

Fig. 100.—Flounce of *Point de France*, in the pattern of which are introduced figures and attributes of Louis XIV.'s reign.

orderly arrangement of which corresponds with that

regulating the disposition of the larger devices in the pattern.

At this time *Point de France* is supreme. Watteau's painting of the Presentation of the Grand Dauphin in 1668 displays the babe robed in "Holland linen enriched with *Points de France*." When the Prince de Conti marries Mademoiselle de Blois, the king's wedding gift is a set of toilet hangings, all trimmed with *Points de France*." It is of Mademoiselle de Blois that Madame de Sévigné writes in a letter dated 27th January, 1674, describing her as "beautiful as an angel with a *tablier* and *bavette* of *Point de France*" (a sort of panel on the front of the body to her dress, and a large one on the front of the skirt).

Before discussing the different classes of laces with meshed grounds (*à réseaux*) we must say a few words about the term which really applies to the larger section of older laces, that is *guipure*.

Originally the term was used in connection with cord composed of an inner core or stout thread, whipped round with fine threads, and the name in this sense is used by trimming and gimp-makers of the present day. With cords of gimp of this description (*cordonnet-guipure*) trimming ornaments were made, which were frequently stitched (*appliqués*), on to a stuff, after the manner of the furniture hangings belonging to Catherine de Médicis, which are described as "velvet hangings with white gimp (*guipure*) ornaments, besides cloths of gold and of silver and dove-colour, with figures and scrolls of gold gimp and tinsel.*

Lace-makers also employed gimp for bars and ties in

* Inventory already quoted by Bonnaffé (see p. 131).

imitation of the dainty *brides à picots* of the Venetians. This, by degrees, gave rise to an extension in the use of the term *guipure*, and its subsequent application to all laces in which bars or ties were used; whilst those, in which the grounds were of small regular meshes (*réseaux*), were distinguished under the name *dentelles*. Hence it may be right to speak of all those splendid laces with their bars (*brides*) embellished with tiny loops (*picots*), little stars, and semilunes, the fame of which reflected glory* upon the city of the Doges, as "*Guipures de Venise*."

To recapitulate briefly, the reign of Louis XIV. is notable for the display both of the Venetian *guipures* in their most sumptuous development, and of *Points de France*, which touched the highest standard of magnificence possible in needlepoint laces. But variations in pattern and make, broadly classifiable under these two groups, are not so numerous as those which arose in the succeeding reign of wild caprices in taste. The pre-eminently artistic character of lace made during Louis XIV.'s period has, however, never been surpassed.

* Amongst portraits at Venice, ornamented with the finest *guipures*, we may cite that of the Dogress Quirini Vallier and that of Morosina Morosini, wife of Doge Marino Grimani.

CHAPTER III.

FROM LOUIS XV. TO THE PRESENT TIME.

IN the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the grounds of laces may be broadly described to have been varied and irregular, like those in *guipures*. Meshed grounds (*réseaux*) when they first appeared were subordinate accessories to a pattern. In the eighteenth century they play another part altogether; and we find them as grounds superseding the irregular barrings of the *guipures*.

The word *réseau*, formerly termed *réseuil*, is derived from *rets* (nets); and, as we have seen, *réseuil* was used as a descriptive name for the net ground of *lacis*. When laces with grounds of regular meshes came into fashion, *réseau* was the generic appellation for such grounds; and the varieties of special local makes of *réseaux* were known under the names of the several localities, whence we have the *réseau d'Alençon*, that of Argentan, and of Chantilly, Brussels, Mechlin and Valenciennes, etc.

Points de France, under Louis XIV., had more or less been distinguished by grounds of regular meshes, large in size and enriched with tiny loops or *picots*. The large mesh was, however, soon reduced to smaller dimensions, and thus the *petit réseau* (ground of small meshes) was evolved, in which the elegancies of little *picots*, etc.,

could not be used to break the monotony of regular meshes. Nevertheless, *réseaux* possess a peculiar charm, as we shall see in the case of the Argentan laces, where *réseaux* with meshes of various sizes have been happily contrasted in making up a ground. But their encroaching predominance in laces is coeval with a falling off in general artistic quality of design.

Of the *Points de France* at the commencement of the eighteenth century there is one variety—the *Point de Sedan*—which calls for some notice. Sedan was one of the lace centres selected by Colbert,* and to it no doubt belongs the greater share of the reputation attaching to this lace, which, however, was also made at Alençon; for the characteristics of *Points de Sedan* were merely such as resulted from a slightly varied arrangement of stitches, all of which were also worked at Alençon. The floral devices in *Points de Sedan*, somewhat large, and heavy in execution, spring from bold scroll forms, and in between them are big meshes of the *grande maille picotée*, of the *Point de France*. Instead of an even and slightly raised stitching along their contours, these big flowers are accentuated here and there in well-chosen parts by raised stitching, worked somewhat with the effect of vigorous touches of rather forced high lights in a picture. These recurrent little mounds of relief, as they may be called, are frequently introduced with admirable artistic result. The finest bishops' rochets, which appear in the later portraits by Hyacinthe Rigaud and De Largillière, are of *Point de Sedan*. But this lace soon became tainted

* See Louis XIV.'s letter of the 9th November, 1666, addressed to M. de la Bourlie, Governor of Sedan.

with the pretentiousness of the rococo style so much affected during the Regency, and one can express but a guarded admiration of works bearing the impress of this style.

Alençon made a speciality of very regular mesh grounds. At first the meshes were large, similar to the hexagonal barring (*brides*) of the *Point de France*, but quite simple and without *picots* (fig. 101); refinements in making the ground ensued, and the button-hole stitched barring was gradually felt to be too clumsy for delicate work; accordingly a lighter and more simply constructed mesh was invented, and this has survived as the perfected hexagonal mesh known in all countries as distinctive of the Alençon ground or *réseau*.

During the transition in the make of meshes, Argentan simplified the method of producing the larger hexagonal meshes. As has been said, they were first constructed by means of button-hole stitching, but instead of this the Argentan workers took to a *bride tortillée*; that is, twisting or whipping thread around each of the six *brides* which form a single mesh. To fix the twisted thread on each *bride*, a button-hole stitch was taken on commencing the twisting, and a second one on its termination at the other end of the *bride*. This simplification in producing a *bride* mesh is well explained by Madame Despierres in her history of Alençon laces. The facility with which this twisted *bride* mesh could be made, conduced to simpler and more economical work, the results of which obtained considerable vogue in the middle of the eighteenth century, and were generally known (especially in laces with large meshes made in this way) as *Points d'Argentan*. Laces in which these

Argentan bride meshes are happily blended or contrasted with smaller mesh grounds (of the *Point*



Fig. 101.—Point d'Alençon with hexagonal *bride* ground or *réseau*, commencement of the eighteenth century.

d'Alençon class) are frequently of the choicest description.

But the grounds of regular meshes led to an impoverishment in the patterns of laces, and when this was perceived, ingenuity devised the employment of little fanciful devices (*jours* or *modes*) with which the centres of blossoms and other appropriate spaces in the pattern would be filled in. From these *modes* or fillings sprang a series of most charming little devices, in which the skilfully plied needle often surpassed all that it had previously effected. Such fillings or *modes* will be found generally to be inserted like little jewellerys in the centres of blossom forms, though they also spread over wider spaces, as in medallions, shells, or spaces between garlands and along the borders of laces. Some of these fillings (*jours* or *modes*) were even used as entire grounds for such laces as were to be richer in effect than when made with simple mesh grounds. And one of these fillings used as a ground, greatly favoured at the beginning of the eighteenth century, has been named by Mrs. Bury-Palliser Argentella ground—a name which has given rise to discussion.*

The great success of the Alençon and Argentan centres of the lace industry raised up many competitors with them.

In the first place, Venice, finding that laces of lighter texture were being sought after, that men wore less as women wore more of them, introduced refinements in her productions, and, in lieu of the vigorous scrolls with rich reliefs, such as she had made in the seventeenth century, she set herself to make the *point de rose* (rose-

* Alan S. Cole, *Les Dentelles Anciennes*, translated by C. P. Haus-soullier. (The English edition is *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace*. Arundel Society. 1874.)

point) and other laces, the patterns in which resemble coral branches. Rosepoint is a Venetian needlepoint

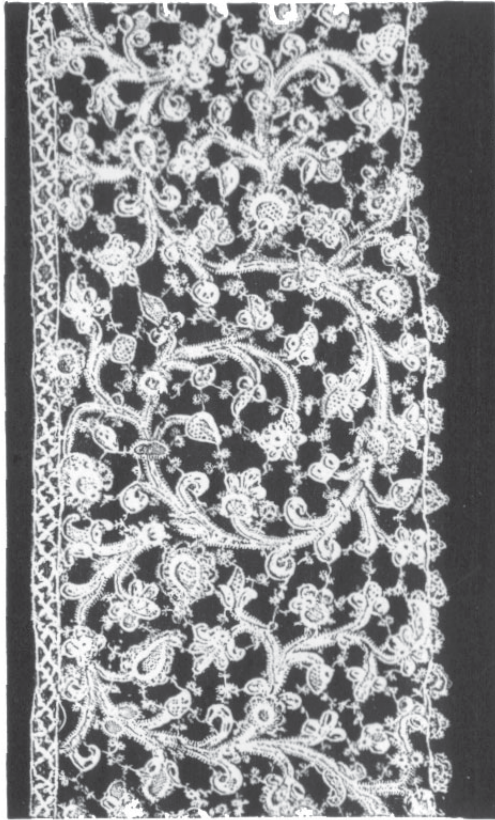


Fig. 102.—Venetian needlepoint lace (rosepoint), eighteenth century (belonging to Madame G. Dreyfus).

lace of delicate scrolls enriched with many little offshoots, held together by tiny bars or *brides à picots*,

and freely spotted with small blossoms consisting of wreaths of microscopic loops or *picots* superposed one on the other with the daintiest effect (fig. 102). This lace, infinitely less bold than the great and splendid Venetian *guipures*, is more elegant and precious looking, and reflects eighteenth-century taste for pettiness of detail.

According to Zeno of Udine, Joseph II., Emperor of Germany (1765—1790), ordered on the occasion of his marriage a set of rosepoint laces at a cost of thirty thousand florins, which from all accounts seem to have been of the finest quality ever reached in this style.

Attempts were also made at Venice to produce needlepoint laces with meshed grounds. Burano, one of the islands in the lagoon, gave its name to a lace with a ground of meshes; but no slightly raised overcast outlines (*festons*) were used to mark its details, as is the case with *Point d'Alençon*, and with later Burano lace, such as that shown in fig. 112. The outline of the ornaments in Burano lace, and indeed in all the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Venetian laces made with meshed grounds, are of scarcely perceptible single threads. It seems as though the Venetians did not grasp the extent of variations in effect of which filmy needlepoint laces are capable.*

* I may here note that M. Lefébure refrains from mentioning a class of fine needlepoint lace which has been termed by many (Monsieur Dupont-Auberville amongst them) *Point de Venise à réseau*. For employment of wonderfully fine thread this class of lace is remarkable. But there is a formality in its patterns which appears to have succumbed before, and been altogether superseded by, the floral playfulness of the French and Flemish contemporary laces. Hence *Point de Venise à réseau* is rare. Fig. 103, although called by Monsieur

Flanders, which hitherto had almost entirely restricted her making of laces to the pillow or bobbin method, soon attempted to copy the needlepoint laces of Alençon. The needlepoint laces made at Brussels were flatter and less firm than the *Points d'Alençon*, and in some instances were of finer texture (fig. 103). Belgium spun the most slender and delicate of all flax threads: Felix Aubry states that it was sold at



Fig. 103.—Flemish needlepoint lace, end of the seventeenth century (belonging to Madame Franck).

from eight to ten thousand francs (£320 to £400) the pound weight. Hence it will be understood that with such dainty material laces of the utmost fineness could be produced; and the variety of little open devices (*jours* or *modes*) was multiplied with charming

Lefébure Flemish needlepoint lace of the late seventeenth century, might, I think, be equally entitled to the name *Point de Venise à réseau*. Certain differences between Flemish needlepoint lace (the *Point à l'aiguille de Bruxelles*) and the *Point de Venise à réseau* are stated in *Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace*.

dexterity, and ranked amongst the triumphs of Brussels needlepoint.

As fashion favoured the application (*appliqué*) of floral devices, made in pillow lace, to meshed grounds separately made (as we shall explain later), laces known as *Points d'Angleterre*, had a great success. One of the kinds of application lace consisted of floral devices, etc., made in needlepoint, and applied or stitched on to pillow-made mesh grounds (*vrai réseau de Bruxelles*). Some of the more sumptuous of the *Points d'Angleterre* are made in this manner. The exquisite softness of the meshed ground, the dainty workmanship in the flowers, of which the outlines (*cordonnets*) have little or no relief, the gem-like wealth of the fillings (*jours* or *modes*), have placed these Brussels points in a category quite distinct from those of Alençon, Argentan, and Venice, which are more remarkable for their firmness of texture and crisp accentuation of their reliefs.

Supple light and beautiful lappets for the head were made in Brussels point, and during certain phases of fashion were preferred before similar but rather heavier things made in *Point de France* or *Point d'Alençon*. Although etiquette required that at court presentations ladies should wear only point lace lappets on their heads, the Brussels points were deemed to comply with this regulation.

These court presentations were attended with much ceremony and show. When a lady had secured the privilege of such honour, she arrived at the appointed hour and presented herself at the door of the grand chamber, waiting her turn to be called in, dressed in the most magnificent stuffs, tricked out with the finest point laces

of her wardrobe, and glittering with all the diamonds she could collect from the jewel-boxes of her relations. A court robe or train trailing behind her eight ells in length was fastened to her waist, and from her hair, cunningly plumed, hung point lace lappets, falling in the regulation lengths prescribed for respective degrees of nobility. Every detail of this sort was subject to minute rule. Princesses of the blood alone enjoyed the right of wearing full length lappets in their head-dresses.

The use of finery, thus encouraged under Louis XIV. in reception-rooms, was in Louis XV.'s reign extended to boudoirs and bedrooms. Never were dishabilles more elegant; coverlets of beds, trimmings of curtains and pillow-cases, of toilet tables, etc., involved a consumption of laces far in excess of what had been necessary for dresses in the preceding reign.

The Marquise de Créquy, speaking of her aunt, the Dowager Duchesse de la Ferté, said that she had, in 1714, a quilt made of one single piece of Venetian point. "I am certain," she adds, "that the trimmings of her curtains, which were of *Point d'Argentan*, were worth at least forty thousand écus."

