

Another piece, probably of Spanish origin also, lovely in its details, but a little heavy in its relief, belongs to the Spitzer collection, and is a lectern cover, said to have been a gift of Charles V. to the monastery of St. Juste, in Estramadura, whither he retired to end his days in 1558. This lectern cover is a sort of long rectangular scarf of red velvet, the main portion of which is powdered over with blossom, and crossed S devices worked in gold thread. At the ends of the velvet cover are panels, the more sumptuous of which contains a figure subject. The other is blazoned in gold, with a large eagle (emblem of St. John the Evangelist), accentuated in relief and almost filling up the panel. In the spaces between its head, wings, and claws, are golden spanglings shaped like little blossoms. Upon the breast of the bird is a medallion, in which is a portrait of the saint delicately embroidered in coloured silks. The panel at the other end of the cover shows us St. John, seated in the midst of landscape scenery, writing his Gospel, inspired thereto by the Virgin who is figured in the skies above. The embroidery is well carried out, though with less refinement than one would find in a correspondingly important piece of Italian workmanship. The border around the whole cloth is composed of a pattern of repeated truncated and leafy branches.*

The date of this embroidery is that of the best period of the Flemish and Dutch schools of painting, which were noted for extraordinary care in minutely depicting detail.

In a way we may trace a similar scrupulousness

* Theodore Biais, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, August 1874.

of execution in Flemish embroideries of this period, for which a fair justification can be pleaded from the materials so used being under more restraint than

those of the painters.

Many orphreys and chasuble crosses vie with painted panels of Flemish triptychs. One selected as an illustration of this (fig. 55) is typical of the finest work of its kind. The design is a sixteenth-century version of the Jesse Tree device. King David with a long beard is in the centre; and the character of all the figures is forcibly rendered.

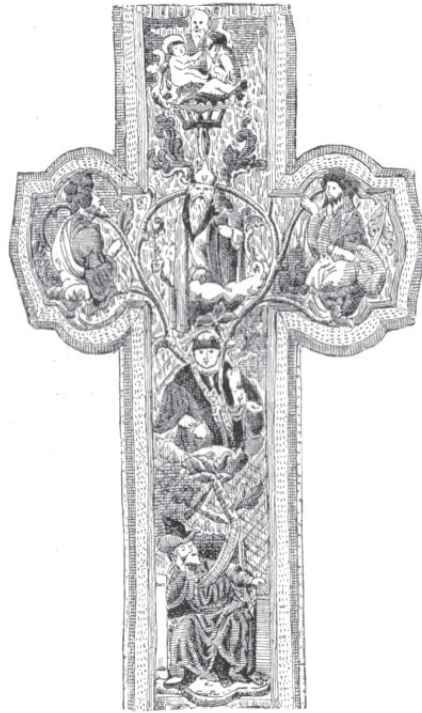


Fig. 55.—Cross or orphrey from a Flemish chasuble (in the Hochon collection).

Supreme quality of Flemish em-

broidery is to be seen in an altar frontal, 4.60 metres long and 1.10 wide, exhibited in the Royal Museum of Antiquities and Armour of the Porte de la Hal at Brussels. It comes from the abbey of Grimbergen,

and bears the arms of Christopher Outers, prior, from 1615 to 1647.*

An inscription, *Panis confortans Christus*, indicates



Fig. 56.--The Last Supper, embroidered on a panel to an altar frontal (in the Museum of Antiquities and Armour at Brussels).

that the main idea of the design is the glorification of the mystical feast of the Eucharist. This the artist illustrates by means of a series of panels separated by

* See *Classified Documents concerning Flemish Art in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, Van Ysendeck.

architectural ornaments, each panel containing incidents from the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ figures as taking part in a repast of some sort. The Last Supper



Fig. 57.—Spanish relief embroidery in gold threads and coloured silks (on an orphrey from the Fortuny collection).

of course occupies the first place (fig. 56), then follow panels with the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, the entertainment in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, the repast with Zacchæus, and the dinner at Emmaus. The architectural surroundings, and accessories couched in both glistening and burnished gold, are designed with great elegance, and modelled in gentle relief. The grouping of the different figures in each panel is admirable; Christ, sometimes at the centre, at others at the side of the table, is always rendered with dazzling majesty. The faces, embroidered with utmost skill in silks, are fine and full of expression, the actions appropriate to the scene, and the attitudes nobly expressed. The specimen is in fine condition. We know of no better nor more important piece of needlework. It is, in fact, the gem of the highly

remarkable set of embroideries to be seen in the Porte de la Hal Museum.

Before this period embroidery had been done in considerable quantities with coloured threads upon canvas

and on white linen articles. Linen had been somewhat rare. Queen Isabella of Bavaria had in her wedding trousseau three dozen "chemises of Holland," a quantity which seemed a great luxury to the French court.* Her spouse, Charles VI., wore silk shirts, however, one of which is recorded as of "white silk, striped with red silk and embroidered with letters of gold (1422)."

In the accounts of Margaret of France, dated 1545, we find "four livres, twelve sous (about twelve shillings), for a trimming to a chemise, ornamented with crimson silk."

White thread embroideries were hardly known; linen garments, rarely of very fine texture, were quite plain and without decoration.

But in the sixteenth century this gradually changed; the manufacture of linen was improved, and finer qualities played an important part in costume, whilst other varieties were more largely used for household purposes.

Considerable numbers of towels or napkins, em-

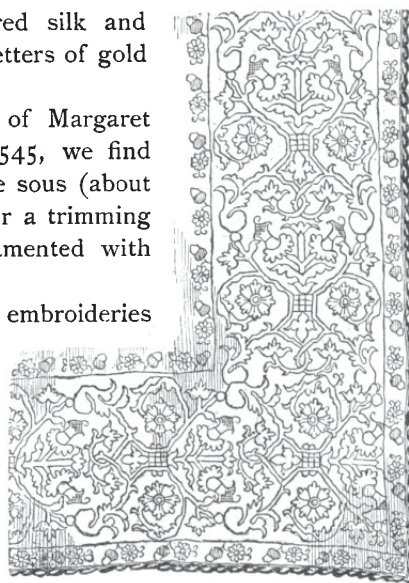


Fig. 58.—Border of red silk embroidery on a linen cloth (in M. E. Bocher's collection).

* Bezon, *Dict. Gen. des Tissus Anc. et Mod.*, vol. viii., p. 232.

broidered with nice effect in red silk, etc., thus came into use (figs. 58, 59, and 60).

A desire for more pronounced effects of decoration in the borders of such clothes also arose. *Point coupé* (cut work) was accordingly adopted, resulting in the production of patterns with cut-out and open details, many filled in with small devices of needlework, which gave value to the more solid sections of the design about them. Through the influence of a taste for lighter and less compactly woven grounds the limits of needlework were extended, and embroidery on linen,



Fig. 59.—Border of embroidery, with devices of double-headed eagle, crown, and *fleur de lys*, to a linen cloth (in the Cluny Museum).

from which certain threads had been withdrawn (*à fils tirés*), leaving such as were sufficient to carry an overcasting of stitches, came into vogue; and, later still, embroidery on net.

At this period it was the fashion for all ladies to apply themselves to embroidering. Catherine de Médicis was renowned for her skill in it. Brantôme tells us that she would gather round her her daughters, Claude, Elizabeth, and Margaret, with their cousins the Guises, and sometimes the exiled Mary Stuart, and with them "she passed a great portion of her time after dinner in silk needlework, in which she was as great an adept as possible."

Ronsard, referring to Queen Margot, sister of Francis I., writes:—

*Elle adonnot son courage
A faire maint bel ouvrage
Dessus la toile, et encor
A joindre la soye et l'or.**

But for such broderies ladies required special patterns, and drawings of these would be passed from hand to hand for each to make copies from them. Hence the circulation of patterns was somewhat slow.

Happily new inventions at this time came to the



Fig. 60.—Coloured silk embroidery on linen of the sixteenth century (in the Cluny Museum).

assistance of the ladies. Engraving on wood had been practised for a century. Maso di Finiguerra had given a new impulse to the use of engraved metal plates from which impressions could be taken, and Gutenberg issued his first proofs of printing from movable type in 1454. Such various means, of bringing writings and designs within the reach of all, were adopted early in the sixteenth century for the publication of beautiful embroidery patterns made up as pattern books. Their

* Ronsard, *Ode à la Royne de Navarre*, Book II., ode vii.

success was considerable; since their numbers increased as if by enchantment. In a few years French, German, Italian, Flemish, and English publishers spread broadcast books of designs made by their best engravers, in addition to those previously issued.

Pierre Quinty seems to be the first of such publishers. In 1527 appeared his "new and subtle book respecting the art and science of making embroidery, fringes, tapestries, as well as of other crafts done with the needle."*

Francis Pelegrin at Paris, William Vostermans at Angers, Claude Nourry *dit* Leprince at Lyons, Tagliente, Nicolo d'Aristotile, Vavassore le Guadagnino and twenty others at Venice, published in rapid succession books of ingenious and interesting patterns.

The new style of open work led to further developments of needlework, and little by little from embroidery was evolved needlepoint lace, of which more hereafter, when we shall also go more fully into the question of the pattern books here merely referred to incidentally.

Many of them, and especially the earlier ones, like that of Pierre Quinty, relate solely to embroidery; but the arts of embroidery and lace-making, as displayed by the patterns in some of the books, frequently merged into one another in such a way as to render the distinctions between the several points of union difficult of definition. Later on we shall endeavour to disengage these difficulties one from the other.

* "Livres nouveaux et subtils touchant l'art et science tant de broderie fronsures, tapisseries, côme autres mestiers qu'on fait à l'esguille."

Under Henry II. costume was scarcely more than a mass of embroidery. Black velvet, principally employed, was enlivened by dainty gold threads, which deviously coursed in trceries along borders, and as insertions over men's doublets and cloaks. In women's dresses the bodies, sleeves, and borders of the skirts were embroidered, and a panel, or band of similar work, ran up the front of the dress.* The more frequent ornamental devices, repeated in series, were those of reversed and interlaced S's, truncated leafy branches, and little compartments enclosing flowerets and pomegranates, dolphins and intertwisted scrolls, all of which occur in the pattern books in delightful variety. Amongst such we meet with the combined cypher of Diane de Poitiers and Henry II.

At this time, too, hand-knitting of stockings was a favourite occupation. The first pair is said to have been worn by Henry II. when he attended the marriage of his sister, Margaret of France, with Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. Embroidery was worked on stockings as on everything else, from velvet caps to linen underclothes. When dead, the king was laid out in state, "dressed in a Holland shirt most excellently broidered about the collar and the cuffs."†

After the demise of her royal spouse, Catherine de Médicis adopted, in her mourning garb, a fanciful luxuriousness, of which we can scarcely form a conception; amongst other things she had a mourning bed, concerning which M. Bonnaffé has gathered

* Carrying one back to a similar band of embroidery in the peplos of Athéné Polias (fig. 19, p. 36).

† See description by Godefroy in *Le Ceremonial de France*.

numerous particulars in following his close investigations of the queen's accounts, recorded after her decease in 1589. This bed was astounding in its wealth of embroidery, as may be inferred from the following extract:—

“A bed of black velvet, embroidered with pearls, powdered with crescents and suns, a foot-board, head-



Fig. 61.—French embroidery in small tent and cross stitches on canvas (in Mademoiselle de Bressolles' collection).

board, nine valances, and coverlet of state similarly bedecked with crescents and suns; three damask curtains, with leafy wreaths and garlands figured upon a gold-and-silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broderies of pearls."

It stood in a chamber all hung "with rows of the queen's devices in cut black velvet on cloth of silver."

The adjoining room was draped "with black satin, ornamented with white gimp work."

The reign of Charles IX. was melancholy with its religious warfares, and his subjects suffered great miseries. Complaints of the extravagance of the court were endless, and petitions were numerous. One, presented to Catherine de Médicis in 1586, is typical. It is entitled "An Address upon the Extreme Dearness of Living, . . . etc., presented to the mother of the king by one of her faithful servitors, Du Haillan de Bordeaux." Referring to the court circle it sets forth that "their mills, their lands, their pastures, their woods, and all their revenues are wasted upon embroideries, insertions, trimmings, tassels, fringes, hangings, gimps, needleworks, small chain stitchery, germanders, quiltings, back stitchings, etc., . . . new diversities of which are invented from day to day."

When Henry III. succeeded Charles IX. his dependents gave themselves up to an exaggeration of fashion in wearing velvets damasked with gold thread. Their ornamentation was almost always in the best taste, and this partially accounts for the employment during a protracted period of such fabrics. The same decorative motives were to be seen in men's doublets as in the delicate chasing of their daggers; sword-guards and ivory mounts to muskets repeated the favourite wreaths and garlands and scrolls, amongst which birds, dogs, and other animals disported themselves with delightful ornamental effect.

Henry III. founded the Order of the St. Esprit (31st December, 1578), the regulations of which applied to the veriest details of its ceremonials. All the knights

wore costumes and mantles of red velvet embroidered with gold ; the hat, mantle, doublet, and even the backs of the gloves were all worked in gold with the duly prescribed emblems of the order, the chief of which was typical of the Holy Ghost. The vestments of the clergy engaged in the religious functions of the order were also sumptuously embroidered with this emblem.

At length, however, the rage for costumes made with heavy velvets, which had been so generally worn for more than a century, came to an end ; and a reaction set in in favour of brocades and brocatelles, stuffs of flowery patterns, the designs for which gave birth to the use of pomegranates and other fruits with fine foliage. The designers sought inspiration from plants blossoming in luxuriant fulness. An intelligent horticulturalist (Jean Robin) set himself to meet the demand in this respect, by opening a garden with conservatories in which he cultivated strange varieties of plants, then but little known in our latitudes. This proved an immense success.

In a short time the king (Henry IV.) purchased Jean Robin's horticultural establishment, which, under the name of *Jardin du Roi*, became crown property. The learned Guy de la Brosse in 1626 propounded the suggestion that medical students might study the plants without interference with the designers for embroideries and tapestries ; whence the first *Jardin des Plantes* (Botanical Garden), with its Natural History Museum, came into being. This institution seemed so excellent that every country adopted it as an example and founded similar ones. Who would have thought it possible for embroidery thus to have come to the aid of science !

But, as may be easily divined, taste for showy stuffs could but stimulate the wild expenses incurred by great nobles. In spite of the personal simplicity observed by good King Henry IV., and the austere disposition of his minister Sully, fops and exquisites took advantage of public ceremonies to uphold luxurious displays, at times carried to amazing excess. Bassompierre, in his *Memoires*, tells how, for the baptism of Louis XIII., he had a costume made of flowered cloth of gold bedizened with so many pearls that they alone cost 8,000 écus, not to mention 6,000 écus for the stuffs and the making of the clothes, in all 14,000 écus, or about 167,000 francs (£6,680) of current coin.

