

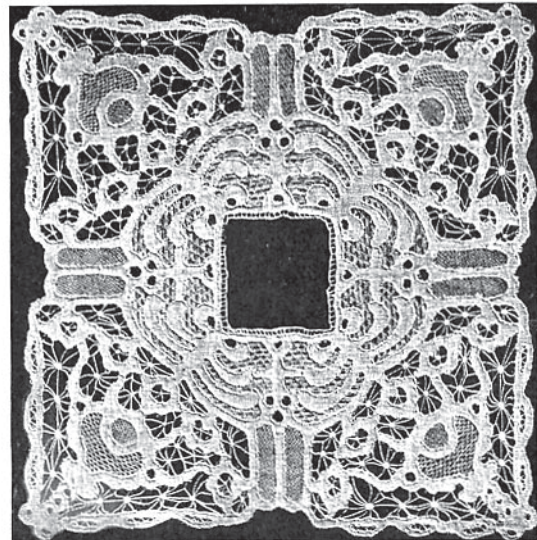
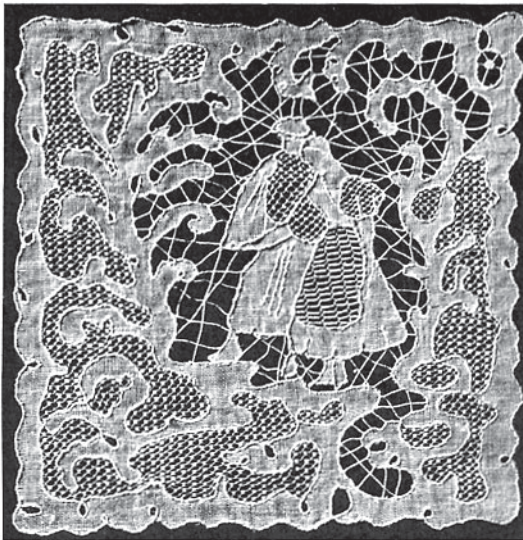
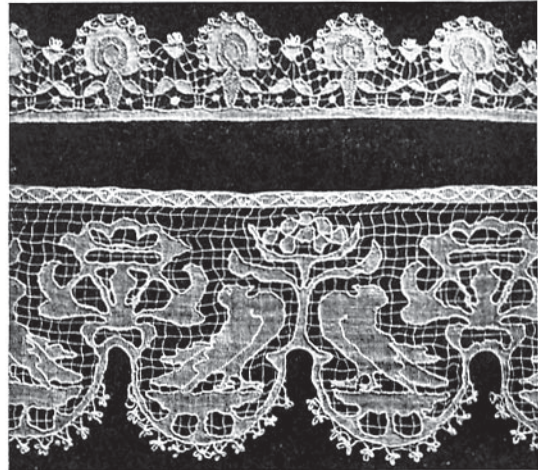
## *The Revival of Lace-Making in Hungary*

**T**HE REVIVAL OF LACE-  
MAKING IN HUNGARY. BY  
A. S. LEVETUS.

To many it will come as a surprise that there really is such a thing as Hungarian lace, for it has been generally ignored by writers on the subject. How the art of lace-making found its way to the land of the Magyars is a debatable point, but certain it is that bobbin lace has been made in some districts of Hungary for centuries, for how else could a law have been passed some three hundred years ago forbidding the making of lace by Hungarian maidens lest "easy work should unfit them for the heavy"? What that heavy work was that was expected of them and rendered with a fervour which only those deep in the history of the country can fully realise, we can surmise on remembering that among the countries of Europe Hungary for many centuries served as a buffer against the inroads of the Turks, who overran the land and devastated it times without number. In those perilous times the women of all ranks played their part in defending their castles and homesteads, in training their sons for battle, besides fulfilling their household duties, including spinning, weaving, ploughing the fields and performing other arduous tasks which in peaceful times are usually discharged by the men. This was the heavy work which the law-givers of those days feared might be neglected if the women indulged in such an easy and pleasant task as lace-making. In such times as these, when it was necessary to be ever

on guard against the inroads of the terrible Turk, there was indeed little opportunity for æsthetic pursuits, and for the same reason the changes of fashion in ladies' attire, the powdered hair, the hoops and furbelows, the lace cravats and the lace frills ornamenting the sleeves of both men and women, either remained unknown to the Hungarians or were despised or ignored as unfit for a people engaged in continuous warfare.

