

Courtesy of Maison de Blanc

The interest of an ancient design carried out in Venetian Point to serve as a dressing for the table

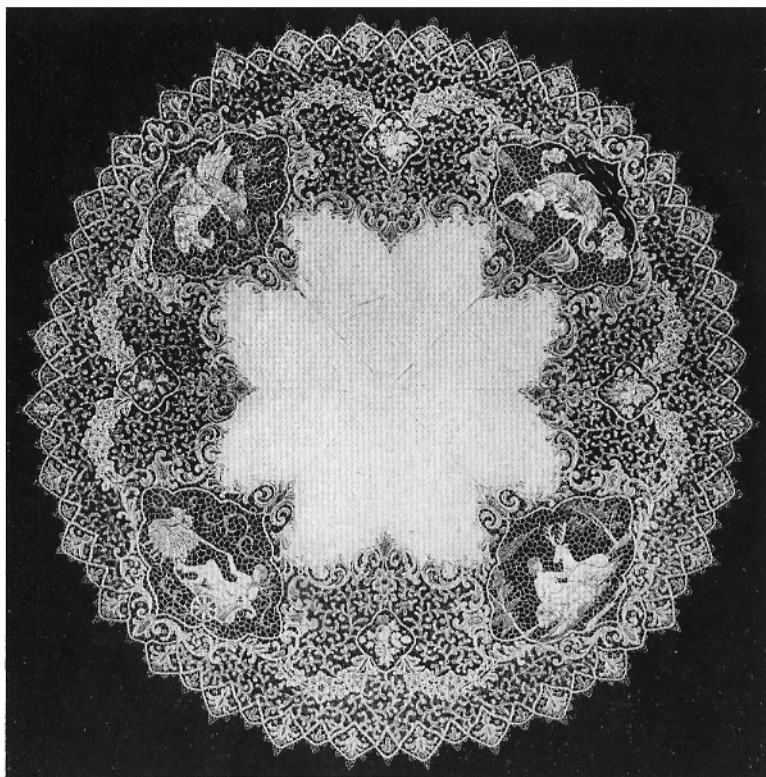
Luxurious Linens and Rare Laces

The Table, the Bed, and the Window, Make of Them Necessities

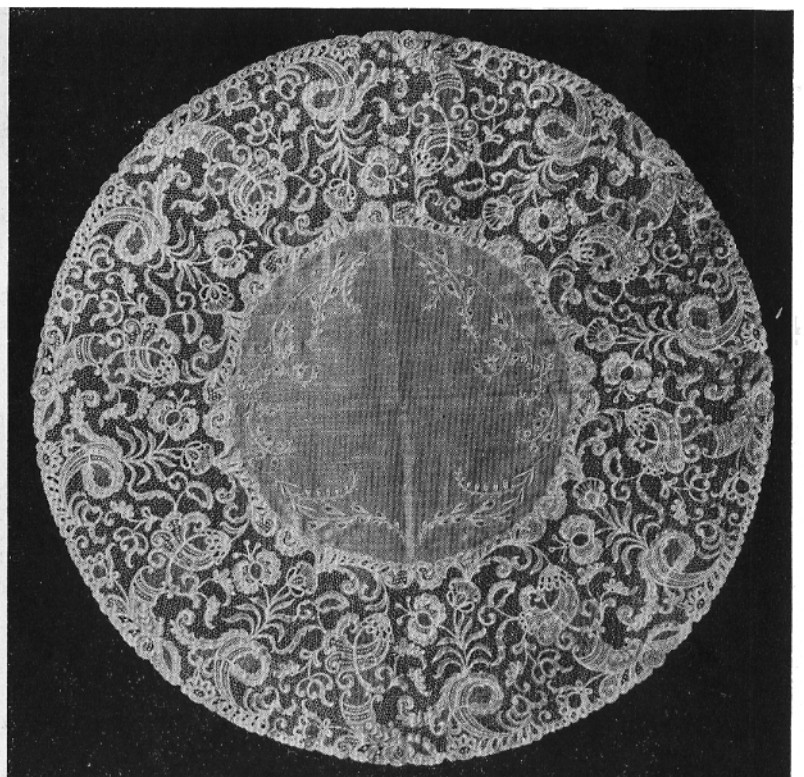
A NOMALOUS as it may seem, this is an era of luxury, and that luxury extends to every part of the house. The department of furnishings which is alluded to as linens is now full of new beauty. Napkins, tablecloths, towels, sheets, tray cloths, bureau

and stand covers are all more enticing than before the war. And as for lace, either for the table or in the department of laces for decoration, or even antique lace for collectors, that is truly bewildering in its elegance and charm.