Henry IV., opposed to this courtly folly, issued several edicts against "the glitterings and gildings."

But the most important of such edicts was that by Louis XIII., in 1629, bearing the title "Regulation of Superfluity in Clothes." This law put a limit to expenditure for costume and for the table. Article 133 is interesting here on account of its enumeration of the ornamental articles then worn. It runs:—

"We forbid men and women to wear in any way whatsoever embroidery on cloth or flax, imitations of embroidery, of bordering made up with cloth and thread, and of cutwork for 'rebatos,' capes, sleeves, done upon quintain and other linens, laces, 'passamaynes,' and other threadwork made with bobbins.

"And we forbid the use of all other ornaments upon capes, sleeves, and other linen garments, save trimmings, cutwork, and laces manufactured in this country which do not exceed at most the price of three pounds the ell,

that is, for the band and its trimmings together, without evasion ;

“ Upon pain of confiscation of the aforesaid capes, chainworks, collars, hats, and mantles which may be found upon offending persons ; as well as the coaches and horses which may be found similarly bedecked.”

It is almost impossible to believe that such a sumptuary law was



Fig. 62.—Embroidered ammunition pouch of the time of Louis XIII. (in the Cluny Museum).

either seriously enforced or respected, in the face of the pleasing and numerous engravings of costume published at this date by Abraham Bosse, which we shall have to discuss more amply in the section on laces.

Moreover, these edicts really concerned embroideries

at court only, and did not affect those on ecclesiastical vestments, the output of which was always considerable. Louis XIII., on the advice of his famous minister, Cardinal Richelieu, must have been careful to avoid doing anything to militate against the production of such rich ecclesiastical adornments. We even find in the *Théâtre d'Honneur*, published in 1620 by André Favyn, a description of superb religious vestments, etc., made to the order of the king in 1619, by

his Majesty's embroiderer Alexandre Paynet, for presentation to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

As a specimen of the character of ecclesiastical work done at this period we give a cut (fig. 63) of a handsome chasuble, belonging to Messrs. Tassinari and Chatel, on which, set in massive gold couchings, are medallions wrought in coloured silks.

Louis XIV. gave the highest encouragement to embroidery; its splendour in house decorations, on furniture and costume, surpassed that previously displayed.

The wondrous luxury at Versailles dazzled the whole of Europe; but the gorgeousness of many details in it overshot the bounds of good taste, and was monstrous in exaggeration. There were, for instance, gold embroidered caryatid figures in the king's apartment measuring fifteen feet high, and proportionately bold in relief. Such a substitution of embroidery for decoration, which should have been executed rather in metal or wood carving, was clearly a mistake. A textile fabric and threads are not materials appropriate to a design of this nature. And no matter what amount of skill may have been involved in embroidering them, we cannot acquiesce in Saint Aubin's statement that these Louis XIV. caryatids were "specimens of masterwork beyond eulogy."

The king, however, showed better taste in matters of costume, and the blue uniforms which he recognized as "regulation uniforms" (fig. 64) were pleasing in appearance. In 1664 an order was issued that the right of wearing them would be granted only by special favour



Fig. 63.—Cross or orphrey on the back of a cope of Louis XIII.'s period, embroidered in gold and silver (in the collection of Messrs. Tassinari and Chatel).

of the king, and on a licence signed by himself! The number of wearers was limited; and when one died another was appointed.

The coat was of blue, lined with red, embroidered with a fine pattern in gold picked out with silver; metal spangles were freely scattered between the forms. Given the sparkling saloons in which these uniforms were worn, the golden equipages which conveyed the



Fig. 64.—Design of the embroidery on regulation uniforms (Louis XIV.), after St. Aubin.

wearers, and the magnificence of the scene is easily pictured.

Louis XIV. had many embroiderers attached to his household; and we find in the list of his domestic officers, amongst those of his hereditary grooms of the chamber, the names of Jean le Boyteux, Jacques Remy, Jean Henry, and his son Etienne Henry, all embroiderers.

On the 2nd June, 1679, Jacques Remy receives a payment of 4,000 livres (about £200), "on account of

embroidered brocade, which he was making for the king," a typical instance of the important commissions given to such workmen.

Besides the above-mentioned embroiderers specially retained for the king's service, his Majesty employed others at the Gobelins factory where their workrooms adjoined those of the tapestry-makers. These were Simon Fayette and Philibert Balland, who were engaged upon the embroidering of the hangings, door and other curtains and coverings for furniture of all sorts. Fayette's speciality was for figures, whilst Balland's was for landscapes.*

The designs for their work was supplied by the king's designers: Bailly, who painted in miniature, Bonnemer de Falaise, Testelin, and Boulongne the younger.

Their names frequently recur in the accounts for the king's buildings.† We give a few extracts from those of the years 1671 and following:—

"Paid to Testelin for a painting of Jupiter on his eagle, to be used as a pattern for embroidery, 300 livres (or £15).

"To Fayette, for works in which he embroidered the figures, 2,345 livres (about £117).

"To Balland, for works in which he embroidered the landscapes, 2,855 livres (about £143).

"To Balland, for embroideries representing the capture of birds in flight, 400 livres (or £20).

"To Boulongne, for drawings of birds, 72 livres (or £3).

* A.-L. Lacordaire, *Notice Historique sur les Gobelins*.

† Jules Guiffrey, *Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi*.

“To Bonnemer, painter, for six paintings upon vellum, used as patterns for the furniture embroideries in the gallery at Versailles, 300 livres (or £15).”

Other evidence indicates the lavish expenditure incurred by the king for woven fabrics used in his palace at Versailles. We find Berain furnishing the design for a figured velvet which the king ordered from a weaver of St. Maur at a cost of 1,000 livres (or £50) the ell! Its manufacture was so intricate and slow that only a few ells of it were completed before the king died.

But the patterns of these fine fabrics, magnificent tapestries, and sumptuous embroideries were all of a grandiose style. The noble attitudes of the persons depicted in them, the bold ornamental forms, the luxuriance of flowers, the excellent selection of emblems always clear and straightforward in their symbolism, such as royal suns, helmets, swords, standards, and triumphal trumpets, all contributed to a greatness of style, which is still impressive.

Amongst the emblems thus embroidered occurs the bâton of the Marshal of France, the shape in which it was then designed being retained to the present time. It is a staff eighteen inches long, covered with blue velvet and embroidered in gold satin stitch with thirty-six *fleurs de lys*. The name of the marshal and date of his appointment are engraved upon the gold ferrule on the end of the staff.

The admirable portraits by Hyacinthe Rigaud, Largillière, and many others, which have been faithfully engraved by Nanteuil, Léonard Gautier, and Pierre Simon, supply us with accurate pictorial information

as to minutest particulars in the beautiful embroidery used during this brilliant period upon costumes.

Ladies' dresses were generally less flowered and bedecked with gold work than men's. With a refined taste, women gave preference to wearing soft and fine-textured linens, white embroideries, and thread laces, so becoming to the skin. Persons having a taste for real elegance ridiculed the ostentatious gold trimmings and embroideries. Here, for example, is some of Madame de Sévigné's delightful banter about them:—
“M. de Langlée has given Madame de Montespan a dress of gold upon gold, wrought over with gold, with hems of gold, and then over it a curling additional embroidery of one gold mixed with another certain gold, making altogether the most divine fabric that I could possibly have imagined !!! Fairies certainly made all this in secret.”

But it should not be supposed that in the midst of this abundant luxury women were indolent and displayed no taste in the choice and making of embroideries. Of Madame de Maintenon it is said that she herself worked at embroidery, not only in her apartments, but when out walking or driving. “Hardly fairly ensconced in her carriage,” according to a letter of the time, “and before the coachman had flicked his horses, this good lady put on her spectacles and pulled her needlework out of the bag she carried with her.”

Then again, when the college at St. Cyr was under her direction, Madame de Maintenon devoted the greater measure of her efforts towards having the young and aristocratic girls in the school instructed

in embroidery, and a quaint print now in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* displays her, surrounded by pupils, holding pieces of needlework, and grouped, by standards of difficulty suited to schoolgirls, of one, two, or three years' training. There can be little doubt that work by three years' pupils is still to be seen in the palace at Fontainebleau, on the hangings in Madame de Maintenon's apartment. These hangings, embroidered at St. Cyr, are covered with Chinese scenes upon a jonquil yellow ground.

Workboxes and delicious little cases for scissors, needles, and thimbles, depositories special to a lady's boudoir known as *bonheur du jour*, etc., reveal the fact, as testified



Fig. 65.—Indian coloured embroidery (in the Cluny Museum).

by specimens of them in collections, that many ladies did not disdain employing some part of their leisure in the art of the needle.

Europe followed the lead of France in the fashion of embroideries, and never perhaps had so enormous a quantity of costly specimens been consumed.

On its part, the East continued to put forth needlework of fantastic splendour. When Sobieski, King of

Poland, overcame the Turks in 1683, compelling them to raise the siege of Vienna, he took possession of a canopy hung with curtains, beneath which the Koran and Mahomet's standard had been reverentially kept in the Turkish camp. It was made of Smyrna gold brocade, embroidered in turquoises and pearls, with verses from the Koran. Its supports were of silver-gilt, beautifully chased and profusely set with enamelled and jewelled medallions. Sobieski had it converted into a state bed, which at his death was valued at 700,000 Tournese livres.

An interesting attempt was made at this period to induce the Chinese to imitate in embroidery the great decorative tapestry hangings that Louis XIV. had hung on the walls of his palaces. It seems probable that embroidery was producible in the far East at a minimum cost, and so tempted the enterprise of Portuguese or Dutch merchants, who were almost the only traders with these distant parts. Vasco de Gama was the first to double the Cape of Good Hope, and disembarked at Calcutta in May 1498. A hundred years later, in 1602, the Dutch had united under one powerful *Compagnie des Grandes Indes* all the associations which had been formed to deal in the products of the then little-known Asiatic countries.

Colbert, aiming at a greater extension of French export trade, gave every encouragement to shipowners at Marseilles, Bordeaux, Rochefort, St. Malo, and Havre, to found a *Compagnie des Indes*, which should compete with the Portuguese and Dutch. And it may have been under his directions that commissions were given to the Chinese to make embroideries on large

cloths previously prepared with drawings and paintings of figure subjects, such as those done by eminent painters like Le Brun and his pupils.

There are some important door hangings at the Cluny Museum, in the borders of which are French *fleurs de lys* intermixed with Indian ornament (fig. 66). Other parts of them more whimsical in effect were probably left

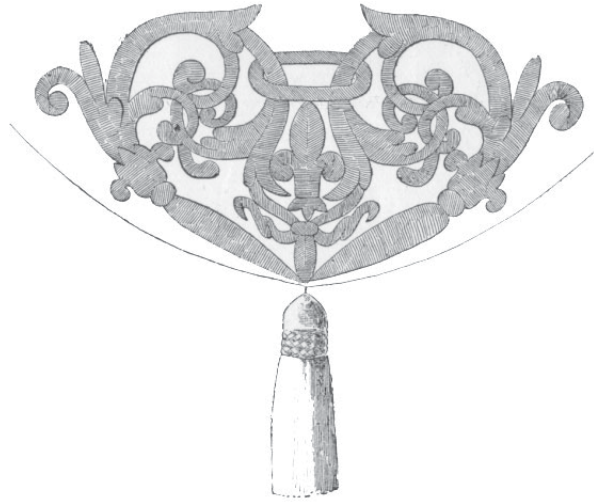


Fig. 66.—Indian embroidery, with the device of the *fleur de lys* introduced (in the Cluny Museum).

blank by the designers, and the embroiderers accordingly worked over them as their own taste dictated; whence it happens that persons with distinctly European poses and actions are represented as wearing clothes, and moving in scenery and amongst surroundings all decorated or treated in a Chinese style. Incomplete as these experiments really are, we felt that it would be

wrong to ignore them, since the effort made by those undertaking them was very considerable.



Fig. 67.—Velvet costume embroidered in gold and silver for Catherine of Brandenburg, seventeenth century (in the Buda-Pesth Museum).

Looking back we see that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are periods of great splendour in

embroidery. No temerity was wanting on the part of those giving orders for all sorts of needlework ; and workers of marvellous aptitude and dexterity in France, Italy, Spain, and Flanders were always to be found, capable of carrying out the unconditional and almost priceless commissions given to them. The patrons of embroidery at this time may be occasionally charged with the reproach of having instigated the production of articles exaggerated in character, and of having indulged an inordinate craving for effect of unstinted and tawdry pretentiousness, which beguiled workers into an unhealthy style. Still, embroidery of this period, on the whole, attained a condition of perfection which leaves the bulk of that subsequently produced far in the lurch.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM LOUIS XV. TO THE PRESENT TIME.

THE character of ornament and decoration during the reign of Louis XV., which commenced under the inauspicious influence of the Regency, reflected the dissolute tone in manners developed at that period. It consequently stands in marked contrast with the breadth of style that had obtained in the previous reign. Dignity of warlike pageants and pomp of regal majesty now virtually disappeared; and pencil and needle were called upon to set forth with frothy effeminacy the triumphs of love. All artistic work dwindled and shrank in aim, and embroideries of course did not escape from the prevalent demoralization. But ladies' toilettes more especially became vehicles for a thousand and one little fripperies, most of which verged upon the grotesque. Queen Marié-Leczinska—a very thin dame—set a fashion of wearing hoops of great circumference beneath her petticoats. And one of the more extraordinary instances of such enormities is referred to by the Marquise de Créquy, in the description she gives of her grandmother's costume,—the Duchesse de la Ferté, a celebrated and extravagant woman of fashion. The Marquise writes that her grandmother wore a dress of reddish brown velvet, the

skirt of which, adjusted in graceful folds, was held up by big butterflies made of Dresden china. The front was a tablier of cloth of silver, upon which was embroidered an orchestra of musicians, arranged in a pyramidal group, consisting of a series of six ranks of performers, with musical instruments wrought in raised needlework. The skirt was supported upon a hoop four ells and a half in circumference.* The Marquise averred that the cheeks of the musicians were as big as plums, from which the scale of the other parts can be fairly imagined.

Men's clothes, on the other hand, were of a more rational type. The brodered coats, and especially the daintily ornamented waistcoats, on which elegant little flowery sprays gracefully trickled about buttonholes, along pockets, and over trimmings of cuffs, are noticeable amongst the more pleasant results of the art of embroidery at this time. As taste in such matters became refined, it was difficult to satisfy the exactions which consequently arose for very delicate execution in tiny details. This tendency led many nobles, pedantic amateurs of this class of embroidery, to remain satisfied no longer with what European workmen could do for them. Accordingly many sent their clothes, ready cut out, to be embroidered in China (fig. 68). St. Aubin writes that at his time embroideries done with fine and evenly whipped cords or gimps came into fashion. "This," he says, "we owe to the Chinese, by whom many embroideries, most precise in regularity, have been made for fanciful dandies." The importation of this excellent Chinese work was the means of securing for us many

* *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy*, vol. i., p. 205.

of those fascinating coats of the period of Louis XV. and Louis XVI., which no one tires of admiring (figs. 68, 69, 70, and 72).

