

Frattini, in his "Storia dell' Industria Manifatturiera in Lombardia," states the inhabitants of the Cantu district made lace from about 1600. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century the industry had fallen into decay. "The Milanese," writes Lalande, "only fabricate lace of an inferior quality,"* to which may be added the later testimony of Peuchet, who writes that the laces are very common and not highly priced.†

The earlier Milanese laces are not grounded with the *réseau*, but covered by bold rolling scroll designs held together by brides, sometimes of twisted strands of thread. A specimen in the Bolckow Bequest, catalogued as Italian or Flemish, but certainly Italian in treatment, has a design of large flowering scrolls, in the centre of which is a lady playing a lute, while toward her flies a cupid bearing a heart, and on the other side is a nude figure with a flowing scarf. The cupid, blindfolded, has a bow and arrows (Plate XXXVIII.). One very fine piece of Milanese lace in the Victoria and Albert Museum has no brides; the details of the pattern touch one another ‡ (Plate XXXVII.). The *toilé* is a close, firm, even braid, varied with pin holes, or larger open devices. The *réseau* ground was introduced by 1664, at which date a portrait by Gonzales Coques shows a straight-edged piece of Milanese with meshed ground.

The *réseau* is of various kinds. Its most common type is a diamond-shaped mesh, formed with a plait of four threads like Valenciennes, but many experimental grounds, loosely worked, are met with in earlier pieces. Sometimes the mesh is square with the threads knotted at the points of intersection.

The pattern is first made on the pillow by itself, and the *réseau* ground is worked in round it afterwards, sloping in all directions so as to fit the spaces, while Valenciennes is worked all in one piece,

* "Voyage en Italie," 1765.

† "Milan. Dentelles en fil.—Elles sont très-communes. Cette fabrique n'a rien qui puisse nuire aux fabriques françaises de même espèce, ni pour la concurrence ni pour la consommation de Milan. Beaucoup sont employées par les paysannes de la Lombardie. La plus fine peut procurer quelque manchettes d'hommes d'un prix fort modique" ("Dictionnaire Universel de la Géographie Commercante," 1789).

‡ No. 42, 1903.

pattern and réseau together. If the lace is turned upon the wrong side the strands of thread of the Milanese réseau can be seen carried behind the pattern. The designs are beautiful, and consist of light ribbon-like scrolls and conventional flowers,* which enclose small chequer or other simple fillings. Animal forms, eagles, hares, bears, hounds, archaic in drawing, but always vigorously treated, are frequently introduced.

Coats of arms are frequently met with, and animals which, no doubt, represent family badges. The double or imperial eagle is of very common occurrence. This is to be accounted for by the fact that Charles V. conceded as a mark of special favour the privilege of bearing the imperial arms to several Italian as well as Spanish families, who used them instead of their own arms.†

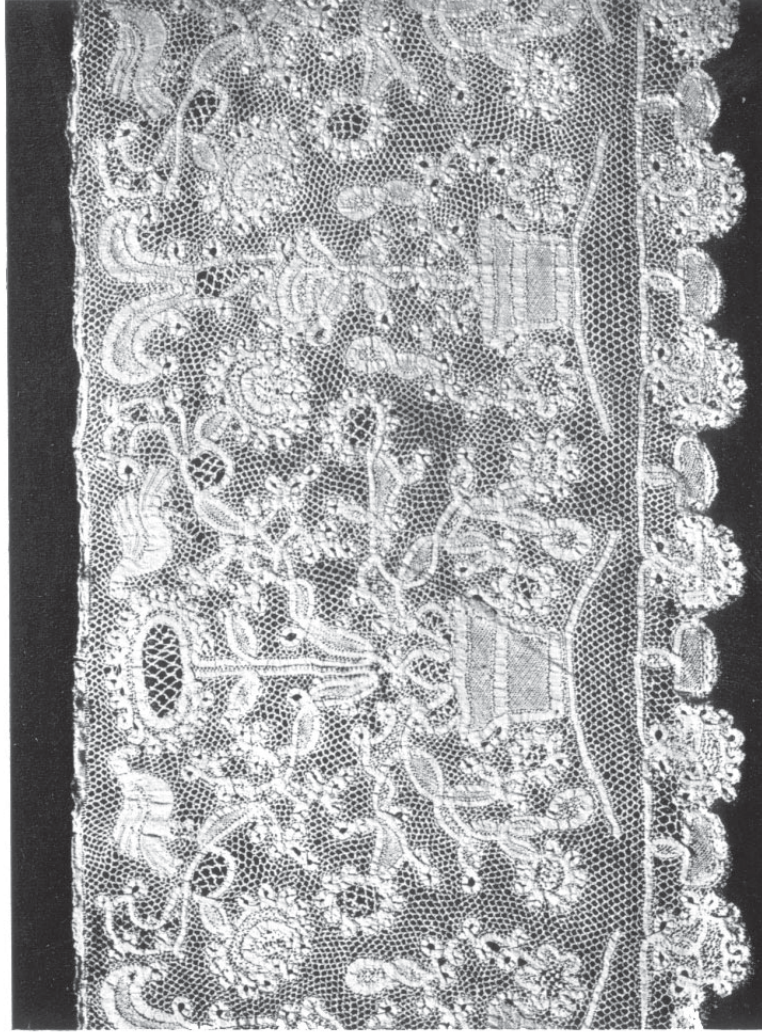
The very curious piece of Milanese lace (Plates XXXIX. and XL.), shows a clumsily-drawn figure seated upon an ornamental fountain. The graceful scrolls include various long-tailed birds, angels, horsemen chasing stags and lions; while part of the pattern has a kind of knot-work upon the more important motifs; the lion's mane, the angel, the horsemen are ornamented with this work in black silk, as is also the double eagle surmounted by a crown. It is dated 16..5.

In church lace, figures of the Virgin, angels, and monograms occur.

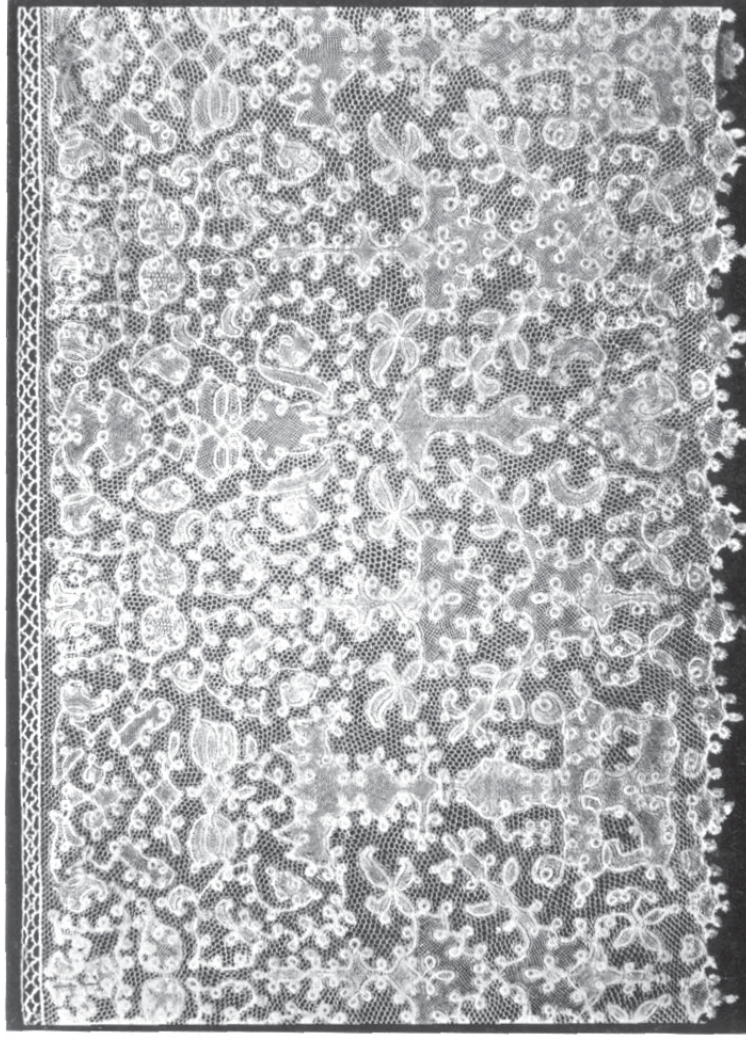
An interesting piece, dated 1733, in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, at Brussels (of which two photographs are given on Plate XLIII.), should be studied. The first portion, with arms of "Julius Cæsar Xaverius Miccolis abbas et rector S. Mariæ Græcæ, A.D. 1733," and its repeating scroll design with its characteristic birds and stags is perfect, while the second portion shows a hopeless confusion of motifs carelessly thrown together, and the réseau mended. The angels supporting the shield with its rayed monstrance are followed by a stag and a crowned double eagle, which are quite unrelated to the design and to each other. The scroll, instead of repeating like the first portion, is twisted into a broken and irregular volute, and a single

* Not conventional beyond recognition, like these highly ornamental flowers of Venetian rose point. The pink, lily, and other flowers are met with, often treated naturalistically.

† From 1535 till 1714 Milan was a dependency of the Spanish Crown.



BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.
With réseau ground.



FLOUNCE OF MILANESE OR GENOESE LACE.
Late eighteenth century. (*In the possession of the Misses Trevelyan.*)

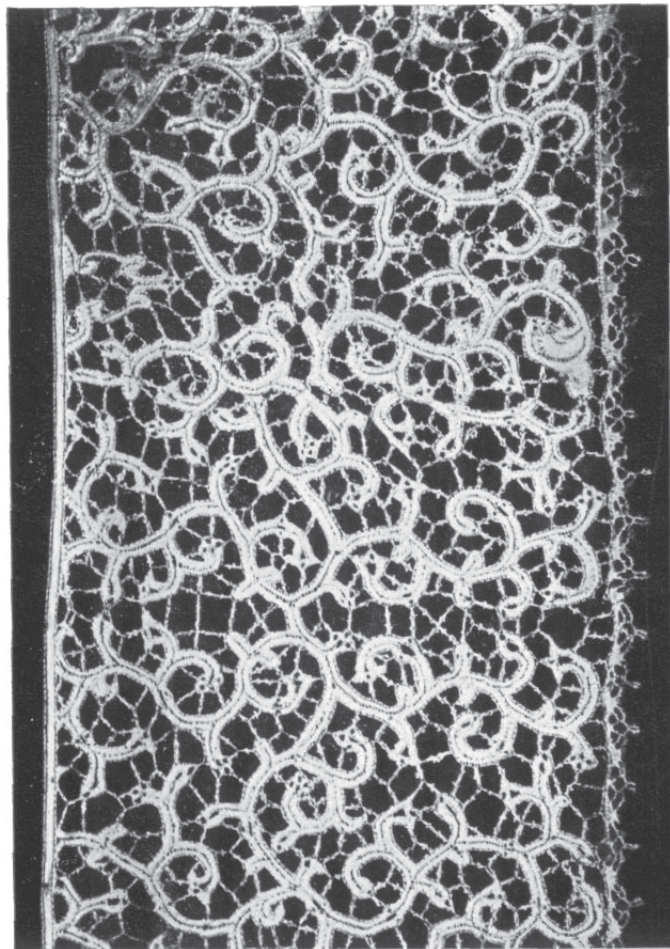


BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.
Dated 1733.



BORDER OF MILANESE LACE.
Dated 1733.

Plate XLIV.



BORDER OF MILANESE OR GENOESE LACE.
Late eighteenth century.

supporter of the abbot's arms is transferred to a new position beside an ornamental pillar.

Plate XLI., with its naïve rendering of floral design, is perhaps a late or peasant rendering of Milanese work; the twisting, ribbon-like convolutions, which may be seen in the stems of the flowers and other ornament, became more prominent in the decadence of Milanese lace. The trade name for such lace is "Genoese lace," but it was made both in Milan and Genoa and the district. The design consists merely of the tape looping back upon itself, and linked together by brides with picots, or with a *réseau* ground. It has been much used for church vestments, and was frequently of considerable width (Plate XLII.).

Strong peasant bobbin laces were made very freely throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Northern Italy. Coryat* notices in Piedmont "that many of the inns have white canopies and curtains made of needlework, which are edged with very fine bone-lace," and in Venice that "the sides under the benches" in the gondolas are "garnished with fine linen cloth, the edge whereof is laced with bone-lace." About fifty years ago, sheets and pillow-cases, towels and table-cloths were still to be bought from country inns, trimmed with pillow lace of coarse thread and indeterminate pattern.

* Coryat's Crudities, 1611.

CHAPTER VII.

CRETAN.

BOBBIN-LACE making in Crete would seem to have arisen in consequence of Venetian intercourse with the island,* and Cretan white thread laces bear distinct traces of Venetian influence, as for example those in which costumed figures are introduced. "As a rule, the motives of Cretan lace patterns are traceable to orderly arrangement and balance of simple geometric and symmetrical details, such as diamonds, triangles, and quaint polygonal figures, which are displayed upon groundworks of small meshes. The workmanship is somewhat remarkable, especially that displayed in the making of the meshes for the grounds. Here we have an evidence of ability to twist and plait threads as marked, almost, as that shown by lace-makers of Brussels and Mechlin. Whether the twisting and plaiting of threads to form the meshes in this Cretan lace was done with the help of pins or fine pointed bones, may be a question difficult to solve." † Cretan lace is very often worked on silk. The patterns in the majority of the specimens made of linen thread are outlined with one, two, or three bright coloured silken threads, which may have been run in with a needle.

* In the partition of the Greek Empire after the capture of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204, Crete fell to the lot of Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, and was by him sold to the Venetians, to whom it continued subject for more than four centuries, till 1669.

† "A Descriptive Catalogue of the Collections of Lace in the Victoria and Albert Museum."

Plate XLV.



FLEMISH OR BELGIAN LACE.
Seventeenth century. Known as "Brugcs."

CHAPTER VIII.

FLANDERS.

WHILE the conditions of art in Flanders—wealthy, bourgeois, proud and free—were not dissimilar to those of the art of Venice, from the very infancy of Flemish art an active intercourse was maintained between the Low Countries and the great centres of Italian art, so that it was not unnatural that at the close of the sixteenth century laces were known and made in Flanders.* As a matter of fact, Flemish paintings do not begin to show the use of lace until about 1600.† The evidence of the series of engravings after Martin de Vos is hardly conclusive as to the making of bobbin lace in Flanders in the sixteenth century, as he spent many years in Italy; and though the third of the series (assigned to the *age mûr*) shows a girl sitting with a pillow on her knees making bobbin-lace, the treatment and the background are Italian.

Needlepoint lace was hardly made at all. A specimen of needlepoint lace, of which the pattern consists of a number of small blossom devices arranged very closely together, is notable for the characteristic absence of contrast between the compactly worked ornaments and

* "It is a noteworthy circumstance that the two widely distant regions of Europe where pictorial art first flourished and attained a high perfection, North Italy and Flanders, were precisely the localities where lace-making first took root and became an industry of importance both from an artistic and from a commercial point of view" (Art. *Lace*, Encyclopædia Britannica).

† "I ritratti fiamminghi non cominciano a essere ornati di pizzi che intorno al 1600; solo dopo il 1600 l'uso di cotale ornamento e estesissimo nelle Fiandre" (A. Melani, "Svagli Artistici Femminili").

open spaces about them, and the same defect is to be seen in Flemish bobbin laces of the same period.*

In the *Wardrobe Accounts of Queen Elizabeth*, Flanders cutwork is priced less highly than the Italian variety and is of less frequent occurrence.†

In one point Flanders was superior to other countries of Europe—its linen, whereof the Flemish “exporte great quantity, and fyner then any other part of Europe yealdeth.”‡ Spinning flax threads and weaving fine textiles is closely associated with the early commercial history of Flanders, and “when the progress of manufactures was endangered by the religious persecutions of the sixteenth century, the linen trade alone is said to have upheld itself, and to have saved the country from ruin.” The fineness of the thread used especially affected the lace designs when the early twisted and plaited merletti a piombini after the Italian models began to give way to scalloped laces in which flattened, broader tape-like lines forming some sort of floral ornament, were prominent.§ These date from about 1630 to 1660. Curved forms seem to have been found easy of execution in the bobbin lace, no doubt because (unlike reticella) it was not constrained by a foundation of any sort.