The tablecloth is called the tie that binds the family together. Is it the refectory table and the Cromwellian gate-leg table that has banished the tablecloth? It is not banished entirely, for a formal dinner demands it always. The snowy damask cloth means cere-



Venus, Diana, Jupiter and Neptune form medallions after Eighteenth Century models



Courtesy of B. Altman & Co.

Pointe de Flanders and embroidered linen make this table center

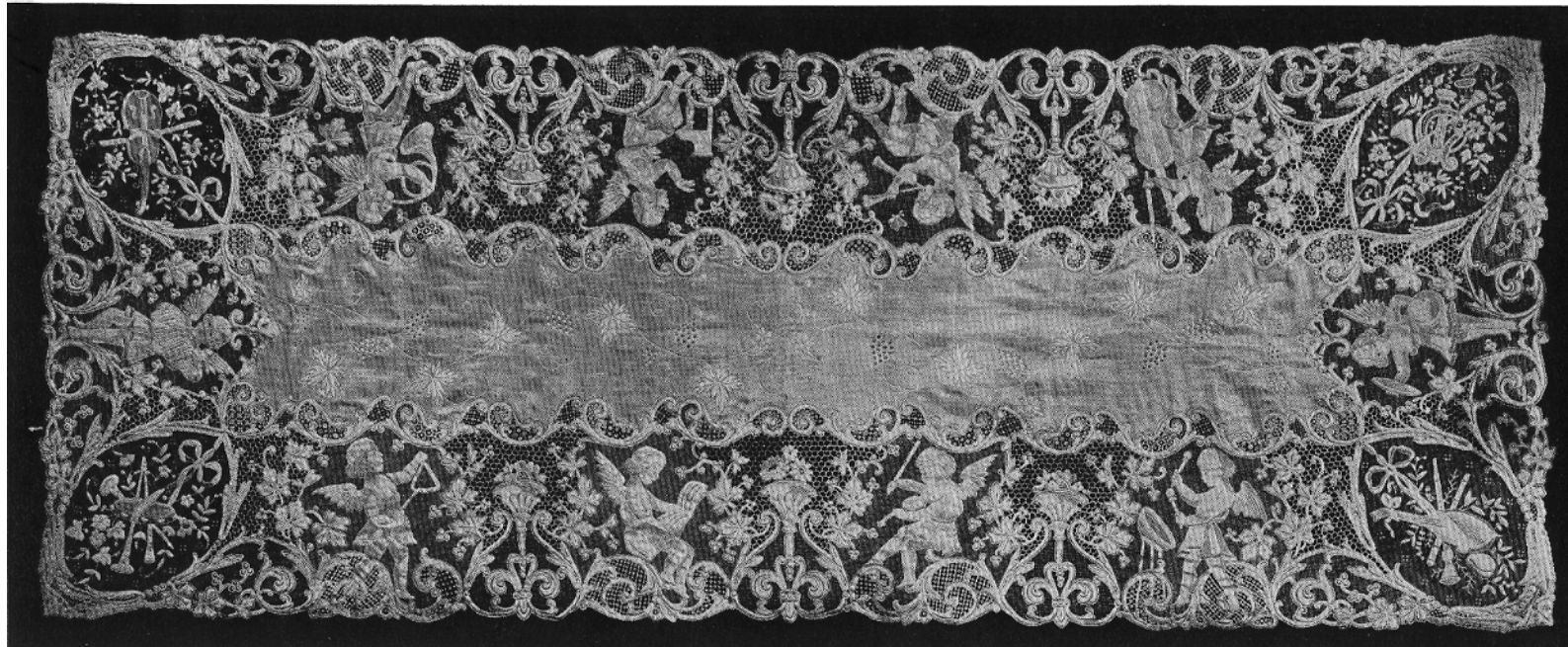


Table scarf of Burano lace with center of sheer soft linen

Courtesy of B. Altman & Co.

mony, and is always quietly elegant. Going to a round of teas in Washington the other day, every table was bare, spotted with center-pieces and doilies, until the Cuban Legation was reached. There the long board stretched its oblong elegance under the lights, suave, with linen which hung heavy in its folds, satiny in its high lights, graciously setting off the vessels of gold and vessels of silver that contained swaying flowers and tooth-tickling dainties. No spotty effect of independent laces could equal the stately elegance of that damask-draped table.

