



## THE LACE BOOK

patterns and had quite as much openwork and as deep points as the needle-point laces. Indeed, it is only by looking carefully for the buttonhole stitch which distinguishes the needle lace that one can tell the difference. The cost of the needle points was always far greater, and they were always held in higher esteem. Then there arose a change in the fashions, and wider laces were demanded. At first this demand was supplied by joining a dentated or pointed edge to the flat band. In the seventeenth century there were many attempts to make wide lace. Italy and France made it in strips and sewed them together. But Belgium invented a better way, by making the lace in small pieces, following the convolutions of the pattern, similar to the method of joining needle-point patterns. It was the skilful manner in which these Belgian laces were put together after being made in pieces which gave so much success to the Flemish industry. The richest and most complicated patterns could be made in this way, individual workers doing special parts of the design, which, when put together, made a splendid whole.

The Flemish makers did not use such slight patterns, with very open grounds, as were common in Italy and France, but gave their attention to ornamental close parts, with contrasting stitches to bring out the elegance of the pattern. The style of these laces, heavy and floriated, went admirably with the linen collar, and the style passed into France. Until Mazarin died in 1661, Louis XIV wore these collars, or *rabatos*, of



***P**LATE XXXI.—Portrait of a young man.  
He wears a collar trimmed with Point de  
Flandre. Portrait by Jan de Bray, died 1697.*



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pillow-made Guipure lace, and they are shown in several of his early portraits. He was fully 25 when the use of Venetian needle points came in, and turned the attention of the king and his minister to the making of similar laces.

Brussels lace—*Point d'Aiguille*—was the most beautiful and costly of all the needle lace made in the Low Countries, and its successful manufacture was confined to the city of Brussels itself. The grounds could be either *à réseau* or of brides. As in Italian laces, the brides were the earliest form of connection between different portions of the pattern; but they were soon discarded, and by the end of the seventeenth century the ground *à réseau* was used entirely, except when, in ordering lace made, brides were specified. Sometimes the two grounds were used in the same pattern with very beautiful effect.

Just how early one kind of Brussels bobbin lace came to have the name *Point d'Angleterre* applied to it is a matter of doubt. Enthusiastic collectors of lace, particularly if of English birth, claim that English Point was first made in England and was successfully copied by the facile Dutch. Certain it is that England could not begin to supply the demand of the English court alone for this lace, and that large quantities of lace were bought in Flanders and brought boldly into England, or smuggled in, in coffins, by dogs, or in any other manner which cupidity and inventiveness could suggest. To give some idea of the enormous amount of Flemish lace which was smuggled into England, Mrs. Bury Palliser



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quotes the account of the seizure of a vessel by the Marquis de Nesmond, bound for England in 1678, loaded with Flanders lace. Without counting the collars, fichus, handkerchiefs, aprons, petticoats, fans, and trimmed gloves, there were in addition 744,953 ells of Brussels lace.

The earliest *Points d'Angleterre* were made in separate pieces, each piece consisting of its appropriate net or meshed ground and pattern. Later, however, the flowers were made by one set of workers, the meshed ground by another, while a third stitched on the flowers with needles.

Madame Du Barry, from whose lace accounts items have been already quoted, used *Point d'Angleterre* also. In these inventories it is sometimes specified as "*grande dentelle de Gros Point d'Angleterre.*" When little Philippe, son of the Regent, died in 1723, in his inventory there is one item of "six peignoirs of fine silk, trimmed with old *Point d'Angleterre à réseau.*"

The groundwork of Brussels lace was sometimes made by the needle, in which case the lace was three times as expensive as when it was made by pillow. The needle-made *réseau*, however, is much the stronger of the two, since the thread of each mesh was twisted by the needle four times, while in pillow lace it is not twisted in this way at all. The pillow lace is difficult to repair, and the part always shows. The needle ground can be mended so as to escape detection.

Within the last eighty years since the invention of



*PLATE XXXII.—Portion of cap. Point  
d'Angleterre à Brides. Bobbin-made lace.  
Seventeenth Century. Photographed by Charles  
Balliard.*



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machine-made grounds the needle ground is seldom made, on account of its great cost.