The immense quantity of bobbin lace produced in Flanders during the seventeenth century was aided by the improvements in spinning threads,|| and in the making of pins.

The design, as we have said, is usually somewhat crowded,¶ com-

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 243, 1881.

† “For one yard of double Italian cutwork, a quarter of a yard wide, 55s. 4d. For one yard of double Flanders cutwork, worked with Italian purl, 33s. 4d.” (G.W.A., 33rd and 34th Elizabeth).

‡ Fynes Moryson.

§ About 1630. A portrait of a lady by Rembrandt about 1640, in the Royal collection at Windsor Castle, shows a fichu bordered with scallops of this type of lace.

|| The first improvement in the primitive spindle was found in the construction of the hand-wheel, in which the spindle mounted in a frame, was fixed horizontally and rotated by a band passing round it and a large wheel set in the same framework. Such a wheel became known in Europe about the middle of the sixteenth century.

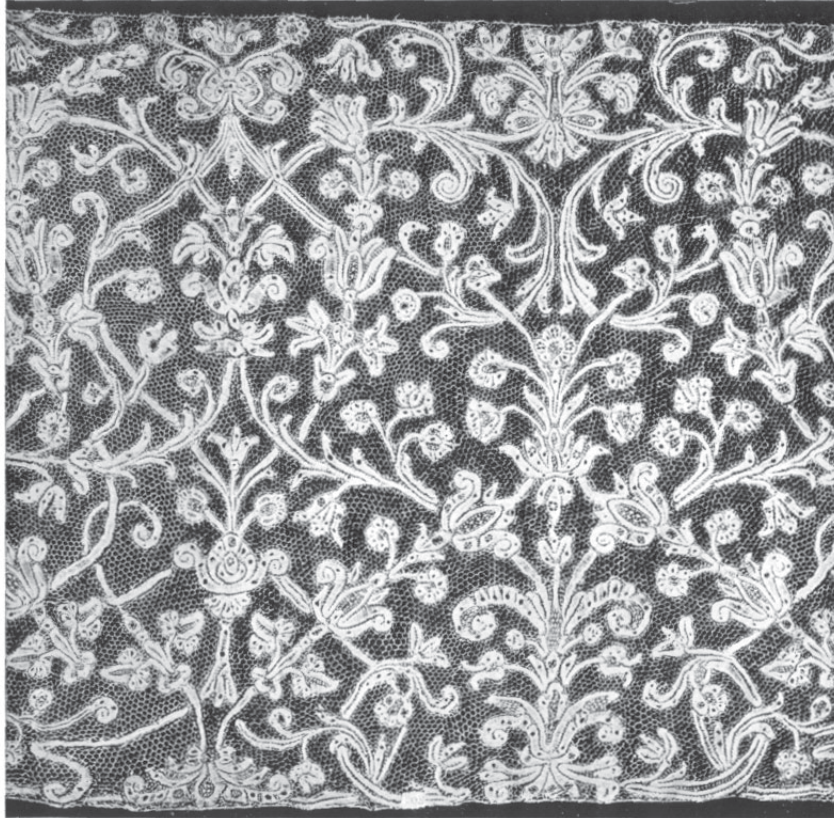
¶ “While the painters of Germany and the Netherlands were fond of filling a given space with figures and incidents, the Italians preferred to deal with an

Plate XLVI.



FLEMISH LACE.
Late seventeenth century.

Plate XLVII.



FLEMISH LACE.
Beginning of the eighteenth century.

posed of the local flora;* the edge spread into a fan-shaped or rounded broad scallop. In Flanders a means was invented for producing laces of great width, which consisted of "dividing the patterns not by bands, but into small and separate pieces, the boundaries of which coincided with the capricious curves of the ornament."

Of this century is a bobbin-made lace à brides—"point de Flandres," or "guipure de Flandres" as it is sometimes called. In this the pattern is composed of bold scrolling stems connected together by brides à picots. When the ground to lace of similar character and make consisted of small meshes, the lace was termed point d'Angleterre, and was made for the English market.†

There has been some doubt as to the country of origin of certain seventeenth-century pillow-made tape guipures in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which are described in the cases containing them as "Flemish or Italian." If a distinctive difference may be suggested between lace of the same style of pattern made in the two countries, it would perhaps appear to be in the quality of the thread. As has been said, the inhabitants of the Flemish provinces have always been noted for their superior skill in spinning and weaving linen, and from a difference in national taste, Italian lace is heavier and stouter than that produced in the north of Europe. The loose texture of this Flemish lace gives a pulled appearance to the outline, as if the brides were slightly straining it, and the pin-holes, from the same looseness, appear less precise in form than in the Italian work.

Pillow-tape guipure is composed of a tape made on the pillow to follow the curves of the pattern, and connected by brides, generally plaited, also made on the pillow, or by "sewings."

expanse of background, and by their treatment of it, gave an effect of air and freedom to the scene" (Woltmann and Woermann, "History of Painting," p. 399).

* "Pour la plupart de la nationalité germaine, les populations du nord-ouest de la Gaule tiennent de cette origine des tendances vers le naturalisme dans l'art. Cette origine a contribué . . . à donner aux habitants de la Gaule Belgique, comme trait principal de leur physiognomie artistique, une aptitude toute spéciale à reproduire la nature" (Deshaisnes, "Histoire de l'Art dans la Flandre").

† For explanation of this name, see p. 48 *et seq.*

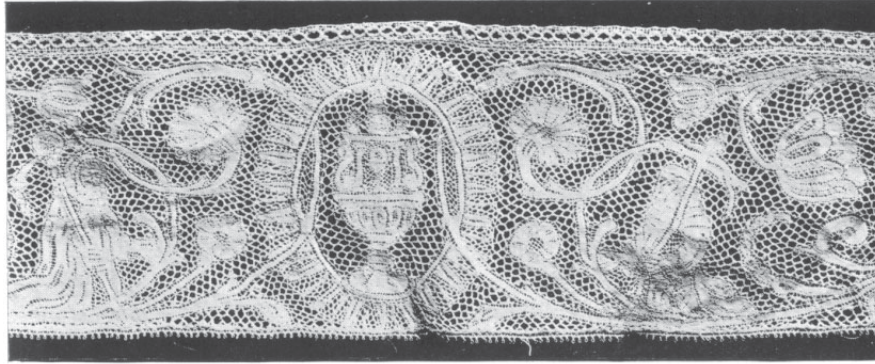
The braid follows the curves and lines of the pattern, and the various turns and curves are connected by means of sewings. The manner in which the braid is carried round the curves is extremely ingenious. By working partly across the braid and then returning to the outer edge of the curve a kind of wedge can be formed which brings the work round flat without any apparent thickening of the material. In the Flemish lace the fine thread obviated the necessity for the careful turning of the curves, and the method was gradually forgotten. Though we see less of the absolutely continuous line, patterns remained of a continuous scrolling character.

The "sewing" (as now practised by Brussels lace workers) is formed by catching a thread through a pin-hole in an adjacent piece of braid, and passing another thread through the loop thus formed. In this way a pattern worked in separate narrow lines is all joined into a homogeneous whole. Sometimes instead of the braids being closely united, two threads are twisted, or four threads are plaited into a braid fastened with a sewing into a part of the pattern, and then carried back into the braid.

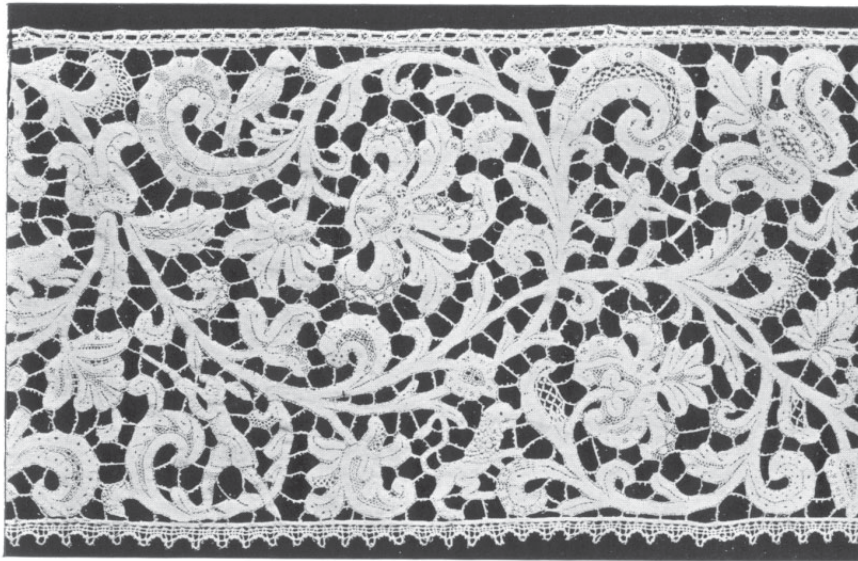
In most of the pillow guipures the braid is lightened by holes or "bird's eyes," sometimes single, sometimes arranged in groups. Sometimes a coarse quality of lace was made in which tape (not the tape made on the pillow) was used. The weaving of tape appears to have been begun in Flanders about the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century.

"Flat Spanish," or point de Flandres, is a pillow lace without any raised work. The lace was probably intended for Spanish consumption. "The making of lace," writes Sir John Sinclair in 1815, "at the time the French entered the Low Countries, employed a considerable number of people of both sexes. . . . A large quantity of sorted laces of a peculiar quality were exported to Spain and the colonies." The pattern which consists of detached and fantastic cut-up forms of varying widths, sprays, ribbons, flowers, &c., lightened by many varieties of open work, grillé, and veinings of pin-holes, &c., shows often an architectural and balanced arrangement.

A Flemish lace, straight-edged, with indeterminate pattern, and cloudy ground of irregular round circles with solid portions, is frequently met with. Its trade name is "Binche." Such specimens in



BORDER OF FLEMISH LACE.
With figures adoring a monstrance.



FLOUNCE OR BORDER OF FLEMISH (?) LACE.
Seventeenth century.

the Gruuthus Collection, however, as are attributed to Mechlin, in other collections are assigned to Antwerp. It is probable that it was a widely spread type of lace in Flanders, from which Mechlin, Valenciennes, &c., developed. It seems unlikely that this simple and ineffective lace was produced at Binche, of which the lace was admired by Savary, and said to be "equal to the laces of Brabant and Flanders."

CHAPTER IX.

BELGIAN LACE.

BRUGES LACE.

BRUGES made bobbin lace in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the name of Bruges is given to a lace of a scrolling character.* A guipure de Flandres piece of this kind, dated 1684, is preserved at Bruges, in the Chapelle du Saint Sang. The central portion shows two angels supporting the tube of the Holy Blood.† This oblong picture is surrounded by a scrolling design upon a réseau ground.

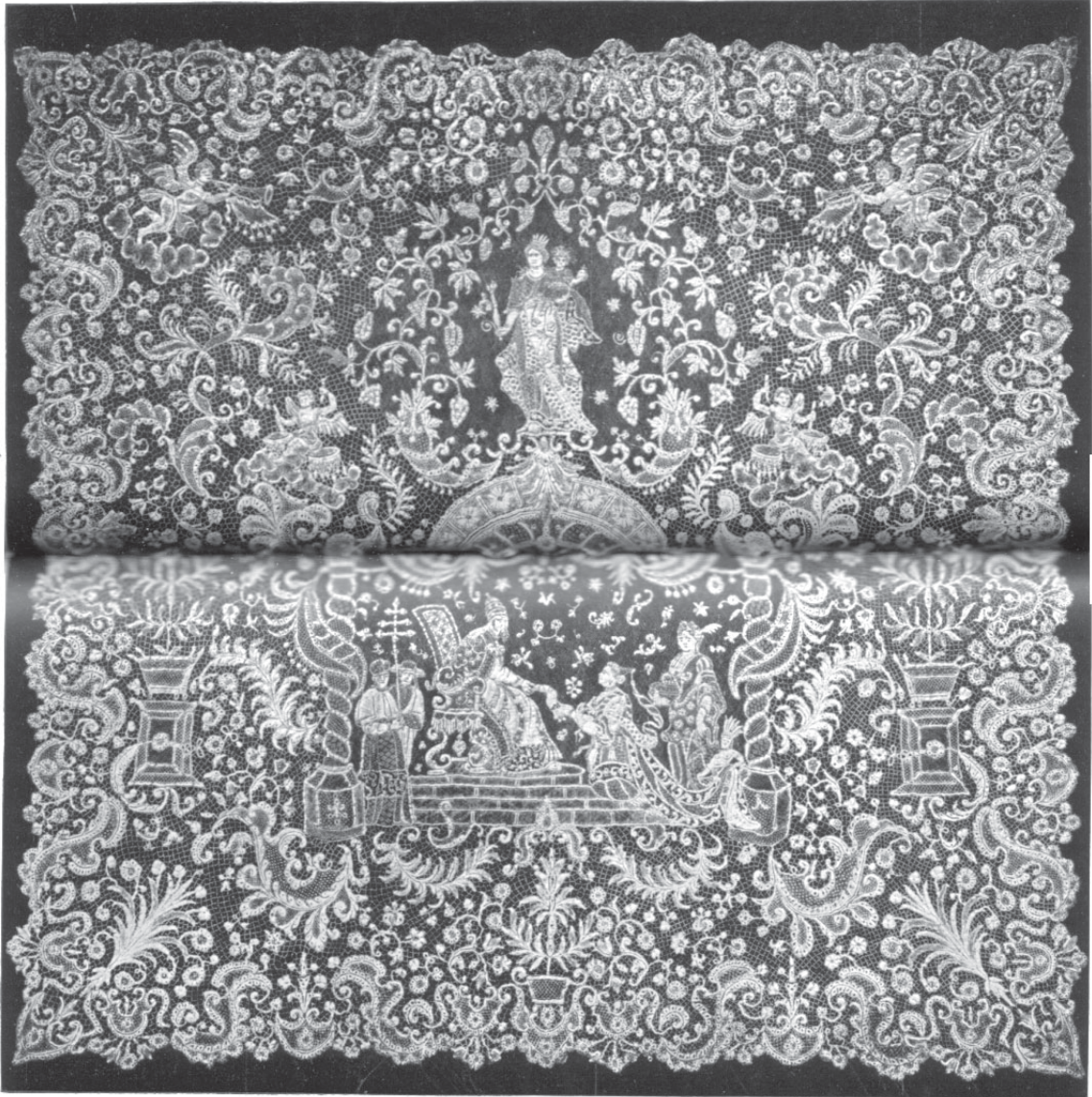
There is a good collection in the Gruuthus Museum, and a number of pieces were given to the Victoria and Albert Museum by the Rev. R. Brooke. The earlier examples have no brides; the later have brides picotées. The pattern as a rule resembles that of Venetian rose point. It is interesting to notice the pillow renderings of forms of "diaperings" and modes, which were originally done with the needle.

Later than the ground of brides is the réseau, of which there are some good specimens in the Victoria and Albert Museum. One specimen shows the tendency to naturalistic treatment of flowers in the eighteenth century, and has its floreated scroll pattern ornamented with tulips, primulas, and poppy-pods, acorns, &c.‡

* Société de l'Art ancien en Belgique, 1883-92.

† A copy in lace of the original glass tube containing the Holy Blood, which, though broken, is still preserved in the chapel.

