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*The Lace Maker*  
by Netscher

# PILLOW LACE

## A PRACTICAL HAND-BOOK

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AND

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERNEST MARRIAGE  
AND FIFTY PATTERNS

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## PREFACE

**O**F late years there has been a marked revival in England of interest in pillow lace; not the interest of the collector in old laces, the historical interest, which has always continued without regard to fashion, but interest of a more practical kind. To this revival fashion in dress no doubt contributed, but its real root lies more in the growing respect for handicrafts, and the cultivation of village industries induced by the cry of "Back to the land." This change of attitude has not yet been reflected in the books on lace published in England; with the exception of a few pamphlets and the advertisements of thread-makers, they all treat the subject from the standpoint of the collector.

Some years ago, when on a holiday at Freiburg in Breisgau, we learnt the elements of Torchon from a young Czech. On returning to England we had the greatest difficulty in finding any new patterns from which to work. We found valuable articles by Mme. Amélie Olivier in "La Mode Pratique," but the laces there given were usually not easy, and the French technical terms used were not to be found in any dictionary. For the English learner of pillow lace nothing was available but some pamphlets on the elements of Torchon, with simple ordinary patterns;

after that meagre instruction she was left to sink or swim by herself. We therefore planned this book with the object of giving a thorough and graduated course of instruction in the easier kinds of pillow lace. We have endeavoured at the same time to bring the means of further progress within the worker's reach by the suggestions contained in Chapter IV, and by the glossary of technical terms at the end of the book, which will enable any one possessing an ordinary knowledge of French or German to work from the foreign books mentioned in the bibliography.

Writers on pillow lace have used various systems for explaining the working of patterns. Some have had recourse to a code of symbols of the most discouraging appearance; some have merely given prickings of patterns with scanty explanations; in other cases the explanations are so long that they weary and confuse the reader. Our ideal has been to make the explanations as short as possible, relying to a great extent on the diagrams, which show clear and detailed direction lines and indicate all the difficulties, and the difficulties only, by number. To avoid repetition, we have chosen a carefully graduated set of examples. The book cannot be begun at random. The worker may start with either Russian, Torchon, or Maltese, but should take the laces of the chapter chosen in their order, and should not attempt Chapters X and XI without having mastered at least Chapter IX.

Our readers may be interested to learn that while this book was being written, some of the chapters

in the manuscript were lent to a beginner, one of the staff of the East Anglian Sanatorium at Bures, who wished to teach some of the poor women patients lace-making, so that they might have an occupation and at the same time earn some money. With a little supervision, she learnt Russian lace from them in less than a week.

In a work of collaboration it is difficult to assign to the workers their respective parts; it may be sufficient to say that I am responsible for the first six chapters, the rest of the book being shared between Mrs. Marriage and myself.

We desire to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Hon. Rose Hubbard, of the Winslow Lace School, for kind permission to reproduce the lace shown in Fig. 23, and to make and publish a pattern of the handkerchief border No. 26. Our thanks are also due to Messrs. Hachette and Co. for permission to reproduce pattern 43, and to Messrs. Ponting Bros. for leave to photograph various implements.

ELIZABETH MINCOFF.

SOFIA, BULGARIA,  
*April, 1907.*

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE ATTRACTIONS OF LACE-MAKING . . . . .	1
II. HISTORICAL SUMMARY . . . . .	9
III. TOOLS . . . . .	57
IV. PATTERNS . . . . .	68
V. THREAD . . . . .	77
VI. THE VARIETIES OF PILLOW LACE . . . . .	83
VII. RUSSIAN LACE . . . . .	87
1. TRIMMING FOR A DRESS . . . . .	96
2. INSERTION . . . . .	98
3. NARROW LACE . . . . .	99
4. BROAD INSERTION . . . . .	101
5. MEDIUM LACE . . . . .	103
6. END OF A TIE . . . . .	104
7. SQUARE AND ROUND D'OYLEYS . . . . .	106
8. BROAD LACE . . . . .	109
9. TRIANGLE . . . . .	111
10. HANDKERCHIEF BORDER . . . . .	113
VIII. TORCHON LACE . . . . .	115
11. NARROW LACE . . . . .	117
12. NARROW INSERTION . . . . .	122
13. NARROW LACE WITH CORNER . . . . .	125
14. INSERTION TO MATCH NO. 13 . . . . .	128
15. LACE WITH CORNER . . . . .	128
16. FRINGED LACE . . . . .	133
17. LACE . . . . .	137
18. INSERTION . . . . .	140
19. LACE TO MATCH NO. 18 . . . . .	141
20. LACE . . . . .	142
IX. MALTESE AND CLUNY LACE . . . . .	145
21. NARROW LACE . . . . .	146
22. NARROW INSERTION . . . . .	148
23. LACE TO MATCH NO. 22 . . . . .	150

CHAPTER		PAGE
	MALTESE AND CLUNY LACE— <i>continued.</i>	
	24. NARROW INSERTION . . . . .	151
	25. WAVED LACE . . . . .	152
	26. HANDKERCHIEF BORDER . . . . .	155
	27. LACE . . . . .	157
	28. TRIMMING FOR A MUSLIN BLOUSE . . . . .	161
	29. HANDKERCHIEF BORDER . . . . .	163
	30. SMALL SQUARE . . . . .	167
	31. SQUARE . . . . .	172
	32. LACE TIE . . . . .	176
X.	PLAITED LACE . . . . .	180
	33. LACE . . . . .	182
	34. INSERTION . . . . .	183
	35. EDGING FOR ROUND D'OYLEY . . . . .	184
	36. CORNERED INSERTION . . . . .	185
	37. EDGING TO MATCH NO. 36 . . . . .	187
	38. EDGING FOR ROUND TABLE-CENTRE, TO MATCH Nos. 36 AND 37 . . . . .	190
	39. INSERTION . . . . .	190
	40. SQUARE . . . . .	192
	41. TRIANGLE . . . . .	194
XI.	SAXONY GUIPURE . . . . .	196
	42. INSERTION . . . . .	198
	43. LACE . . . . .	200
	44. HANDKERCHIEF BORDER . . . . .	204
	45. LACE TIE . . . . .	206
	46. BROAD CORNERED INSERTION . . . . .	210
	47. BROAD LACE . . . . .	212
	48. BROAD INSERTION . . . . .	214
	49. SQUARE D'OYLEY BORDER . . . . .	217
	50. HANDKERCHIEF BORDER . . . . .	219
	A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	223
	ANALYSIS OF THE PATTERNS . . . . .	226
	TABLE OF COMPARATIVE SIZES OF THREADS . . . . .	227
	GLOSSARY AND INDEX . . . . .	229

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACE PAGE
THE LACE MAKER. BY CASPAR NETSCHER . . . . .	
FIG. 1. A PAGE FROM "LE POMPE," 1559 EDITION . . . . .	16
.. 2. A PAGE FROM PARASOLE'S "TEATRO," 1616 . . . . .	19
.. 3. ITALIAN LACE (ABOUT 1570) . . . . .	20
.. 4. ITALIAN LACE (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	20
.. 5. FLEMISH COLLAR (FIRST HALF OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	20
.. 6. ITALIAN INSERTION (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	21
.. 7. MILAN POINT (reduced) (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	21
.. 8. A PAGE FROM DANIELI'S PATTERN BOOK, ABOUT 1640 . . . . .	22
.. 9. ITALIAN LACE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	28
.. 10. FLEMISH LACE (ABOUT 1630) . . . . .	28
.. 11. FLEMISH LACE WITH SHALLOW SCALLOPS (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	29
.. 12. FLEMISH LACE WITH STRAIGHT EDGES (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	29
.. 13. BRUSSELS LAPPET (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	29
.. 14. MECHLIN LAPPET (FIRST HALF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	30
.. 15. VALENCIENNES LACE (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	31
.. 16. VALENCIENNES LACE (NINETEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	31
.. 17. FRENCH LAPPET (LOUIS XVI) . . . . .	42
.. 18. FRENCH LACE (LOUIS XV) . . . . .	42
.. 19. LE PUY LACE (MODERN) . . . . .	48
.. 20. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LACE (MODERN) . . . . .	48
.. 21. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LACE (MODERN) . . . . .	48
.. 22. HONITON LAPPET (FIRST HALF NINETEENTH CENTURY) . . . . .	48
.. 23. MODERN "RUSSIAN" LACE (MADE AT THE WINSLOW LACE SCHOOL) . . . . .	52
.. 24. BELGIAN LACE PILLOW . . . . .	62
.. 25. OLD ENGLISH LACE TURN . . . . .	62
.. 26. FRENCH PILLOW . . . . .	62
.. 27. HONITON PILLOW . . . . .	62
.. 28. GERMAN WINDER . . . . .	62
.. 29. STAND FOR CYLINDRICAL PILLOW . . . . .	62
.. 30. BOBBINS (natural size) . . . . .	64
.. 31. PLANNING A CORNER WITH MIRROR . . . . .	76
.. 32. PATTERN OF RESULTING CORNER . . . . .	76
.. 33. MAKING CLOTH-STITCH. (GERMAN PILLOW AND STAND) . . . . .	88
.. 34. MAKING HALF-STITCH . . . . .	88
.. 35. DIAGRAM OF RUSSIAN TAPE . . . . .	90
.. 36. VARIOUS FORMS OF TAPE . . . . .	90
.. 37. MAKING A LEAF . . . . .	90
.. 38. DIAGRAM OF CURVE AND ANGLE . . . . .	93
.. 39. DIAGRAM OF TORCHON GROUND . . . . .	123
.. 40. DIAGRAM OF ROSE-STITCH . . . . .	142



## PILLOW LACE

No.	1.	RUSSIAN TRIMMING	PATTERN		PHOTOGRAPH
			Page	97	Face page
"	2.	" INSERTION	"	99	" 100
"	3.	" NARROW LACE	"	100	" 100
"	4.	" INSERTION	"	102	" 102
"	5.	" MEDIUM LACE	"	103	" 102
"	6.	" END OF A TIE	"	105	" 106
"	7a.	" SQUARE D'OYLEY	Sheet	1	" 106
"	7.	" ROUND D'OYLEY	Page	108	" 106
"	8.	" BROAD LACE	"	110	" 110
"	9.	" TRIANGLE	Sheet	1	" 112
"	10.	" HANDKERCHIEF BORDER	"	1	" 114
"	11.	TORCHON NARROW LACE	Page	118	" 132
"	12.	" " INSERTION	"	122	" 132
"	13.	" LACE WITH CORNER	"	126	" 132
"	14.	" INSERTION TO MATCH NO. 13	"	128	" 132
"	15.	" LACE WITH CORNER	"	129, 132	" 132
"	16.	" FRINGED LACE	"	134	" 138
"	17.	" LACE	"	138	" 138
"	18.	" INSERTION	"	140	" 144
"	19.	" LACE TO MATCH NO. 18	"	141	" 144
"	20.	" LACE	"	142	" 144
"	21.	MALTESE NARROW LACE	"	147	" 154
"	22.	" " INSERTION	"	148	" 154
"	23.	" LACE TO MATCH NO. 22	"	150	" 154
"	24.	" INSERTION	"	151	" 154
"	25.	" WAVED LACE	"	153	" 154
"	26.	" HANDKERCHIEF BORDER	"	155	" 160
"	27.	" LACE	"	158	" 160
"	28.	" TRIMMING	"	160	" 162
"	29.	" HANDKERCHIEF BORDER	"	164	" 160
"	30.	" SMALL SQUARE	"	167	" 174
"	31.	" SQUARE	"	172	" 174
"	32.	" LACE TIE	"	177	" 178
"	33.	PLAITED LACE	"	182	" 184
"	34.	" INSERTION	"	183	" 184
"	35.	" EDGING FOR ROUND D'OYLEY	"	184	" 184
"	36.	" INSERTION WITH CORNER	"	186	" 186
"	37.	" LACE TO MATCH NO. 36	"	188	" 188
"	38.	" EDGING FOR ROUND TABLE-CENTRE	"	189	" 188
"	39.	" INSERTION	"	191	" 192
"	40.	" SQUARE	Sheet	1	" 192
"	41.	" TRIANGLE	"	1	" 194
"	42.	GUIPURE INSERTION	Page	199	" 202
"	43.	" LACE	"	201	" 202
"	44.	" HANDKERCHIEF BORDER	"	205	" 218
"	45.	" LACE TIE	Sheet	2	" 208
"	46.	" CORNERED INSERTION	Page	211	" 212
"	47.	" BROAD LACE	Sheet	2	" 212
"	48.	" BROAD INSERTION	"	2	" 216
"	49.	" SQUARE D'OYLEY BORDER	Page	218	" 218
"	50.	" HANDKERCHIEF BORDER	Sheet	2	" 222

# PILLOW LACE

## CHAPTER I

### THE ATTRACTIONS OF LACE-MAKING

*Qui trop embrasse, mal estraint.*

AS a handicraft, pillow lace-making offers such attractions that, at first sight, it seems strange so few Englishwomen should take to it. The real reason for this neglect is that lying at the root of the degeneration of all Englishwomen's handicrafts, for to them the odious term "fancy-work" is often most appropriately applied. Not that this degeneration is now at its lowest ebb; on the contrary, of late years embroidery patterns have frequently borne evidence of some intelligence and knowledge of the principles of design, and the colours employed have been far less insipid than formerly.

The Royal School of Art Needlework at South Kensington has produced excellent results, as have the Manchester School of Embroidery and the London Guild of Needlework. The movement known, by a strange inversion of terms, as "art nouveau" in England, and as "modern style" in France, has, with all

its contortions and undeniable perversities, put new life into the art of embroidery and has practically created that of stencilling on textiles.

But what is really needed to regenerate women's handicrafts is a change in the standpoint of the workers. They should take their crafts a little more seriously. Granted that these are, to the vast majority, merely agreeable pastimes, on which to spend stray hours of leisure, still no artistic result, no result really worth having, can be attained if these stray hours are spasmodically devoted now to drawn thread work, now to crochet, and then to leather or poker work.

It is this diffusion of work and ingenuity that has led to the neglect of pillow lace as a home art. For pillow lace involves some study and requires learning; the tools are unfamiliar to most of us, and the technique is quite unlike that of needlework, being more akin to weaving—another woman's handicraft also relegated to the professional worker.

But, after all, the learning needed is not very formidable; a few simple turns of the bobbins, once thoroughly understood and remembered, form the key to the most intricate laces. And from almost the very first the worker is making something really desirable; the narrowest, simplest lace looks well as the edging to a frill or the finish to a piece of embroidery.

Almost any handicraft will yield, not perhaps works of art, yet specimens of really good craftsmanship, if pursued by itself and with patience. And the time spent will be more pleasantly spent as the worker

obtains greater mastery over her materials. The shorter the leisure at the disposal of an amateur, the more need she has for concentration in such pursuits if the result is to be worth having.

This applies equally even when occupations of this kind are regarded purely as recreation ; for any handicraft worthy the name always offers enough variety to keep all but the most fickle and uncertain of workers well amused when once it has appealed to her taste. Pillow lace is certainly a handicraft of this kind, great in its scope and variety. It brings into play not only the dexterity, but also the ingenuity of the worker in adapting and altering patterns. Old pattern-books<sup>1</sup> contain many valuable suggestions and long-forgotten designs which are fascinating to work out. And more than ingenuity is brought into play if the worker should aspire to invent new patterns or adapt such designs from embroidery, tiles, wrought-iron work, etc., as may lend themselves to the purpose. For the designing of a pillow-lace pattern demands far greater skill and technical knowledge than does that of a pattern for point lace. There is not only beauty of line to take into account, but also the strength of the fabric, and this involves much care in rightly placing and balancing the threads. The field before the pattern-maker is very wide, and improvements are sorely needed. If any one would introduce new patterns with bold decorative curves, or other really effective designs with a character to them, to take the place of the debased rococo flowers and

<sup>1</sup> See Bibliography, p. 224.

wearisome geometrical figures that we know too well, all lace-makers—to say nothing of the vast numbers of those who wear lace and whose houses are embellished with it—might well be grateful.

But even without aspiring to the invention of new designs for broad laces, beautiful effects can be obtained by the adaptation of existing patterns. A narrow insertion may be modified to go round great curves, thus forming a bold design, and let into some linen cloth. There are also possibilities for combinations of shaped tapes woven on the pillow in all their curves and applied on net, or joined with needle-point stitches. All these possibilities await the ambitious.

And for the least ambitious, the least self-reliant of workers, pillow lace offers other attractions. It makes no demands on that sense of colour which is, unfortunately, so singularly rare in our countrymen, as one has to admit with a blush when one looks at and admires the embroideries of Bulgarian peasants, or watches the skill with which a Moorish servant arranges daring and gorgeous effects among the flowers on a dining-table. It seems as if sense of colour were, like sense of smell, refined away by civilization.

Then, again, so long as you work correctly there is no likelihood of the lace produced being of bad quality; that is the outcome only of crass carelessness and hurry. Aim at an even tension, no very difficult thing to attain, follow the lines of your pattern accurately, set your pins firmly and straight, and your lace cannot fail to be well made from the very outset.

It is most encouraging for the beginner to find everything looking "so professional" from the first. There are no dull parts in the work (as in embroidery the stems of the flowers); all is almost equally interesting. And there is no better employment to keep one from fidgeting while listening to conversation or to reading aloud, since there is no counting to be done, and the work can be taken up or dropped at any moment, for one cannot "lose the place."

