



Lace Making as an Art

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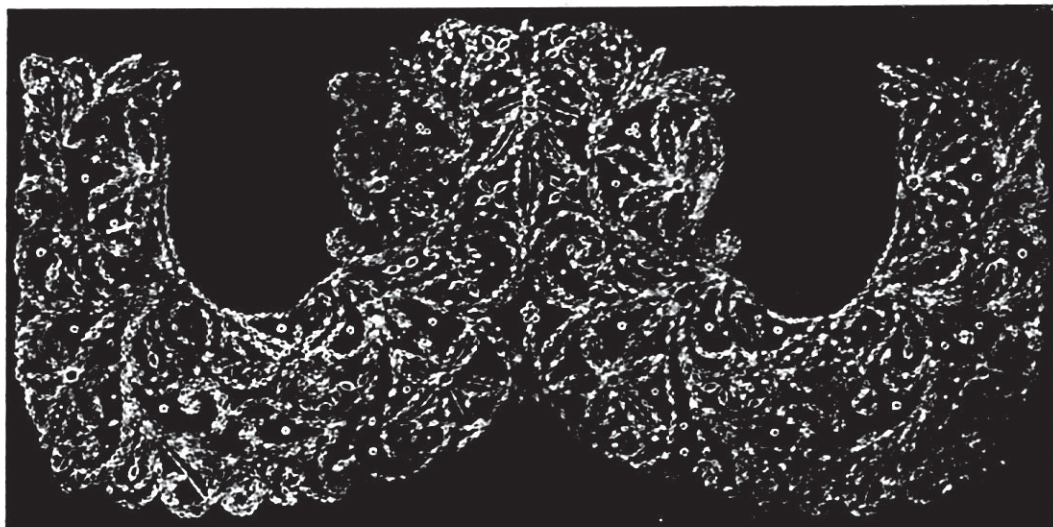
NEVER has there been a time in the history of man when the wearing of laces has been so universal as at the present time. We seem to have enveloped ourselves in a cloud of the flimsy, fairylike fabric until one almost holds one's breath at the exquisite creations due to such trifling things as a needle and spool of thread. The American woman, ever ready and alert, is holding out to her foreign contemporaries her delicate mantle of lace, original in design and workmanship, ready to hold her own with the world at large. After a close study and analysis of the different kinds of work and weaving, the designs here shown have been made and executed in lace.

The first, last and most important fact to be remembered in lace-making is—patience. Exquisite care, neatness, and strict attention to every detail and stitch are necessary, as in the laying in of the pattern, from its first conception, your watchword must be care. It is to be regretted that so many lace patterns are faulty in design and make-up, as this is most misleading to a beginner, who invariably

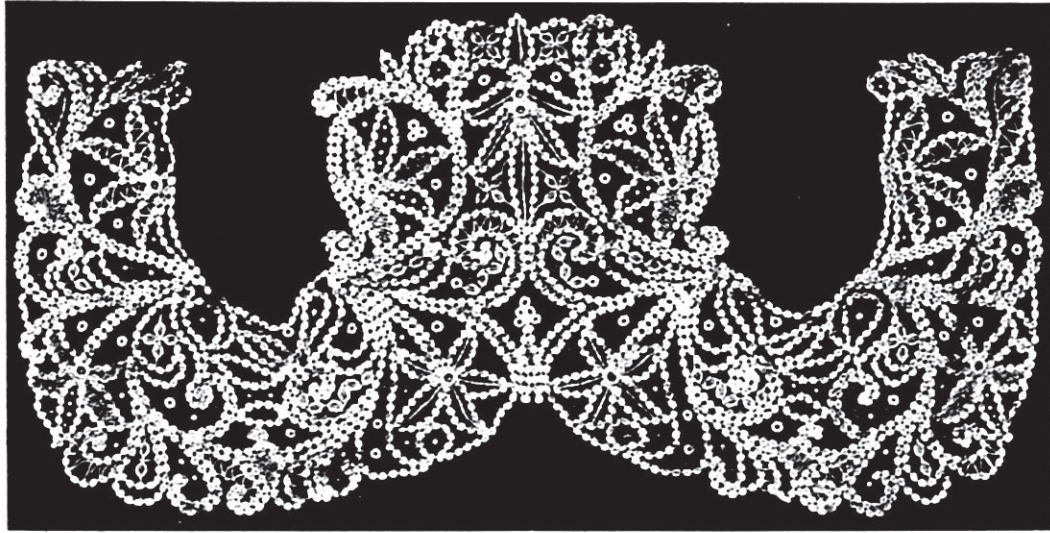
replies to a criticism, "I followed the design."