‡ No. 888, 1853.



SQUARE OF BRUSSELS LACE.

Early eighteenth century.

Double-page spread rotate 90° to fit on page.

BRUSSELS LACE.

There is at present no information as to the date when the manufacture of Brussels lace began. In the eighteenth century it was famous, as Lord Chesterfield wrote in 1741, as the place "where most of the fine laces are made you see worn in England." The Béguinage was a great centre for lace-making, and English travellers often visited to buy lace.* In 1756 a Mrs Calderwood, who visited it, gave an account of the process of lace-making. "The manufacture is very curious," she writes; "one person works the flowers. They are all sold separate, and you will see a very pretty sprig for which the worker only gets twelve sous. The masters who have all these people employed give them the thread to make them; this they do according to a pattern, and give them out to be grounded; after which they give them to a third hand, who 'hearts' all the flowers with the open-work. That is what makes the lace so much dearer than the Mechlin, which is wrought all at once."† Thus half-way through the eighteenth century some special characteristics of Brussels work—the low rate of wages, the division of labour, and the *specialisation* of lace-workers on some branch of this work, the domination of the "masters"—is already established.

Brussels pillow lace is, as Mrs Calderwood writes, not made in one piece on the pillow; the réseau ground is worked in round the pattern which has been *separately* made.‡ "Thus the long threads that form the toilé of Brussels lace of all dates always follow the curves of the patterns, while in other Flemish laces these strands are found to run parallel to the edge the whole length of the lace, and *to pass* through the pattern into the réseau ground."§

* "We went to the Béguinagè Convent to buy lace" (Letter of Elizabeth Viscountess Nuneham, 1766—"Harcourt Papers," vol. xi.).

† "Mrs Calderwood's Journey through Holland and Belgium, 1756" (printed by the Maitland Club).

‡ In old Brussels lace the ornament was worked on the pillow into the ground. Later, and at the present time, the flowers are applied to or sewn in the ground. Sometimes they are sewn on to the ground.

§ A. M. S., "Point and Pillow Lace."

There are two sorts of *toilé*, one the usual woven texture, as of a piece of cambric, the other a more open arrangement of the threads, which is used for shading effects.

Relief is given to certain details of flowers and fibres of leaves by a flattened and slightly raised plaited *cordonnet*. A slight modelling is imparted to flowers by means of a bone instrument, which gives concave shapes to petals, leaves, and other ornaments.

There were two kinds of ground used in Brussels lace—the *bride* and the *réseau*. The *bride* was first employed, but was already discontinued in 1761, and was then only made to order.* Sometimes the *bride* and the *réseau* were combined.†

The ground used in Brussels lace is of two kinds—*needlepoint* and *pillow*. The *needlepoint réseau* is made in small segments of an inch in width, and from 7 to 45 inches long, joined together by a stitch long known as “*fine joining*,” consisting of a fresh stitch formed with a needle between the two pieces to be united. The *needleground* is stronger, but three times more expensive than the *pillow*, which has a hexagonal mesh, of which two sides are made of four threads plaited four times, and four sides of two threads twisted twice. Since machine-made net has come into use, the *vrai réseau* is rarely made, save for royal orders. Of course, lace-makers so skilful as those of Brussels occasionally made experiments with other grounds, such as the *star-meshed réseau*; but this is uncommon.

Brussels *needlepoint* was introduced into that city about 1720, evidently in imitation of the *Alençon* fabric, which it closely resembles in pattern and general effect. The Brussels *needlepoint*, however, is not so firm and precise, and the *toilé* is of looser make than the French work. The *button-hole stitched cordonnet*—a distinguishing feature of *Alençon*—is replaced by a single thread‡ or strand of threads. The Brussels *needle-made réseau* is made with a simple looped stitch.§

* “*Dictionnaire du Citoyen*,” 1761.

† “*Une coëffure à une piece d’Angleterre bride et réseau*” (*Comptes de Madame du Barry*, Bib. Nat., MSS. F. Fr. 8157-8).

‡ In the *needlepoint* laces of Brussels the *cordonnet* is *generally* only a thread, but in some few cases it is covered with *button-hole* stitches, as in *point d’Alençon*.

§ “*Le point d’aiguille de Bruxelles fait pour imiter le point d’Alençon est loin d’avoir sa solidité et son travail artistique. Pour imiter la brode qui donne tant de*

The earliest Brussels needlepoints were grounded with this needle-made réseau, but much of the best needlepoint is grounded with the more familiar pillow-made "droschel." The Alençon "modes" are rendered with great accuracy. In this kind of mixed lace the cordonnet is usually a single moderately thick thread. In a specimen in the Dublin Museum, the cordonnet is like that of Alençon lace, buttonhole stitched, but the stitchery is not very close or regular.*

The making of Brussels lace is so complicated, wrote Mrs Palliser, that each process is assigned to different hands, who work only at her own special department, the first termed :—

1. Drocheuse (Flemish, drocheles), makes the vrai réseau.
2. Dentelière (kantwerkes), the footing.
3. Pointeuse (needlewerkes), the point à l'aiguille flowers.
4. Platteuse (platwerkes), the plat flowers.
5. Fonneuse (groundwerkes) is charged with the open-work (jours) in the plat.
6. Jointeuse or attacheuse (lashwerkes) unites the different sections of the ground together.
7. Striqueuse or appliqueuse (strikes) is charged with the sewing (application) of the flowers upon the ground.†

The pattern is designed by the head of the fabric, who, having cut the parchment into pieces, hands it out ready pricked. The worker has no reflections to make, no combinations to study; the whole responsibility rests with the master, who selects the ground, chooses the thread, and alone knows the effect to be produced as a whole. "The same design," writes Peuchet, "was never executed twice; continual variations were introduced."‡

cachet au point d'Alençon et qui est fort longue à faire, on l'a remplacée dans le point d'aiguille de Bruxelles par un gros fil passé dans les mailles pour entourer le dessin" (Mme. Despierres, "Histoire du Point d'Alençon").

* No. 40, Dublin Museum.

† Mrs Palliser, "History of Lace," p. 122, edition 1902.

‡ "Le dessin est le premier objet de son attention; il (le fabricant) le varie continuellement et ne fait exécuter le même une seconde fois . . . il en détache les fleurs en les piquant d'un millier d'épingles pour faciliter aux ouvrières la lecture du dessin, et les mettre à portée de l'exécuter avec exactitude. C'est lui qui juge des fonds les plus convenables pour faire ressortir les fleurs du dessin, pour donner à la dentelle l'éclat et la finesse."

The fineness of thread used in Brussels lace is almost a fable. "It is made of the flax grown in Brabant, at Hal and Rebecq-Rognon. The finest quality is spun in dark underground rooms, for contact with the dry air causes the thread to break, so fine is it as almost to escape the sight. The threadspinner closely examines every inch drawn from her distaff, and when any irregularity occurs, stops her wheel to repair the mischief. A background of dark paper is placed to throw out the thread, and the room so arranged as to admit one single ray of light upon the work." * †

Representation of objects naturalistically treated is one of the characteristics of Brussels work. In eighteenth-century specimens accurately rendered leaves and flowers,—in especial the pink and the tulip and the rose,—insects and birds are the main components of the design. ‡

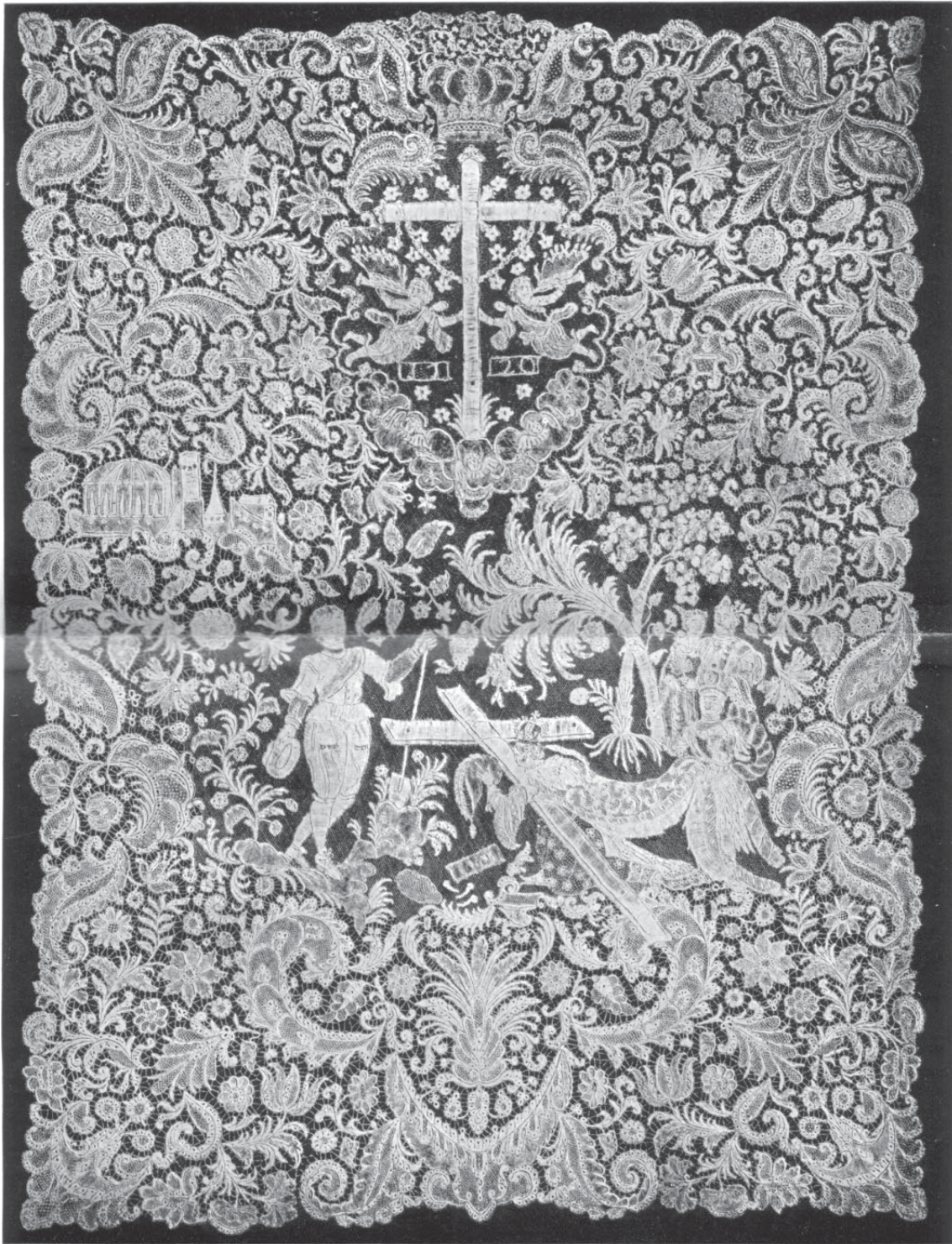
In larger and more important pieces of the last years of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, the structure of the design is most elaborate, and figures, "subjects," and every variety of plant-form are most skilfully rendered. In a flounce given by Madame de Maintenon to François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, who was consecrated Archbishop of Cambrai in 1695, the ground is of brides picotées.§ In the two later specimens in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Brussels (one of which is dated 1720, while the other belongs to the early eighteenth century), a centre of the réseau ground contrasts with the surrounding border of brides picotées (Plates XLIX. and L.). The cravat-end in the possession of Miss Josephs is entirely grounded with the réseau (Plate LII.).

* Mrs Palliser, "History of Lace," edition 1902.

† Thread spun by machine in England from Belgian flax is much used now in Belgium. It has, however, never arrived at the fineness of that made by hand, and frequently in it there are traces of cotton, which depreciate its quality.

‡ "A Gênes, à Milan, à Venise, les dentelles au fuseau moins fines de matière se reconnaissent surtout aux détails de la composition. L'ornement y reste plus conventionnel et, lorsque les personnages et les animaux y apparaissent, ils sont d'expression allégorique. Le même genre de dentelle au fuseau fabriqué à Bruxelles ou en France contiendra des détails plus réalistes, les personnages y porteront le costume contemporain, les animaux y seront représentés sous la forme active" ("Le Musée Historique des Tissus de Lyon." R. Cox, Lyon, 1902).

§ Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 755, 1890.



PANEL OF BRUSSELS LACE.

Dated 1720.

Double-page spread rotated 90° to fit on page.

Plate LI.



CRAVAT END OF BRUSSELS LACE.
Eighteenth century.

Plate LII.



CRAVAT END OF BRUSSELS LACE.
Eighteenth century. (*In the possession of Miss Josephs.*)

The two specimens from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs are very wonderful pieces of work. The dated piece (1720) represents the Invention of the Cross by Saint Helena, whose train is carried by an Eastern attendant. The second piece represents the pope seated under a canopy presenting or receiving a document from a lady who kneels before him. Her train is borne by an Eastern attendant, and her crown by a lady who stands behind her. The work upon the costumes is remarkable. Among the scroll work are angels blowing trumpets, and others beating drums.

During the reign of Louis XV. Brussels lace was much affected by the French court, and was almost preferred to point d'Alençon. This produced a certain French style of design in Brussels to meet this demand. In large designs figures, whimsical devices, and mottoes were introduced. Some of the details are graceful and ornamental; others, again, are misshapen. There is a distinct reflection of French mannerisms in Brussels of this period*—the balanced designs of repeated similar groups of fragmentary floral sprays, the valanced canopy, the royal attributes, cupids, pillars, trophies, &c., and the waved bands or ribbons dividing the design into compartments, and worked with very varied modes † (Plate LIII.).

In the last years of the seventeenth and in the early part of the eighteenth centuries, ornamentation in the Chinese style, fantastic zigzag forms, pagodas, and Indian or Chinese figures were introduced—a reflection of the taste that demanded negro attendants, and Oriental lacquer plaques inlaid on furniture. The Chinese influence may have received an impetus from that Siamese embassy which is said to have brought over many specimens of Chinese lacquer work as presents to Louis XIV.

Two specimens of the Louis XV. period belonging to Mme. Doistau and the Comtesse Foy, which were lent to the Exposition Internationale of 1900 at Paris, are good examples of this exotic style.

* And again at a later date, when a number of lace makers left France for Belgium after the French Revolution. To-day the influence of French design is as strong as ever.

† Brussels pillow-renderings of various modes, used in French needlepoint, the Argentan hexagonal mesh, the réseau rosacé, star-devices, &c., are very close and skilful.

Mme. Doistau's piece (which is bobbin lace) is a square cravat end, showing motifs of pagodas, and the longtailed crested bird that so often accompanies them. The point lace belonging to the Comtesse Foy shows the influence of the design of Dresden china in the little kiosks, the minute landscapes, rocks and rivers, among which are huntsmen and dogs chasing stags.

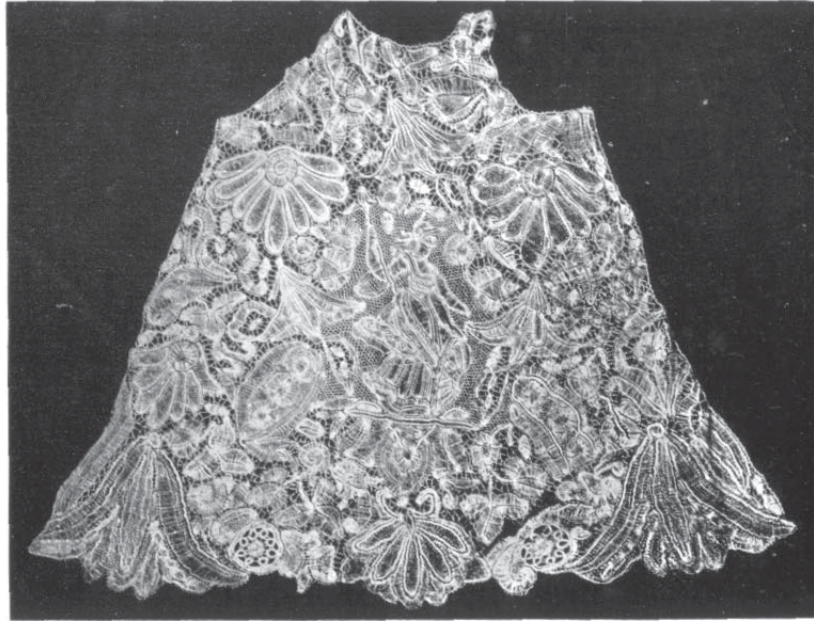
Brussels in the late eighteenth century followed French laces in the change that took place on the accession of Louis XVI., when design became "thinner," and the lace appeared to be mostly *réseau*, edged with a stiff rectilinear border of conventional design, the ground powdered with little detached flowers, sprays, and, later, spots and rosettes.