At this date two rival manufacturers at Argentan contended for workpeople,* and their disputes indicate how much store was set upon *Point d'Argentan*. One of them, named Duponchel, complained that Mdlle. James, his competitor, enticed his workwomen from him, and sought special protection on the grounds that

* Madame Despierres, *Histoire du Point d'Alençon*, p. 95.

he worked for the king and his court. On the other hand, Mdlle. James maintained to the king's steward

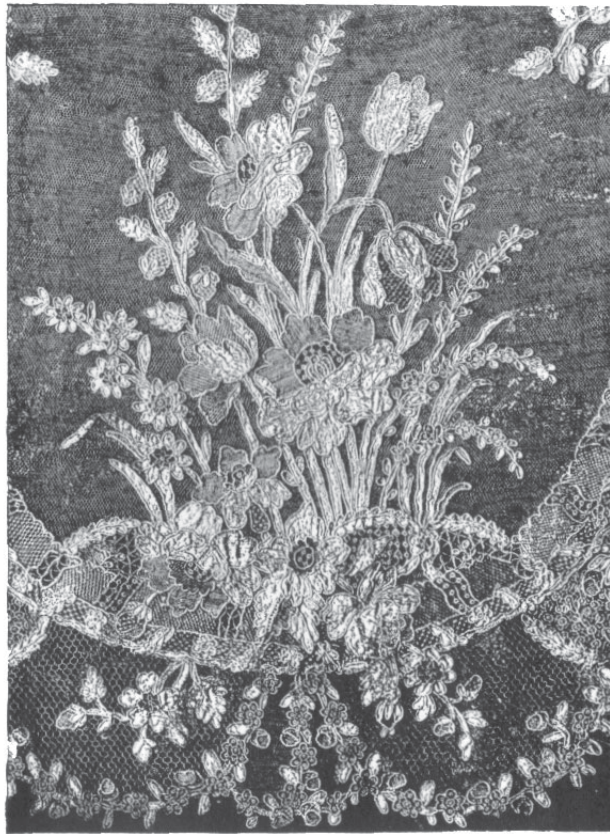


Fig. 104.—Fragment of Point d'Alençon lace, early period of Louis XVI.

that "it is I who supplied laces for the king's chamber this year, by order of the Duc de Richelieu. I also

have the honour of furnishing the king's wardrobe, by order of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. Moreover, I am purveyor to the King and Queen of Spain, and at this very moment I am engaged in supplying lace for the marriage of the Dauphin" (Letter of the 9th September, 1744). Duponchel rejoins that "he had supplied two *toilettes* and their *suites*, several *bourgognes* (ladies' head-dresses), as well as a cravat for the queen."

The number of lace-makers then at work was at least 1,200 at Argentan and its vicinity; whilst at Alençon and the neighbouring villages it is said that there were 8,000. Boucher, the painter, appears to have preferred *Point d'Argentan*; and no one knew better than he how to make charming effects in his patterns, by contrasting and interchanging the delicate and bolder grounds which are so characteristic of this lace.

Under Louis XVI. the taste for great lightness in design proved unfavourable to needlepoint laces. Instead of point laces, worn flatly for the display of all the daintinesses of their exquisite fillings and delicate reliefs, it became the fashion to multiply the number of flounces to dresses and to gather them into small pleats, or, as it was termed, *badiner* them, so that the ornamental motives, more or less broken up or partially concealed by the pleats, lost their decorative value. The spaces between the motives were therefore widened more and more, until at last nothing was left but grounds of meshes, very slightly ornamented with flowers; or else these grounds would be powdered over (*semés*) with tiny blossoms and sprays—a style of

design which offered little opportunity for invention, especially when the little devices to be used were restricted to peas or dots.

The kinds of laces with powderings of such insignificant ornaments, and suitable for gathering into pleats or being fluted, were more successfully produced on the pillow, and were altogether of a more filmy nature than the needlepoint laces. Nevertheless a considerable quantity was made of similarly patterned *Points d'Alençon à petites brides*.* This ground of *petites brides* consists of meshes made with twisted threads in the manner of that of the *Point d'Argentan*, as described on page 228, but more closely twisted. The effect is rather cloudy and thick. The greater number of men's *jabots* (shirt frills or neckerchiefs), which, in Louis XVI.'s reign, fell in pleats over the openings of their long waistcoats, were usually of *Point d'Alençon à petite bride* (fig. 105). This kind of lace is very compact in make, and stands much washing, which at that time was rendered necessary through the fashionable habit of snuffing, the yellow stains from which often displayed themselves upon the frills of noble counts and marquises.

The Revolution contributed to ruin the manufacture of needlepoint laces. Many districts were severely tried, and the traditions of an art, which had been their former glory and profit, were lost. † For close upon fifty years, Argentan and Venice herself—illustrious Venice—produced no more laces.

Alençon fared better. Napoleon, solicitous for a

* Madame Vigée-Lebrun, in one of her prettiest portraits, wears a *Point d'Alençon* powdered lace (*à petits semés*).

revival of the manufacture, encouraged it, and endeavoured to renew the courtly etiquette of Louis XIV. in requiring point lace to be worn at court receptions. Some few important orders were given by the imperial circle, and a bed-trimming of lace, powdered over with bee devices, and costing 40,000 francs, is cited as an instance. It is true that it was begun for the Empress Josephine, and that in the course of its making her escutcheons were replaced by those of Marie-Louise!

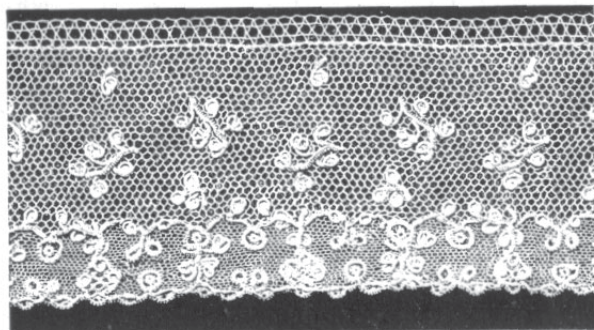


Fig. 105.—Point d'Alençon, with ground of small hexagonal meshes (*à petite bride*), later period of Louis XVI.

who, little flattered by the notion of possessing what had been destined for another, made difficulties about receiving it.

In May 1811 the Emperor and Empress visited Alençon. Marie-Louise received the lace-makers at the Prefecture, saw them at work, and made a number of purchases. Napoleon remarked, "It is marvellous how well they work in France! I ought to encourage such an industry." But incessant wars frustrated any



Fig. 106.—Flounce of Point d'Alençon of modern manufacture.

real extension of trade in luxuries like lace, and con-

stantly interrupted commercial relations with foreign countries. Russia before others has always shown a liking for *Point d'Alençon*.

Peace restored prosperity to Alençon ; and at each of the great international exhibitions she has secured the highest prizes for her sumptuous works of the needle (fig. 106). Hers are still the more dexterously

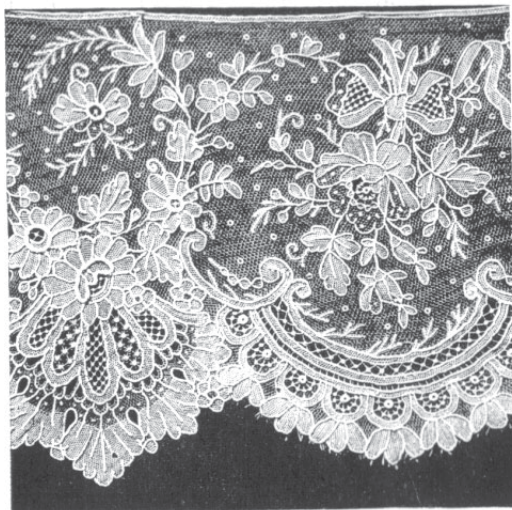


Fig. 107.—Belgian needlepoint lace, modern manufacture.

wrought and costly of laces, and she proves herself worthy of her illustrious past.

Latterly, Argentan has once more renewed the practice of her almost forgotten art, and the traditions have been revived of her laces with large meshes enhanced by fillings of small mesh grounds (*réseaux*) (fig. 108).

Bayeux has witnessed the establishment of a model workshop for



Fig. 108.—Point d'Argentan, modern manufacture.

needlepoint laces, where the making of many varieties of point lace is revived which, if not forgotten, had certainly been abandoned since the Revolution. Every sort of needlepoint lace made during the best periods can be produced now. The name *Point Colbert*, adopted in grateful memory of the great minister, protector of lace, is applied to point laces in high relief, with scrolls enriched with magnificent blossoms and flowers, with grounds of bars ornamented with dainty *picots* (loops), in pre-

cisely the same fashion as that of those laces made by the Venetian mistresses of their craft who were brought to Alençon in 1665 (see figs. 109 and 111).

Belgium has not been behindhand in the matter of needlepoint lace-making: if *Point d'Alençon* remains, according to hallowed expression, the Queen of Laces,

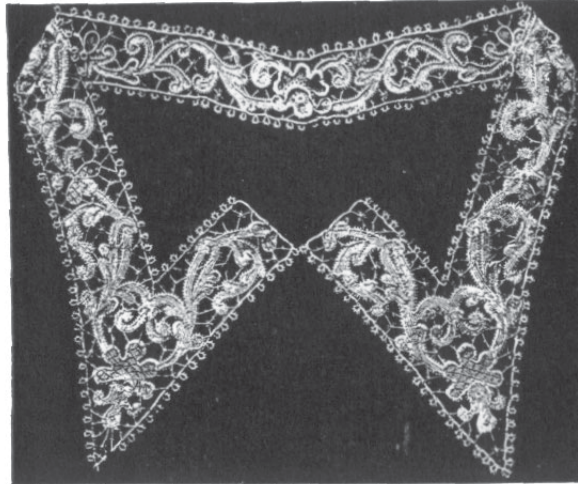


Fig. 109.—Collar of needlepoint lace (modern) worked at Bayeux, and called *Point Colbert*.

Brussels and its neighbourhood produce a vast quantity of ably wrought needlepoint laces, under the name of "*Point Gaze*" (fig. 107). The shawl (fig. 110) is a beautiful specimen of such work. The *feston* or outline to the ornament in *Point Gaze* has no horsehair in it, and is not therefore so firm and crisp in appearance as that of *Point d'Alençon*. But the fillings (*jours*) are of cunning work and great diversity. The

floral ornaments are cleverly depicted with delicate gradations of close and open textures. The export of this lace, to America particularly, is very considerable at times. Unfortunately the manufacture of flax threads as fine as those of earlier dates is almost

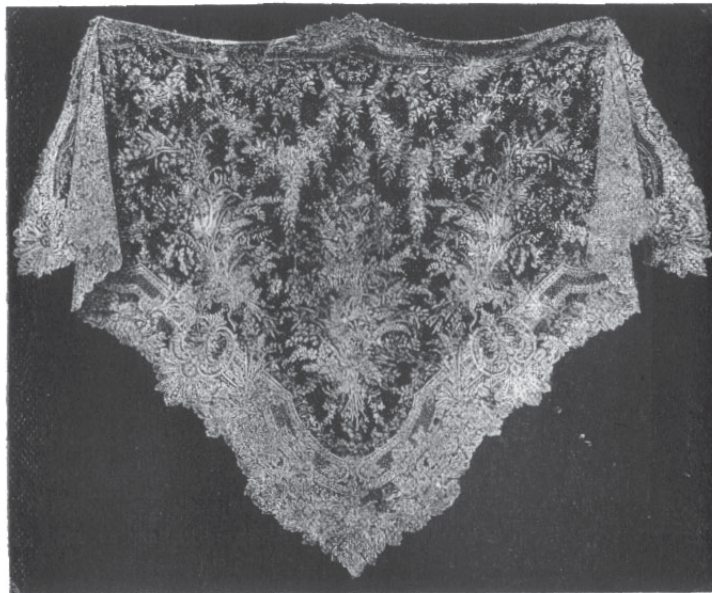


Fig. 110.—Shawl of Belgian needlepoint lace (modern), from a design by Alcide Roussel.

extinct ; and many of the modern laces are made with cotton instead of flax. Nevertheless, whatever orders she is called upon to meet, Belgium carries them out with skill untrammelled by routine (fig. 113). In questions of pattern the impulse of novelty and style

comes from Paris, which fairly claims to be the



Fig. 111.—Cuff of needlepoint lace (modern) called Point Colbert.

foremost inspirer of artistic motive in all lace production.



Fig. 112.—Point de Burano, of modern Belgian manufacture.

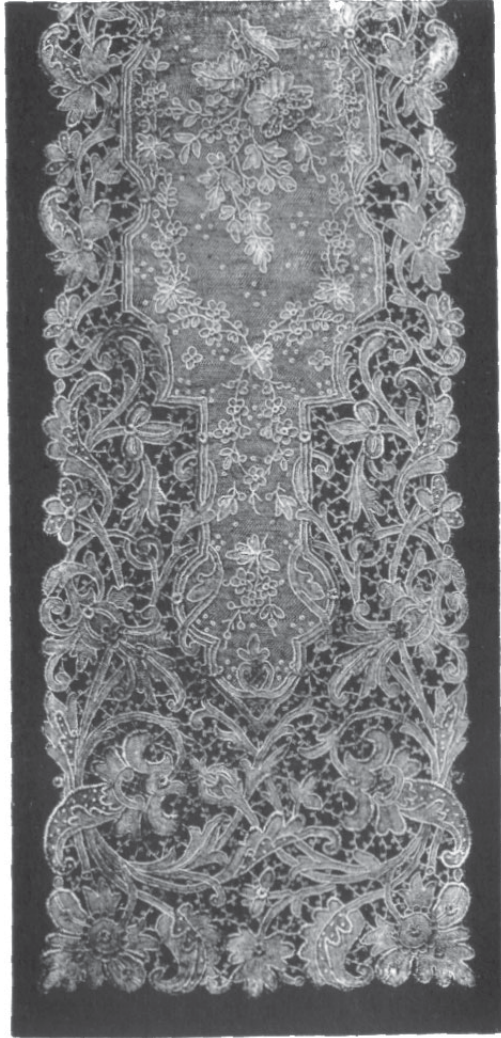


Fig. 113.—Lappet of modern needlepoint lace.

Obedient to the dictates of that invisible but supreme queen, named fashion, the making of these different laces in France, as in Belgium, is more or less extensive, and prospers.

High patronage within recent years has revived Venetian lace-making, which had died out. Under its auspices a school of lace-workers has been established in the island of Burano, a name already mentioned.

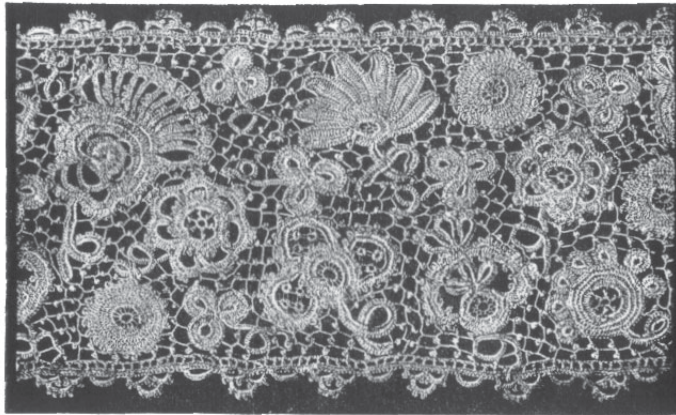


Fig. 114.—Irish crochet lace (*Point d'Irlande*).

“The little isle of Burano,” writes an Italian author, “is situated two leagues to the north-east of Venice; it is the poorest of the archipelago in the lagoon, and withal the richest in beautiful and steady young girls.” Lace-making, as one sees, retains its former place as the occupation of the *virtuose donne*. Some admirable copies of ancient laces made at the Burano school were exhibited in Paris at the Exhibition in 1878.

Austria's contribution to this Exhibition, and that of

Vienna in 1882, consisted of needlepoint laces, for the most part copies of old specimens in her Museum of Industrial Art. In Austria and Hungary there are



Fig. 115.—Flounce of Limerick lace (Ireland), embroidery on net.

many able hands, requiring but well-regulated encouragement to evoke a more serious development of their industry.

