

A  
HISTORY  
OF  
HAND-MADE  
LACE  
BY  
MRS. F. NEVILL JACKSON  
AND E. JESURUM

2



A  
HISTORY  
OF  
HAND-MADE  
LACE.

DEDICATED

BY SPECIAL PERMISSION

TO

**Her Royal Highness Princess Christian,**

WHOSE FELLOW-FEELING WITH WOMEN WORKERS

HAS ALWAYS SHOWN ITSELF

IN HER KINDLY INTEREST AND TENDER SYMPATHY

WITH WOMEN'S WORK,

WHETHER OF BRAIN OR HAND.

## PREFACE.

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THE special object in writing this History of Hand-made Lace has been to sift and condense all available information in order to classify antique and modern lace specimens with regard to their origin, period, and mode of manufacture, as well as to trace the History of the rise and growth of the great lace centres.

For a complete list of Works on Lace-making we must refer to our chapter on the Literature of Lace: we are specially indebted to Mrs. Bury Palliser's "History of Lace": "The Lace Catalogue" of South Kensington Museum, revised by Alan S. Cole; Lady Layard's translation of "The Technical History of Venetian and Burano Laces"; and Felkin's "Machine-wrought Lace."

Our thanks are due to Signor Giuseppe Aldo Randegger for the "Ballade à Toile," written expressly for this work. In order to preserve to posterity the almost extinct song of the lace-makers, which had its origin in the ateliers of the sixteenth century, he visited Venice, where a few of the old workers still retain the once universal custom of singing appropriate songs as they ply the needle or twist the bobbins, and, after listening to the harmonies, he set the graceful words of Signor Eugenie Randegger to music. We wish to express our thanks to Signor Ernesto Jesurum for much valuable information regarding the hand-made laces of the present day, and for placing at our disposal a large number of specimens of antique lace, which rendered our systematic pictorial classification possible; also to the Council of the South Kensington Museum, and to Mr. A. F. Kendrick personally, together with Mr. Alfred Whitman, of the Print Department at the British Museum, for their courtesy and assistance.

EMILY JACKSON.

*July, 1900.*



Portrait of a Lady, painted by Ravesteyn (1580—1665). Taken from a photograph by Hanfstaengl.  
The ruff is trimmed with the elaborate Guipure Point Gotic of the period.

# A HISTORY OF HAND-MADE LACE.

DEALING WITH THE ORIGIN OF LACE, THE GROWTH OF THE  
GREAT LACE CENTRES, THE MODE OF MANUFACTURE, THE  
METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING AND THE CARE  
OF VARIOUS KINDS OF LACE.

BY

MRS. F. NEVILL JACKSON,

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION BY

ERNESTO JESURUM.

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ILLUSTRATED

WITH 19 PLATES, AND OVER 200 ENGRAVINGS OF LACE AND THE FASHION  
OF WEARING IT AS SHOWN IN CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS.

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LONDON: L. UPCOTT GILL, 176, STRAND, W.C.  
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, 153-157, FIFTH AVENUE.

1900.

“THERE IS STILL SOME DISTINCTION BETWEEN MACHINE-MADE AND HAND-MADE LACE. I WILL SUPPOSE THAT DISTINCTION SO FAR DONE AWAY WITH THAT, A PATTERN ONCE INVENTED, YOU CAN SPIN LACE AS FAST AS THEY NOW DO THREAD. EVERYBODY THEN MIGHT WEAR NOT ONLY LACE COLLARS, BUT LACE GOWNS. DO YOU THINK THAT, WHEN EVERYBODY COULD WEAR THEM, EVERYBODY WOULD BE PROUD OF WEARING THEM? A SPIDER MAY PERHAPS BE RATIONALLY PROUD OF HIS OWN COBWEB, EVEN THOUGH ALL THE FIELDS IN THE MORNING ARE COVERED WITH THE LIKE, FOR HE MADE IT HIMSELF; BUT SUPPOSE A MACHINE SPUN IT FOR HIM? SUPPOSE ALL THE GOSSAMER WERE NOTTINGHAM MADE? IF YOU THINK OF IT, YOU WILL FIND THE WHOLE VALUE OF LACE AS A POSSESSION DEPENDS ON THE FACT OF ITS HAVING A *BEAUTY* WHICH HAS BEEN THE REWARD OF INDUSTRY AND ATTENTION. THAT THE THING IS ITSELF A PRICE—A THING EVERYBODY CANNOT HAVE. THAT IT PROVES, BY THE LOOK OF IT, THE ABILITY OF THE MAKER; THAT IT PROVES, BY THE RARITY OF IT, THE DIGNITY OF ITS WEARER—EITHER THAT SHE HAS BEEN SO INDUSTRIOUS AS TO SAVE MONEY, WHICH CAN BUY, SAY, A PIECE OF JEWELLERY, OF GOLD TISSUE, OR OF FINE LACE—OR ELSE THAT SHE IS A NOBLE PERSON, TO WHOM HER NEIGHBOURS CONCEDE AS AN HONOUR THE PRIVILEGE OF WEARING FINER DRESS THAN THEY. IF THEY ALL CHOOSE TO HAVE LACE TOO—IF IT CEASES TO BE A PRICE, IT BECOMES, DOES IT NOT, ONLY A COBWEB? THE REAL GOOD OF A PIECE OF LACE, THEN, YOU WILL FIND, IS THAT IT SHOULD SHOW FIRST, THAT THE DESIGNER OF IT HAD A PRETTY FANCY; NEXT, THAT THE MAKER OF IT HAD FINE FINGERS; LASTLY, THAT THE WEARER OF IT HAS WORTHINESS OR DIGNITY ENOUGH TO OBTAIN WHAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN, AND COMMON SENSE ENOUGH NOT TO WEAR IT ON ALL OCCASIONS.”

RUSKIN.



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# A HISTORY OF HAND- MADE LACE.



"L'Industria," from a painting by Paul Veronese, in the Doge's Palace, Venice. Taken from a Photograph by Anderson, Rome.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE EVOLUTION OF LACE.

**O**F all the industries there is perhaps none so valuable as that of lace-making, for the cost of tools and working materials is so trifling that the profit is derived almost entirely from the manual labour expended upon it, and the scope for artistic feeling and individuality in the taste of the worker is so great that a very high value can be obtained by the humblest operator.

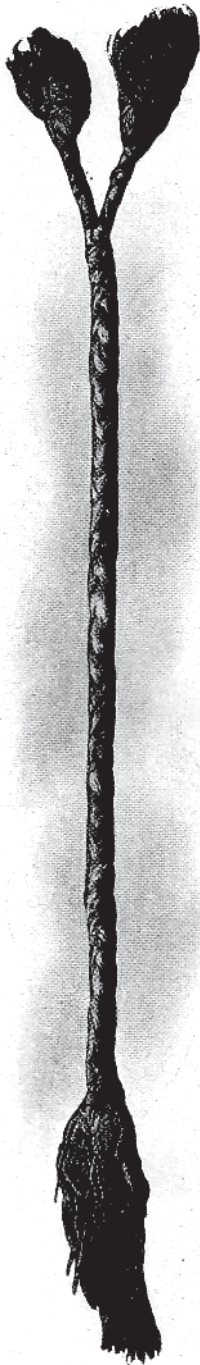
The work is not beyond the strength of the most delicate woman; family cares need not be neglected, for the lace-maker can work at home; and lastly, the work itself necessitates perfect hygienic conditions and personal cleanliness.

On the charm of lace, as beauty's aid, it is hardly necessary to dwell: all acknowledge the graceful and softening effect of filmy ruffles and delicate webs of flax thread. Never does an old lady look so charming as when she drapes her head and shoulders with old lace, and never are the charms of youth and beauty so apparent as when enhanced with lace.



Specimen of Ancient Network, the forerunner of the Lace Ground of the present day. From a Roman Cemetery in Middle Egypt.

It is the one costly wear which never vulgarises; jewels worn without judgment can be rendered offensive to good taste in their too apparent glitter, but lace in its comparatively quiet richness never obtrudes itself and is recognised in its true worth and beauty only by those whose superior taste has trained them to see its value. The



Cord or Lace made of Twisted Threads, from an Ancient Tomb at Gourmet, near Thebes, Upper Egypt.

distinction between the two costliest adornments which have ever been produced is a subtle one, and the wearer of artistic hand-made lace is marked as a woman of taste which raises her above the ordinary level, in refinement of judgment, all the world over.

Lace has been defined as the name generally applied to ornamented open-work of threads of flax, cotton, silk, gold or silver, and occasionally of hair or aloe fibre. Such threads may be either looped, plaited or twisted together in one of three ways:—

- (1). With a needle, when the work is distinctively known as Needle Point Lace.
- (2). With bobbins, when the work is known as Bobbin Lace, though sometimes inaccurately described as Pillow Lace. Needle-point, Bobbin, and Knotted Laces, such as Macramé, are all supported in the hands of the worker on a pillow, so that the term Pillow Lace conveys no distinctive meaning and should never be used except as a general term.
- (3). By machinery, when imitations of both Needle-point and Bobbin Lace patterns are produced.

The difficulty of tracing the history of lace is vastly increased by the fragility of the specimens. In public and private collections of pictures, sculpture, or pottery, a continuity of the story is possible by means of the examples left intact by the ravages of time; but with lace the delicate gold, silver, and flax threads are so perishable that only very few examples remain to show what special mode was employed in the handicraft at this or that period. Pictorial art is a rich source of information when that point is arrived at in the history of lace when portraits show the variety and style of wearing the fabric. Sculpture also lends its aid in the same way.

Some authors have stated that lace originated in the far East; but if this be the case it is strange that in those lands where the trades and customs are so conservative that one may see made to-day what was made centuries ago, from the same designs and by identical methods, lace should be conspicuous by its absence. There is little native industry of lace-making in China, perhaps the most conservative of all countries, and only the scantiest trace of a past lace industry. Lace now made by the Celestial

Where were the earliest forms of lace made?

has been taught in modern mission schools, and is an imitation of the Maltese varieties; in Japan it is the same. In Persia no lace is made, though open work in drawn thread work is occasionally to be met with. At Tinneveli and Travancore, in India, lace is made at the mission schools, but there is no special native industry.

Why, if the Orientals originated lace, should they cease to make it when Europe began? And why, moreover, should so few traces of the old industry remain where centuries roll by without affecting other trades? The arguments for the theory of the origin of lace in the far East are, we think, inadequate. It is in the West, in those countries contiguous to Europe, in Asia Minor, that the earliest forms of lace work were made.

The references in ancient manuscripts to lace or network are frequently confounded with embroidery, possibly because the two kinds of needlework were so often used together, and translators from the primitive languages, Chaldaic, Hebrew, and Arabic, did not differentiate between the two distinct varieties of needlework: embroidery, and network or lace.

In the paintings on ancient Egyptian sarcophagi, we see figures weaving garments of fine network, such as are described in Isaiah: "They that work in fine flax and they that weave networks" (xix. 9). The robes of state of royal personages in such pictures appear to be of network darned round the hem in gold, silver, and coloured silks.

Examples of elaborate netting have been found in Egyptian and Græco-Roman tombs, and mummy wrappings are ornamented with drawn work, cut work, and other open ornamentation.

Homer mentions nets of gold.

Homer mentions veils of net woven of gold. Such expressions cannot possibly be considered as referring to embroidery. Reference to them seems to establish two points:—First, that network of fine linen interwoven or embroidered with gold, whether for the ornamenting of wearing apparel or the enrichment of hangings (just as we find darned network used for curtains in the present day) were made use of from Biblical times; secondly, that lace derived its origin from netting, and not, as many imagine, from embroidery.

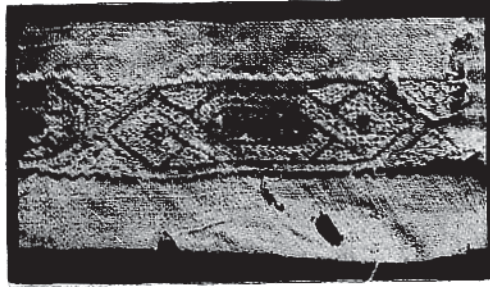
The lozenge pattern is the most ancient.

On the opening of a Scandinavian barrow near Wareham, in Dorsetshire, a small piece of gold lace was brought to light. It was of course much decayed. Its old lozenge design, however, could be distinguished. This pattern, which is the most ancient and universal, has also been found



A Tape or Braid of Twisted Threads, from a Tomb at Akhmèn, Panopolis, Upper Egypt.

depicted on pottery as trimming the coats of the ancient Danes. The borders of the coat are edged with a network pattern of the same design; possibly the knowledge of the handicraft of gold lace making had been brought to Scandinavia by some captive women torn from their Southern homes by the Vikings, for it was by such means that nations so far removed from the centres of civilization were often taught.



Saracenic Drawn Linen Work, the earliest form of Open Work Ornamentation. From a Tomb in Egypt, tenth or eleventh century B.C.

A fine example of antique gold lace was discovered in the coffin of St. Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral. The Saint had been buried in his cope and maniple, which were very beautifully embroidered; on one side of the maniple the gold lace was stitched and showed quite separate from the material which it ornamented, *but on which it had not been originally worked as embroidery.*

**The distinction between lace and embroidery.**

The Circassian and Armenian women have from the earliest times adorned the fronts and necks of their underlinen, the skirts of their dresses, and the veils which are worn on the head, with a net interwoven with threads of gold, silver, or of silk.

The Arabs also excelled in such work, and the commerce which was formerly carried on between Italy and Arabia is a matter of history; we are therefore justified in conjecturing that the Italian word *ricamo*, which signifies embroidery, is no other than the old Arabic word *rabuna*, and that the other Italian word *trime*, or lace, represents the Arabic word *targe* the evident deduction being that the Arabs distinguished between the two species of needlework, embroidery and lace, and gave to each its distinctive appellation.

In documents of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the word "fimboice"

is used in writing of fringe and lace, and the addition of "in gold," "in silver," or "in network" is frequently met with; if it had been intended to speak of embroidery proper it is obvious that, at least sometimes, mention of the material, or the colour of the material, on which the



Drawn Linen Work with Arabic inscription, from a Tomb in Upper Egypt.



embroidery was worked would have been made, as embroidery in gold, on linen, on purple, silk, or some other variety.