Once the initial cost is defrayed, it is the least expensive of handicrafts, entailing only the cost of the thread, which gains infinitely in value in the worker's hands. And the initial outlay is small enough: bobbins, winder, and stand should not cost together much over ten shillings; the other things the worker can either make or probably possesses already. This making something well worth having out of really raw material has a great satisfaction in it. I remember an old Yorkshire farmer saying of drawn-thread work: "You lasses mun be allus pulling summat to pieces. It's fair waste o' good stuff." And, after all, there is something to be said for the criticism from his point of view, but it does not apply to pillow lace.

To some, lace-making may appeal as a picturesque pose; but without owning to such a weakness, any sufficiently human woman will, other things being equal, prefer a handicraft that has pretty, dainty accessories. The bright pillow, the quaint bobbins, the many-coloured pins are undeniably attractive. They are not a litter in the room, but an ornament.

In summer too, when to many needlework is a doubtful joy, entailing effort with a sticky needle and the frequent use of emery cushions, the smooth wooden bobbins are delightfully cool to handle. The position of the lace-maker is more comfortable than that of the embroideress, who is forced to tire either hands and arms with holding up her work or else her back with bending over it. Lace requires an easy upright position. I knew a dyspeptic who always worked at her lace pillow for half an hour after meals, and this obligatory upright position had the best effect on her health.

So much for the pleasures of making lace ; there are besides the pleasures of possessing what one has made. There are so many uses for the finished product that the lace-maker is never likely to be in the position of, say, the basket-maker, who has soon provided herself and all her acquaintance with as many baskets as they will want for years to come. The lace you make will never go out of fashion. It drapes beautifully, falling into far more graceful folds than does point lace. If good thread is used and solid patterns chosen, it will resist endless washing. Here, again, it wins a victory over most "points." At the risk of being called a Goth, I must protest against the theory that no lace should ever be ironed. Most pillow laces—all described in this book—are all the better for being ironed while damp, nor will a little starch hurt in most cases.

A far worse prejudice is the one against frequent washing of lace. Nothing is improved by dirt, cer-

tainly not anything that is worn on the person and even near the skin. It seems to me that on calm reflection soiled lace can be nothing short of disgusting, and that it should be admired "Isabella colour" or dipped in tea to make it look old, foxed, and mildewed is incomprehensible. Any one who has inherited lace from some one with these ideas knows to her cost how impossible it is to remove the yellow stains, a mark of the dirty habits of the last owner. Lace is far more likely to be spoiled by letting it get really dirty, when the fabric has to be rubbed hard to cleanse it, than by more frequent careful washing. Of course it should be washed very gently. Simmering long and gently in a solution of some mild soap will be found to cleanse it with the minimum of rubbing; it is friction that most hurts it.

Since we are speaking of prejudices, let me say that there are few subjects about which more absurd prejudices are rife than this very subject of lace, and in few is tradition more blindly followed. Lace is admired far more often for its age, the cost of production, its name's sake, than for any intrinsic beauty. The magic words Mechlin, Valenciennes, Brussels, are passports to admiration even for the most banal of patterns; and laces of the Revolutionary period do not need to be pretty in order to be prized, and that not merely as curiosities, which is natural, but as works of art.

We should try to clear our minds of this slavish worship of authority and be conscious what it is we admire. Is it the bold curves of the pattern, the



pleasant suggestions of some quaint piece of "pot-tenkant" with its trim flower-pots, the flowing intricacy of Russian labyrinths, the texture and the light graceful folds of Chantilly, or the richness of Brussels?

One may do whate'er one likes in Art.  
The only thing is to make sure  
That one does like it, which takes pains to know.

And so in lace. There are so many styles, so many different ideals of beauty, but let us feel sure that an example has reached a point some way along the path to *one* of these ideals before we blindly admire it.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL SUMMARY

*Il n'y a rien de nouveau dans ce monde que ce qui est oublié.*  
(Saying of Marie Antoinette's milliner.)

THE origin of lace is, like most other origins, wrapped in mist, to dispel which many legends have arisen, more or less picturesque, more or less improbable. There is the legend of its Venetian birth; of the love-sick girl who, gazing hour after hour at the coral her sailor had given her as a keepsake, came to imitate its slender and intricate branches with a mazy weft of linen threads.

Flanders from all time has disputed with Venice the invention of pillow lace, and one Flemish tradition is that the last Crusaders on their return from the Holy Land brought the industry to the Low Countries. Another, that of Bruges, has it that lace was suggested to a Flemish lover by the sight of a cobweb on his sweetheart's apron.

From Brabant they say it was carried to Nuremberg in the bundle of a Protestant refugee, escaping from Spanish persecution. A rich burgher's daughter of Nuremberg learned the art, and on her marriage introduced it into her Saxon home. She taught the daughters of her husband's miners to make lace, and

the name of Barbara Uttmann came to be revered round Annaberg for her industry and for the welfare brought by her means to the whole district of the Erzgebirge. It was foretold her on her marriage that she would have as many children as there were bobbins on her lace-pillow, which came true, runs the story, for at her death she had seventy-five children and grandchildren. So if we trust tradition we must conclude that the lace Barbara made was either rather narrow, or else of the kind known nowadays in Germany as Idriaspitze (cf. chapter VII), for on other laces thirty-seven pairs make only a poor show. This Barbara is a less mythical figure than the Venetian fisher-girl who precedes her. We know the dates of her birth and death (1514 and 1575), and the epitaph on her tombstone at Annaberg announces that she "invented" pillow lace in 1561. If she invented it, she was not the first to do so, as the two volumes of lace patterns called "Le Pompe," published at Venice in 1557 and 1559, show already an advanced stage in the development of technique. However, in the face of all this detailed information,<sup>1</sup> and of the lady's statue set up centuries later by the still grateful town of Annaberg, we cannot dispose of her too summarily. She belongs with William Tell to the borderland between history and legend.

The story of the introduction of the lace industry into the English Midlands by Catherine of Aragon during her retirement, while awaiting her divorce, at the dower-house of Ampthill Park, in Bedfordshire,

<sup>1</sup> Rasmussen, p. 5 f.

might be true. A pattern named after her is still in use in the district,<sup>1</sup> and further to confirm the story it is said that till the beginning of the nineteenth century St. Catherine's Day (25 November) was kept as a festival by the lace-makers in her honour. But this comes rather as a contradiction than as confirmation, for St. Catherine was, to her cost, poor lady, the patron saint of wheels, and among others of spinning-wheels. To this day the Protestant peasants of the Palatinate spin during the winter months from Catherine's Day to Candlemas, and on Catherine's Day a fair of spinning-wheels is still held at Neckargemünd, near Heidelberg. One cannot but suspect that the Queen's name was brought in to explain a Catholic survival in a Protestant district.

The account of the twelve venerable Westphalians,<sup>2</sup> who taught lace-making in Tondern in 1647, is not incredible, curious though it be. They were chosen for their skill by an enterprising citizen to teach any who should apply to them. Their beards were so long that while they worked they were forced to keep them in bags out of the way of the bobbins and pins.

All these stories doubtless have their grain of truth, even the tale of the coral, for the earliest pattern-books for pillow lace hail from Venice, and Venice has from the earliest times of lace been known as a great head-quarters of the industry. The first Venetian patterns are said by competent authority<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the photograph in Channer and Roberts, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Rasmussen, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Séguin, and "Edinburgh Review," 1872, p. 49.

to have an Oriental character in the arabesques that form their designs. This and the fact that the very first published patterns show a fully developed technique make it seem to me probable that the art of pillow lace-making was introduced into Venice from the East by one of the many channels at the disposal of that great commercial power; for at the time when we can first accurately date pillow lace in Venice the Venetians were the carriers of Europe. Had it been a native growth, we should probably have seen more tentative, clumsy beginnings, both in the pattern-books and in the specimens of old Venice lace still surviving, not the graceful, complex designs that lie before us. Only some one well acquainted with the intricate history of the Oriental textile arts can bring the final proof or refutation of this theory. But if for the present there is no decisive proof of the Eastern origin of pillow lace, at least the evidence is strong in its favour. The Flemish legend of the Crusaders bringing the art from the Levant gives its slight weight on this side, but far more important are the facts that we find an art with Oriental patterns starting almost simultaneously in the three chief sea-ports trading with the East—Venice, Genoa, and Ragusa—and nowhere else in Europe.

Another theory, plausible at first sight, is that the pillow-lace industries in different countries had separate origins, all derived from the primitive art of plaiting. When, however, we take into account the technical uniformity of all European pillow lace, it is difficult to believe in a theory involving separate

origins. Even fabrics so different in character as Valenciennes, Russian, and coarse Cluny are formed of the same stitches and can be made with the same tools. Then again, though plaited threads or cords had been used for trimming all through the Middle Ages, there are no traces of lace before the end of the fifteenth century, and these first traces are more than doubtful. Actual specimens of lace of course bear no evidence of exact date. Pieces have sometimes been made depicting some event; one, for instance, has portrait heads of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and their two eldest children;<sup>1</sup> but such specimens are altogether exceptional, and could not occur in primitive laces owing to their technical difficulties. Even such evidence of date cannot be implicitly accepted, as a very elaborate piece of needle-point, representing the defeat of the Armada and Tilbury Fort among dolphins and flags and English roses,<sup>2</sup> must for its technique belong to the eighteenth, or at earliest to the late seventeenth century.

One frequently sees pieces of pillow lace in museums ticketed as belonging to the fifteenth century or as older still;<sup>3</sup> these tickets are pure romance. According to some authorities, the first traces of pillow lace occur in pictures and in certain inventories of linen belonging to the D'Este<sup>4</sup> and other great Italian families from 1476 onwards. As to the inventories, they must be accepted with great caution. There occur in them Latin terms which seem certainly to

<sup>1</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, in the fine collection at the Gruuthuis in Bruges.

<sup>4</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 46; Dreger, p. 24.

refer to bobbins and pillows ; but the bobbins may have been only some kind of reel to hold cord for plaiting, and the pillows may have been used, as indeed they often were, for embroidery. One of the great difficulties in dealing with such descriptive lists or with the old pattern-books is to arrive at a really clear understanding of the dozens of technical names rife in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for every kind of needlework. The historical side of these subjects has mostly been dealt with by men, or by women unversed in their technique, which has led to continual confusions. One may go so far as to say that barely half a dozen of all the writers on the subject of lace are capable of distinguishing the old printed patterns for needle-point from those used for pillow lace ; while, on the other hand, those who have practical knowledge have seldom the learning or inclination to make researches in archives or museums. It seems almost too absurd that repeatedly references to lace, in the sense of shoelace, staylace, etc., should have been hastily set down as proof of the existence of points and guipures, but so it is. Even the British Museum Catalogue exhibits an instance of this carelessness. The library contains three manuscripts relating to the plaiting of narrow braids by hand, the latest of which (1651) bears the appropriate title of "The Art of Making Strings," and has a specimen of each silken string, from one-eighth to a half-inch broad, neatly stitched down beside the instructions. Yet the oldest, a fifteenth-century production, is endorsed as containing a treatise on lace

and has often been brought up as an authority. The inventories then must be taken as evidence only with caution. As to the pictures, in several cases a pillow with some leaden weights attached to it, no matter in what way, has been accepted without further criticism as a lace-pillow.

If pillow lace was made at all in Europe before 1520, it certainly was not in common use until some thirty years later. Portraits of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary<sup>1</sup> in England, and of Francis I<sup>2</sup> in France, bear no trace of lace. The earliest French portrait showing lace is said to be that of Henry II at Versailles; the ruff is edged with a very narrow and simple pillow-lace edging. Whereas from that time onwards French portraits offer a rich and valuable source for lace patterns. Our own Elizabeth and her courtiers are in their portraits loaded with lace; and while at the beginning of the seventeenth century Dutch artists constantly introduce it even in religious subjects, very little occurs in their pictures before 1580.<sup>3</sup>

The introduction to "R. M's" pattern-book, published at Zürich by Christoff Froschower<sup>4</sup> about the year 1550, gives us clear proof that pillow lace was known in Venice before 1526.<sup>5</sup> It says: "The art of

<sup>1</sup> A. M. S., pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> Séguin, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> According to Séguin, none; but the lady in the portrait by Pourbus, dated 1551, in the Municipal Museum at Bruges, wears three kinds of lace, one of which was certainly made on a pillow, and possibly two.

<sup>4</sup> Printed verbatim in Ilg's "Geschichte und Terminologie der alten Spitzen," p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> This date is misprinted (1536) by Mrs. Bury Palliser and by Ernest Lefébure.



pillow lace (*die kuenst der Dentelschnueren*) has been known and practised for about twenty-five years in our country, for it was first brought by merchants from Venice and Italy into Germany in the year 1526." Causes other than the first discovery of lace by Venice merchants, during their journeys in the East, may have timed its spreading in Europe from Venice at this particular moment. Severe sumptuary laws repressed the wearing of gold, silver, jewellery, cloth of gold, silks, and other materials of value. In this delicate product of plain white thread lay an admirable chance of evading them and gratifying the natural taste for luxury and artistic beauty in dress. Again, without metal pins, or with only a limited number of them, not much could be achieved in the way of pillow lace. In England, during the reign of Henry VIII, the price of ordinary pins was about a penny each in our money; and although on the Continent they were in common use, they seem to have been somewhat of a luxury until the second half of the sixteenth century.

The first known pillow-lace patterns of certain date are those already mentioned of the collection called "Le Pompe" (see Fig. 1), published at VENICE in two volumes in 1557 and 1560. Both volumes fortunately are accessible to Londoners, the first in the edition of 1559, a copy of which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the second in a reprint of the 1562 edition published by the Imperial Austrian Museum at Vienna in 1879.<sup>1</sup> Together they form a rich and

<sup>1</sup> Publisher, F. Paterno.

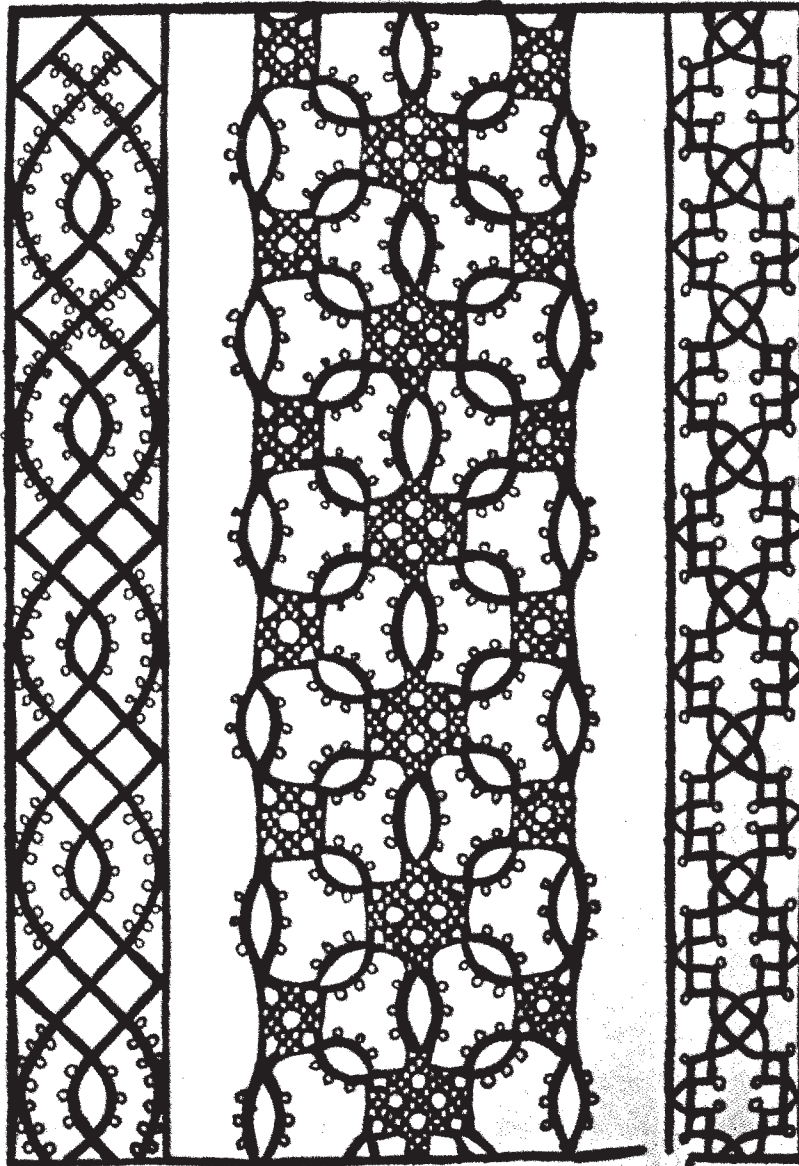


FIG. 1. A PAGE FROM "LE POMPE," 1559 EDITION

beautiful collection of geometrical patterns which, as M. Séguin points out, have no relation to the general style of Renaissance art, but for the most part take their inspiration from the East. All the patterns are for pillow lace; the great majority are plaited laces, some varied by the introduction of small squares or circles of grounding; there are also tape laces. These last are of great interest as disproving a theory, that was held with much apparent reason, that the process of "crochetage"<sup>1</sup> originated in Flanders, where it has always been held in especial favour. The Pompe patterns show us this process well established. It is difficult to give any adequate idea of this work, which in variety and in the charm and simplicity of its designs far surpasses any of the other old pattern-books that I have had opportunity to see.

