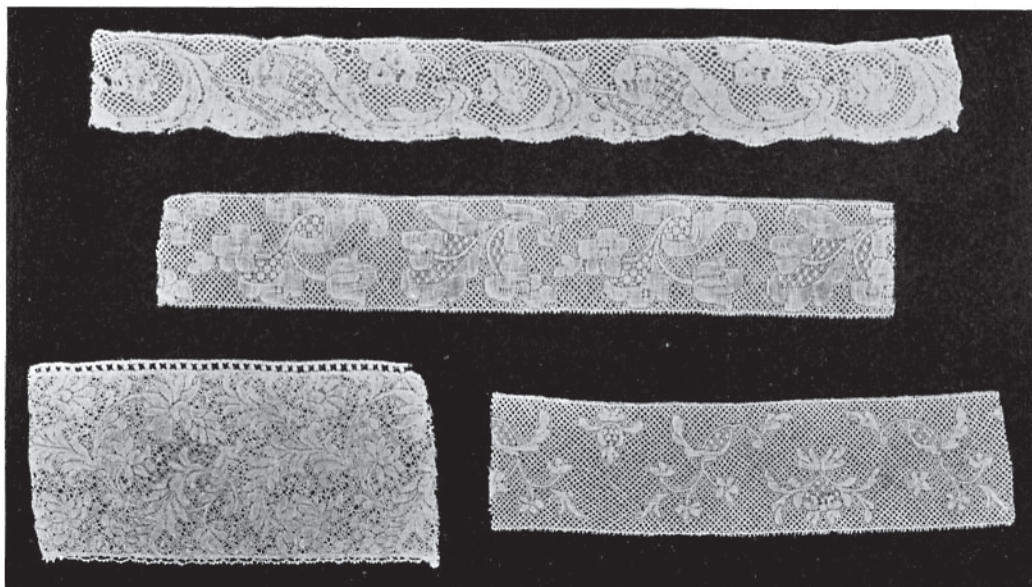


Lace at Pratt Institute



OLD VALENCIENNES LACE

PRATT INSTITUTE

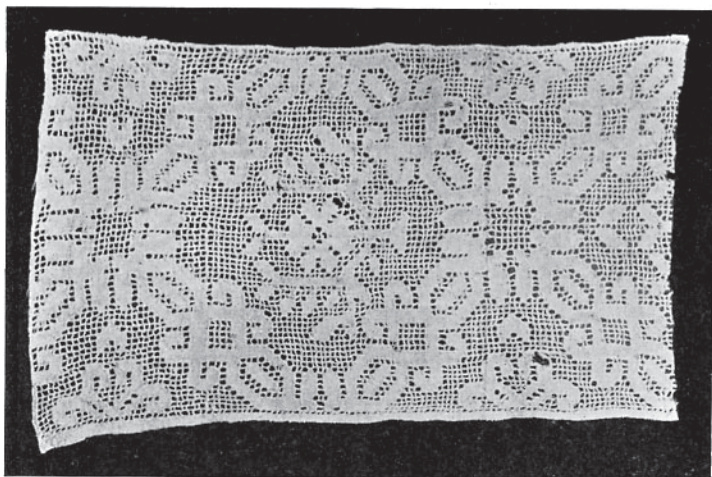
LACE AND LACE MAKING AT PRATT INSTITUTE BY EVA LOVETT

THE Lace and Embroidery Section of Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, where classes in such work are conducted, has lately acquired a collection of lace, not large, but thoroughly good and comprehensive. This collection is a valuable asset for the Institute, and furnishes an excellent object lesson for the students, which was the special purpose for which it was bought. It contains be-

tween nine hundred and one thousand pieces, including specimens of nearly every kind of lace, and covering nearly every period of its manufacture.

The majority of the lace pieces are quite small; some are only a few inches in length, but there is enough of each to show the pattern, the peculiarities of the variety, and the distinctive stitches used in making it. Each piece is complete and in good condition. Each is well mounted and labeled with the name and a short description of the kind of lace, and the place where, and the year when, it was first made and most used.

