



**C**RAVATS  
BY MRS. F. NEVILL JACKSON

It was in the third quarter of the seventeenth century that lace cravats were worn by all the fashionable folks in Europe. The cravat entirely of lace, or of fine linen trimmed with lace or with lace ends, was first seen in England at the close of the reign of that prince of dandies, Charles II.

The mode came to us from France, where Colbert was carefully establishing the fine-lace industry of France, and Louis XIV., delighted at the success of the enterprise which promised such large additions to the revenue of the country, was encouraging the royal manufactories by edicts, by purchase, and by himself wearing the costly fabric, besides intimating that no lace except the Points de France should be worn at court.

The theory that cravats were first worn in Germany seems hardly likely, for that country has

never been famous for inaugurating new modes. The Croats in Germany have been given the credit of originating the special form of neck-cloth, the story being that the French officers, ever on the watch for novelty in change of dress, saw the cravat worn by the Croats during the war in 1636, and adopted it with enthusiasm. Our word cravat is clearly derived from the

French Crabbat or Cravates.

It must be remembered that the neckwear of a gentleman of fashion which immediately preceded the cravat was the rebbat or falling collar, which in its turn had ousted the ruff, so that we are not surprised to find that the earliest cravats hang like the fronts of a turn-down collar, and are guiltless of bow or knot. It is likely that the added length and luxuriance of the wigs, which set in during the early years of the second half of the seventeenth century, materially assisted in the curtailment of the rich lace-trimmed collar, which would be entirely hidden by the hair except



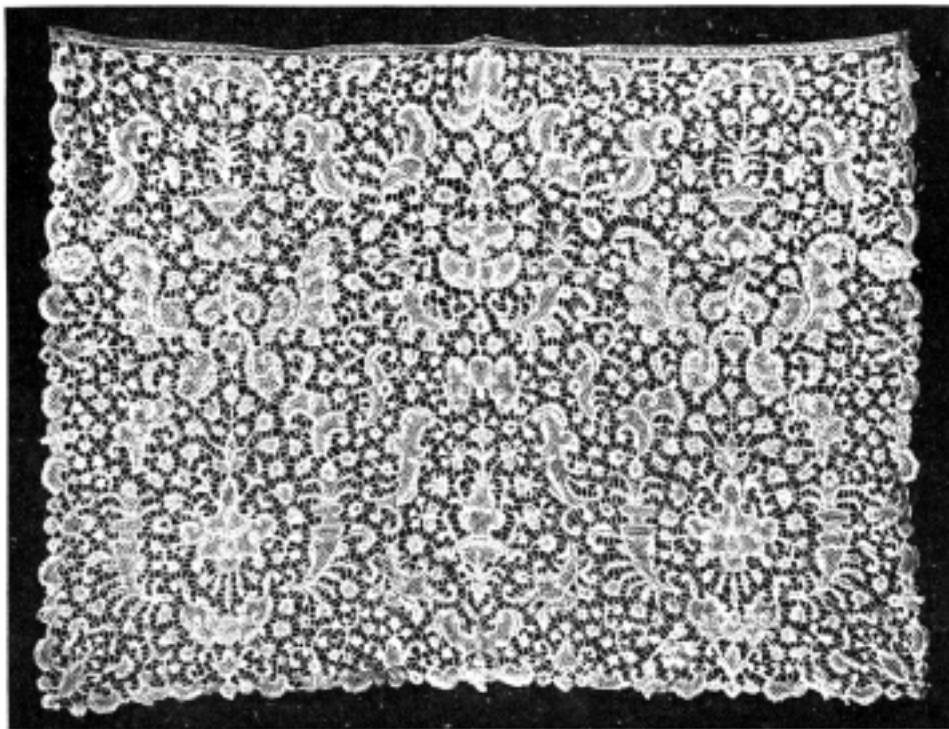
ANDRÉ LE NOSTRE CHEER. DE L'ORDRE ST. MICHEL CONER. DU ROY CONTROLLEUR GENERAL ANCIEN DES BASTIMENS DE SA MAJESTÉ JARDINS ARTS ET MANUFACTURES DE FRANCE, 1699