The needle-point Brussels lace was made, as was the Alençon, in strips or bits, and then joined together, the process of joining being one of great delicacy. The flowers and sprigs were and are made separately for Brussels lace, and then worked into the ground. These needle-point flowers are called "*Point à L'aiguille.*" Those woven on a pillow with bobbins are called "*Point Plat.*" In the old pillow laces, flowers and ground were wrought at the same time; applied lace was unknown to old lace-makers. As in the making of Alençon lace, each piece of old Brussels passed through the hands of different workers, who did only one thing and then passed the bit on to the next worker, who in turn did her share. The bits were finally stitched together, and the whole, when complete, seemed as if wrought in one piece, so carefully were the joins made.

The making of needle point, even in its infancy, was not different from the way in which it is made to-day. The pattern is first drawn on parchment and tacked to a stout piece of linen. The leading lines of the pattern have threads laid on them, which are caught down here and there by means of stitches. The brides, or bars, or the *réseau* if the work has a grounding, are worked in around the pattern by the needle.

In the eighteenth century pillow-made lace in needle-point patterns was made in Flanders in large quantities. Much of this lace was called *Point d'Angleterre.*



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So much of the Flanders lace is bobbin lace that the question of pins, of which so many are necessary, was a serious one. Metal ones, it is true, were found in the tombs of ancient Egypt, made of gold, silver, and bronze, yet the pin of modern life was not made in any quantity until the fifteenth century. In 1483 their importation into England had been prohibited, and clumsy enough articles they must have been, for sixty years later, under Henry VIII, an act of 1543 reads :

“No person shall put to sale any pinnes but such only as shall be double headed and have the heads soldered fast to the shank of the pinne, well smoothed, the shank well shaven, the point well and round filed, canted and sharpened.”

About 1560 the making of pins was much improved, and the cost of them was lessened. Catherine Howard was said to have first brought brass pins into England from France.

The pillow used in lace-making is stuffed very hard, and covered with a clean piece of linen. The shapes of the cushions and the way they are held vary more than would be deemed possible. They may be square and used on a stand, cylindrical or drum-shaped and held on the lap, or mounted on a basket or stool and held between the feet. In Belgium, besides the large cushions on which lace in the strip—either insertion or edging—is made, small cushions are used, upon which are formed the sprays or bouquets of flowers which are appliquéd on a net ground. The Flemish bobbins were generally very thin and as light as possible. They were



**P**LATE XXXIII.—Francis Henry of Orange.  
Gothic needle point on collar and cuffs. Gold  
lace on cloak. Portrait by Mierevelt (1567-1641).





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made of different sizes or forms, to indicate quickly to the worker the particular thread used on each. For such laces as Valenciennes or Mechlin, filmy and delicate in texture, very light bobbins were used, so as not to strain the thread. In the coarser Guipures heavy bobbins are used. On the cushion is stretched a piece of parchment on which the design is drawn. To form the meshes, pins are stuck into the cushion, and the threads are woven or twisted round them. The pattern on the parchment shows the places for the gimp, which is interwoven with the fine threads of the fabric. The work is begun at the upper side of the cushion by tying the threads together in pairs, each pair being attached to a pin. The threads are twisted, and crossed, and secured by the pins which determine the meshes.

The most important pillow-made lace in Belgium today is Valenciennes. We are accustomed to consider this as a French lace, and so it was originally, but the work has long since died out in its native city. In fact, by 1656 the Belgians were making Valenciennes lace as fine, and as beautiful, and of exactly the same patterns as the French fabric. By 1684 there were left in Valenciennes only threescore lace-workers.

The seventeenth century was somewhat advanced before there was a surfeit of the pointed laces, the later styles of which were often called Van Dycks, which had varied, from the acute point of the old Gothic laces, through the slender and the rounded point. Valenciennes lace was the first straight-edged lace made, and