Anglo-Saxon gentlewomen were extremely clever in embroidery and its kindred ornamentations, and many accounts are extant of richly embroidered tunics and sarks worked by the nuns, whose lives of seclusion gave them ample opportunity for the execution of intricate needlework.

In tracing the evolution of lace, mention must be made of other early forms besides that of darned network and veils. The most important of these was the cut work, which was extensively used in the sixteenth century, and is known to have existed at a much earlier period. The commonest use made of this form of needlework was for the ornamentation of shirts and smocks.

"These shirtes," writes Philip Stubbs in 1583, in the 'Anatomie of Abuses,' "are wrought throughout with needlework of silke, and such like, and curiously stitched with open seame, and many other knacks besides, more than I can describe, in so much, I have heard of shirtes that have cost some ten shillings, some twenty, some

Cut linen was an early form of lace work.



Part of a Bag with Twisted Thread Laces for Tying. From a Tomb in Upper Egypt, third to ninth century B.C.



Band of Galloon in coloured silk and gold thread, forerunner of the Gold Lace of the present day. From an ancient Tomb at Akhmén, Panopolis, Upper Egypt.

forty, some five pounds, some twenty nobles, and (which is horrible to heare) some ten pound apece."

At first cut-work was used only for ecclesiastical purposes; and until the dissolution of the monasteries, the art of making it was looked upon as a secret belonging to the Church. The Church dignitaries did not consider it derogatory to design patterns, the great St. Dunstan himself executing several.

The transition from lace of gold, silver and silken threads to that of flax was very simple.

In the works of Dante and others we read that the early simplicity of dress had given way to extravagance and luxury, and many rich people impoverished themselves by purchasing scarves, sashes, mantles, coverlets, cushions of gold brocade embroidered with pearls and other gems, and veils and trimmings of lace made with spun gold, of immoderate richness. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gold thread was subject to heavy duties and severe Sumptuary regulations, so much so, that about the year 1460 the lace-workers, finding the demand for their work so much diminished that the production of gold and silver lace was no longer profitable at home, many of them emigrated, taking their industry to other countries; others continued their work in Italy, substituting

*flax threads* for the costly gold and silver.

The transition from gold and silver lace to that of flax thread.

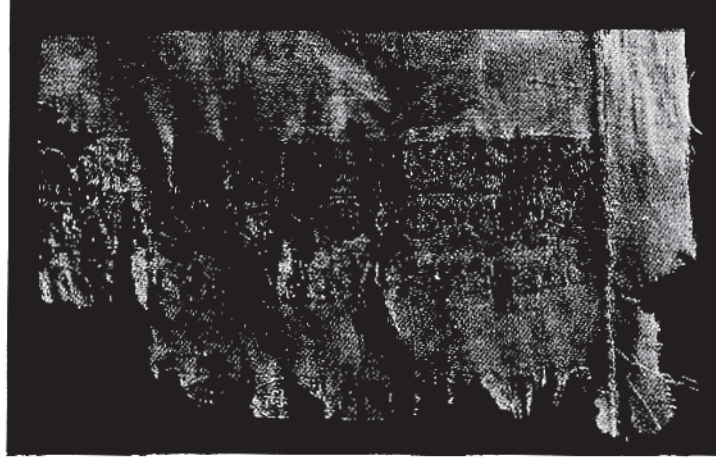


Example of Saracenic Drawn Linen, the earliest form of Open Work Ornamentation. From a Tomb in Egypt, tenth or eleventh century B.C.

It is beyond doubt that the designs of the laces made with spun gold were towards the end of the sixteenth century reproduced in linen thread, and it is no wonder that when the increased facility in working with flax was discovered, and beautiful and ingenious stitches were introduced, the lighter and cheaper material eventually remained master of the field.

The Sumptuary laws have in every lace-making country had such an important influence on the evolution and development of lace, that it

Sumptuary laws have hindered the lace-making industry.



Portion of a Linen Garment, ornamented with Drawn Work, over-sewn and embroidered with Kufic inscriptions. Saracenic, ninth or tenth century B.C.

is impossible to sketch the history of lace without first taking a cursory glance at some of the edicts which in all ages have retarded, hampered, and occasionally threatened to altogether extinguish the lace-making industry.

In France the first Sumptuary law is dated 608. It was made by Charles the Great for the regulation of high-priced cloth used for the dress of the period. Unlike many of his predecessors, the King himself showed an example of extreme simplicity while endeavouring to restrain luxury in others.

Louis le Débonnaire, Philip Augustus, and Louis VIII., also tried to restrain by edict the luxury which increased with the development of the industries. Philip



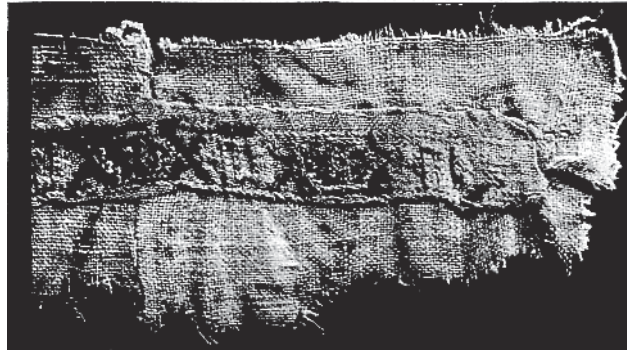
Christian Coptic example of Drawn Linen, the flax warps forming a lace-like ground for needlework stitches. Sixth century.

Augustus made himself ridiculous by the exactness of his orders. He not only legislated with regard to dress but also to attendants, and even the number of the dishes to be served at table.

"No burgess," says this unconscious humourist, "must have a carriage, nor be dressed in green nor grey, nor must he wear ermine. No burgess must wear gold nor precious stones, neither gold nor silver crowns. No lady, if not a lady of the Manor, must have more than two dresses a year. It is forbidden to a burgess to spend more than six francs a yard on any material, and no more than eight francs per yard must be spent by ladies of superior rank. The penalty for infringing these laws being forfeiture of the forbidden article for a year, from Easter to Easter."

Sumptuary laws varied curiously according to the monarch by whom they were issued. Louis

XI. would not allow those without titles to have the luxury of adorning their tables with pieces of gold plate, and goldsmiths had to ask his permission before executing any order except for the use of the Church. Charles VIII. would allow silk dresses, but no gold or silver cloth.



Saracenic example of Drawn and Embroidered Linen. From a Tomb in Egypt, tenth or eleventh century B.C.

Francis I., Henri

II., Charles II., and Henri III., each forbade articles of luxury except for himself, the members of his family, and his courtiers.

René Benoit, one of the confessors of Henri IV., used all his influence to stop luxury in the dress of his contemporaries, and the effect was disastrous on the Guipure and thread-work industry of the time.

During the reign of Charles IX. protest was made against the usurpation by common people "of the nobility's privilege of riding on horseback," and rich dressing was again allowed. Whatever the law of the period, the result was generally the same: a return to the old abuses immediately on the removal of the edict, so that arrested development was the effect on the lace and kindred handicrafts; and whereas one would expect a story of continuous prosperity in so beautiful a craft as lace-making, which appeals to everyone on account of the small initial outlay, the simplicity of the tools required, and the scope for high artistic skill, we are continually finding arrested development and check.

Even Venice, the home of lace, was not exempt from legislation which hampered the evolution of lace.

As early as 1299 the Great Council forbade any trimming which cost more than five lire an ell. A few years later ladies were forbidden the use of jewellery beyond a

Even Venetian lace-making was hampered by legislation.

prescribed limit, and the wearing of any coif in gold or silver. Children under twelve were forbidden to wear gold, silver, or pearls, but from twelve to twenty they were permitted girdles worth not more than twenty-five ducats.

Another decree in 1348 seems strange enough: morning dresses of dark green or black were forbidden.

In the 15th century the Pope permitted lace to be worn.

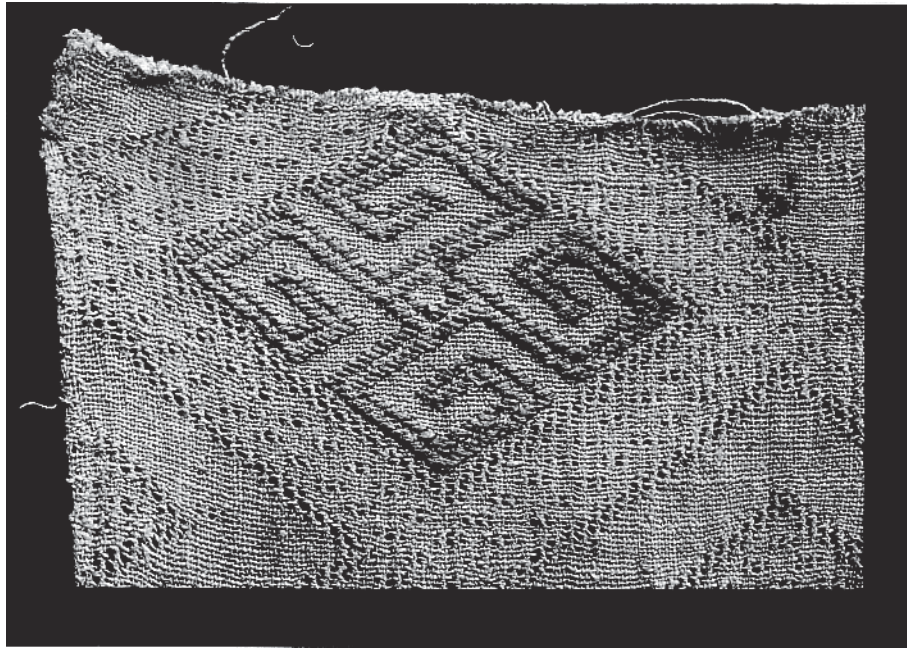
In 1437, after another vexatious edict, the ladies took the matter into their own hands, and appealed to the Pope, who gave his permission for the wearing of the gauds.

These laws of the Venetian Senate were not made to be disregarded, as were many of those in England and France.

The Avogadori del Comune having seen on Carnival Sunday the wife of Zorzi di Bertucci dressed in white silk contrary to the law, "did decree that the honourable lady and the dressmaker should be condemned according to the edict of 1470." Again, during the festivity for the crowning of Andrea Gritti, the niece of the Doge, the wife of one of the Pisani having presented herself at the Palace dressed in a fashion forbidden by the decree of the Doge, *she was sent back*.

In 1476 a serious blow was aimed at the lace trade, for a law was made forbidding the use of "silver and embroidery on any fabric and the Punto in Aria of linen threads made with a needle, or gold and silver threads."

Then in 1504 a law was made to check too frequent changes in fashion. "Among so many expenses, superfluous and useless, the women in this city



German Example of Drawn Linen Work, executed in the fourteenth century, when this early form of Open Ornamentation was soon to be superseded by the later forms of Lace-work.

show a vain-glorious pomp which is most ruinous for the nobles and burgesses: that of changing so often the shape of dresses."

In France, where the Sumptuary laws were carried out in a much more half-hearted manner, the futility of legislation is constantly seen. During the reign of Louis XIV., the lace-wearing period *par excellence*, there had never been so many edicts against the use of personal luxuries; nearly a dozen ordinances, especially against lace-wearing, were published. The incongruity of the proclamations of the King against lace-trimmed garments, when at the same time he was fostering, subsidising, and encouraging Royal lace manufactures, simply shows that a Royal whim was more powerful in those days than logic. Discontent of the masses was eventually to effect what Royal edicts could not achieve, and even while still more lace than ever before was made and was used by every class, when, on account of the universal use of costly lace, it was impossible to know the burgher from the noblemen, the Churchman from the cavalier, the seeds of decay were sown, and a spirit of reaction and of economy grew which was to culminate in the *citoyen* period and the French Revolution.

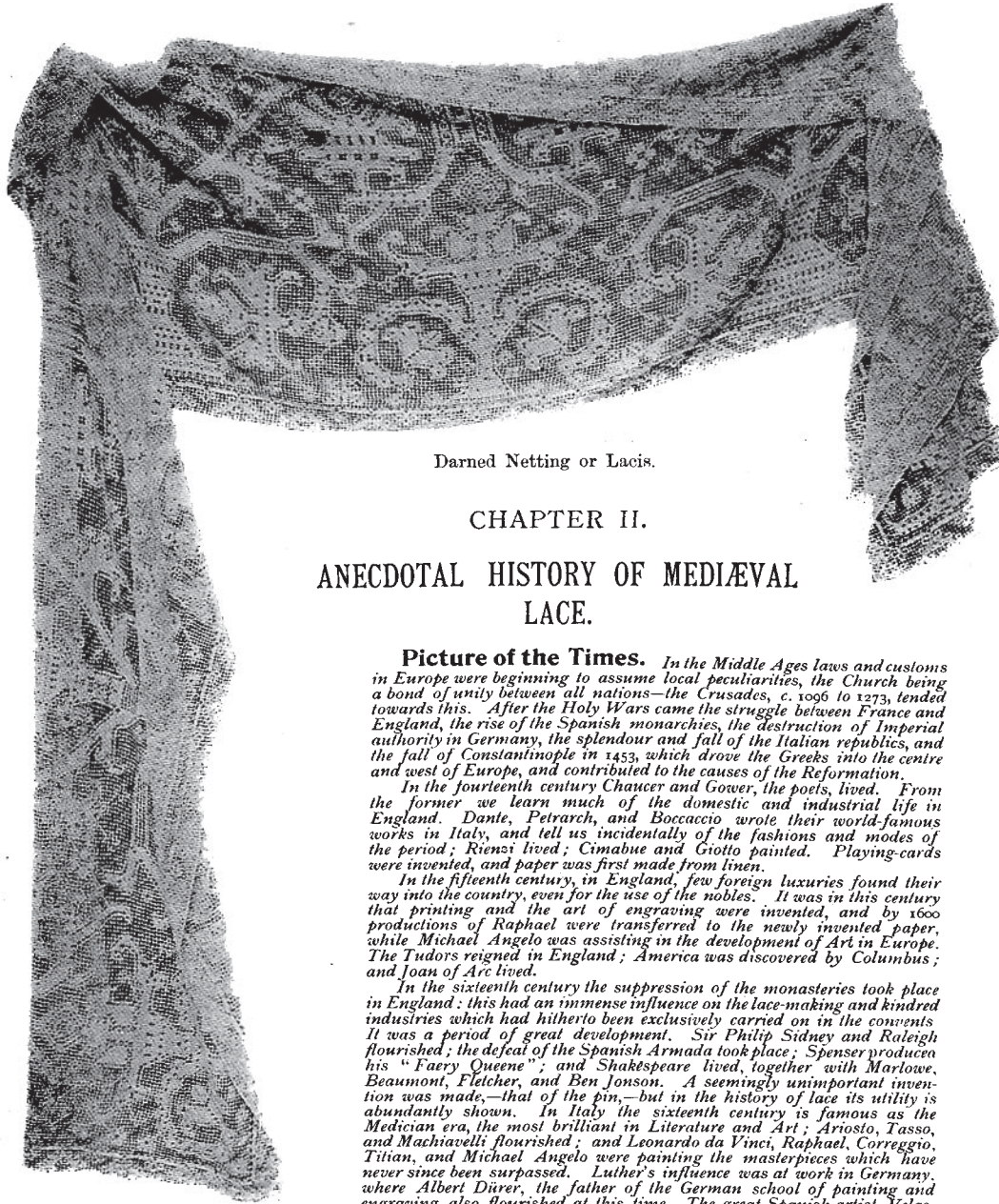
Modest designs, less florid and costly workmanship, were demanded by the Court of Marie Antoinette, and the art of lace-making at its best died amongst the muslin folds in which the beautiful Queen clothed herself as a concession to the spirit of an age which demanded simplicity.