Never, perhaps, will *finesse* in embroidery be carried further. Floss and spun silks were made up into different kinds of threads, such as gimps, and chenilles, and even small narrow ribands like those used on book tassels, and these varieties were intermixed in embroi-



Fig. 68.—Embroidery in Chinese style upon a coat of the eighteenth century (in the Museum of Decorative Arts).

deries. Gold and silver was employed not only in smooth threads, but also for granulated ones, and as beads and spangles of all sizes, as wires, and little bars, in laminations, in bullion, as frizzed threads for chain-stitch work, and narrow flat braids. The number of stitches increased in a remarkable way.

On the other hand we meet with specimens of work most curious in their close resemblance to embroidery, and yet entirely made without a single needle stitch. The method of producing them seems to have been as follows:—Over an engraving, fixed to a card, a layer of transparent adhesive wax mixture was floated on with a brush. The card thus prepared was then placed upon the hot plate of a chafing-dish, so as to render the wax soft and bring the other adhesive ingredients into a gently

melting state. Flat silk threads could then be applied to the lines of the engraving as seen through the transparent glue. By pressing them with a nail of the finger or a small instrument the flat silk threads were made to adhere to the surface, being carried backwards and forwards from right to left and left to right and laid close to one another, over the portion to be covered with the same coloured silk. When carefully done, the illusion is complete, and conveys the

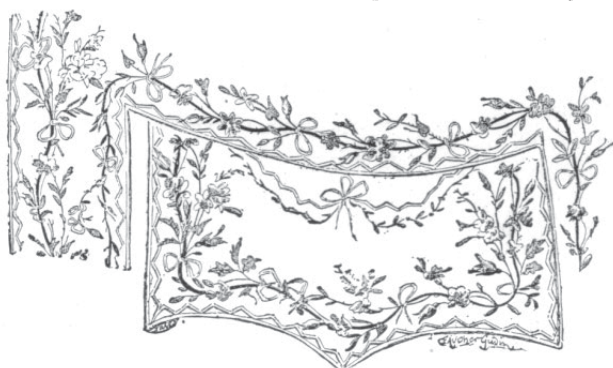


Fig. 69.—Embroidered pocket of a satin waistcoat of the eighteenth century (in the Museum of Decorative Arts).

impression of flat embroidery in fine silk. Skin textures were obviously very difficult of treatment in this manner, consequently, wherever they occurred in the engraving, blank spaces were as a rule left, which were subsequently painted in water-colour. This process, as will have been seen, is fantastic and ingenious, but scarcely commendable as an artistic substitute for embroidery.

A great deal of wool work on canvas (cross and tent stitch) was done in the eighteenth century. It is easy of

execution, the stitches are counted and taken according to the meshes, but the results of the work are rarely artistic.



Fig. 70.—Embroidery in gold and pearls upon the wedding coat of the "Grand Dauphin," after St. Aubin.

Seats, which before Louis XIII.'s time had generally but little stuffing in them or trimming on them, were considerably upholstered under Louis XIV. But appetite for anything contributing to luxurious ease and comfort was prodigiously developed under Louis XV., and a great quantity of seats in shapes hitherto unknown were then produced: sofas, *causeuses* (small sofas), *tête-à-tête*, or double seats, came into use, and were covered with tapestry-weavings or with canvas embroidered in cross and tent-counted stitches.

When human figures were part of the ornamentation in this class of work they were done with silks in very small cross and tent stitches. Furniture embroideries so made in the time of Louis XIV. are notable for rich flowery patterns and ornamental details of a bold style (fig. 71). Under Louis XV. grotesque forms, monkeys, squirrels, clowns, and such-like at times portrayed with great spirit, very finely

worked, but often in very mediocre taste, were freely adopted. François Boucher, when appointed court



Fig. 71.—Chair covered with superb embroidery, of the end of the seventeenth century.

painter, supplied pastoral designs which, however mannered, were always elegant.

This counted stitch work on canvas is the easiest of all embroideries, and many fashionable women applied themselves to it. Marie Antoinette herself, with Madame Elisabeth, commenced some work of this sort, which she intended for her apartments on the ground-floor of the Louvre, but its completion was cut short

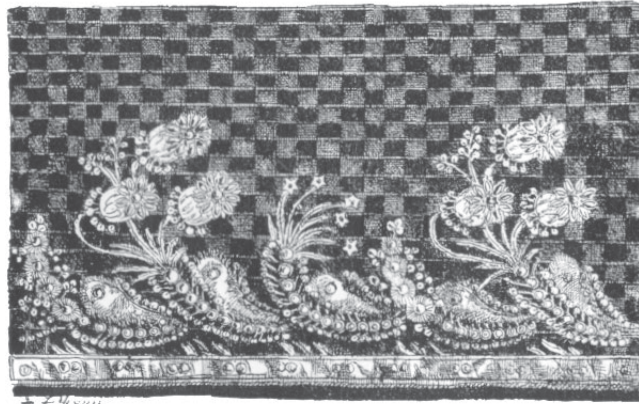


Fig. 72.—Embroidery with spangles and tinsel for a coat, Louis XVI. period (in the Museum of Art and Industry at Lyons).

by the Revolution. The specimens themselves were, at the commencement of the Empire period, exhibited on sale at Mademoiselle Dubucquois', who had been purveyor to the queen.*

Returning to the period of Louis XV. we must make special mention of a circumstance giving rise to an unwonted output of embroidery. A chapter of the

* Comte de Reiset, *Livre Journal de Madame Etoffe*, vol. i., p. 478.

Order of the St. Esprit had not been held since the reign of Henry III., so the king decided to celebrate with much ceremony a general reassemblage of the knights and officers of the order. His embroiderer (Rocher) was commissioned to produce a magnificent throne. Three hundred workwomen were employed for many months in embroidering the stuffs for its canopy, hangings, and coverings. Emblems of the St. Esprit, interchanged with *fleurs de lys*, were scattered over the grounds, whilst the borders were rich in gold work. The vestments of the officiating clergy were thickly embroidered with gold, and powdered over with St. Esprits in silver. In the *Memoires Secrets* of Bachaumont the value of these embroideries is placed at more than three hundred thousand livres.

Princely nuptials were also occasions for the giving of important orders for embroideries (fig. 70). La Fage, Jean Perreux, and Trumeau are cited as having been engaged by the Duc de Choiseul to embroider satin fittings and linings of superb coaches used in the wedding *cortège* of the Grand Dauphin when he married Marie-Joseph of Saxony.

Monsieur de Montgomery contributed to the exhibition of the *Union Centrale des Arts Decoratifs* held in 1882 a bed and arm-chair worked in feather stitch, which had belonged to Queen Marie-Leczinska. The canopy and head of the bed are decorated with medallions, containing subjects such as Psyche rising and looking at Cupid. Upon the coverlet are Cupid, Jupiter, and Mercury.

A very marked impulse was given to the Lyons silk manufactories in the eighteenth century, and to

embroideries made in that town. The designers for them displayed high skill in their compositions; particularly two, Bony an inhabitant, previously at Gisors, and Philippe de la Salle, both of whom left behind them a great reputation.*

Linen was of a most exquisite quality, consonant with this age of frivolity. Inimitable skill was shown in embroidering delicate cambrics, with which coquettish duchesses, equally punctilious in their dishabille as in their *grandes toilettes*, would envelop themselves. The needle-workers of Saxony were conspicuous for the excellence of their drawn thread and all sorts of white embroideries; and the Queen and the Dauphin set a fashion for these as well as for porcelain wares from Saxony.

The rococo style, which had its vogue in the reign of Louis XV., was based upon the employment of forms like conch and other shells nestling amongst frizzy mosses and imaginary rocks, joined together by ornaments of fantastic shape, but of absolutely false construction. Under Louis XVI. a tentative reaction towards classic ornament was manifested. Greek friezes and wreathings, daintily drawn by Salembier and other able designers of the eighteenth century, encouraged the adoption of a purer style in treating floral decoration. Tulips, carnations, and roses, tied with coloured ribands of tender tones, surrounded medallions edged with bead ornaments, from which depended garlands mixed with groups, or trophies of sylvan and mythological attributes. Such devices embroidered on satin produced refined and elegant

* Bezon, *Dictionnaire des Tissus*, vol. iv., p. 253.

effects, especially when used in conjunction with baskets garnished with ribands, *motifs*, which find frequent imitations at the present day.

The Revolution closed this volatile century, and gave melancholy employment to embroiderers in setting them to pull to pieces the finest and most beautiful work of antecedent times. It is not without a sense of sorrow that one reads of forty or fifty needlewomen, at Angers, in Vendemaire, of the year 3, being engaged to carefully unpick and spoil the various pieces of a set of embroideries, such as the valances of a bed or of a canopy, in order, as it was asserted, to make the restoration of them by persons attached to the old *régime* all the more difficult. These workwomen were compelled to unstitch braids and all articles in which gold and silver thread had been used, which were then sent to the smelting pots for the benefit of the nation. Circumstances of this description caused the destruction of the fine specimens known since the time of René d'Anjou as the great embroidery of Messire Saint-Maurice. The art of the needle thereby suffered an irreparable loss, the reality of which gains in vividness if one recalls the facts that certain velvet copes, bereft of their golden figures, orphreys, and laces, were even then purchased at prices from 695 to 800 livres (about £27 to £32), the bids for those disposed of at a single sale alone amounting to 24,350 livres (or £1,217).

When the tumult and horrors of the Revolution, so inimical to the gentle pursuits of embroideresses, had subsided, bees, in lieu of *fleurs de lys*, were abundantly embroidered; but as wars virtually absorbed the

attention and energies of the nation during the Empire, embroidery received scanty recognition and encouragement. Comparatively few of such handsome costumes and uniforms as are painted by Gérard in his portraits of Napoleon, Joséphine, and Marie-Louise were to be seen in the saloons of the imperial court (fig. 73).

At the coronation of Charles X. the robes of state were profusely worked with gold, as the big picture of the ceremony, now at Versailles, shows us; but on

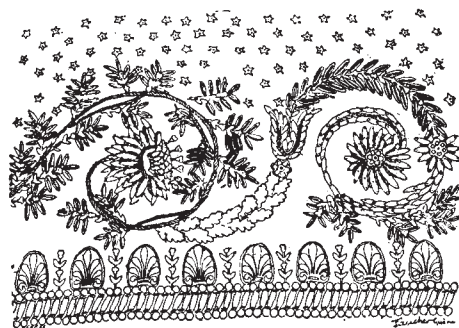


Fig. 73.—Silver spangle embroidery for a coat, Empire period
(in the Museum of Decorative Arts).

passing into a few rooms further on, similar pictures of the splendid functions, under Louis XIV., will be found significantly emphasizing the decadence which, meanwhile, had ensued and culminated in later phases of poor artistic needlework.

Within the last fifty years works of embroidery have been very widely diffused, and their use adopted amongst all classes of society, as well as in countries which follow European fashions. Development of commercial relations has singularly favoured the life of the industry,

though much more so as regards quantity than beauty of production.

It may be safely stated that embroidered ornaments have been, and are still, very considerably applied to costume, house decoration, and furniture.

The East has of late years sent us, by numerous and easy modes of transit, marvels of old-time and traditional art, with which Europe has been but little acquainted.

Not only have we been supplied with lovely Persian and Turkish carpets, but from the valley of Cashmere we have received stores of shawls, some wonderfully woven, others embroidered with the characteristic and exquisitely soft wool (or pushmena) that eclipses any analogous material. India has sent us muslins finely worked with gold thread palmates and stitched over with iridescent beetle's wings. Théophile Gautier, in a passage full of colour, thus conveys the impression he received from Oriental embroideries :—

“It might almost be said that Indian embroidery seeks to engage in a contest with the sun, to have a duel to the death with the blinding light and glowing sky; it attempts to shine as brilliantly beneath this fiery deluge; it realizes the wonders of fairy tales; it produces dresses in colours of the weather, of the sun, of the moon; metals, flowers, precious stones, lustres, beams of light, and flashes are mixed upon its incandescent palette. Over a silvery net it makes wings of beetles to vibrate like fluttering golden emeralds. With the scales of beetles' bodies it gives birth to impossible foliage mixed with flowers of diamonds. It avails itself of the shimmer of tawny silk, of the opalescent hues of

mother-of-pearl, of the splendid gold blue blendings of the peacock's plumage. It disdains nothing, not even tinsel, provided it flashes brightly ; not even crystal, so long as it irradiates light. At all costs its duty is to



Fig. 74.—Slavonic peasant's cap embroidered in gold, eighteenth century (in Monsieur G. Bapst's collection).

shine, sparkle, and glitter, to send forth prismatic rays ; it must be blazing, blinding, and phosphorescent ; and so the sun acknowledges its defeat."*

* Théophile Gautier's *l'Orient à l'Exposition*, quoted by Didron in his *Report upon the Decorative Arts*, 1878.

What more could this glowing writer have said had he even seen the astounding splendours of the specimen presented some forty years ago to Mahomet's tomb by Kinderao, Rajah of Baroda? It was a *chadar* or veil composed entirely of inwrought pearls and precious stones, disposed in an arabesque pattern, and said to have cost a crore of rupees (a million pounds). Although the richest stones were worked into it the effect was most harmonious. When spread out in the sun it seemed suffused with a general iridescent pearly bloom, as grateful to the eyes as were the exquisite forms of its arabesques.*

China and Japan have flooded the markets of Europe with their silks, vivaciously embroidered with sympathetically designed natural objects. By the side of Chinese robes, ornamented with the imperial dragon, so *chatoyant* in tint, with its green-toned golds, one equally admires Japanese *foukouses*, "those squares of stuff, more or less worked over, which are used by the Japanese as covers to their ceremonial gifts; the plumage of birds is above all rendered upon them with exquisite feeling, the tones and surface effects of silk being subtly employed in securing surprising effects of colours" (fig. 75).

Georgians and Greeks work charming meanders upon cloth in gold threads or cords, picked out sometimes with small discs or little coins.

To the East again we must turn for the best embroideries produced during the first half of our century. Excepting some few good imitations of ancient work, there is little to engage our attention in the masses of

* *The Industrial Arts of India*, by Sir George Birdwood, vol. ii., p. 118.

