese temple and a cruet-stand, in fact.

This the pullet's dwelling; here she hardened every night;

Perched on high, became a rooster till the dawning of the light.

One sad day a Yankee peddler, glib, persuading, passing by,

Gazed at Blobbs and that poor pullet with a calculating eye.

From his wagon's deep recesses drew out, smiling wickedly,

"Johnson's Patent Hen-Persuader," then to gullible Blobbs he said:

"Here's a marvelous invention! In this box you see a nest;

Hens at once will lay an egg here, lured to do their very best.

Then behold! this sliding bottom lets the egg drop out of view,

And the hen, somewhat bewildered, lays at once egg number two!"

"T'would be useless to repeat all that this wily peddler said;

This suffices. Blobbs, unwary, by his specious tongue misled,

Bought the "Patent Hen-Persuader," set his snow-white pullet on,

Locked them both within the hen-house ere he went to town that morn.

Business then engrossed him fully, till, with num'rous cares beset,

Who can wonder that the pullet and her nest he should forget?

Nothing all day to remind him; but returning late at night,

Flashed a sudden recollection, and his cheek grew pale with fright.

Rushing madly from the station, straight he sought the hen-house door,

Called his pet in tones entreating. Ah! she'll never answer more!

Full of gloomiest forebodings, in he dashes; finds the nest

Overflowing with its treasures—yes, she's done her level best.

Fifty eggs! and near them head and tail and wings still lay,

For the poor ambitious pullet thus had laid herself away!