Simplicity and the French Revolution were fatal to fine lace.

Colbert, the minister of Louis XIV., in establishing the home lace factories, foresaw the increase to the exchequer which the huge sums hitherto spent on foreign laces would entail, if French lace could be made to equal the Venetian fabric. The edicts checking the importation of foreign laces still further assisted his scheme. The result showed that the brilliant financier was right; his *mot* that "Fashion should be to France what the mines of Peru were to Spain" has come true to the letter, and the great Napoleon saw no better way of improving the finances of the country than by endeavouring to reinstate the dying lace factories. Lace may be thought by some to be only a simple, graceful, womanish fabric, unlikely to affect the finances of a great nation; but it has done much for France. She holds to-day a different position from that which she held in the days of Le Grand Monarque, but, thanks to Louis' clever minister, she still retains her position as the wardrobe of the world.

It will be useful to remember that, roughly speaking, lace, using the term as we now understand it, was first made and worn in the sixteenth century; that its development was rapid, the splendid skill and delicacy of artistic design which characterised all the work of the Renaissance period tending to raise it to that lofty pinnacle of beauty which it reached in the seventeenth century; that in the very climax of its perfection it began to decline, and by the end of the eighteenth century the art of lace-making was dead. It is no exaggeration to affirm that the sharp blade of the guillotine which severed the head of the beautiful Marie Antoinette, also severed the thread which wove the masterpieces of lace, only a few of which remain to us in the present day to show how incomparably beautiful was the Renaissance lace, for such productions ceased abruptly at the end of the eighteenth century.

The finest lace was made in the 17th century.



Darned Netting or Lacia.

## CHAPTER II. ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF MEDIÆVAL LACE.

**Picture of the Times.** *In the Middle Ages laws and customs in Europe were beginning to assume local peculiarities, the Church being a bond of unity between all nations—the Crusades, c. 1096 to 1273, tended towards this. After the Holy Wars came the struggle between France and England, the rise of the Spanish monarchies, the destruction of Imperial authority in Germany, the splendour and fall of the Italian republics, and the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which drove the Greeks into the centre and west of Europe, and contributed to the causes of the Reformation.*

*In the fourteenth century Chaucer and Gower, the poets, lived. From the former we learn much of the domestic and industrial life in England. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio wrote their world-famous works in Italy, and tell us incidentally of the fashions and modes of the period; Rienzi lived; Cimabue and Giotto painted. Playing-cards were invented, and paper was first made from linen.*

*In the fifteenth century, in England, few foreign luxuries found their way into the country, even for the use of the nobles. It was in this century that printing and the art of engraving were invented, and by 1600 productions of Raphael were transferred to the newly invented paper, while Michael Angelo was assisting in the development of Art in Europe. The Tudors reigned in England; America was discovered by Columbus; and Joan of Arc lived.*

*In the sixteenth century the suppression of the monasteries took place in England: this had an immense influence on the lace-making and kindred industries which had hitherto been exclusively carried on in the convents. It was a period of great development. Sir Philip Sidney and Raleigh flourished; the defeat of the Spanish Armada took place; Spenser produced his "Faery Queene"; and Shakespeare lived, together with Marlowe, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson. A seemingly unimportant invention was made,—that of the pin,—but in the history of lace its utility is abundantly shown. In Italy the sixteenth century is famous as the Medicæan era, the most brilliant in Literature and Art; Ariosto, Tasso, and Machiavelli flourished; and Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Correggio, Titian, and Michael Angelo were painting the masterpieces which have never since been surpassed. Luther's influence was at work in Germany, where Albert Dürer, the father of the German school of painting and engraving, also flourished at this time. The great Spanish artist, Velasquez, to whom we are indebted for so many detail portraits showing the lace of the period, and the mode of wearing it, belongs to this century.*

**I**T is a significant fact that the two widely-separated countries of Europe where pictorial art flourished and attained a high perfection—North Italy and Flanders—were precisely the countries where lace-making and lace-wearing achieved the highest standard in mediæval times. This is perhaps hardly to



Queen Elizabeth, in ruff trimmed with the most elaborate Thread Guipure of the period; from an Engraving by George Vertue (1684-1756). The linen cuffs are turned over and edged with the same.



be wondered at, as we know that from the very beginning of the sturdy Flemish school of painters, a close connection was kept up with the great art centres of Italy. Venetian art and handiwork inspired the equally thriving,



Reticella, sixteenth century.

industrious, and artistic inhabitants of the Low Country, and at the end of the sixteenth century pattern books for laces and needle-point were issued simultaneously in the two places, and were identical in general character.

The history of hand-made lace, in the sense of the term in which we now use it, begins with the sixteenth century. Before that time there are no traces that we know of in the costume pictures of the period, and though this or that fantastic tale may be believed with regard to its earlier origin, and certain forms of lace work may be studied with profit as bearing on the evolution of lace, it is impossible to commence an authentic history at an earlier date.

The history of hand-made lace begins in the 16th century.

The first detailed portraits in which lace is painted are those belonging to the early Florentine school; this points to the fact that not only was lace first made in Italy, but also first worn there. One of the earliest French portraits with lace in it is that of Henri II., painted at Versailles.

From that time the subjects of so many portraits have been adorned with lace, that the study of its variations in design, workmanship and mode of wearing is comparatively easy; help is constantly received also from contemporary literature, inventories and wardrobe accounts, and the Sumptuary laws of the different countries give considerable insight into the matter.

Documents still exist which prove that lace properly so called was made in Italy before 1500; one belonging to the Cathedral of Ferrara is especially interesting, as it fixes the price to be paid for the mending and ironing of the lace trimmings on the priests' vestments.

Double evidence of the existence of lace, and, moreover, of special makes and designs, is afforded in the records of the Sforza family. In 1493, on the 12th of September, the division took place of the property of the sisters Angela and Heppolita Sforza, Viconti of Milan; the old castle belonging to the family is still to be seen in the Province of Venice.

Amongst the vast amount of valuable jewels and other personal property in the inventory are chronicled borders, veils, embroidery of fine network (*Ricamo a reticella*), points (*Punti*), pieces of fine network



Sleeve trimmed with the Cutwork of the fifteenth century. From "Lucretia," by Bassano; painted about 1462. Photograph by Anderson, Rome.

Inventory belonging to the Sforza family first mentions varying kinds of Lace.

(*Lavoro a groppi*), bone lace (*Lavoro ad ossa*), and twelve spindle points (*Punti dei dodisi fusi*). All these names are to be found in books of lace designs of the period.

No wonder that several different countries, notably France, Spain, and Flanders, claim the honour of introducing so beautiful a fabric as lace to the world,



Béatrix d'Este-Sforza, Duchess of Milan, 1490. From the picture by Leonardo da Vinci, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. From her inventory of household effects we first learn the names and varieties of laces known in the fifteenth century. Photograph by Anderson, Rome.

and it is in the history of lace in the Middle Ages that the arguments used in this controversy must be touched upon. We have shown that many peoples have executed networks and twisted threads of gold, silver, and silk; but in its more modern guise, Italy has certainly led the world with regard to needle-point lace. It

is astonishing that notwithstanding the inventory of the Sisters Sforza and other documents, besides the Italian pattern books of the fifteenth century, one writer asserts that it was under Francis I. in 1544 that "Women and the dignitaries of the Church began to adorn their garments and vestments with a kind of lace which was so coarsely worked that it showed the art was in its infancy."

Again, several have attributed the invention of lace to Barbara Uttmann; perhaps the words on her tomb in the churchyard of Annaberg gave rise to the idea: "Here lies Barbara Uttmann, died 14th January, 1575, whose invention of lace in the year 1561 made her the benefactress of the Hartz Mountains."



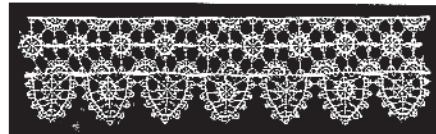
Catherine de' Medici, by Jean Clouet (1541). It was this Queen who brought with her from Italy the fashion of wearing the high collar still named after her.



Charles of Savoy, painted in 1582, in the Lace-edged Ruff of the period.

It is probable that Frau Uttmann introduced bobbin lace into Germany, having learned the art from a native of Brabant, a Protestant, whom the cruelties of the Duke of Alva had made an exile. That she "invented" lace is a misleading assertion. Barbara was born in 1514 at Utterlein, where her father had work in connection with the mines

of the Saxon Hartz Mountains. She married Christopher Uttmann, a rich mining overseer. The mountain girls in the neighbourhood of her home had long made a kind of network for the miners to wear over their hair. Barbara taught them to improve this rough tricot, and they succeeded in producing a kind of plain lace ground. Aid was procured from Flanders, and a regular workshop set up at Annaberg under the direction of Barbara Uttmann, who invented various simple patterns. The industry spread with great rapidity, and at one time no fewer



Needle-point Guipure Lace (Point Gotico).

than 30,000 persons were employed in it. At the age of sixty-one Barbara Uttmann died, leaving sixty-five children and grandchildren, thus realising a prophecy that St. Anne would so bless the one good Chatelaine of St. Annaberg that her descendants would equal in number the bobbins of the first lace she had made.

Flanders bases her claim to priority in making bobbin lace on a series of six woodcuts executed in 1580 by Martin de Vos, De Brugn, and Van Londerseel, which represent occupations during the various periods of life; amongst these a young woman is shown seated with a lace cushion on her lap, whence it is argued that lace was already common in Flanders at that time.

The oldest lace pattern book known is now in the library of the Arsenal in Venice.

In Venice, as early as 1557, a book was published giving patterns for bobbin laces. In the course of some interesting remarks entitled "Le Pompe," the author explains that this lace "is a work not only beautiful, but useful and needful." This volume is now to be seen in the library of the Arsenal in Venice, and is the oldest known lace pattern book. It is likely, however, that it was not the first brought out, as no instructions are given in it as to how the lace is made, nor is there any description of the materials and implements required; this makes it probable that the author, whose name is unknown, was not the inventor of pillow lace, and that the handicraft was already well known in Venice. Evidence, therefore, appears to favour the theory that to Italy belongs the honour of introducing bobbin as well as needle-point lace.



Christian IV., King of Denmark, 1577—1648; by Peeter Isaakoz. This portrait shows how important a feature was lace in the rich dress of the period.

In England the humble endeavours of the peasants in mediæval times were not assisted by schools of design, nor were the peasant lace-makers of Germany, Sweden, Russia, and Spain encouraged to produce fabrics of artistic pattern. When Barbara Uttmann instructed the country folk of the Hartz Mountains in the sixteenth century, a sort of purling and network was the kind produced; and German laces have never acquired artistic reputation.

In 1246 Pope Innocent IV. ordered vestments to be sent to Rome for his use, despatching an official letter to an English abbot to procure the *opus Anglicanum* or nuns' work. Lace is still called nuns' work in outlying districts in England and the Continent.

But it was not only in convents that the art of lace-making was taught. The great ladies—heads of households—prided themselves on the number of young girls who came to their castles or suzerain manors, and, taking up a temporary residence, were taught lace-making, embroidery, weaving, and matters in connection with the

still-room. During the hours while the needles were plied, singing was encouraged, and certain *ballades à toiles* were composed especially for the use of the workers. Such ballads are still used in Italy (one specially composed for this book is given in the chapter on "The Literature of Lace").

Special songs were sung by the lace makers as they worked.



Elizabeth of Bourbon, painted about 1620, in the Lace-edged Ruff of the period.

Many interesting historical scenes have taken place in the working rooms of royal ladies. Wolsey found Queen Catherine at work amongst her women when he went to her at Bridewell to speak of her divorce. The unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots found solace in plying the needle during her lonely hours of captivity, and in many of her letters demands are made for silk and gold thread. She had learnt the art from her governess, Lady Fleming, and had been perfected by Catherine de' Medicis, who was a famous needlewoman.

M. de Barante, the historian of the Duke of Burgundy, writes that Charles the Bold

in 1476 lost his laces at one of the battles in which he was engaged. It is probable that these laces were of the gold or silver gimp variety, as fragments of such kinds are among his relics. Jacob Van Eyck, the Flemish poet, sang the praises of lace-making in the long-winded Latin verse of the day; they end with this somewhat involved period:—"Go, ye men, inflamed with the desire of the Golden Fleece, endure so many dangers by land, so many at sea, whilst the woman, remaining in her Brabantine home, prepares Phrygian fleeces by peaceful assiduity." It was the

Refugees from Flanders taught bobbin lace-making to the whole of Northern Europe.

lace manufacture alone which saved Flanders from utter ruin when the country was deserted by so many handicraftsmen, who fled from the awful religious persecution. Owing to the exodus at this time, every country of Northern Europe learned the art of bobbin lace-making from Flanders.