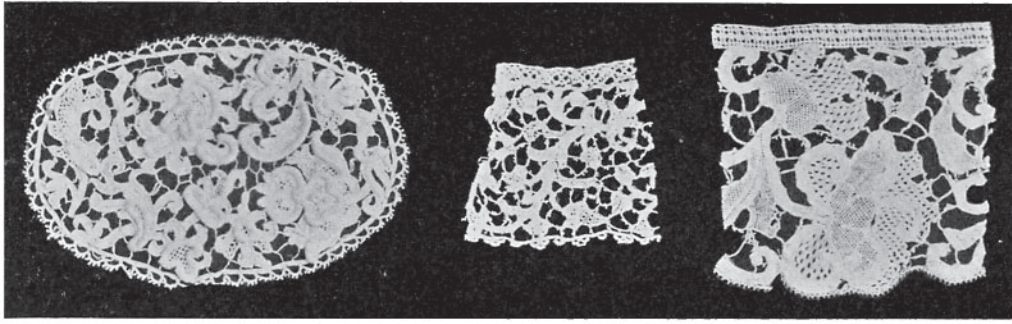
The specimens begin with early "drawn work," where the threads of the material were drawn together in clusters and patterns, leaving spaces between; "cut work," where small pieces of the material were cut out, forming a pattern, with the edges of the cut worked over with buttonhole stitch, making an effect something like the English embroidery now in vogue, and "reticella," where an elaborate pattern was worked with threads in the open spaces. All these were styles which marked the beginnings of lace making, when embroidery was developing into lace. The dates of these pieces are the fifteenth



CUT WORK OF
LACE TEXTURE

SOUTHERN ITALY

Lace at Pratt Institute



VENETIAN POINT

RAISED AND WITH BRIDE PICOTS

and sixteenth centuries. They are undoubtedly authentic, as much internal evidence proves.

Pieces next in point of age are examples of the early Venetian needle points. These were made entirely with the needle, and upon a paper on which the design was previously drawn. These show the first step in the manufacture of lace proper; that is, lace made entirely of threads without a foundation of material. In making "reticella" it was found that so much of the work could be done with threads alone, and without the material as a basis, that it was only natural that the next attempt should be the manufacture of point "d'aria," without the material at all. There are beautiful bits of these early Venice points in the Pratt collection, some of them being raised point, where the work is done over and over until a heavy effect is obtained, and some the flat point.

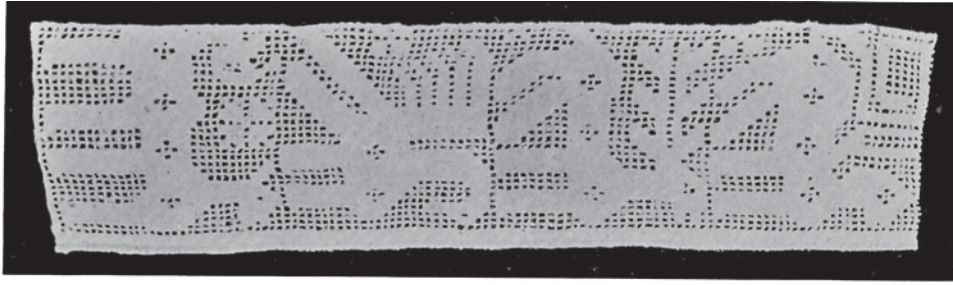
A quantity of examples of early valenciennes shows the really old patterns and styles of this beautiful lace, and there are many specimens of different periods and places, specimens of Brus-

sels, Honiton, Mechlin, Binches and many other German, Italian and French laces. The collection is very complete, and the pieces form a most interesting study. A few pieces have some historical interest. Several were said to belong to Marie Antoinette and to the Empress Josephine. But such statements are always doubtful, and the laces are beautiful and valuable enough in themselves to make them unnecessary.



EXAMPLE OF PRATT POINT

Lace at Pratt Institute



DRAWN-WORK (ABOUT 1550)

MOTIF OF ARCHAIC FIGURES

In the embroidery department of Pratt Institute they furnish a valuable lesson to students both in design and method. The early patterns were simple and effective, and nothing better has succeeded them. To have constantly before them the work of the early masters in the art of lace making cannot fail to have a distinct and elevating influence on the work of pupils in design, and to give practical lessons in detail to the learner in methods of lace making.