CHRISTIAN LUDOVIC D. G. DUX MAGAPOLITANUS  
PRINCEPS VANDALORUM



MONR. DE BOISFRANK INTENDANT DES  
BATIMENTS DE MONSIEUR



BOBBINS LACE CRAVAT OF ELABORATE DESIGN, WITH HAND-MADE HEADING  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



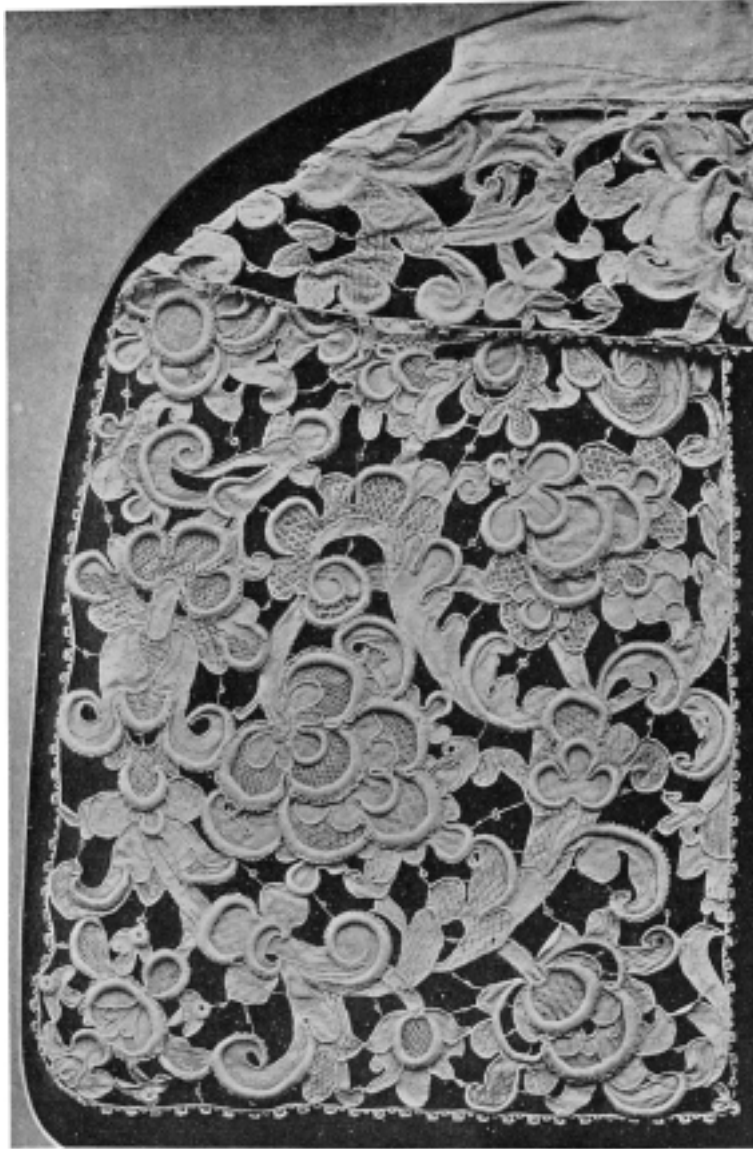
CAROLUS II. DEI GRATIA ANGLIÆ. SCOTIÆ. FRANCIÆ. ET HIBERNIÆ REX.

*P. Lely pinxit. A. Blooteling fecit et a. 1680.*

## Cravats

in front, and so hastened the universal adoption of the cravat.