The manufacture of that most beautiful of laces, Brussels, commenced in mediæval times, judging from the patterns of the earliest known fragments, which are to be found in the churches of Brabant; these pieces formed gifts of munificent noblemen, who did much to promote the industry of their country by their patronage. Linen embroideries, darned netting, knotted and plaited laces were made in the convents all over Europe at this period, and were chiefly used for Church purposes. Sometimes the convent rules were considerably relaxed for the benefit of the lace-workers, and mediæval human nature seems to have been very much like that existing at the present day, as an old journal of the kloster at the convent of Wadstena, Sweden, shows. Mrs. Bury Palliser thus relates the incident:

“The rules of the convent forbade the nuns to touch either gold or silver, save in their netting and embroidery.

“One of the nuns writes to her lover without the walls—‘I wish I could send you a netted cap that I myself have made, but when Sister Karin Andersdotter saw that I had mingled gold and silver thread in it she said, “You must surely have some beloved.”’

““I do not think so,” I answered, “here in the kloster you may easily see if any of the brethren has such a cap, and I dare not send it by anyone to a sweetheart outside the walls.”

““You intend it for Axel Nelson,” answered Sister Karin.

““It is not for you to talk,” I replied, “I have seen you net a long hood and talk and prattle yourself with Brother Bertol.””

It was not until the sixteenth century that lace-making became a lay industry. In Italy and Spain, where the influence of the Church was paramount, point and bobbin lace work remained confined to the religious orders until long after. Gradually the nuns taught the art to their lay pupils, but it spread but slowly.

The kinds of lace made in mediæval times.

The kinds of lace work made in mediæval times were linen embroidery and reticella, darned netting on knotted net, darned netting on twisted net, drawn work, macramé plaited laces, cut work and embroidery. (For full description of each see “Dictionary of Lace.”)

Cut-work.

Cut-work comprised a wide variety of decoration. The linen edges were sometimes worked in close embroidery, the threads occasionally drawn and afterwards worked with the needle in various forms; or the ends of the cloth were, perhaps, unravelled as if for a fringe and then plaited in a geometric pattern. The grave clothes of St. Cuthbert were ornamented in this manner. “There has been,” says one who witnessed his disinterment, “put over him a sheet; this sheet had a fringe of linen thread of a finger’s length upon its sides.”

Punto Applicato.

Cut-work is sometimes made with fine lawn, called quintain, which is fastened to a background of interlacing threads, the lawn being cut away when the pattern has been stitched on. This variety is occasionally called *Punto Applicato*.

Another form of this work was made without the opaque lawn, and was simply a network darned upon with counted stitches, *Point Conté*. This work is also called *Lacis*. Point Conté  
or Lacis.

Lace, or *passemens*, the general term for the gimps and braids, together with the laces, like those with which in modern times we unite two parts of a dress, were made of silk, worsted, or thread. They also serve as links in the chain of evidence which brings us to the hand-made laces of to-day. Passemens,  
gimps, and  
braids.



Cavaliera Fiammingo, in Collar of Guipure Point Gotic; painted by Francesco Pourbus in the sixteenth century. This picture is now in the Académie at Venice. Photograph by Naya, Venice.

Cut-work sometimes signified what we now call appliqué work, meaning rather the cutting-out of pieces of velvet, silk, or cloth, and sewing them down to the garment with braid, than the open linen work, which the modern meaning of the work describes. Chaucer speaks of the priests wearing gowns of scarlet and green cut-work.

In the middle of the sixteenth century *Point Coupé* became widely known. Geometrical patterns were the most used; the linen on which the work was done was of splendidly tough make, which rendered possible the survival of specimens to the present day. Darned netting dates back as early as linen embroidery; it was very extensively used in the Middle Ages, especially in Russia and Sicily, where it is still popular. The earlier patterns are of the old lozenge type, and also include *fleur de lis* and other armorial

Darned  
netting.

designs, monsters, and foliage. Many of the old pattern books give designs for darned netting; in fact, this kind appears almost exclusively in those earlier published. In the Exeter Cathedral inventory it is stated that there were, in 1327, three pieces of darned netting for use at the altar.

Drawn-work was as well known in the Middle Ages as were cut-work and darned netting; altar cloths and winding-sheets were chiefly ornamented with Drawn-  
work.

it; groups of animals, strange monsters, armorial shields, heraldic devices, and weird-looking trees served as designs, such patterns being more suitable for the scope of the work than the intricate geometric patterns used in darned netting. This was the favourite lace of the ladies of the powerful house of Medici, both in Italy and in France, and it was natural that the kind which was admired by the reigning house should be popular with the nobles. The ruffs and manchettes, the aprons and collars of the period were all trimmed with the finest reticella and drawn-work, which formed an important item in the *trousseau* of a noble lady of the Middle Ages.

The bridal or carnival laces, as they were called, were not only worn at the wedding, but also at the succession of festivities always given in honour of the event; they were subsequently kept for wearing at carnivals and other stately ceremonials when the relaxation of the Sumptuary laws permitted their display. The patterns were usually formed by the armorial devices of the contracting families being combined. Since mediæval times reticella, or drawn-work, has not been much used for personal adornment. It is now considered more suitable for Church and household use.

Knotted  
lace.

Though knotted borders and fringes occur on garments of Eastern nations in remote times, the more intricate knotted lace dates from the fifteenth century. It is spoken of in the first record of Italian laces, as we have already mentioned, in the Sforza inventory, and patterns are given in books in use in the first half of the sixteenth century. In the mediæval method of working it, horizontal threads were fixed on heavy pillows, and to them vertical threads were attached; the knotting was done much in the same way as on the macramé cushion of the present day.

The making of the knotted lace, *Lavoro a groppi*, was chiefly confined to Italy. None of it is found in either France or the Netherlands, the two other lace centres of the Middle Ages. It was used on the linen scarves, or cloths, worn as head-coverings by the peasants, the patterns being occasionally most intricate. In the seventeenth century, however, the long fringed ends were again allowed to flow free without elaborate knotting. *Lavoro a groppi* never achieved the popularity of the other mediæval laces.

Bobbín lace.

When once the pillow was introduced for facilitating the making of knotted lace, or macramé, the plaiting of loose threads did not take long to grow in popularity. The work was easier than the knotting, less straining to the fingers, more suitable for light and graceful patterns than could be achieved in cut-work, drawn-work, or knotting. The success of plaited laces was assured, and the introduction of bobbins, whether owing to the accidental discovery of a love-sick maiden, according to the story well-known in the City of the Lagoons, or to some other source, soon came about. The legend is pretty and worthy of mention as a graceful story only.

A young fisherman of the Adriatic was betrothed to a girl, who made for him a new net as a gift. The first time it was cast the only catch was a piece of petrified wrack grass or white coralline weed. Soon afterwards the fisherman was pressed into the service of the Venetian Navy, and the girl was left with the now useless net in her charge. While she wept bitterly she wound the delicate coralline



strands in and out of the net, then twisted the threads and small weights attached, and made an imitation of the spirals of the grass, throwing and twisting the lead just as the bobbins are thrown. The effect was so beautiful and easily obtained that the girl, who was accustomed to making the coarse guipure of the period, followed up her discovery, in course of time evolving serviceable tools, not unlike the cushion and bobbins of the present day.



Mary Queen of Scots, in Coif edged with purling, the narrow edging of twisted threads ; the Ruff is trimmed with Guipure Lace.

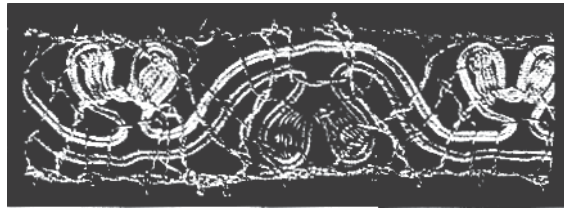
The Le Puy factory appears to be the most ancient of the French lace centres dating back to the sixteenth century ; it was in connection with this factory that the Jesuit father, Saint François Regis, who is considered the patron saint of the lace-makers, earned his canonisation. Sumptuary edicts were published by the Seneschal of Le Puy which threatened to annihilate the lace trade, a heavy fine being imposed on any who wore lace upon their clothes. The reasons for the edicts have an element of humour in them : the general custom of wearing lace

**Le Puy in France dates its connection with the lace trade from the 16th century.**

among all classes was undesirable, it was said, as it caused the distinction between high and low to disappear. Father Regis not only consoled the sufferers in their poverty, brought on by the edict, but also went to Toulouse and obtained a revocation of it.

Pattern books of the sixteenth century give instructions for plaiting gold and silver threads; Lucca, Genoa, Florence, Venice, and Milan were all celebrated for their gold and silver plaiting; and Point d'Espagne was known and worked in coloured silks as well as metal covered threads. It was in Genoa and the neighbourhood that the lace-workers first ceased to follow the fashion in using only geometrical patterns for plaited lace work, and produced in silk and flax the scalloped borders. This Point de Gènes Frisé became famous. A history of the manufacture of this lace at Albissola, a village near Genoa, was written, and a full account is given of the famous sixteenth century plaited laces of silk in black, white and varied colours.

Point de Gènes Frisés was worn as the handsomest lace procurable until the seventeenth century, when the reign of Mediæval lace was over, and the elaborate needle-point and bobbin laces of the Renaissance period swept the older and simpler methods into oblivion.



Early specimen of Gold and Silver Thread Lace.



Specimens of rich Venetian Point,  
Tagliato Foliami and Rose  
Point.

### CHAPTER III.

## ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF LACE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

**Picture of the Times.** *It is important to remember that the seventeenth century was a period of great colonial activity, so that fresh markets were opened for the lace and other industries. The East India Company was founded, Jamaica was conquered, Boston founded, as well as Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Carolina, the French West India Company flourished, and the Dutch settled at the Cape of Good Hope.*

*The act which has had more influence than any other on the History of Lace, took place in France in this century. This was the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which was instrumental in scattering the lace-makers and lace merchants all over Protestant Europe. It took place in 1685, when Louis XIV. was on the throne. Richélieu and Mazarin were the great French Ministers of the century; while in England, Cromwell's was the master mind; and the austerity in dress of the Roundheads for a time depressed the lace trade, which flourished again at the Restoration of Charles II. The devastating influence of the Plague and the Fire of London affected all industries. In Holland, the Treaty of Nimeguen in 1678 changed the nationality of many important lace centres. William III. of Holland eventually became King of England. In Russia, the brilliant Court of the Romanoff dynasty held sway, and the personal sympathy of Peter the Great was in vivid contrast to the barbaric splendour of the surroundings of Catherine I. Literature and Science in Europe were represented during the century in France by Balzac, Corneille, Racine, Fénelon, Molière, La Fontaine, Bossuet, and Boileau, and the Académie Française was founded. England was represented by Algernon Sidney, Milton, Locke, Waller, Otway, Dryden, and Harvey. The Royal Society was founded. In Italy, Sarpi, Marini, Tassoni, and Galileo were celebrated. In Spain Cervantes wrote his immortal "Don Quixote." The artists of the century include such names as Watteau, Fragonard, Charles Lebrun, Abraham Bosse, Guido, Albani, Salvator Rosa, Domenichino, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt and the two Teniers.*

**T**HE history of lace in the seventeenth century is the history of the fabric at the most elaborate and beautiful stage of its development. To Italian influence at the end of the sixteenth century was due the fashion then obtaining throughout Europe of wearing the ruffs decorated in a lavish manner with the



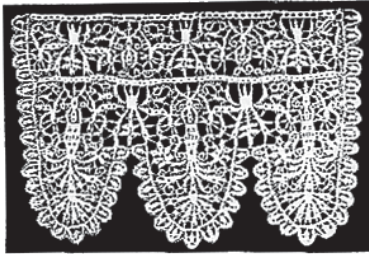
François, Prince of Savoy-Carignan, by Van Dyck. 1634.  
He wears the rich lace collar and cuffs of the period.

geometric lace of the period. Lace of gold and silver thread trimmed the mantles, cloaks, and all other garments; the raised points of Venice were well known, for, despite the commencement of the decline in the prosperity of Venice, that

city maintained for a short time longer her high position as the creator of all models of fashion and luxury. The Venetian silks and costly laces were unrivalled, and when factories were to be established in other parts of Europe, it was from Italy that skilled workmen were enticed.

Catherine de' Medicis, on her arrival from Italy, encouraged enormous expenditure on dress, at the court in Paris, believing that the brilliant fêtes would divert the minds of the people from the unsatisfactory political state. Sumptuary edicts were issued in vain, no fewer than ten being proclaimed during the last half of the sixteenth century; but at the same time the King wore on his dress enormous quantities of gold lace, at the meeting of the States of Blois.

Venice furnished most of the luxuries and led the fashions.

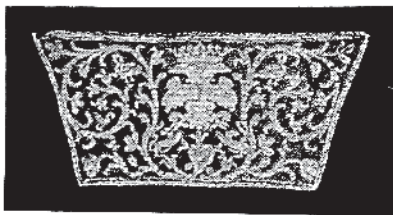


Rare specimen of Bobbin-made Lace of unusual width and degraded ornament resembling the Peasant Lace of Crete. In each scallop a man with uplifted arms holds a flagon, and on either side are deer.



Madame Verbiest, by Gonzales Coques. 1664. One of the first pictorial representations of straight-edged lace which by this time rivalled the early scalloped edges in popular favour.

In 1594, 1600, 1601, and 1606, Henri IV., his successor, made other Sumptuary laws and abided by them himself, wearing "a doublet of taffety without either trimming or lace"; and Sully, his minister, prohibited under pain of corporal punishment any dealings with foreign lace merchants. "It is necessary," he said, "to rid ourselves of our neighbour's goods which deluge the country."