European embroidery produced at that time. France, Switzerland, Saxony, and the United Kingdom have



Fig. 75.—Embroidered Japanese fukuse or cover (in the Montefiore collection).

employed native talent in the art, but with alternations of success and discouragement.* All sorts of needlework

* Felix Aubry *Report on the London Exhibition of 1851.*

have been successively attempted, especially such as are easy of execution. Fashion has capriciously inclined to one or other of them, evoking, during the periods of its heat, enormous quantities of hurried work, often designed with spirit, but almost always deficient in that quality of persevering care and conviction, the impress of which is always seen in a work of real art. Quick work and cheap labour especially, heedlessness of the particular use to which an embroidery is to be put, attempt to make it do equally well for a church, for a bit of furniture, or a dress, are elements which invariably militate against style in workmanship.

The machine invented by the Alsatian Hellmann has in latter years supplied what is wanted for the superficial requirements of present days. By ingenious mechanism a hundred double-pointed needles, threaded in the middle, are made to pass backwards and forwards through a vertically stretched textile. Little carriages fitted with nippers seize the needles as they emerge through the stuff, thus playing the part of hands to pull through and return the needles, almost in the same way as the manipulation described in chap. i., p. 6. The bars on which the stuff is fixed in the machine are brought into relation with a pantograph and are adjusted accordingly for each stitch, so that the stuff can be shifted in any direction, as the requirements of the design render necessary. This machine is very cleverly devised, and produces results that satisfy a demand for effective and low-priced goods.

But, confronted with such a formidable rival, is the art of embroidery to be lost to such supple and submissive fingers as those which in bygone times realized with

devotion and toil the lovely needleworks we have endeavoured to describe in the foregoing pages? Are mechanical processes ceaselessly pouring forth abundant quantities of things to supplant artistic handicrafts? Well-cared-for handworks have, however, always been, and presumably always will be, wanted where mere hasty selection of patterns is not the only exercise of artistic taste. Concurrently with the extraordinary development of mechanical processes, there is a widespread movement in favour of closer study of artistic works of past periods. Artists furnish their studios with ancient stuffs, and tapestries and embroideries of great age are rescued from beneath the accumulations of dust where, since the last century, public apathy left them. Thus the exercise of the art of embroidery, and an appreciation of its possibilities, are stimulated, and new and delightful phases of the art manifest themselves.

Many persons have acquired portions of those picturesque costumes formerly beloved in their respective provinces, but now fast disappearing before the relentless current of modern customs. Breton waistcoats, Norman caps, Alsatian coifs glistening with gold, have been sought for and obtained in France and abroad by intelligent collectors, who prize them for their excellence as objects of study and as remains of local art stamped with originality and character (figs. 47 and 80).

Under a cultivated guidance skilful embroiderers have zealously reproduced well-chosen, genuine, and typical specimens of old-time embroidery (fig. 76). Encouraged by success in this direction, and emulating methods in vogue during the best epochs of em-

broidery, all who have seriously engaged their talents in producing ornamental broideries for furniture or costume, have at length ventured into the confines of the higher branches of the art.

Chasuble-makers now produce ecclesiastical ornaments worthy to be used in our cathedrals side by side with the scarce relics preserved from the despoiling

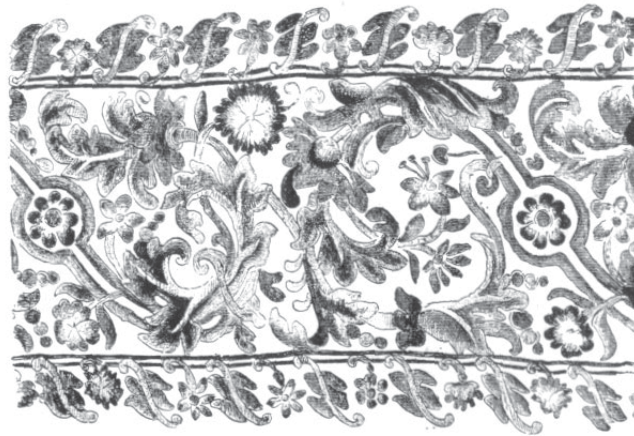


Fig. 76.—Reproduction of a sixteenth century embroidery in gold and coloured silks, by M. Henry.

touch of revolutions. The mitre, figured with the Crucifixion (fig. 78), wrought in feather stitch with coloured silks upon a tissue of gold and enriched with pearls, and the peacock-blue rep cover, set with crystal bosses, for the Papal Bull of the Immaculate Conception (fig. 79), are works which reflect honour upon our time.

Tapestry-weavers and upholsterers make coverings

and embroideries for furniture incomparably superior in design and suitability to those twenty years ago.*

But more marked improvements are seen in fancy work. Instead of the conventional square of canvas covered with a cross-stitch parrot or a horrible



Fig. 77.—Small screen of modern embroidery, by M. Henry.

little dog, work of charming design and good workmanship is produced. Every assiduous woman now embroiders in satin stitch, feather stitch, check or chess-board stitch, and *point de Hongrie* (Hungary stitch); whilst those having greater skill do *petit point* (small

* We would call attention to the very remarkable modern embroideries with the verses of the *Credo*, made for the stalls of the Cologne Cathedral.

cross and tent stitch), various sorts of couching, and shading stiches; they lay and stitch down tracteries of gold thread about panels and medallions, as was

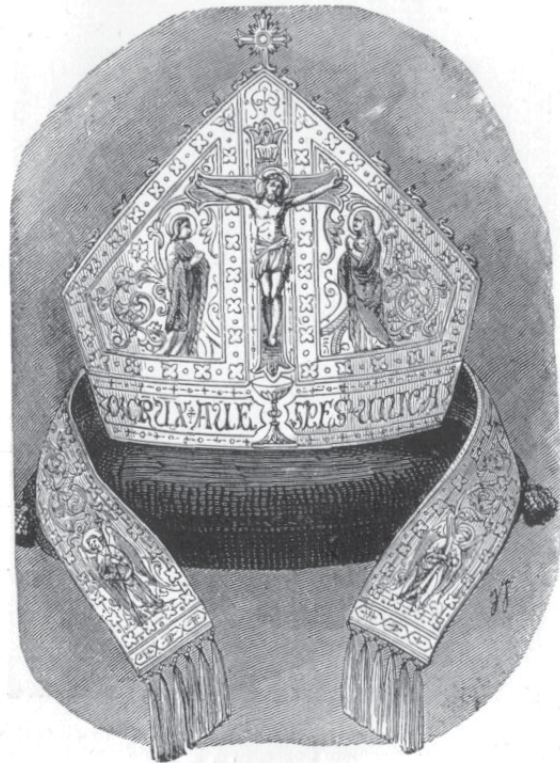


Fig. 78.—Mitre figured with the Crucifixion, embroidered by Biats.

done in the sixteenth century, or represent playfully twining ribands as in the eighteenth century.

Thus it comes to pass that, in the presence of records of

knowledge and of specimens brought together by modern eclecticism, in a way that no other age has attempted, and composed of ingatherings from the East and the West, from primitive and polished civilizations, arranged



Fig. 79.—Embroidered cover made for the Papal Bull of the Immaculate Conception, by Biaisi.

in museums, and representative of all ages and peoples, the embroiderer of the present day finds himself plentifully provided with exceptional means for taking a great step forward in the progress of his art.

Called upon to take part in such an advance, we have written these pages, convinced that they coincide with the dawn of a great epoch in the art of the needle. A fixed intention of reviving the noble, but too long forgotten traditions of embroidery, manifests itself every day in France, England, Germany, Hungary, Italy—in

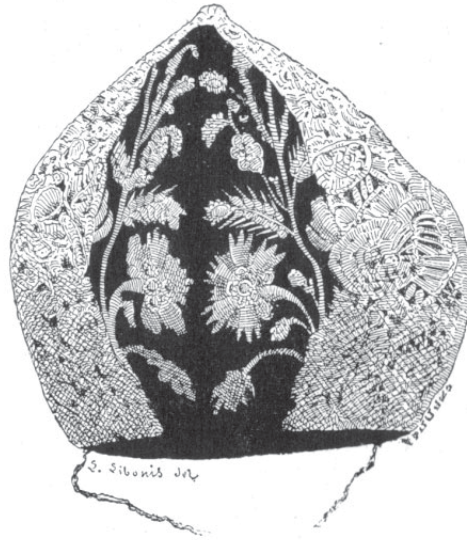


Fig. 80.—Alsatian peasant's cap embroidered in gold on black velvet (in Monsieur G. Bapst's collection).

fact, everywhere. A justification of our hopes is therefore clearly found in the general movement alluded to.

We feel certain that many women, especially the better educated, will become more and more conversant with the artistic delights derivable from the use of their needles. That they will grow to love the "needle's

excellency," and find this incomparable little instrument always willing to translate with variety of stitches, designs, or paintings which shall ornament a textile and give it desirable attributes. But there must be no scamped or superficial work; the machine can always beat that. On the contrary, let us strive to perfect methods of the handicraft; and in such a manner that the artist, having made his sketch on paper, shall not disdain to transfer his design to the stuff on which it is to be wrought, to consider the colours to be used in it, the reliefs, details, spangles, beads, gold threads, or whatever appears to him to be necessary for it; nor to delegate the transfer of his design to some prentice hand which shall, as has too often been the case, contort the shapes and curves of his composition. As a matter of the highest importance, utmost care in drawing patterns and selecting materials should be thoroughly inculcated at all schools of artistic needlework. Under such guarded circumstances the success of the embroideress is better assured.

We have endeavoured to bring before our readers salient features of the history of Embroidery. And our aim is attained, firstly, if we have successfully demonstrated that no superior process for the decoration of textiles exists; and, secondly, if we have been able to do justice to those humble workwomen too frequently neglected and left to starve by a public, which haggles over the acquisition of the earlier marvels of the needleworker's art, and yet, when modern work is in question, gives preference to the showy but altogether less artistic embroideries produced by machinery.

PART II.—LACES.

NEEDLEPOINT LACE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY—TRANSITION FROM EMBROIDERY TO NEEDLEPOINT LACE-MAKING.

THERE are two classes of laces: those made with a needle, and those made with bobbins on a pillow. We shall consider needlepoint laces first, since their analogy with embroideries, whence they are derived, entitles them to the precedence given them in this book.

Lace, whether of needlepoint or pillow make, is a textile fabric with open-work grounds; and both the ornament and the ground are entirely produced by the lace-maker. Needlepoint lace is made by first stitching thread along the outlines of a pattern drawn on paper or parchment, by which means a skeleton thread pattern is produced. This skeleton threadwork serves as the scaffolding, as one might call it, upon and between which the stitches, for the shapes and ground between them, are cast and so wrought into needlepoint lace.

With these few words of definition, let us now enter upon the history of this industry.

Origin.—All authors on the subject have attempted

to show when the making of lace was commenced. Some, dealing in a summary way with this question, have stated that the origin of the work is lost in the mists of early time; but that, according to certain expressions found in Greek and Latin writings, lace-making may be supposed to have been practised in the classic periods of industry.

But successive and more precise researches made by the principal of modern writers—Felix Aubry, Mrs. F. Bury-Palliser, Alan S. Cole, and J. Seguin—leave little room for doubting that there is no documentary or reliable evidence to prove the existence of lace before the fifteenth century.

In the East, the cradle of our industries, light tissues, such as gauzes, and muslins, and nets (see fig. 81), were undoubtedly made at very early times, and were used as veils and scarfs, etc., after the manner of subsequent laces; and women enriched them with some sort of embroidery (fig. 82), or varied the openness of them by here and there drawing out threads.

With a view to variety and ornament early makers of fringes plaited and knotted the threads of them; and it is also probable that they may have tied them together or worked stitches upon them, since such work might plausibly answer to the description of ancient trimmings for the *scutulata vestis*, a sort of Roman toga, of which the borders, according to Dupont-Auberville, were of open reticulated weaving.*

But, whatever may be said, we do not, in these, recognize lace, the production of which involves much

* See *L'Ornement des Tissus*, by Dupont-Auberville and Victor Gay.

more refined and artistic methods, and postulates a combination of skill and varied execution carried to a higher degree of perfection.

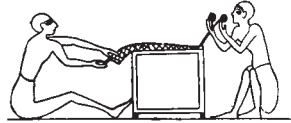


Fig. 81.—Egyptians making net (from Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*).

The monk Reginald, who took part in opening the tomb of St. Cuthbert at the cathedral of Durham in the twelfth century, writes that the Saint's shroud had



Fig. 82.—A network embellished with glass beads (Egyptian Museum of the Louvre).

a fringe of linen threads an inch long; surmounted by a border "worked upon the threads" with representations of birds and pairs of beasts, there being between each such pair a branching tree. This tree was a survival of the sacred Oriental "hom" tree, previously mentioned. But from this description of the work no one can decisively say that it was a species of open stitched embroidery;* and not before the end of the fifteenth century do we find indications of such open embroidery becoming the staple production of a specialized industry.

We explained in the history of embroidery how luxury in the use of fine textiles was developed after the Crusades, when princes and kings stimulated the manufacture of silken stuffs. Velvets and silks came

* The contemporary MS. by Reginald the Monk speaks of this border to the winding-sheet as being "inwoven," and seems to suggest that the weaving produced equally good effects on the back and front of the material; not, therefore, that the fabric was consequently in the nature of an open-work or ornamented net.

to be the habitual materials for the costumes of lords



Fig. 83.—Cutwork (*point coupe*) sixteenth century
(*Musée des Arts décoratifs*).

and their ladies. Linens in Brittany, those too of

Alençon and Lille, and more especially of Holland, were made in finer qualities; and luxury in using them succeeded to that of employing other costly and heavier fabrics.

Embroideries with open grounds. — Embroidered linen consequently came into vogue. White embroidery on linen has a frigid and monotonous aspect: that with coloured threads is more vivacious in effect, but by frequent washings the colour gets fainter and fainter until it almost disappears. But white embroidery, relieved by open spaces in, or shapes cut from, the linen ground, is possessed of an altogether new charm; and from a sense of this the birth may be traced of an art in the results of which happy contrasts are effected between ornamental details of close texture and others of open work.



Fig. 84.—Linen band ornamented with embroideries in white thread and parts of cutwork, sixteenth century (Bonnaffé collection).