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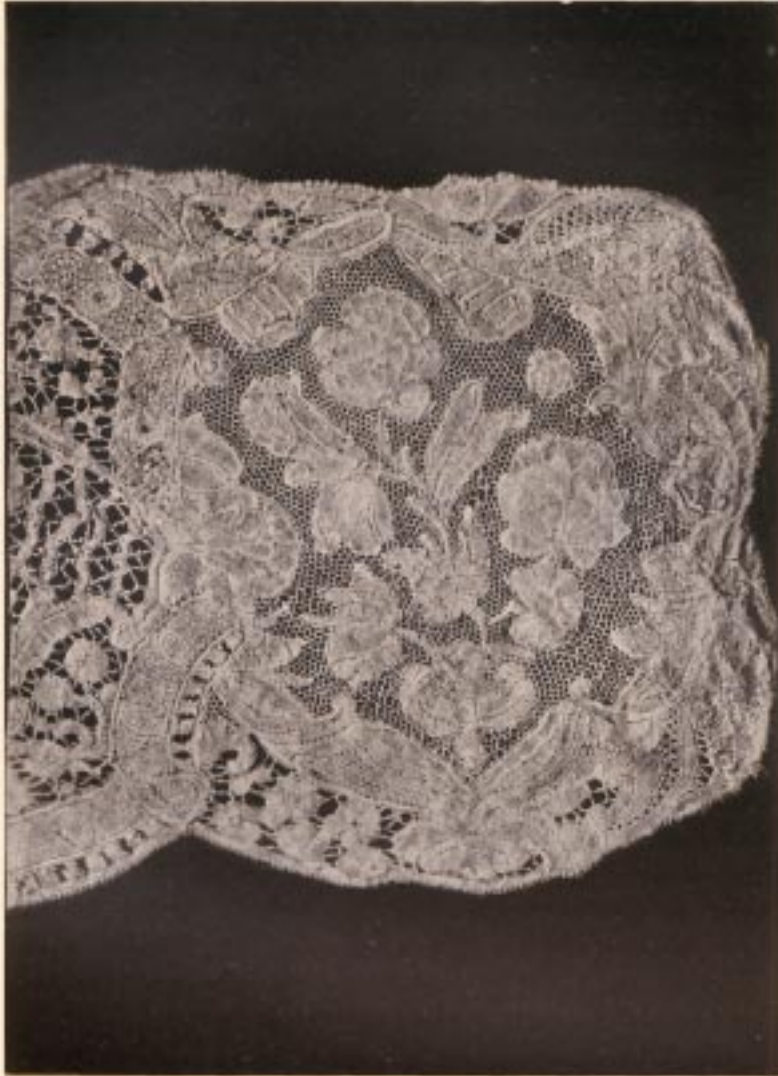
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its appearance was hailed as a great novelty. The lace was quite unlike the modern product of this name, and had a large, clear mesh. The thread was of exquisite fineness and colour.

The best Valenciennes lace made to-day, as well as for a hundred and more years, is that from Ypres, in West Flanders. Its fineness is exquisite, and the patterns are very elaborate; some of the fine old pieces two inches wide necessitated the use of 200 or 300 bobbins; patterns wider than this often called for 800 to 1,000 bobbins, all on the same pillow.

The tedious process required to make this lace accounts for its great cost. A lace-maker could hardly complete more than a third of an inch of a wide width in a week, and it would take one twelve years to complete enough for a flounce for a dress. Such lace as this would sell for \$400 a yard. France buys annually from Belgium, at the present time, over \$4,000,000 worth of Valenciennes. When this lace was made in the city of France, from which it takes its name, the fabric made in Belgium was called *fausse Valenciennes*. Bruges and Ghent, as well as Ypres, have long been centres for the making of this lace, though the Bruges Valenciennes has a groundwork made by two twists of the bobbin, while the Ypres ground takes four or five twists, making it finer and firmer, the patterns standing out much clearer from the grounding.

A series of treaties concluded at Nimequen in 1678-79 made a difference in the nationalities of a number of



*PLATE XXXIV.—Point d'Angleterre à réseau.  
Part of a lappet. Eighteenth Century.*



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lace-making towns. They put an end to the hostilities between Holland and France which had begun six years before. The countries engaged in these treaties were Holland, France, Spain, and Sweden. Spain ceded Valenciennes, Ypres, St. Omer, Cambrai, and many other towns back to France, while France ceded Ghent, Limburg, Oudenarde, Charleroi, and half a dozen more to Spain.