Italian-made Bobbin Lace,  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide, about 1650, showing the change from the Vandyked to the straight edge which took place at that period.

As long as Marie de' Medicis lived, the upstanding collar worn at the back of the dress, which still bears the name of the Medicis collar, was used with its edgings of fine lace. The ruin of the nobles on account of their extravagance in dress becoming imminent, in 1613 the Queen published the "Reglement pour les super-

The Medicis collar, which is still so popular, was introduced in the 17th century.

fluités des habits," in which the wearing of lace and embroidery was forbidden.

In a curious collection of costumes of the period made by M. de Bonnard (Bibliothèque Nationale), the enormously extravagant use of lace may be seen.

In one portrait the corsage, which is *décolleté*, is trimmed with Point d'Angleterre, the brocaded train with rich braid; in front, a petticoat, made entirely of Point de France, is displayed. The shoulders are covered with a cape with double flounce of Point d'Angleterre, and on the head is worn a hat of fine Valenciennes guipure, wired and drawn.

It was at this time that many of the old pattern books were printed, no fewer than six at Lyons, and many editions of Vinciola's works in Paris from 1587 to 1623; full details of these are given in the chapter on the "Literature of Lace."

Point de Venise in relief was first produced to supply the demand for some novelty at this time; the old type suggested to the workers the creation of the new, and so popular was the raised point from the first moment of its introduction, that for many years it dethroned all other kinds of lace in the taste of the public. Seguin says, "If perfection can exist on earth, it has been attained by the makers of lace, and this specially applies to the Venetian lace of this period." Its distinctive style lies in the ornaments of flowers or leaves, which have a richly raised outline. This outline is filled with jours or stitches of the most beautiful and intricate kind. The different sections of the design are united by a groundwork of brides decorated with pearls or loops. The effect is that of carved ivory, though the lace has a soft and velvety richness which the coldness of ivory can never imitate; these reliefs wrought in flax thread are amongst the most beautiful objects in the world.

For a long time Venice only produced this lace, but Colbert introduced it into France when he obtained Italian workers for the French factories; and in the middle of the seventeenth century it was as much made in France as were the bobbin and other pillow laces during the reign of Louis XV. Venice point made in France, was, by Royal ordinance, called Point de France.

Lace-making was stimulated, fresh designs appeared constantly, and the beautiful points of Italy and Flanders began to make their appearance at all the Courts of Europe; besides being used in the decoration of the altars of the Church, and in the trimming of the priests' vestments.

The falling collar replaced the ruff.

Immediately after the introduction of Point de Venise, the ruff or fraise became *démodé*, as unsuitable for displaying its charms, and was replaced by the deep scalloped collar, made entirely of lace or with rich point lace border. This change in the fashion produced an interesting modification in the French guipure, another of the laces of the period. The fabric had hitherto been fine and light, so that it would stand out well as a trimming for the ruffs when mounted on cambric or lawn: now it became heavier, as more suitable for the falling collar; the edges were enriched with a kind of point d'esprit, made with three projecting wheat-shaped lobes, which gave weight and helped to keep the collar in place. Later, when guipure was less made, these lobes were imitated, and the colour was dyed a pale yellow to falsely indicate age, so that purchasers might believe that the lace had been made during the falling collar period. At this time the guipure designs were extremely characteristic, being much more ornamented than at any other. The ornaments were tied to one another, and opened in a vase or fan-shaped pattern which was most effective, more especially from the great beauty and delicacy of the work.

Sleeves were trimmed with revers of lace, lace hung down from the tops of the men's boots, and garters worn like a bandage or scarf round the knee were edged with point lace; on dress and court shoes a large rosette of lace adorned the instep; gloves, caps, aprons, capes in double and treble tiers were worn by the ladies, and Italian laces adorned even the christening suits.

In one of M. de Bonnard's pictures we see that even the servants wore lace-trimmed garments; the attendants of the young Duc d'Anjou are covered with costly points, and the cradle, bed, and sheets are decorated with the same beautiful fabric. The household table linen of this time was richly trimmed with lace.

It was in the seventeenth century that in French Flanders, in Valenciennes,

and the surrounding district, the laces with straight border were first made. This was an important innovation, for hitherto elaborate escalops only had been known. It must be remembered that the Valenciennes of this period was different from that we are accustomed to see in the modern production: the net had a much larger mesh and the thread used was infinitely finer.

Though Italian laces of the seventeenth century were perfectly imitated in France, the laces of Belgium and England of the same period were not made except in the countries in which they had originated. This is accounted for by the special stitch, called the *crossing* or *crochetage*, being a trade secret, and jealously guarded.

When the marriage of Louis XIII. to Anne of Austria took place, the collars of the Medicis changed in character, being worn

farther from the head and sloping more outwards, and Spanish lace became the favourite.

Edicts were constantly being issued, the most celebrated of the many in the seventeenth century being that called the Code Michaud, which entered into the most minute regulations of the toilet which a grandmotherly legislation could devise; but there was little result beyond laughter, and a budget of clever skits and caricatures; and when Louis XIII. died, his effigy was exposed to public view dressed in a shirt of fine holland, with rich lace collar and manches, or outside cuff trimmings, of Italian point.

Every garment was trimmed with lace, even to the boots and garters of the men.



Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I. of England, from a painting by Van Dyck (from Seidlitz's "Historical Portraits"). The great artist's appreciation of the rich and beautiful effect of lace is very apparent.

The courtiers of the Regency under Anne of Austria were no less extravagant in their taste for fine lace. The size of the boot tops was compared to the farthingales of the women, and the space between outstanding leather and the limb was filled with ruffles of costly lace. Mazarin, in 1652, while engaged in the siege of a town, was purchasing laces from Flanders, Venice, and Genoa. These were intended as patterns for the factories of Point de France, which were already contemplated. In 1660 fresh Sumptuary orders were passed, prohibiting the use of all foreign laces, Genoa Points and Point Coupés; even French laces were not allowed of more than one inch in width, and lace collars and cuffs were to be worn only for one year after the issue of the edict; after that time they were to be of linen trimmed with lace not exceeding one inch in width.

Spanish lace was worn when a Spanish Princess became Queen of France.

From the time of the marriage of Louis XIV. with the Infanta, Spanish laces, out of compliment to the Spanish princess, increased in popularity and were considered most *récherché* when worn over rich gowns of silver or gold brocade.

Colbert founded the Alençon factory.

Then followed more edicts prohibiting the use of foreign laces, before Colbert adopted the scheme for securing for France the large sums disbursed by the lace-wearers. Selecting some of the best workers of Italy and Flanders, he established a lace factory at Lonray, at Alençon, appointing a manager who knew the Venetian method of lace-making; and under her thirty forewomen, who had been brought from Venice. The work executed

delighted the King and his courtiers, who declared the Alençon specimens to be superior to those of Venice. A large sum of money was given to Madame Gilbert, the manager, and the lace received the name of Point de France. In 1665 the manufacture of it was founded on a princely scale, and a grant of 36,000 francs was made, together with an exclusive privilege for ten years. The decree, dated August, 1665, ordained "that there shall be established at Guesney, Arras, Rheims, Sedan, Chateau-Thierry, Loudun, Alençon, Aurillac, etc., manufactures of all kind of works with thread, either with needle or upon pillow, like those made in Venice, Genoa, Ragusa, and they will be called Points de France."



Portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, showing the lace head-dress called the Fontange, after the favourite of the French king, who initiated the fashion. Point de France, showing the Venetian influence, is the kind of lace used.



Other factories were set up at Argentan and the Chateau de Madrid. At the latter the best work was executed, for the most famous artists designed the graceful patterns; it was this factory that was patronised by the Royal household.

Not only were foreign laces forbidden, but a special decree forbade "the production, sale, or use of any kind of thread point laces made with the needle, whether old or modern, except those made in the Royal manufactories." French characteristics began to show themselves at the different factories, and the laces

which had begun by being copies of the Venice Point, and had been called collectively Point de France, were soon distinguished by their different characteristics as Alençon, Argentan, etc.

It was during the reign of Louis XIV. that the Edict of Nantes was revoked, and this had such a disastrous effect on the French lace industry and assisted to such a vast extent in spreading the knowledge of lace-making in all the capitals of Europe where there was religious toleration, that it may be considered the act of legislation which has had the most important influence of any on the history of lace. Through it France lost 500,000 of her best citizens, and it is said that when Louis XV. asked Frederick the Great what he could do for him to show his gratitude, the German sovereign asked for "A second revocation of the Edict of Nantes," doubtless remembering that before the influx of French emigrants, Berlin had only 15,000 inhabitants, and that

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes spread the knowledge of lace-making throughout Europe.



Jean Baptiste Colbert, Minister of Louis XIV., who established the great lace factories at Alençon and elsewhere, with a view to keeping in France the fortunes spent by the courtiers on Venetian and Flemish laces. He wears a falling collar of Point de France.

its silk, lace and other industries were practically non-existent.

When Louis XIV. became so zealous for the welfare of the Roman Catholic Church, under the influence of Madame de Maintenon and his confessor, the Jesuit father La Chaise, all the chief manufactures were in the hands of the Protestants. It is difficult to account for this fact except that it was then a dogma in the Roman Catholic Church that profit on a loan was usury and undesirable. The Huguenots held no such opinion, so that mortgages, borrowed capital and other means for extending trade were freely used by them with excellent result. The persecutions,

imprisoning, forfeiture of estates and other penalties soon drove all these worthy citizens, together with their riches and industrial capacity, into other countries, where their religious views were tolerated.

Tours lost her ribbon factories, the number of looms falling from 8,000 to 200, In Lyons the weavers were reduced from 18,000 to 4,000, and nearly the whole of her trade in gold and silver laces, which was valued at four million francs yearly, was transferred to Genoa. Fifty thousand workmen took refuge in England, Flanders, Germany, and Switzerland, bringing with them their trade secrets and establishing factories, from which France would henceforth be compelled to buy her supplies instead of being in the position to supply the world. From Alençon the skilled workmen took their trade with them to the North. London received the silk weavers from Lyons at Spitalfields.

The lace industry of France suffered terribly, and after leading the world during the brilliant Colbert period in the manufacture of the finest needle-point laces, produced only the cheaper and more easily made varieties, the best kinds being imported from Venice and Flanders.

The driving into exile of her most skilful workers was not the only reason for the decline of the Alençon factories. At this time the original Point de Venise designs were neglected, and lace was no longer made raised in relief, with the result that richness in effect was lost, and the pure outlines and delicate arabesques shrank and dwindled until the final stage of decadence, the dotted style, was reached.

Colbert was distressed and uneasy at the falling away of the foreign markets from purchasing at the lace factories he had established with so much care. He wrote to M. de St. André, then French Ambassador in Venice, charging him to give exact information of the laces made in Venice and Burano—"If they are made in as large quantities as in former times, and where they are exported."

It is interesting thus to see that the Points of Venice appropriated by France, as Point de France, and imitated by other countries, their fame being clouded by unskilful copies, were once more made exclusively in Venice, their original home. It is doubtless most desirable that one nation should imitate what is beautifully



André le Nôtre. Chevalier of the order of St. Michael, Councillor of the King (Louis XIV.), Controller General of His Majesty's Gardens, Arts and Manufactories of France. He wears sleeve ruffles and cravat of richest Point de France, which at that period was identical with Venetian Point.

France no longer made the splendid Point de Venise.

created by another, stamping on the original invention some special characteristics, but at any rate in the case of Point de Venise, Fate seems to have decided that the original trade should return to the city which gave birth to the type.

After rivalling Venice and Genoa in all industrial arts in the Middle Ages, Belgium had suffered through the persecution of her skilled workpeople by the Spanish Government. In 1620, however, the new activity in the commerce of lace



Henry, Prince of Wales, son of King James I., in elaborate collar trimmed with Punto in Aria of very beautiful design.

revived the old industry, which spread from Valenciennes, then a town of Flanders, to Antwerp, Lille, and Bruges.

At the commencement of the Belgian lace industry the Gothic and Venetian styles had been copied; later on the Genoa Guipures were adopted; and finally the Belgian Point de Gaze was invented, and from it the celebrated Point de Bruxelles and no less important Appliqué.

The impetus to point lace-making in the seventeenth century benefited the bobbin lace industry indirectly, for those who could not afford to wear needle-point must needs be in the fashion in lace-wearing, and an increased demand for the

cheaper pillow laces sprang up. The paintings of this period, the portraits by Rubens, Van Dyck, and Rembrandt, the figures and interiors by Watteau and Fragonard, the engravings of Abraham Bosse, all show us the rich profusion of lace worn by both men and women on every occasion, whether a christening, a wedding, a funeral, or one of the fêtes of that brilliant period.

A new fashion in lace-wearing introduced on a battlefield.

Nor were the courtiers the only wearers of Point de France. In 1690 a passport was demanded to allow the passing through of laces for the use of the officers of the army, and one of the most popular fashions of the day originated on the battlefield. It was at the battle of Steinkirk, in 1692, that the officers suddenly ordered into action, having no time to arrange their lace cravats in the elaborate method in vogue at the time, knotted them hastily and drew them through a button-hole. The fashion originated by the victorious officers became the rage for both men and women in France and England for half-a-century.

A popular head-dress was the result of an accident.

With the century died the fashion of wearing the high head-dress of wired lace, called *La Fontange*. This head-dress, which was at first low and graceful, was originated by the royal favourite whose name it bears. Her hair having become disarranged while out hunting, she bound up the flowing locks with her lace handkerchief. Louis XIV. was so charmed with the coiffure that he desired she should appear in it at the Court ball in the evening; after that, every lady who desired to court royal favour appeared with a head-dress à *la Fontange*, until the mode became exaggerated; wire was used to support the lace, sermons were preached about the exaggeration of its height, and Madame la Mode tired of her dainty whim.