On working out a number of the most original and representative of the patterns in this book—the plaited laces—I found them, as a rule, too stretchy for modern needs. They were meant, not for insertion or edging, but for sewing on to the seams of coats, etc., and unless supported by a foundation fell out of shape at once. However, two of them, with slight alterations, are included among the working diagrams in the chapter on plaited laces; they are Nos. 33 and 34.

No one in Italy seems to have published any more pillow-lace patterns until 1591, when Cesare Vecellio brought out a large and important work in four parts,

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 94.

called the "Corona."<sup>1</sup> It ran through a number of editions, the last appearing in 1608. Most of the patterns are for point lace, and those which could be worked on a pillow are so little specially adapted to this technique that they too may well have been intended for points.<sup>2</sup>

In 1597 Elisabetta<sup>3</sup> Catanea Parasole brought out her first collection of patterns at Rome, called "Studio delle virtuose dame."<sup>4</sup> They are thirty-three charming designs, but serve our purpose very little, as only two narrow and insignificant edgings to other laces are for the pillow. Elisabetta mentions on all her title pages that the designs are of her own drawing. As a designer she has strength and great power of invention, and the methodical arrangement of her books is an admirable contrast to the confusion in those of her male colleagues, this owing no doubt largely to her technical knowledge and their ignorance of the crafts for which they designed. Each technique is treated separately; patterns for drawn thread, reticella, and point lace are ranged in groups. Her next book, the "Pretiosa Gemma delle virtuose donne," was published at Venice in two parts, 1600-1,<sup>5</sup> and reprinted at Rome in 1610

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by Wasmuth, Berlin, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> They are six in all: in Part I a narrow insertion, the second from the bottom on page F 4; another in Part II on GG 4, above the picture of Vesta (repeated in Part III, GGG 4); in Part III the broad guipure on CCC 4, and two narrow insertions, DDD 2, the bottom but one to the right, and the lowest on GGG 1. Part IV has one narrow insertion, CCCC 1, the lowest to the left.

<sup>3</sup> Or Isabetta, or Isabella, for she gives herself all three names.

<sup>4</sup> Reprinted by Quaritch, London, 1884.

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted by Ongania, Venice, 1879.

and 1625.<sup>1</sup> The first part contains point and reticella patterns, the second, besides these, darned net and two broad pillow laces which show lack of experience in handling bobbins. Indeed, were it not that in her methodical way she has indicated the number of bobbins required, few would take the patterns to be for pillow lace.

Her "*Teatro delle nobili et virtuose donne*" (see Fig. 2), published at Rome in 1616,<sup>2</sup> shows enormous progress in the pillow patterns. Evidently pillow lace had come more into fashion, and the artist herself gained mastery over its technique. There are seventy-four pillow patterns of great variety of style, many beautiful and some most elaborate. In most cases the number of bobbins needed is given, varying from fourteen to a hundred, while the laces are of all widths up to about four inches. All are geometrical in design and of light fabric, the majority, very light indeed, consist of twists and plaits. They are of the guipure order, if we use the word in its present meaning; that is to say, the fabric is formed by the design itself without the aid of grounds. These patterns have not the same happy art as those of "*Le Pompe*" in producing effect by the skilful variation of different simple methods. They are more monotonous, more complex, less practical. But they are far better arranged, and evidently this kind met with greater success, for both Mignerak and Shorleyker publish quite similar patterns, while I have seen no attempt

<sup>1</sup> Strange, "London Bibliographical Society Trans.," VII, 235.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted by Wasmuth, Berlin, 1891.

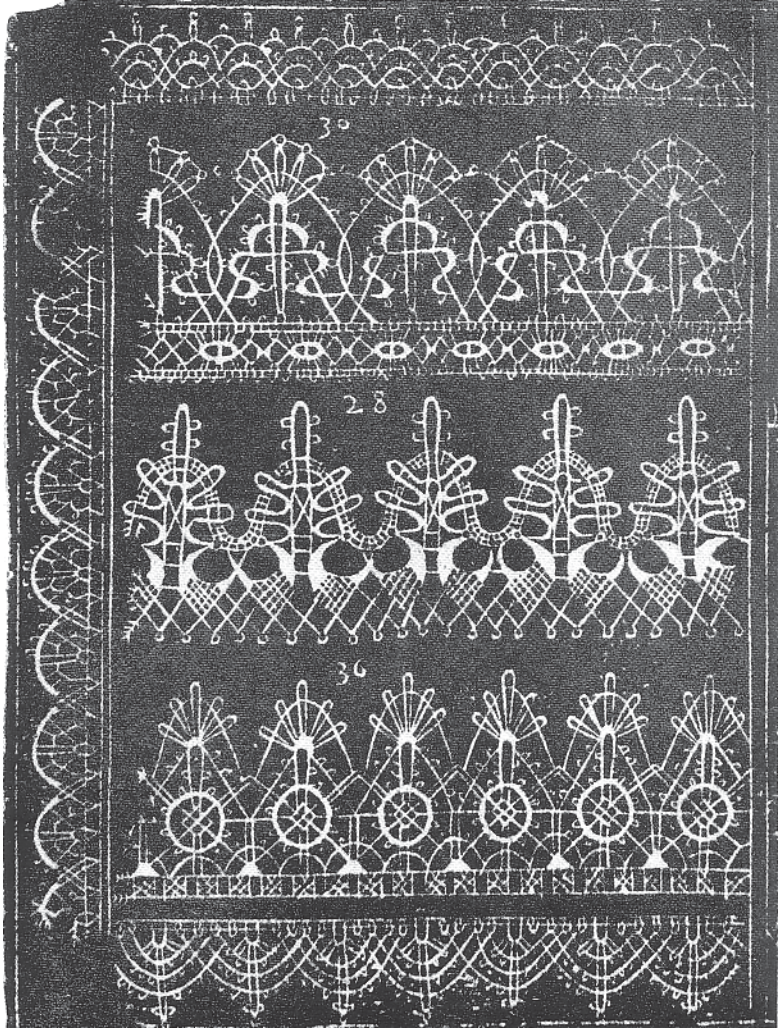


FIG. 2. A PAGE FROM PARASOLE'S "TEATRO," 1616

to revive the style of "Le Pompe." The present representative of Elisabetta Parasole's laces is Cluny, a name at first given to modern copies made at Mirecourt of certain old laces in the Musée Cluny at Paris, but now extended to a number of geometrical guipures.

Besides being the birthplace of the lace industry as far as Europe is concerned, Venice manufactured great quantities of lace, chiefly needle-wrought, but some pillow laces, until into the nineteenth century. At the present day lace is no longer made in Venice itself, but at two places near by, Burano and Pellestrina. Both industries were reorganized about the year 1872 to relieve the distress consequent on a terribly cold winter. Now Burano alone employs four hundred workers.<sup>1</sup>

Directly after the rise of lace-making at Venice, we find it established at GENOA, and whereas Venice for the most part produced point, Genoa chiefly developed pillow lace. The little leaves which have been likened to grains of millet<sup>2</sup> are of Genoese origin, a later development brought about by the change in fashion, which introduced the flat, turned-down collar in place of the quilled ruff. The ruff demanded a light, graceful lace, which all its frilling could not make heavy (see Figs. 3, 4), and for this the first Venetian patterns were admirably adapted. But these laces looked poor and flimsy on the new collars; something richer and heavier was needed (Fig. 5). The curves of the pattern were now formed by tapes

<sup>1</sup> An interesting account of the Burano lace school is given in the "Century Magazine," XXIII, 333.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 95.

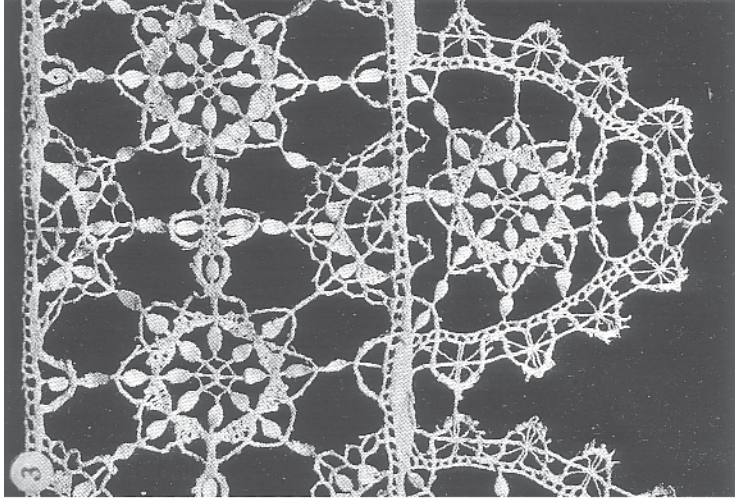


FIG. 3. ITALIAN LACE (ABOUT 1570)

Face page 20

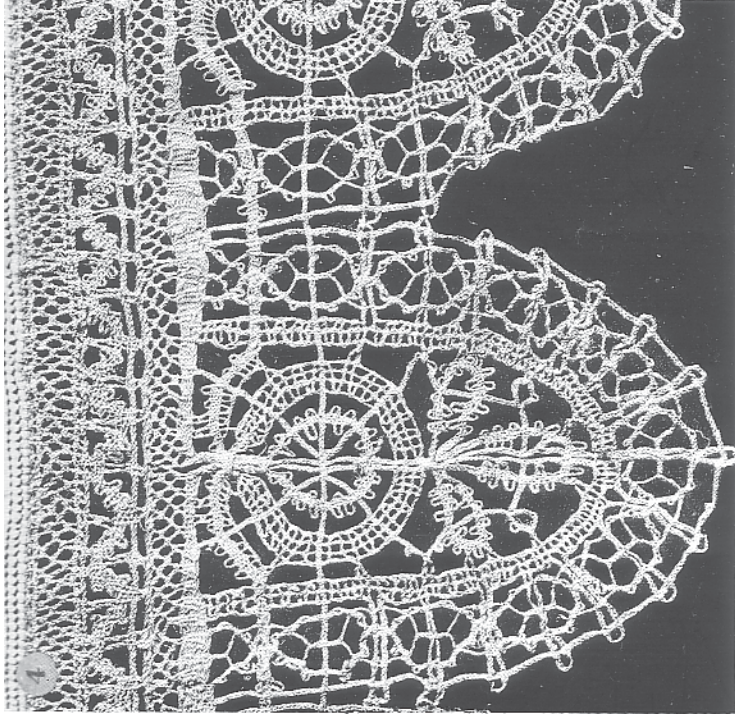


FIG. 4. ITALIAN LACE (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



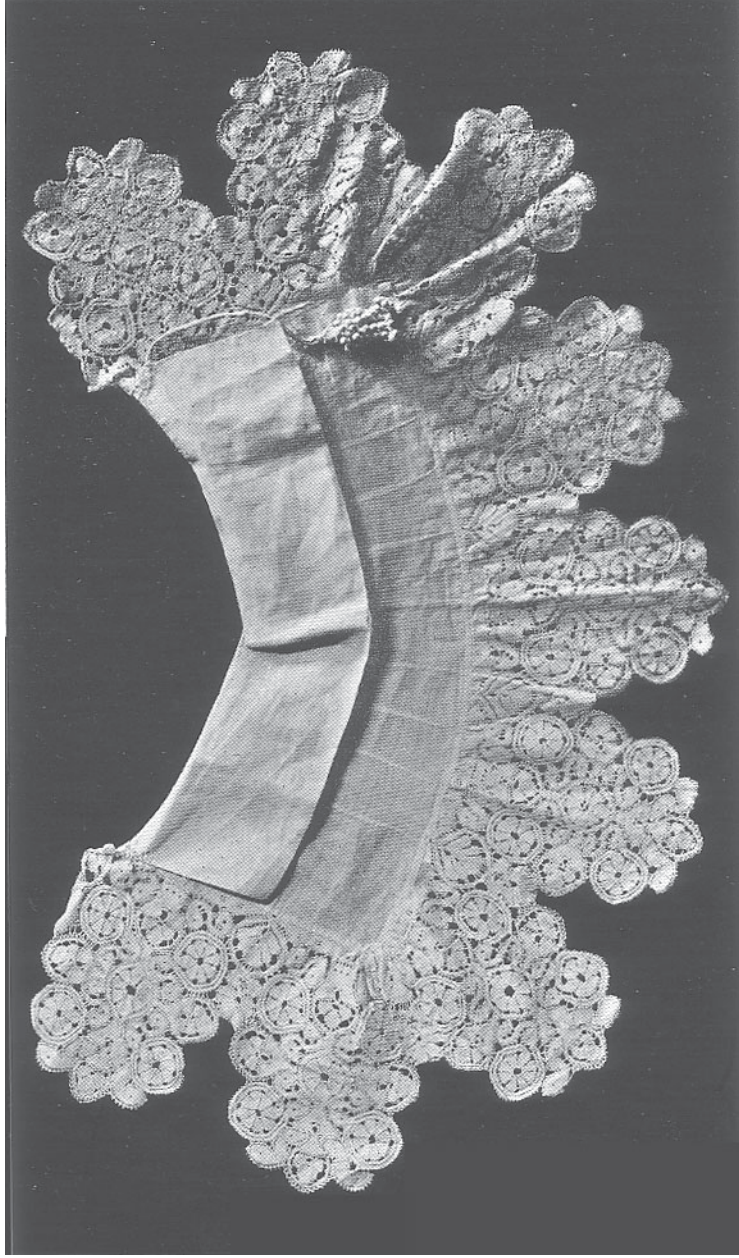


FIG. 5. FLEMISH COLLAR (FIRST HALF OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

instead of plaits (Fig. 6), and these leaves or bars were introduced, probably from reticella (then a very fashionable form of needlework), where they play a most essential part as "bullion stitch." This heavier Genoese lace was made from about 1625 onwards. Its lineal descendant is modern MALTESE, which was introduced into the island by lace-workers brought from Genoa in 1833 by Lady Hamilton-Chichester, wife of a governor of Malta. Though Genoese by extraction, the industry, flourishing exceedingly in Malta, has developed a character of its own, retaining as essential the Genoese leafwork, but very little of its solid tapes, light twists taking their place. Characteristic is also the Maltese cross in the patterns and the cream or black silk in which the lace is usually worked. There is besides some fine thread Maltese lace and a great deal of Torchon made in the island. Great quantities of coarse guipure are made nowadays near Genoa at RAPALLO, and all along the coast from Albissola to Santa Margherita. The patterns have charming boldness and originality, but in the specimens I have seen both workmanship and material left something to be desired.

MILAN early learned the industry from Genoa, evolving a marked style in its productions. Point de Milan (Fig. 7) has copied the Genoese tape guipure, but substituted the Valenciennes ground for the connecting *brides* of the original. It is one of the earliest grounded laces. At the present time the lace trade of the district is carried on at Cantu, near Lake Como.<sup>1</sup>

BOLOGNA distinguished itself as the place of pub-

<sup>1</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 66.



FIG. 6. ITALIAN INSERTION (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

FIG. 7. MILAN POINT (reduced) (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

lication of Bartolomeo Danieli's pattern-books, two of which are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, both dating about 1640. Nearly all the patterns are for points, but the last page of one volume is devoted to most beautiful "Russian laces" (see Fig. 8). Lace is still made in Bologna, where there is a school of lace. There are others at Coccolia near Ravenna, Udine, Pisa, Florence, and Perugia. Friuli and Naples also have lace industries.

Of the lace made at RAGUSA we have very little information, although it was one of the first, and very celebrated in its day. In the little town that is now all that remains of the great Slavonic Republic, which for a century or more disputed the commercial supremacy of Venice herself, gold lace is still produced. The "point de Raguse,"<sup>1</sup> so often mentioned throughout the seventeenth century, may have been gold lace also, but we have no certain data. Louis XIV, after Ragusa had sided with Austria against him in 1667, forbade all importation of "point de Raguse" into France. The present lace industry at Idria and that which in the eighteenth century flourished at Laibach, might, being on Slav territory, have taken their origin from Ragusa; but the nearness of Venice and the fact that Laibach has always spoken German, not Slavonic, point rather to a Venetian source. There are at present State-supported lace schools in the neighbourhood at Idria, Isola, and Chiapovano.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We need not assume that "point de Raguse" was needlework, despite its name, for "point de Milan" is pillow-wrought.

<sup>2</sup> Brockhaus, "Conversations Lexicon," art. Klöppeln.

