

THE LOAN EXHIBIT OF LACES AT THE CARNEGIE
INSTITUTE, PITTSBURG

BY MRS. WILLIAM REID THOMPSON

THROUGH the efforts of a committee of Pittsburg ladies a delightful loan exhibit of laces was held in the Carnegie Institute during the past winter, where for several years a class in lace-making has been conducted by Miss B. E. Merrill, a member of the Needle and Bobbin Club. The exhibit, which proved exceedingly popular, covered a period of several weeks in January and February, remaining open until Lincoln's Birthday. The ladies were fortunate in gathering a representative collection that was indeed a page from the past illustrating the best period in an art almost lost. The cases were filled with specimens of the early Venetian, gros point, rose point and Burano, the points de France, Argentan and Alençon, shawls, flounces and wedding veils of Chantilly and the Brussels point de gaze, as well as the earlier Flemish bobbin laces, Binche and Valenciennes. There were also several charming lappets of point d'Angleterre, a lace fashioned before the scarlet battle line had blotted out the homes of the lace-makers for centuries settled in dreamy content in northern France and Belgium, where to-day at Bruges, Ypres, Courtrai, Lille, Arras, Bailleul, Quesnoy, Armentières, even the spider finds no quiet place in which to spin its web and the *dentellière* with her lace pillow has vanished with the home, the choirs and their altars and the chimes,—yet the Maid of Orleans and the Crucifix remain!

Historically interesting also was a flounce of pillow lace from Brussels, one of the first pieces sold in America for the relief of the Belgian sufferers. Another, a piece of modern network or *filet brodé* designed by

Mrs. Marcus, who chose for her theme scenes from Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," and thus marked the high standard of excellence attained by American needlewomen.

The attribution of the church flounce shown in the accompanying illustration is full of interest. This lace which at first glance appears to be Milanese has, on the other hand, certain features distinctively Flemish, while the lotus motif bearing in its petals the emblems of the Passion at once suggests a work of the Spanish provinces where the Egyptian lotus flower introduced by the Copts still survives in mediæval stone-carvings. With this in mind the interesting query asserts itself as to whether this may not be the *Redano* lace described by Ellen Wishaw in her catalogue of the Andalusian Museum at Seville.

The interest awakened by this loan collection proves how well worth while it is to encourage local exhibits of this character, and it is to be hoped that women of other cities and smaller towns may be inspired to follow the precedent so ably established by those of Pittsburg.



EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BOBBIN LACE WITH LOTUS MOTIF BEARING EMBLEMS
OF THE PASSION IN ITS LEAVES