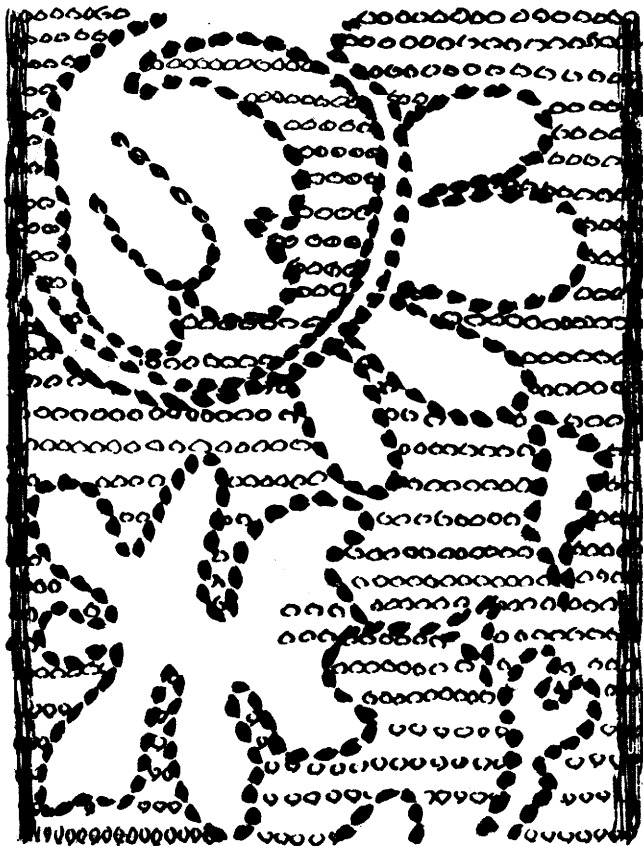


Woven Lace

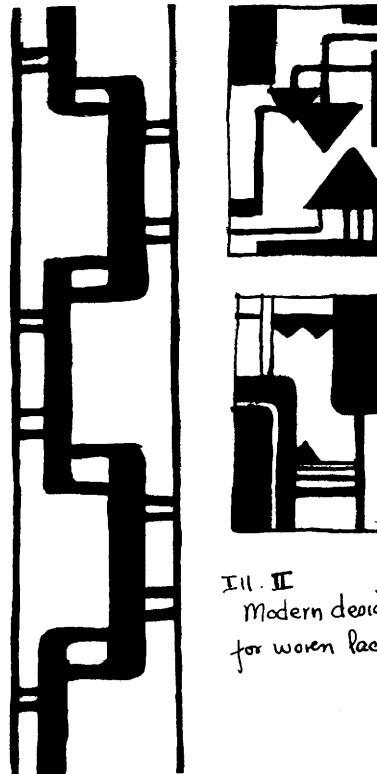
by HELEN LOUISE ALLEN

Looking thru a book on lace one day, I found reference to a "woven lace." This lace was apparently done in the American colonies by the weaver who was skillful with her loom and wished lace for her household linens but did not have the time or know the technique of making bobbin lace.

Later I found that the Metropolitan Museum had a piece of this lace. It is illustrated in "Notes on Laces of the American colonists with plates explanatory of Lace Technique from Antique Laces of the American Collectors" written by Francis Morris and published for the Needle and Bobbin Club. The lace is illustrated on plate 15, no. C, and a description is given on page 4; "From this same district comes a strip of rare hand woven lace of the same technique as the piece in the Leipsic Museum illustrated by Marie Schuette and attributed to the 17th century. This lace, which at first glance has the appearance of buratto, is similarly woven except that the pattern instead of being worked in by needle after the band of open work mesh is completed, is woven at the same time as the mesh itself, the threads of the warp being twisted before the weft threads are passed through them (as in buratto) to form the back ground, and the warp threads left untwisted for straight weaving as in linen cloth, to form the pattern. The



Ill. I Design of old Woven Lace



Ill. II
Modern design
for woven lace

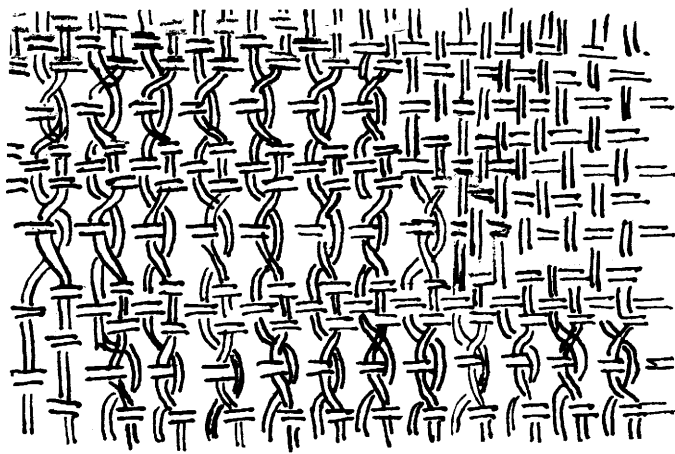
pattern of this piece, unlike that in the Leipsic Museum, is outlined with a thread of untwisted linen floss."