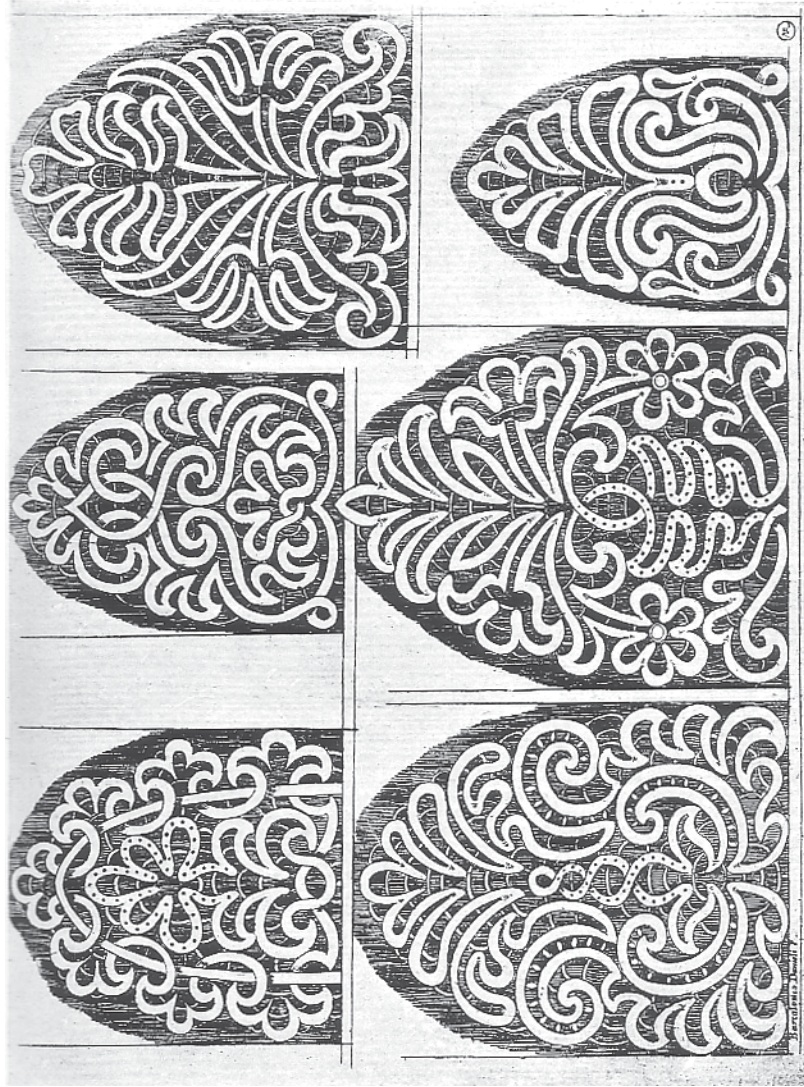
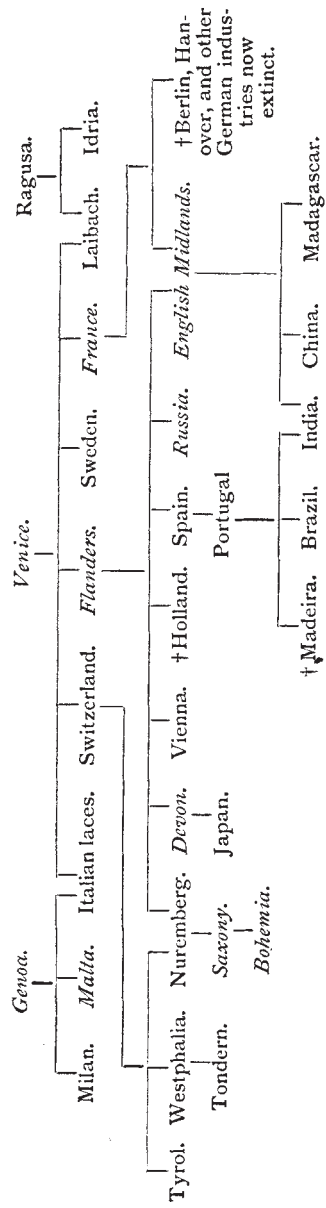


FIG. 8. A PAGE FROM DANIEL'S PATTERN BOOK, ABOUT 1640



NOTE.—The places printed in italics are the most important lace-making centres.  
 In those marked + lace has ceased to be made.

If these industries are of uncertain origin, there are many others which undoubtedly spring from Venice. Indeed, Venice is the mother or grandmother of all European laces except those just mentioned. Her eldest daughter is one of the least important. SWITZERLAND, though it still makes a good deal of Torchon as a peasant industry in the district between Neufchatel and Basel, never excelled in pillow lace from the time when the art reached its full development. But the Swiss interest in lace during the sixteenth century is proved by the publication of three pattern-books—one at Zürich about 1550, another at St. Gall by Georg Straub in 1593, and a third six years later by Ludwig König at Basel. Straub's pattern-book is a reprint of Part III of Vecellio's "Corona."<sup>1</sup> König's designs are Vinciolo's darned net patterns. But the Zürich pattern-book of "R.M.," published by Christoff Froschower, and now surviving in the libraries at Vienna and Munich, is a most important source. Ilg<sup>2</sup> reprints the introduction verbatim, and very interesting it is. The author begins by stating "the art of pillow lace-making (*die kuenst der Dentelschnueren*) has been known and practised for about twenty-five years in our country, for it was first brought in the year 1526 by merchants from Venice and Italy into Germany.<sup>3</sup> . . . Clever women and girls, admiring it,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Geschichte und Terminologie der alten Spitzen," p. 31 f.

<sup>3</sup> This word is not to be understood in its present political sense, but as meaning wherever the German tongue was spoken, including much of Switzerland and Austria.

contrived with great industry and zeal to copy and reproduce the same . . . and invented new models much more beautiful than the first." In technique also the Swiss workers made such progress that the author says, "In my opinion the art has now reached its highest point." There was a growing demand for the new product, and women "could earn a better living at lace than with spindle, needle, shuttle, or anything else of the kind," and the number of lace-makers greatly increased. "At first these laces were only used for shirts,<sup>1</sup> but now they have come to be used on collarettes, round the necks of bodices, on sleeves, caps, as edgings and bindings, on and round aprons and barbers' cloths,<sup>2</sup> on handkerchiefs, table and other linen, pillows and bedclothes, beside many other things which I need not mention. . . . Years ago, when quilting and raised work was in fashion, it took more time than I can tell for a seamstress to make a collarette, or the edging round the neck of a bodice, or such-like, to the great expense of those who employed her in their houses. Now a lace can be bought cheaply and sewn on in a few minutes, and the greater part of the expense spared. When collarettes and the like were worked with gold and silk, people were put to a great expense to wash them with soap: this is now saved, for all these laces being of flax thread can very well be washed with lye." Our author is eminently practical;

<sup>1</sup> i.e. shirts and shifts, whether for day or night wear, and camisoles. Some of the following terms in dress are obsolete and difficult to render exactly.

<sup>2</sup> Or according to Dreger, "coarse cloths."



perhaps "R.M." is the cover for some good housewife shrinking from publicity, but to this the book gives no clue; the only fact divulged is that "R.M." has taught lace-making in Zurich for twelve years. The fruit of this experience is given not only in the patterns, but in suggestions for making broader laces by means of parallel repetitions of any given pattern, and for varying them by the use of coloured threads. Of the patterns themselves some examples may be seen in Dreger's "Geschichte der Spitze";<sup>1</sup> they resemble the more elementary and least successful patterns of "Le Pompe" for plaited laces.

The Swiss lace industry received a fresh impetus from the incoming of French Huguenots after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1689. They settled at Geneva, and to the double exasperation of the Grand Monarch smuggled lace made not only abroad, but by the heretics he had expelled, back into his own territory over the passes of the Jura, which were too inaccessible to keep under surveillance.

Besides the Torchons already mentioned, narrow laces are still made at Neufchatel, with a fine net ground and thick flowers, resembling Lille lace, an unattractive variety that has been made banal by machine copies, and which thickens terribly in washing.

It is a question how far the peasant industry in the TYROL and the former lace trade in NUREMBERG were the outcome of this of Switzerland. For the Tyrol

<sup>1</sup> Sixteen are given.

we have no data; Nuremberg is traditionally supposed to have been taught by Flemish refugees from Alva's persecution, which is quite likely. In the Germanic Museum of that city there are specimens of pillow lace made by a Nuremberg lady about the year 1600 from Vinciolo's patterns.

Infinitely more important is the pillow lace of FLANDERS; indeed, it is in this district that pillow lace ranks the highest as an industry, employing the greatest number of workers and producing laces of the highest grade. This fact, coupled with a natural patriotic feeling, has led Belgian writers to claim for pillow lace a Flemish origin, which is, however, disproved by the later appearance of Flemish laces. According to Séguin, the Low Countries did not start making lace before the arrival of the Duke of Alva in 1567, and from that time until the death of his master Philip II the sufferings of the unhappy country would not have favoured the starting of such an industry.<sup>1</sup> This I hold to be an overstatement of the case, for the Pourbus portrait of 1551, already mentioned,<sup>2</sup> is of a Flemish lady in very Flemish surroundings, and her clothes are decidedly trimmed with lace; nor are they so *recherché*, nor in any other way different from those in other Flemish portraits of the time, that we need assume them to be imported. But whether this is so or not, there is distinct evidence that Flemish lace was later than Italian, in the fact that Flanders published no pillow-lace pattern-book until that of Jean de Glen at Liège in 1597, and de Glen in his

<sup>1</sup> Séguin, pp. 191, 131.

<sup>2</sup> p. 15.

preface himself says that he brought his patterns from Italy. They are a transcript of Vinciolo. Early Flemish laces are copied from Italian models,<sup>1</sup> and more especially from those of Genoa. At first the lighter Genoese style was imitated, the plaits ornamented with leafwork; but soon Flemish taste found its natural bent in the solid, massive patterns of the later Genoese. The original Genoese patterns were mostly based on the use of parallel tapes, which were woven into each other as they were formed. The great change brought into these laces by the Flemings was the substitution of a single tape for three or four and the use of "crochetage"<sup>2</sup> to form the fabric. But this cannot be the *invention* of the Flemings as M. Séguin has it, for as we have already seen "Le Pompe," the earliest Venetian pattern-book, has many designs which necessitate crochetage. This does not, however, prevent that process from being characteristic of Flemish laces, for in them it plays a far more important part than in any others save Russian, which doubtless were copied in the first place from Flemish models. Early seventeenth-century guipures of Flanders and Brabant often consist of a single tape even for the broadest lace, and this tape is not greatly varied as in modern Bruges or Honiton; it is of the same weaving and pretty much of the same width through the whole of its course, and runs unbroken throughout the lace (Fig. 10). The system of crochetage has to this day remained a marked characteristic of Flemish guipures. It was long before French

<sup>1</sup> Ilg, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 94.

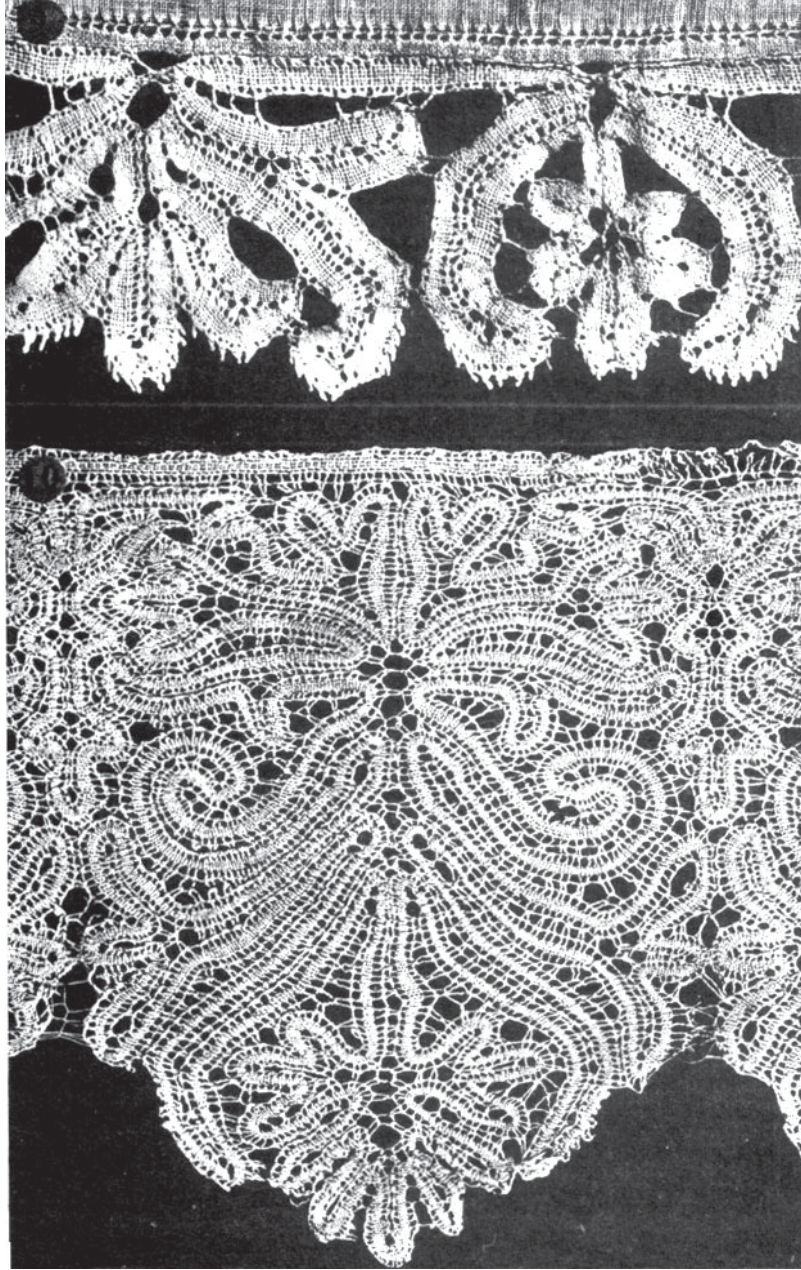


FIG. 9. ITALIAN LACE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)  
FIG. 10. FLEMISH LACE (ABOUT 1630)

lace-makers learnt the process, not indeed until Colbert imported Flemish workers into France in 1665, and it has never become popular in that country.<sup>1</sup>

The Flemings further varied their laces by substituting shallow scallops (Fig. 11) for the deep Vandycks of their models. Later these scallops became flatter and flatter until the nearly straight edges (Fig. 12) of Mechlin and Valenciennes were evolved. Early seventeenth-century Brabant guipures show wonderful boldness and beauty of design; carnations and other flowers are conventionalized in graceful curves of the tape with the greatest success. The eighteenth century brought greater technical skill, such skill as will never be surpassed (Fig. 13); but the designs do not show the same improvement, and by the nineteenth century they had little by little degenerated into the naturalistic flower-pieces of modern Brussels. Some of the finest eighteenth-century guipures were made at Binche, which no longer produces. Brussels has always been their chief centre, especially for the finest kinds; Bruges produces a great quantity, mostly of coarser workmanship; Ghent and St. Trond also make guipures.

Quite a different style of lace ran parallel with the guipures from about the middle of the seventeenth century. The need for a cheaper lace suggested the scattering of heavy *motives* of the guipure order, filling in the intervening spaces with a light groundwork of net, which took less time to make than the thick parts or *mats*. Such laces draped better in folds,

<sup>1</sup> Séguin, pp. 39-40.