In the early nineteenth century the pseudo-classic style of ornament then in vogue in France influenced Brussels design. The introduction of machine-made net, upon which Brussels bobbin-made flowers were applied (*Brussels appliqué*), also had an influence upon design.

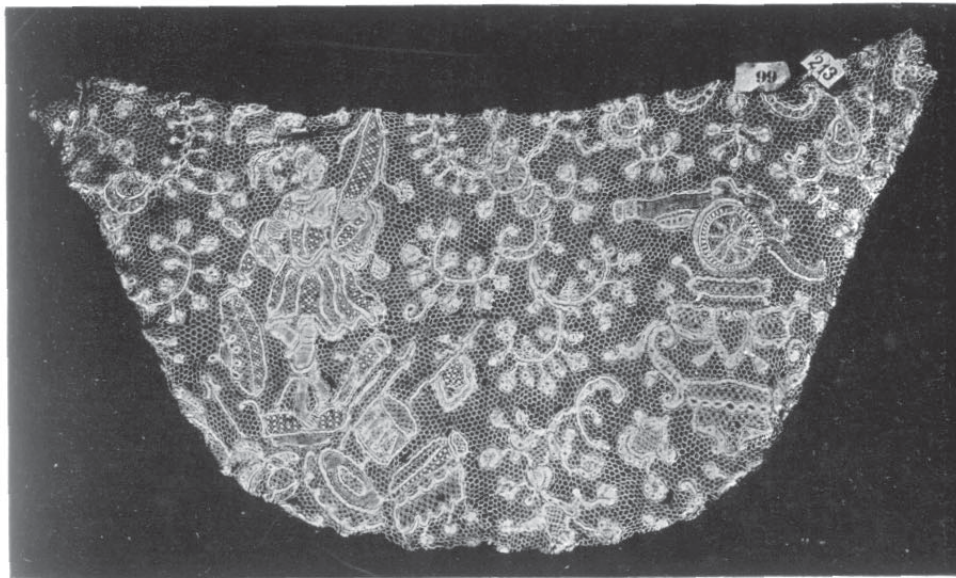
In France the term *point d'Angleterre* is used for Brussels lace. This is somewhat confusing, as *point d'Angleterre* was a term applied in the late seventeenth century to a variety of Flemish pillow lace, of which the design was in imitation of the scroll patterns of point lace of that date. Flanders lace was worn almost exclusively during the reign of Charles I. and the Commonwealth, and in 1662 an Act was passed by the English Parliament, alarmed at the sums of money expended on foreign goods, prohibiting the importation of all foreign lace. The English lace dealers endeavoured to improve the national fabric by inviting Flemish lace makers to settle in England, and establish a manufacture there,* but when this scheme proved abortive they adopted the simpler experiment of smuggling in Brussels lace, and selling it under the name of *Point d'Angleterre*—a term which, like *point d'Espagne* and "flat Spanish," relates to the country that consumed it rather than that which produced it.

This fact is corroborated in a memorandum by the Venetian

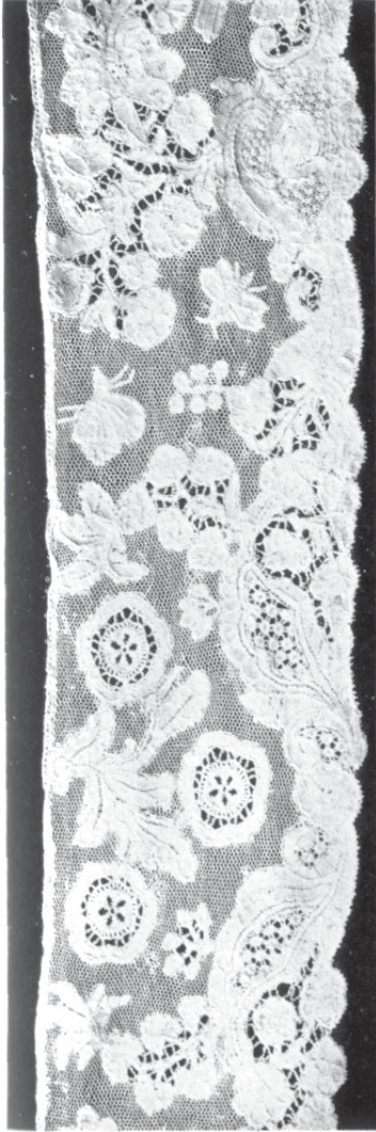
* Peuchet gives a somewhat different account. "Les fabricans Anglais, pour favoriser les premiers essais de leurs manufactures, achetaient beaucoup de dentelles de Bruxelles qu'ils vendaient à toute l'Europe sous le nom de *point d'Angleterre*" ("Dictionnaire Universel de la Géographie Commercante," 1799).



FRAGMENT OF BRUSSELS LACE.
Beginning of eighteenth century.



FRAGMENT OF BRUSSELS LACE.
Showing French influence in the design. Early eighteenth century.



BORDER OF BRUSSELS LACE.
Early eighteenth century.



BORDER OF BRUSSELS LACE.
Eighteenth century.

ambassador to the English court in 1695, who states that Venetian point is no longer in fashion, but "that called English point, which, you know, is not made here, but in Flanders, and only bears the name of English to distinguish it from the others."* The name point d'Angleterre is used nowadays, of a variety of Brussels lace, with many open fillings of the bride variety.

* Quoted in Mrs Palliser's "History of Lace," edition 1902, p. 117.

CHAPTER X.

MECHLIN AND ANTWERP LACE.

PRIOR to 1665 nearly all Flanders laces were known under the name of Mechlin to the French commercial world. "The common people here," writes Regnard, who visited Flanders in 1681, "as throughout all Flanders, occupy themselves in making the white lace known as Malines." The laces of Ypres, Bruges, Dunkirk, and Courtrai, according to Savary, passed under the name of Mechlin at Paris. Peuchet writes that a great deal of Malines was made in Antwerp,* Mechlin, and Brussels, and that the industry was an important one at Antwerp. He adds that an excellent quality of thread is made in the town and neighbourhood.

In England Mechlin is not mentioned by name until Queen Anne's reign.†

In 1699 the Act prohibiting foreign lace was repealed in so far as it touched the Spanish Low Countries, and Anne, while prohibiting lace made "in the dominions of the French King," admits the import of Flanders lace, so that from the first years of the eighteenth century Mechlin was without rival in England among light laces. According to Peuchet, Mechlin laces are "les plus belles, après celles de Bruxelles, et elles ont un peu plus de durée." It was eminently suited to the less severe modern costume which came in with the eighteenth century, and by reason of its open à jours and transparent appearance was worn

* Specimens of Mechlin lace are preserved in the Steen Museum at Antwerp.

† "Flanders lace" is the only term used for Flemish laces in the Great Wardrobe Accounts until Queen Anne, when "Macklin" and Brussels are first noted down.



PART OF A LAPPET OF MECHLIN LACE.

Showing quatrefoil filling. Eighteenth century.

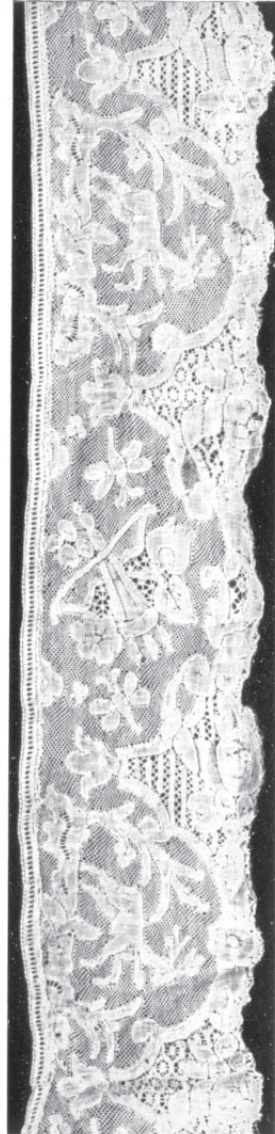
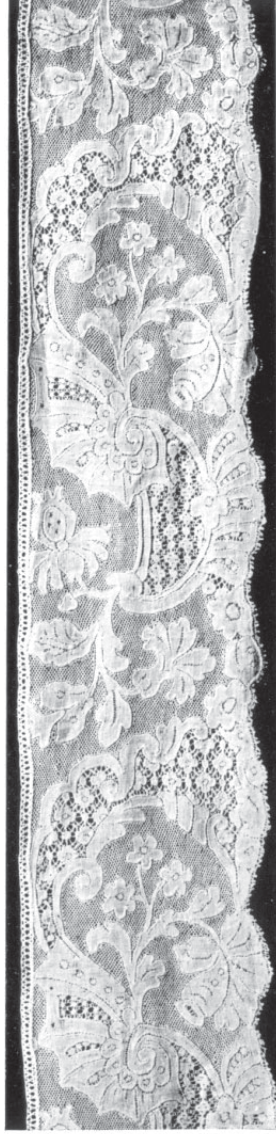


BORDER OF MECHLIN LACE.

Dated 1757.



BORDER OF MECHLIN LACE.
With medallions of scriptural subjects.



BORDERS OF MECHLIN LACE.
Eighteenth century.

as a trimming lace. It thus remained in fashion through the eighteenth century, when references like "Mechlin the queen of lace,"* "Mechlin the finest lace of all,"† bear witness to a vogue in England little short of extraordinary. The disappearance of lace ruffles before 1780 from women's sleeves, and the disappearance of the cravat and men's ruffles, put an end to lace as a fashionable adjunct to dress. In 1834 there were but eight houses where it was fabricated.‡ Unfortunately, also, for the prosperity of the industry, Mechlin is of all laces the easiest to copy in machine-made lace.

Historically, Mechlin developed, like Valenciennes, from the straight-edged laces of indefinite pattern, with an irregular ground§ which has the appearance of being pierced at intervals with round holes.||

The earliest examples of what we can recognise as Mechlin show a design consisting of groupings of heavily drawn flowers, clumsily designed rococo devices, cornucopias, &c.

Later, with the adoption of the characteristic Mechlin *réseau*, the floral design becomes more delicate and light, and a French influence is apparent (Plate LVII.). Much of this lace, worn in France during the Regency and later, was made up in the style of modern insertion, with an edging on both sides,¶ *campané* or scalloped, and used for the gathered trimmings called "*quilles*," like the Argentan sleeve-trimmings of Madame Louise de France, painted by Nattier in 1748.

The attempt to imitate Alençon extended not only to the motifs

* Young, "Love of Fame."

† Anderson, "Origin of Commerce."

‡ Mechlin lace was also made at Antwerp, Lierre, and Turnhout. "There was a fine collection of Mechlin lace in the Paris Exhibition of 1867 from Turnhout, and some other localities" (Mrs Palliser, "History of Lace").

§ See Chapter on Valenciennes.

|| In the Gruuthus collection, laces of this type which have "*points d'esprit*" (small solid portions like the millet seed of Genoese lace) are invariably attributed to Mechlin, while in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at Brussels they are attributed to Antwerp.

¶ 1741. "Une coiffure de nuit de Malines à raizeau *campanée* de deux pieces" (Inv. de Mademoiselle de Clermont").

1761. "Une paire de manches de Malines bridée non *campanée*" ("Inv. de la Duchesse de Modène").

of its design—the characteristic winding ribbon and scattered sprays of flowers,* but to the buttonhole-stitched cordonnet. In Mechlin a coarse thread was applied to the edges of the design, which gives higher relief than the flat cordonnet.† The fillings are often, like Alençon, of the trellis type.

The late eighteenth-century Mechlin has pieces quite undistinguishable in design from Alençon of the Louis XVI. period, no doubt owing to its large consumption in France, as a “summer lace.” The very characteristic pattern of a flower (sun-flower?) in full blossom, and with closing petals, is often met with in Mechlin laces of the end of the eighteenth century. This lace has a border with a very shallow scallop or slightly waved. The pattern of repeated sprigs of flowers, or of leaves, follows the edge. The remaining ground is covered with small square spots, minute quatrefoils, or leaflets. The flower is Flemish in treatment,‡ while the semés upon the réseau show the French influence of the late eighteenth century (Plate LVIII.).

Design in Mechlin is in general floral in character. But a curious figured design is illustrated in Séguin’s “La Dentelle” (plate xiv., fig. 1), and characterised by him as “une niaserie enfantine.” This piece, which dates from the last years of Louis XV., represents two men in a carriage driving a horse. The men wear three-cornered hats, long coats, ruffles; two birds are flying in the air, and the group is separated from its repeat by an ill-drawn tree. A piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum,§ has a pattern of trees, buds, and scrolls, with cupids blowing horns and shooting at winged and burning hearts. A fragment of an altar cloth in the Gruuthus Museum|| shows a medallion containing figures representing some scriptural scene. A similar piece, including several similar medallions, is in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at Brussels (Plate LVI.).

* The sprigs in Mechlin are, however, clumsier in drawing.

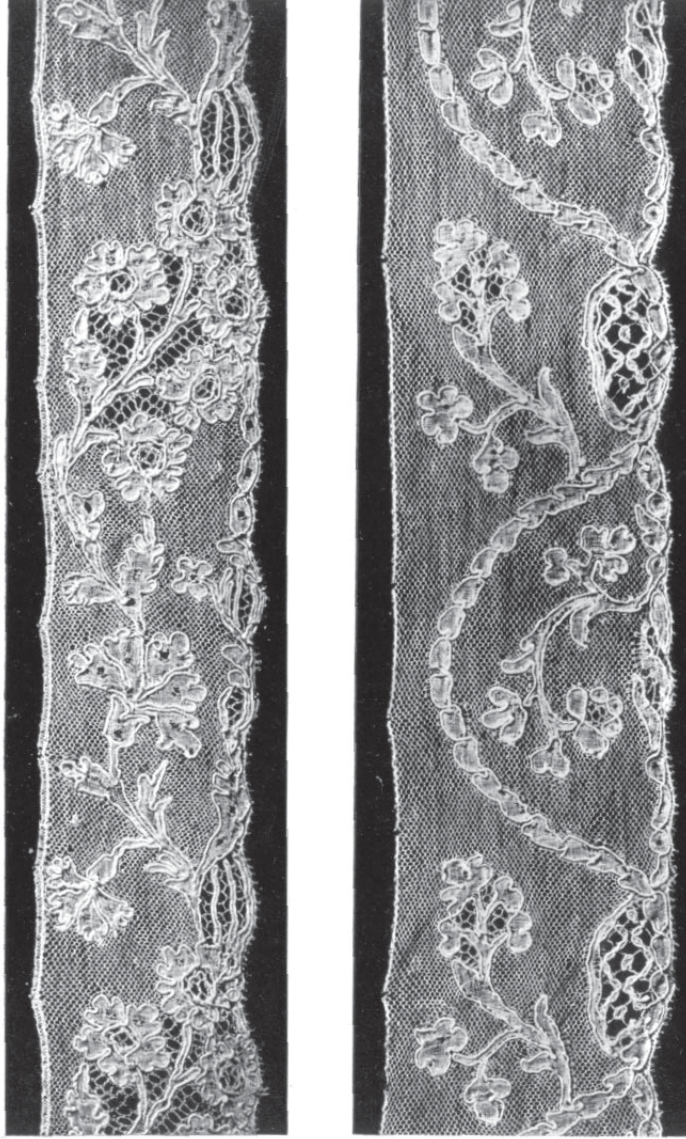
† No. 1297, 1872, in the Victoria and Albert Museum shows this thick twisted thread stitched to the gimp of the flower or pattern.