All things considered, however, it is remarkable what headway was made in these bygone days of storm and stress. Take for instance the art of embroidery. This was introduced into Hungary by Gisela, the Queen of Saint Stephen, who lived in the very beginning of the 11th century. She taught her maidens to make what is known as



EXAMPLES OF HUNGARIAN NEEDLE-POINT LACE ("HALÁSER")

DESIGNED BY PROF. ARPÁD DEKÁNI



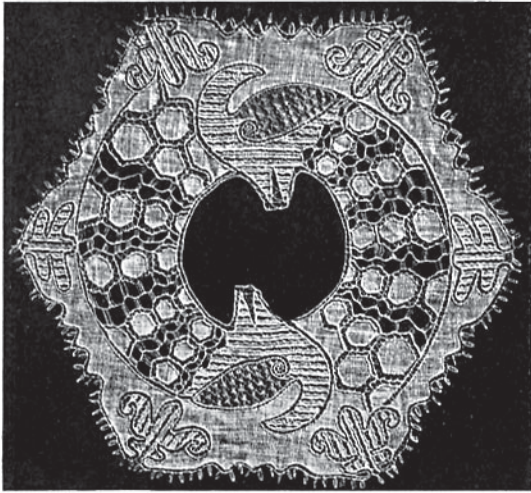


*(Executed in the Royal Lace  
Schools, Budapest)*

HANDKERCHIEF IN HUNGARIAN  
NEEDLE-POINT LACE. DESIGNED  
BY PROF. ARPÁD DEKÁNI



## The Revival of Lace-Making in Hungary



HUNGARIAN PILLOW LACE  
DESIGNED BY ÖRKÉNY AND SZENDRŐI

“Magyaröltés,” or Hungarian point; but this art, owing to “flame and sword,” was necessarily confined within a narrow circle. In the course of the centuries little advance was made. Very little lace was worn, and that little was bobbin lace; this, made of gold thread, was used to edge the long veils, hand-woven from the finest flax, which were worn by the women. These veils were worked in “Magyaröltés,” in different coloured silks—bright hues for the maidens and younger women, sombre hues for those of middle age and quite old women.

Bobbin lace was probably introduced into Hungary by the Saxons and others who were invited by the Hungarians to settle in different parts of their country, and who worked in their mines. Their wives accompanied them, and

in the hours of rest from labour worked at their “pillows and bobbins,” which they brought with them.

The Hungarian women have, however, always been great adepts in the art of making drawn-thread lace in their own homespun linens, and the custom continues to this day of adorning the body and house linen with it. In this particular line of needlework the Hungarians are real artists, and much ingenuity and dexterity have been exercised in the designing and working of the patterns, many of which are of exceeding beauty. From this drawn-thread lace it was but a step to the making of *filet* lace, which was known in Hungary as far back as the time of Arpád, the first crowned King of Hungary. The making of *filet* is still carried on, more especially in the neighbourhood of Solt, near Budapest.