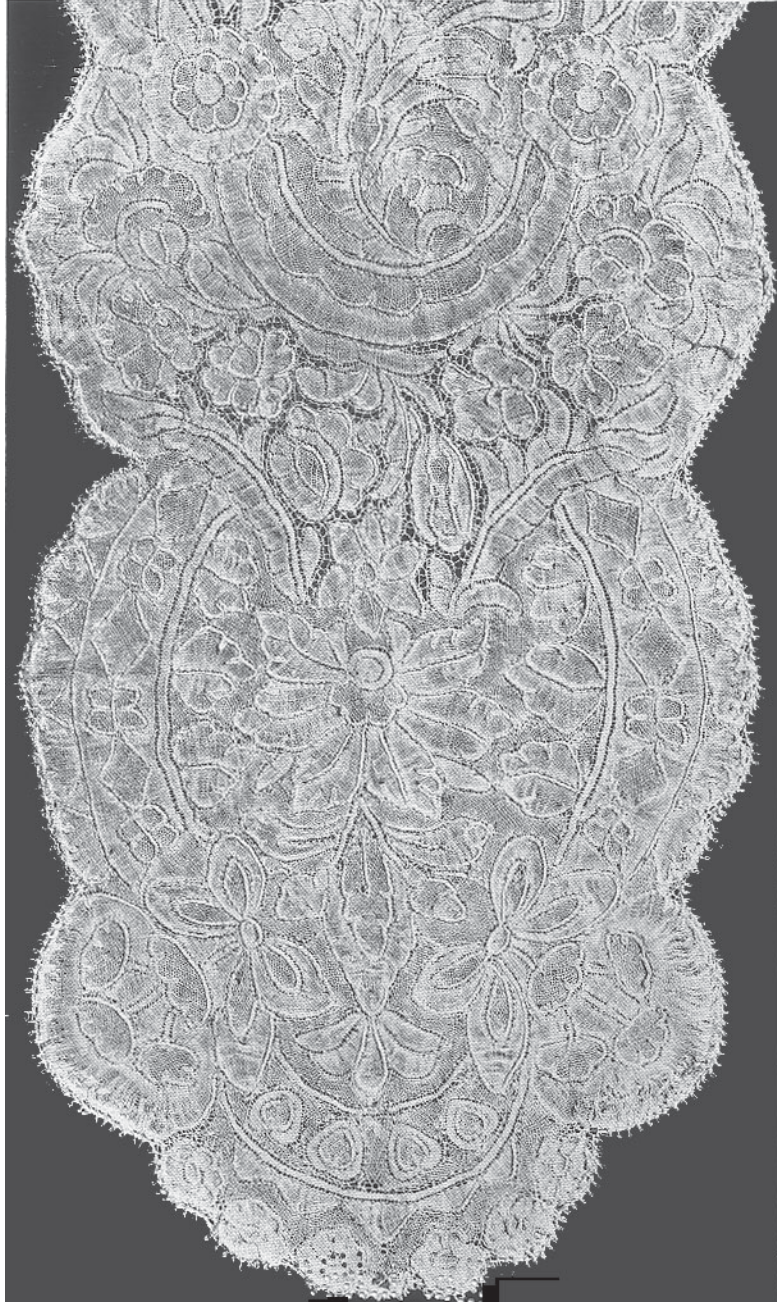


FIG. 13. BRUSSELS LAPPET (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

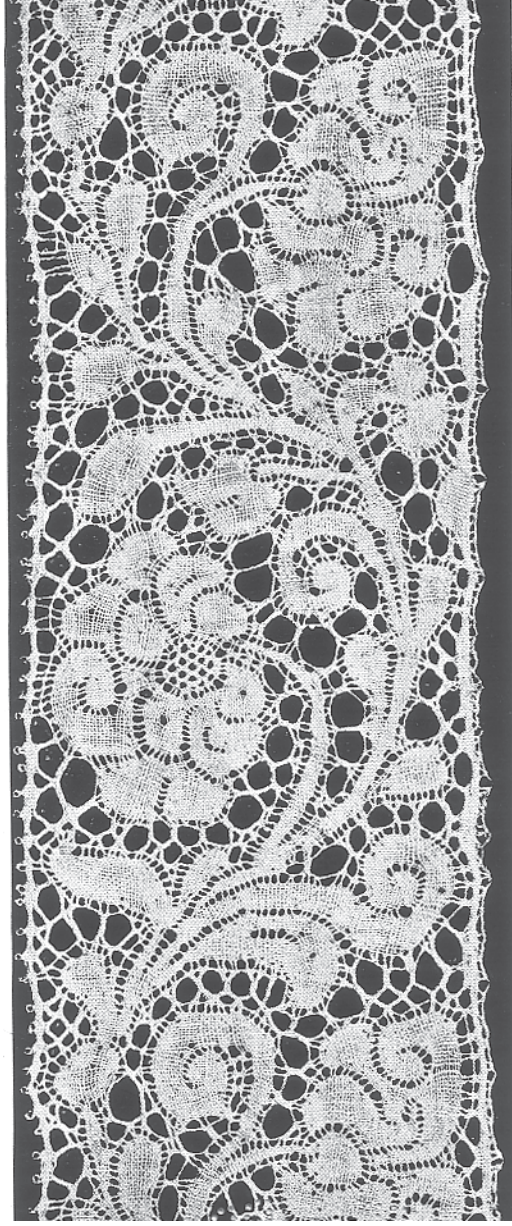


FIG. 12. FLEMISH LACE WITH STRAIGHT EDGES (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

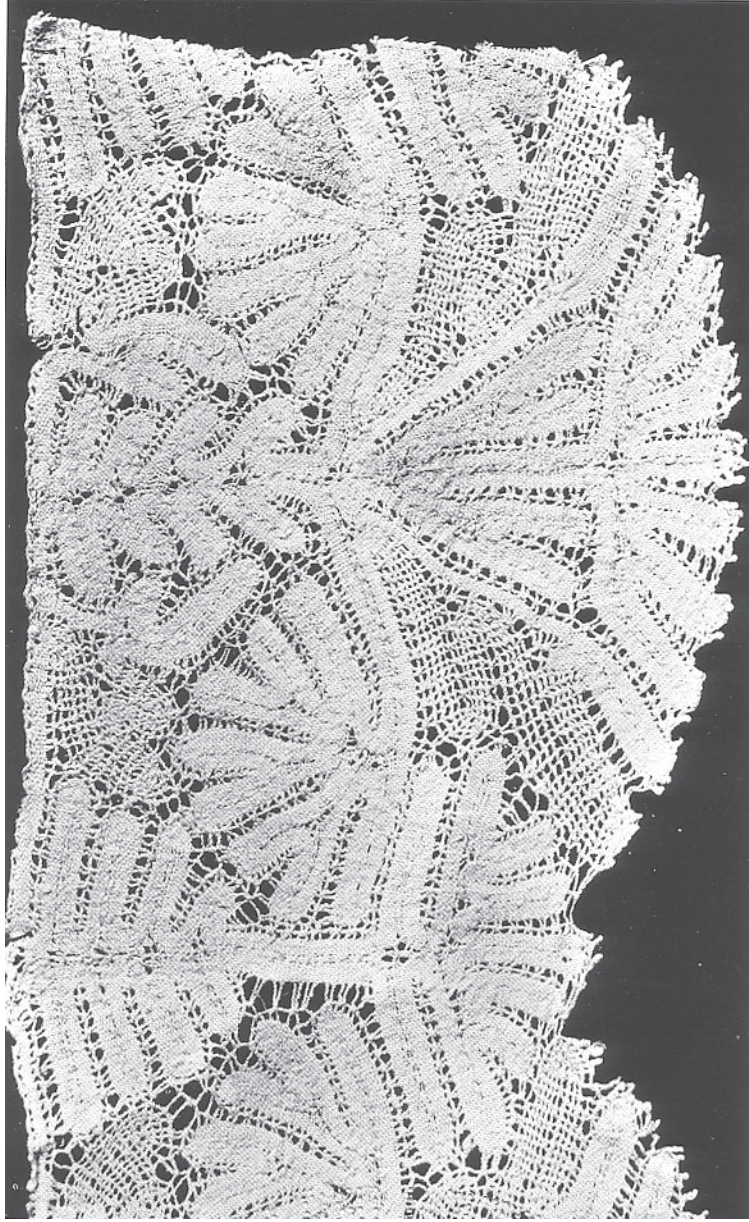


FIG. 11. FLEMISH LACE WITH SHALLOW SCALLOPS (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)



being lighter ; but these folds concealed the pattern, and as less attention was given to the design, it deteriorated. So we come to the exquisite workmanship of MECHLIN and the banality of its patterns. Mechlin and Valenciennes are the two principal Flemish laces of this class—the *dentelles à réseaux* or grounded laces. They are worked to and fro across the pillow, ground and flowers together, which necessitates the use of a great number of bobbins—500 is no uncommon number, for very fine thread is used. Had we never heard of the high prices paid for Mechlin lace, this fact alone would prove that while the origin of these grounded laces lay in an effort at cheapness and simplicity, the new variety soon ranked with Brussels itself in price and quality. It was at its best during the first half of the eighteenth century. It is made in Mechlin itself and at St. Trond and Turnhout. It is more elaborate than Valenciennes, and has a far greater variety of stitches (Fig. 14). The trade of late years has fallen off owing to the fact that Mechlin has been copied by machines with especial assiduity and success.

The same applies to VALENCIENNES (Fig. 15), but this lace, being in its most usual forms cheaper, has resisted better. Its patterns have adapted themselves more successfully to changes in taste, while Mechlin clings to its rococo designs with the greatest tenacity. Valenciennes washes and wears excellently well, and however clever the machine copies may be, they never reproduce the texture or the durability of the real thing. It is made most in the district between

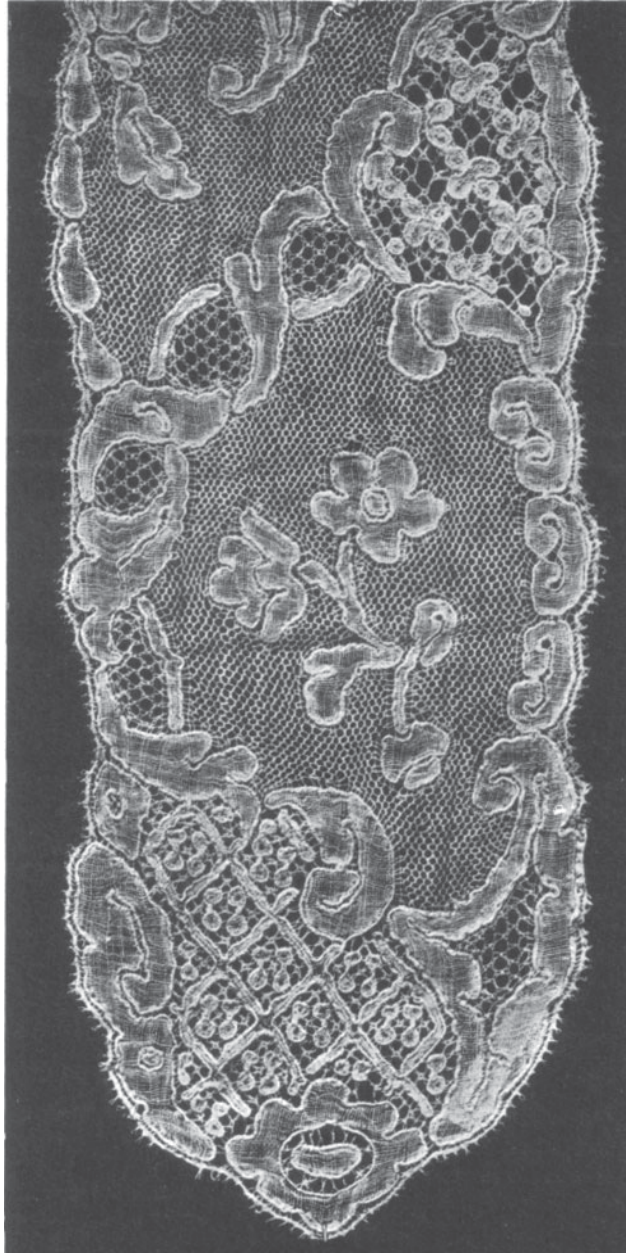


FIG. 14. MECHLIN LAPPET (FIRST HALF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

Poperinghe, Courtrai, and Ghent,<sup>1</sup> also at Valenciennes, Ypres, Alost, and Bruges. In the latter place the convent lace schools make little else, and one of these alone has 420 pupils. These convent schools are not a pleasant sight; most of the little girls have a dazed, stultified look, that very naturally would come from spending hours cooped up with eyes fixed on the fine threads.

During the last thirty years<sup>2</sup> Valenciennes has had a new development—the Brabant variety (Fig. 16), which is worked differently, the thick parts first separately, the background being afterwards worked on to them. These laces are often extremely handsome.

Antwerp formerly made and exported quantities of lace to South America via Cadiz; but that market being closed, the industry has died down except for local use in peasant costumes. The favourite style of pattern was “pottenkant,” i.e. “pot-lace,” so called from the flower-pots on it, which are said to be a reminiscence of the kind of flower-pot almost always present in old pictures of the Annunciation.<sup>3</sup>

Black silk laces are made at Grammont, Enghien, and Oudenarde.<sup>4</sup>

HOLLAND never seems for any length of time to have followed the example of her sister State as to lace, even though more than once French workers took refuge in that country. Such lace as was made there seems to have been needlework.

<sup>1</sup> A. Lefébure, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 130; Ilg, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 134.



FIG. 15. VALENCIENNES LACE (EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)  
FIG. 16.       DITTO       (NINETEENTH CENTURY)

WESTPHALIA probably learnt the art of lace from her Flemish neighbours. There is, I believe, no trace there to-day of the old industry, though in the neighbouring Rhine province the artistic activity of Düsseldorf has produced a modern revival of lace. But Westphalia must have been a centre of the lace trade, for in 1647 Westphalian workers were introduced into TONDERN in Schleswig by a merchant of that town anxious to improve the local lace, which had already been making some thirty years. In 1712 Tondern's lace-makers were reinforced by Flemish women who had followed King Frederick's army from the Netherlands. The industry was at the height of its prosperity during the early years of the nineteenth century. The Flemish character noticeable in the old specimens has given way to that of Northern France and Malta. Tondern is the only place in the old kingdom of Denmark where there ever was a trade in lace, and one of the few in the German Empire where it has survived. It has been said that Venice lace, taking an overland route to Flanders, had left traces behind in Cologne and Augsburg,<sup>1</sup> pattern-books being published in both towns; but it will be found, I think, that the books in question contain no pillow patterns. The only German pattern-book for which I can vouch that it contains pillow patterns is Wilhelm Hoffmann's "Gantz new Modelbuch" of 1607, which gives sketchy indications of seven insignificant narrow edgings for the embroideries which are the main object of the book.

<sup>1</sup> Cole, "Cantor Lectures," p. 8.

Hoffmann had published another set of patterns for cutwork in 1604, but these have no pillow lace among them. The same applies to all the fine works of Hans Siebmacher and to the whole of the very fair collection of old German pattern-books in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The earliest German lace centre is the one still by far the most important, that of the ERZGEBIRGE, which from Saxony has spread into Northern Bohemia. Of the legend concerning this industry we have already spoken. It is more probable that Barbara Uttmann learned what she knew from the Swiss during her girlhood at Nuremberg, teaching her new neighbours at Annaberg after her marriage. There is no reason, as several have done, to explain away Barbara's lace as netting, since we have seen<sup>1</sup> that pillow lace had been common in Switzerland at least twenty years before her marriage, and a commercial city like Nuremberg was bound to have trade relations with the Swiss. There are besides traces of lace industry in the seventeenth century at Nuremberg.<sup>2</sup> Information about the lace trade in Germany during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is very scanty; but there is proof that about the year 1660 the industry was widely spread, in the following extract from J. G. Schoch's "New Poetical Pleasure and Flower-Garden," Leipzig, 1660, which also shows us in what esteem it was held by the cultivated classes: "It is sad to see how common our poems are become nowadays, in what contempt they are held, when

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 24.    <sup>2</sup> Bury Palliser, pp. 264, 44; Ilg, pp. 35, 37.

such fine and excellent songs not only go the rounds of all the village alehouses and taverns, but are even to be found pinned to every lace pillow." We have no trustworthy information about the SAXONY lace trade until 1666,<sup>1</sup> when we hear of it spreading over the Bohemian frontier to Grasslitz. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes brought Protestant French lace-workers to Saxony, and to Prussia, Hanover and Hesse besides. Lace never greatly prospered in those parts, but in Saxony it kept on gaining ground, until in the eighteenth century we hear of Dresden and Meissen laces. In 1766 the Empress of Austria tried to make it spread further on the Bohemian side by offering prizes, and a school was endowed at Prague for the purpose of copying Belgian laces, but the enterprise failed because it was not run on sound commercial lines.<sup>2</sup> After the French Revolution emigrants again stimulated the Saxon trade by introducing lace-making into Leipzig and Halle, besides starting new industries in Hamburg, Berlin, Anspach, and Elberfeld. Berlin alone had at one time 450 workshops.<sup>3</sup> None of these remain to-day, but the Saxon trade is as great as ever. From 1808 to 1817 four State schools for lace were started in Saxony; at present there are twenty-eight, with a special school for pattern-designing at Schneeberg.<sup>4</sup>

French writers constantly affirm that Saxon laces cannot compare with theirs for quality, that design, workmanship, and material are alike inferior. This

<sup>1</sup> Ilg, 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> Brockhaus, "Conversations Lexicon," art. Klöppeln.

may be true as far as Saxon copies of fine French laces are concerned ; but there is a variety of guipure made in the district,<sup>1</sup> sometimes of soft glossy thread, sometimes of coarse cream-coloured silk, of quite distinctive charm. The patterns, though not geometrical, are very conventional, and a good deal of raised work is made on the *mats*, in the shape sometimes of stars, sometimes of sprays of leaves.

A great deal of Torchon is produced, of all qualities, besides Cluny and Maltese. In the winter men work Torchon as well as women, and are supposed to make it better, their tension being usually tighter. The lace-makers have a curious way of amusing themselves by repeating long rhymes, somewhat in the style of "Mother Hubbard" or the "Ten Little Nigger Boys," setting their pins by the rhythm or by the numbers in the rhyme. One is about the cuckoo with thirty wives, and what they each did, another about the twelve geese who stole oats, and so forth. The lace-makers keep count of the number of pins set during the recital and see who has done most work in the time.<sup>2</sup>

Beside the Erzgebirge there is no other lace trade of importance in Germany. Of late years the institution of art trade schools has influenced lace, notably in Düsseldorf, a great centre for the applied arts.

As to AUSTRIA, there is the old industry in Croatia already mentioned, and one in the Tyrol, with four

<sup>1</sup> See chapter XI.

<sup>2</sup> These rhymes are given in Alfred Müller's "Volkslieder aus dem Erzgebirge," 1891, p. 214.



State-endowed schools at Proveis, Luserna, Predazzo, and Calavino. Besides these, a central school at Vienna is devoted to the making of new patterns. This school has published the best, and so far the only scientific manual of lace, a great folio work by Carl Jamnig and Adelheid Richter. It is a collection of beautiful photographs of plaited and Russian laces, progressively arranged with clear explanatory notes.

The Austrian industry long kept in touch with Belgium. Vienna attracted lace-makers from Flanders, while both were under the same government, and in the middle of the eighteenth century the Emperor Francis summoned the sisters van der Cruyce from Brussels to teach lace-making there.<sup>1</sup>

The peasants in HUNGARY make "Russian" laces, but probably more for home use than for commerce; for though we see specimens in museums, no Hungarian town figures as a trade centre.

Of far greater consequence is the lace trade in FRANCE, for nearly half of the total half-million of lace-makers in Europe are French.<sup>2</sup> It was also one of the first countries to make lace, learning in all probability direct from Italy in the middle of the sixteenth century. The pedlars of Auvergne fetched most of their wares from Italy and travelled far and wide in France, carrying their stock-in-trade on their backs, and in company with their wives and children. Séguin<sup>3</sup> traces to them the introduction of

<sup>1</sup> *Ilg*, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 188; it should be remembered that these figures refer not only to pillow lace, but to points.