‡ Some of the designs of Mechlin show very careful naturalistic presentment of flowers.

§ No. 1400, 1874.

|| Litt. B., No. 6.

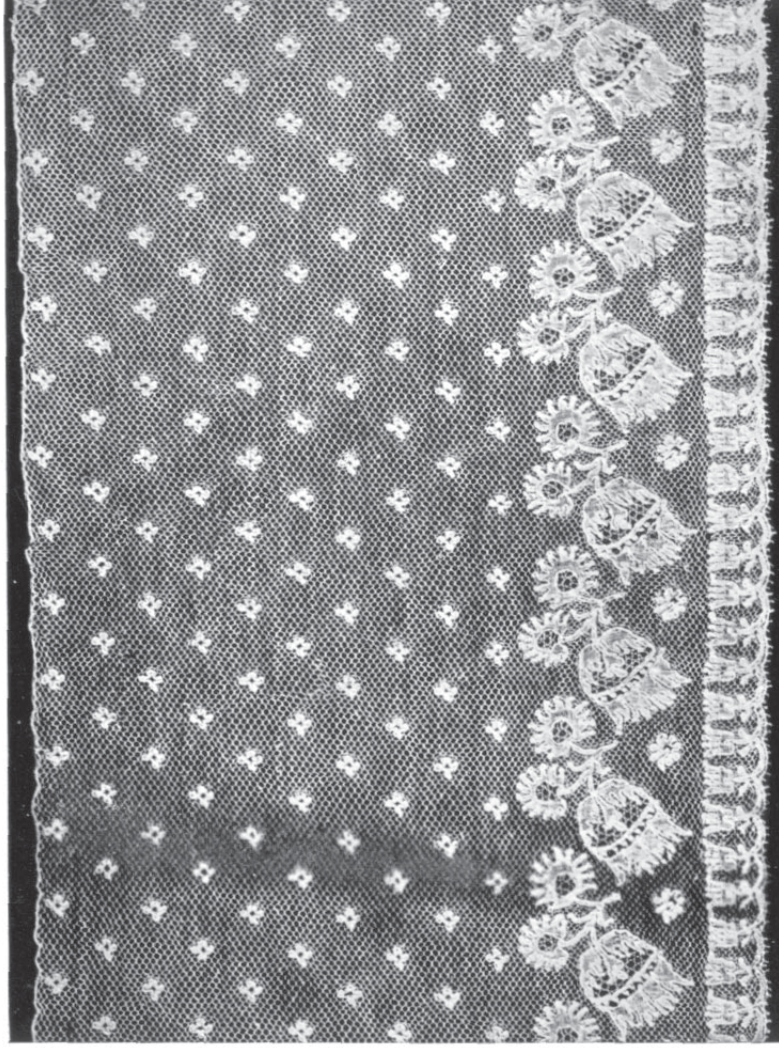
Plate LVII.



BORDERS OF MECHLIN.

Showing Alençon influence in its design, and in the coarse cordonnet.

Plate LVIII.



BORDER OF MECHLIN LACE.

Late eighteenth century.

The ground and ornament of Mechlin, like Valenciennes, are made in one piece on the pillow, and many and various experimental fancy groundings were tried before adopting the hexagon-meshed *réseau* made of two threads twisted twice on four sides, and four threads plaited three times on the two other sides—producing a shorter plait and a smaller mesh than that of the Brussels *réseau*.

The early grounds are varieties of the “fond de neige,” and the *fond-chant* or six-pointed star mesh is met with. A *réseau* of interlaced double threads is also of frequent occurrence, and a *réseau* of four threads plaited to form a very large mesh having the effect of an enlarged *fond-chant* ground.

The most common form of ornamental filling is an arrangement of linked quatrefoils.

The toil is finer and less close in texture than Valenciennes, and appears to be now dense and cloudy, now thin and almost transparent. This unevenness of quality, together with the presence of the *cordonet* (which gives precision to the ornament), is responsible for the old name of ‘broderie de Malines.’ *

ANTWERP LACE.

Antwerp, though an old lace-making centre (p. 50), is remarkable for only one type of peasant lace, the “potten kant,” so called from the representation of a pot of flowers with which it is almost always decorated. Mrs Palliser considered the motif to be a survival from an earlier design, including the figure of the Virgin and the Annunciation, though it does not appear that any such composition has been met with.† The motif of a vase of flowers, however, is a

* “Une paire de manchettes de dentelle de Malines brodée” (Inv. de décès de Mademoiselle de Charollais, 1758).

† “The flower-pot was a symbol of the Annunciation. In the early representations of the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, lilies are placed either in his hand, or set as an accessory in a vase. As Romanism declined, the angel disappeared, and the lily-pot became a vase of flowers; subsequently the Virgin was omitted, and there only remained the vase of flowers” (Mrs Palliser).

common one among Flemish and Belgian laces ; and the flowers are not restricted to the Annunciation lilies—roses, pinks, sunflowers, and other flowers being met with.

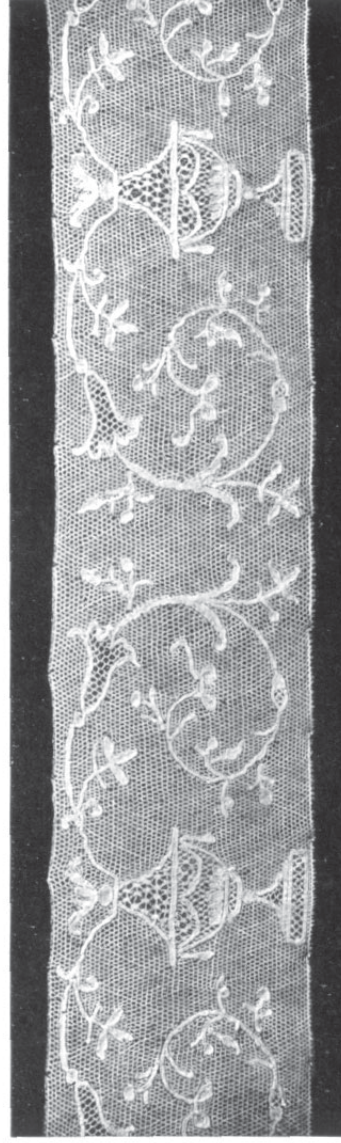
The ground varies from a coarse *fond-chant**—a six-pointed star *réseau*, or, as it is better described, a diamond crossed by two horizontal threads—to various large meshed coarse and fancy grounds. The laces are usually straight-edged. The pot, or vase, or basket is not always part of the design ; a stiff group of flowers, throwing out branches to right and left, is almost invariable. Sometimes pendant festoons or garlands, or bunches of flowers are met with.† The *cordonné* of strong untwisted thread often appears too coarse for the *toilé*, and outlines it with short loops. Antwerp lace appears in a portrait of Anna Goos (1627 to 1691) in the Plantin Museum at Antwerp. The date of the portrait is between 1665-70, and the lace, which is straight-edged, has a thin scroll pattern upon a *réseau* ground.

* The name *chant* is an abbreviation of Chantilly, in which lace the *fond-chant* *réseau* is much used.

† No. 1570, 1872, Victoria and Albert Museum, is a border of Antwerp lace with a loosely twisted sort of *œil de perdrix* ground, and pattern of flowers and leaves. The outline to the pattern and the *gimp* of the leaves and flowers are like those seen in some of the early eighteenth-century Mechlin laces.



BORDER OF ANTWERP "POTTEN KANT."



BORDER OF ANTWERP "POTTEN KANT."
With "fond chant" ground.

CHAPTER XI.

VALENCIENNES AND DUTCH LACE.

VALENCIENNES, part of the ancient province of Hainault, together with Lille and Arras, is French by conquest and treaty.* The lace fabric was introduced there from Le Quesnoy, one of the towns mentioned in the ordinance of 5th August 1665, which founded on a large scale the manufacture of point de France. Some years before, in 1646, a certain Mlle. Françoise Badar † had brought from Antwerp some young girls, whom she intended to teach lace-making, and for this purpose she took a house in the Rue de Tournay (now Rue de Lille). She afterwards undertook the direction of several manufactures, among them that of Le Quesnoy, which she left in a prosperous condition on her death in 1677, the date that the town of Valenciennes was taken by Louis XIV.

The lace of Le Quesnoy is never mentioned after Louis XIV., and after that reign Valenciennes comes into notice, but there is no record of the transfer of the fabric. The fond de neige ‡ is supposed to be a tradition derived from the workwomen of Le Quesnoy. Valenciennes, from its position as a commercial centre, was well fitted to carry on

* French Hainault, French Flanders, and Cambrésis (the present Dép. du Nord), with Artois, were conquests of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., confirmed to France by the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668) and Nimeguen (1678). In 1656 the Spaniards under Condé made a successful defence against the French under Turenne, but in 1677 Louis XIV. took the town, and it has always since belonged to France.

† "Vie de Mlle. Françoise Badar," Liège, 1726.

‡ "Les directrices du bureau du Quesnoy avaient, en effet, adopté un genre spécial ce fond de neige qu'elles enseignèrent aux ouvrières Valenciennes" (A. Carlier, "Les Valenciennes").

the industry, and the fact that the town had its "brodeurs" and "passementiers" * aided in its development. It reached its climax from 1725 to 1780, when there were from 3,000 to 4,000 lace-makers in the city alone, and the art was largely practised in the country round, to judge by the quantity of *fausse Valenciennes*. †

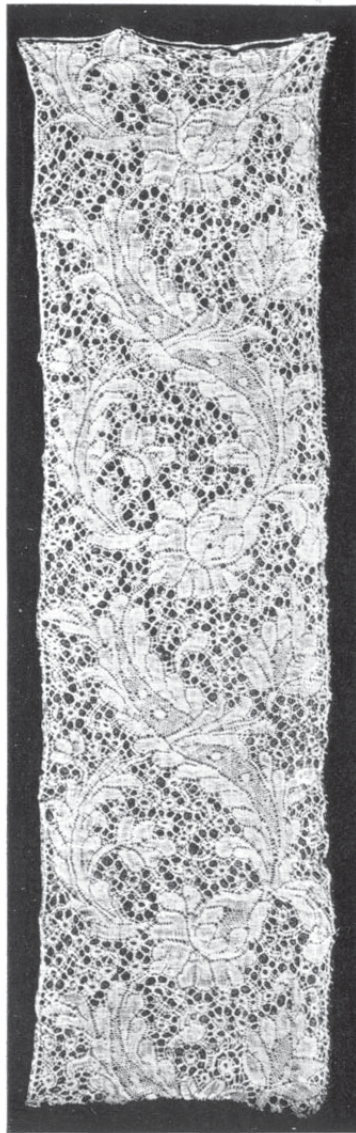
Existing specimens of the Louis XIV. period—for we have not the evidence of portraits as a corroboration, as *Valenciennes* was never a "dentelle de grande toilette"—appear closely to resemble the designs of Venice à réseau. In specimens Nos. 416, 1872, and 913, 1901, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the long rolling scroll throwing out a number of small cut-up leaves, the large ornamental fruit—like a conventionalised pomegranate with leafy crest—are among the motifs of the fine type of late Venetian à réseau, but the Italian lace, with its clear and even needle réseau, contrasts favourably with the confused "neigeux" *Valenciennes* pillow ground of minute solid circles, sometimes surrounded by other circles.

Valenciennes was used in negligés, the trimmings of sheets, pillow-cases, nightgowns, nightcaps, for ruffles, for barbes, fichus, and "tours de gorge." In the "Etat d'un Trousseau," 1771, among the necessary articles are enumerated, "Une coëffure, tour de gorge et le fichu plissé de vraie *Valenciennes*"; and Madame du Barry had lappets and pillow-cases trimmed with *Valenciennes*. It was not used as a Church lace, being fine and ineffective.

From 1780 downwards there was less demand for a lace of the quality of *Valenciennes*, and with the Revolution this, with more than thirty French fabrics, disappeared. In a manuscript of M. Tordois's "coup d'œil sur *Valenciennes*" (de l'an IX. à l'an XIII.), we read that in the year IX. there was a cessation in the production of lace-thread. Three ateliers were subsequently established, but this

* "L'industrie des brodeurs et des passementiers, qui était pratiquée dans cette ville à la même époque, contribue à l'épanouissement de la dentelle. Tel fut d'ailleurs la raison de l'article 21 de l'édit de l'an 1653, conférant aux maîtres passementiers le privilège exclusif de la fabrication des passements aux fuseaux, aux épingles, et sur l'oreiller" (A. Carlier, "Les Valenciennes").

† In the seventeenth century "L'hôpital de Lille renfermait sept cent ouvrières faisant de la fausse valenciennes, très rapprochant de la vraie; on comptait tant dans cette ville que dans les environs quinze mille ouvrières travaillant de la dentelle bâtarde du fond Paris, et du fond clair" (A. Carlier, "Les Valenciennes").



BORDER OF EARLY VALENCIENNES.
With neigeux ground. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.



BORDER OF EARLY VALENCIENNES.
With neigeux ground and confused design. Late seventeenth century.



BORDER OR INSERTION OF EARLY VALENCIENNES.
Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.



BORDER OR INSERTION OF EARLY VALENCIENNES
Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

short artistic revival had no permanent result; in 1800 there were only a few hundred lace-workers within the walls; and in 1851, in spite of the efforts of Napoleon III. to revive the industry, there were only two lace-workers remaining, both upwards of eighty years of age.

Narrow straight-edged borders of pillow lace were probably made in Valenciennes and in French Flanders in the early seventeenth century consisting of running closely crowded and indefinite designs, with a ground of a series of irregular or rounded holes between short brides; but extant pieces of Valenciennes belong mainly to the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI.

In the Louis XV. period and the late eighteenth century, the Flemish character of Valenciennes re-asserts itself in its choice of motifs such as tulips, carnations, and anemones, naturalistically treated and occasionally heavy in outline; the characteristic clear *réseau* ground in the subsequent reign occupies much of the place originally destined for the design, but towards 1780 little lace was made, and the disappearance of ruffles from the masculine costume added greatly to the depression. Among Empire pieces is a curious specimen once in the possession of M. Dupont Auberville, representing Napoleon I. as an equestrian Cæsar facing the Empress Josephine; while the Imperial arms, flanked at the base by cannons and flags, appear between the two.

In Valenciennes, unlike Brussels and Milanese pillow lace, the ground is worked at the same time as the pattern, that is to say, threads are brought out from the pattern to form the *réseau* and carried back into the pattern, so that the threads do not follow the lines of the ornament, as they do in all pillow laces where the ornament or *toilé* is made separately. The Valenciennes method thus requires an enormous number of pins, because each thread must be kept in place until the whole width of the pattern is worked.

Like Mechlin, the ground went through various modifications—including the *fond de neige* already noticed as accompanying early scroll patterns—before the *réseau* was finally fixed. Several of these ornamental grounds are used in various portions of the design, in the edging in Plate LXII., where two or three varieties can be counted, which are much thicker and closer in effect than the characteristic Valenciennes *réseau*. In this ground each side of its mesh, which is more diamond than hexagon in shape, is formed of four threads plaited

together. The clearly marked hexagonal mesh of the Mechlin réseau is also formed of four threads, but only two of its sides are plaited, the other four being twisted.