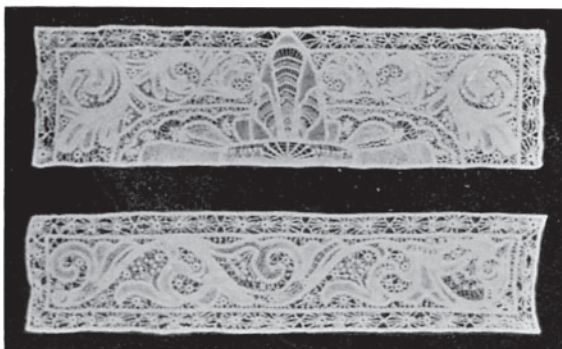
Original work is both encouraged and required in the Pratt embroidery and lace classes. Each article embroidered, and each lace piece made, is original, in the sense of being designed specially for the purpose. There are no duplicates, and there is no copying from a pattern. New ideas in style, method, coloring and other details of the art are required. The history of embroidery and lace, and the principles and designs used by the best makers, are first thoroughly learned by the pupil, who next studies the different kind of stitches used in the arts. Afterwards, her work is to combine these, making her own patterns from her studies of good design, and using such stitches as will best express her meaning. This method makes the

student entirely independent of patterns, and with a fund of ideas from which she can draw as she needs them. This course of study occupies about two years. The work of the department, which has been for seventeen years under a most competent director, Miss Stocking, is done on well defined lines; and certain principles of her own, the result of study and research, are justified in the competent workers sent out each year by the department.

There are also peculiarities in the method of teaching. One of these is the principle that nature subjects, to be best expressed in lace embroidery, should be conventionalized, and never literally reproduced. The thought at the bottom of such teaching is that the natural growth of flowers, leaves and blossoms cannot be adequately represented in stitchery. An attempt to make a copy of a flower in embroidery would result in a caricature. The correct way to reproduce it is to conventionalize the flower. This same idea is taught by the best jewelry workers in regard to nature forms in design.

Another principle used in Pratt lace teaching is, that the regular stitches are learned and the work executed in very coarse thread. The lace designs used in the finest kind of needlepoint, for instance, would be made in thread so coarse that the piece, when finished, would be a dozen times the size of one done in fine thread. This method is adopted for several reasons. In the first place, the novice can understand the stitches and follow the pattern better and can see more clearly the importance of exactness and care in her work, when any mistakes become at once apparent. In the second place, the coarser work is easier on the eyes and quicker. After the student has thoroughly learned the stitches and design, she can specialize in fine lace if she chooses, says the teacher. She has been taught her lesson thoroughly in a "large, round-hand," where she could perceive her own blunders.

But this heavy lace, done after the style of the



GUIPURE LACE SCREENS
FOR DOOR PANELS

MADE AT
PRATT SCHOOL

The "Marie Antoinette" Shawl

old lace designs, has a charm all its own. It is used in hangings, upholstery and as trimming for gowns in bordering and inserting, for table covers and table linen. It is known as Pratt point, and is executed in heavy flax and in wool thread. A handsome set of curtains made in this lace has an elaborate design in medieval style, the lace portion surrounding the material at both top and bottom, and running up into it at the sides and at different points. A table cover of heavy linen is embroidered with a design of dolphins, seaweed and other sea motifs worked in pale colored silks. A set of curtains has leaves and blossoms in conventionalized forms worked across the bottom, with a narrower design running up the sides.

Some delicate sketchy "Kensington" embroidery is done on light tinted silks for wall hangings, and a pattern of conventionalized leaves and flower sprays is in Renaissance lace as the border of a table doily, to the linen of which it is fastened with buttonhole stitches. Some charming embroidery done on lace net suggests berries, the pieces being intended for a blouse, and sets of lace to be used as trimming for gowns are to be seen in several designs.

A striking feature of the work is its immense variety, which ranges from the heaviest embroidered draperies in silken and woolen goods to the filmiest laces of exquisite design and workmanship. An exhibition of the work done by Pratt pupils was given the latter part of June, and the finished pieces displayed, the harmonious grouping of colors, the well selected and appropriate designs, were eloquent of the value of the methods employed and the ability and diligence of the pupils.



DOILY

EDGED WITH
PRATT POINT LACE