In 1685 came the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by which the lace industry of France suffered so severely; for the proclamation was followed by the emigration of about 300,000 persons, artisans of all kinds as well as men of letters and science. These refugees sought an asylum in Holland, England, and America, and spread the making of lace into widely divergent places. The value of the gold and silver lace trade of the city of Lyons alone was valued at 4,000,000 francs yearly, and this was transferred to Genoa. The workmen took with them their trade secrets, and France was thenceforward obliged to buy the gold lace she needed instead of being able to supply the world.

The American colonies opened quite a promising field, notably some of the flourishing southern colonies. In New York, Madam Steenwych, a rich, hospitable, and several times married Dutch lady, had much household gear, and it was of no mean quality, as her inventory shows. Among many other chairs are mentioned "two easy chairs with silver lace." And this, too, was as early as 1664. In the first half of the eighteenth century,



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Governor Montgomery's effects were offered for sale at Fort George, New York. Among them was a bed "lined with silk and trimmed with fine lace which came from London." There are in addition "some blue cloth lately come from London for liveries, and some broad gold lace." Among the notices in the American newspapers of goods offered for sale during the whole of this century is much gold and vellum lace.

Ghent, Binche, Liège, and Antwerp have been and still are centres for the manufacture of lace. In some of these cities they are reviving the beautiful old laces of 200 years since, where the pattern is made with the bobbin, and the fanciful fillings are put in with the needle.

Under the two great heads, needle and bobbin, come all the varieties of lace: the differences being caused by design, size of thread, and arrangement of stitches. The ornament or pattern is of the first importance in making lace, the grounding being added either for strength or because the character of the design makes it necessary.

From the very infancy of Flemish art a constant intercourse was maintained between Italy and the Low Countries. The Flemish designs were somewhat similar to the Venetian, but both Flemish and French were more floral and flowing than Italian designs of the same period. In fact this was so noticeable that Bishop Berkeley pointed it out early in the eighteenth century. He says:



**P**LATE XXXV.—*Rubens' wife, by Frans Hals (1584-1666). Ruff trimmed with fine Gothic needle point. Cuffs and cap with Flanders bobbin-lace, and stomacher of gold lace.*



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“How have France and Flanders drawn so much money from other countries for figured silk, lace, and tapestry? It is because they have their academies of design.”

Besides their academies they had been further protected by a particular stitch called the “crossing-stitch,” the secret of which was guarded as carefully as possible. Italian laces were imitated perfectly in Flanders and France, while Belgian fabrics, and to some extent English laces as well, were made only in the country of their birth. The taste for flowers, so largely developed in the Flemings and Dutch, found expression in their artists, and soon crept into their pattern-books. The favourite tulip, the forms of which are so admirably adapted for use in geometric patterns, was soon utilised in the splendid laces of the period, and when the tulip mania was at its height it was reflected in *rabato*, band, and *passemens*.

From 1589 to 1650, the ruff, with all its eccentric convolutions, was gradually superseded by the flat collar of Dutch linen, with an insertion and edge of lace, or with simply a rich lace border. The fashions of France and Italy were adopted in Flanders with certain modifications which gave them ever an air of quaintness; and while the grand dames of Italy and France were wearing their hair all a-frizzle, the Dutch dame drew hers smoothly back and covered it with an exquisite cap. The modest cut of her gown was enhanced by the muslin kerchief trimmed with splendid Flanders Point, or the finer Gothic Points, the result of many weeks' labour



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with the needle. The Dutch ladies and their sedate husbands live before us, to-day, in the magnificent portraits of such masters as Rembrandt, Van Dyck, and half a dozen others. Never again will such portraits be painted, since the era of magnificence in dress, at least for men, has taken its departure.

No less objects of pride to these exquisite house-keepers were the many cloths for shelves of dressers, mantel-shelves, tables, and other everyday articles. Most of these were lace-trimmed, with the rich and heavy products of bobbin and pillow, which could be so cheaply bought and were so durable. They had a dozen uses for lace which were quite peculiar to themselves, and some of them seem curious enough.

In 1807 Sir John Carr wrote his "Tour Through Holland," and, although a close observer, he has little to say about the manufacture of lace save at the *Béguinages*, where it still flourishes, and, curiously enough, also at the workhouses. The workhouse at Antwerp particularly claimed his attention, and he notes that its inmates were employed at making many varieties of the fabric. As some of the residents of this institution come from the best families, and are sent there for disobedience or insubordination of some sort, the choicest as well as the coarsest laces are made within its walls.