Fancy grounds (Plate LXII.) were produced side by side with the above-described mesh, as the accounts of Madame du Barry bear witness, until late in the eighteenth century. When their grounds were thus mixed and varied, such laces, although their patterns are almost identically the same as those of Valenciennes with the pure réseau, are termed "fausses Valenciennes." This has been taken to mean that these laces were made in the neighbourhood of the town of Valenciennes, in Hainault, and elsewhere, not in Valenciennes itself, where the simple distinctive réseau alone was used.

A legend has arisen about vraie 'Valenciennes.' In support of the theory that the "true" lace was only made in the town itself, M. Dieudonné, Préfet du Nord in 1804, wrote: "This beautiful manufacture is so inherent in the place that it is an established fact that if a piece of lace were begun at Valenciennes and finished outside the walls, the part which had not been made at Valenciennes would be visibly less beautiful and less perfect than the other, though continued by the same lace-maker with the same thread on the same pillow." M. Dieudonné attributed it to the influence of the atmosphere.

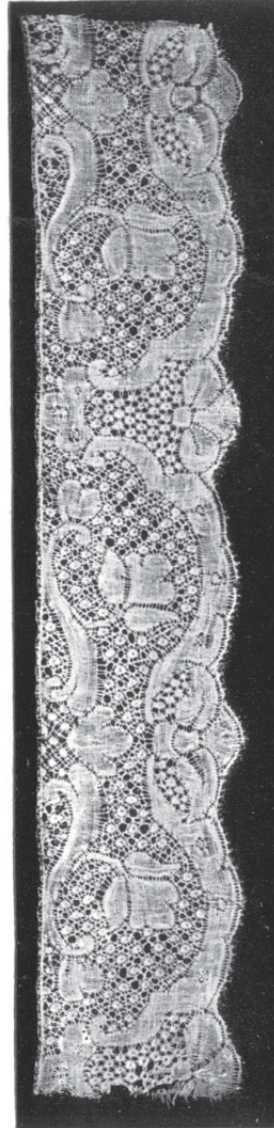
"All by the same hand" we find entered in the bills of the lace-sellers of the time. The superiority of the city-made lace no doubt depended largely on the fact that it was made in underground cellars, in which the dampness* of the air affected the "tension" of the very fine thread in use. In a drier atmosphere outside the walls, a different result would be obtained, even by the same workwoman, with the same cushion and thread, though it is doubtful whether the experiment has ever been actually tried.† The necessity for a humid atmosphere was recognised early in the eighteenth century. In an

* "En 1780 plusieurs milliers de dentellières travaillaient dans l'enceinte de la ville, généralement dans des caves ou des chambres basses. Grâce à l'humidité le fil était de retors, ou ne se détordait pas, et conservait toute sa force" (A. Carlier, "Les Valenciennes").

† "Le fil employé pour quelques pièces fines était d'une telle susceptibilité que l'haleine de l'ouvrière le modifiait et que sa teinte se trouvait influencée par le soleil et l'humidité" (A. Carlier, "Les Valenciennes").



PORTION OF A LAPPET OF VALENCIENNES.
Wire ground.



EDGING OF VALENCIENNES.
Showing various fancy grounds. Early eighteenth century.

extract from the "Procès Verbaux du Bureau du Commerce," 1727, it is stated that in Holland or in England it would be impossible to "conserver les filets dans le point de fraîcheur et d'humidité convenables pour façonner des toilettes."*

According to Peuchet the sole defect of Valenciennes was its indifferent white; only one quality of thread was used, the value of which in Arthur Young's time ranged from 24 to 700 livres a pound, but though expensive, the price of the flax was but one-thirtieth of the selling price of the finished lace. This thread came from Flanders, Hainault, and Cambrésis.

The designs were pricked upon green parchment prepared at Lille, and a favourite pattern remained in use as long as it was in demand.

The design was the special property of the manufacturer, and it was at the option of the worker to pay for its use and retain her work, if not satisfied with the price she received. Valenciennes can be detected no matter what its design, which is often derivative, imitative, or directly borrowed from Mechlin, Brussels, or Alençon, by the absence of cordonnet and by its peculiar mesh. Some rare experimental specimens were made by the Valenciennes workers in which an occasional cordonnet was introduced, but such works are very exceptional. Open à jours are of extremely rare occurrence; their fillings are very similar to those of Mechlin.

No lace was so expensive to make, the reason being the number of bobbins required for fine lace of wide width. "While Lille lace-workers could produce from three to five ells a day, those of Valenciennes could not complete more than an inch and a half in the same time. It took ten months, working fifteen hours a day, to finish a pair of men's ruffles, hence the costliness of the lace."†

At the present day in the Valenciennes lace made in Brabant all the bobbins which are employed in the "mats" or ornament do not pass into the ground, which is a great economy; they are removed to the next motif.

After the French Revolution, when so many lace-makers fled to

* Quoted in Mme. Laurence de Laprade, "Le Point de France," 1904.

† Mrs Palliser, "History of Lace."

Belgium—Ghent, Alost, Ypres,* Bruges, Menin, and Courtrai† became the centres of a new and inferior Valenciennes, each town having a distinctive feature in the ground. These laces are as a rule less close in workmanship, less solid, and cheaper.

At Ypres, which makes the best quality of Belgian Valenciennes, the réseau is made of a plait of four threads, and forms a diamond-shaped mesh. In Courtrai and Menin the grounds are twisted three and a half times; and in Bruges, where the ground has a circular mesh, the bobbins are twisted three times; that made at Ghent,‡ in East Flanders, is square-meshed, the bobbins being twisted two and a half times. Valenciennes laces made outside the walls of Valenciennes were designated as fausses Valenciennes, whether made in Belgium or in the Département du Nord, at Lille, Bergues, Bailleul, Avesnes, Cassel, and Armentières. § Of these latter centres Bailleul || produced the largest quantity: chiefly (before 1830) of a narrow straight-edged type for the Normandy market.

At Dieppe, in Normandy, Valenciennes with the square ground was introduced in 1826, by the sisters Fleury and Hubert from the Convent of La Providence at Rouen, and took the place of the old point de Dieppe, which is very like Valenciennes with small round meshes. Of this lace Peuchet says that the designs were inferior, but that an attempt was being made to introduce lighter, less crowded designs. The thread came from Flanders, from Saint Amant. Point

* As early as 1656 Ypres began to make lace. In 1684 it was already much decayed. It rose again after the influx of Valenciennes workmen after the French Revolution. In 1833 the wire ground was adopted.

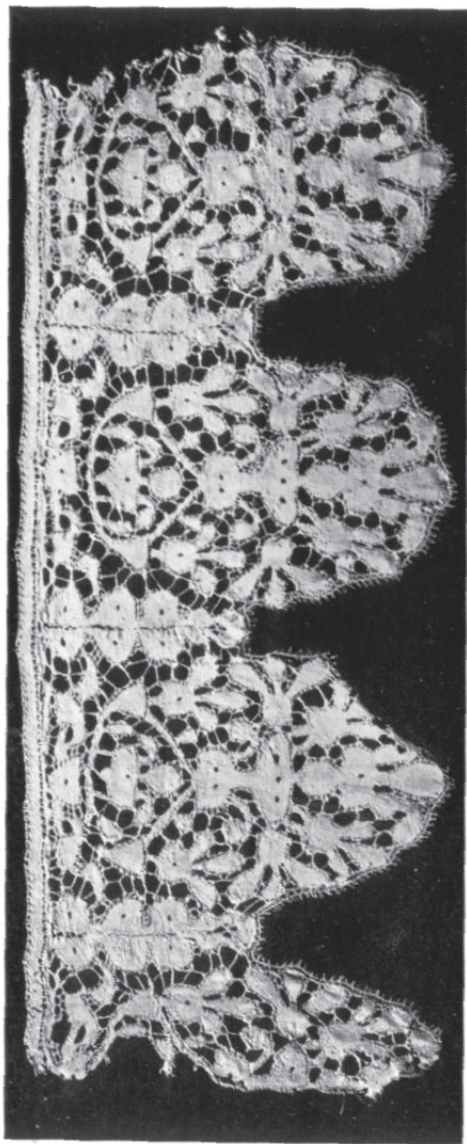
† “Courtrai makes the widest Valenciennes. Valenciennes of Courtrai was much sought after in the eighteenth century both in England and France” (Peuchet).

‡ Savary cites the fausses Valenciennes of Ghent, which he declares are “moins serrées, un peu moins solides, et un peu moins chères.”

§ “Armentières et Bailleul ne font que de la Valenciennes fausse dans tous les prix” (Peuchet).

|| The laces of Bailleul “have neither the finish nor the lightness of the Belgian products, are soft to touch, the mesh round, and the ground thick, but it is strong and cheap, and in general use for trimming lace” (Mrs Palliser, “History of Lace”).

Plate LXIII.

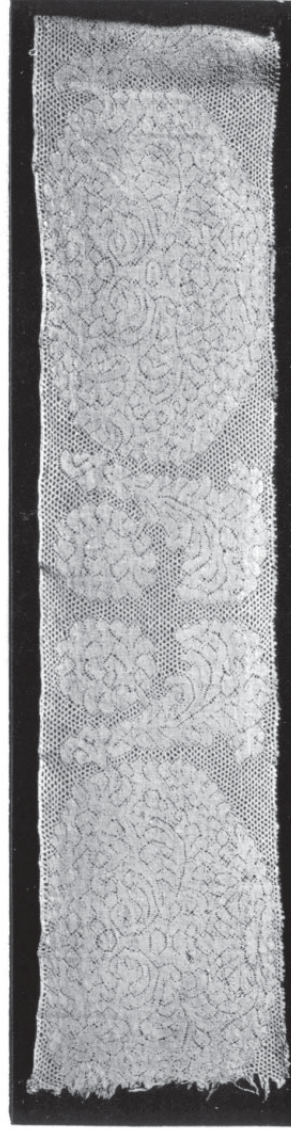


BORDER OF DUTCH LACE.
Early seventeenth century.

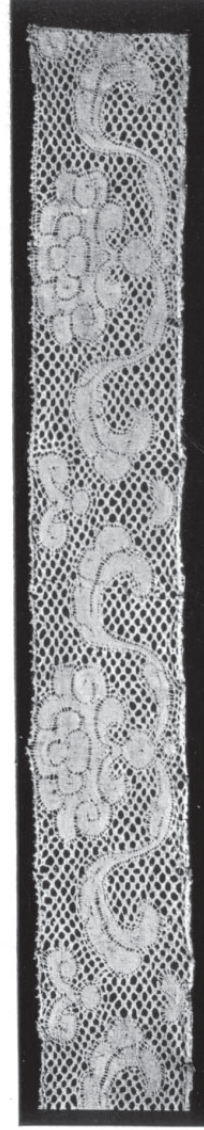
Plate LXIV.



BORDER OF DUTCH LACE.
Late seventeenth or eighteenth century.



BORDER OR INSERTION OF DUTCH LACE.
Late seventeenth century.



EDGING OR INSERTION OF DUTCH LACE.
Valenciennes type.

de Dieppe requires much fewer bobbins, and whereas Valenciennes can only be made in lengths of eight inches without detaching the lace from the pillow, the Dieppe point is not taken off, but rolled.

DUTCH LACE.

Holland, in spite of its proximity to Flanders, seems to have produced little lace during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In 1667, however, the Dutch themselves set up manufactures of lace, to rival France, which had laid prohibitive duties upon foreign goods.

No trace is found of the manufacture of point lace set up at Amsterdam by refugees from Alençon. The Dutch lace, as it appears in portraits, is thick, strong, and bobbin made. A type of scalloped lace, the pattern of each scallop repeating upon either side of a central line, has a design of tape-like continuous scrolls arranged rather closely together in leafy or fan forms, or some pendant blossom of conventional form ; * this lace was in use from about 1630 to 1650. † Other Dutch varieties of lace are pieces in design like early Valenciennes with conventional rolling scroll with blossoms ; or a pattern of flowers and fruit strictly copied from nature. The ground is generally of small irregular meshes.

The thread used in Holland was the famous Haarlem thread, once considered the best adapted for lace-makers in the world. "No place bleaches flax like the meer of Haarlem."

* Among the Dutch laces in the Victoria and Albert Museum is a pillow-made edging in the manner of early Italian pillow-laces, but of thicker design (No. 604, 1854).

† See in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 286, 1890 ; No. 861, 1853 ; No. 153, 1885.

CHAPTER XII.

ALENÇON AND ARGENTAN.

A VERY full and accurate account of Alençon lace has been given by Madame Despierres* in her "Histoire du Point d'Alençon," and the revival of interest in the national lace industry, noticeable latterly in France, is responsible for a new work on the subject, "Le Point de France," of Madame Laurence de Laprade, which reproduces at length many interesting documents. The history of no other lace centre has been so exhaustively treated; and any one interested in the historical side of the subject will find all available material in these two histories. The present account is concerned only with the development of the design of Alençon, and the process of its manufacture.

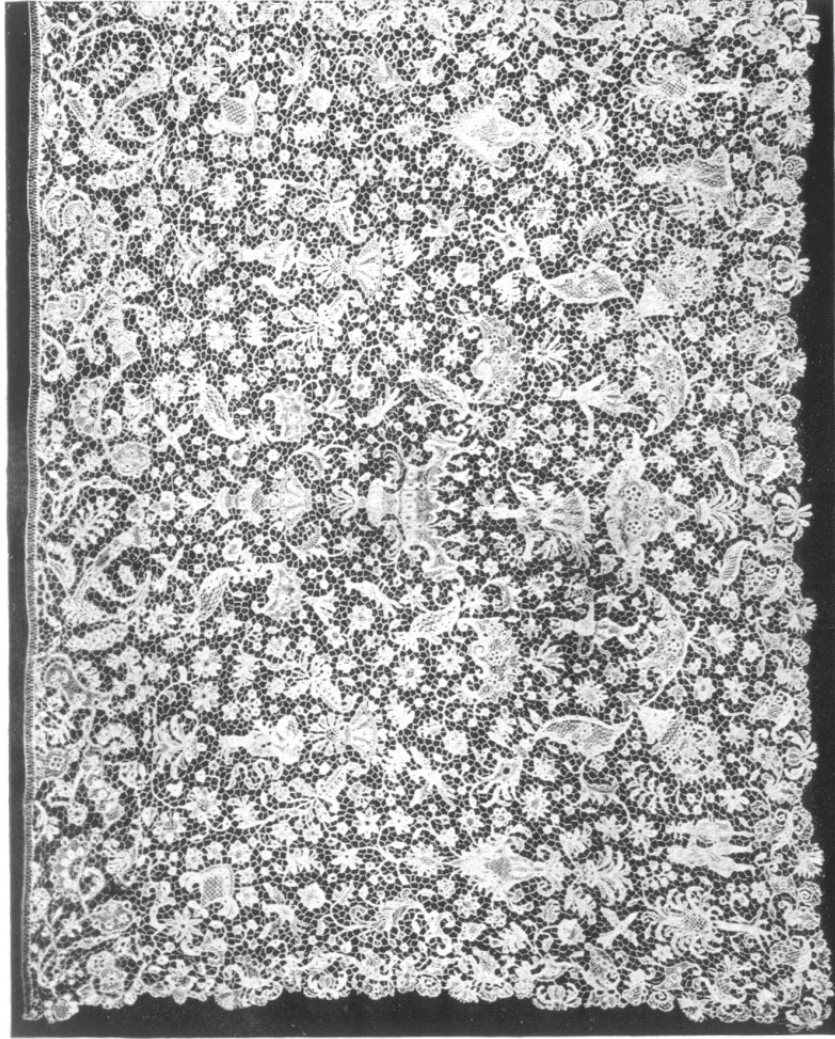
Colbert's attention was directed to the immense amount of money that was sent out of the kingdom; nor must his personal inclinations and tastes be overlooked.†

Alençon, in Normandy, was chosen as one of the seats of the new manufacture, because the lace industry was already widespread among the peasants. Point coupé had been made there at an early date, possibly introduced by Catherine de Medicis, to whom Charles IX.