At Moscow, in Russia, a lace school produces capital

work, bearing the impress of a Russian taste which leans to a Byzantine style of art.

Lastly, we may mention Ireland, where for some

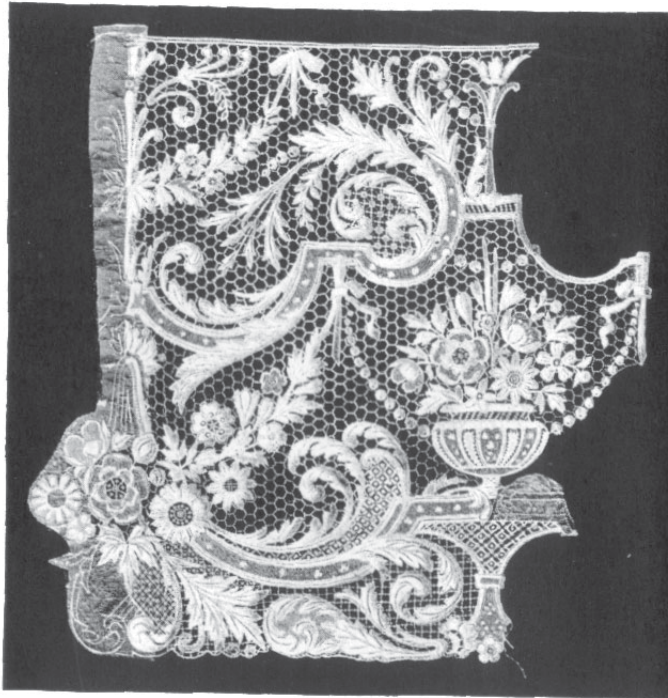


Fig. 116.—Part of a flounce of Kenmare lace (Ireland), flat and slightly raised needlepoint lace.

time lace-making has been pursued. At the time of the famine in 1846 special efforts were made to encourage the industry as a means of assisting a suffering, poverty-stricken population in the "Emerald Isle." The story goes that the first piece of Venetian

lace used as a pattern in Ireland was procured by a Jesuit, and much of the needlepoint lace has been since called "Jesuit lace." In the schools attached to many convents the girls are trained to embroider on net, and to do needlepoint lace. Crochet lace-

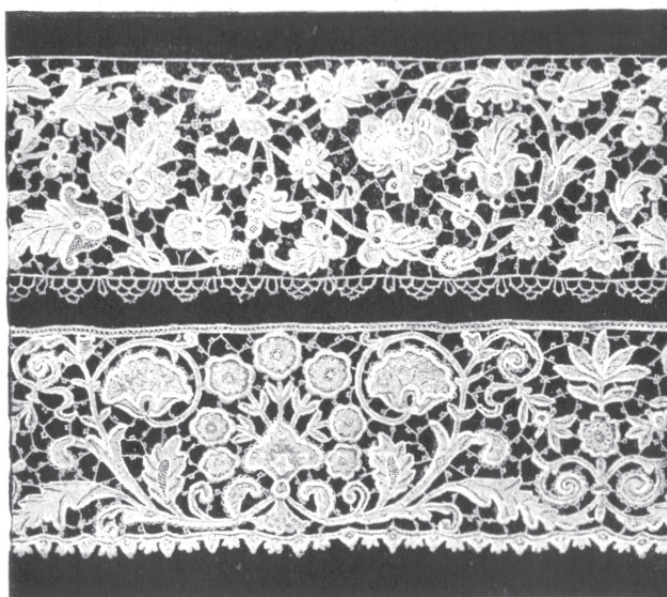


Fig. 117.—Borders of New Ross lace (Ireland), raised needlepoint lace.

making is a speciality (see fig. 114), from which much better results could be obtained. The Department of Science and Art of the Committee of Council on Education has latterly been called upon to aid in the development of the Irish lace industry.*

* The particular form of encouragement given by this Department has been that of payments on results of instruction in drawing and

In crochet lace, which starts from no foundation, as does embroidery with a crochet needle (see p. 4), the work is done upon no tracing on parchment or paper: the work is done in the hand, very much after the manner of knitting. The thread is looped, pulled through the loop as in chain-stitch, knotted, and so forth. By a series of interlocking chain-stitches this crochet lace is produced. Without attaining to great



Fig. 118.—Border of Youghal lace (Ireland), flat needlepoint lace.

value, this class of work is capable of considerable refinement.

Summary.—This slight sketch of needle-made laces

design. Within the last few years lace-making convents have established drawing and designing classes in connection with their lace-schools. These drawing classes are branches of schools of art at Cork and Waterford. The Cork School of Art, under the able guidance of Mr. James Brennan, R.H.A., now supplies lace-schools with patterns for the various classes of Irish lacework. Fig. 115 displays a flounce of embroidery on net worked at Limerick from a design by a student of the school; fig. 116 is part of a flounce worked at the convent of Poor Clares Kenmare, in needlepoint lace, from a design by Miss Julyan, of the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art;

will at least show what an important part they have played in sumptuary arts from the fifteenth century to our days.

It is to be noted that these laces have almost in-

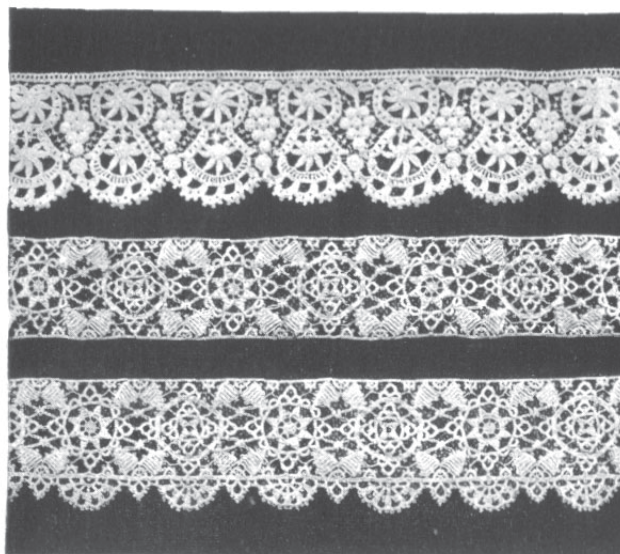


Fig. 119.—Borders and insertion of Cork crochet lace (Ireland).

variably been made of white thread. The needle seems to have disdained using any fantastic threads; and

fig. 117 shows two borders of raised needlepoint lace made at the Carmelite Convent, New Ross, from designs by the master of the Waterford School of Art; fig. 118 is a border of dainty needlepoint lace made at Youghal from a design by the mistress of the Dublin School of Art; and fig. 119 shows some crochet recently made at Cork from new designs by Mr. Holland. Carrickmacross lace consists of cut cambric *guipure* and cut cambric *appliqué* on net. Fig. 120 is of a border and insertion of the latter class of lacework from designs by Miss Anderson.

specimens in which coloured or gold and silver threads have been employed are excessively rare ; such materials have been more frequently used for pillow-made laces. The delicate sculpturesque creations of the needle, with gradations of gentle relief, may be said to be comparable with other laces, as marbles cultpore is with wood-

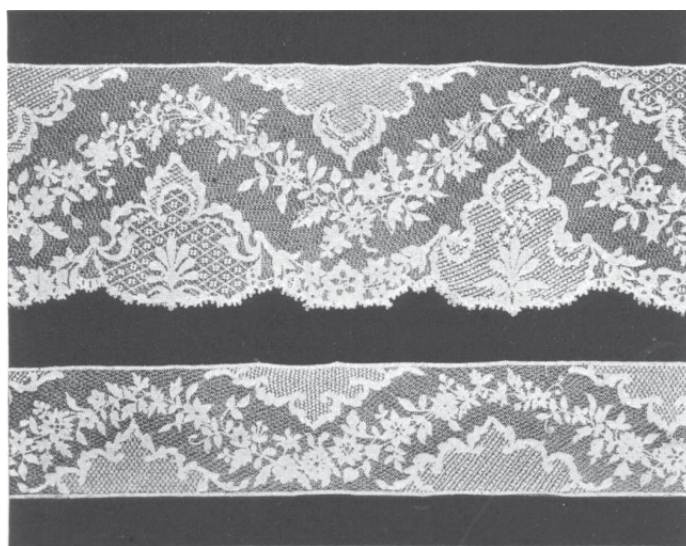


Fig. 120.—Border and insertion of Carrickmacross lace (Ireland), *appliqué* and other embroidery on net.

carving. Charles Blanc, comparing the two classes of hand-made laces, makes the following very apposite remarks :—

“ The dominant character of pillow-made laces is the soft blending of its forms : the needle is to the bobbin and pillow what the pencil point is to the stump. The pattern—of which the definition becomes softened when

wrought in pillow lace—is depicted with crispness by the needle.” This in a measure accounts for the relative importance of needlepoint lace, and its higher value. Point lace is most suited to occasions of state, and rightly possesses an universally recognized prestige.

Notwithstanding many severe trials and ups and downs, the traditions of this beautiful art are not lost. Modern eclecticism, perhaps, even engenders a number of favourable circumstances: it is possible nowadays to reproduce the finest works of other notable times, and there is no lack of skilful workers. Artists and people of taste know how to appreciate the refinements of old laces. If instead of incontinently decrying modern lace they would encourage the execution of well-considered commissions, there is little doubt that modern art could produce results as excellent as those of past centuries. May we then have inspired our readers with a lively interest for the noble and charming art of needlepoint lace-making, which fascinated Louis XIV. and Colbert, and by which many towns and villages have acquired legitimate renown!

BOBBIN OR PILLOW-MADE LACES.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THEIR ORIGIN TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV.

Manufacture.—We have already explained the make of bobbin or pillow laces; briefly, they are tissues produced by intercrossing and plaiting the threads, which are rolled at one end around bobbins and fastened at the other upon a cushion or pillow by means of pins.

Bobbins.—Bobbins (fig. 9) are called *fuseaux* or *bloquets* in French, and *fuselli* or *piombini* in Italian; the latter term apparently implies little shaped blocks of lead. Bobbins were also made of bone, whence the Italian name *ossi*, and the English, bones. But it is customary to speak of them in English as bobbins. They are, in fact, small elongated spindles or reels tapering and swelling at one end into little handles for convenience of manipulation.

The size of bobbins varies according to the usage of districts and the thickness of threads employed. In Belgium bobbins, generally thin and very light, are appropriate for the making of filmy fabrics like Valenciennes and Mechlin laces; in Auvergne, on the contrary,

where stout *guipures* or *torchon* laces are made, involving the use of very different materials, bobbins are much larger. But pillow lace-makers frequently use, for the same piece of work, bobbins of different sizes, in order to readily distinguish the different degrees of thread corresponding with the different bobbins upon which they are respectively wound.

Sometimes a small covering of thin horn is placed around the head of the bobbin, to protect and keep clean from dust its supply of thread. In Normandy these little coverings are called *noquettes*.

Pillows or Cushions.—These are of greater variety even than the bobbins. Some are square, some cylindrical, some pyramidal, some like drums, and some like large pincushions with firm flat base. In England they are generally pillows or cushions (as in fig. 11), and when used without a stand are held on the lap; in Italy they are called *tombola*.

Small and flattened cushions are used in Belgium for making single devices and flowers for *appliqué* lace; long cushions are used at Barcelona; big cushions (fig. 10), upon which upwards of six hundred bobbins may be used, are employed for making delicate laces, as at Bayeux. But the bulkiest forms of cushion are those of the *almofadas*, or species of drum, which the Portuguese of Vianna do Castello or of Peniche gracefully place between their feet on end upon a basket high enough to bring the cushion level with their hands.

Pricking the Patterns.—The pattern over which a pillow lace is made is traced and pricked upon a card or bit of parchment of close and smooth surface, so that the threads, as thrown one over the other,

may not be caught by any little irregularity. The pricked holes show the worker where she is to stick her pins as *points d'arrêt* for the formation of the several stitches. In certain classes of laces as many pin-holes or prickings are necessary as there are meshes in the network of the ground. By means of the prickings, as well as directions written across floral or other ornamental devices of the pattern, several lace-makers, working quite independently, finish similar portions of patterns with such uniformity that the parts can be easily united together to make up one large piece of lace.

If the pattern, instead of being for a particular shape, as for a collar, a head-dress, or a lappet, is for a continuous band of some sort, consisting of repeats of the same ornament, the cushion may be fitted with a rotating cylinder, round which a complete repeat is fastened. With such an appliance, revolving as the work proceeds, the worker has a continuous pattern to work from. The method of two sorts of revolving endless patterns is displayed in *figs. 10 and 11*. It is, however, attended with one drawback, and that is, that, as the threads have to hang in one direction, the make of the lace must follow that direction. Upon a flat cushion the making may spread out in all directions. The lace-worker using a revolving pattern meets with difficulties in rendering certain fillings in flowers, etc., which run across, instead of with, the pattern; whilst the worker upon a flat cushion is not similarly inconvenienced.

On the other hand, the making of lace by the yard is not suited to flat cushions, since each time that a

piece of lace is completed up to the end of the pattern all the pins have to be taken out, and the completed portion of the lace has to be moved up to the head of the pattern and fixed there before its continuation is possible. This, of course, involves loss of time.

However, each kind of cushion or pillow has its peculiar advantages and inconveniences. That best adapted to the special class of lace made in a district is naturally the one most commonly in use there.

Origin of Pillow Lace.—For a long time the question whether pillow-made lace was older in origin than needlepoint lace has been discussed. But it is unlikely that one should be earlier than the other, since the development and use of both sorts of lace are identified with the same period.

Flanders, conceding to Venice priority in needlepoint lace-making, lays claim to the honour of having invented the bobbin or pillow method. Up to the present time no serious or definitive proof has been produced to substantiate this claim. J. Séguin offers the following reasons to show that Belgium did not make pillow lace sooner than Italy:—

The only pattern-books published in Belgium are those of Wilhem Vostermans, who died at Antwerp in 1542, and of Jean de Glen, who died at Liège in 1597. Neither contain patterns for bobbin or pillow laces.

No Flemish portrait earlier than the end of the sixteenth century shows laces upon costume, whereas after that time they abound plentifully.

The Church of St. Gomar, at Lierre, in the province

of Antwerp, possesses a *retable*, said to have been painted in 1495 by Quentin Matsys, in which, amongst other figures, is one of a young girl making lace on a pillow. But connoisseurs deny the authorship attributed to this painting, and consider the work to be by Jean Matsys, probably son of Quentin, who painted at a later date in the manner of his father.

Then again, the words "gold laces," which occur in a treaty of the fifteenth century between the town of Bruges and England, apply to laces in the sense of shoe-laces and cords for lacing up sleeves and dresses.

Séguin concludes: "As soon as Belgium acquired the art of pillow lace-making, she unremittingly applied herself to it, and in a short time converted it into a widespread industry, possessing well-merited reputation on account of the delicacy and beauty of its productions. All countries turned to her for them, and she became, as it were, the classic country of pillow lace. Credit for the invention of the special process was readily given to her, and no one has since taken the trouble to closely examine her title to it."

If as close an investigator as Madame Despierres could some day do for the history of Italian laces what she has done for that of Alençon laces, it seems quite probable that evidence would be forthcoming to corroborate what is at present a conjecture—that towards the year 1500 the north of Italy was the true cradle of the arts of pillow and needlepoint lace-making.