Of this character is cutwork embroidery, or cutting out certain selected spaces from between the devices

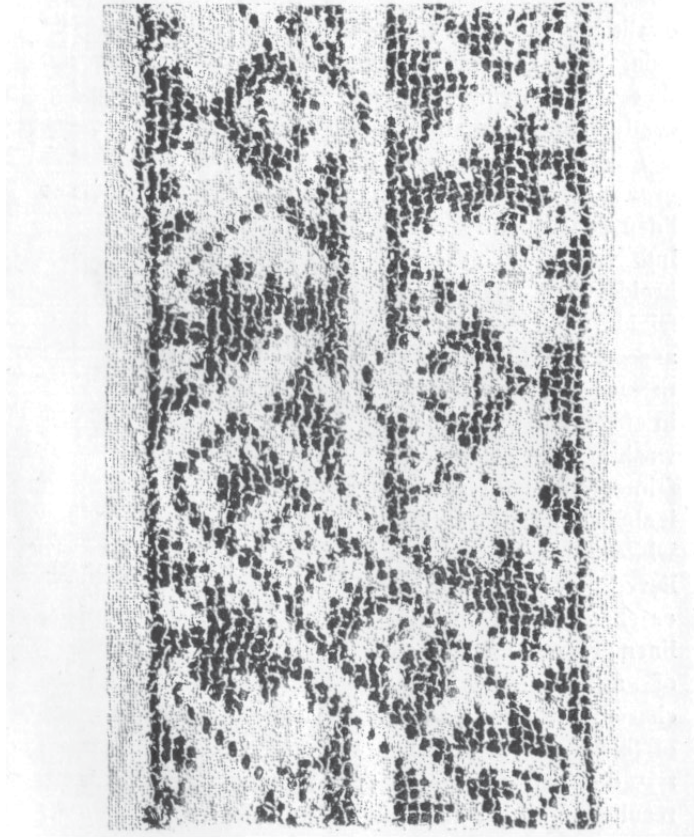


Fig 85.—Embroidery of drawn threadwork (*Musee des Arts décoratifs*, from a design published in 1588).

embroidered on the linen. Such cut spaces filled in with open devices (*à jours*) were at first sparingly adopted

(fig. 84); but by degrees, as the pleasant effects ensuing from the use of them were appreciated, they were more extensively employed (figs. 83 and 88). Sometimes the flower or other ornament would be worked on the linen and edged with stitching of the button-hole class, and adjoining it corresponding devices would be wrought with the needle in the middle of empty spaces cut out of the linen (see fig. 84). Thus cutwork as a title is applicable to specimens of varied ornamental effect; and although the principle of the process remains the same in all, it is distinctively a class of embroidery upon a material and comes within the definition given in chap. i., p. 9, of this book.

Drawn thread embroidery was another cognate work. For this certain threads would be drawn out from the linen ground, and others left, upon and between which needlework was made. With Turkish women this class of embroidery seems to have been a very favourite pastime, and is still much affected in harems at Constantinople; its employment in the East dates from very early times* (figs. 85 and 86).

Contemporary with these drawn threadworks were embroideries of similar effect, in which the skill in

* Withdrawing threads from a fabric is perhaps referred to in the following quotation from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, book x., ver. 142:—

*“ Candida Sidonio perlucet pectora filo,
Quod Nilotis acies compressum pectine Serum,
Solvit, et extenso laxavit stamina velo.”*

“Her white breasts shine through the Sidonian fabric, which pressed down with the comb (or sley) of the Seres, the needle of the Nile workman has separated, and has loosened the warp by stretching out (or withdrawing) the weft,” p. 5, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Collections of Tapestry and Embroidery in the South Kensington Museum.*

needlework was almost entirely devoted to working over the threads left to form the interstices or open reticulations about the pattern; or else to taking stitches so as to convey the impression of a reticulated ground about the pattern which was left on the linen (fig. 87).

From the first of the two just-mentioned methods sprang the idea that instead of laboriously withdrawing threads from stout linen it would be more convenient to introduce a needle-made pattern into



Fig. 86.—Design for a drawn threadwork (belonging to Madame Franck).

an open reticulated ground, a "quintain," as it was termed, after the name of a little town in Brittany, a district famous in the Middle Ages for its linens. The reticulations or meshes of these "quintains" were made more and more open, so that at length many of these

special fabrics were nothing more than nets. Such nets go by the name of "*lacis*" in France. "*Lacis*," according to the *Dictionnaire Antique de Furretière*, published in 1684, "is a sort of thread or silk formed into a tissue of net or *réseuil*, the threads of which were knotted or interlaced the one into the other."

Embroidery was done upon the *lacis* by darning or running threads into a certain number of meshes; the monotony of the open meshes forming the ground about



Fig. 87.—Short-stitch embroidery on linen, the ornament being left in the linen, in the character of patterns usually done in drawn thread-work, sixteenth century (*Musée des Arts décoratifs*).

the pattern, would sometimes be broken by working

into them little delicate devices such as stars or crossed diagonals, or making little loops or picots upon their threads. This darning work was easy of execution ;

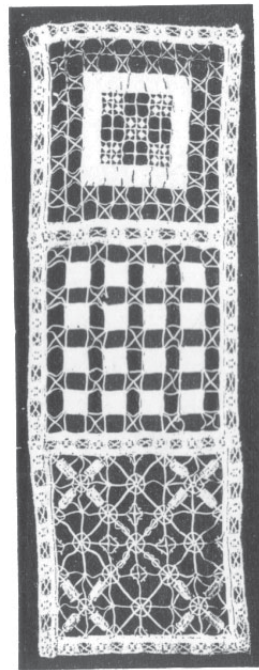


Fig. 88.—Sampler with squares of cutwork (*Musée des Arts décoratifs*).

and, the stitches being regulated by counting the meshes, effective geometric shapes could be produced ; less skilful embroiderers excelled in this more than in the 'drawn threadwork. Small squares of *lacis* could be worked separately, and this characteristic of the process found much favour with women, who applied themselves to making all sorts of textile ornaments for religious and secular use. Altar cloths and baptismal napkins, as well as bed coverlets and tablecloths, were decorated with these squares of net embroidery, inserted most often into larger squares of plain linen, which again might be picked out here and there with little cut points.*

Many specimens of such embroideries are extant.

A linen cap, ornamented with cutwork and very finely wrought white thread embroidery, in which

* This combination of open embroideries was called "*Punto reale*" or Royal point, by some of the Italian designers (see *Pattern Book*, by Parasole, 1616).

appear eagles, is in the Cluny Museum, and is said to have belonged to Charles V.

In linen bands embroidered like that in fig. 84, personages are sometimes figured in the open cut out spaces.

An alb, said to be the work of Anne of Bohemia (1527), is preserved in the cathedral at Prague, and is of linen drawn-threadwork.

Punto a redxelo, embroidery upon open reticulated ground, is mentioned in the deed, dated 1493, apportioning various articles between the sisters Angelo and Ippolita Sforza-Visconti of Milan, a document to which we shall have occasion to make several references.

Catherine de Médicis had a bed draped with squares of *réseuil* or *lacis*, and it is recorded that "the girls and servants of her household consumed much time in making squares of *réseuil*." What she possessed in the way of squares of embroidered net is incredible; the inventory of her property and goods includes a coffer containing three hundred and eighty-one of such squares, unmounted, whilst in another were found five hundred and thirty-eight squares, some worked with rosettes or with blossoms, and others with nosegays.*

At a very slightly later date, lengths of insertions made of darned or run net (*lacis*) were used, and of such there are good specimens in the *Musée des Arts décoratifs* (fig. 89).

Part of a handsome curtain border of darned net, with numerous personages, amongst whom is a hunter, is shown in fig. 91.

At the opening of the sixteenth century we have

* *Inventory of Catherine de Médicis*, by Bonnaffé.



Fig. 89.—Band of stout threads darned into network (*laci's*), sixteenth century (*Musée des Arts décoratifs*).

white thread embroideries on linen, cut points, and drawn threadwork, followed by needlework upon quintain or open canvas, and lastly by darning or running upon net or *lacis*.

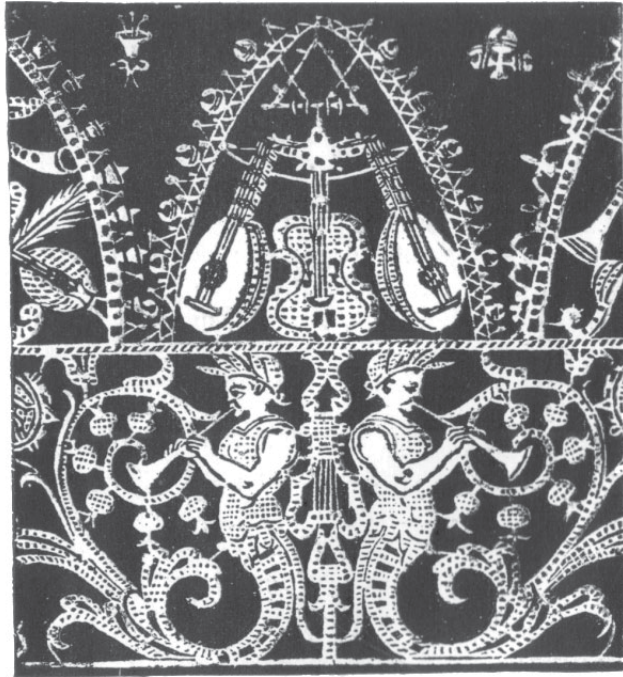


Fig. 90.—Italian design taken from Cesare Vecellio's *Corona delle virtuose donne*.

Pattern books.—Now, during the early development of these open ground embroideries, some difficulty was experienced in procuring patterns for them. Such as could be drawn by pen upon parchment, or made into

needlework samplers on bits of linen, were passed from hand to hand. This was soon found to be tedious and

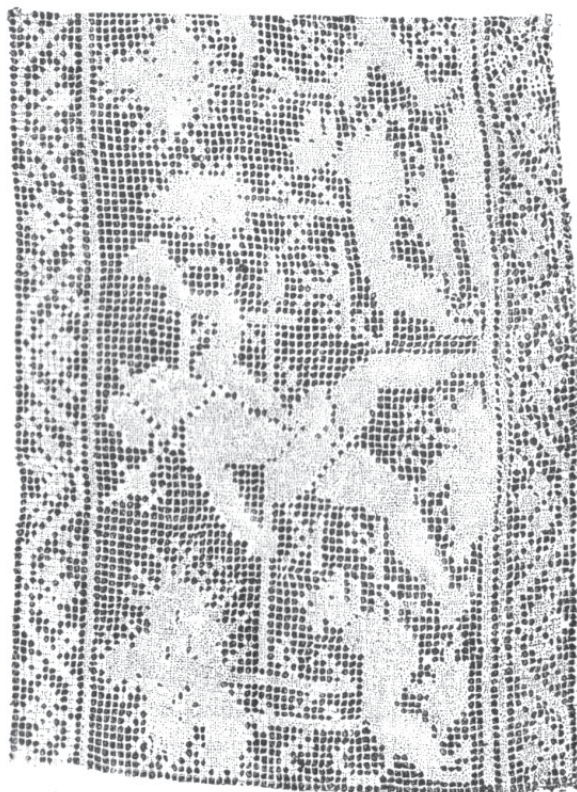


Fig. 91.—Curtain border of darned net (*laci*), French work of the sixteenth century.

insufficient to satisfy a demand, the sources of which multiplied with rapidity.

The assistance which embroiderers derived from

the art of engraving and various modes of printing has already been alluded to. Printers of books became numerous, first in the Rhenish countries, and subsequently in France, Italy, and elsewhere.

The plan, of reproducing and publishing gleanings of different and well-contrived patterns for embroidery with open grounds, seems to have been first taken advantage of by Pierre Quinty of Cologne.

In 1527 he published his "New and Subtle Book concerning the Art and Science of Embroidery, Fringes, Tapestry-making, as well as of other Crafts done with the Needle." This work passed through many editions.* The first is in French, but succeeding ones are in German, signed Quintell instead of Quinty, and contain a portrait of Charles V. All the designs are for embroidery and not for lace. This is also the case with an identical reprint of patterns issued by Vostermans, published at Antwerp, with English letterpress.

The successive issues of new pattern books made by French, Italian, and other publishers supply one with a means of tracing the stages in the transition from white thread embroidery to needlepoint lace. With those for squares and bands of *lacis*, patterns for indented or vandyke borders or edgings, involving new departures in execution, gradually appear. And we now meet with a style of needlework which differs from embroidery in not being wrought upon a stuff foundation. As the

* For further details as to pattern books, see the appendix to Mrs. Bury-Palliser's *History of Lace*, and articles by Girolamo d'Adda in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1863-64, and those by Duplessis in the *Revue des Arts décoratifs*, 1887.

dentations and vandykes become more and more elaborated with open devices, so the needlework for them assumes the phase of embroidery, without apparent foundation whatever, done as it were "in the air." We thus find ourselves confronted with the newly evolved lace, which in a few years and by rapid strides specializes itself in an immense variety of patterns and subtleties of stitchery.

A new fashion arose amongst men and women in Italy for decking their necks with fluted or pleated collars called ruffs. The connections formed by the Médicis with families of the French court introduced this Italian fashion, which soon spread over Europe. But it was hardly one of common sense and convenience, for the most fashionable ruffs were made of grotesque sizes. Contemporary writers, referring to them, speak of them as "gadroned like organ pipes, contorted or crinkled like cabbages, and as big as the sails of a windmill."

Poets satirized these absurd collars in passages similar to the following, taken from the *Vertus et propriétés des Mignons* in 1576:—

"Le col ne se tourne à leur aise
Dans le long reply de leur fraise."*

* "The most curious wives," says Stowe, "now made themselves ruffs of cambric, and sent them to Madame Dinghan to be starched, who charged high prices. After a time they made themselves ruffs of lawn, and thereupon arose a general scoff or byword that shortly they would make their ruffs of spiders' webs." Stowe in another passage writes, "Both men and women wore them intolerably large, being a quarter of a yard deep, and twelve lengths in a ruff." In London this fashion was termed the "French ruff"; in France, on the other hand, it was the "English monster."—MRS. BURY-PALLISER'S *History of Lace*.

But what chiefly interests us in the matter is that a fashion had been created which stimulated the use of a large quantity of laces, as trimming borders for ruffs and their companion cuffs or sleeves.

During this period ladies' dresses and nobles' doublets were enriched with lace insertions, interlacing designs for which are to be seen in the majority of the pattern books we are now about to examine.

Those by Antonio Tagliente (1528) and Nicolo d'Aristotile (1530) are the earliest published in Venice. They are interesting, not solely on account of their patterns, but also because the introductory text to them gives us insight into the different methods of needlework, stitches, etc., then used in Italy. Tagliente entitles his first book, "Samples for Embroidery" (*Esempio di Ricami*). He states that his patterns may be wrought in thread and in silk, "*sete di varii colori*," also "*con argento i oro tirato*," with silver and gold wire or thread. He enumerates amongst the stitches in which his patterns may be worked, "*disfilato*," drawn threads; "*fatto sur la rete*," work on net-ground, "*a magliete*," of small meshes; "*punto damaschino*," damask stitch; "*rilevato*," raised work; "*filo supra punto*," darning; "*croceato*," cross stitch; "*punto tagliato*," cut point; and, lastly, "*punto in aere*," point in the air, a term, as we shall see, which was henceforward descriptive of needlepoint lace in Italy. Notwithstanding that he named his book "Samples for Embroidery," Tagliente seemed to be acquainted with the specialty known as *punto in aere*, as patterns for its earlier productions are included by name at least in his work.