<sup>3</sup> p. 22.

the lace trade into Auvergne, le Velay, and Lorraine, as well as some parts of Burgundy. It was with one of these travelling lacemen that Claude Lorraine, the painter, first visited Italy in his boyhood.

Catherine de Medici set the fashion for lace in Paris. She brought from Florence in her suite Frederic Vinciolo, who was appointed pattern-maker for laces and needlework to the Court. He published a number of pattern-books at Paris, mostly for needle-point and darned net, but that of 1623 is said to have contained eight pillow patterns. Séguin's criticism is that Vinciolo shows an ignorance of technical detail; consequently his patterns are not well contrived.

During the reign of Henry III (1574-89) lace began to play a more important part in French fashions, especially as an edging to the frilled ruffs then in vogue. In the last years of Henry IV (1589-1610) ruffs gave place to turned-over collars of linen edged with lace. These, as we saw, demanded a heavier style of trimming, and consequently the lace of this time is richer in character, becoming later on richer still, when the large linen collars were replaced by small turned-down collars, made entirely, or almost entirely, of lace.

The reign of Henry IV is the most prolific in French lace pattern-books. Most of the needle-point patterns of Vinciolo appeared at this time, but they do not concern our purpose. Séguin mentions what seems to be an important pattern-book, published at Montbelliard by Jacques Foillet in 1598. But with due respect to M. Séguin's authority, I feel

doubts as to the existence of this book. Only one copy is mentioned, that of the "Bibliothèque Nationale" in Paris, and this is said to have been lost years ago. Foillet published in the same year a collection of patterns for cutwork, and it may be that the idea of the existence of a second collection is due to some confusion.

In 1605, however, there is a well-authenticated French pattern-book, or one might say Anglo-French, that of the "très excellent Milour<sup>1</sup> Matthias Mignerak, anglois ouvrier fort expert en toute sorte de lingerie." It was edited and published by Jean le Clerc at Paris under the title of "La Pratique de l'Aiguille Industriuse." For the most part it contains patterns for darned net, remarkable for their methodical arrangement and strange subjects. The author seems to have had in mind the construction of some great coverlid in squares, some with scenes, others with flower-pots or trees for variety. The scenes are most ambitious, representing Danae with the shower of gold, Lucretia piercing her breast, the elements, the seasons, "la Charité Romaine," and other curious pictures. At the end of the book he gives twelve patterns of "passements faits au Fuzeau," which is all that directly concerns us. They are much in the style of Parasole, but show less practical knowledge than do most of hers.

The pattern-book published by Vinciolo in 1623 falls in the next reign. Unfortunately no copy is accessible to me. It seems to have been the last

<sup>1</sup> My lord.

French pillow-lace pattern-book published.<sup>1</sup> Ladies had given up practising the art of pillow lace; it had already developed into styles more difficult for an amateur to copy than the light easy patterns of "Le Pompe" or even those of Parasole. They reverted to needle points, which needed no special training nor tools, leaving pillow lace to professional workers. These latter for the most part kept to two or three patterns, at which they constantly worked, a woman sometimes rearing a whole family on the produce of a single pattern not an inch broad. So though lace-making developed into a fine art, patterns were less and less in demand.

From the time of Henry IV<sup>2</sup> lace, which had thus far been used on body and house linen, came into more general use, and soon was worn on everything down to garters, shoes and boot tops, trimming equipages, coffins, and even baths. But though this was the case, the French lace trade does not seem to have been very large, most of the commodity being imported. Cardinal Mazarin tried to suppress the importation of foreign laces and improve the small home manufacture by the purchase of patterns in Italy and the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> During the first half of the seventeenth century many edicts were issued with this intention. No laces were to be worn save those made in the kingdom, and not above a certain value per ell; or laces were to be allowed only on the collar and edge of the cloak, on the sleeve seams and down the middle of the back, along the buttons

<sup>1</sup> Séguin, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Séguin, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ilg, 49.

and button-holes, and at the edge of the basques of the doublet,<sup>1</sup> and so forth, with an infinity of detail. Mostly the idea is to prevent waste of money, and especially the squandering of it on foreign products ; but an ordonnance at Le Puy, in 1640, forbids lace on the ground of its obliterating class distinctions, since it was worn by all classes, and still more because of the "servant question," so many women making lace that it was impossible to obtain servants.

Mazarin's successor in office, Jean Baptiste Colbert, was not at all of the opinion of the parlement of Le Puy. Chief among the various industrial enterprises which he set on foot to revive the commerce and finance of the country was the lace trade.<sup>2</sup> Till then unimportant for the kingdom as a whole, it has ever since the time of Colbert been a real item in French commerce. We have seen that ten years before Colbert's coming into office<sup>3</sup> the industry played a great part already in the district of Le Puy ; and at the beginning of the seventeenth century Catherine de Rohan, Duchess of Longueville, had brought workers from Havre and Dieppe to Chantilly.<sup>4</sup> But Colbert introduced the lace trade into many new districts, first starting a school in the castle of Lonray, at Alençon,<sup>5</sup> the property of his daughter-in-law. This was followed by others at Quesnoy, Arras, Reims, Sedan, Château Thierry, Loudun, and Aurillac—some for point, some for pillow lace. He showed discernment

<sup>1</sup> Séguin, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> His activity is well summed up in the "Edinburgh Review," 1872, p. 51 ff.

<sup>3</sup> He became King's Councillor in 1651.

<sup>4</sup> Ilg, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Alençon became a great centre for needlepoint.

in developing the pillow-lace industry especially in the towns of the Flemish frontier, which were already used to seeing the laces made by their Belgian neighbours.<sup>1</sup> Besides providing for the instruction of workers in the different towns by competent lace-makers, many of whom he had, with infinite pains and secrecy, brought from Venice through the agency of the French ambassador there, he started a central institution for the working out of new patterns at the Château de Madrid in Paris. This supplied models to all the other centres in France, and exercised a most happy influence on French taste. The years from the time of Colbert's coming into power until nearly the end of the reign form the most brilliant period in the evolution of lace. The patterns in use were extremely elaborate and closely woven, but neither clumsy nor clothly in effect, and the execution shows a sureness and mastery over all the infinity of bobbins required that leaves one puzzling how, with such primitive tools, it was ever possible to realize such complex and perfect tissues, rendering so many degrees of light and shade, of high and low relief.

The end of the reign of Louis XIV was, however, a time of general exhaustion, and the lace trade naturally suffered with the rest. The Château de Madrid ceased to supply patterns.<sup>2</sup> The impoverished nobles could no longer pay such heavy prices for the beautiful guipures, and lace took a new development. Designs covering the whole of a piece

<sup>1</sup> Cole, "Cantor Lectures," p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Séguin, p. 68.

of lace were replaced by scattered *motifs*, and the space between them was filled by some soft light grounding (Fig. 18). Somewhat less time and a good deal less skill were needed in making these grounded laces. The fashion of the time demanded a lace that would frill; their texture was soft, and they draped gracefully in folds, which concealed the pattern, so that less attention was paid to boldness and beauty of design. These laces continued in fashion throughout the reign of Louis XV, and have ever since formed the greater proportion of French pillow laces—for instance, Chantilly, Lille, and the blonds of Bayeux. The Vosges, however, and Le Puy have retained older traditions—not those of Colbert, but of the early seventeenth-century guipures. For the beautiful guipures of the best period, such as those of Sedan, we look nowadays in vain. Indeed, it is most unlikely that any one in the future would be content to lavish skill, time, and eyesight in such extravagance on a few square inches of lace, even for the satisfaction of making it a world's wonder; and if one sometimes regrets the lost art, one is more than reconciled to the loss by the improved condition of the worker.

The following reign brought worse times for lace. To neglect in the matter of design had succeeded absolute indifference (Fig. 17). Marie Antoinette introduced the fashion of fichus of muslin or of the bobbin-net made at Tulle, and named after that town. These with their folds and frills replaced lace to a great extent. When lace was used to trim them, it was



FIG. 17. FRENCH LAPPET (LOUIS XVI)  
FIG. 18. FRENCH LACE (LOUIS XV)



frilled on full, and any insignificant pattern served the purpose. The French Revolution was not likely to encourage the art; indeed, it is said that some lace-makers of Chantilly were guillotined because they had worked for the queen. Under the Directoire, the Consulate, and well into the First Empire, the classical fashion of dress prevented much use of lace except on underwear, and as this last was during that time in France of the slightest character, the lace trade continued to suffer. Napoleon, with characteristic grasp of detail, recognized its importance for the country and encouraged it by large purchases, and by making lace obligatory on Court dresses.<sup>1</sup> He himself chose the laces for Marie Louise's *corbeille de noce*, spending over 80,000 francs on them.

An event occurred in 1817 which proved of the greatest importance for the lace trade in France, but whether for good or evil it is difficult to say. Machines for the manufacture of "bobbin-net" were smuggled from England to Lyons, and henceforward the hand-made groundwork of the time of Louis XV was frequently supplanted by net, on to which separate hand-made *motifs* were sewed. This combination can never be anything but a cheap substitute; the texture of machine net cannot compare with the gloss and soft elasticity of pillow-made grounds. Machine-made nets were also sprigged and run by hand in the fashion of Limerick lace; such French work is nowadays called *dentelle bretonne*. Twenty years later the Jacquard looms brought in the first pos-

<sup>1</sup> A. Lefébure, p. 34.

sibilities of regular machine-made lace. This in France, as everywhere else, has damaged the interests of the handworker, an uncultivated eye not grasping the differences in the two fabrics. Indeed, with modern improvements in lace machines it has become difficult sometimes even for a trained eye to do so. But after all there is no need to despair of the old handicraft. Séguin<sup>1</sup> most happily explains one of the reasons why machine-made lace cannot equal the hand work that it imitates: "In machine work the operating force is uniform, continually the same, hence there is always an equal tension in the threads and a perfectly regular tissue is produced, but at the same time perfectly flat. Hand work, on the contrary, is bound to be irregular, because, though the worker's hand represents a force of a uniform strength, its action is unequal and cannot be regulated in the same way as can a mechanical force." He goes on to point out the advantage of this irregularity by alluding to the uneven surface of hand-woven cashmere shawls "presenting an infinite succession of waves and little imperceptible roughnesses, which catch the light and cast shadows," making a surface vastly different from anything a machine can produce; different in somewhat the same way in which the inside of a limpet shell differs from that of a "sea-ear." The one is flat, dead white; the other by its irregularities breaks the light into the prismatic colours we call mother-o'-pearl, and these colours

<sup>1</sup> p. 93.

depend only on the uneven surface of the shell; a cast taken in sealing-wax will reproduce them.

It must also be remembered that the best flax thread is too soft to bear the tension needed by a machine, hence the "poor" texture of machine laces, whose thread has perforce been adulterated with cotton in order to make it more resisting.

Besides, it will always be costly to vary patterns on lace machines frequently, and taste will never tolerate wholesale consumption of a single pattern in trimmings. As soon as a collar is widely known it ceases to please, so that even if machine laces were far more generally successful in imitation than they are, the art of lace-making is not likely to fall into disuse.

Some help is being afforded to the industry in France by legislation,<sup>1</sup> and a good deal more by the enterprise of different lace firms, the heads of which have contrived to interest the public by lectures and the publication of books.<sup>2</sup> It is doubtless owing to the intelligent guidance and good taste of such men that France preserves so high a reputation for her laces.

Her chief district for fine pillow laces at the present day is Normandy, whither the old Chantilly industry has been transferred, owing to the increasing cost of living round Paris.<sup>3</sup> Caen and Bayeux are the two centres, and a great deal of silk blond and black silk

<sup>1</sup> A. Lefébure, 93 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The works so frequently cited here, by J. Séguin, A. Lefébure, and E. Lefébure, are instances.

<sup>3</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 215.

lace is made. Of Valenciennes we have spoken in considering Belgium, for that lace is made in far greater quantity across the frontier. Lille, I believe, still produces fine narrow lace *à réseau*. More important by far is the Vosges district, with Mirecourt as head-quarters of the trade. A variety of guipures, some copies of sixteenth and seventeenth century models, some modern and elaborate, are made here. Le Puy also produces a great quantity of admirable coarse guipures (Fig. 19).

THE SPANISH LACE TRADE is and always has been of far less consequence than one would expect. Spain has published no lace pattern-books.<sup>1</sup> The general theory is that she learned lace-making from Flanders, but at what period is disputed. Riaño doubts the existence of a native industry before the eighteenth century,<sup>2</sup> Spain up to that time depending for the commodity, which was in great demand, on imports from Flanders and France. Mrs. Bury Palliser, however, states that pillow lace was made in La Mancha and Catalonia before 1665,<sup>3</sup> and A. S. Cole that the lace trade of Barcelona was worked up after Flemish models toward the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> This earlier dating is supported by the mention of Spanish "gueuse" (a kind of coarse guipure, or according to others Torchon) in the often quoted satirical French poem of the "Révolte des Passements" published at the time of the sumptuary edict of 1660. That these old Spanish laces were coarse and of no

<sup>1</sup> Cole, "Cantor Lectures," p. 25.      <sup>2</sup> Riaño, p. 275.  
<sup>3</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 44.      <sup>4</sup> "Cantor Lectures," p. 8.

distinction is seen also from the testimony of a Spanish author, quoted by Riaño, who, writing in 1775, says: "Lace is employed to a very considerable extent; all the fine qualities come from foreign lands, and the greater varieties of the coarse ones. Spanish matrons, among other branches of their education, are taught to make lace of different kinds, and many respectable people live on this industry." The districts in which pillow lace was then made were Madrid, Barcelona, La Mancha, Almagro, Zamora, Granatula, and Manzanares; and there was quite a lively industry both in thread, silk, and gold laces. Coarse thread laces are to this day a staple of trade at Barcelona and in Catalonia, as also are silk blonds. Gold and silver lace is made at Barcelona, Talavera de la Reyna, Valencia, and Seville.

As to PORTUGAL little information is obtainable. At present pillow lace is made in and near Lisbon, at Vianna do Castello, Setubal, and Faro in Algarve.<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese seem to have had a hand in teaching the art to several other peoples; Ceylon, Travancore, and other Indian laces are said to have a Portuguese character.<sup>2</sup>

MADEIRA must have learned from the governing country, but the lace trade of the island does not seem destined to flourish. It had died out in 1850, when it was re-established by an English lady, and managed later on to support seven families. It does not take much to support the natives of Madeira. But in 1901, in spite of diligent inquiry in Funchal, I

<sup>1</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

could find no trace of any such work beyond Swiss embroidery and a little drawn thread.

A more creditable pupil of Portugal is BRAZIL. Here again there is no information accessible, but the Victoria and Albert Museum has a number of Brazilian specimens of what may perhaps best be called Torchons, but that have a charm and character quite beyond what one is accustomed to connect with that class of lace. The ground is Torchon, but the figures are varied and well chosen, the workmanship excellent.

ENGLAND has two principal lace-making districts; Devon is one, and a part of the South Midlands, including Northampton, Bedford, and Buckingham, the other. Each has a distinct character; the Devonshire lace (Honiton) resembling Flemish guipure, such as Brussels (Fig. 22), while the older<sup>1</sup> Midland patterns have a mixed character, Flemish of the Antwerp and Mechlin kinds on the one hand, and French (Lille and Norman) on the other. They are always grounded, never guipure (Figs. 20, 21). And these characteristics have their origin in history, for Devon learnt early from Flemish refugees from Alva's persecution, learning apparently once and for all; there is no record of the little community that brought the art, nor of any subsequent arrivals. The older guipure lace was mastered and retained. In the Midlands, on the other hand, we have evidence of many successive arrivals of Flemings, later of French Huguenots, and last of French *émigrés* from

<sup>1</sup> After the 1851 Exhibition these patterns gave way to Maltese.