Meanwhile, and in the absence of anything more authentic, one may here repeat the pretty legend of Venice concerning pillow or bobbin lace-making.

“A young fisherman of the Adriatic was betrothed to a beautiful girl of one of the isles in the lagoon. Industrious as she was beautiful, the girl made a new net for her lover, who took it with him on board his boat. The first time he cast it into the sea he dragged therefrom an exquisite petrified wrack-grass, which he hastened to present to his *fiancée*.

“But war breaking out, the sailors and fishermen were pressed into the service of the Venetian navy, and departed for the East.

“The poor young girl wept at the departure of her lover, and for many days inconsolably contemplated his farewell gift to her. But whilst absorbed in following the wondrous and lovely ribs of the petrified wrack-grass, knitted together by the lightest of fibres, she began to twist and plait the threads weighted with small leads which hung around her net; little by little she wrought in a skilful manner a thread imitation of the beloved petrification, and thus was created the *merletti a piombini* (bobbin lace)!”

The story, if not true, is good: *Si non e vero e ben trovato*.

The most ancient mention, known at the present day, of bobbin lace in Italy, occurs in a deed, drawn up at Milan the 12th September, 1493, of assignment of property to two sisters, Angela and Ippolita Sforza, Visconti. One there reads of “*Una binda lavorata a poncto de doii fuxi par uno lenzolo*”—a band of work done with twelve bobbins to trim a sheet. The question of course arises, are these twelve bobbins early types of those which in later times were used by thousands of women for bobbin or pillow lace? Amongst other entries of the

property given to the sisters Sforza is one of "*la mita de un fagotto quale aveva dentro certi designi da lavore le donne*"—half a scrap-book containing several drawings or patterns for ladies' work.

Here, again, is another piece of evidence—a collection of patterns preserved in the Royal Library at Munich, entitled *Neues modelbuch allerley gattungen Dantelschnür*, printed at Zurich by Christopher Froschowern, for all sorts of lace made and used in Germany, for the instruction of apprentices and other women working in Zurich and elsewhere; quarto in twenty-four sheets. On the title-page is a woodcut of two women making bobbin or pillow lace. Then follows a long preface, in which it is said: "Amongst the different arts we must not forget one which has been followed in our country for twenty-five years. Lace-making was introduced in 1536 by merchants from Italy and Venice. Many women seeing a means of livelihood in such work, quickly learned it, and reproduced lace with great skill. They first copied old patterns, but soon were enabled to invent new ones of great beauty. The industry spread itself about the country, and was carried to great perfection: it was found to be one specially suitable for women and brought in good profits. In the beginning these laces were used solely for trimming chemises and shirts; soon afterwards collars, trimmings for cuffs, caps, and fronts and bodies of dresses, for napkins, sheets, pillow-cases and coverlets, etc., were made in lace. Very soon such work was in great demand, and became an article of great luxury. Gold thread was subsequently introduced into some of it, and raised its value considerably; but this

latter sort was attended with the inconvenience that it was more difficult to clean and wash than laces made with flax threads only."

This book of patterns establishes the facts that in 1536 Venice had for some years previously made lace, which had been exported, and that women in Germany and Switzerland had learned, from dealers coming from Venice, the way of making bobbin lace.

What occurred at Zurich also happened in other countries which had similar relations with Italy. Few countries were more closely connected, commercially and otherwise, with Italy than Belgium. Flemish artists flocked in numbers to study painting in Italy. Merchants or designers from Italy probably prompted the imparting of instruction in bobbin lace-making to the Flemings. And from the interest displayed by Flemish artists in this kind of lace Belgium soon assumed a first place as producer of it.

Quicherat tells us that towards the end of the fifteenth century it was the fashion in France to wear silken waistbands or girdles edged with a plaiting of meshes—called *bisette*. The name appears to have been derived from the colour of the silk, which was of brown-bread hue (*pain bis*), whence *bisette*; reminding us of another lace which similarly owes its name to its colour—namely, *blonde*. In the account of the entry of King Henry II. into Lyons on the 23rd September, 1548, we read that "the costumes were of velvet and satin, the humblest being of taffetas; some ornamented with gimp applications, others trimmed with *bisette* or with edgings of silver thread." A few

years later, Elizabeth of France, on the occasion of her marriage with Philip II., made purchases in 1559 of "*bisette* and trimmings made with white thread of Florence."

Judging laces worn at the time by such portraits as that of Henry II. at Versailles (the earliest French painting in which lace is depicted), it will be seen that they were of no greater importance than that belonging to the sisters Sforza-Visconti, which was made with twelve bobbins. The collar of the king is in fact

trimmed with a tiny dentated edging of open work.

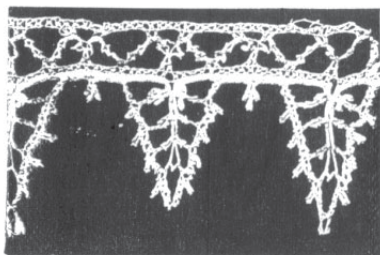


Fig. 121.—A bobbin or pillow-made *passement* of the sixteenth century.

The name *passement* (also used in England in the sixteenth century), was given to the earliest plaited thread laces or bobbin laces (see figs. 121 and 122). It

comes from the title of the corporation of *Passementiers*, who had the monopoly, according to their statutes of 1663 (article 21), "of making all sorts of *passemens* of lacework on the pillow, with bobbins, pins, and by hand" (probably in this case with a hooked or crochet needle), "in gold and silver thread, both real and false, in silk, and white and coloured thread." In the accounts of the king's treasurer, 1557 (*Archives Nationales.*, KK., 106), appears, "*Passement* of fine black silk *dentellé* (with open dentations) on one side."

The accounts of the Queen of Navarre (1577) also

show an entry : " For two ells of silver *passement* with deep dentations (*haute dentelle*), to be used as a facing, at sixty *solz* the ell." *

An inventory (1645) of the Church of St. Médard, at Paris, has mention of " four lengths of fine cambric to surround the pulpit, and a beautiful surplice for the preacher, trimmed with deep *passemens à dentelle*."

Hence *passement* and *dentelle* are convertible terms for bobbin lace, or open work trimmings of plaited and twisted thread.

As we have stated, the *passementiers* or trimming makers often used gimp cord. For bobbin work this gimp cord, from its stiffness, could only be used in respect of large open *passemens*. Whence the name of *guipure* came to be used for all lace in which the grounds were very large and of irregular openings.

Bobbin laces, of less elaborate pattern than needlepoint laces, were cheaper, and gladly welcomed for use by such as could not afford the expense of point lace.

Further, as Charles Blanc so justly says, " When ruffs or gadrooned (pleated) collars were imported from Italy, the needlepoint laces with which some would be trimmed presented a hard appearance, converting the encircling ornament of the neck into a sort of collar bristling with sharp points. But when these stiff *guipures* were superseded by bobbin laces, these lighter and more supple articles softened the contours which they trimmed, and almost gave a vaporous effect to the cut-out shapes of the triple-staged

* *Archives Nationales*, KK., 162.

ruffs imprisoning the heads of their wearers" * (fig. 123).

As rapidly as the industry of pillow lace-making passed into various countries, so, as we have seen in the case of Switzerland, each locality specialized it in some manner, that various characteristic laces were accordingly produced, and came to be identified with their native places.

In Italy, Milan and Genoa were two principal towns in which pillow lace was extensively made, whilst Venice remained the chief centre for needle-points. Very frequently the less complicated of the patterns for needle-made laces were adapted and reproduced by the pillow-

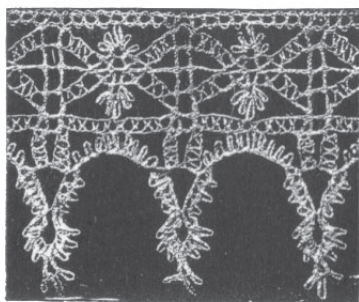


Fig. 122.—Bobbin or pillow-made *passement* (*Musée des Arts décoratifs.*)

lace makers. Gradually, however, the more skilful of the pattern designers of whom Isabetta Catanea Parasole is an instance, invented patterns for pillow laces, marking under them the number of bobbins to be used in working each.

In Saxony Dame Barbara Etterlein, wife of Christopher Uttmann, a great proprietor of mines, living in the castle of St. Annaberg, introduced the industry of pillow lace-making to the wives of the miners, as a means of profit for the family purse. A story is

* Charles Blanc, *l'Art dans la Parure*, p. 291.

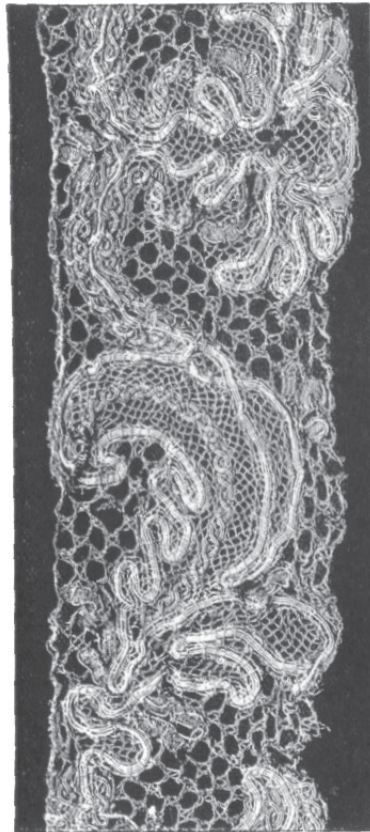
told of an old woman—somewhat of a sorceress, no doubt—who, noticing the kindly devotion of the good Châtelaine of St. Annaberg in instructing the poor peasant women to make pillow lace, foretold that St. Anne would reward her in making her children



Fig. 123. - Portrait attributed to Van Mierevelt, 1568—1641
(belonging to M. G. Duplessis).

prosper, in allowing none to die during her lifetime, and in multiplying their descendants so that they should be as numerous as the bobbins in the district. The prediction was approximately verified, since, on her death in 1575, Barbara Uttmann left sixty-five children and grandchildren.

In Spain, fine and rich fabrics made at the different



hôtels des Tiraz were greatly esteemed ; and silk and gold and silver thread passements were freely produced to adorn them. These passements were for a long time known under the name of Spanish points (*Points d'Espagne*), on account of the admirable workmanship displayed in them. *Finesse* was not perhaps so marked a quality in them as that of glittering and massive effect. This characteristic makes it easy to distinguish a *Point d'Espagne* when one happens to meet with it (fig. 124).

Fig. 124.—Pillow lace of gold and silk thread made in Spain (*Point d'Espagne*).

Belgium and Holland were noted, not for pillow laces made with silk, gold and silver thread, but for those made with delicate flax threads. In those countries the best linens of the world were woven ; with threads of similar

material were made the very fine laces for trimming broad collars and great linen cuffs, which are to be seen in the Flemish portraits of the period* (fig. 125). The designs for such laces were distinct from the Italian patterns, and were usually composed of devices derived from the local flora. These departures and improvements raised Flanders to the front rank as a pillow lace-making country.

Whilst the French Court enriched itself with both Italian and Flemish laces, its humbler followers contented themselves with laces of less pretence. The farmer's wife trimmed her caps and the townsfolk their dresses with laces called *mignonnette*, *campane*, and *gueuse*—the latter a very popular passement—all of which play a part in the Revolt of the Laces (*Révolte des Passements*), already cited, and were made in considerable quantities in the suburbs of Paris. The greater part of these smaller laces were rigid, without much ornamental design in them, and it is scarcely fitting to mention them in a treatise which proposes in the main to deal with the artistic side of lace-making.

Of the French provinces where pillow lace-making was soonest established as an industry the Auvergne is the first in age.

Many of the men there were employed as carriers—an occupation of considerable importance before good highways and the means of wheel traffic were known. These hardy mountaineers, travelling by short stages, with packs on their backs, undertook long journeys, and storing themselves in the Midi with costly merchan-

* *Histoire de la Peinture Hollandaise*, by Henry Havard, p. 72.

dize like silks and laces, which are easily portable, would come to Paris and the north of France to find



Fig. 125.—Portrait of a courtier of the period of Louis XIII.
(after Abraham Bosse).

markets for them. Thus, no doubt, they returned to their native districts with intelligence of the new

industry of pillow lace-making, in the produce of which considerable trade flourished between Paris and Italy. The women of the Auvergne set themselves to imitate these new wares, which in course of time their husbands took off to sell,—selling them with good profit on their line of journey here and there, and often at great fairs like those of Beaucaire and Guibray, where places in the *fosse aux toiles* were assigned to the itinerant lace vendors.

The same sort of dissemination of knowledge about lace-making and of traffic in its wares took place in Lorraine, whence, in 1615, Claude Gelée, a young man, afterwards surnamed Le Lorrain, travelled into Italy in company with his uncle, a carrier and dealer in laces, who was anxious to get his nephew instructed in the art of painting, for which he displayed precocious predilection.

Aurillac and Le Puy-en-Velay were the chief centres of lace-making in the Auvergne. Gold and silver laces were made principally at Aurillac, and were exported in great quantities to Spain, where the consumption of such goods often exceeded the home production. Le Puy, however, was more noted for thread laces and silk guipures.

The lace industry was found to be of much profit by the numerous families adopting it; and when its development and the accompanying prosperity were menaced through sumptuary edicts, public feeling ran high against them.

Outdoing the edict of Louis XIII., passed in 1629, which permitted “a consumption of laces provided they were manufactured in the kingdom at a cost not exceeding three livres the ell for insertion and edging,” the

Parliament of Toulouse issued a decree which the Seneschal of Le Puy made known in 1639 to the sound of the trumpet throughout the town, and was severer than the king's. This decree forbade, under penalty of a heavy fine, "everybody of either sex, quality, or condition from wearing any sort of lace, whether of silk or white thread with glittering passement of gold or silver, real or false." This naturally produced consternation amongst the inhabitants of Le Puy; and well-nigh annihilated the industry throughout the province. At this juncture a Jesuit Father, since canonized by the Church as St. François Régis, appeared as a preacher in Le Puy and in Auvergne, distributing wherever he went pious advice and charitable relief so effectually as to lighten the unhappy effects of the decree. Moved by the sufferings and lamentations of women reduced to misery, he said, "Have confidence; pray to God to help me, and lace-making shall not perish!" Then taking his departure for Toulouse, he interceded with much fervour in favour of the Auvergnese lace-workers, and obtained from the local Parliament a revocation in the following year, 1640, of its cruel decree. In addition he commended to the tender protection of his religious brethren—Spanish Jesuits—the lace-workers who carried their laces for sale to the southern side of the Pyrenees. Trade and prosperity revived, and to this day the lace-makers of the Auvergne invoke St. François Régis as their patron saint.

That consummate connoisseur of gems, fine stones, and *objets d'art*, Cardinal Mazarin, held the Aurillac laces in high appreciation. These laces are frequently

mentioned in the inventory of the property he left at his death in 1661. "The doublet and breeches of scarlet cloth belonging to Mons. le Cardinal are bordered with red and black silk laces."

The *Mercure Galant*, giving a description of a masked ball, says that "the Prince de Conti wore a mantle of Point d'Aurillac of gold and silver;" the Duchesse de Mortemart "wore below her plumes a veil of silver Aurillac lace falling over her shoulders;" whilst the Marquis de Colbert, as an African, had "long hanging sleeves bordered with gold Aurillac laces."