And yet, we women have ever a weakness for the *haute nouveauté*, the top of the mode, and we adore showing off our precious laces on our table tops. A table furnishes better this way. Fewer dishes and accessories are necessary, for the decoration of transparent fabrics on a dark ground is enough in itself to furnish a table, added to the *couverts* of silver and glass.

The kind of doilies alters a little every year, just enough to tempt one into buying often to keep up with the mode. The Italians give us our informal table-sets, for the breakfast and lunch table, fascinating coarse things that charm with their coarseness—a sheer handwoven linen-like scrim, and finished with a sparsely stitched buttonhole border, with little vagrant loops of lace-stitch along the edge and a bit of lace-work in one corner like a postage stamp of *fantaisie*. These are in half-bleached white, which blends so well with an old oak table-top, and are often embroidered in old blue. A set comprises center-piece, either square or oblong, with doilies for plates and smaller ones for glasses, not forgetting the serviettes.

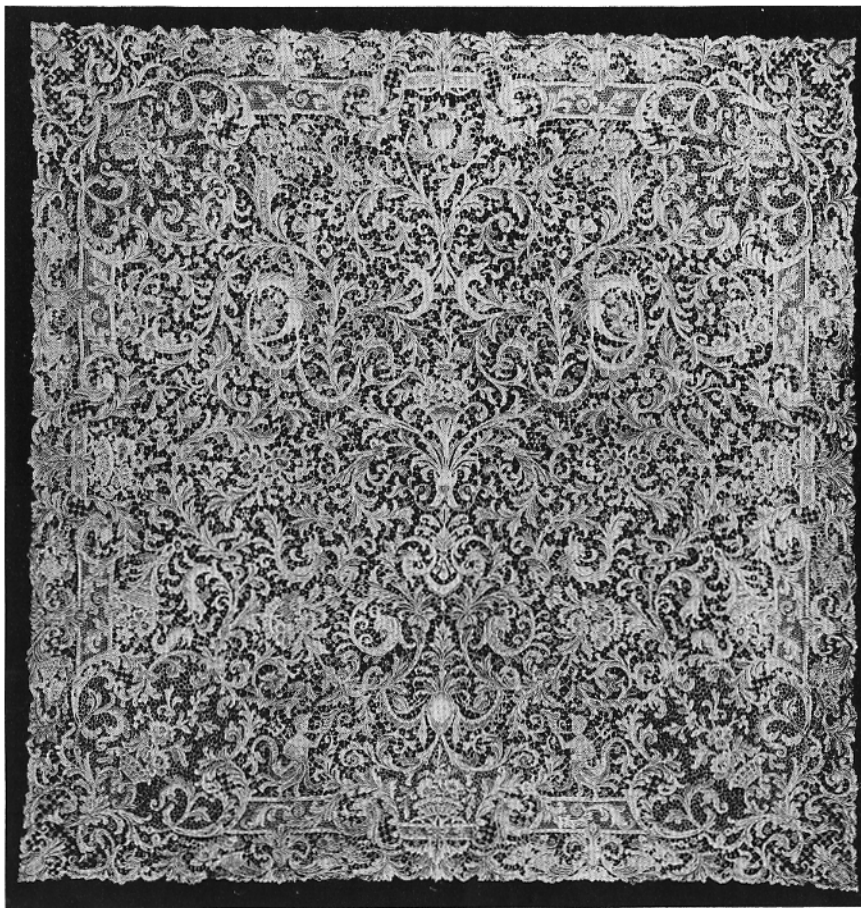
From Italy, too, come the beauteous sets of *pointe de Venise*, and of Burano, than which nothing is more beautiful. Distinctly French are the sets made of lighter laces, introducing much Valenciennes and embroidered motifs worked on *organdie*. These fairly

smell of old rose leaves, of roses grown in Eighteenth Century gardens where Boucher

pointed, so quaintly sweet they are in a dainty way. Whether the laces that compose them be old or not is a secret of the manufacturer, but they bear a lovely tint which we call the yellowing of time.

Novelties always interest. For the table we are asked to buy a wonderful species of *filet* or drawn work that is the work of fairies, one might say. It resembles *filet* lace, but whereas *filet* is made of bobbin thread and set into the cloth like an *entredeux*, this new lace is cunningly wrought in the linen itself. Threads are drawn out where a pattern is desired, and a square mesh is made of the remaining threads.