He further is careful to specify the purposes to which

the different embroideries may be put ; for men's and women's collars, for "*camisiole con pettorali*," shirts or chemises with embroidered fronts, for "*frisi di contorni di letti*," bed vallances ; and for "*entemelle di cuscini*," insertions on pillowcases.

Here, then, we have instances of ornamental needlework, the immediate ancestor of needlepoint lace, in its application to costume and articles of furniture.

Nicolo d'Aristotile inscribes his book to ladies and young girls, *fanciulle*, who will learn from it how to "*lavorare, cusire, ricamare i far tutte quelle gentilleze que una dona virtuosa podra far con l'aco in mano*," to work, sew, embroider, and do all the fancy work that a virtuous woman can with a needle in her hand.

To this end his compilation consists of old and new patterns, and its title is *Gli Universali dei Belle Ricami Antichi e Moderni* ("The Universality of Fine Ancient and Modern Embroideries").

The foregoing suggests that, prior to the books just noticed, others had been produced, or, at least, that there were early drawings of patterns which publishers utilized and developed. Tagliente writes that he himself designed "*con studio continuo et vigilante cura*," with continuous study and vigilant care, a large part of his book, the remainder of which is made up of "*varii disegni di maestri copiuti*," different designs copied from the masters.

The existence of drawn patterns and worked samplers is attested by various documents, etc.

The inventory of Edward VI., King of England (1552), contains the entry of a parchment book with a variety of patterns :—

Item: (Sampler) or set of patterns worked on Normandy canvas, with green and black silks. These may possibly have been used by the king's sisters.

In the preface of the first of his books, known to us, Vavassore writes, "*Havedo io pel passato fatto alcuni libri di esempli*," having myself produced some time ago a few books of patterns.

This Giovanni Antonio Vavassore, reputed to have been a pupil of Mantegna, and known amongst engravers under the name of Zoan Andrea, pilfered in the most shameless manner from the works of other publishers, and was accordingly dubbed Guadagnino, the Rapacious. His first work, *l'Esemplario di Lavori* (1530), reproduces designs of German embroideries with double-headed eagles and other *motifs* of anything but an Italian character. During the course of twenty-five years he issued innumerable impressions and editions of his patterns, heading the series with the pompous titles so much affected by the Italian pattern-book publishers; at one time it is *Fontana de gli Esempli* ("The Fountain of Patterns"), 1546; *La Fior de gli Esempli* ("The Flower of Patterns"); *La Corona di Ricami* ("The Crown of Embroideries"), 1550. He takes credit to himself that the authors of other similar books have not known, as he has, how to count stitches, "*numerar li punti*," and that, consequently, the ladies have been left without guide as to the way in which the patterns were to be worked, "*le donne noli possino meter in opera*."

But Venice was not the only publishing centre for open stitched patterns. Francisque Pelegrin, styled "*noble home de Florence*," printed his "*Fleur de Science*

de Pourtraicture et Patrons de Broderie Façon Arabique et Ytalique," in France, securing the sanction of the king, Francis I., thereto, on the "17th day of June, in the year 1530, and sixteenth of our reign."

Thus the name of Francis I. is connected with this work of Francisque Pelegrin, as Charles V.'s is with that of Quintell, an instance of the simultaneous encouragement bestowed by two rival courts upon needlework and pattern books to propagate its practice.

It is, moreover, interesting from the point of view of style in pattern to note the two currents of supply for pattern publishers, the one coming from the North and the other from Italy.

Embroideries upon open grounds, done by counted stitches, are almost entirely of a German character. Their patterns are principally composed of eagles, and heraldic emblems, oak leaves, acorns, holly and thistles, all of which belong to Northern vegetation; and, lastly, of hunting scenes, designed with a remarkable air of truth.

The *motifs* in Italian needleworks which were largely of cut points, and *punti in aere*, points in the air, consist on the other hand, of oleander blossoms, and elegant wreaths and scrolls, conventional foliage of the acanthus type, figures of people real or imaginary, standing under arcades or separated by columns, vases, and fountains; and very often musical instruments are introduced (fig. 90). Besides these, *paesi con historie antiche*, landscapes with mythological scenes play an important part; saints are at times alternated with Olympian gods; and hunting episodes, less realistic than the Northern ones, are pictured with fauns, and nymphs

or *amorini* shooting arrows. In French and German patterns lifelike huntsmen wind their hunting horns, and chase boars (fig. 91).

That the publishers were not the designers of the patterns may be inferred from the fact that in a set of collected designs, Italian, French, Flemish, English, and even those of the *façon arabique* (Saracenic style), were heterogeneously mixed together.

In 1543, fifteen years after the books by Tagliente and d'Aristotile had been issued, Rob. Mathio Pagan published at Venice his *Giardinetto novi di punti tagliati i gropposi*, or "New Garden of cut and knotted Points." These are for cut linen embroideries, or embroideries upon open linen, or net, but with more relief imparted to them than earlier ones. This relief was obtained by knotted stitches "*gropposi*." The *motifs* of the patterns are "*à fogliami*," of foliage as well as "*in storia*" of episodes. A little later, in his edition of 1558, entitled *La Gloria di Punti* ("The Glory of Stitches"), he adds *li punti in aere*, points in the air, of which he had not spoken previously. His book in its two editions thus displays the transition from embroidery with open stitches to needlepoint lace with raised work.

A certain number of these pattern books bear no authors' names, and some are undated; these are therefore only classifiable by analogy with those of which the authors and dates are known. One of the most interesting of them is *Le Pompe*, dated 1558, author unknown. Many were produced by friars or monks, as, for instance, the *Triumpho di Lavori a Fogliami* ("The Triumph of Foliated Work"), by Fra Hieronimo of Padua, in 1555, and that by Antoine Belin, recluse of St. Martial

at Lyons, who co-operated with Jehan Mayol, Carmelite monk at Lyons. The publisher of the last-named book was Pierre de St. Lucie dit Le Prince. On the title-page is a cut of women instructing children in needlework. Monks probably designed such books for purposes of instruction ; for use as class-books, in fact.

The same sort of remark applies to a large number of patterns brought together and published under the direction of women, the designs of which have great individuality. Dame Isabetta-Catanea Parasole brought out a book in 1594, at Venice, an issue of which she repeated the next year at Rome, entitled *Specchio delle Virtuose Donne* ("The Mirror of Virtuous Women"). The drawing of the patterns proclaims the practised hand of a workwoman thoroughly conversant with the *punti in aria*, needlepoint laces, and the *punti a piombini*, bobbin laces.

Another woman (Lucrezia Romana) to some extent influenced Venetian wood engravers. Mathio Pagan dedicated his *Giardinetto di Punti* ("Garden of the Stitches") to her ; and on one of the pages of Giovanni Ostans' pattern book (fig. 92) is a woodcut, in which she is represented surrounded by a group of women, whose work she is directing.

In 1584 Dominique de Sera, an Italian, follows the example of Francisque Pellegrin, by publishing a set of patterns at Paris, called *Livre de Lingerie*, for instruction in the noble and gentle art of the needle (*de l'esguille*) according to the methods he saw "in Italy, Spain, Roumania, Germany, and other countries." But, fearing that this may be insufficient attraction for French patrons, he adds "several patterns designed by Jean

Cousin, painter at Paris," youthful works of one who subsequently ranked amongst the most illustrious of French artists.

Queen Catherine de Médicis, wife of Henry II., and mother of Charles IX., induced one Federic Vinciolo to come from Italy and make ruffs and gadrooned collars, the fashion of which she started in France. According to Brantôme she gave him the sole right, for many years, of selling such articles.

This encouraged the said Vinciolo to collect a number of patterns specially suitable for the trimmings of these ruffs. Under the patronage of Louise de Lorraine, wife of Henry III., who succeeded Charles IX., Vinciolo published the



completest known series of patterns. Its first part is dated 1587; the title is as follows:—

"The singular and new designs (*pourtraicts*) and work for linen (*lingerie*) for use as patterns for all sorts of stitches, cutwork, *lacis*, and others. Dedicated to the Queen. Newly invented, to the profit and content

Fig. 92.—Design from pattern book by Giovanni Ostans.

of noble ladies and young ladies, and other gentle spirits, *amateurs* of such art. By the Seigneur Federic de Vinciolo, Venetian. In Paris at Jean Le Clerc the younger, Rue Chartière, St. Denis, 1587. With the sanction of the King." On the last page of the work is: "Sanction granted for nine years to Jean Le Clerc the younger, dealer in storybooks at Paris, signed the 27th June, 1587. From the printing press of David Le Clerc, Rue Frementel, at the sign of the Golden star: in 4to."

For twenty years, at least, new editions of the *Singuliers Pourtraicts* appeared without intermission; and each succeeding edition contained a few new additional plates.

Vinciolo, who dedicated them to the Queen with multitudinous compliments in prose and verse, adds in his inflated style: "I have greatly desired, honourable readers, to place before you, for works of a magnificent standard, the present designs, which I have kept back hidden and unknown until now, when I offer them with a cheerful heart to the French nation!"

All, however, are not entirely invented by himself, since he owns to "having obtained from Italy certain rare and singular patterns, and having originated a few to the best of my poor powers." . . . Still he asserts his superiority over all his predecessors in the art, by stating patronizingly that "he is assured that those patterns, less perfected and more rudely outlined, have already served and been of some profit." Although Vavassore had counted and numbered stitches (*numerare li punti*) before him, Vinciolo does the same in his third edition, and placidly states it to have been "never before seen or thought of." After which, one cannot

resist smiling at his saying, "I think, friend reader, that you will not ignore in any way the great and sedulous labour I must have expended in drawing and giving light to the larger quantity of most excellent patterns for needlework contained in this present book."

We will not prolong our remarks upon these pattern books; * as we turn over the leaves of many of them it is not difficult to identify most with the period of the Médicis and to recognize the widespread influence of Italian taste in the publications of other countries. Venice, moreover, asserts its supremacy in producing fine laces, and drives a considerable trade in collars and cuffs, worn as frequently by men as by women of quality.

Perhaps the oldest painting in which lace is depicted is that of a portrait of a lady by Carpaccio, who died about 1523. It is in the academy at Venice. The cuffs of the lady are edged with a narrow lace, the pattern of which reappears in Vecellio's *Corona*, not published until 1591; this particular pattern was therefore in use

* It will suffice here to note that the better-known pattern books, besides those already named are—1534, Johan Schwartzemberger, Augsburg; 1546, Gormont, Paris; 1554, Balthazar Sylvius or Dubois, Paris; 1560, Christofer Froschowern, Zurich; 1593, Jeromino Calepino, Venice; 1564, Ve. Jean Ruelle, Paris; 1568, Nicolas Basseus (four editions), Frankfurt; 1591, J. Wolff, London; 1591, Cesare Vecellio (nine editions), Venice (fig. 90); 1597, Jeande Glen, Liège, 1597, Balthazar Laimoxen, Nuremberg; 1598, Jacques Foillet, Montbéliard; 1661, Johan Sibmacher, Nuremberg; 1604, Paul Tozzi, Padua; 1605, The Englishman Mignerak, Paris.

Interesting reproductions of many of these books have been recently made by F. Ongania of Venice, and other foreign publishers; in France by Hippolyte Cocheris, Emmanuel Bocher, Madame Veuve Perrault & Son, and Armand Durand.

at least eighty years before it got into circulation with other published patterns.

Of similar date, no doubt, were the "ancient laces" mentioned in an inventory, dated 1598, which furnished the bed of J. Bta. Valier, bishop of Cividale di Belluno.

Notwithstanding the success which attended the first appearance of Venetian laces, they met with opposition even in their own country; for officers of the Republic, the *Proveditori alle Pompe*, issued several ordinances against the wearing of *punti in aere* in towns, under pain of a fine of two hundred ducats. One of these sumptuary laws passed in 1514 lays down the limits of fashion in "ladies' cloaks, laces, gloves embroidered with gold and silk, embroideries generally, fans, gondolas, and sedan chairs." *

However, on the occasion of the French king's (Henry III.) passing through Venice in 1574, special leave was granted to ladies to wear all sorts of costume, ornaments, and jewellery whatsoever, "even such as were prohibited by the ordinances."

Henry III. certainly brought back with him on his return from this journey a lively taste for all sorts of Italian affectations to which his mother Catherine de Médicis had accustomed him from his childhood. And we hear of him being so punctilious over his ruffs, that he would set himself to iron and goffer his cuffs and collars rather than see their pleats and gadroons limp and out of shape.† This probably explains why Vinciolo, in dedicating his patterns to the

* *Venice*, by Charles Yriarte, p. 222.

† Charles Blanc, *L'Art dans la Parure*, p. 297.

Queen, did not forget, in sly courtier manner, to add a portrait of the King who gave so much heed to his laces.

Summary.—These detailed explanations seemed necessary with the view of giving some insight into the transition from white embroideries to laces: they indicate that in the sixteenth century no laces beyond the *punti in aere* were really known, although these were used in bands of insertion and for edgings of dentated shapes. The close portions of the *motifs* and floral devices in such *punti* were worked in a filling-in stitch, lightened with small holes arranged like veins in a leaf, or ornamentally grouped together; the contours of these close-worked devices were rarely outlined with a thread; and the portions, when rendered in relief, were worked with a knotted stitch. More elegant effects were obtained by means of small loopings or purls cast upon the edges of some of the details, with charming effect.

In conclusion it may be said that needlepoint lace of this period is found to be so closely allied with embroidery in cut or drawn-thread work, or embroidery on *lacis* (net), and other needlework wrought with open grounds, that it seems to be merely a slight variety of one or the other of them. It is not until the succeeding century that it acquires a really independent character and individuality.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—VENETIAN POINTS— MARKED INFLUENCE OF LOUIS XIV. AND COLBERT —POINT DE FRANCE.

To properly follow the course of, and deviations, in lace-making it is necessary to study costume from the sixteenth century to our time. This at least is the advice given by M. G. Duplessis in his remarkable articles entitled "*Indications sommaires sur les documents utiles aux artistes industriels dans le département des estampes à la Bibliothèque nationale.*"* One result of his researches deserves our special attention. He finds distinct evidence that the production of the more noteworthy of earlier laces owes more to the influence of men than to that of women. When men adopted the fashion of wearing laces, designs for them become of a distinctively artistic character. Man readily criticizes the adornments of the opposite sex, and cannot therefore but feel flattered in nowadays reviving the remembrance that the costliest productions of the art of lace-making originated under his direct influence, whether he exercised it for the enrichment of his courtly costume as a great noble or for that of his alb and rochet as a prelate.

* See two articles by M. G. Duplessis (director of the *Département des Estampes* in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*) in the *Revue des Arts décoratifs* for February and March, 1887.