The king, Louis XIV., wore a costume made by his tailor, Claude Hochar, of black brocaded with gold flowers, for which he paid thirteen hundred livres, and which consisted of doublet, breeches, shoes, cloak, and gloves, all bordered with silk guipure."

Under such excellent patronage it is easy to understand why in the *Révolte des Passements* Aurillac laces are represented as being so accustomed to perfumed saloons, that they hesitate about returning to their mountain homes to be used probably for no better purpose than for tying up Roquefort cheeses!

Early pillow laces were comparatively narrow; throughout Italy, France, Spain, and Flanders, they were made in strips on the pillow, the bobbins hanging in one and the same direction. When the demand for wider trimmings arose, increased width of lace was obtained by adding a passement or dentated border to the band—"bande et passement." In the sixteenth century similar means were resorted to. But in the seventeenth century the making of wide laces was attempted. Then arose the question of how to divide

and distribute the work for facility of execution. In Italy, France, and Spain large pieces of lace were made by dividing the pattern into horizontal bands,



Fig. 126.—Louis XIV. when a child, after a portrait by Mignard.

the pieces of which could be stitched together. In Belgium another means was invented; this consisted of dividing the pattern, not by bands, but into small

and separate pieces, the boundaries of which coincided with the capricious curves of flowers, leaves, or other ornaments in the pattern, after the manner of dividing up needlepoint lace patterns. This ingenious division, whereby the distribution of a single large pattern could be effected in numberless small pieces, was to a large extent a cause of the great success which attended the Belgian industry. By working each *motif* of a pattern independently, the union of the separate pieces together became a more certain and successful operation, especially when each happened to be of rich and complicated work. Instead of *passemens* like those of Italy and France, in which the open parts dominated around slender and thin devices of patterns, the Flemish bethought them of a totally different character of lace. They gave greater attention to the making of the close portions, obtaining richer contrasts between them and the adjoining parts rendered in open stitches. The compact work in the floral designs assimilated admirably with the wide flat linen collars which were fashionable in Flanders. This fashion passed over to France; and under Louis XIII. the wide flat collar (see figs. 125 and 126) superseded the pleated ruffs, the edgings of which had been the means of creating a reputation for the *punti in aere* and the Italian *passemens* (or *merletti à piombini*). Flemish *guipures* therefore mark a progress in the making of pillow laces, and deservedly enjoyed a success. Up to the death of Mazarin, Louis XIV. himself wore nothing but *rabats* (or bands falling over the chest from below the chin) of pillow-lace *guipures*, to which several portraits of the young king by Mignard testify. It

was only at the age of twenty-five, and at the suggestion of Colbert, who had succeeded Mazarin, that the king took to wearing Venetian needlepoints. Two or three years later he thought of having them reproduced by French skill.

In the course of the seventeenth century, laces with meshed grounds or nets (*réseaux*) were first made in Belgium. These were produced by much the same methods as those for the Flemish *guipures*, and often after the same patterns, with modifications in the grounds only. But by a strange anomaly such laces, although made in the same way and in the same country, were variously called *guipures de Flandres* when bars or ties were introduced between the ornamental devices, or *dentelles* or *Points d'Angleterre* when meshed grounds were used instead of bars or ties.

Many explanations have been offered as to the variation in naming these laces. England no doubt has made lace, but all the world knows that she has sold a much larger quantity than she herself ever produced. She imported them from Belgium, and sold them to France and elsewhere, giving them her own name, and not that of the country of their origin. Mrs. Palliser explains what took place thus:

"The English, close neighbours of the Flemish, were amongst the first to appreciate the beautiful laces made by the latter. From the seventeenth century England consumed an immense quantity of Flemish laces; and when those with meshed grounds made their appearance she literally monopolized the wearing of them. But extravagance in this direction provoked, as it did

in France, the issue of sumptuary edicts. In 1662 the English Parliament, alarmed at the sums of money expended on foreign point, and desirous to protect the English bone lace manufacture, passed an Act prohibiting the importation of all foreign lace. The English lace-merchants, at a loss how to supply the Brussels point required at the court of Charles II., invited Flemish lace-makers to settle in England and there establish the manufacture. The scheme, however, was unsuccessful: England did not produce the necessary flax, and the lace made was inferior in quality. The merchants therefore adopted a more simple expedient. Possessed of large capital, they bought up the choicest laces of the Brussels market, and then smuggling them over to England, sold them under the name of *Points d'Angleterre*, or 'English Point.' The account of the seizure made by the Marquis de Nesmond of a vessel laden with Flanders lace, bound for England, in 1678, will afford some idea of the extent to which this smuggling was carried on. The cargo comprised 744,953 ells of lace, without enumerating handkerchiefs, collars, fichus, aprons, petticoats, fans, gloves, etc., all of the same material. From this period, *Point de Bruxelles* became more and more unknown, and was at last effaced by *Point d'Angleterre*, a name it still retains."

What seems evident from this, is that the name *Points d'Angleterre* was adopted, not for the *Guipures de Flandres* already known in England and passing as English laces, but for the newly invented laces with meshed grounds.

Another explanation, and possibly a more logical

one, might be that English pillow lace-makers may have made laces with meshed grounds. These becoming the vogue, the English supply may have been inadequate to the demand, and so the English dealers had recourse to Flemish labour in the production of similar laces, which would be termed "*Points d'Angleterre à réseaux*."

"*Une grande dentelle d'Angleterre*" is spoken of in the *Révolte des Passements* (1661). In all inventories of the period entries of such lace occur: the *Mercurie Galant* often mentions it, and goes so far as to say, in 1678, that "corsage and sleeves were bordered with a white and delicate lace, which undoubtedly came from the best lace-making centres in England."

The earliest *Points d'Angleterre* were made in separate pieces, each, however, consisting of ornament and meshed ground. Later, however, the subdivision of labour was increased. The flower (fig. 146) or ornament alone was made by certain hands, whilst others would be employed in making bands of net or meshed ground, on which the flowers were *appliqués* or stitched with a needle. This class of lace was called *application d'Angleterre*. It is not quite determined whether this lace was made towards the end of the seventeenth or in the succeeding century. On this point we shall have more to say in the next chapter.

When Colbert founded the Royal Manufactory in 1665, at the Hôtel de Beaufort, Paris, he directed the head administration to arrange for the making "of all sorts of threadwork, both with the needle and with bobbins on the pillow," in the various selected centres. But if this experiment was less successful in

respect of bobbin laces than of needlepoint laces, the making of the two sorts has a bearing on the history of bobbin or pillow lace-making which is of importance and cannot be ignored. Besides, has not Voltaire told us that whilst two hundred head lace-makers were induced to come from the Netherlands into France, not more than thirty came from Venice?

The French towns in which lace-making was organized as an industry were numerous; some, no doubt, achieved little or no success with it; and one never hears now of the lace-making efforts of Rheims, Auxerre, Loudun, La Flèche, Le Mans,—all of which, however, are mentioned in Colbert's Correspondence, which reveals the minister's close interest in the fortunes of the industry he so warmly promoted. Of the towns materially benefited by his energy and encouragement, we may name above others Aurillac, Arras, and Le Quesnoy.

The latter town is probably unknown to most of our readers as one famed for its lace-making. This, however, is accounted for by its having been supplanted in the eighteenth century by its better-known neighbour, Valenciennes. The invention of Valenciennes laces, amongst the most esteemed of bobbin or pillow laces, is undoubtedly a development of the lace-making operations founded at Le Quesnoy by Colbert. On its first appearance in the seventeenth century little was said about Valenciennes lace; and, as we shall further on show, it was not until the following century that it became famous.

The first Norman centre of lace-making was Havre; and as early as 1661 Havre laces were known and

are referred to in the *Révolte des Passements*. In 1692 the Governor, M. de St. Aignan, gave a great impulse to the Havre industry, in which some twenty thousand fisherwomen or peasants of Caux were engaged. The Duc de Penthièvre, who lived at the Château d'Eu, was also a leading patron of this pillow lace-making.

Paris was affected by the general movement initiated by Louis XIV. and Colbert. Apart from the offices of the royal lace manufactories, at the Hôtel de Beaufort in Paris, rooms for lace-workers were provided in the Château de Madrid,* in the Bois de Boulogne, principally for pillow lace-makers. Their influence extended to the Ile-de-France, where, according to the Marquis de la Gombardière, "the children of ten thousand families were taught to make laces." Chantilly also dates its lace manufacture from this time.

The *Point de Paris* was a somewhat common little lace, made in the *Faubourg St. Antoine*. And on this account, no doubt, the Comte de Marsan, youngest son of the Comte d'Harcourt, fixed upon this quarter of the town as the more suitable in which to find lodgings for his former nurse, a Madame Dumont of Brussels. He obtained from the king a licence for her to employ all the pillow lace-makers there. Assisted by her four daughters, Madame Dumont supervised nearly two hundred of the lace-workers in the suburb. Her management was attended with such prosperity that she determined to transfer her workwomen to a more central place. She accordingly placed them in one or

* A silk stocking manufactory also found accommodation in the Château de Madrid.

other of the numerous buildings which formed the Hôtel de Chaumont, situated in the Rue St. Denis and the Rue St. Sauveur. Whether it was from the great and unnecessary size of the hôtel buildings, or what, Madame Dumont's prosperity did not follow her here; and shortly after she took her departure for Portugal to establish a lace-making centre there, leaving the direction of the manufactory in the Hôtel de Chaumont to Mdle. de Marsan.

The *Livre Commode; or, Addresses in the City of Paris*, by Pradel, published in 1692, shows that the lace-makers during the reign of Louis XIV. occupied work-rooms, near the beginning of the Rue St. Honoré, between the Place aux Chats and the Piliers des Halles. Two streets intersected it,—the Rue des Bourdonnais, in which silk laces were specially sold; and the Rue de Béthisy where points and thread laces were sold.

Summary.—The details given in the foregoing pages indicate that the demand for bobbin or pillow laces began to display itself very little later than that for needlepoint laces, and that in the seventeenth century the manufacture of them sprang up in different places. The success of pillow lace-making in the first periods of its life was not as great as that of needlepoint lace-making. Venice and Alençon reigned supreme in the latter industry. Some years intervened before pillow lace-making rose in public estimation, and was called upon to interpret designs of artistic character. Many of the now better-known places, like Valenciennes, Mechlin, Chantilly, had enjoyed no reputation in the earlier days of pillow lace-making. Colbert nevertheless had well prepared the soil; in the north, as in

the centre, of the country, from Arras and Le Quesnoy to Aurillac and Loudun, he had spread a network of instruction, and had sown seeds which were destined to bear fruit.

Belgium, through the invaluable aid of English trade, began to find outlets to all countries for the produce of her lace industry, and infused into pillow laces special technical characteristics which have not since been superseded. Their development, in many branches, belongs to the reign of Louis XV., when, as we shall see, filmy and supple pillow laces flourished in an extraordinary manner, whilst needlepoint laces appear to have been stricken with a sort of decadence after the death of the Grand Monarque.

Whilst, then, the apogee of the needlepoint method of making laces is in the seventeenth century, that of the bobbin or pillow process belongs to the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER II.

FROM LOUIS XV. TO THE PRESENT TIME.

PILLOW laces have preserved those well-marked characteristics which are to be observed in specimens made at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Instead of their patterns being, as they were at first, imitations of those for needlepoint laces, a new departure was made when patterns were designed to meet the peculiar requirements of the bobbin or pillow method of manufacture. Woman's coquetry, cultivated to its utmost limits during a century of elegance, whetted keenness of perception in initiating all the effects which were possible with such supple and diaphanous tissues, soft and yielding to the touch, graceful in folds, and ethereal in filminess, as were procurable from dainty twistings and plaitings done with bobbins. Hence arose that series of charming productions known respectively as Valenciennes, Mechlin, Angleterre, Chantilly, and Blonde laces, each of which possesses individuality of style. In attempting to describe them, we hope to demonstrate their right to the reputation which they have inherited down to the present time.

Foregoing chronological order in our remarks upon these laces, we hope to avoid much repetition which would be inevitable were we to deal with these laces

by historic periods analogous to those touched upon in describing embroidery and needlepoint laces. At the same time, it is but right to say that this plan of proceeding cannot but be somewhat incomplete, since little short of a separate volume would suffice for fully setting forth all the variety of details to be found in these typical classes of pillow lace. Our remarks will therefore be limited to generic types of pillow lace, to one

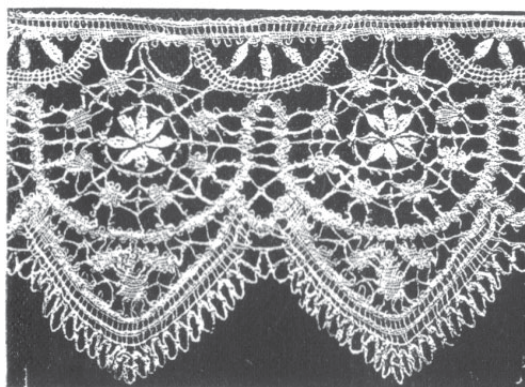


Fig. 127.—*Guipure* of Le Puy, also called Cluny lace.

or the other of which other pillow laces are nearly related.

Passement.—The oldest class of bobbin or pillow lace is, as we have previously stated, that of *passements*, the light and open *guipures* figured in the pattern books. The making of these has not ceased since its commencement early in the sixteenth century. From being somewhat spasmodic, and undertaken by few women, the industry became localized in different parts of France, particularly Le Puy and at Mirecourt.

The Auvergne has ever since retained its celebrity as a classic home of *guipures* made in bands, for which designs of geometric character, with *motifs* like squares, stars, and formal blossoms, have been and continue to be chiefly used. The great number of women engaged in this industry, the simplicity of their life in the mountains, and its modest requirements, have helped to make this local lace-making the most important in the world. In 1851 Felix Aubry computed from official returns that upwards of 130,000 women were then

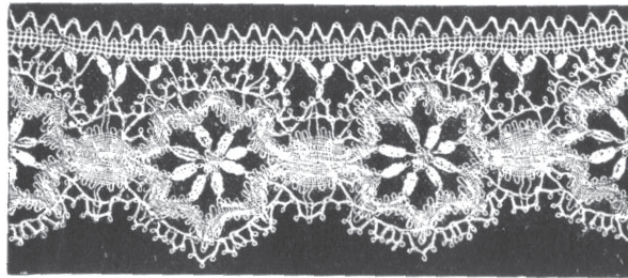
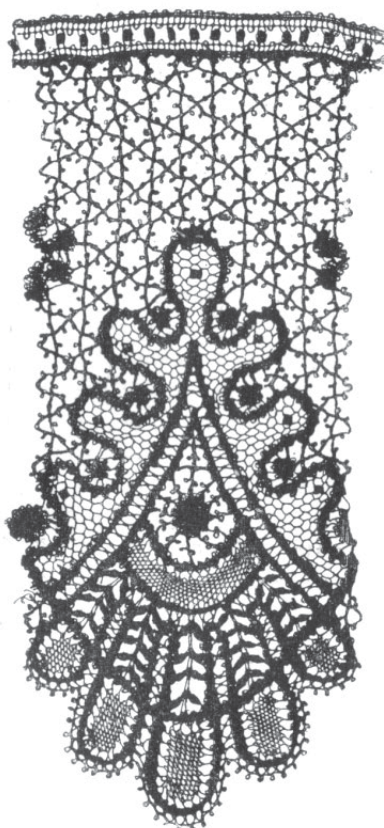


Fig. 128.—*Passement* in fine thread (Le Puy or Mirecourt).

engaged in it. Thread *passemets*, as shown in fig. 122, have always been made by them. From time to time fashion discards, whilst at others it favours these *passemets*, as was recently the case when a demand for *Guipures de Cluny* arose (fig. 127). This purely fanciful name was adopted from the Musée de Cluny, where samples of ancient laces are preserved.