FIG. 22. HONITON LAPPET (FIRST HALF NINETEENTH CENTURY)

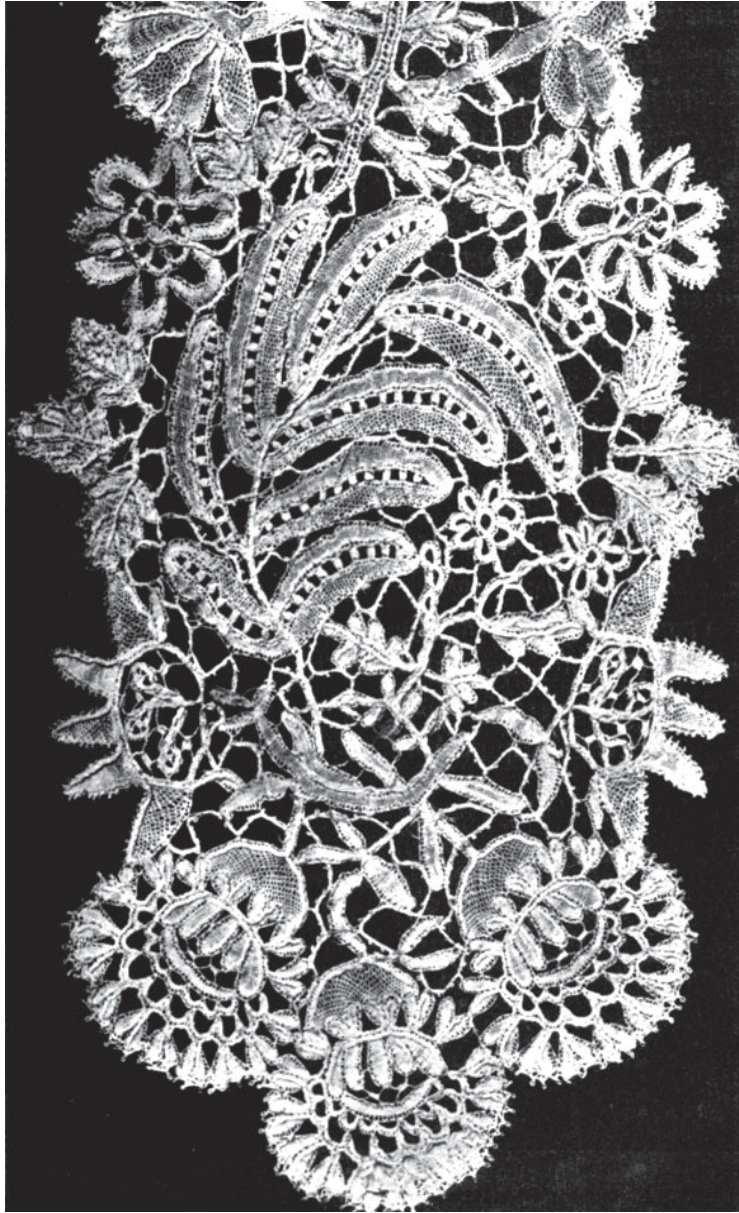


FIG. 22. HONITON LAPPET (FIRST HALF NINETEENTH CENTURY)



the Revolution. The Midlands then had opportunity to learn the later forms of grounded laces, and these it was that came to stay. The Flemish origin of many of these laces is shown not only by the patterns, but by Flemish terms the lace-makers use, such as "trolley" for gimp.

We hear of "bone lace" in England as early as 1554, when Sir Thomas Wyatt went to his execution in a ruff trimmed with it.<sup>1</sup> But we do not seem to have distinguished ourselves in pattern-making, except in as far as we may lay claim to the "très excellent Milour Matthias Mignerak anglois."<sup>2</sup> Despite le Clerc's testimony to his nationality, his outlandish name makes one sceptical of English parentage. Another who, like Mignerak, has a name more Flemish than English is Richard Shorleyker; but at least his book is printed "in Shoelane at the signe of the Faulcon 1632," and with a good English title, "A Scholehouse for the Needle." His patterns closely resemble those of Mignerak, but not having been able to compare them directly one with the other,<sup>3</sup> I cannot definitely state what I more than suspect—that he republishes the older patterns. An earlier book (1596) of "curious and strange Inventions," published "for the profit and delight of the Gentlewomen of England," by William Barley, contains no pillow-lace patterns, and is on its own confession reprinted from a Venetian pattern-book.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

<sup>1</sup> A. M. S., p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Mignerak is in the British Museum, Shorleyker at South Kensington.

both area and importance of the English lace trade were considerably greater than they are now. The Midland district included Cambridge, Hertford, and Oxford, joining by Wiltshire the southern one, which stretched from Hampshire to Cornwall.<sup>1</sup> In 1698 a petition to Parliament calls the "lace manufacture in England the greatest next to the woollen," and estimates the number of workers earning a living by it at one hundred thousand.<sup>2</sup> Earlier is Thomas Fuller's testimony, and so charmingly worded that it must be quoted in full, as it stands in his "Worthies" under Devonshire's manufactures.<sup>3</sup>

"Bonelace. Much of this is made in and about Honyton, and weekly returned to London. Some will have it called Lace, à *Lacinia*, used as a fringe, on the borders of cloaths; *Bone-lace* it is named, because first made with *bone* (since *wooden*) *bobbins*. Thus it is usual for such utensills both in the Latine and English Names, gratefully to retain the memory of the first matter they were made of; as *Cochleare*, a *Spoon*, (whether made of Wood or Metal) because Cockle-shells were first used to that purpose.

"Modern is the use thereof in *England*, not exceeding the middle of the Raign of Queen *Elizabeth*: Let it not be condemned for a superfluous wearing, because it doth neither hide nor heat, seeing it doth adorn: Besides, (though private persons pay for it) it stands the State in nothing, not expensive of Bullion, like other Lace, costing nothing save a little thread descanted on by art and industry: Hereby many

<sup>1</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. 1662, p. 246.

children, who otherwise would be burthensome to the Parish, prove beneficial to their Parents: Yea, many lame in their limbs, and impotent in their arms, if able in their fingers, gain a lively-hood thereby; Not to say, that it saveth some thousands of pounds yearly, formerly sent over Seas, to fetch Lace from Flanders."

Save to England some thousands of pounds yearly it very well might, considering the orices paid in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Dorset and Devon lace fetched £6 per yard, and lest it be assumed that this was specially wide, we may add that a narrow piece of Lyme Regis lace, enough to set on plain round an old woman's cap, was valued at four guineas.<sup>1</sup> Defoe speaks of the exquisitely fine lace of Blandford, rated above £30 sterling a yard. £15 was paid for an 18-inch square of plain bobbin net made at Honiton. It must be remembered that the fine thread needed was also excessively dear; in 1790 it was brought from Antwerp at £70 the pound. Still there was a handsome margin for profit, and it is no wonder that the trade spread. Ripon and Suffolk produced lace, and in 1775 an attempt was made under the patronage of Queen Charlotte to teach poor London children, but without lasting effect.

In England, as indeed everywhere else, a marked decline in the lace industry began from about 1780 onwards. This is partly accounted for by the pseudo-classical fashions in dress, which then prevailed all over Europe, partly by the burden wars had laid on

<sup>1</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 398.

the country, and also by the increasing use of machine-made trimmings and of muslins. From the time of Queen Adelaide royal patronage was secured to Honiton lace, but the industry languished until for a while it was galvanized into life by the Great Exhibition of 1851. This impetus was counteracted by the perfecting of lace machines, and it is not likely that pillow lace will ever again recapture the second place among British industries.

Of late years, however, fashion has brought lace into great prominence, and the increased demand has caused revivals of various local industries. Winchelsea, for instance, where lace had long been forgotten, now owns a school with a score of pupils; and among other patterns, a rough design of hops, supposed to have originated in the place itself, is made once more. Suffolk has again taken to lace-making. The Midlands, where since the time of the 1851 Exhibition quantities of cotton lace of Maltese pattern had been produced, now provide a much greater variety of styles (Fig. 23).

Even more encouraging is the improvement in design noticeable in Honiton laces, due to the initiative of several ladies who have lace schools, or have interested themselves in making new patterns or adapting old Italian ones. Honiton lace has always deserved its reputation for workmanship, but its patterns had till lately been going from bad to worse, formed as they were of naturalistic flowers and insects, without any attempt at continuity of design, and very little at broad effect, for which there is so

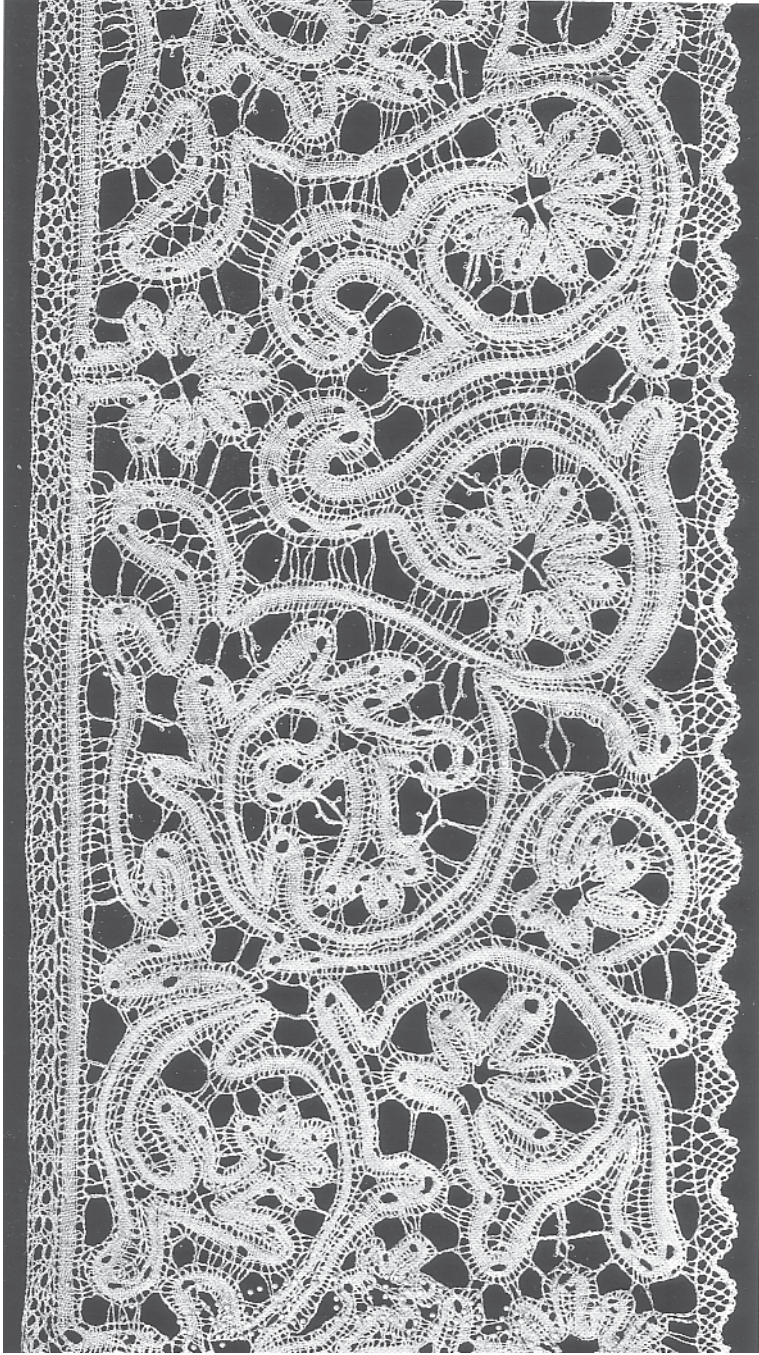


FIG. 23. MODERN "RUSSIAN" LACE (MADE AT THE WINSLOW LACE SCHOOL)

much scope in the well-known Honiton bridal veils and state dresses.

A. S. Cole, in a parliamentary report on Honiton lace (1888, vol. LXXX), quite accounts for the ugliness of these patterns. A lace-worker at Beer told him how they were designed. "Sometimes we see a new wall-paper and prick a pattern off it, changing a bit here, or leave a little or add a little." Another adapted her patterns from "wall-papers, tablecloths, or anything." The sprigs thus devised out of cottage wall-papers were made separately, and sold to some other worker to join together in one confused mosaic. If patterns of a different character were chosen, "the gentlefolks called it machine."

In IRELAND pillow lace is a negligible quantity compared with the allied arts of point lace, crochet, and various forms of linen embroidery. There seems to be a small peasant industry at Carrickfergus in narrow pillow laces, and some of the convents, among them the one at Parsonstown, copy Honiton patterns.<sup>1</sup>

SCOTLAND<sup>2</sup> has never dealt much in lace, though several attempts have been made to introduce the industry. One was at Edinburgh in the middle of the eighteenth century by the Duchess of Hamilton, one of the beautiful Miss Gunnings. A quarter of a century later a woman from Lille taught lace-making in Glasgow and Renfrew. Neither of these industries seems to have survived, but better fortune

<sup>1</sup> Cole, "Dublin Lectures," II, p. 19, and Bury Palliser, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 428.

attended one at New Pitsligo, Aberdeenshire,<sup>1</sup> where, soon after 1820, a cobbler's wife from Huntly began lace-making, and, the clergyman and laird interesting themselves in the matter, the village took it up. Thirty or forty workers are still employed, some on quite elaborate patterns.

Before we leave the subject of British laces, we must mention the influence of missionaries in teaching our patterns to Indians, Chinese, and, I believe, to the Malagasy. The India and China Museum at South Kensington has a collection of Indian laces, which for the most part plainly speak to the influence of the Midland patterns, both the older French and Flemish kinds and the modern Maltese. From the labels of the collection, it is evident that the lace industry is not confined to the missionary schools, but has spread among the ladies of Bombay and other towns. The thread laces show little or no originality, but the gold and silver lace seems to bear marks of being a true native product.

About the age of the RUSSIAN lace industry opinions differ. Its origin has been traced<sup>2</sup> to Peter the Great, who was said to have introduced it to Novgorod from France, but this, on the face of it, is false. It is characteristic of French laces that they none of them employ *crochetage*, and equally characteristic of Russian ones that they nearly always do so. Peter, if he introduced the industry, must have chosen Flemish workers, for Russian lace is most akin to the

<sup>1</sup> Article in the "Weekly Scotsman" of 2 September, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Bury Palliser, p. 283.

guipures of Flanders and Brabant. There is indeed a tradition to the effect that in 1725 he brought lace-makers from various convents in Brabant to the convent of Novodevitschy to teach lace-making and spinning.

It is difficult to determine whether or no it is patriotism that prompts Madame Davydoff to set the origin of Russian lace back into the Middle Ages. Slavs as a rule make better patriots than pedants, and there are many well-known cases where they have let their national feeling run away with them to the extent of inventing all kinds of past achievements for their ancestors. This fact on the one hand, and the far more recent origin of lace in all the other European countries on the other, makes one hesitate to accept all the historical statements in the introduction to Madame Davydoff's most valuable work. Were one not told the contrary, one would say that these medieval specimens were simple eighteenth-century patterns. But, of course, if the vestments they trim are intact and of proven antiquity, there is no more to be said against this early dating. The quotations from old documents which the author gives to prove the existence of lace at certain dates, are constantly open to the objection that we are not sure what meaning their terms conveyed to contemporaries. Certainly this is difficult ground.

Great quantities of lace, mostly of coarse thread in vermiculated patterns, are produced in Central Russia ; 32,514 lace-makers are employed. The chief districts for it are Belev, Vologda, Riazan, and



Mzensk, and there is a new school of lace under imperial patronage at Moscow. A good idea of the possibilities of Russian lace was given by an exhibition in London (autumn, 1904), organized by the Zemstvo of the Vologda district. A great variety was shown, some extremely beautiful, both in design and execution. There were large scarves and bed-covers and most curious combinations of colours, beside the ordinary Russian laces, of which the examples in chapter VII give a fair idea. All the more elaborate pieces were of the mazy kind; the simpler patterns included grounded laces, whose geometrical design was formed by gimps, and many Torchons. Beside these laces a good deal of gold and silver lace is made. Odessa, though not itself manufacturing laces, does a considerable trade in them in open market.

FINLAND has a lace industry at Nardendal, near Abo.

In SWEDEN the peasants of Dalecarlia make lace for their own consumption. The only trade centre for lace is Wadstena, where it was long a convent industry. Of late years some charming eighteenth-century patterns have been revived.

CRETAN laces are well represented in the India and China Museum. They have a barbaric air, from the many-coloured threads and the curious clumsy figures of men, birds, and animals worked in them.

Having then considered in brief the past history and present geography of pillow lace, we will pass to the practical side of the subject.

## CHAPTER III

### TOOLS.

Puis qu'ainsi t'est predestiné, voudrais tu faire espoincter les fuseaulx, calumnier les bobines, reprocher les devoirs, condamner les pelotons des Parques?—Rabelais, "Pantagruel," Book III.

THE tools required for making pillow lace present no great hindrance to the intending worker, either for their number or cost. With exception of the bobbins and the winder, they are either articles in daily use or such as can easily be made by the worker herself. She may dispense with the winder at a pinch, and the bobbins are easily turned by any one who can work a lathe; so that the length of this chapter need not discourage the beginner. I have described different forms of pillow, etc., at some length, not because I think the worker is bound to provide herself with several kinds, but so that if one does not suit her she can try another. For not only do these different forms adapt themselves more easily, some to one kind of lace, some to another; even more than this, there are the personal ways of the worker to take into account. It does not come naturally to every one to work in one and the same way, and slight differences in method may make one kind of pillow far more comfortable in use than

another. The short-sighted worker will use a different stand from that which suits her long-sighted sister.

And here I should like to protest against the hide-bound conservatism that rules—sad to say—especially in women's handicrafts. Why should we so illiberally cling to some traditional way of holding the hands in our work as the only correct one? Why cannot we recognize the fact that our hands are shaped differently, the strength of our muscles balanced differently, that some are stronger in the wrist, some in the fingers, and so can never use their force to best advantage by all trying to pose themselves in some one accepted traditional way?

In many parts it is traditionally correct to hold a great number of bobbins in the hands while working. It *is* possible in this way for some to economize the time they would spend in taking up and setting down the pairs in use. But that is no reason why the beginner should feel herself clumsy and amateurish because she can work better with only two pair in hand at a time. This is much less confusing, and I have known a fairly experienced worker to waste more than the time she gained in having the bobbins so close at hand, by being obliged to undo a good part of her work because she had got hold of the wrong pairs. The Flemish lacemakers, who work very fast indeed, retain no bobbins in the hands, but let them all lie in a row on a stiff card fastened across the pillow, lifting each bobbin in turn over the next.