Ruffs and their companion cuffs, says Quicherat made their first appearance as articles of costume about 1540.* At this time needlework for the *punti in aere* also is first practised, and designers begin to relax the geometric character of their devices and to enter upon a freer and more wealthy style of pattern for the *punti a fogliami*.

The spirit of Flemish and Dutch painters, great lovers of flowers, readily infuses itself into this period of pattern-making, and is as speedily apparent in Italy as in France. Under Henry IV. (1589—1610) and Louis XIII. (1610—1643) pleated and gadrooned ruffs disappear and are replaced by wide flat collars of Dutch linen, garnished with laces falling over the shoulders of men or perked up fan-fashion at the back of women's heads. The shapes still retain the ornamentation imparted to insertions and trimming borders, *bandes et passements*; but the dentations of the borders are less pointed than under the Valois. The well-balanced scallop forms are finely curved, and give rise to the employment of other than geometric *motifs*. Expanding tulips come into vogue as ornamental devices, and remind us of the costly extravagances of Dutch tulip fanciers. Nothing so completely conveys an idea of the style which collars assume at this time as the engravings by Abraham Bosse. "There is hardly a specimen of Abraham Bosse's work," writes Quicherat, "which does not display the forms of collars, frills (*jabots*), or cuffs." Fig. 95 shows us a lace shop in the "Gallery of the Palace," decked out with its wares, and provides us with incontrovertible authority for the

* Quicherat, *Histoire de Costume en France*.



Fig. 95.—Lace shop in the *Galerie du Palais*
(after Abraham Bosse).

style of laces then in use. Everything in the embellish-

ment of male attire of the time lends itself to enrichment by means of laces. Great collars, cuffs turned back, gloves, doublets, breeches, and even boots are all profusely trimmed.

Bits of furniture are literally enveloped with *lacis* work or laces, especially beds; head and foot-boards, canopies and their supporting pillars, are completely hidden beneath these cloudy fabrics; from the corners of the canopies spring plumes reaching to the ceiling, and all below them is a pendent mass of lacy draperies.

The inventory of Charles de Bourbon, 1613, and that of his wife, Countess of Soissons, 1644, includes mention of a bed decked with "a pavilion of linen hangings, with bands of net made up of squares, the head-board covered with similar material, the inside of the canopy, the covers for the pillars, three curtains and a head curtain, a sheet of similar linen with a band of *réseuil*, a state coverlet, all bordered with lace." . . .

Laces, too, were used as trimmings for the interiors, and along the great open window-sashes, of coaches and carriages, which increased in number as well made royal roads superseded the badly kept highways of the Middle Ages.

These exaggerated uses of lace, etc., vexed Henry IV. very much. For all that, however, he was a good and patient prince, anxious to see progress made with the industries of his country. In 1607 he called the Royal Tapestry Manufactory into being. Previously, in 1598, he had had planted in the Bois de Boulogne fifteen thousand mulberry trees which had been brought from Milan by one Balbani, and were put under the charge of Olivier de Serres. At the chateau de Madrid close

at hand the king had established a silk-worm nursery ; but the austere disposition of Huguenot Sully, the



Fig. 94.—A dandy discarding his laces (after Abraham Bosse).

king's first minister, did not harmonize with such pre-occupations. "You want iron and soldiers," said he

to his master, "and not laces and silks to trick out fops!"

In the face of absurd abuses through which certain nobles ruined themselves, Henry IV. felt compelled to issue a few sumptuary edicts intended to lessen them.

Louis XIII., with his religious rigour in striking contrast with Henry IV.'s geniality, was much more severe, and promulgated in 1629 the edict already referred to, under the title of "Regulation as to Superfluity in Costume." Draconic as this law appeared, its application was not rigidly enforced, and people did not dissemble their contempt for it. Many of Abraham Bosse's engravings cheerfully caricature the supposed effects of this law, and the first series of them were extremely popular. The same subject was used by him for three distinct versions of the "Courtier obeying the last edict," in which a gentleman is represented pulling off his collar, cuffs, and the minor elegancies of his court dress, throwing them on to a chair, and re-clothing himself in simple attire, so little trimmed that he presents a comparatively sorry appearance after the transformation (fig. 94). His *valet de chambre* is about to lock up the laced clothes. Beneath him are the lines :—

*C'est avec regret que mon maître
Quitte ces beaux habillemens
Semés de riches passemens
Qui le fesoient si bien paroistre.
Mais, d'un autre côté, je pense
Qu'étant avare comme il est,
Assurément l'édit luy plaist,
Pour ce qu'il règle la dépense.*

*Je vais donc mettre dans le coffre
Tous ces vêtements superflus,
Et quoiqu'il ne les porte plus,
Je ne crains pas qu'il me les offre.**

Fig. 95 displays us the lady inconsolably dressing herself in clothes without laces:—

*Quoique j'aye assez de beauté
Pour assurer sans vanité
Qu'il n'est point de femme plus belle,
Il semble pourtant, à mes yeux,
Qu'avec de l'or et la dentelle,
Je m'ajuste encore bien mieux.†*

The king's severity against the prodigalities of courtiers is nevertheless justified when one finds, for example, that Cinq Mars left at his death in 1642 more than three hundred sets of collars and cuffs trimmed with lace!

At the end of Louis XIII.'s reign, lace-making had become an industry quite distinct from that of embroidery. Embroidery with open stitches and upon nets was still slightly practised; but active and special centres were organized for the pursuit of the novel and charming industry of lace-making, the origin of which and its admission into the confederation of the industrial arts do not reach back into fabulous ages; from its

* It is with regret that my master doffs the fine clothes covered with trimmings, which gave him such a handsome appearance. On the other hand, I think, that being a niggard as he is, the edict must surely please him, so far as it affects his expenses. I go then and put all these superfluous garments in the cupboard, and as he will wear them no more, I shall not fear he will give them to me.

† In spite of my personal beauty which, without vanity, cannot be surpassed by that of another woman, it still seems to my eyes that with gold and laces I further enhance my charms.

commencement it at once took a position of the first rank in industrial arts.



Fig. 95.—A lady of fashion discarding her laces (after Abraham Bosse).

Moreover, at this moment there succeeded to the throne of France a young king whose influence in

developing the new-born industry was decisive ; it may be safely said that the sixty-eight years of his reign witnessed the production of the most stately needlepoint laces ; the transformation of Venetian point, and the outburst of *Points d'Alençon, d'Argentan, de Bruxelles, d'Angleterre*, occur during this period of the Grand Monarque, which, in respect of many of these laces, covers both those of their birth and apogee.

Nevertheless, at the commencement of the vogue for laces, under the regency of the queen-mother, Anne of Austria, they were objects of divers sumptuary edicts.

One issued during the last year of Mazarin, 1660, kindled very great anxiety, its publication taking place on the eve of the young king's marriage. Everybody had had their gala dresses trimmed with braids, *guipures*, and fine laces, in honour of the arrival of the bride, and so the cruelty of the edict was doubly felt. On all sides murmurs arose to such a degree that Molière, at the risk of giving offence to the king, endeavoured to mollify public discontent by a mock eulogy of the decree which he introduced into the *École des Maris*.

*Oh ! trois et quatre fois béni soit cet édit
Par qui des vêtements le luxe est interdit !
Les peines des maris ne seront plus si grandes
Et les femmes auront un frein à leurs demandes.
Oh ! que je sais au roi bon gré de ces décrets,
Et que, pour le repos de ces mêmes maris,
Je voudrais bien qu'on fit de la coquetterie
Comme de la guipure et de la broderie.*

The edict of 1660 provoked a clique of fashionable dames, who used to meet at the Hotel de Rambouillet,

to compose a set of satirical verses, the mere technical interest of which is so conspicuous that it cannot be passed by in silence, as every then known lace is mentioned in it. It is entitled *La Révolte des Passements*. No author's name is given, but the verses are dedicated to Mademoiselle de la Trousse, a cousin of Madame de Sévigné. Mrs. Bury-Palliser has in her book on the *History of Lace* made an excellent *resumé* of these verses, and we extract it in full.

“In consequence of the sumptuary edict against luxury in apparel Mesdames les Broderies,—

*“ Les Poincts, Dentelles, Passemens,
Qui, par une vaine despence,
Ruinoient aujourd'hui la France—*

meet and concert measures for their common safety. *Point de Gênes*, with *Point de Raguse*, first address the company. Next, *Point de Venise*, who seems to look on *Point de Raguse* with a jealous eye, exclaims,—

*“ Encor pour vous, Poinct de Raguse,
Il est bon, crainte d'attentat,
D'en vouloir purger un Estat.
Les gens aussi fins que vous êtes
Ne sont bons que, comme vous faites,
Pour ruiner tous les Estats.
Et nous, Aurillac et Venise
Si nous plions notre valise,*

what will be our fate ?

“The other laces speak in their turn, most despondently, till a ‘*Veille broderie d'or*,’ consoling them, talks of the vanity of this world: ‘Who knows it better than I, who have dwelt in kings’ houses?’ One ‘*grande dentelle d'Angleterre*’ now proposes they should all retire to a convent. To this the ‘*Dentelles*

de Flandres' object. They would sooner be sewn at once to the bottom of a petticoat.

"Mesdames les Broderies resign themselves to become '*ameublements*,' the more devout of the party to appear as '*devants d'autels*.' Those who feel too young to renounce the world and its vanities will seek refuge in the masquerade shops.

"'*Dentelle noire d'Angleterre*' lets herself out cheap to a fowler, as a net to catch woodcocks, for which she felt '*assez propre*' in her present predicament.

"The Points all resolve to retire to their own countries save Aurillac, who fears she may be turned into a strainer '*pour passer les fromages d'Auvergne*,' a smell insupportable to one who had revelled in civet and orange-flower.

"All were starting

*" Chacun, dissimulant sa rage,
Douxement ployoit son bagage,
Résolu d'obéir au sort.*

when

*" Une pauvre très malheureuse,
Qu'on appelle, dit-on, la Gueuse,*

arrives, in a great rage, from a village in the environs of Paris. She is not of high birth, but has her feelings all the same. She has no refuge, not even a place in the hospital. Let them follow her advice, and '*elle engageoit sa chainette*,' she will replace them all in their former position.

"Next morn the Points assemble. '*Une grande cravate fanfaron*' exclaims,—

*" Il nous faut venger cet affront;
Révoltons-nous noble assemblée.*

“ A council of war ensues.

“ *Là-dessus, le Point d'Alençon,
Ayant bien appris sa leçon,
Fit une fort belle harangue.*

“ Flanders now boasts how she had made two campaigns under Monsieur as a cravat, another had learned the art of war under Turenne, a third was torn at the siege of Dunkirk.

“ *Racontant des combats qu'ils ne virent jamais,*

one and all had figured at some siege or battle.

“ *Qu'avons à redouter ?*

cries *Dentelle d'Angleterre*. Not so, thinks *Point de Gênes*, ‘*qui avait le corps un peu gros.*’

“ They all swear,

“ *Foy de Passement
Foy de Poincts et de Broderie,
De Guipure et d'Orféverie
De Gueuse de toute façon,*

to declare open war and to banish Parliament.

“ The Laces assemble at the fair of St. Germain, there to be reviewed by *General Luxe*.

“ The muster-roll is called over by Colonel *Sotte Dépense*. *Dentelles de Moresse, Escadrons de Neige, Dentelles de Hâvre, Escrués, Soies Noires, and Points d'Espagnes*, etc., march forth in warlike array, to conquer or to die. At the first approach of the artillery they all take to their heels, and are condemned by a council of war, the Points to be made into tinder for the sole use of the king's musquetaires, the Laces to be converted into paper, the *Dentelles, Escrués, Guouses, Passemens*, and silk lace to be made into cordage and sent to the galleys, the Gold and

Silver Laces, the original authors of the sedition, to be burned alive.

“ Finally, through the intercession of Love,

“ Le petit dieu plein de finesse,

they are again pardoned and restored to court favour.”

The poem is of the highest value to us, in its enumeration of the laces in use in 1661, and in its portrayal of the character peculiar to each.

From amongst the names thus given we select two for special note in connection with needlepoint laces. These are the *Point de Raguse* and the *Point de Venise*. The investigation of the origin of the great transformation which was taking place in patterns of Venetian laces leads us to inquire if the rivalry between the two towns, as set forth in the poem, may not point to a suggestion that the rich foliated scroll patterns possessing Oriental character, were first designed in Ragusa, before Venice adopted kindred works. Venice, as Queen of the Adriatic, shared her power with no other place; still, the poem certainly seems to say that Ragusa had made even finer laces than Venice, as—

*Les gens aussi fins que vous êtes,¹
Ne sont bons que, comme vous faites,
Pour ruiner tous les États.**

But, Ragusa being so effectually beaten out of the field, in the matter of laces, by Venice, no means are really left us for determining the exact character of the Points de Raguse apparently so highly esteemed by the clique of the hotel de Rambouillet.†

* “The people (Venetians), as skilled as you (of Ragusa) are, are only useful, as you are, to ruin all estates.”

† Ragusa is comparatively near the Montenegrin seaboard, and north-western coast of Greece, and in the fifteenth and early six-

However this may be, Venice certainly monopolized the production of, and commerce in, all fine needle-point laces, and the returns of her trade in them, particularly with the court of France, the centre for such elegancies, are enormous. At this juncture the young king, taking counsel with his far-seeing minister Colbert, cast away the vexatious measures inspired a short time earlier by his mother, and forthwith determined to enrich his own kingdom with the means of pursuing an industry which had proved so remunerative to Venice. As lace-making was already to some extent practised in many parts of France, Alençon already enjoying a reputation for its skill in this direction, Colbert, with statesmanlike perception, set inquiries on foot respecting those towns whose local circumstances would best favour the contemplated development; and selected them as special centres for the privileged manufacture of lace.

Monseigneur de Bonzy, bishop of Beziers, was then French Ambassador at Venice; to him Colbert natur-

teenth centuries was one of the principal Adriatic ports belonging to the Venetian Republic. The peasants of the Ionian Islands and neighbouring Greek coast were noted for geometric-patterned drawn thread and cutwork, and many wares of such character must have been imported by the Venetians through Ragusa. Hence they appear to have been named *Points de Raguse*. Venice, with her unlimited artistic resources in the sixteenth century, developed richer versions of these laces, and her later seventeenth-century sumptuous foliated scroll patterns (hardly displaying Oriental feeling) completely superseded, at the time of the *Revolte des Passements*, the Greek laces or *Points de Raguse*. The poetical lament of the coterie at the hotel de Rambouillet, over the extinction of the *Points de Raguse*, is, I think, to be accepted as reflecting the condition above indicated, and, if so, furnishes but slender grounds for the supposition that the *Points de Raguse* entered into rivalry with the finer developments of Venetian lace, by which they were certainly superseded.

ally turned, and received from him many communications on the subject. "All the convents,"* writes Monseigneur de Bonzy, "and poor families make a living out of this lace-making." In another letter he says, "I see how easy it would be for you to establish the making of Venetian needlepoint laces in France, if you were to send over here a few of the best French lace-makers' daughters to be taught, so that in time they should impart their instruction to others in France." This suggestion was accepted. And a few years later (January 1673), M. le Comte d'Avaux having succeeded M. de Bonzy as ambassador at Venice, Colbert writes: "I have gladly received the collar of needlepoint lace worked in relief that you have sent me, and I find it very beautiful. I shall have it compared with those now being made by our own lace-makers, although I may tell you before-hand that as good specimens are now made in this kingdom" (fig. 96).