* Mme. G. Despierres, "Histoire du Point d'Alençon," 1886.

† "Dès 1650 Colbert s'initia, lui aussi, à la culture de ces beaux-arts qu'il devait un jour protéger avec tant d'efficacité. Envoyé par Mazarin à Rome, à Florence, à Gênes, à Turin, s'il échoua parfois dans les missions diplomatiques . . . du moins ne négligea-t-il aucune occasion d'accroître les richesses artistiques de celui dont il représentait et les goûts fastueux et la politique astucieuse" ("Les Manufactures Nationales").

Plate LXVI.

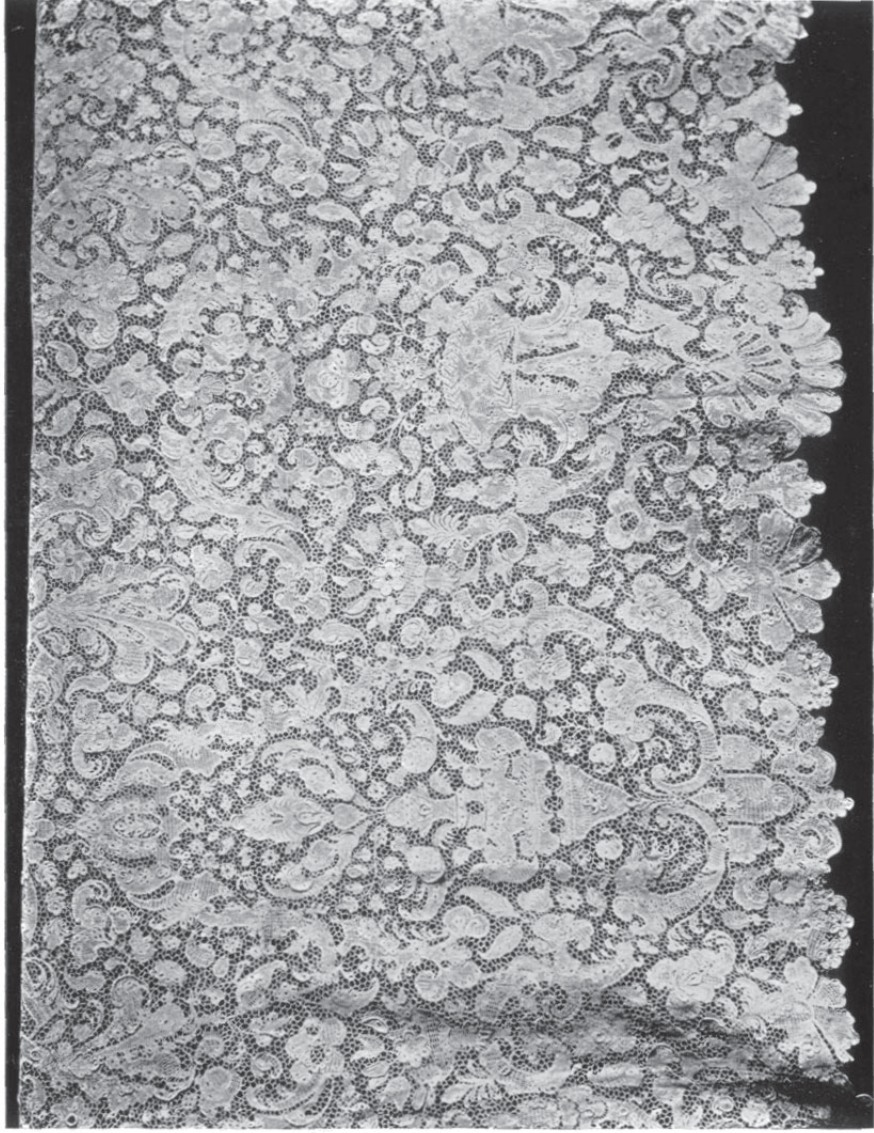


JABOT OR CRAVAT END OF POINT DE FRANCE.
With a design of a pseudo-Oriental character. End of seventeenth century.



PORTRAIT OF A WIDE FLOUNCE OF POINT DE FRANCE.
Eighteenth century.

Plate LXXVIII.



PORTION OF A FLOUNCE OF POINT DE FRANCE.
Eighteenth century. (*In the possession of Mrs Christie Miller.*)

had given the Duchy of Alençon. About 1650, according to Madame Despierres, it appears from a letter of Favier-Duboulay, intendant of Alençon, that points de Venise were successfully imitated and introduced into Alençon by "une femme nommée La Perriere, fort habile à ces ouvrages,"* thus causing the gradual disappearance of point coupé. More than eight thousand persons were employed in lace-making in Alençon, Sées, Argentan, Falaise, and in the neighbouring parishes.

It is no doubt to this long apprenticeship in lace-making that the supremacy of Alençon among French laces is due. An ordinance of 15th August 1665 founded the manufacture of points de France, with an exclusive privilege for ten years; a company was formed, and the manufacture realised enormous profits until 1675, when the monopoly expired and was not renewed. The new manufactures had the advantage of high-handed protection on the part of the Government. On 17th November 1667 appears a fresh prohibition of the selling or wearing of passements, lace, and other works in thread of Venice, Genoa, and other foreign countries; and on 17th March 1668 *itératives*—prohibitions—to wear these, as injurious to a manufacture of point which gives subsistence to a number of persons in this kingdom. In 1670 an Englishman travelling in France notices the efforts of the French Government to protect the points de France. "They are so set (he writes) in this country upon maintaining their own manufactures, that only two days ago there was publicly burnt by the hangman a hundred thousand crowns worth of point de Venise, Flanders lace, and other foreign commodities that are forbid."† Later, in 1680, it is stated in "Britannia Languens" that the laces commonly called points de Venise now come mostly from France, and amount to a vast sum yearly. In 1687, again, the fourth Earl of Manchester writes from Venice of the excessive dearness of the point made there, but is confident, either in Paris or England, "one may have it as cheape, and better patterns."

It is certain that the Italian style continued in vogue for the ten

* Letter from Favier-Duboulay, 7th September 1665. "Correspondence Administrative sous le Règne de Louis XIV.," vol. 3.

† R. Montagu to Lord Arlington. "MSS. of the Duke of Buccleuch," vol. i. Hist. MSS. Comm.

years of the monopoly (1665-75). There were Venetian workwomen to the number of twenty at Alençon in October 1665,* and in the same month a letter to Colbert is sanguine enough to hope to produce in a short time from the royal manufacture "des échantillons qui ne céderont en rien au véritable Venise." In 1673 these hopes are apparently justified, and Colbert is able to write to the Comte d'Avaux, who has sent him a point collar in high relief, that the French points can bear comparison with the products of Venice.†

The *Mercure*, which gives detailed chronicles of the new points de France, describes them in 1677 as having a floral design, brides à picots, and with "little flowers over the large, which might be styled flying flowers, being only attached in the centre,"—the fine raised work of flying loops, upon delicate rose points. The design, again, is exactly that characteristic of Venetian scroll patterns. "The flowers," the *Mercure* writes in 1678, "which are in higher relief in the centre, and lower at the edge, are united by small stalks and flowers."

The development of the new points was watched by Colbert, who writes, in 1682, that their principal defect is that they are not so firm or so white as the rival points of Venice.‡

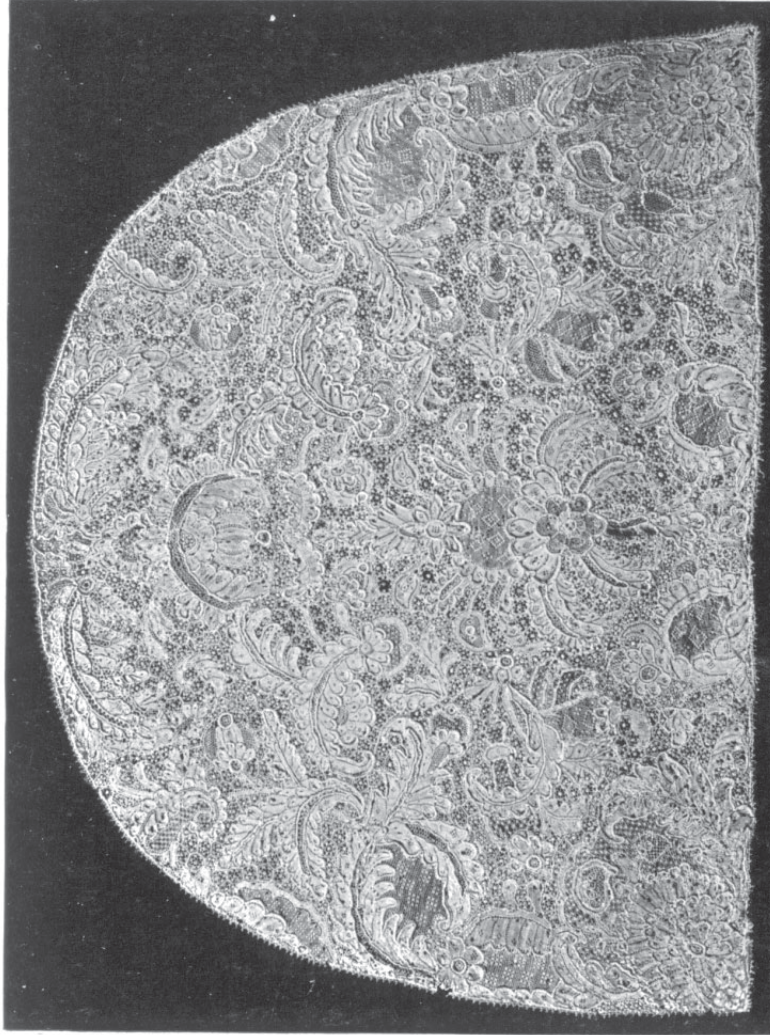
Before the expiration of the privilege, the artists who furnished designs for all works undertaken for the Court of Louis XIV., must have supplied patterns for the royal manufacture. In the account of the King's buildings is the entry of a payment due to Bonnemer and to Bailly, the painter, § for several days' work with other painters in making designs for embroideries and points d'Espagne. These

* Lettre à Colbert, tome 132, fo. 75 ("Bibliothèque Nationale").

† "En Janvier, 1673, M. le Comte d'Avaux ayant remplacé Mgr. de Bonzy comme ambassadeur à Venise, Colbert lui écrit: "J'ai bien reçu le collet de point rebrôdé en relief, que vous m'avez envoyé, et que j'ai trouvé fort beau. Je le confronterai avec ceux qui se font dans nos manufactures, mais je dois vous dire à l'avance que l'on en fait dans la royaume d'aussi beaux" (Lefébure, "Broderie et Dentelles").

‡ A letter written, 2nd January 1682, by Colbert to M. de Montargis, Intendant at Alençon.

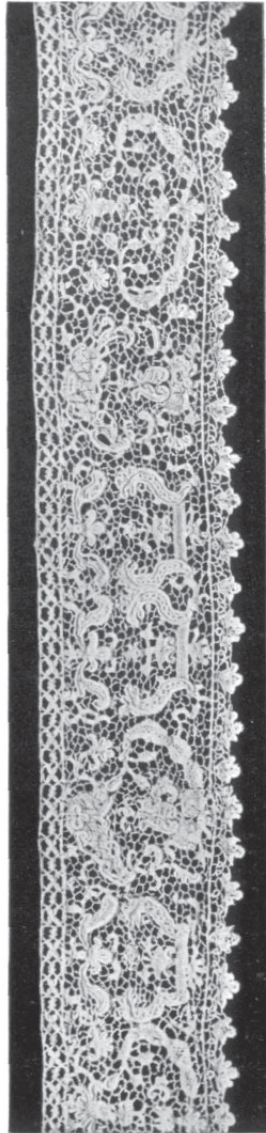
§ "Colbert chargea les plus grands artistes du temps, Le Brun, Bérain, Bailly, Bonnemer, de créer des modèles" (Mme. Laurence de Laprade, "Le Point de France").



CAP CROWN OF ALENÇON.
With fancy grounds, eighteenth century.

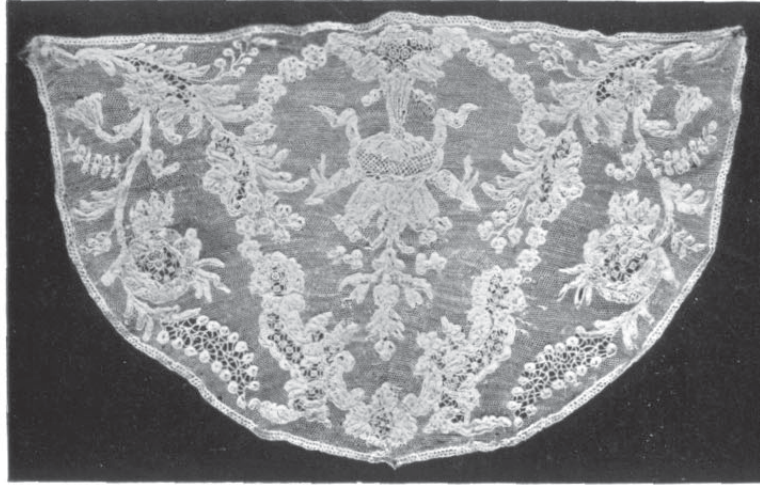


SLEEVE TRIMMING OF ALENÇON.
Louis XV., first half of eighteenth century.



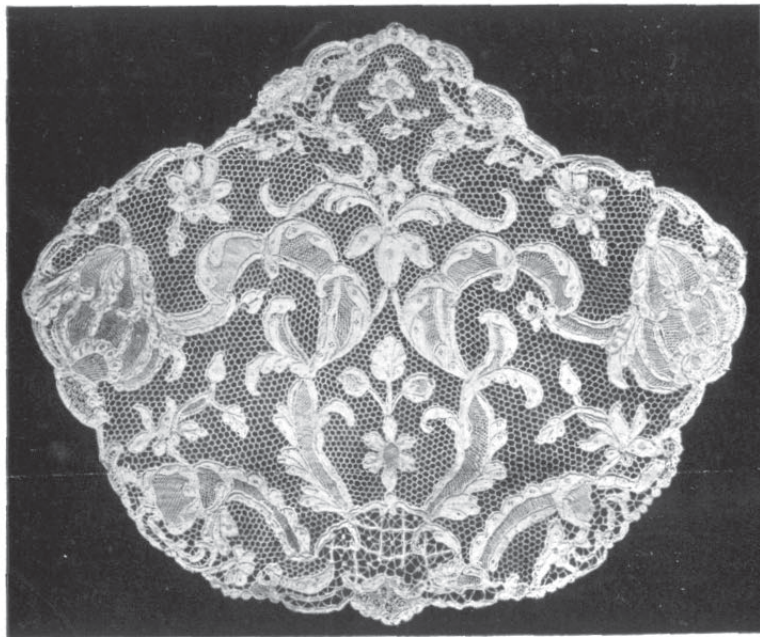
BORDER OF POINT DE FRANCE.
The pattern is made up of repeated groups of poorly-shaped devices on broken scrolls.
French, late seventeenth century.

Plate LXXI.



CAP CROWN OF ALENÇON.

With réseau ground. Louis XIV., early eighteenth century.



ALENÇON.