Work in the way that comes natural to you. There

is no need to follow slavishly the rules laid down in this or in any other book, in order to become expert. If the instructions given here appear precise and dogmatic, it is because to give a choice of methods confuses and worries the beginner, not that only one road "leads to Rome." Later on, the worker, gaining experience, will find short cuts and ways of her own.

Take pains to find the most comfortable pose for working, the best heights for table, stand, and chair, so that you do not have to bend over your work, nor fatigue your arms with raising them unduly. These details, unnoticed at first through absorption in the work, afterwards make themselves most unpleasantly apparent in stiff neck or arms.

Do not hurry because you have heard professional workers clicking their bobbins at a great rate; remember that they mostly make one pattern day after day. The amateur has no need to turn herself into a machine, and cannot expect to work as fast as if she did so. Lace-making is a pleasant and soothing employment; if it "excites the nerves," as I have heard German ladies complain, it is because the worker does not take it in the right spirit, either regarding it as a task to be finished quickly, or as an opportunity of "showing off."

But to return to our tools. Chief among them is the PILLOW. Whatever the size or shape, it must be stuffed hard and evenly, and its different covers must not be so thick or closely woven as to offer resistance to the pins. The outer cover should be

washable and of some colour restful to the eye, preferably without a pattern, as this tends to dazzle the worker.

1. A cylindrical pillow is best for yard-work.<sup>1</sup> It is convenient to have it of a definite girth, as this enables the worker to calculate the length of lace made without continual measurement; 18 in. is a good size. If the pillow is made much larger, it is cumbersome, especially for taking away from home; if it is smaller, the join in the pattern (and it is sometimes difficult to effect this invisibly) comes round all the oftener. As to length, it must be long enough to take the widest laces with a margin of 3 in. or so on each side for the long pins, on which the bobbins not at the moment in use are hung out of the way. That will be about 10 in. (Fig. 33).

Cut a strip of Hessian (or any strong stuff not too close in texture, so as readily to admit the pins) 18 in. by 15 in. (turnings not allowed). Hem both long sides so as to admit a strong tape runner; join the shorter sides by a seam. Cut two circles of stout card with a radius of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in.<sup>2</sup>

Set tapes in the runner hems: draw one up tight and knot it, leaving the other open. This forms a bag; cover the hole left by the gathering at the bottom with one of the cards.

The next business is the stuffing, for which differ-

<sup>1</sup> Lengths of edging or insertion as distinguished from shaped pieces of lace.

<sup>2</sup> These will, of course, be slightly under the 18 in. in circumference, but the thickness of the coverings and the stretching caused by tight stuffing should make the finished pillow practically accurate.

ent materials may be used. Hay with stones makes a very fair stuffing; the stones should be laid in the middle out of the way of the pins; they are needed to give the pillow weight, otherwise the bobbins constantly drag it round. Bran or sawdust mixed with silversand is another good stuffing, easier to make even. Emery would answer all requirements, being not only heavy, but saving steel pins from rust, which is the great curse with hay pillows, for it not only spoils the pins, but sometimes stains the lace with iron-mould. Emery by itself, however, is too heavy except for a very small pillow, but an empty cylindrical cocoa-tin set in the middle of the pillow would bring it down to a more reasonable weight. Whatever your material, stuff the pillow as tightly as possible, lay the second card circle in the open mouth of the bag and draw up the runner, tying it very tightly. This finishes the pillow.

The outer cover is cut like the inner one, save that it should measure 20 in. by 14 in., and the shorter sides should have two narrow hems added instead of the seam. These will be fastened one over the other on the cushion with pins. The ends are drawn up with ribbons, and small card circles, covered with material of some contrasting colour, are slipped inside to make all neat. The pillow is then ready for use. Honiton workers generally use a number of small movable cover-cloths to keep the lace clean. I have never found them necessary, and they are a complication, but, especially in towns, it is well to have some large handkerchief, or embroidered cloth,

to throw over the pillow if it is left to stand out in the room.

This shape of pillow requires a STAND to complete it. Saxon workers often use a cardboard box about 3 in. deep, the same length as the pillow, but not quite so wide. It is a simple expedient, but not ideal, being untidy, soon worn out, and, what is worse, unless the table at which the worker sits is particularly high, such a stand does not raise the pillow near enough to the eyes, and to bend the head over lacework very soon incapacitates the worker with a stiff neck. A shallow basket or wooden tray is open to the same objection.

Wooden stands are better. I have seen three kinds almost equally good: A (shown in Fig. 33) raised the pillow well; B (Fig. 29) might be mounted on a box to hold thread, scissors, and extra bobbins. The most portable form, and one which cannot possibly be broken, is simply a rectangular block of wood with the top hollowed lengthways to hold the cylindrical pillow.

2. Another cylindrical pillow (Fig. 26)<sup>1</sup> most frequent in France would not be so easily made at home, since it requires some carpentry. Its foundation is a board about 18 in. square. Slightly to the rear of the centre is set a lidless wooden box about 5 in. by 8 in. and 5 in. deep. Flock is set all round the box and sloped gradually down to the level of the board as it reaches the edge. This flock, when

<sup>1</sup> Our illustration is from a pillow kindly lent by Messrs. Ponting Bros., High Street, Kensington.



FIG. 24. BELGIAN LACE PILLOW  
 FIG. 25. OLD ENGLISH LACE TURN

FIG. 26. FRENCH PILLOW  
 FIG. 27. HONGTUN PILLOW

FIG. 28. GERMAN WINDER  
 FIG. 29. STAND FOR CYLINDRICAL  
 PILLOW



tightly covered, forms a sort of desk, sloping from the box (which is to contain a cylindrical pillow), and on this the bobbins rest when not in use. In the middle of one shorter side of the box is a hole, of the other, a groove, to receive the axle of the pillow. A ratchet engaging a wheel on the axle prevents the cylinder from slipping round. The pillow is a wooden reel, with an axle which projects at each end fitting into the hole and groove in the box. It is wound round tightly and evenly, first with tow, then with a few layers of flannel, till the waist of the reel is brought flush with its circular ends.

3. Another form of pillow for yard-work is the Belgian lace desk. Being made in two parts, the worker, starting from the top of the smaller piece, can work down to the bottom of the larger and then fit the small piece into the bottom of the large one, replacing it later at the top.

None of these pillows are suitable for shaped pieces.

4. For these the Belgians use a mushroom-shaped disc (Fig. 24)<sup>1</sup> made of a circular piece of board, padded. It revolves on a pivot set in the sloping top of a box containing a drawer for the bobbins.

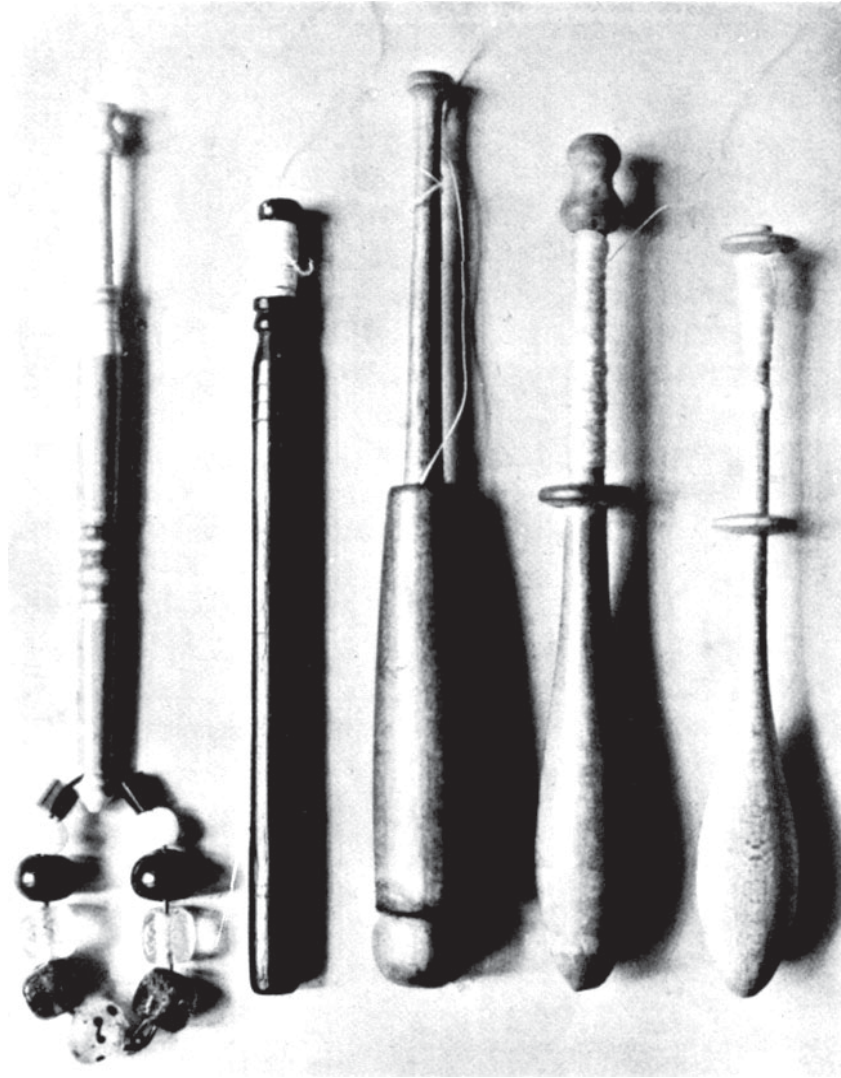
5. Devonshire lace-makers use a great ball (Fig. 27) made of flock swathed round and round with list till it is 36 in. to 38 in. in circumference. The top is flattened, and padded with layers of flannel. The cover is made of a circle of twill, the same size as the

<sup>1</sup> Kindly lent by Messrs. Ponting Bros.

top of the pillow, and seamed on to this circle, a straight piece deep enough to cover the sides and almost meet beneath the pillow. The straight part is finished with a broad hem, through which a strong runner is passed to fasten the cover. Our illustration is from a pillow in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

6. But the amateur making her own pillow for shaped pieces will find it easiest to seam together two circles about 18 in. in diameter, of strong soft material, leaving 4 in. or 5 in. open for stuffing. Stuff it hard with bran and sand, so that the centre is the thickest part, and close the seam. Such a pillow is shown in Fig. 37. Flat, square, or oblong mattress pillows are also in use. They are more troublesome to make than circular ones, and offer no special advantage.

Next in importance to the pillow come the BOBBINS (Fig. 30). These are turned out of wood, though there are ornamental ones of bone and ivory. B is one of the common English shapes, which perhaps it may be more convenient for the worker to adopt, for she will need a large number, and may have difficulty in obtaining other kinds. D and E are also nowadays easily obtained in London; they are the kinds most used in Belgium and France. Both cost about 1s. per dozen. Cleaner and more comfortable in use are the German bobbins (C) with covers to protect the thread; they cost 10 pfennige per pair. Cleaner still are the "fuseaux Cottier"—a French patent bobbin with a hollow handle,



A

B

C

D

E

FIG. 30 BOBBINS (natural size)

which unscrews to receive a little ball of thread. The end of the thread is brought out through a hole and fastened round the bobbin-head in the usual way. Another French patent kind is the "Tjevoli": the head takes off, the thread is wound in little hollow rolls, which are slipped on to the stem of the bobbin, and the head replaced. These two systems, while they save the trouble of winding, have the disadvantage that the worker is limited to one make of thread, for of course special balls or rolls are needed for charging the bobbins. And the price is augmented, which is a consideration, for the worker who takes her lace seriously needs at least fifty pair of bobbins. A beginner, however, need not buy more than twenty pair for the start.

These are the chief types of bobbin, but there are all sorts of varieties. Some in use in the school of lace at Vienna have three-sided handles, and are weighted with lead to prevent their slipping out of place and causing entanglement. Old-fashioned English bobbins (A) from the Midlands are often trimmed with coloured glass beads called "jingles"; the worker, looking at the handles (a bad practice, by the way), distinguished them by their colours. Others, of bone or ivory, are ornamented with designs traced by tiny holes drilled and coloured black or red. The owner's name is worked on them, or some inscription, "from J. B." or even—what had become of the fitness of things?—"Jesus wept!"

PINS are another great item. Indeed, as already

indicated, one authority on lace<sup>1</sup> goes so far as to connect the beginning of pillow lace with the comparative commonness of pins. There are traditions that before pins were much in use fishbones and splinters of bone took their place on the pillow; but certainly such tools would be a great hindrance.

English lace-makers' pins are slim brass pins, longer and sharper than toilet pins, but otherwise just like them. In Germany glass-headed steel pins are used. Both have their advantages: the English are cheaper, and do not rust; the German are much prettier, more comfortable to handle, and do not bend. If the latter are chosen two sizes are needed: thick pins about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. long for the coarse lace, and fine ones for the fine. The larger size sometimes have brass stems, which avoids rust. Short hatpins are needed for keeping the bobbins arranged in groups.

The beginner is not bound to buy a **BOBBIN-WINDER**; but though not indispensable, it greatly lessens the drudgery of winding—a consideration when you are dealing with forty or fifty pair. Illustrations of two types of winder—German and English—are shown facing p. 62, the former (Fig. 28) lent by Messrs. Ponting Bros., the latter (Fig. 25) from an old "lace turn" in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Should a winder not be readily obtainable, a carpenter, even an amateur, could easily make one. The English and German models are both worked on the same principle: a large driving-wheel, turned by a handle, is connected by an elastic or string band with a

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Cole, "Lecture at Dublin on Lace-making," p. 9.

smaller wheel, which sets the bobbin spinning. The English winder, clumsy as are the examples I have seen, had an advantage in being provided with a spool-holder for the reel of thread in use; but the German model is all the compacter for lacking this, and its place is easily supplied by making the reel revolve on a hatpin stuck into the pillow. Both models have the same defect: the clip which holds the bobbin in place is never strong enough to keep it steady as it whirls. The middle finger of the left hand must remedy this, while the thumb and first finger guide the thread.

The Belgian winder is nothing but a leather driving belt  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide and a primitive arrangement of posts for holding the bobbin in place. The belt is held fast and tight by passing through a ring buttoned into the worker's bodice and over the bobbin. The worker, by pulling the belt constantly towards her, makes the bobbin revolve. The lidless box at the foot serves as stand and receptacle for bobbins.

Other special apparatus beyond pillow and stand, winder, bobbins, and pins, I have only found to be a needless and tiresome complication; but from time to time the worker will need a fine steel crochet-hook, and another crochet-hook whose point has been ground sharp like a pin, or else one of those whose hook can be unscrewed from the handle and an ordinary stout needle inserted in its place. A small pair of embroidery scissors and some needles complete the list of tools.

## CHAPTER IV

### PATTERNS

On dit improprement les beaux arts, car l'art est un; l'idéal du beau en toute chose.—JOSEPH SÉGUIN.

THE most important accessory to a lace pillow is the pattern. Some Russian peasants are said to work without patterns, simply by counting the number of times they twist their threads,<sup>1</sup> but this could only be done with very simple laces. Many professionals work from patterns drawn on parchment in plain outline, with no indications for the pinholes; and, indeed, with curved designs this liberty has great advantages, experience soon teaching the worker where to set her pins. This is especially the case with very fine laces. But the beginner is bound to follow conscientiously a detailed pattern, and moreover to keep a piece of the finished lace or a photograph of it near at hand, with which to compare her work until she knows the pattern by heart.

Beside the examples given in this book, there are easy Torchon patterns in Weldon's "Practical Torchon Lace," Myra's Library of Needlework (No. 30) "Pillow Lace," and the books on Torchon published by two firms of threadmakers, Messrs. Harris, of

<sup>1</sup> Davydoff, p. 9.

Cockermouth, and Barbour, of Lisburn. Other laces are given in No. 40 of "Needlecraft," published by the Manchester School of Embroidery, and in Weldon's "Pillow Lace" and "Honiton Lace."

To those who know German I can thoroughly recommend Sara Rasmussen's "Klöppelbuch" (Copenhagen, Andr. Fred. Höst & Søn, n. d.) and Frieda Lipperheide's "Das Spitzenklöppeln" (Berlin, 1898), both of which contain a variety of advanced patterns. Simpler, but also good, are Adele Vosnage's "Das Spitzenklöppeln" (Leipzig, 1895), Tina Frauberger's "Handbuch der Spitzenkunde" (Seemann's Kunsthandbücher), Th. de Dillmont's "Encyclopedie der weiblichen Handarbeiten,"<sup>1</sup> "Das Klöppeln" in Ebhart's "Handarbeiten" (Berlin, Franz Ebhart). C. Braunmühl's "Das Kunstgewerbe in Frauenhand" (Berlin, 1885). If expense is no object, nothing could be better than the magnificent work of Carl Jamnig and Adelheid Richter, "Technik der geklöppelten Spitzen" (Vienna, 1886). For those who know French, there is "Les Dentelles aux fuseaux," published by "La Boule de Neige" at Le Mans; and there are excellent occasional articles on pillow lace in Hachette's weekly journals "La Mode Pratique" and "La Corbeille à Ouvrage."<sup>2</sup>

As all the patterns in the present work were taken from unpublished sources,<sup>3</sup> any of the books men-

<sup>1</sup> One of the excellent "D. M. C." pattern-books, published under the auspices of Dollfus Mieg & Co.

<sup>2</sup> The second is an abridged edition of the first.

<sup>3</sup> Except No. 43, reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Hachette & Co., from "La Mode Pratique" of 1899.