We cannot suggest that it was economy however which prompted the wearing of the cravat, for though the lace was needed only at the ends of the cravat instead of trimming the whole of the collar, the richness and depth of the lace gave ample scope for extravagance. Charles II. is charged twenty pounds twelve shillings, according to the Great Wardrobe Accounts, for a new cravat, to be worn on the birthday of his "dear brother." James II. pays thirty-six pounds ten shillings for a cravat to wear on the day of his coronation. It is interesting to note that this cravat was made of "Venice lace," so that the heavy and splendid Italian raised point was evidently held in highest esteem for the purpose. In studying contemporary portraits this fact is borne out in a very striking manner. In the early years of the cravat fashion at any rate the inimitable Point de Venise seems first favourite: it was not till folds were required when knotting and tying was resorted to in the arrangement of the cravat, that thinner makes of lace such as Mechlin were used for trimming.



RAISED VENETIAN POINT LACE WORKED IN DOUBLE AND TRIPLE TIER  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

With regard to the flatness of the ends and their straight hang we are told in a "Treatise upon the Mode, or Farewell to French Kicks," written by Dr. John Harris, Bishop of Llandaff, and published in 1715, that beads are fastened to the ends of cravats

to correct the stubbornness of their muslin, but we have not been able to trace such additions in any painting or print. By this time the ends of the cravat had lengthened considerably, their likeness to the front of a turn-down collar had vanished, and not infrequently elaborate bows in the muslin or cambric were tied immediately beneath the chin.

The suggestion for lengthening the ends was obtained through an accidental circumstance which, like many another, has set a fashion for either sex. At the battle of Steinkerque, August 3rd, 1692, the

French officers were summoned in haste to the battle, and had no time to arrange their cravats in the elaborate fashion of the day, instead of tying the ends they twisted them quickly, drawing the lace through a button-hole to keep it out of the way.

The popular victory of the Mareschal de Luxembourg over the Prince of Orange was commemorated

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by every one at court in the novel disposition of the cravat, and for a dozen years the Steinkerque was worn by men and women, not only in France, but in England, and at the other courts of Europe where the French fashions are followed.

The female addition of the Steinkerque cravat was little more than a narrow lace scarf worn round the neck crossed, and the ends passed through a button-hole or kept in place by a long narrow brooch; sometimes a kerchief of linen or lace was rolled instead of being spread over the shoulders, and arranged in front as we have described the scarf. This graceful accessory of woman's dress of the early eighteenth century was not always of lace or lace-trimmed cambric.

Isabella, Duchess of Grafton, in 1708, purchases a green Steinkerque for one guinea. It will not be irrelevant perhaps to describe the other details of the dress of which the cravat formed so important a feature. The short pourpoints, or coats, which had been in fashion at the French court during the third quarter of the seventeenth century, had given place to the

justaucorps and the veste, which in England were called coat and waist-coat; both of these garments were very much longer than those worn at the present day, reaching in fact to the knees.

Rich and costly stuffs were less worn than they had been during the early years of Louis XIV., when velvet satin and gold and silver brocades had been the mode for coats, but, when cravats were popular, humbler materials were beginning to make their appearance for coats, the more costly stuffs remaining in fashion for the vest long after, and dying hard a century later, while a flicker reappears in every decade, when coloured vests, satin vests, or a gleam of colour in the lining shows us what the glories of the eighteenth century vest might have been.

Cloth poplin and camlet were used for the coats,

and as a rule only a bunch of ribbons on the right shoulder served as decorations to the long full-skirted tunic.