These designs are not difficult ones to carry out. The black net tie is two yards long and a quarter of a yard in width. In basting the braid on the pattern use a short stitch on the braid, a long one underneath the pattern, paying strict attention to its smoothness; follow the pattern, from the inside of the flower, not from its outer edge, as many times the braids draw unless brought carefully around the edge. In turning corners, if it is a possibility draw the braid around the corner rather than pleating or doubling the braid; this is what gives it a smooth, fine appearance when taken off the pattern. Avoid, as much as possible, cutting your braids. The close student of anything makes good his foundation. The stitches explained here will be about all that will be required. The first stitch in lace-making is extremely simple and forms the basis or root of the entire structure, if so it might be called.

We will suppose the tie you are making to be the one represented in this article, "The Butterfly." Butterflies are associated in your



HONITON LACE BOLERO.

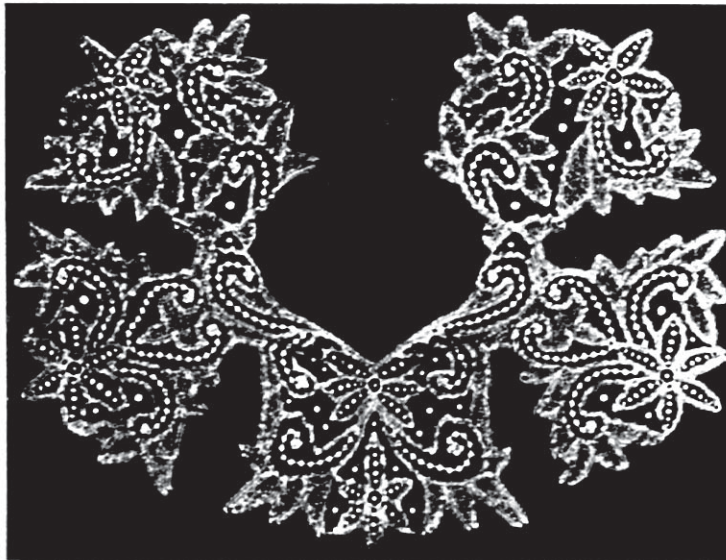


BOLERO OF SNOW-FLAKE HONITON LACE.

mid with cobwebs and criss-cross stitches; so following nature as far as you can with the needle, you proceed starting with one of the wings. A stitch or two is taken under the braid to secure the thread, as there must be no knots in lace-making. Starting at the lower corner of the wing, take a stitch straight across, forming a line; picking your braid up with two or three stitches, cross back within two or three stitches of where you started from. This gives another line; and

you go on crossing again until you have formed a straight web two to three stitches apart around the web. The centre, of course, being solid, each thread must in turn be twisted. This is done by throwing your thread back, making the needle do the work, forming a perfectly smooth twist. The outline being finished, pick up the centre, drawing the six threads already twisted together, focussing them as it were into one decided centre. The formation of this delicate centre

must be made with extreme care. It is not only the needle that is a most important factor, but the left hand that holds each thread in proper place, as in the finish of the web the thumb must be placed on this centre. Draw your threads together, then one thread forward, one backward, until you have passed around the entire web three or four times. The straight lace stitch follows this pattern thread to thread, returning by a simple twist over the same ground. When the bastings are removed your tie is complete. Many lace-makers make the mistake of working the lace apart and separate from the tie, and trying to adjust the



COLLAR OF HONITON AND POINT.

two afterwards, but the result is not so agreeable, and this newer, simpler method facilitates the work in every particular.

The circular design of tulips, which is entirely new and original, found its motive in an old bridal veil which came into the possession of the designer, after nearly five hundred years of travel.

The pattern for this flounce is absolutely circular in circumference. The parchment pattern can be cut any size to suit the fancy of its maker. Two braids are used in this design, Honiton and point, with fifteen-hundred thread. The tulips and leaves are formed entirely of the point-braid. It is absolutely necessary not to use a diversity of braids or stitches in the creation of flowers; each bud, leaf, and blossom must stand for itself, having one stitch for the background, as the exquisite simplicity and fine workmanship are its greatest value, its truth, and its loyalty to the type or school to which each bit of lace belongs.

This circular flounce, worn on full-dress occasions over the shoulders, caught with point-lace Mercury wings, and with other wings in the hair, makes an extremely effective decoration.

The bolero and Eton jackets made of lace are charming adjuncts to an afternoon toilette. To be effective the design used should be large conventionalized flowers—the passion-flower, tiger lily, etc. The prettiest braids used in these jackets are the snow-flake Honiton, the stitches being extremely fine.

In nearly all hand-made lace the materials used are black, white, and écarle; but, after careful study, an American woman has designed and executed laces in all the dainty pastel shades. Some idea can be formed of a gown lately sent to London for an English beauty. The entire gown was of sea-shell pink



RENAISSANCE SCARF.

silk in the glaucé effects, with flourishes of white lace, delicate beyond description; running through the soft white lace was the maiden-hair fern in natural colorings. The yoke and sleeves were entirely of lace, in one piece, the entire background in purest white leaves, throwing into bold relief the shaded green of the maiden-hair.