But it is worth while to follow all the steps taken by Colbert to establish lace-making in France which are described in the careful history of *Point d'Alençon*† compiled by Madame Despierres.

An exclusive privilege, dated August 5th, 1665, for ten years, together with a subsidy of 36,000 livres (about £2,700) was granted by the minister to a company, the first shareholders in which were Pluymers, Talon, and another Talon, surnamed de Beaufort, etc. The principal office and shop were opened at Paris in the hotel de Beaufort.

* The convent of San Zaccaria was the most noted for its fine needlepoint laces.

† *Histoire du Point d'Alençon*, by Madame Despierres, p. 18.

As we have already pointed out preference in starting centres for the manufacture was shown for those towns already engaged in lace-making, whether with the needle or with bobbins ; the company thus expecting to find, ready to hand for its operations, such conditions as would best favour the attainment of the object in view. The principal centres were Aurillac, Sedan, Reims, le Quesnoy, Alençon, Arras, Loudun, etc.

The title of *Points de France* was given to all the laces made at these centres, without distinction as to variety in make. In order to adopt all the processes of foreign lace-making, the company engaged, at the king's cost, workers from Italy and Flanders, placing them at the different suitable centres. Voltaire says that thirty came from Venice and two hundred from Flanders.

The most brilliant results came from the Alençon centre, which accordingly stood first on the list. It is true that since the commencement of the seventeenth century Alençon had turned out needlepoint lace, and that some of the lace-makers there showed great talent in the art, and earned high wages. Marriage contracts and wills, the terms of which have been extracted by Madame Despierres, with the utmost care, furnish significant figures. A notable instance is that of a family named Barbot, the mother having amassed 500 livres (about £37 10s.). Her daughter, Marthe Barbot, married Michel Mercier, sieur de la Perrière, on 18th March, 1633, and brought him a wedding portion of 300 livres (about £22 10s.), the earnings of her industry ; whilst her sister Suzanne Barbot's wedding portion upon her marriage with Paul Fenouillet, on 28th August, 1661, amounted to "6,000

livres (about £450), earned in making cutworks and works *en vélin* (needlepoint lace done on a parchment pattern), which command a high price." This last sentence indicates that the elder sister, Madame de la Perrière, many years before the founding of the royal manufacture, had acquainted herself with the Venetian methods of making needlepoint laces.

It seems quite evident here, that the difference between the point lace made at Alençon before 1665, and that made by Madame de la Perrière, on her own initiative, in imitation of Venetian specimens for which Colbert established a special manufacture, was one in respect of design or pattern, and quality of work. Point on vellum (*point en vélin*), so termed because the work was done on a vellum or parchment pattern, had been wrought at Alençon for fifty years. It was evidently the same as that, rightly called by the Italians *punto in aere*, made on parchment patterns, but usually of geometric character; survivals, indeed, of kindred patterns for cutworks and cognate open embroideries, which by the circulation of pattern books for a hundred and fifty years, *i.e.*, from 1500 to 1650, had become generally known throughout Europe.

But what had meanwhile given new features to Venetian laces was a departure, reflecting the greatest taste in the composition of patterns, and consisting of flowering and interlacing scrolls, blossomed with flowers "worked over in relief," as Colbert says in his letter to Comte d'Avaux, and enriched with most admirable details.

From the lace insertions and dentated borders of the sixteenth century, to the laces of flowering scrolls

brought to high perfection by the Venetians in 1640, a considerable progress had taken place which Louis XIV. and Colbert fully appreciated. And it was in the direction of extending this progress that the Grande Monarque and his minister introduced subtle developments at Alençon and other centres of the royal manufacture.

Surrounded as he was by artists who furnished designs for all works undertaken for his court, Louis XIV. would not have contented himself for long with simple copies of the patterns brought over by the Venetian lace-workers who had been engaged to teach their art in France. The studios of the Gobelins, where a bevy of talented designers for tapestries, costumes, and festive decorations was regularly employed, must certainly have supplied designs for the lace manufactures.* Who indeed can now say whether the transformation in the patterns of Venetian laces, of which but little trace is to be detected in the Italian pattern books, was not largely owing to the orders sent from the French court?

During that time the Venetian Senate, exercising a vigilant guardianship over the interests of the Republic, regarded the departure of Venetian workers to France as a State crime. Forthwith was issued the following decree, the severity of which is out of tune with modern ideas:—

“If any artist or handicraftsman practises his art in any foreign land, to the detriment of the Republic,

* In the accounts of the king's buildings is the entry of a payment to “Bailly, the painter, for several days' work with other painters, in making designs for embroideries and *Points d'Espagne*.”

orders to return will be sent to him ; if he disobeys them his nearest of kin will be put into prison in order that through his interest in their welfare his obedience may be compelled. If he comes back, his past offence will be condoned, and employment for him will be found in Venice ; but if, notwithstanding the imprisonment of his nearest of kin, he obstinately decides to continue living abroad, an emissary will be commissioned to kill him, and his next of kin will only be liberated upon his death."*

This decree applied not only to the lace-makers but also to the glass and mirror-makers whom Louis XIV. had induced to come to France.

Happily no emissaries were deputed to carry into effect the terrible threats held over these truant work-people. The experiment of bringing Venetian lace-workers to France required no repetition ; the women were free to return with sufficient promptitude to their native land, since the first attempt had answered admirably ; for, as Voltaire writes, in a short space of time sixteen hundred girls were in full occupation at lace-making at the royal centres of the industry.

The production of the *Points de Venise*, and consequently of the *Points de France* which in many cases involved the closest imitation of the Venetian stitches, was all that could be wished. As rapidly as patterns became elaborated from the times of Louis XIII., so quality in the craft of reproducing them as laces improved. A close and detailed inspection of the splendid rabato or neck-band in the Cluny Museum (No. 6,587 in the Catalogue) is indispensable to any

* *Venice*, by Charles Yriarte, p. 228.

one who wants to really appreciate the extraordinary standard of work to which the art of the needle can attain (fig. 96). Nothing in embroidery can compare with such marvels of elegance, delicacy, and at the same time vigour, as those displayed in this specimen

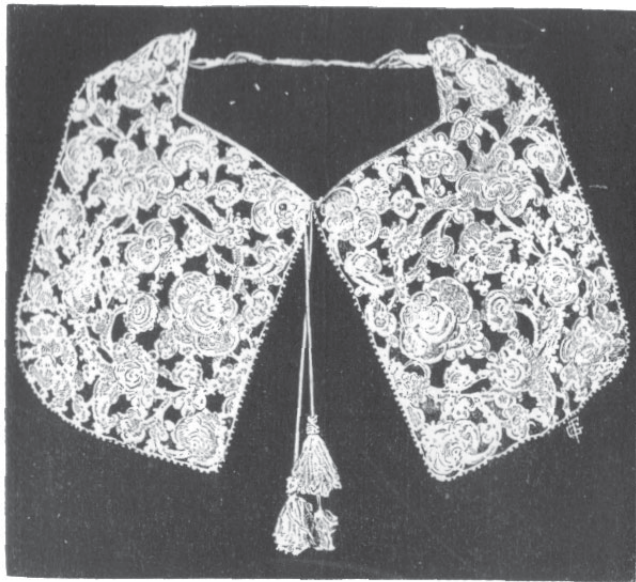


Fig. 96.—Splendid rabato of Venetian needlepoint lace (in the Cluny Museum).

of needlepoint lace. Not only do the scrolls of the design flow with dignity and grace, but the lace-worker herself would appear to have invented an almost superabundance of wonderfully dainty devices, giving lightness in effect to the otherwise heavy forms of the flowers. Firmness of outline marking the different

contours, results from employing a horsehair, over which minute stitches are cast; and by the same means a

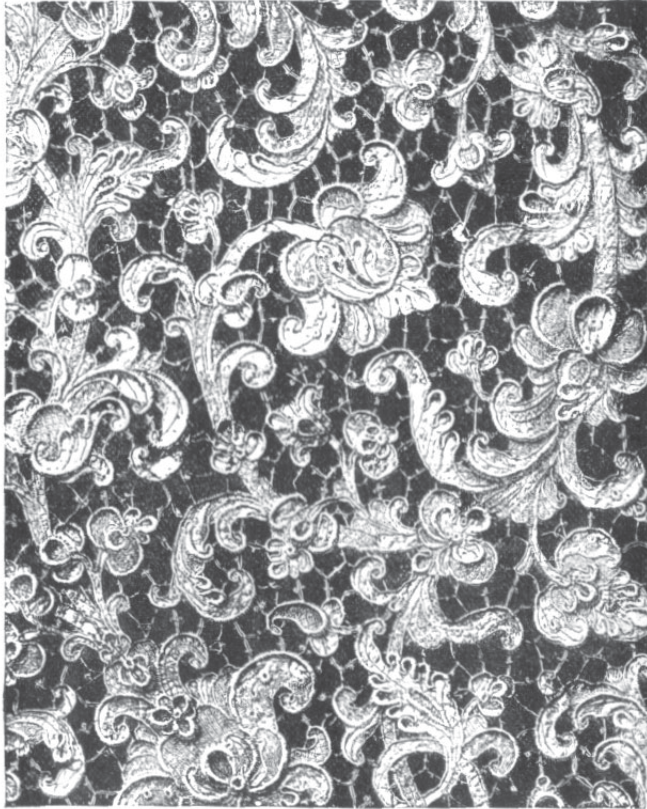


Fig. 97.—Venetian needlepoint lace (seventeenth century).

finished crispness is imparted to tiny loops or *picots* elegantly inserted in the spaces between the scrolls and flowers. This method is still in use in the making of

Points d'Alençon which for sharp definition bear the palm over other laces. It is related of a collar made at Venice for Louis XIV., that the lace-workers being unsuccessful in finding sufficiently fine horsehair employed some of their own hairs instead, in order to secure that marvellous delicacy of work which they aimed at producing. The specimen cost 250 golden *écus* (about £60).

It was for men, then, that these magnificent things were made. They were chiefly in the form of *rabatos** or bands falling from beneath the chin over the breast, the fashion for which, succeeding that of ruffs and collars, when large wigs were worn (fig. 98). Cuffs of similar fine lace were also worn. These latter were occasionally so large that Molière was incited to write

De ces manches, qu'à table on voit tâter les sauces.†

Fine *guipure* laces of this character are also to be seen in *rochets* worn by Bossuet (fig. 99), Fenelon, and other prelates, whose portraits are well worth referring to according to the indications of them given by G. Duplessis.

Ladies trimmed their *berthes* and sleeves with these *guipures*; when the sleeves were short they were called *engageantes*; when long, *pagodes*. Upon skirts laces were worn, *volantes* or as flounces, whence the name *volant* or flounce, which has come into use for all

* Towards the end of Louis XIV.'s reign flat *rabatos* were superseded by others which fell in folds, and were called *cravates*, after, it is said the Croates, or Croatian guards who were much esteemed by Maria Theresa of Austria.

† *École des Maris*.

wide laces; these flouncings were draped either in *tournantes* or *quilles*; the former laid horizontally, the latter vertically upon skirts; but in either case these were stitched down on each edge of the

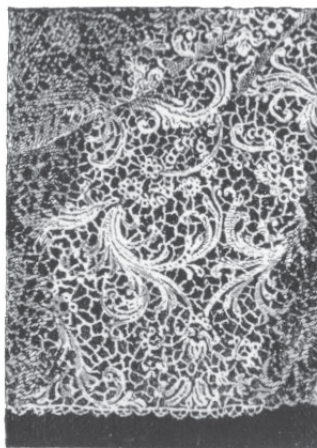


Fig. 98 —Louis XIV., 1670 (after Hyacinthe Rigaud).

lace, whereas flounces were fastened to dresses by the *engrelure* or footing, a small band along the upper border of a flounce. Lace *barbes* and *fontages* (a sort of erection like a sheaf of lace) were used as head-

dresses ; besides these, handkerchiefs, *fichus*, scarves, mantillas thrown over the head, and mantles across the shoulders, were all trimmed with lace.

Berain and Le Brun gave a new and most artistic turn to patterns for laces, which fully justified the success achieved. In portraits painted immediately after 1665, the year when the Royal Alençon manufacture was started, we have sufficient data for recognizing the style of the first *points de France* designed by the king's artists. The laces, to be there noted, are entirely of a French character with ornamental *motifs* more or less emblematical of the attributes belonging to the Sun King.



It may be gathered, from what we have said, that towards the end of the seventeenth century

the make of French laces was identical with that of the Venetian, the difference between the two classes being one solely in respect of pattern. At Venice patterns retained their Italian character of graceful scrolls embellished with rich floral and blossom devices, of an Oriental flavour perhaps, suggestive in a measure of those dreams without termination

Fig. 99.—Fragment of an alb or rochet of *Point de France* (from an engraving by Drevet of Bessuet's portrait).

or definite climax which are so entirely in the vein of Arabian or Persian poetry.

In French contemporary lace patterns we observe a tendency to similar ornament, which, however, is treated in a more precise and less dreamy manner, and intermixed with ideal architectural elements of an extremely light character, generally subordinated to well-balanced arrangement of grouping about some central device possessing strongly marked symbolism.

This style of pattern, based upon a regularity in arrangement of its component parts, gave birth to an influence the effects of which seem to be visible in some of the smallest of the details in the lace ornamentation at this period. We have no hesitation in attributing to this influence, for regularity in arrangement, the germs of that important transition to grounds of regular meshes. Little by little the intercrossing and arbitrarily placed bars or *brides* which contrasted pleasantly with the devices in the composition of a pattern, were subjected to a regularity in arrangement.

The fine flounce of *Point de France* (fig. 100) filled with personages, portraits, and emblems of the time of Louis XIV., is an illustration of the transition to regular grounds just mentioned. The specimen has for many years been in the possession of Madame Dupré of Tours; and Léon Palustre assigns a date between 1675 and 1680 for its production. The ground consists of bars with tiny loops on each, (*brides à picots*) similar in workmanship to Venetian *brides*, but arranged in a series of hexagonal shapes thus forming a ground of regular large meshes, the