The book referred to in this paragraph is Marie Schuette's *Alte Spitzen*, published in 1914. A drawing of the lace is shown in Ill. I.

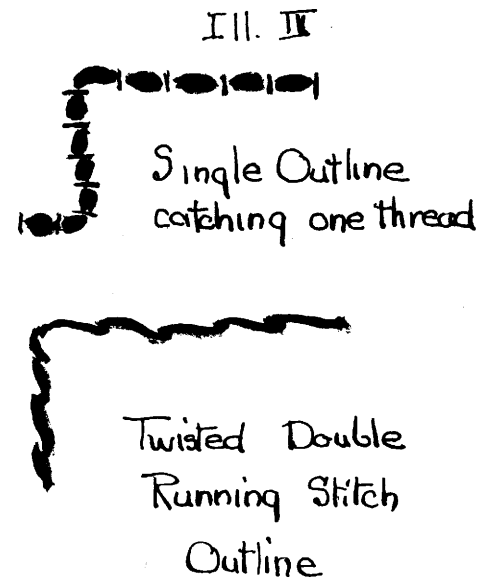
With a magnifying glass I was able to work out the technique of this lace. The main problems encountered were the difficulties of getting just the right weight of thread and the right number of dents to the inch to obtain the correct effect. Linen weaver was much too heavy and did not show up any pattern. My next attempt was spoiled by Egyptian cotton too close together and I had only a warp effect. In order to make it look like lace and for the design to stand out the warp thread must be quite fine and must be so set that an even weave will result. If the threads

are too close together, the background areas will not appear as lacy as desired, and if set too far apart, the plain weave areas do not stand out from the background. Yarns like Umbrian warp, Perle No. 20, or Linen warp 50/2 are suitable for this technique.

The design in the piece in the Metropolitan Museum is floral in character showing a running vine with branching flowers and leaves. Geometric designs can also be used with very good effects Ill. II. One can use the plain areas on the openwork background or the open work as the design on a plain weave background. Diagonal lines or very slightly curved lines are the most successful but vertical lines are also good. Horizontal lines do not show up very well where one is making the pattern in plain and the open background, but they do stand out when open work is used on a plain background. A single line of plain worked vertically looks like a mistake but single lines of open work either diagonally or vertically will show slightly on the plain background. Just a sketched design is more easily handled than one done on squared paper as the design always elongates. One has to draw a short squat design in order to have a square one. But maybe you will be more successful in keeping to your original proportions than I was.



III. III Technique of Woven lace



The loom should be one on which the thread will not slip loose when changing to the next shed. A good stout weaving sword such as the primitive weavers use in beating down their threads is a great help to keep the threads close together. A flat weaving shuttle will do if no "sword" is available.

The loom is threaded in plain weave with a good wide selvage set in. After weaving a heading, the area using the gauze weave is picked up on a flat stick letting the stick run between the regular shed for the plain wave areas. A netting mesh stick is very handy for picking up the threads, or else a pointed flat stick. When all is arranged on the flat stick as desired the stick is turned on edge and the weft thread is put in. A small flat shuttle may be used or a large netting needle. Then three rows of plain weave are put in each row being beaten down closely and firmly. It will spring out enough to show the pattern as one weaves. The next pattern row is then picked up. The three rows of plain weave make this lace weave progress very rapidly. III. III

When the article is finished the design may then be outlined with a heavy soft thread. A plain running stitch catching only a single thread and jumping three or four will make a one sided article, that is, one that has a right and wrong side. A double running stitch is better as then the two sides are alike. The second running stitch is taken going above and then below the previous stitch thus twisting one stitch around the other like a cord. III. IV.

In the modern geometric designs, I do not feel that an outline is necessary, but in a floral design the outline is necessary to give the curved feeling of the petals and leaves. In large areas details may be drawn in with the outline that are not there in the weaving and also bits of the open work may be left not outlined in an article in which the main parts are outlined. If the outline is very heavy and fluffy it might give a three-dimensional effect with other areas left untreated or edged with a thinner thread.