But that which has tended more than anything else to the perpetuation of the industry, is the versatility of the Auvergnese workers in using with equal facility variety of threads. As circumstances require, flax,

silk, worsted, goat's hair, and Angora rabbit hair threads are employed. Black *guipures* (figs. 129 and 130), in



the production of which the industry has for a great part of the present century been engaged, are made with a rich and strong silk thread. These certainly reflect more honour upon the lace-making of Le Puy than any other kinds of kindred work made there; and it is perhaps surprising that they do not keep a longer hold upon public taste. No where have better woollen laces been made than in the Auvergne. Somewhat thick in texture and bold in pattern, they nevertheless harmonize admirably when

Fig. 129.—Black silk *guipure* (Le Puy). used as trimmings to dresses made of similar material.

Gold and silver laces long famous at Aurillac continue to be made in the Auvergne.



Fig. 130.—Flounce of black silk *guipure* (in the museum of Le Puy).

Craponne is notable for its furniture stout thread *guipures* of low price.

Mirecourt in the Vosges makes a similar lace to

that of Le Puy, but rather finer in quality. The workmanship is careful and the patterns are well chosen. Considerable efforts have been put forward to develop this class of lace-making which has existed for so long in Lorraine, but the double competition of the Auvergne on the one hand, and Belgium on the other, in each of which a far larger number of lace-makers are at work, has often pressed the Lorraine industry sorely; still it maintains its reputation as one of the best directed branches in respect of artistic aim (fig. 128).

In Italy, Genoa has remained faithful to the production of well-made *guipures* with small blossom or seed devices but rather gross in quality. A characteristic which is noticed in the *Révolte des passements* when the *Point de Gènes* is spoken of as having a too stout substance ("le corps un peu gros"). Black silk *guipures* made in the villages of the seaboard are very much of the same nature as those made in Malta.

No matter what may be the class of material used in respect of the threads and their size, the make of all these *guipures* accords with that of the primitive *passements*; the patterns, on the whole, are geometric, and the work is made in bands.

Point de Milan.—Milan, after first making *passements*, adopted patterns of flowing scrolls and blossoming flowers, after the style of the Venetian points *à foliami*. In these we have another sort of *guipure*, the leading feature of which is the bold flowing scroll devices. These undoubtedly lacked the rich reliefs which abounded in the Venetian needlepoint laces of similar

ornamental *motifs*: the flowers in this Milanese lace were flat and wrought with the appearance of compactly woven linen; here and there, somewhat sparsely, would be introduced open fillings (*à jours*), or else small holes would be left to lighten the tape-like effect of the close work. At the same time, the plaited bars or tyes used as a ground to the earlier patterns very admirably set

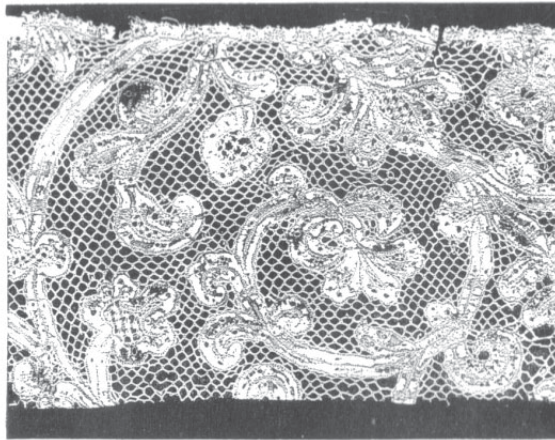


Fig. 131.—Milanese pillow lace with mesh ground.

off the curved and scrolled devices. As in the Venetian points, eagles, armorial bearings, and crowns were frequently intermingled with them.

Unfortunately the taste for grounds of small meshes carried all before it in the eighteenth century; and although characteristic scrolls and flowers were still used in patterns, they were not so effective in contrast with the meshed grounds (figs. 131 and 132) as they had been with the bars or tyes of the *guipures*. Genoa

imitated Milan; and Venice herself did the same in respect of those of her pillow laces which were made in the island of Palestrina and Chioggia. A distinctiveness, however, belongs to the *Points de Milan* as a class of pillow-made laces.*

A version of these Milanese laces has been produced by using tape for the scroll forms and flowers, and filling in the open portions, between the tapes, with needle-point stitches.



Fig. 132.—Milanese pillow lace with mesh ground, eighteenth century (the property of Madame Franck).

Belgium, as already stated, was the earliest of lace-making countries to free herself from Italian influence in the matters of make and pattern, and to strike out an independent path. The development of the *Point de Flandres* about the period of Louis XIII. has been sketched. The style of its patterns was flowery and rich, somewhat heavy in detail, of very flat work (fig. 126), notable for delicate veinings composed of

* This industry is still kept up round about the little town of Cantu in the province of Milan.

pinholes to lighten with happy effect the close white surfaces. Comparatively primitive as this style is, it nevertheless contains the germs of the later and varied productions we now propose to allude to.

Valenciennes Lace.—This did not acquire a distinctive appellation until the eighteenth century; it will be remembered that the centre of the manufacture

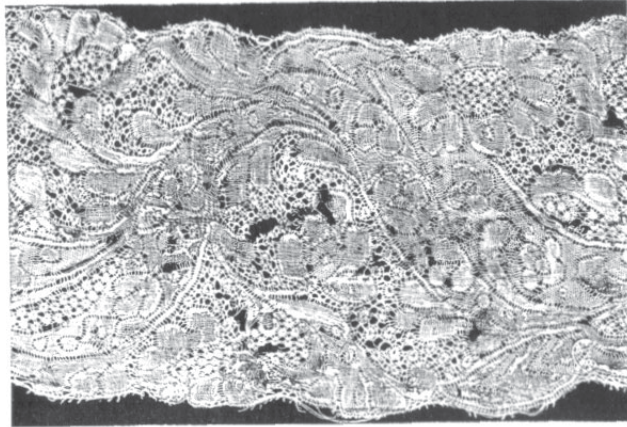


Fig. 133.—Valenciennes lace with "snowy ground" (*fond de neige*).

at the time of Colbert was Le Quesnoy. But the Flemish mistresses of the craft clearly instructed the workers there to produce flat and closely made pillow lace such as we have described. This make of lace, especially in respect of floral and other ornamental details, survives throughout various phases of what is known as Valenciennes lace. The modifications, which gave birth to the features of these various phases, applied to the grounds and portions intervening

between the floral and ornamental devices. Little by little the intervening spaces were enlarged and subjected to different treatments. The small bars or ties, to be noted in the prototypes of Valenciennes laces, were superseded by groupings of dots or pea forms which, in dainty white thread intertwistings, assumed the appearance of orderly sprinklings of snow-flakes, whence Valenciennes laces in which these grounds occurred were spoken of, as in the *Révolte des passe-*



Fig. 134.—Valenciennes lace, seventeenth century (in the *Musée des Arts décoratifs*).

ments, as *Escadrons de Neige* (Squadrons of Snow) (fig. 133).

After divers variations (fig. 134) in the making of grounds, the classic meshed ground, with which the name of Valenciennes has since become identified, was developed. In this the mesh is square or diamond shape, of great regularity, very open, and each side of it is of closely plaited threads (fig. 135). Both floral ornament and ground of meshes are worked together with the same quality of thread. The ornament is not picked out with any outline of thread, as is the case with Mechlin lace (see fig. 139); and

the absence of such thread or of any work in the nature of relief, conduces to facility in successfully washing Valenciennes lace, which, of all laces, is most easily ironed and suitable for being "got up" with linen.

The elegant dishabilles of duchesses and marchionesses in the eighteenth century were bedecked with exquisite laces of this sort; their light flowery patterns, very delicately veined in the fine filmy parts, were agreeably set off by the intervening grounds of diamond-shaped meshes, which formed a dainty trellis-

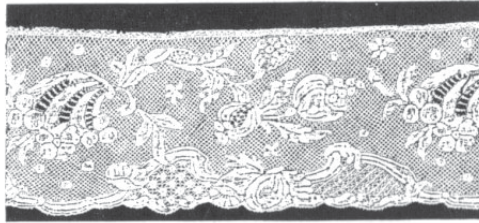


Fig. 135.—Valenciennes lace (eighteenth century).

work about them. These laces certainly justified their reputation.

Up to the period of the Revolution, the town of Valenciennes had been the centre of this particular industry. Its name has always been associated with it, notwithstanding that for some time lace-making has disappeared from the town itself. The industry is now carried on in two provinces of Belgium. Almost all the convents for poor girls, and the *béguinages*, where widows and spinsters congregate in communities, make Valenciennes laces. Along the line between Poperinghe, Courtrai, and Ghent an active commerce in these laces

is carried on; the town of Ypres makes a better quality (fig. 136).

In France, Valenciennes laces are made at the small frontier town of Bailleul, where a museum of laces has been established. Valenciennes and other large towns have, however, taken no trouble to preserve the smallest specimen of the fabrics which made their names famous.



Fig. 136.—Modern Valenciennes (Ypres) lace, with square mesh ground.

During the last thirty years a lace termed Valenciennes-Brabant has been made, in which the division of labour, common to Flemish laces, has been adopted. Instead of being made in one piece, as is the case with Valenciennes lace, the flowers and ornaments are made first and the groundwork is then inserted between them. This process is well adapted to the production of large pieces which could not be conveniently pro-

duced in narrow bands or strips of lace (fig. 137).

Mechlin Lace.—This is a light-looking lace, the close

portions of the ornament and flowers, etc., being more



Fig. 137.—Flounce of Valenciennes-Brabant lace.

filmy than those in Valenciennes laces. It is indeed the most supple of all laces ; but a more distinguishing

feature in it is the fine bright thread which outlines all the ornamental shapes in it. Before the meshed ground, ultimately adopted as the more suitable, was decided on, various attempts and experiments were made, as in the case of the Valenciennes ground, and amongst these a notable snow ground (*fond de neige*, see fig. 138) sur-

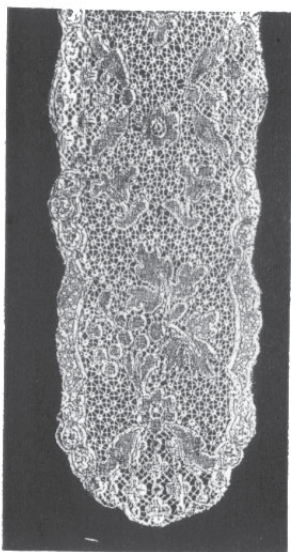


Fig. 138.—Lappet of Mechlin lace
“snowy ground” (*fond de neige*).

vived for some time. At length, however, a normal type of ground with small hexagonal meshes, somewhat resembling that of Brussels pillow lace, only with shorter plaited sides to each mesh, was adopted. It is without question the prettiest of all pillow-made grounds. Mechlin lace was in great request during the reign of Louis XV., and the *rococo* style of ornament prevailed in its designs. To some extent in their lightness and transparence they may be compared with similar patterns upon contemporary engraved glasses from

Saxony and Bohemia (fig. 139). Under Louis XVI. floral sprays and delicate interlacings which gave opportunities for varieties of fillings (*à jours*) were used in the patterns. Later on, the patterns consisted of orderly scatterings of tiny blossoms, spots, and so forth, which make a pleasing play of effect in contrast with

the regularity of the meshed grounds. No better lace can be found to assimilate with, and adorn, light textures such as gauze and muslin. It is admirably suited for *barbes* and headdresses, and our grandmothers showed cunning appreciation of its appropriateness in bedecking their undulating mounds of white hair.

The district between Mechlin, Antwerp, and Louvain has always been celebrated for its make of Mechlin lace.

Lille and Arras laces are somewhat of the same

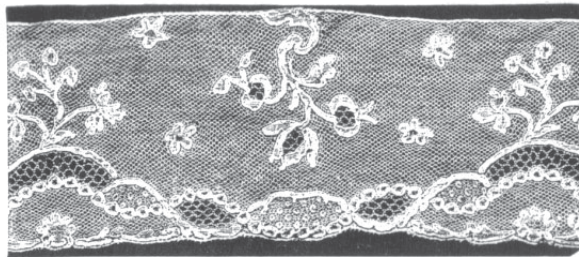


Fig. 139.—Mechlin lace (eighteenth century).

character; the principal difference between them and Mechlin being in the less elaborated make of their grounds, in which the meshes are made by twisting, not plaiting, threads; the other portions of the lace are of the same make as Mechlin.

In the country about Bayeux, laces, having a close affinity to Mechlin lace, are manufactured with fine thread. Important pieces for *fichus*, *mantillas*, or head scarves, coming from this district, have all the suppleness and softness which contribute to the seductive charm of this class of lace (fig. 140).

Chantilly.—Chantilly, in the seventeenth century,

became the rallying point of the lace-makers from the Ile-de-France. After producing lace of modest artistic pretension, such as *gueuse* and the *Point de Paris*, which latter was a sort of second-rate Mechlin or Valenciennes type of lace, Chantilly suddenly achieved a reputation by making silk laces, especially those in black silk.

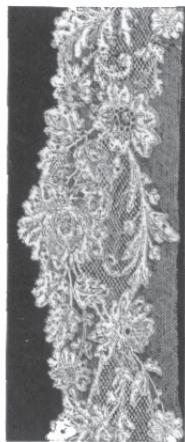


Fig. 140.—White thread pillow lace (Bayeux).

Specimens of old Chantilly lace, whether of white or black silk, are remarkable for patterns in which are introduced vases and flowery baskets similar in shape and decoration to those made in Chantilly pottery, which were highly esteemed at the same time as Chantilly lace (fig. 141).

The material employed for the Chantilly black laces is a silk termed *grenadine d'Alais*. The peculiar twist in spinning these silk threads diminishes the brilliant silkiness of the unspun material, and persons frequently imagine that Chantilly black lace is therefore made with black flax.

The earliest form of mesh in Chantilly lace grounds is a lozenge, crossed at its two opposite points by horizontal threads. Grounds with meshes of this description are termed *fonds chant*, an abbreviation of the name Chantilly (fig. 142). The fillings introduced into the flowers and other ornaments in Chantilly lace are of mesh grounds of old date, which, according to the districts where they were made, are called *vitré*, *marriage*, or *cinq trous*. Chantilly, however, less than

its sister centres of manufacture, withstood the temptation of imitating the mesh common to Alençon grounds, which for a long time has been employed in almost all other black laces.

Black lace, however, has not been in such general demand as white laces. That it possesses characteristic charm, and is peculiarly suitable for the wear of ladies of a certain age, few will be disposed to deny. As Directress of St. Cyr, Madame de Maintenon, always wore Chantilly black lace. For shawls and ample

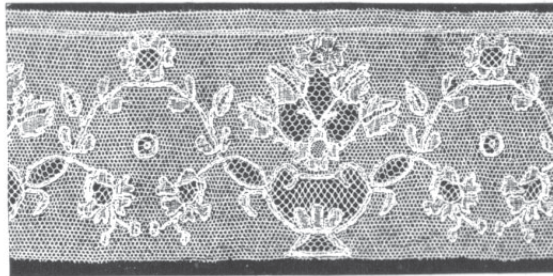


Fig. 141.—Chantilly lace (eighteenth century).

scarves, for mantles and other articles of outdoor costume, black lace is probably without a rival.

After, as it were, making the fortune of Chantilly and the neighbouring districts as far as Gisors, for many years, the black lace industry disappeared from the suburbs of Paris, to be revived in Normandy about Caen and Bayeux, where, during the present century, it has been extensively followed. According to Felix Aubry, upwards of sixty thousand workers are there engaged in it at their homes. It has become a valuable auxiliary means of livelihood in a district

almost wholly dependent upon agriculture. Such patient application as is indispensable in its practice, involving the constant use of a large number of bobbins, is rarely to be met with amongst dwellers in the vicinity of a great city like Paris.

The make of Normandy black laces has been carried to a higher condition than previously attained anywhere else. Patterns in which flowers and ornamental *motifs* are rendered with the utmost delicacy of gradation in texture have been produced with the greatest

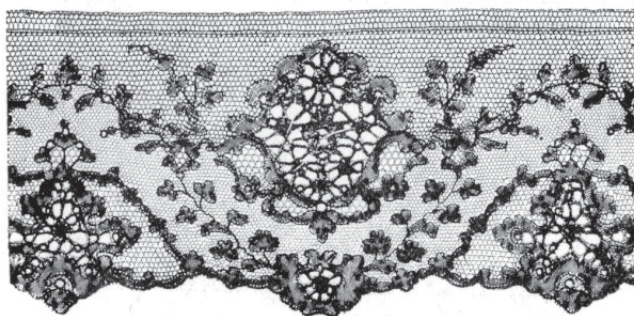


Fig. 142.—Chantilly black lace with the grounds interchanged (the *fond chant* and the imitation Alençon ground).

success at Bayeux, and defy all comparison with the earlier Chantilly laces. This specialty in gradation of texture pertains to modern black lace, and is unknown in old laces of a cognate class (fig. 143).

The towns of Grammont and Enghien in Belgium also produce black laces, which may be distinguished from French work by being less elaborated in changeful *nuances* or gradations: the threads to indicate veinings of leaves have no delicate open work about them like that to be seen in the French black lace.



Fig. 143.—Black lace lappet (Bayeux).

Blonde, or white silk pillow lace.—Certain sorts of pillow-made laces derive their names from some characteristic of the material with which they are made, instead of from the town of their manufacture. Such, for instance, is *blonde*, which is one of the more important types we shall mention. Originally, *blonde* was made with unbleached silk, the pale straw colour of which gave rise to its name. *Bisette* is another lace which, in the sixteenth century, was so called in consequence of the colour of the thread with which it was made. But *blonde* is now made only with white and black silk. Two different sizes of thread are employed in its manufacture, a fine one for the meshed ground, and a coarser and more fluffy one for the ornament.

Early patterns for *blonde* show but few details of close work (*mat*), the ornament being principally in outline wrought sinuously with a single thread, thereby producing a diversity of interlacing open forms. This style, much affected in the eighteenth century, was adopted at Caen towards 1840, when quantities of such work was produced (fig. 144).

Marie Antoinette's predilection for *blonde* of this description is well known; the book of her dress-maker (Madame Eloffé)* gives evidence of it on almost every page. The patterns she affected were thin and poor in effect; but it is well to note the distinction between the elegancies of the first years of her reign and the almost sad simplicities of the later years, as exhibited in fashions adopted by this Queen who underwent cruel fluctuations of fortunes. It was during her

* Comte de Reiset, *Reproduction du livre journal de Madame Eloffé*, published by Didot.

later years that Marie Antoinette wore considerable quantities of the light patterned *blonde* laces.

Since then, *blonde* has been more frequently made in the Spanish style, with big flowery *motifs* wrought in excellent close work (*mats*), sheeny as satin, and standing out in vigorous contrast with the delicate net ground (fig. 145). Occasionally, spaces, filled in (*grillés*)

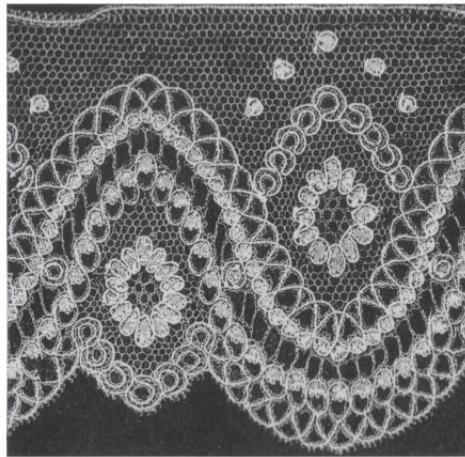


Fig. 144.—Light *blonde* of white silk (Caen).

with thin silk thread, alternate with the compact parts of flat and stouter silken thread ; this variety is termed *Blonde mi-genre*.

The mantilla, the national headdress of Spanish women in Europe and America, is made in both sorts of *blonde*, *blondes mates* and *blondes mi-genres*; the Mexican and Havannah patterns being bolder and heavier than the European Spanish ones. Unfortunately the



Fig. 145.—Black close-patterned (*mate blonde*) (Spanish style made at Bayeux).

mantilla is rapidly being supplanted by the modern bonnet and hat. Barcelona and Bayeux are the two principal centres for the manufacture of mantillas; and one may hope that the Spaniards will not allow this local and characteristic head ornament to fall out of use and disappear.

All the laces we have mentioned are made in lengths or bands upon pillows or cushions; ornament and meshed grounds being worked together.

We are now, however, going to notice those laces which are made in small pieces to be afterwards joined together; that is, by separate flowers and bits of ornament, or in segments analogous to those used in the needlepoint lace process. This manner of dividing a pattern for the pillow-lace method of work is certainly due to Belgian initiative.

Guipures de Flandres (Flemish Guipures).—The first time that a Flemish lace-maker made a single flower with her bobbins upon a flat cushion (fig. 146), it probably did not occur to her that, by so doing, she had rendered her country a great service. Still, it is perfectly obvious that this peculiar modification in the making of pillow lace has, to a large extent, affected the industry.

A separate flower or ornament once completed, the ground, or some such means of connecting it with other similar flowers, was necessary. At first these connec-



Fig. 146. — Pillow-lace flower for *applique* lace (Flemish).

tions were small bars of three or four threads plaited together. These bars would sometimes be enriched with little loops (*picots*). Separate ornaments and

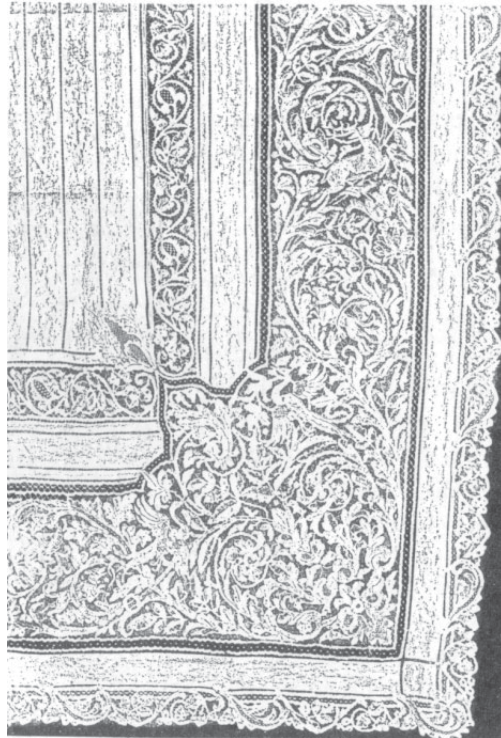


Fig. 147.—Linen and white thread Flemish *guipure* curtain.

flowers with intervening looped bars or tyes (*barrettes picotées*), are the main features of *Guipure de Flandres*, a class of lace much in demand during the seventeenth century. Fine trimmings for albs. and

such-like were made in it; and although its texture is flat and without reliefs, it derives a richness of effect from the ample and soft folds into which it falls. Bruges was specially noted for making this class of lace.

For furniture purposes Flemish *guipures* have been considerably used, in respect of hangings and trimmings about beds, toilet tables, and such-like (figs. 147 and 149).

Honiton Lace (fig. 146).—But they have also been used for ladies' costume. In Devonshire, Honiton has created and maintained a reputation for making pillow-lace *guipures* in the same manner as Bruges at an earlier date. But there is a marked difference of style in pattern between the Bruges and the Honiton laces.*

Duchesse Lace.—In Belgium, the lighter sorts of *guipures* are called *Guipure Duchesse* (see fig. 148).



Fig. 148.—Pillow-made lace, *Duchesse guipure* (of Belgian make).

* Besides the *guipure* laces, Honiton and other villages in Devonshire occasionally produce laces with a ground of regular meshes. Latterly some superior specimens have been made, in which this meshed ground is of needlepoint work. On the whole, however,

Application d'Angleterre (English Appliqué lace).—
As grounds of small meshes came into fashion, bars

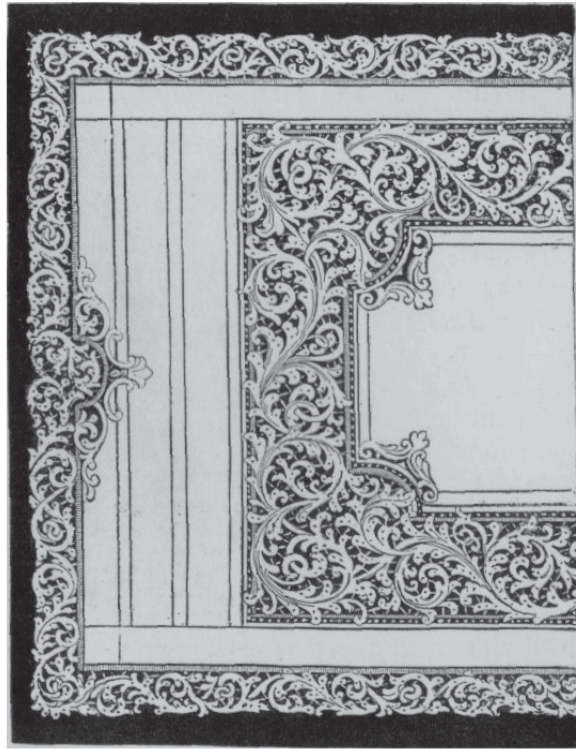


Fig. 149.—Flemish *guipure* for furniture purposes.

and ties in Flemish *guipures* disappeared, and lengths

Honiton lace has conserved its *guipure* character. At the same time, there is no reason why it should not make new departures and achieve as high a success with these as with the styles of former days, for which there is comparatively little present demand.

of meshed grounds (*réseaux*) were made, to which were applied the flowers or ornaments brought by other workers. This led to a more or less well-recognized division of labour. Certain workers excelled in making meshed grounds, and were solely employed in doing so; whilst others were restricted to the making of the flowers or ornament.

The new *appliqué* lace was in high favour during Louis XV.'s reign. The *vrai réseau* was the name given to the finest and softest of the mesh grounds made on the cushion. It was produced chiefly at Brussels. The mesh is hexagonal in shape, and its two longest sides consist of four plaits of four threads, the other four shorter sides being of two threads twisted twice. The delicate linen thread with which *vrai réseau* was produced possessed a fair creamy tone admirably suited to the complexions of blonde beauties, and this subtle charm of the lace gave rise to the custom of steeping other whiter laces in tea, so that they, too, might have the same kind of tint.

Appliqué lace was made in less quantities in England than in Belgium, notwithstanding that for purposes of trade it was always called English application (*Application d'Angleterre*) (fig. 150). Certain connoisseurs, anxious to show that they could not be imposed upon, adopted for this lace the Duc de Penthièvre's appellation: "*d'Angleterre de Flandres*;" but this hybrid name never became general, and it was eventually deemed correct to speak of the lace as "*point d'Angleterre*."

Of this we have evidence in a letter of the Duc de Luynes written in 1638:—

"To-day were brought to Madame de Luynes the

laces she had chosen for the Queen, which, after use, revert to the ladies of honour. They consist of coverlets trimmed with *point d'Angleterre* for the big bed, and of pillow-cases similarly trimmed. This set of things cost thirty thousand livres, Madame de Luynes



Fig. 150.—Application lace, called *Angleterre*, on pillow-made mesh ground.

not deeming it necessary to give orders as to renewing the best coverlets belonging to the Queen." This extract shows that it was the custom for the bed trimmings of the Queen, upon their renewal each year, to pass into the possession of Her Majesty's ladies-of-honour. In spending no more than thirty thousand livres, Madame de

Luynes is to be credited with the exercise of an economy and discretion not displayed by her predecessors in office.

Other decorations of a room would match those of the bed. The luxury displayed by Louis XV. in this direction is historic. The Duchesse de Bourbon

has "a toilet table and her *bonhomme*" completely draped with spotted muslin and lengths of a beautiful "*dentelle d'Angleterre*." *Monseigneur* the Dauphin had six comb cases and a dozen pincushions trimmed with "*Angleterre*."

And we may finally quote the Princesse de Condé who had "two bathing cloaks trimmed with lace, and drapery about her bath edged with wide *Angleterre*." It would be difficult to further extend the employment, not to say the abuse, of laces!

The patterns for these *appliqués* laces are generally insignificant in design, consisting for the most part of a few sprays or leaves, etc., scattered over a ground of meshes; this is obviously insufficient to give such lace artistic character. It will be well then to beware of the unstinted admiration so freely given, as a rule, to every old bit of *vrai réseau appliqué* lace which may come under notice. It is preferable to reserve one's appreciation for works in which good execution has been applied to graceful and well-composed designs.

In certain of the *appliqués* laces we meet with admirable contrasts of two sizes of meshes for the grounds, a device for obtaining variety in effect which had been happily used in the Argentan needlepoint laces.

The little town of Binche in Belgium has given its name to some pretty laces in which contrasting mesh grounds are used, as well as others in which the irregular barring of *guipures* is interchanged with regular mesh grounds (*réseaux*),—all with excellent result, especially as settings to patterns.

Application de Bruxelles.—About 1830 the invention

of machines for making fine nets (*tulle*) gave a new impulse to this class of work. Its costliness being considerably diminished through the substitution of *tulle* for the hand-made mesh ground or *vrai réseau*, a large trade has ensued in quantities of these Brussels application laces (*Applications de Bruxelles*), a name usually restricted to applications of lace, ornament, flowers, etc., upon Brussels *tulle* (fig. 151).



Fig. 151.—Flounce of Brussels application lace.

This simplification of process and lowering of price in its productions has been attended with some advantages. Larger pieces, for instance, such as big shawls and ample bridal veils, which, on the score of cost, could but rarely have been attempted with the hand-made net (*réseau*), are now easily made. It can-

not be maintained, however, that machine-made *tulle* is as charming a material as *vrai réseau*; its dressing, as a rule, tends to make it wiry and harsh to the touch, and although this may be lessened by modification, the cotton thread, employed both for the lace ornaments and the *tulle*, lacks that delicate suppleness which is characteristic of the pure and fine flax thread used in *vraie Angleterre* laces. It is a matter even of congratulation when these

modern cotton fabrics are not powdered with white lead, a pernicious and perfectly useless ingredient, frequently used, with dire effect to the health of the lace-workers and the good preservation of the lace.

Lace ornaments applied to *tulle* are not solely made on the pillow, some are of needlepoint work done in the same way as in the eighteenth century, when lace applications of pillow-made and needlepoint were sewn with admirable effects upon *vrai réseau*. Specimens of modern work, in which this mixture of lace applications occur, are given in figs. 152 and 153. Considerable skill is displayed in the little fillings or devices, *à jours* (see also fig. 110). The selection of details which are to be of needlepoint or pillow work rests with the designer of the pattern.

The town of Brussels, and one or two others, like Ghent and Alost, have derived handsome profits from this particular branch of the lace industry. Belgium has kept a pre-eminent position in it, notwithstanding efforts to compete with her on the part of England and France.

Tulle et Marli.—The fashion for meshed grounds (*réseaux*), so freely referred to in the course of our remarks upon pillow-made laces during the eighteenth century, culminated in the reign of Louis XVI. in one for almost patternless laces of mesh grounds with an insignificant little edging of loops. There were two kinds of such laces, distinguishable one from the other merely by the shape of the mesh; the one was called *tulle*, the other *marli*.

Although the precise date of its production cannot be stated, *tulle* would seem to have derived its fame

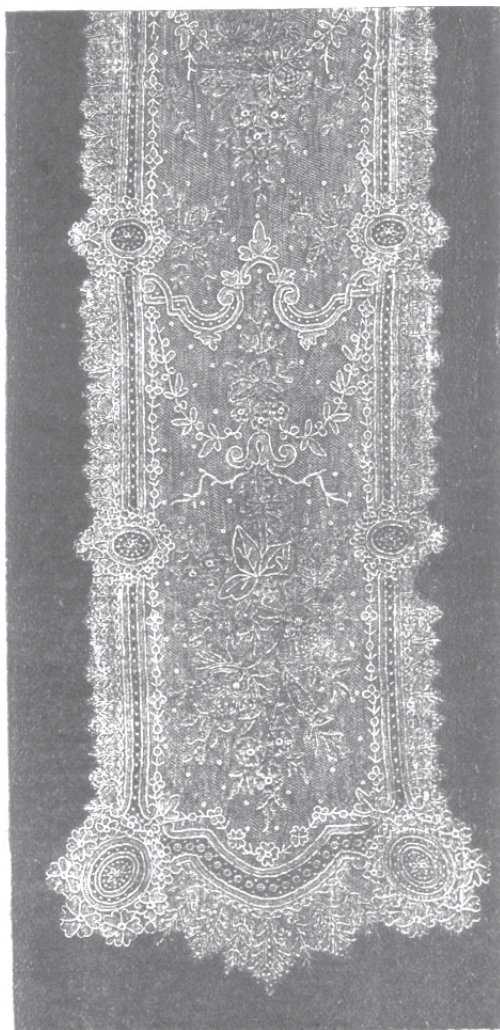


Fig. 152.—Lappet of Modern Brussels mixed needlepoint and pillow lace.

as a fabric when made in the town bearing its name. Tulle, the chief town of Corrèze, is not far distant from Aurillac; the character of its lace being simple, it was speedily imitated by many other places, but nowadays lace-making has disappeared from the province of Corrèze. But in an annual of 1775 there is mention of lace-makers at Tulle, certain Mesdemoiselles Gantes, aunts of the Abbé Gantes, who succeeded M. de Talleyrand as Bishop of Autun, and met his death at the guillotine after having been president of the constituent Assembly. Lace was certainly manufactured at Tulle in the eighteenth century, and by some fortuitous circumstance the name of the town came to be given to all simple net grounds (*réseaux*) produced by the machine.

Of these a considerable variety has been manufactured with sufficient differences to entitle each sort to be called by some qualifying title, such as Brussels *tulle*, Mechlin *tulle*, bobbin *tulle*, *tulle illusion*, *tulle point d'esprit*, etc. Originally, however, *tulle* was merely a lace of simple and regular meshes, almost bereft of ornament, and was called *tulle a fil* (thread net).

Marli lace no doubt takes its name from the village between Versailles and St. Germain, where Louis XIV. built his celebrated residence. The peculiarity of this lace consisted of its innumerable little square spots dotted over the gauzy *tulle*, which was frequently further



Fig. 153.—Bit of Modern Brussels application lace, with the roses worked in needlepoint.

embellished with light embroidery. It was used for *ruches* and cloud-like, vaporous coverings. The patterns of Tulle and Marli lace, whenever there were any, were composed of different little dots, little peas, or rosettes, but more often of little spots called *point d'esprit*.

Tulle and Marli lace was much worn by Marie Antoinette during the latter years of her life; entries of them occur over and over again with those for *blondes* and embroidered linens in Madame Eloffé's accounts with the Queen. Taste grew poorer and poorer, so far as ornamental lace was concerned, and when one meets with typical items like "a gauze fichu trimmed with white *pretention*," it is not difficult to realize that the art of lace as previously known, had become extinct. Moreover, this period was one of general sadness; the Queen wore black net laces only, and on leaving Versailles (October 6th, 1789) for the last time she distributed amongst her suite all that remained of her fans and laces.

Still, so great had been the demand for *tulle* a few years prior to the Revolution, that, according to the *Tableau de Paris* of that date, at least 100,000 work-women were engaged in France in its manufacture.

Many ladies applied themselves to making the simple mesh laces, for which comparatively few bobbins had to be used. Jean Jacques Rousseau recommended it as a suitable occupation for females:—

"But what Sophie knows best, and has been more thoroughly trained to, is work special to her sex, such as cutting out and making up her dresses. There is no needlework in which she is not an adept, knowing

how to do it well, and doing it with pleasure ; but that which she prefers above others is lace-making, because it necessitates a pretty attitude, and provides an exercise for the fingers which involves more grace and lightness of touch." (*Emile*, Book IV.).

The reference to a species of network at which Teresa Panza was able to make "eight *maravédís* a day," as she writes to her husband Sancho, is obviously not of the same nature as the fine bobbin *tulle* of which we have been speaking. Such delicate fabrics were virtually unknown during Cervantes' lifetime.

We cannot here undertake to speak of all the countries which have been, and are still, engaged in the pillow-lace industry. The principal types of pillow lace have, however, we hope, been so described as to at least enable our readers to identify their make when met with.

Every lace-making village or centre doubtless has some feature special to its work, but considerations of space prevent us from attempting a close survey of what at best are but minute variations in typical methods of manufacture.

The groundworks of certain German pillow laces consist of vermiculated plaitings. Russian laces are noted for patterns of meanders and sinuous forms (fig. 154). The Danubian provinces of Austria and Hungary make laces very similar in character of pattern.

Much as these laces at first sight may appear to be of distinctive manufacture, they will, upon examination, be found to come within the classification of *passemens* for which the Auvergne is noted. The same methods of plying the bobbins and of producing tissue in strips,

or bands, obtain in all these laces. So true is this, that Russian designs are frequently reproduced in laces made at Le Puy and Mirecourt.

Spain and Portugal enjoy a certain reputation for imitation white Chantilly laces. The island of Madeira, and places along the South American coast, have adopted traditions of the industry from Portuguese and Spaniards.

Pillow laces made by women in Ceylon and Travancore, as well as elsewhere in India, seem to owe more

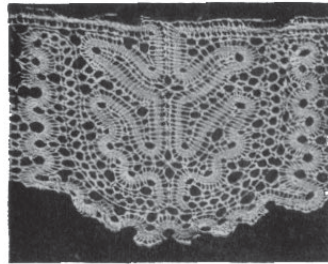


Fig. 154.—Russian pillow lace.

to the instruction of Portuguese than to that of either Dutch or English.

And the specimens of Indian pillow laces, wrought with white and black threads, in the India Museum are apparently made in single pieces, and not, as in

Honiton laces, by separate flowers, which are subsequently placed together for the ground to be worked in between them.

On the other hand, the Honiton method is known at Yokohama, where the Japanese Government has encouraged the development of a school of pillow-lace makers under the supervision of an English lady.

All pillow laces, from one end of the world to the other, are in a manner closely related one to another, though not to such an extent as to obscure certain slight peculiarities which contribute towards establishing characteristics of individuality. Circumstances of

manufacture, together with local traditions, leave a trace upon the productions. Valenciennes lace, for instance, is made along the whole of the Franco-Belgian frontier. And yet each village or town between Bailleul and Ypres, and Ypres and Courtrai, etc., has its particular make, which is quite perceptible to any one on the look-out for it. It is the same in Normandy in respect of difference in manufacture between similar laces that may have emanated from Caen or Bayeux, notwithstanding the proximity of these two towns. The same remark applies to other lace centres near to one another.*

Members of conventual communities, sent by their superiors from one country or district into another, have introduced the art of lace-making into a locality where it was previously unpractised. Hence, Bayeux owes the establishment of its lace industry to nuns from the Convent *de la Providence* at Rouen. They were sent there at the end of the seventeenth century, to undertake the supervision of the workroom founded by the Canon Baucher in the old church of St. Georges. In 1747 the Abbé Suhard de Loucelles provided additional room for them in a house in the *Faubourg St. Loup*, close by the church of *Notre Dame de la Poterie*. In a short time more than four hundred young women were employed at the two sets of workrooms; and in 1758 the aldermen of the town presented to the *Intendant* of the province a pair of thread lace cuffs, which, according to the accounts of the municipality, cost 144 livres.

Dieppe and Cherbourg are also indebted, as are

* See observations as to this in Felix Aubry's Report of 1851.

many other places in Normandy, to nuns for their lace industry.

The Revolution was as disastrous to pillow as to needlepoint lace-making. Valenciennes never recovered from the effects of it; and Chantilly gradually declined. At the Industrial Exhibition of Paris held in 1802, two Chantilly makers shared the honours, then conferred, with several lace-makers from Le Puy; but this was the last occasion when Chantilly asserted herself as a lace-making town. She was superseded by Bayeux and Caen, where intelligent direction struck out a new line for the Chantilly make of lace, and gave new life to it. In 1823, Madame Carpentier of Bayeux won the first gold medal ever awarded for lace, and at each succeeding exhibition Norman lace-makers have added to their laurels. It may be safely said that France has preserved an eminent place in the first rank of lace-making countries.

Imitation Laces.—But the prosperity attaching to this position has been seriously menaced through the invention of machines for making lace, more so as regards pillow than needlepoint laces.

At Nottingham, whose reputation for its hosiery is of long standing, the mechanical manufacture of bobbin net or *tulle* was started in 1768. This was due to the ingenuity of a workman named Hammond, who conceived the idea of mechanically making a net tissue on a stocking-knitting machine. Hammond's somewhat crude machine was greatly improved upon in 1809 by Heathcote's bobbin net-loom, since which time the manufacture has flourished to a very important extent.

Notwithstanding war and difficult commercial relations between England and France, a few English bobbin net-looms or frames were imported during the first Empire and set up in Lyons; and in 1817 a manufactory supplied with English plant was started at St. Pierre-lès-Calais.

The production of net in wide lengths being thus brought within the range of mechanical means, imitations of lace were made by hand embroidery upon machine-made net. In 1837 Jacquard invented his apparatus for fancy weaving, and an adaptation of it to the net-weaving machines gave rise to the production of *tulles brochés*, or flowered nets, which were still closer imitations of hand-made lace. The new manufacture, with its low-price results, speedily developed itself, and became a source of exceptional prosperity to the manufacturers engaged in it at Nottingham, Lyons, and St. Pierre-lès-Calais. In a few years St. Pierre, which had been but a small suburb of Calais with 1,000 or 1,200 inhabitants, grew into an important centre of manufacture with a population of from 35,000 to 40,000 persons.

Without lamenting over the progress which has taken place in the employment of machinery, and of which this century is so justly proud, we need not, therefore, hold with those who believe that machinery will supplant the hand.

It would be an obvious loss to art should the making of lace by hand become extinct, for machinery, as skilfully devised as possible, cannot do what the hand does. No doubt, from pretty patterns specially selected for reproduction by the machine, admirable illusions

are produced to the satisfaction of those who have no care beyond superficial appearances. But these are the results of processes, not the creations of artistic handicraft. Where truth is wanting, art is absent—absent where formal calculation pretends to supersede emotion—absent, moreover, where no trace can be detected of intelligence guiding handicraft, whose hesitations even possess peculiar charm. The machine truly supplies cheap substitutes; but, as M. Didron well expresses it, “cheapness is never commendable in respect of things which are not absolute necessities; it lowers artistic standard. Lace must inevitably lose the best features of its delight for us, on the day that it ceases to be precious and relatively rare.”*

CONCLUSION.

THIS century has produced much lace, fashion being favourable to it. Never, probably, has so much been made as within late years, when 300,000 Frenchwomen alone have derived a livelihood from an industry which is one of the best alternatives to agricultural labour. It can be taken up, without damage to the work, at intervals between occupations in the fields. The implements and material, whether for making needlepoint or pillow lace, require little room, and can be stowed away with facility in the humblest of dwellings. The mother works her lace surrounded by her girls, who from their earliest years become instructed in the art. Jules Simon, in his book *L'Ouvrière*, and all economists interested

* Didron, *Report on the Decorative Arts at the Universal Exhibition of 1878*, p. 190.

in women's industries, have remarked how consonant the occupations of embroidery and lace-making are with family life.

We shall be glad if this, our book, in any way contributes towards maintaining the supremacy of lace-making by hand. Our remarks are intended to supply young women with information concerning women's artistic work, and it may perhaps be found useful by others who have an interest in such questions. All possibly may find in it some means for appreciating the difference between styles and periods of lace-making.

It will be seen that discrimination is necessary to a perception of the really admirable in ancient laces, and that unreflective enthusiasms vented upon old laces, merely because they are old, are in no way evidences of knowledge of and feeling for beauty of design and fine quality of workmanship. Our readers will be wary of being deceived by specimens of detached and incongruous bits of lace speciously and tastelessly made up by dealers.

Whilst, as regards modern lace, the fitness of its use, its special appositeness to certain portions of costume, and the qualities it should possess to be truly beautiful, will reveal themselves through study of the subject. This, too, will enlarge our sympathies with the humble and skilful workwomen who eke out a meagre living with their needles and bobbins.

A favouring return of general appreciation for hand-made lace and embroidery is observable in the interest with which books on the subject, by artists and *savants*, are read nowadays. Lace bibliography is becoming

very considerable, and is supplemented with the highest advantage by museums of specimens for public inspection, and technical schools for the practice of the handicrafts.

Under such circumstances it would seem that these branches of contemporary art acquire sufficient vitality for a long and successful career in the future. Machines will respond to demands for large supplies; connoisseurs, however, will rely upon artistic handwork for what they want.

Women assuredly have at heart the interests of those artistic productions which come under the title of *Embroidery and Lace*. Young women who learn to draw and to paint, this book has been written for you above all others; take your needles, cross your bobbins, and teach yourselves how best your designs may be put into execution! Study the works of old time, and understand the possibilities of your art! Our aim has been to help you in this direction, and, like the old authors, to have been of service "to virtuous women and other gentle spirits who feel the want of such arts" as embroidery and lace-making.