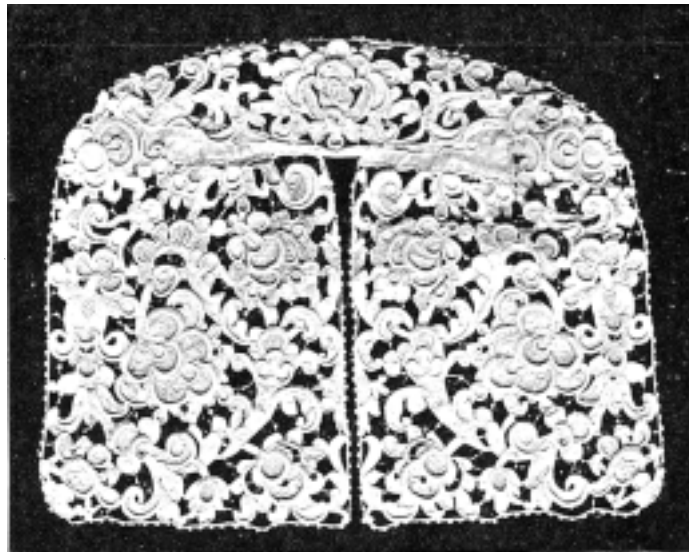
Swords were worn in broad baldricks, which were frequently fringed with silk, a sash or scarf was tied round the waist over the baldrick, and in winter a muff of fur or brocade was suspended round the neck by a ribbon, a three-cornered hat often fringed or be-ribboned completed the costume of the man of fashion in France.

In England, during the reign of William and Mary, wigs had increased in size and the cravat had come to be the recognised neck wear. The amplitude of the sleeves, especially in the cuffs, was the leading

characteristic of the male costume. These large hanging cuffs, with lace ruffles, continued in fashion throughout the reign of Queen Anne, and the square cut coats had their skirts stiffened out with wire or buckram; the sword peeped out from between the folds, but the elaborate baldrick on which it has hung was no longer the mode. The silk stockings, drawn up over the knee,

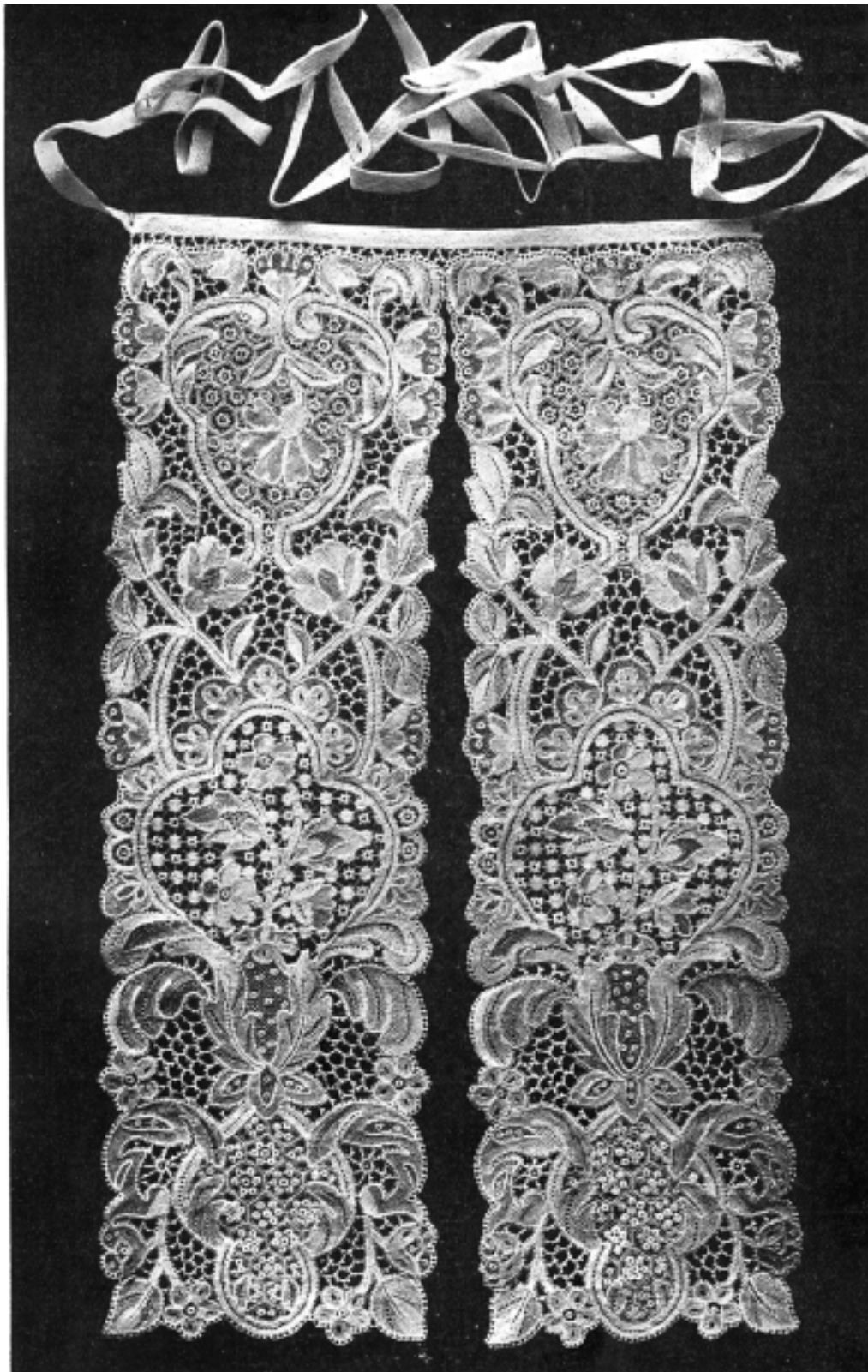
but gartered below it, were frequently of blue or scarlet, and had elaborate clocks embroidered in gold or silver upon them, square-toed shoes were worn with buckles and red heels. The hats were small and three-cornered, frequently laced with gold galloon. Well on into the nineteenth century lace cravats were worn at the French court, for they were one of the items in the dress decreed for the *noblesse* when the States General prescribed the respective costumes for the three estates, except for state occasions, however plainer clothes began to be worn, and frilled shirts came to obviate the necessity for folds other than those attached to the under garment.