In England, during the early part of the seventeenth century, the ruff, sometimes with double tier, delighted the Court gallants and aroused the wrath of the preachers, who waxed eloquent against the vanity of "the popinjays and plaister faced Jezebels." Like the ruffs worn in France and Italy at the same period, they were edged with elaborate geometric point, and Ben Jonson says, in the time of James I., that "men thought nothing of turning four or five hundred acres of their best land into two or three trunks of apparel." It was about 1600 that the fashion for saffron-tinted lace appeared in England, and the Dean of Westminster ordered "that no man or woman wearing yellow ruffs be admitted to the Church." Either this order discouraged their appearance, or the fact that Mrs. Turner, the inventor of yellow starch, was hanged at Tyburn in 1615 for the Overbury murder, and thus rendered that especial tint distasteful; at any rate the fashion disappeared.

The French mode of wearing Flanders and Venice points held sway in England, and Lord Bacon wrote, "Our English dames are much given to the wearing of costly laces, and if brought from Italy, or France, or Flanders, they are in much esteem." In 1621 there was a movement set on foot to establish an office "to repress pride by levying taxes on all articles of luxury," and in 1623 a complaint of the decay of the bone lace trade caused distress in Great Marlow.

Queen Anne of Denmark was most patriotic in her taste, and purchased "Great bone lace and Little bone lace" at Winchester and Basing; the lace for the layette of the Princess Sophia cost £614 5s. 8d.

Cut-work was still a favourite in England for the trimming of the falling collars which came in when ruffs went out of fashion, and Medicis collars were worn as at the Court of France. At the death of Queen Anne, wife of James I.

in 1619, a large veil was used to drape the hearse, with "peak lace wired, and lawn curiously cut in flowers."

Lace used  
at a Royal  
funeral.

Though Charles I. is occasionally represented in a ruff during the early years of his reign, the fashion practically died with King James I., being superseded by the fall of lace-trimmed linen; but extravagance was shown even in the less elaborate neck wear, and in 1633 the bills for the King's lace and linen amounted to £15,000 for the year. As there was little of this money paid for foreign lace, it may be inferred that the making of English laces had become an important industry. Much bone lace and point lace was made in England, besides that of the more costly gold and silver thread.

Henrietta Maria gave lace as a present to her sister-in-law, Anne of Austria, and the Countess of Leicester ordered lace to be sent to her in France, "fine bone lace of English make"; this would be the beautiful Point d'Angleterre, which is erroneously supposed to have originated in Belgium, and to have been chiefly made there. The fact that shoe rosettes were worn in England at this time with the same extravagance as at the French court inspired the epigram—

"Wear a farm in shoe-strings edged with gold,  
And spangled garters worth a copyhold."

The fall of Charles I. and the rule of the Puritans had less disastrous effect on the lace trade than one would expect. It is true that less cheap bone lace was required for the middle classes, and the bravery and junketings of the lower classes were sternly repressed, but the ladies of the noble and aristocratic families had little liking for the simple Roundhead dress. Silver lace ornamented the buff coats of the men; falling collars of Flanders lace and English point laces half-hid the armour worn beneath. Nor did the foreign ambassadors of the Puritan government think it necessary to appear in less ornate garments or less costly stuffs. Even the members of Cromwell's own family used costly lace to a considerable extent, and on the death of the Protector his body was more richly draped with velvet, ermine, and Flanders lace than had any monarch's been before in England. It is likely that the simplicity so much talked of at this period was more a party cry and a concession to the spirit of reaction, than a practical rule carried out to the letter.

Cromwell's  
family used  
costly lace.

At the Restoration the wearing of lace resumed the old place in the affections of the people, from which it had never really been ousted; and while fresh proclamations were issued by Charles II. against the entry of foreign lace, he himself continued to buy Flanders lace, and, as Pepys tells in his delightfully gossiping diary, other people did likewise. "My wife and I to my Lord's lodging, where she and I stayed, walking in Whitehall gardens, and in the Privy garden saw the finest smocks and linen petticoats of Lady Castlemaine's, laced with rich lace at the bottom, that ever I saw, and it did me good to look at them."

The change of fashion in men's hairdressing brought about the extinction of the falling lace collar, for the flowing wig and long curls hid the back and shoulder portions of the lace. This accounts for the introduction of the lace cravat of this period. Aprons, pinnars and handkerchiefs of lace were immensely popular with the ladies. With the end of the century the fashion of the head-dress *à la Fontange*,

Lace cravats  
succeeded  
falling  
collars.

called a *commode* in England, was at its height, and never had such sums been spent on lace in England as were disbursed during the reign of William and Mary. The industry thrived in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Devonshire and all the other lace-making districts in England. Defoe, a few years later, wrote that "Thro' the whole south part of Bedfordshire the people are taken up with the manufacture of bone lace, in which they are wonderfully exercised and improved



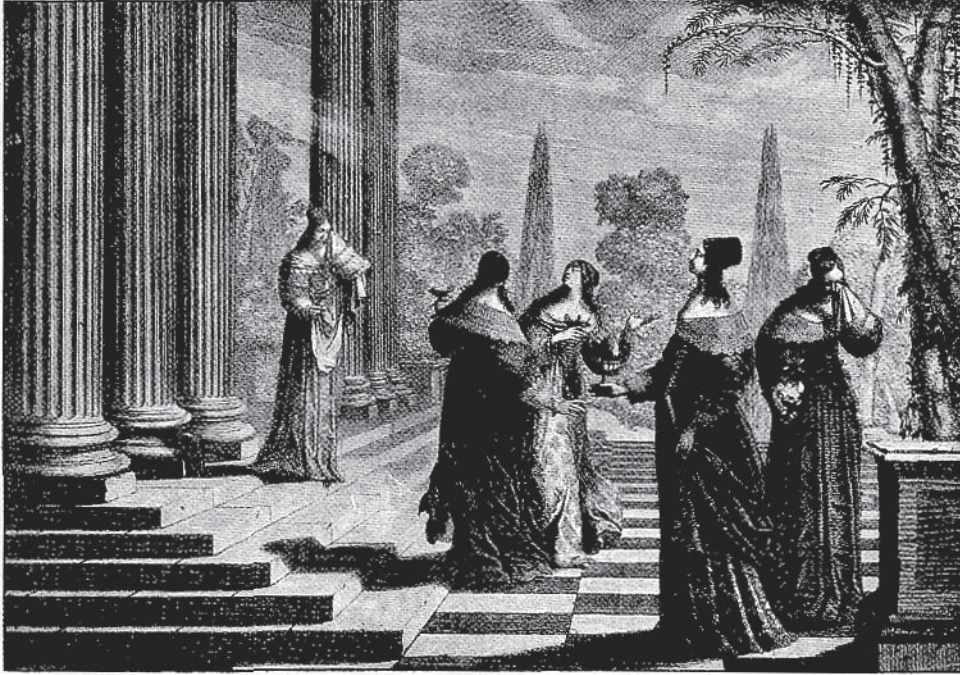
George Digby, Earl of Bristol (1612-1677). The deep turn-down collar characteristic of the Stewart period was soon to be replaced by lace cravats, when, the hair being worn longer and more over the shoulders, elaborate ornament was needed only in front.

within these few years past." Devonshire was kept busy with the demand for her Point d'Angleterre laces, and at Honiton the three celebrated lace-makers of the seventeenth century flourished, namely: James Rodge, Mrs. Minifie, the daughter of the Vicar of Buckrell, near Honiton, and Humphrey of Honiton, whose records of bequests to the townspeople are preserved on a board at the west end of the parish church at the present day.

In the seventeenth century we know that the lace industry of England flourished, and some traces may be found of small centres having existed before

that time, but English portraits are searched in vain for traces of characteristic native-made laces earlier than about 1603, nor is there any mention of the existence of either a bobbin or a needle-point factory.

It is probable that, during the reign of Elizabeth, the close intercourse between the Courts of France and England gave ample opportunity for the exchange of ideas and models in what was then a favourite pastime, and a proof of the knowledge in England of some of the well-known lace patterns is shown in the book published in



"The Foolish Virgins," by Abraham Bosse. The flat lace collars are characteristic of the period. This is one of the first pictures in which lace-trimmed handkerchiefs appear.

1605 by Mr. Mignerak, an Englishman, which contains a collection of well-known Point Coupé and bobbin lace patterns. This proves also that there were at any rate some people in England who were interested in the English lace industry.

It is likely that until the second half of the seventeenth century England produced only sufficient lace for her own consumption, for it is not until that time that the characteristic Point d'Angleterre appears in wardrobe lists, periodical literature, and portraits on the Continent; but after 1650 the superiority and originality of the English lace is proved by the large export abroad. This, however, is due to England alone having adapted to the bobbin lace the use of the style created in needle-point by the Venetian artists, and we agree with M. Seguin that the deeply-rooted idea that Point d'Angleterre *originated* in Belgium is erroneous

As early as 1612 a letter, dated January 2nd, is addressed to M. de Morangis, Prefect of Alençon, in which it is said: "As the young ladies are now clever in

The lovely  
Point  
d'Angleterre  
appears.

making the Point de France, the manufacturers could easily introduce in their factories the work of Flanders and Point d'Angleterre ; and if it is necessary to have some skilled workwomen from other countries, we could authorise them to be called." The Point d'Angleterre undoubtedly means, in this case, the work done in England. The English Point d'Angleterre was exported in large quantities to France, and was never confounded at that time with lace made in Flanders. Colbert, for whose information the letter was written, would be the last to confuse the two makes of lace.

In 1675, Savory, in "Le Parfait Négociant," declares that "there is a large importation from England of laces of silk and linen thread."

Point d'Angleterre originated in England, as its name denotes.

Why should Belgium invent a type of lace and call it Point d'Angleterre ? This especial kind of lace existed long before the excessive demand for it in the time of Charles II. necessitated Belgian lace being smuggled into England under that name. It is probable, however, that the fact that in the latter part of the seventeenth century the demand did exceed the English supply, has given rise to the belief that Belgian so-called Point d'Angleterre was the model for the English-made Point d'Angleterre,

instead of the reverse being the case. And this History of Lace will not have been written in vain if we make it clear that England was the first to make the beautiful lace called Point d'Angleterre. The industry still exists in Devonshire, where Honiton point absolutely represents the Point d'Angleterre of the seventeenth century ; the only difference being in the poverty of the present designs. If artistic direction were given to the designing management, there is no reason why Point d'Angleterre should not again attain to its old beauty.



George Savile, Marquis of Halifax (1633-1695). He wears the folded cravat of Flemish lace, which replaced the deep lace collar when flowing wigs came in—hiding the lace trimming at the back.





Busts of Louis XVI. of France (in Point d'Alençon Lace cravat) and his wife Marie Antoinette, daughter of Maria Theresa of Austria (in Point d'Alençon corsage drapery).

#### CHAPTER IV.

### ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF LACE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

**Picture of the Times.** *The eighteenth century was a time of great naval activity for England. Nelson and Howe flourished. The American War took place in 1783. Fox and Pitt guided the policy of the Kingdom, and the South Sea Bubble taking place in the first half of the century, gave rise to reckless expenditure. In France the war of Spanish Succession drained the resources of the country early in the century. The Seven Years' War took place and the Jesuits were expelled. The splendour and extravagance of the Court of Louis XVI. suffered total eclipse at the Revolution, which had disastrous results on the lace-making industry; in fact, at this time, it received a blow from which it has never recovered, notwithstanding Napoleon's efforts to revive the art. Literature and Science were represented in Great Britain by Pope, Thomson, Cowper, Burns, Grey, Steele, Addison, Congreve, Defoe, Sterne, Goldsmith, Johnson, Newton, Wesley, Franklin, and Blackstone. In France, by Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Le Sage, Montesquieu, Buffon, La Voisier, and La Grange. In Italy, by Goldoni, Alfieri, Muratori, Morgagne, Cassini, Galvani, and Volta. In Germany, by Zimmermann, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, and Hoffmann. This was the century when the great German musicians flourished, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Weber. In Art, Hogarth. Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough showed the grace of English women draped in muslin, rather than lace. Greuze and Vernet painted French portraits, and in Italy Lutti and Battoni upheld the traditions of the Italian School.*

**A**T the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, every kind of fine lace was used in France—Point d'Angleterre, originally made in England but imitated in Flanders and also in France, being as popular as Argentan and Alençon; Mechlin being prized for its lightness; and blonde lace having recently appeared from Spain.



Portrait of Mademoiselle de Beaujolas. From the picture by Nattier (1685—1766), at the Musée at Versailles. Taken from a photograph by Neurdein. The lace apron and dress trimming are of Point d'Argentan.

Chantilly lace was first made with flax thread.

It was at this time that the making of silk laces increased considerably. Black silk guipure had been worn, more or less under protest, out of compliment to Louis XIV.'s Spanish consort, for the graceful taste of the Parisian did not find pleasure in black silk lace. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Chantilly industry was begun, at first with thread, afterwards with silk laces. This trade did not really flourish, however, until blonde laces became the rage in Paris.

During the time of the third Napoleon blonde lace was the favourite wear of the Empress Eugenie, who delighted in its transparent brilliance, and did not see the lack of artistic design.

The *equipage de bain* formed one of the most important items in the toilette accessories of the woman of fashion. In the eighteenth century the finest Point de France was used not only for the trimming of the loose dressing gown of madame, but also for a broad flounce which was set on round the bath; the towels and stout linen for stepping out upon were all trimmed with costly point. In Madame Dubarry's accounts, Point d'Argentan and Point d'Angleterre appear for such trimming.

The bed trimmings were also of the most costly nature. It must be remembered that at this time the *reveille*, or uprising, was a favourite time for the reception of friends, and the counterpane, lace-trimmed pillow cases, sheets and curtains were utilised as a means of displaying costly points—a coverlet made of Point de Venise in one piece, worth many hundreds of crowns, being no uncommon sight. The bed garnitures of the Queen of France were renewed every year, Madame de Luignes receiving the old ones as her perquisite. Henry



Mantilla worn by a lady of Madrid. This head-covering is still much used in Spain, though it is no longer the universal headwear of every class as it was in the eighteenth century.

Swinburne, writing from Paris in 1786, says that the expense of a bride's trousseau is equal to a handsome portion in England. "Five thousand pounds' worth of lace, linen, etc., is a common thing among them."

In one of the pictures of M. de Bonnard at the Bibliothèque Nationale, a dressing-room is shown furnished with a sumptuous display of laces. The toilet table has a cover trimmed with a flounce of needle-point; a Venetian mirror has a pair of guipure lace curtains draped on either side of it. The

dressing-gown of the lady is all of guipure, trimmed at the sides, where it opens over a petticoat; rich Point de France edges the sleeves and at the bottom of the gown is a wide flounce of Point de France. At the back of the washing-stand a deep flounce of the same lace is draped, forming a background for the carafes and basins.



George Washington, President of the United States (1732—1799). He wears the lace cravat and sleeve ruffles of the period.

The eighteenth century was the age of ruffles and jabots; fortunes were spent on them, and many are the jokes in the literature of the day at the expense of those who had lace ruffles but no shirts. The lace was always separate and was stitched on. It is said that the falling ruffles of lace

**Fortunes were spent on ruffles and jabots.**

worn over the hands by every man of fashion were first used by card sharpers and the throwers of dice, who wished to manipulate the games, and found the full lace flounce a convenient veil.

Jabots and falls of lace for the wrist were the usual present from the betrothed to her *fiancé*, and the sums spent on single specimens in point or Valenciennes would surprise those who speak of the extravagance of the present day. The number required by the dandies of the period appears enormous; the Archbishop of Cambrai possessed forty-eight pairs of ruffles of Mechlin, Point de France, and Valenciennes; this latter lace was usually worn at night. The year before he died, Louis XVI. had fifty-nine pairs of new lace ruffles, twenty-eight of point, twenty-one of Valenciennes, and ten of Point d'Angleterre.

Fine lace  
frills formed  
part of  
the men-  
servants'  
livery.

The fashion in lace-wearing was not confined to the nobility: the lacqueys in the eighteenth century had rich lace ruffles as part of their livery, both in England and all over the Continent. Queen Anne had her servants regularly inspected that it might be seen if their ruffles were clean and their periwigs dressed; and in a contemporary journal it is stated that "roast beef is banished downstairs because the powdered footmen will not touch it for fear of daubing their lace ruffles." At the beginning of the century, the English Parliament passed an Act for preventing the importation of foreign bone lace, needle-point, and cut-work, imposing a duty of 20s. per yard. The Government of Flanders retaliated by prohibiting the importation of English woollen goods; this caused such distress amongst the wool carders, dyers, and weavers that the prohibition of foreign lace was removed, and more of it was worn than ever, the lace bill of Queen Mary of England amounting to nearly £2,000, and that of her royal spouse to £2,459, in the same year.

At this time the English laces were becoming more elaborate and costly. Defoe writes of Blandford point costing £30 per yard. This lace was much used for trimming the *steinkirks*, which form of cravat, originating in France, was extremely popular in England for many years. The lace-making area of this country was very much wider in extent in the eighteenth century than it is now; it extended throughout Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Hampshire, Dorset, Devon, and as far as Launceston in Cornwall. Point lace was worked at this time by the upper classes all over England: they learnt the art in France, where so many girls amongst the upper middle classes were educated in the eighteenth century. This lace was generally worked by the wearer for her own use and was never an article of commercial value. In 1775 an institution was founded by Queen Charlotte in London "for employing the female infants of the poor in the blonde and black silk lace making and thread laces." This appears to have been successful for a time, having been bolstered up by the purchase by subscribers in London of the produce of the school.

Queen Anne was scarcely patriotic in her tastes, wearing Flanders point at her coronation. The laces of Brussels and Mechlin were always her favourites, over one thousand pounds being paid in one year for the furnishing of these

laces alone. She, however, did not desire the importation of lace made in the dominions of the French king, and in 1711 forbade the entry of gold and silver lace on account of the extravagance to which its wear gave rise, even the corsets of the ladies at this time being trimmed with the forbidden fabric. Spanish point in gold or silver was preferred for state occasions for dress and mantle trimming, thread lace being always used for "heads" and lappets.



Joseph Marie Terray. From a picture by Roslin.  
The magnificent lace alb worn by this prelate is  
of Point de Flandre.

Before the South Sea Bubble burst, two companies had been brought out with enormous capital for importing lace from Holland, and when the china craze of the eighteenth century was at the height of its popularity, many a Flanders "head" and flounce was exchanged for a punch bowl or nodding mandarin.

When George I. came to the throne lace continued to be worn as much as ever; the ruffles were longer and the cravats of exaggerated length. "Weeping ruffles" are responsible for the passing of many a clandestine note between lovers and

**Enormous capital was supplied for importing lace at the time of the South Sea Bubble.**

Jacobites, and the discussion of the prices of foreign lace and criticism of ruffles seems to have taken the place of the modern substitute—the weather—in the conversation of intimates.

The extent to which the men and women ran up lace bills was enormous. The distress of lace sellers at this time, which should have been so prosperous for them, was very great, and constant bankruptcies of “lace men” are recorded. In the *Connoisseur*, a journal of the period, the reckless extravagance of the women is commented upon, and a little incident described. “The lady played till all her ready money was gone; staked her cap and lost it, afterwards her handkerchief. He then staked both cap and handkerchief against her tucker, which to his pique she gained.”

With regard to the laces of Italy at this period, the Venetian Point was still being made in considerable quantities; its style had never been lovelier, for though the workmanship was lighter, it was not less ornate. The demand for thinner laces had altered the designs of Point de Venise, which was approaching the *semé* method, small sprigs taking the place of arabesques.

Argentan lace was made at Burano, and at the latter place the characteristic Burano Point was at its finest; it is to this period that some of the most beautiful specimens of this graceful and lovely needle-point lace belong. Its tint is always a deep coffee colour on account of the human contact; for so laborious is its making that a long time must be spent by the worker in achieving the rows of finest stitching, and accomplishing the effective net ground by hand.

The making of bobbin lace was already a thriving industry in Pelestrina, another of the group of islands of which Venice is one, and at Chioggia also considerable quantities of lace were being made in the eighteenth century. This lace is made with bobbins, and resembles Mechlin lace to a certain extent; the execution, however, is coarser, with the result that Chioggia lace is much stronger than the Belgian variety. The Italian designs are infinitely more artistic.

The eighteenth century was the best period for lace made especially in the form of mantillas. Neither before nor since has the national Spanish head-dress been so universally worn as at that time; peasant women, the upper and lower middle classes, the aristocracy and royalty all used lace for their head-covering on every occasion, the quality of the fabric varying with the rank and means of the wearer, though sometimes mantillas of extremely rich lace were possessed by those whose poverty with regard to the necessities of life showed the contrast in a striking manner. Black lace was the most generally worn, but white mantillas were sometimes *de vigueur*, and are still for special court ceremonies.

The three deep flounces of black lace stitched on the coloured skirt gave ample opportunity for the fabrication of handsome Point d'Espagne, this being also a part of the Spanish national dress much more worn in the eighteenth century than at the present day; in fact, the dress now worn in a few remote villages is a survival of what was then the rule, both with men and with women, even the three-cornered hat, which was then in vogue with all classes, being still occasionally to be seen. The sleeves of the women's dresses were trimmed with Point d'Espagne.

Spanish  
mantillas  
were finest  
in the 18th  
century.

In Belgium, Point de Gaze and Application both of needle-point and bobbin-made sprigs, were much made. A new development of this latter variety of lace was just beginning; this was the Duchesse lace, in which handsome bobbin-made sprigs are made separately, being joined afterwards by means of bobbin-made brides or bars. The Italian lace which most resembles Point Duchesse is the Mosaic lace of the present day, but smaller sections and sprigs serve to build up

the pattern, which is sometimes enriched with medallions of needle-point.

There was much etiquette with regard to the wearing of lace in the reign of George II.; it was so general at court that even young girls before marriage wore lace caps and ruffles. There were winter and summer laces: Argentan and Alençon were amongst the former; Mechlin, Lille and Blonde the favourites for summer wear. With regard to mourning, black and white laces were worn for slight mourning, but none was permissible when deep mourning was worn. Brussels lace was almost invariably the kind worn at court and on state occasions. Fine escaloped Brussels laced "heads" with lappets, hooked up with diamond buttons, were the mode, the sleeve ruffles to match, of double and treble rows, and it was remarked that "the Popish nun lace-makers abroad are maintained by the Protestant lace-wearers of England." Patriotism was shown in a marked degree in 1736, when at the marriage of Frederick, Prince of Wales, all the lace worn was of English manufacture except that of the Duke of Marlborough, who wore Point

There were  
winter  
and summer  
laces.



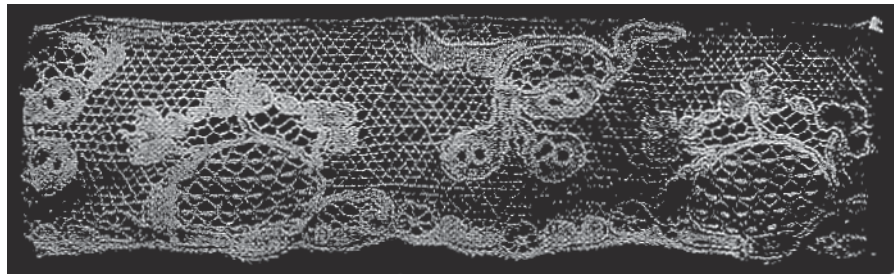
Harlequin's Dress, richly trimmed with gold lace and galloon; eighteenth century. Taken from a photograph of the original dress in the Correo Museum, Venice.



d'Espagne. Soon after, the Anti-Gallican Society was founded to correct the taste for foreign manufactures and to distribute prizes for bone point lace and other English-made fabrics. This society did excellent work in fostering the artistic beauty of English lace, and its prizes were frequently competed for by gentlewomen, who could carry out designs and stitches of a quality and fineness equal to the convent-made lace abroad, as their living did not entirely depend on the quick execution of their work.

The lace  
apron  
disappears.

With the end of the eighteenth century in England the lace apron, popular since the time of Queen Elizabeth, finally disappeared, together with the mob cap pinned under the chin; and though costly point was still worn, blonde lace had made its



Border of Bobbin-made Trolley Lace, 2 inches wide. Late eighteenth century.

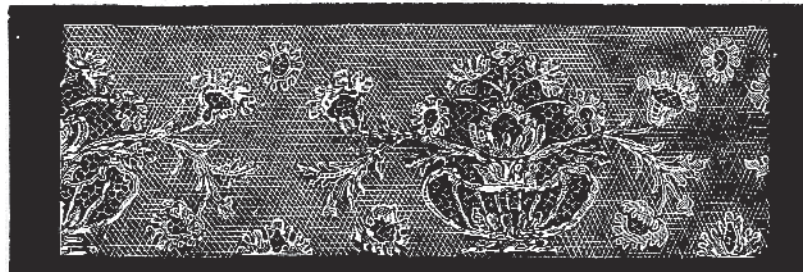
appearance, and with its novel, light effect, charmed the ladies who were ever on the look-out "for what new whim adorns the ruffle."

All the efforts of George III. to protect English manufactures did but encourage the smugglers; notwithstanding royal edicts ladies would have foreign laces, and if others could not smuggle them, they themselves were always ready to run some risk and invent some ingenious plan for evading the Customs House officers, who were not only busy at the seaports at this time, but frequently raided the tailors' and milliners' shops in London, their finds being publicly burnt.

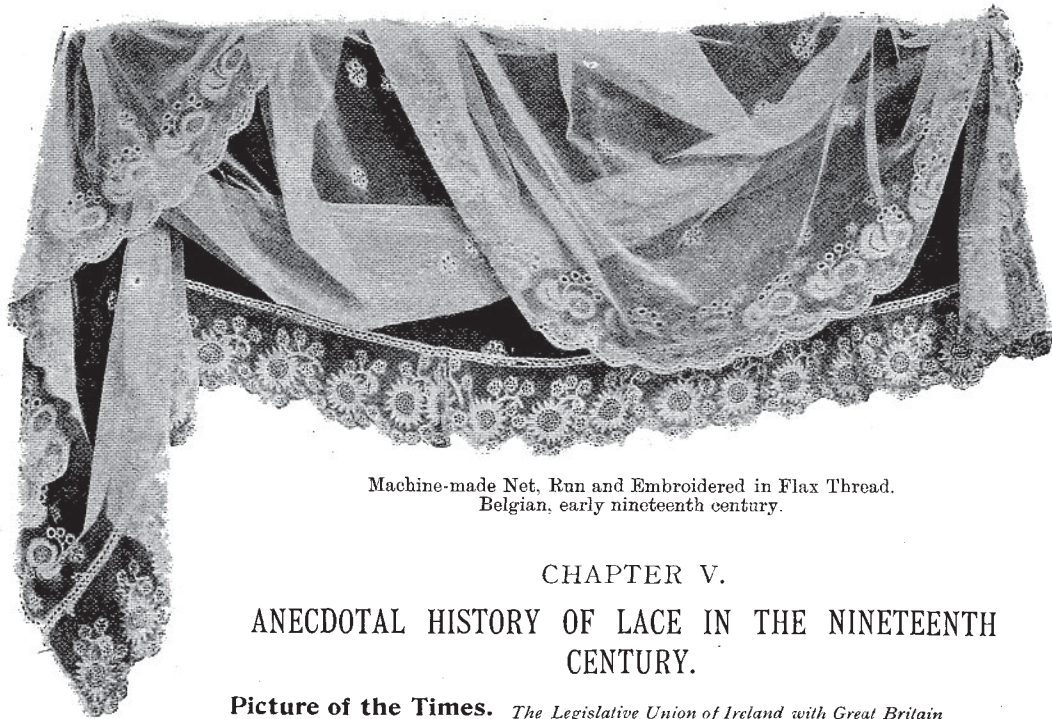
But with the terrible years of 1792 and 1793 all this was to cease. The great lace-wearers of France, the nobility and aristocracy, by the end of the century had either been sent to the scaffold or were miserable refugees in foreign countries, eking out a living by giving lessons in languages and dancing, or by selling their costly laces, if they had been so fortunate as to bring them in their hurried flight.