Parts of the pattern, like the petals of large flowers, are left of the linen fabric, and the square mesh blends and surrounds them. In its simpler forms this new lace (which is always a part of the piece it ornaments and never set in) is formed in table squares and doilies, as a border. But in its highest development it forms large scrolled designs thrown over an entire circular tablecloth. One of its charms is its exquisite refinement; another is the high price at which this



Venetian Point as a bed cover

Courtesy of B. Altman & Co.



The decoration of a curtain a la Bonne Femme

dainty luxury is sold. Little tables which stand about the dining-room and upper parts of the house call for innumerable covers of some elegance. Covers of fine linen lawn, handsomely embroidered, are always an indication of good taste, and suit a French style of furnishing.

But perhaps the Italian work is more practical. It may cost more if too elaborate, but for all its artistic suggestions of old villas and palaces, it is made of practical stuff, which shows stern endurance in the face of frequent launderings. The linen is heavy in covers of this style, and therein lies an advantage. The embroidery has great style and dash, and a fine decorative touch is given by the addition of large fanciful tassels fashioned by hand out of the heavy linen embroidery thread, very much like antique upholstery tassels.

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A cloth for throwing over the tea-table in the library or on the piazza must have the virtue of being lightly decorated all over so that it suits any table. It is too large a square to be elaborate, after the manner of a center-piece, or to have merely a border. In its most satisfactory ornament it is alike all over, that is, made entirely of squares of lace and cut-work, or made of linen of soft heavy quality which is drawn in double hem-stitch at intervals all over its surface to form an all-over of three-inch squares. A narrow Venetian point edges the whole.

THE BED

Two kinds of bed-dressing are seen in every house. There is the elegant, luxurious, extravagant be-curtained bed of the queen of the household, and there is the practically dressed bed of those who lay them down to pleasant dreams careless of frills and indulgences.

The first bed is a draped and curtained affair of taffeta, of damask, of satin with innumerable cushions heaped upon it, beauty's nest. But because towns are smoky and fabrics soil, this bed has its inner draperies of lace, and over its gay-colored spread is thrown a spread of filet or some other beauteous lace.

The practical bed may have its draperies, too, but these are more apt to be of chintz, or linen with a fringe. For such beds we have the daintiest of spreads of seer-sucker or light cotton damassé, for the inclination is to have things that wash easily and can therefore be freshened often. An extra cover or quilt for day is a necessity, as that which protects the blankets gets mussed in the tossings of one restless night. A long wide piece of filet to cover the flat-lying pillows is almost a necessity on the practically dressed bed, and is not too great a luxury to demand in these extravagant times.

CURTAINS FOR THE SASH

When the new house is ready for curtains comes a time of indecision. What kind shall be used? The answer is formed in the underlying principles that govern all

house-furnishings. First of all, the appearance of the house is considered, its outside appearance. We do not build in haphazard fashion; we select a definite dominating note in architecture, that he who motors by knows how to classify. Then should the windows be equipped with appropriateness. An old English farmhouse must have its frilled and draped sashes like a rosy maid in her kerchief, while a Louis XVI chateau and an Italian villa must have elegant and sophisticated lace panels to keep out the gaze of the curious.

The frilled curtains are to be had anywhere; the lace panels must be sought among the finest dealers, as must also the old heavy Italian laces for the Italian house. These are matters to thrill the buyer thereof, and place curtaining the window among the fine arts.

A regulating fact in choosing curtains is the location of the house—if it be in town or country. If the former, then the main object is to preserve privacy and to admit light, unless one is high on the way to the clouds in a sky-near flat. It is for town dwellers that the simplest of sash curtains are made. Plain bobbinet without spot, stripe or pattern is the smartest thing one can have. But to make these desirable they must be of a dainty fineness, must be voluptuously full and edged with a narrow real lace that is not noticeable but replaces a hem. From outside they are simple and piquant as a bridal veil, suggesting beauty; while inside they accord with any expression of taste, and let in all possible light. These are not for any particular story, but for all that the house front may be as uniform in its window-dressing as in its architecture.

But who shall restrict the joys of opening the window to the garden with its flowers or snow, to the world of trees and birds, if the house is out of town and neighbors are far? Then hang but a parted frill or a delicious rag of ancient lace to soften the square, but let the joy of God's world of sunlight and greenery be yours as you gaze through almost uncurtained windows and feel your nearness to the out-of-doors.