SKETCHES OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

AMERICAN THREAD LACE.

It is taught in our schools that fine lace is made in Europe, and that it was all made by a Belgian woman as a means of obtaining a livelihood. It is also said that after the business had been going on for many years, principally in the hands of the large capitalist and manufacturer, some of the wealthy ladies of Brussels and Paris have, within a few years, succeeded in effecting a rival of the art, as such, in the bouquet and portrait of the court family.

But few who come here are prepared to see such a display of American-made thread lace as is shown in the Women's Pavilion. And the specimens are from various makers, located at points widely distant from each other. Among others may be noticed Mrs. Rachel Stanbury, of 245 Fifth street, Jersey City, who shows the finished lace and also the common form of lap cushion used in making it. This cushion is about twelve or fourteen inches across, round, with a flat wooden bottom, the top being a firm cushion about three inches deep, upon the cover of which is the pattern intended to be made, it is first marked out. This cushion being in the lap of the weaver, she puts certain pins into the pattern, to guide and assist her in forming the work, and taking a number of little spools of thread, she interlaces them with each other and around the pins with great rapidity. Starting upon the outer edge of the cushion, she works toward herself, moving the pins forward as the work progresses, until the pins inconveniently pass her, when she "floats" the whole back to the outer edge of the cushion, and repeats the operation.

Here are six samples and card of the "Misses Flaxson, designess and manufacturers of Irish point lace, 269 Shawmut avenue, Boston." This master of fine art, and given the impression that making lace is more a matter of a "ladies amusement" than a continuous fine work is shown by the States of St. Joseph's, of San Augustine, Florida, and the samples of the Spanish work (cushion cover) by Miss Sofia Bravo, of the same plac, is curious and rich.

In the accompanying sketch is shown the cushion exhibit here, with specimen of her skill, by Josephine, of 35 Washington avenue, St. Louis, Mo. The sketch shows the position and manner of handling the spools. It will be noticed that this cushion is made round, or properly speaking, cylindrical, resting upon a neat wooden trellis of small size. The pattern may be worked continuously, and by turning the cushion as the work progresses, the position of the pins is at all times kept the same as regards the worker.

From the case and latitude is posture it allows, as it can be used either sitting or standing, this appears to have some advantage over the flat cushions; while, from its smaller size, it is easily carried about in a reticule when spending the day with a friend. But Miss Emma is not limited to a mere ornamental exhibit, but offers to give lessons in the art, and claims to be the first professional teacher in her line in this country, as she nobly informs us she "has already taught hundreds, and is ready to teach thousands more." She also says that "the art is easily learned, yet pays better than any other lady's handwork.

The cushion used by Ada Sophia Anderson, of Sweden, who is practicing the art in the Women's Pavilion, is a combination of both of those described, and the rapidity with which she handles the spool resembles a skillful piano-player running over the scale. If, as stated, two or three millions of dollars are sent abroad annually to pay for imported lace, it certainly appears to be a matter of public interest that the art should be fostered here. And on this point it is to be observed that the Belgian and French lace exhibited here claim to have a value in the aggregate of over two hundred thousand dollars— or as they express it, a million francs—and include lace valued from twelve hundred to four dollars per yard, shawls from fourteen hundred to sixty dollars each, dresses from seven thousand to twelve hundred dollars apiece, handkerchiefs from five hundred to eighty dollars, etc.

There is, certainly, no more valuable or characteristic handloom than the specimen of the artistic skill and taste of the ladies of a family, and while the spinning and weaving,