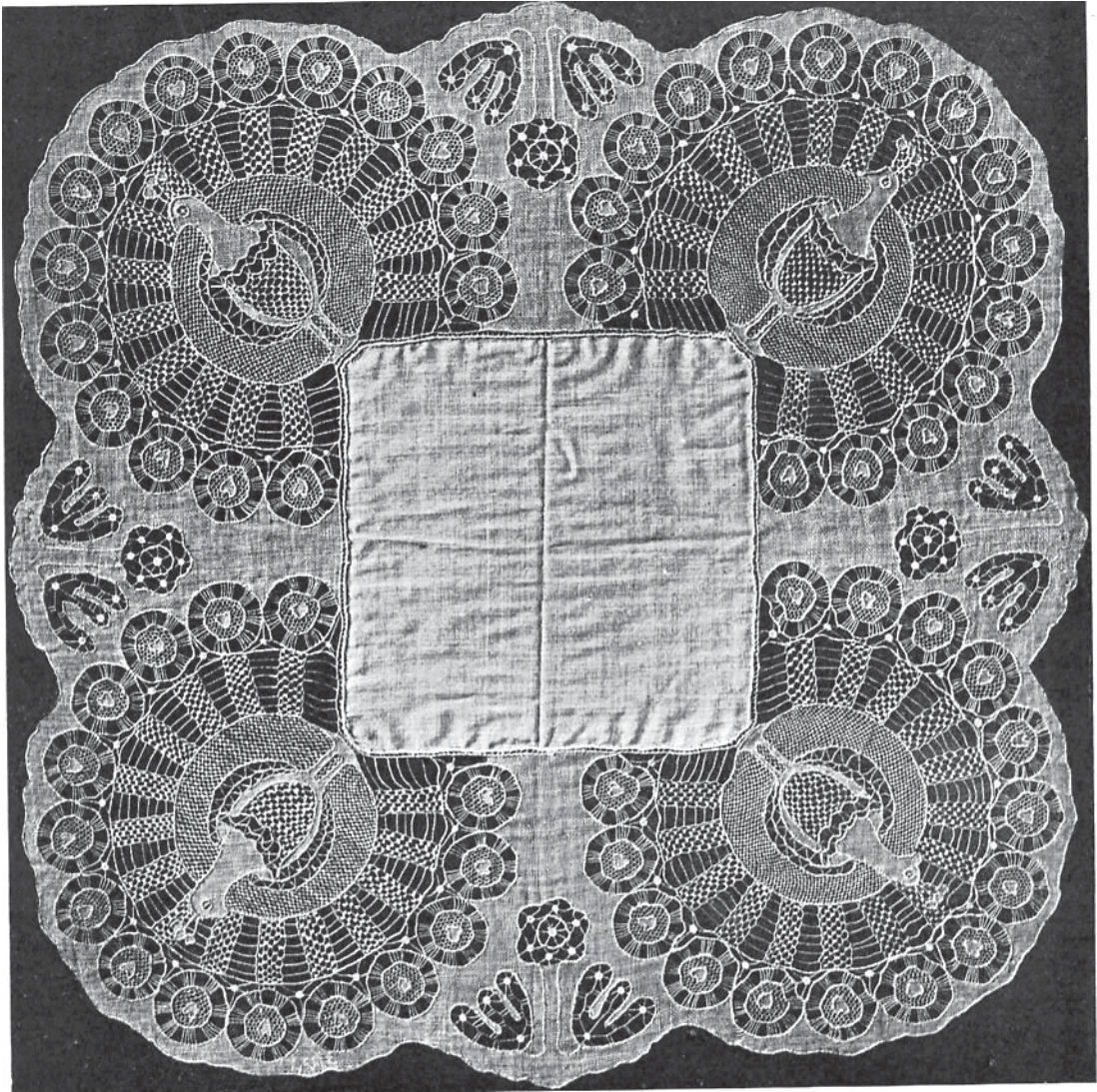
Of late years much has been done to revive the home industries, and, owing to the strenuous