With regard to historical cravats it is said that Louis XVI. wore one made of point tresse at his



VENETIAN NEEDLEPOINT LACE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
FEW BRIDES ARE USED, THE MOTIFS BEING CHIEFLY IN CONTACT  
WITH EACH OTHER





MODERN NEEDLE-POINT LACE CRAVAT OR JUDGE'S BANDS  
MADE IN IRELAND

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coronation. This would be the silver-white fabric made of human hair which was so highly esteemed, and of which we find occasional allusions since the days of Elizabeth. The labour of manipulating the wiry yet fragile hair, and the difficulty of obtaining sufficient tresses of one shade and suitable length, always made the cost of point tress very large.

William III. of England was extremely fond of fine lace, and in his accounts appears, amongst the many other payments for lace, "To six point cravats, one hundred and fifty-eight pounds."

The collector of lace will occasionally find that fine lace cravat ends have been joined together; we know of such an example in the fine points de France, the earliest production of the lace centre, whose headquarters were the Chateau Longay. There the Venetian lace-makers brought over by Colbert, taught the French workers, and in the cravat ends we see their influence and training in every stitch. Not yet

had the light Alençon patterns been evolved, not yet the plain *réseau* which serves as such an inimitable background for the graceful light designs. The pattern of this early example is painstaking and intricate in the extreme, human figures appear in elaborate court costume, musical instruments, birds, medallions, together with a rich ground, à *brides picotées*.

In the National Museum, at Munich, a very fine cravat is to be seen of early eighteenth century workmanship in bobbins lace, bordered on three sides, on the fourth, the top side, is shown the hand-made engrelure or heading on to which the cambric of the tie would be stitched. The pattern is of conventional flowers and foliage, united by *brides*.

Very beautiful and of about the same period is a needle-point cravat, the pattern of flowers and palms of which is done upon a *réseau* of fine needle-point make. This example is bordered on three sides and also has the *engrelure*.



BOBBINS LACE À BRIDES PICOTÉES  
ITALIAN DESIGN

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY