

HAPPY DAYS REMEMBERED

By

MARIAN POWYS

LOVERS of lace in the lace-making countries of Europe are called "La Sainte Famille de Dentelle." The ladies of the Needle and Bobbin Club surely belong to this holy family. Lace brings with it tranquility, peace, and artistic accomplishment in the home life. The needle and the bobbin stand for something significant in the physical and psychological life—"No one can look upon the needle without emotion. It is a constant companion throughout the pilgrimage of life". Absorbed in the fine details of lace-making, the subconscious mind is set free, and how it can roam in all the wonder and beauty of the world! Of the past and the future—wild, strange thoughts —!

In the early days of the Club, Frances Morris arranged a lecture in a far country club, "Flowers in Lace Design". Springtime, in a garden full of flowers, and the speaker was one who knew and loved flowers in the lace and in the house, and could grow them well in the garden. Lace flowers have no colour—they are white with lovely shades and shadows—but always they must have beautiful lines. So garden flowers may be chosen for lace design, but always those with beautiful lines. Not like bougainvillia, only colour in masses. To train our little daughter to love lace—give her a blue pad, a pencil, and some Chinese White, and she will soon be making white lace flowers in patterns and balanced designs.

Another lovely party was when Mrs. Rockefeller, in her house on 54th Street, showed the Unicorn Tapestry. In a low room, shaded, we passed right into a medieval forest, with the mysterious unicorn standing there among the trees and flowers.

Our collectors of lace and embroidery and old woven fabrics would enjoy opening up the chests and cupboards, and showing each piece in the drawing-room on tables, chairs, and screens. It seemed as if the lace enjoyed it too.

Mr. Richard Greenleaf always had old masterpieces in lace framed on the walls.

Mr. J. P. Morgan himself went to the party of his daughter, Mrs. Pennoyer, when she showed Mrs. Morgan's lace after her death. He knew and remembered each example. It was strange to see so big a man in our familiar group of ladies. Mrs. Morgan always showed him every lace before buying it.

Mr. Harris Fahnestock, the last man to drive a coach-and-four through Central Park, knew and loved the lace as well as he did the horses. He would represent his wife at the lace auctions.

Mrs. Fahnestock's collection was a masterpiece, covering all laces and all periods, and fully described by herself. She never bought anything injured, and prided herself on building up her collection in America.

Mrs. MacDougall Hawkes collected only French laces and showed them in the Institut Français, in which she was much interested.

Mrs. Albert Blum, a great lover of lace, had family in Paris, so she had a good opportunity to get good examples when they came up.

Mrs. DeWitt Clinton Cohen had the help and sympathy of her husband in collecting. He loved fans, and she, fine little pieces of lace; lappets, *fonds de bonnets*, *engageantes*, and borders.

Mrs. Fox of the Brooklyn Museum took great pleasure in building up a fine collection of lace, which was well displayed and gave great pleasure at the time; it is still much appreciated.

Marian Hague and Frances Morris gave all these grand laces to the public in the large detailed pictures in their book (20" tall, in two volumes) *Antique Laces of American Collectors*. Miss Hague's impeccable collection of examples is on cards for careful study. Her beautiful face would light up and flush with joy at the sight of a rare and exquisite lace, however small. The book also illustrates masterpieces from the collections of Mrs. George Bliss and Mrs. William Bliss of California. Mrs. Flagler's beautiful laces are now in the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum in Palm Beach.

Mrs. Frederic Pratt had a spring party to show her lace in the country, and the Club strolled about the lovely garden. There was a walk between trees of wisteria trained on posts. This suggested a lace flounce or veil, bordered with hanging wisteria, twisted, with those lace-like leaves.

Mrs. John Vanderpoel took great pleasure in lace, and made and supported a good museum. This is still to be found in that most beautiful New England town, Litchfield, where Mrs. Vanderpoel lived in the simple house of her historic ancestor, who fought in the Revolutionary War.

Mrs. Vanderpoel, author of that good book on American lace, *American Lace and Lace-Makers*, said "God has forgotten me," as she grew very old in Gramercy Park. But many of our ladies enjoy a long and tranquil old age—so that it becomes almost a part of the lace tradition.

But it is the strong and beautiful youth that we trust with the future of all the ancient handicrafts, in thread, in wood, and in stone.