With ground of hexagonal brides. Louis XIV., late seventeenth century.

designs were jealously protected. None had permission to make the fine point of the royal pattern, except those who worked for the manufactory, and all girls had to show to the authorities the patterns they intended working, "so that the King shall be satisfied, and the people gain a livelihood."* That brides with picots, as well as brides claires, were made in the royal fabric, is mentioned in the *Mercur*e of July 1673.†

After the expiration of the privilege (1675) the "fabricants" had designs specially made for them, which became their exclusive property. In 1680 they asked and obtained permission to prosecute certain small manufacturers who copied their patterns,‡ and in 1691 they speak of the "licence" of several manufacturers, who copy the designs of others instead of using "tout leur esprit et tout leur industrie à inventer de nouveaux dessins et des modèles plus parfaits et plus délicats."§

It was in 1675 that the name of point de France began to be confined to point d'Alençon, no doubt as the most important of the French fabrics.|| Point d'Alençon is worked with a very fine needle, upon a parchment pattern. The parchment was originally used in its natural colour, but before 1769 green parchment had been adopted, as it is mentioned in an inventory of that date.¶ The

* Mrs Palliser, "History of Lace," edition 1902, p. 190.

† "On fait . . . des dentelles d'Espagne avec des brides claires sans picots ; et l'on fait aux nouveaux points de France des brides qui en sont remplies d'un nombre infini."

‡ "Gabriel Gence, Charles Guitton, et Louis Marescot, marchands trafiquant des ouvrages de vélin et point de France . . . vous remontrent que depuis trois ou quatre ans ils ont été obligez de faire de nouveaux dessins . . . lesquels reviennent à grand prix aux supplyants. Cependent quantité de personnes malveillantes dérobent les dits dessins. . . . Toutes lesquelles choses méritent un chastiment exemplaire, à l'encontre de ceux qui se trouvent coupables et dont il est presque impossible d'avoir révélation, si ce n'est par censures ecclésiastiques" ("Archives de la Préfecture de L'Orne").

§ Mme. Laurence de Laprade, "Le Poinct de France."

|| "Après la dissolution de cette société (1675) le nom de point de France fut donné au point d'Alençon. Ce nom était aussi souvent usité dans les actes que ceux de vélin et de point d'Alençon, et ces trois noms ont été employés concurrement jusqu'à nos jours" ("Histoire du Point d'Alençon").

¶ The Inventory of Simon Geslin, 13th April 1769 (*Ibid.*).

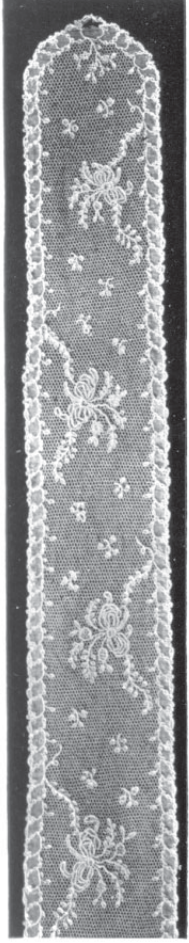
worker is better able to detect any faults in her work upon a coloured ground than upon white. The paper pattern is laid upon the strip of parchment, which rests on a pillow, and the outlines of the ornament are pricked with a needle. After pricking, the parchment is given to a *traceuse*, who first sews it to a piece of very coarse linen folded double, then forms the outline of the pattern by two threads,* which are guided along the edge by the thumb of the left hand, and fixed by minute stitches passed with another needle and thread through the holes of the parchment. The "picage" and the "trace" date in Alençon from the first imitation of points de Venise. The next process, the making of the "fond" or "entoilage,"† employs exactly the same stitch which was used for the mat of point coupé and for the "flowers" of point de Venise. The worker works the button-hole stitch (point bouclé or de boutonnière, not, as is stated in so many authors, point noué) from left to right, and when arrived at the end of the row, the thread is thrown back to the point of departure, and she works again from left to right over the thread. Occasionally small pin-holes (portes) or a diaper pattern of pin-holes (quadrilles) were let into the fond. A more open variety of the fond is the rempli,‡ formed by twisting the thread before making the loop, and these two processes were at first executed by the same worker.

The brides of Alençon are of three sorts—the bride à picots, the bride bouclée, and the bride tortillée. The first—the bride à picots—had, in later point de Venise, shown a tendency to approximate to a regular, generally hexagonal, mesh. These brides in Alençon were not marked upon the parchment until the reign of Louis XVI., and were made at sight, and towards the middle of the reign of

* "D'abord on se servit de deux fils doubles ce qui arrive quelquefois obtenir une trace solide" ("Histoire du Point d'Alençon").

† "Les brides étant presque nulles, on commençait ordinairement un morceau par les motifs. C'est pour cette raison que ce point porta dès l'origine le nom de fond, nom qui aurait dû appartenir aux brides et plus tard au réseau. Il conserva cependant ce nom de fond, et de nos jours il sert encore à désigner le mat des fleures, feuilles, ou autres ornements réservés à cet effet" (*Ibid.*).

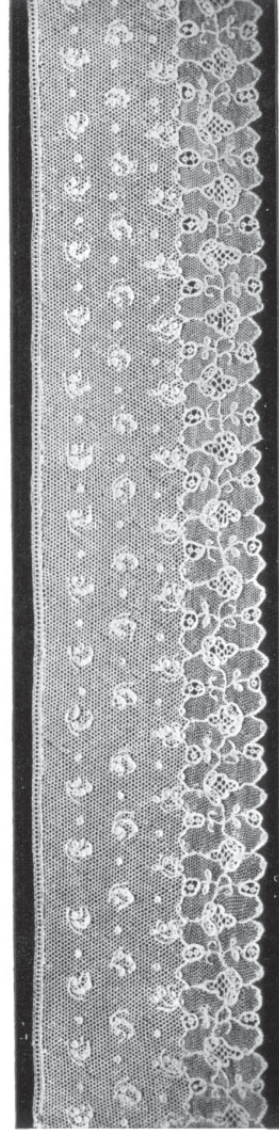
‡ The rempli is found in point coupé, and used as contrast to the fond, employed for closer effect.



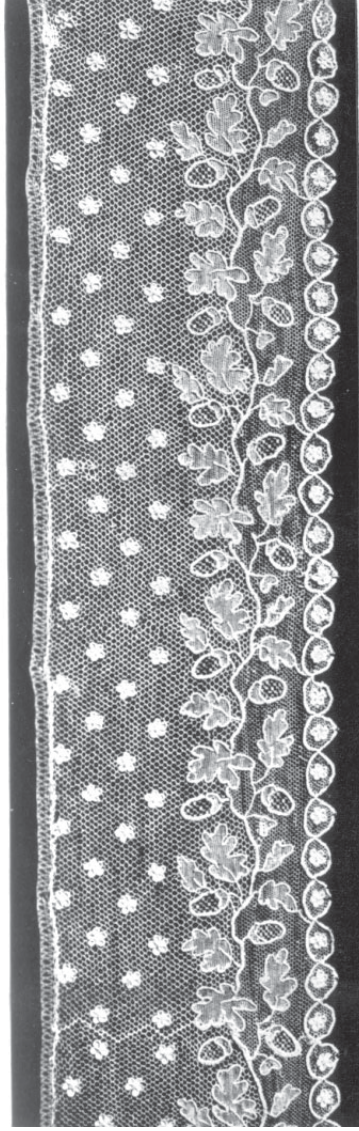
LAPPET OF ARGENTAN.
Louis XVI., late eighteenth century.



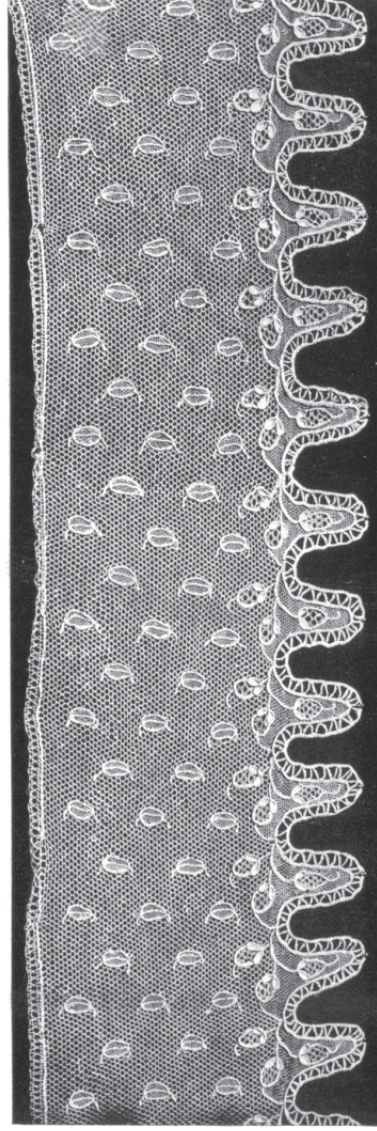
LAPPET OF ALENÇON.
Louis XV., eighteenth century.



BORDER OR EDGING OF ALENÇON.
Louis XVI., late eighteenth century. The réseau is of thick thread, a deteriorated and later substitute for the small hexagonal "brides" ground.



BORDER OF ALENÇON.
Louis XVI, late eighteenth century.



BORDER OF ALENÇON.
Empire, early nineteenth century.

Louis XIV. the meshes show an exact hexagonal form. It will be remembered that in 1673 the "nouveau point de Paris" is described in the *Mercure* as covered with "an infinite number of small picots." The bride bouclée sans nez, also an hexagonal mesh, has no picots, and was invented about 1700. In the bride tortillée the mesh is covered with a thread twisted round it, and held in place by a button-hole stitch at each angle.*

The réseau is worked from left to right, au point bouclé et tortillé, with the thread attached to the outline of the flowers and ornaments.† It began to be made at Alençon about 1700, as Madame Despierres proves from various inventories,‡ and not as Mrs Palliser and M. Séguin assert, in 1741 at the earliest. The modes are made, like reticella, upon skeleton foundations of thread, which are afterwards covered with button-hole stitches, and were introduced, when the réseau was used, to give an open and clear effect to certain portions of the design. The first modes were varieties of the brides à picots and zigzag bars picoted (Les Venises). The modes of Alençon, though very light, open, and effective, are not so rich and varied as those in Venise à réseau, or Brussels lace. Indeed, in 1761, a writer, describing the point de France, says that it does not arrive at the taste and delicacy of Brussels, and that the modes are inferior, and consequently much point is sent from Alençon to Brussels to have the modes added; but connoisseurs, he adds, easily detect the difference.§ A favourite mode is the square trellis foundation, ornamented with squares and circles at the points of intersection. Zigzag lines finely picoted are also used with effect. One of the modes, which consists of a button-hole stitched solid hexagon within a skeleton hexagon,||

* "On plaçait autrefois une épingle au haut de chaque hexagone, afin d'obtenir une tension pour la forme régulière de la maille, lorsque l'on se servait d'épingles, elle s'appelait bride épinglée" ("Histoire du Point d'Alençon").

† There are several varieties of réseau—le réseau ordinaire, le petit réseau, le réseau mouché, le réseau avec bobine, le grand réseau.

‡ "Le réseau se fait dans le sens du pied de la dentelle à son bord, par rangs de gauche à droite, au point bouclé et tortillé peu serré. Lorsque le rang est fini on revient en passant trois fois son aiguille dans chaque maille, et l'on recommence la deuxième rang de la même manière" ("Histoire du Point d'Alençon").

§ "Dictionnaire du Citoyen," Paris, 1761.

|| It is sometimes set within a square.

and connected with the surrounding figure by means of six small ties or brides, is sometimes used extensively to form a groundwork, when it has been named by M. Dupont Auberville, "réseau rosacé" (Argentella). This "Argentella" was supposed by Mrs Palliser to be of Genoese* workmanship, but it has no affinities with the type of lace made in Genoa, while its character and the style of the floral patterns are those of Alençon. Its cordonnet† is worked in button-hole stitches closely cast over a thread, which outlines various forms in the design—a distinctive mark of point d'Alençon. In general the laces distinguished as point d'Alençon, point d'Argentan, and Argentella have so many characteristics in common that it would be preferable to call them Alençon à réseau, Alençon à grandes brides, and Alençon à réseau rosacé.

La brode,‡ the next process, is worked in button-hole stitch, and gives relief to the design in the veining of the leaves, the stalks of the flowers, &c. The brode is borrowed by Alençon from raised Venetian point, but the relief is much lower in the French brode. To obtain the raised effect, a pad of coarse thread was laid down, and upon these very close button-hole stitches were worked. When this is completed, the threads which unite lace, parchment, and linen are cut by a sharp razor passed between the two folds of linen; the loose threads are removed (enlevage and eboutage), the *regaleuse* repairs any small defects, and there remains one last process,§ that of uniting all the segments of lace imperceptibly together, or the "assemblage." The seam follows as much as possible the outlines of

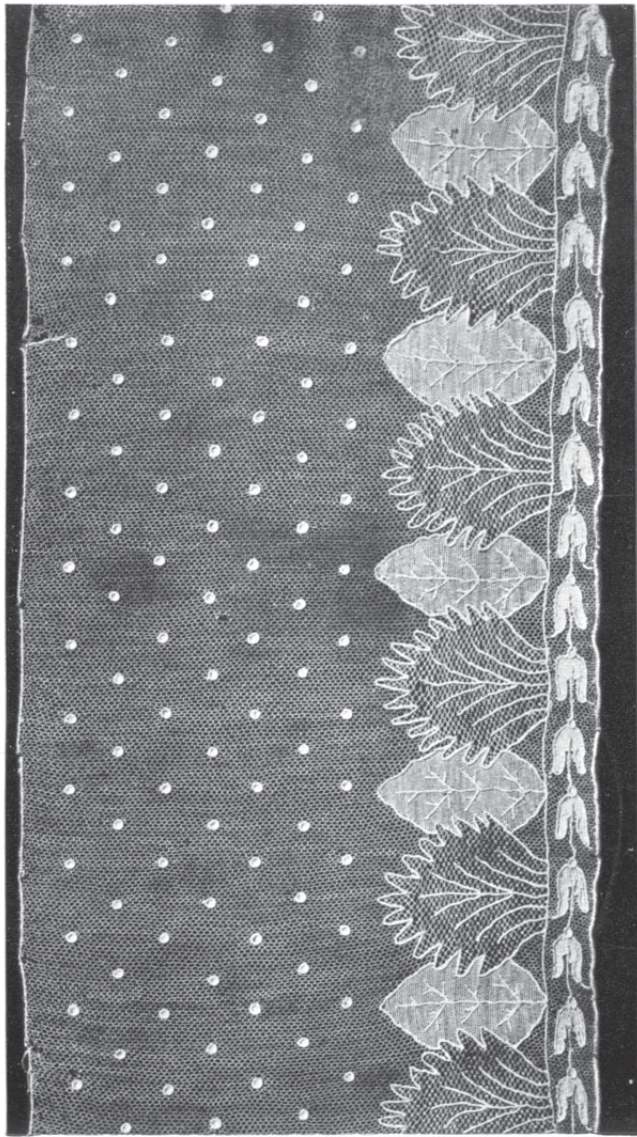
* "Formerly much of it was to be met with in the curiosity shops of that city" (Mrs Palliser, 1864).

† The cordonnet is sometimes of stout thread.

‡ "La brodeuse . . . attache à sa ceinture un fil appelé menu ou fil conducteur, puis elle attache un autre fil à la trace. Elle fait sur le menu trois ou quatre points bouclés, fiche son aiguille dans la trace en faisant le quatrième ou le cinquième point, et continue, en procédant toujours de la même manière" ("Histoire du Point d'Alençon").

§ "L'assemblage consiste à raccorder les dessins, à les unir par une couture quand c'est une fleur. Lorsqu'il s'agit du champ, soit de bride, soit de réseau, on refait les mailles, afin que l'assemblage ne paraisse pas. C'est toujours une ouvrière habile que l'on choisit pour ce travail. L'assembleuse doit connaître tous les points."

Plate LXXIV.



FLOUNCE OF ALENÇON.
Empire, early nineteenth century.