Efforts were made after the Revolution (but without much success) to resuscitate the lace industry of Argentan, that beautiful lace resembling Alençon, but differing from it, with its characteristic bride picotée ground, the six-sided buttonhole bar fringed with a row of delicate pearls or picots round each side. Permission to establish a factory at Argentan was refused to Madame Malbiche de Boislannay; possibly it was thought that the three existing factories were sufficient to supply the small demand.

With Marie Antoinette fell the lace trade of France, and for a decade the manufacture, except of a few cheap peasant laces, ceased to exist. When in the 19th century the gradual recovery from the disastrous effects of the Revolution began to be felt at least a dozen of once thriving centres were hopelessly moribund through the death and dispersion of the workers.



Old Chantilly Lace (reduced), from one of the order-books of the time of Louis XVI.



Machine-made Net, Run and Embroidered in Flax Thread.  
Belgian, early nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER V. ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF LACE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

**Picture of the Times.** *The Legislative Union of Ireland with Great Britain in 1801 secured commercial privileges for the former country on the Continent. Early in the century the peace of Luneville was signed, by which the French became masters of all Europe West of the Rhine and South of the Adige. Trafalgar was fought, but the allies could not withstand Napoleon's generalship, and Austerlitz proved disastrous for Austria. The Peninsular War took place and every industry suffered from lack of encouragement, for all the nations of Europe seemed involved in devastation and bloodshed; and though England preserved her commerce in consequence of her superior navy, the National Debt was augmented to the enormous sum of eight hundred and sixty millions. Great strides were made in machinery and agriculture and the invention of the bobbin net in 1809 had disastrous effects on the hand-made lace industry. In 1837 the Jacquard system was applied to the bobbin net machine. English machines were smuggled over to the Continent, and Calais and Brussels became the great centres of the trade. Machine lace was first made in 1838, a black silk net called "Dentelle de Cambrai" being the first kind brought out.*

*Colonial enterprise opened new markets. The war with the United States took place; Jefferson was President in 1801; Louisiana was purchased in 1803; Florida was acquired, and in 1898 America declared war with Spain on account of the latter power's misgovernment at Manilla. For France the Peace of Amiens was signed in 1802, and after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, his exile and death took place. In 1870, the disastrous Franco-Prussian war paralysed her commerce and lost her the fair provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. In 1871 a Republic was again the form of government, and there is now no brilliant French Court to encourage the lace and other industries. Italy's unrest culminated in the declaration of the constitution of Italy; Rome was made the capital. The most brilliant Italian names of the century are those of Garibaldi, Pius IX., Cavour, Denina, and in art Monti and Canova.*

*Art in England was upheld by such men as Sir Thomas Lawrence, Turner, Wilkie, Chantrey, Lord Leighton, Millais and a host of other celebrated men. In France by David, Bouguereau, Millet, Rosa Bonheur, &c., &c. Madame de Staël delighted with her writings. In England Literature and Science boasted such men as Shelley, Scott, Byron, Southey, Lord Tennyson, Jenner, Herschel and many others.*

Napoleon tried to revive the lace industry in France.

**A**FTER the French revolution, when the Etats Généraux prescribed the respective costumes of the three estates, a lace cravat was decreed for the noblesse. When Napoleon had time to turn his attention to such matters, he did all he could to revive the lace industry in France, with a view to enriching the workers and encouraging the luxury and brilliance of his court; more especially he directed his energy in favour of the Alençon industry, which was almost extinct, and, on his marriage with Marie Louise, ordered lace bed furniture including curtains, valances, coverlet and pillow-cases of the finest Alençon à bride, the Napoleonic cypher,



Portrait of Queen Victoria, in Florence veil and corsage trimming of Appliqué Lace. From a photograph by Alex. Bassano taken at the time of Her Majesty's Jubilee, 1887.

the bee, appearing in the pattern. The layette of his little son was also rich in Point d'Alençon, which, with Brussels and Chantilly, was the favourite lace of Napoleon. He made the wearing of lace at his court obligatory, and delighted in the taste and industry of the people who could produce such fairy-like fabric.

As a consequence, a brilliant flicker of prosperity in the lace trade marked the beginning of the nineteenth century in France, but the heavily made old points were neglected, and the graceful Renaissance designs, rose points of Venice Spain and Milan, in double and triple relief, looking like carved ivory in richness, were no longer worn.

The dotted style of pattern with a modest border, drawn muslin, embroidered Indian work, and Blonde laces with their thin grounds were the favourites, and entirely supplanted for personal wear the old needle-point fabrics. Madame Récamier, like all dainty dressers, was a great wearer and buyer of lace, and her bed curtains of finest Brussels lace bordered with garlands of honeysuckle and lined with pale satin, her counterpane of the same, and pillows of embroidered cambric edged with Valenciennes, were extremely delicate.

Embroidered muslin was worn to an enormous extent, and shared with lace the popular favour. Lists of trousseaux and inventories of the period constantly mention Indian muslin dresses, which were even worn at court, and doubtless appealed to the popular taste for affected simplicity as a reaction after the extravagance and luxury of the pre-revolution days.

All the élégantes of the Incroyable period wore muslin embroidered fichus and scarves, and the lace trade, which had revived to a certain extent, received another blow when bobbin net was first made in France, in 1818. At this date the history of "old lace" ceases: the usually accepted definition of the term includes all laces up to the invention of machine-made net, the lace made after that being "modern." For nearly a quarter of a century the lace trade was much depressed, for Fashion delighted in the lightness of the net and tulle, now made by machinery, which had succeeded bobbin net. The prices of both pillow and needle-point laces were lowered, and had it not been for the opening up of North America as an outlet for the sale of lace a very severe crisis would have taken place.

**Bobbin net was first made.**

The introduction of machine-made thread net, which had so disastrous an effect on the thread lace trade, gave a great impetus to the silk lace varieties. Never before had the Blonde, Chantilly and Bayeux laces been so popular; the brilliancy and beauty of the silk ground were at once recognised as distinctive features which rendered impossible any confusion of the silk mesh with machine-made net, and the silk lace trade enjoyed a popularity that was soon to cease when silk net lace by machinery was produced.

The tendency since that time has always been towards cheapness in order to compete with machine-made goods. About 1833 cotton thread was first substituted for flax, with disastrous results to the artistic merit of the lace, but it afforded increased facility for the makers, who found the cotton cheaper, more elastic, easier to work and less liable to break.

**In 1833 cotton thread was used instead of flax, with disastrous results.**

After the first novelty of the bobbin net and tulle craze had worn off, a slight reaction in favour of old lace set in both in England and on the Continent; and

at Almack's, the Assembly Rooms at Bath and Tunbridge Wells, the chaperons would gossip of their lappets of Alençon or Brussels. Numerous were the anecdotes as to how this treasure or that had turned up, having escaped the doom of the rag-bag, which, alas! was the fate of so much old lace during the muslin and net period.

The Duchess of Gloucester was one of the few whose affections never swerved from her love of the old rich points towards blondes and muslins, and her collection was one of the finest in Europe. Lady Blessington, too, loved costly lace, and, at her death, left several huge chests full of it. Gradually lace began to be worn again, but it was as it were ignorantly put on, worn simply because it was again the fashion to wear lace, and lace must therefore be worn; the knowledge of its history, worth, and beauty was lacking, and for a time the mocking of the connoisseurs was justified. It was the Count of Syracuse who said, "The English ladies buy a scrap of lace as a souvenir of every town they pass through, till they reach Naples, then sew it on their dresses and make one grande toilette."

Then the Parisian dress-makers came to the rescue; Madame Camille, a celebrated costumier, saw the possibilities of the situation, and was the first to bring old lace into fashion again. Laces were cleaned, cut and adapted to modern fashion, and within the last fifty years the taste for good lace has again become almost general, both in England and in France.

An interesting incident, connected with Brussels lace, took place after the battle of Waterloo. Monsieur Trovaux, a manufacturer at Brussels, turned his factory into a hospital for English soldiers, providing nurses, beds, linen and all other necessaries for the wounded men. This humanity checked for the time his lucrative business, but the good man was not a loser in the end, as he received a decoration and his shop was afterwards always crowded with English

**After Waterloo a lace factory at Brussels was turned into a private hospital.**



Napoleon I. (1769—1821), by Stefano Totanelli. From Seidlitz' Historical Portraits. He wears a cravat of Venetian Point.

ladies, who would buy nowhere else the lace they desired to purchase in Brussels.

In touching upon the conditions of the lace industries during the latter half of the nineteenth century it will be convenient to classify them according to their place of origin.

*In Italy* new lace industries have grown up in the present century. Embroidered net both black and white has been well received; much of this work is done in the prisons. Handsome scarves and veils are made as well as lace flounces and godets; the design is effected by darning with coarse, loosely-woven silk thread upon a machine-made silk or cotton net. Bold patterns are used and the effect is easily obtained and meets the demand for a showy and inexpensive lace-like fabric.

The "lace" a la Reine Margherite is very different, though, like the prison laces of black and white, it is simply embroidered net; it is on very fine machine-



Point d'Alençon. The ground powdered with bees, the Napoleonic cypher.  
This lace was made for the Empress Marie Louise about 1810. Depth  
14in. from the edge to the central point.

made foundation and the embroidery rather aims at light radiating and star-like patterns than at thick masses of work. This lace is much used for ruffles, jabots, handkerchief edgings and other useful purposes.

*In Como* and in the villages round the lake, much lace is made by the cottagers at the present day. It is the bobbin variety, a kind of guipure, and is usually sold under the general title of Italian lace; it resembles the torchon kinds, the most usual form of peasant-made lace all over Europe. The laces usually identified with Venice and Burano, Chioggia and Pelestrina are also made in the district of Como.

*In France* little lace is now made except in the Le Puy district, the earliest established of all the French lace centres, which has the largest proportion of the trade of the nineteenth century in Europe. The production is principally

heavy bobbin-made lace, which is used chiefly for furniture, curtains, etc. Other kinds, notably black laces, are still made, but their artistic value is not great, and the Chantilly, torchon, and Valenciennes of other countries are equal in quality and exceed in quantity that now made in France.

The lace workwomen of Le Puy are scattered all along the Haute Loire and in the Puy de Dome, which form the province. They number about 100,000



Louise Adelaide of Orleans. From the picture by Decrenze at the Musée at Versailles. Photographed by Mendein. Mechlin lace trims the muslin fichu, this was much used at the time (early 19th century) its lightness making it specially suitable.

and are employed upon the production of blondes and guipures, in linen, silk, and wool threads. The lace now made is finer and better than the old laces of the same district. In 1875 the average wage of the workwomen was fifty centimes a day. Skilful workers and those who were quick in learning any novelty which was at the moment in demand could gain as much as three francs a day.

The galloons called entoilages are no longer made in the district.



At Argentan, where such famous laces were made in the seventeenth century, there is now no important factory. At Arras, where laces were made which rivalled those of Lille, there are only a few hundred workers, the number having dwindled since the 30,000 lace-makers of the eighteenth century were busy with their bobbins.

*In Spain* needle laces are no longer made; the old industry in imitation of Point de Venise has entirely died out. Bobbin laces only are executed and the designs are usually in execrable taste.



Bridal Dress of 1830. The veil is of Belgian bobbin sprigs mounted on machine-made net; the flounces are of old Brussels.

*In Portugal* the lace of the nineteenth century rivals that of Spain in poverty of design, and is inferior to it in execution. The largest quantity is made at Peniche, in Estremadura.

*In Madeira* there are now comparatively few lace-workers, the industry of the island being chiefly directed towards embroidery.

The laces of *Germany* are not important. Saxony has never produced any original lace, but her trade in the last century was considerable; the lace is inferior now, and is largely exported to America, possibly for the use of the many Germans who have settled there, and who perhaps still retain a taste for German products: otherwise it is impossible to explain a preference which seems unjustifiable.

*In Austria* the old lace factories at Laybach and Illering ceased to exist with the eighteenth century.

*In Switzerland* a good deal of lace is still made, but the designs shown at the Paris Exhibition in 1851 were greatly wanting in originality; these came from Locle Connet and Chaux de Fonds and were chiefly of the blonde and torchon varieties.

*Swedish lace* finds purchasers only in its native country; this is also the case with the *Russian* fabrics, which are most original in design and workmanship,

and it is much to be regretted that steps are not taken to encourage the industry on a large scale. In all probability very valuable results would be obtained in a country where the native lace is so fine and of such a distinct type (though somewhat barbaric) and where an important home industry would be valuable in ameliorating the condition of the peasant population.

*Irish lace*, fostered and encouraged to a certain extent in the eighteenth century, was recognised as an article of commerce in the nineteenth. The manufacture of Limerick lace was established in 1829; this so-called lace work is strictly embroidery or network; the tambour stitch is sometimes worked upon Nottingham net. Crochet and other Irish laces are all imitations of the older foreign fabrics.

One of the few new kinds of hand-made lace invented during the nineteenth century is the Polychromo lace made at *Venice*. This is a very beautiful fabric made with bobbins of many coloured silks; sometimes as many as 300 to 400 are employed upon one seven-inch flounce, the delicate shading of the colours being obtained by the enormous number of tints used. The designs are taken from old Venetian and Raphaelesque point, and the lace is used either for furniture or for personal wear.

Another lace originated in the nineteenth century is that called *Petit Motif*. It is a bobbin lace of most attractive design, the quality and pattern being always the same. To France must be conceded the honour of its creation; it is now made in Venice and in Flanders.

A new departure in *Honiton* lace-making was first introduced in Devonshire in 1874, though it had been known in Belgium before that time. The characteristic of this variety, which is called *Devonia* lace, consists in the raised petals, butterfly wings, or other forms which occur in the design; these are worked separately and stand out in relief.

Early in the nineteenth century royal favour was sought for the lace-workers in Devonshire, who had been much distressed by the introduction of machine-made net, and Queen Adelaide gave an order for a complete dress to be made of Honiton sprigs; these were mounted on machine-made ground, so that both industries were benefited, for it was realized that the struggle between manual labour and invention could only have one result, and it would be useless to attempt to bolster up a dying industry such as that of the hand-made net. The design for the royal order was



Jenny Lind, from an engraving by William Holl, showing early Victorian tippet of black Chantilly lace.

Machine-made net had a depressing influence on the Honiton lace industry.