HUNGARIAN NEEDLE-POINT LACE

DESIGNED BY GIZELLA MIRKOVSKZY





*(Executed in the Royal Lace  
Schools, Budapest)*

HUNGARIAN NEEDLE-POINT  
LACE. DESIGNED BY ÖRKÉNY  
AND SZENDRÖI



## The Revival of Lace-Making in Hungary



HUNGARIAN NEEDLE-POINT LACE  
DESIGNED BY PROF. ARPÁD DEKÁNI

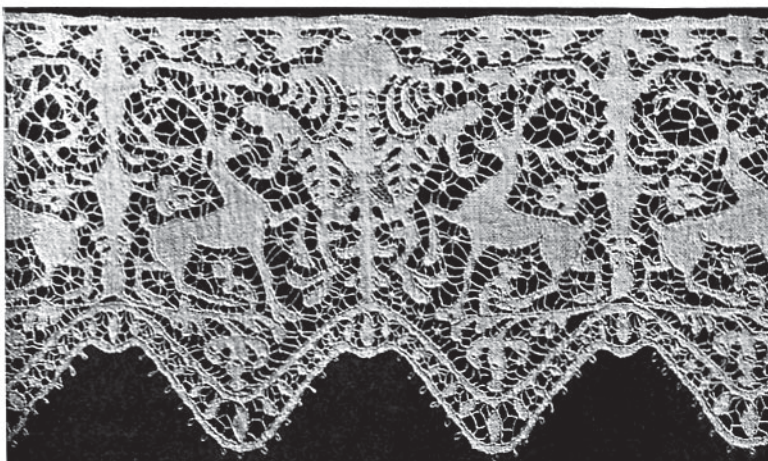
exertions of the Archduchess Isabella, the Countess Ilona Batthyany, and other ladies who have taken a lively and personal interest in the matter, success has been achieved. These two ladies brought the matter before the Government and set the wheel going, and now the art of lace-making is being taught systematically. Though still in its infancy—for the revival of lace-making was only commenced in 1906—success is assured as far as bobbin lace is concerned.

It is different with regard to needle-point lace, which till three years ago was unknown in Hungary. It is known as "Haláser," and its introduction is due to Professor Arpád Dekáni, at that time teacher in a provincial school, but now Professor at the Arts and Crafts Schools in Budapest. Prof. Dekáni conceived the idea of adapting the old Hungarian patterns to this

kind of work by creating new designs based on these lines. How beautiful many of these designs are, and how skilfully they are executed, can be seen from the examples here illustrated. Orkény and Szendrői are pupils of Professor Dekáni at the Arts and Crafts Schools, while Madame Gizella Mirkovszky is engaged in teaching the art of lace-making at the schools.

The organisation of these schools is excellent. The training is thorough and systematic; all subjects bearing upon lace-making are taught, such as embroidery, drawn-thread lace, *filet*, bobbin and needlepoint, knowledge of the materials on which and with which the students work, as well as designing and the application of designs to a particular kind of material, for everything is done to show how the "life" of the work depends on the thought and feeling put into it. The students have access to general and special literature on the subject, and are besides taught the commercial side of it, including book-keeping. Instruction of this character is given in most of the technical schools as an addition to the general curriculum, and such commercial training proves of considerable value to the students when they leave to seek a livelihood by their own efforts.

The teachers and future "directrices" receive instruction free at the schools, and stipends are granted to cover the cost of living in Budapest. Naturally the number of students admitted in any one year is limited, for only as many are allowed to enter the teachers' courses as may reasonably be expected to find employment. When they have finished the course the teachers are sent either to the lace-making centres in the North of Hungary, in the Comitats of Sáros, Gömör (where bobbin



HUNGARIAN NEEDLE-POINT LACE

DESIGNED BY PROF. ARPÁD DEKÁNI



CUSHION WITH SOUTACHE EMBROIDERY. DESIGN ADAPTED FROM AN OLD PEASANT MOTIF

lace was made as far back as 250 years ago), Nyitra and Zólyom, or to "wander" from place to place till a suitable locality is found for planting a school, then to wander further afield after a certain proficiency has been attained among the workers. Their task, as may well be imagined, is not always an easy one.

All work done in the provincial schools is sent to the central school in Budapest, and is paid for on delivery, irrespective as to whether it is sold or not. Holiday courses are held in Budapest every year, so that the teachers may be kept in touch with the latest phases, and moreover enjoy that intellectual life they have been perforce denied in the provinces. They receive special stipends during their stay, the entire cost being borne by the State.

The specimen of embroidery here reproduced does not, of course, belong to our topic, but work of this kind comes within the scope of the schools. It is worked with the finest silk *soutache* on home-spun linen, and the design is unmistakably Hungarian, though built up on modern lines. This is a

speciality of Hungary and well worth developing, for its beauty is undeniable.

Naturally there is a larger demand for bobbin-lace, which finds its way all over the world. For needle-point, unfortunately, there is no great demand at present. Yet for its beauty and charm Hungarian needle-point compares well with that of any other country. It is the old story told everywhere — the initial expense. If ladies could only be induced to overcome their scruples on this point they would be rendering a great service to themselves and to the lace-workers. A. S. L.