The guipure lace represented in the illustration is an absolute and perfect copy of the guipure hundreds of years old. The result was only reached after careful study and trials of different braids and stitches. The braid used is a black point of rather heavy



BUTTERFLIES IN BATTENBERG, HONITON, AND RENAISSANCE PATTERNS.



COLLAR OF POINT AND HONITON COMBINED.

mesh basted carefully on to the parchment, following the old school of guipure patterns, which in itself alone is a complete study. The stitches used are the twisted thread and cobweb. Each stitch must be taken with faultless precision and care; there is absolutely no wear-out to this lace. When studded with pearls, in either emerald, green, or ruby effects, on a gown of black gauze the effect is delightful and bewildering.

The most difficult of all lace-making are the pillow laces, so called from the cushion that supports the pins and bobbins while the weaver works. Mechlin, Bruges, real point-lace and duchesse are pillow laces, though many are made on black parchment, which is far easier. The pattern once fixed in the weaver's mind, the shuttles are worked in and out, minute threads are tied, flowers are formed like magic under the tireless fingers. In many hand-made laces tiny braids or infinitesimally small threads are used to outline the pattern, but so careful are they needled into flowers, leaves, and stems that they defy the closest scrutiny, and stand for what they really are—hand-made laces.

The leader of laces is old point, one of the

most exquisite designs being bride-roses, so cunningly and cleverly wrought, each rose standing out perfect and alone. The finest blond or net is used as a background, as it would be impossible to make by hand a mesh so fine which would be durable and delicate. This blond is basted on the parchment, showing the design through. Then with a fine needle and fifteen-hundred thread the pattern is formed. When this thread outline is complete the blond forming the flower (not the parchment) is cut away, leaving the opening for the stitches, which are then carefully put in by hand. One flower is the work of days, and the designer has spent years picking out each thread of old lace with a view to presenting its possibilities as an industry to and for American people,

not for the sewing on of a few braids, but as a coming industry.

The lace furnishings of a bridal chamber just completed were composed entirely of Renaissance butterflies. The curtains, bed-covers, table-cloths, bed hangings, etc. were a mass of flitting butterflies, not arranged in a conventional manner, but dropped here, there, and everywhere, making a *tout ensemble* delightful to the eye.

Any ordinary woman can beautify her own home in the same manner. Having secured a butterfly pattern six inches long and eight inches across, the braid is basted on as mentioned before, using the cobweb stitch. The cobweb is used for the upper wings, the lower wing being the simple web or twist stitch first taught in all lace-making. Two sizes of butterflies are used, the next in size being five inches in length, and seven in width from wing to wing. The background used is a sort of webbing or grenadine, very open in mesh. For the bed-spread the centre is formed of canvas with large monogram—the monogram being supported by four large lace butterflies with wings toward the centre upholding the monogram, as it were, or forming a

sort of frame. Scattered at intervals over the cover are lace butterflies, the border being entirely of them. The tea cloth, so dear to woman's heart, is of sheer white linen with lace butterfly border. The curtains, of grenadine, to match the bed-spread, have the same butterfly border. Linen covers for dressing-tables with hem-stitched borders have the butterflies appliquéd on, and the linen cut out when finished. After the butterflies are transferred to the material the so-called stingers or, antennæ, are worked on in simple outline stitch made heavier by returning over the outline and picking the stitches up one by one. One need not confine one's self to butterflies alone. Any large flower can be carried out with charming effect; any flower with long, slender leaves—marguerites, for instance, are especially lovely when worked in borders and bands. There is a fascination about lace-making that appeals strongly to the dainty needle-woman. With the summer's beauties in your heart and a needle in your hands, many are the possibilities for beautiful lace ornamentation for both the house and yourself. Any person can, with careful attention to detail, accomplish wonderful results. Supply yourself with a few simple, effective patterns, an assortment of pretty braids, linen threads—800 to 1500; these to be kept spotlessly fresh in a tiny bag with eyelet for thread to pass through, being sure to always cover your work with soft white cambric to prevent soiling, as the beauty of all lace is its spotless purity.

Few people know that most of the imported laces are made by peasants and the little children of charitable institutions. Lace schools have been founded on the outskirts of the larger cities; here each child is trained to do one particular stitch, either on parchment or a black dotted paper, where the thread is carried from point to point, the pattern hav-



GUILPURE SCARF.

ing been carefully traced previously, and when the entire pattern is covered this parchment can be torn away. These laces, when finished, are placed on the market, fabulous prices being paid for them. It has been suggested that with the talent in our own American homes such institutions would be a great success. A school of designing has been talked of where the first rudiments are taught, each person to learn a certain stitch, passing from hand to hand, turning out a perfect piece of work. Many American women already do beautiful lace-work, even going from door to door with gems of handiwork, while many times our misguided American "grandes dames" are going about with a bit of cotton lace on their gowns, sure that it is hand-made and imported, because So-and-so said it came from abroad.

"Like the knights of old with their armor bold," American women have armed themselves with a needle and spool of thread, and who is there to say that they are not ready to compete with the world at large in hand-made laces?