He also remarked at Leyden a curious use to which lace was put:

"As I was one day roving in this city, I was struck with the appearance of a small board ornamented with a considerable





**P**LATE XXXVI.—A. “Fausse Valenciennes,”  
bobbin lace. Belgium, Eighteenth Century.  
B. Fausse Valenciennes, edged with Trolley lace.  
Belgium, Seventeenth Century.



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quantity of lace, having an inscription on it, fastened on a house. Upon inquiry I found that the lady of the mansion where I saw it had lately lain in, and was then much indisposed, and that it was the custom of the country to expose this board, which contained an account of the state of the invalid's health, for the satisfaction of her inquiring friends, who were by this excellent plan informed of her situation without disturbing her by knocking at the door or by personal inquiries. The lace I found was never displayed but in lying-in cases. Without it this sort of bulletin is frequently used in cases of indisposition amongst persons of consequence."

The making of lace seems so natural to the people of the Low Countries that it appears to attract little attention from travellers who visited that country and recorded their impressions. No doubt the fact that it was largely made in homes has something to do with this neglect; for, while Flanders was undoubtedly the second lace-making country in the world, the written records of her achievements in this line are few and far between.

### *Reference List of Flemish Lace*

OLD FLANDERS POINT is the only original Belgian lace. All the other productions are imitations of the laces of other countries, some of them bettered, and all of them more cheaply made than in their native homes. The original Flanders lace was the variety known as *Trolle Kant*, a bobbin lace no longer made in its original pattern. The name "Trolly lace" has been transferred to England, and is given to a class of laces with grounds which resemble the Flemish *Trolle Kant* grounds, and which have a thick thread *cordonnnet*.



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There were also Brussels, *Point d'Angleterre*, *Point Gaze* (one of the earliest laces made and still manufactured), Mechlin, Valenciennes, Lille, Binche, and the black lace of Grammont.

**BRUSSELS LACE.** The needle-point lace of Brussels is called "*Point Gaze*," or *Point d'Aiguille*. The bobbin-made Brussels is called "Flat Point" or *Point Plat*, the word "point" referring entirely to the quality of the lace. There is an *appliqué* lace, in which bobbin-made sprigs are applied with the needle to machine-made ground: this is called *Point Plat Appliqué*.

**POINT D'ANGLETERRE**, a rich bobbin-made Brussels lace, attained an enormous vogue during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One reason why the old Brussels lace was such a beautiful fabric was on account of the delicacy of the thread. The flax which made it was grown in Brabant, and the city of Courtrai was particularly famous for its flax, which was steeped in the water of the river Lys. The thread now used is machine-made in England from Belgian flax, which is sometimes blemished by the addition of cotton. This thread cannot compare with the hand-spun flax thread of a couple of centuries ago, and the lace suffers in consequence. The hand-spun thread was made in lengths of about 20 inches and then knotted, and this style of thread was in use till about the nineteenth century, when machine-made thread was first used. With hand-spun thread the spinner could draw only a length of about 20 inches from the distaff, so then it had to be



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joined and begun again. In fact these knotted threads form one of the tests for antique hand-made lace, and are of quite as much value in dating a specimen as the structure of the brides or the angularity of the outline.

When Charles II sat on the throne of England, 1660–1685, Point d'Angleterre was much worn. Much of this kind of lace was made by applying the needle-made flowers to bobbin-made net, made separately. The most elegant and becoming laces were made in this way, the softness of the pillow-made ground, with the exquisite beauty of the needle-made flowers, giving this lace a superiority over either the French or Italian Point laces, which were firmer in texture and less flowing.

Very beautiful lappets for head-dresses were made of *Point d'Angleterre*, and were held in much favour by ladies in arranging their court costumes, when Point lace only was allowed to be worn. These lappets hung down behind, and were of regulation lengths for respective degrees of nobility. The privilege of wearing full-length lappets was allowed only to princesses of the blood.

Some interesting pieces of Brussels lace have recently been sold at Christie's in London. Among them was a fine flounce of Brussels needle point, made for some of the christening garments of the little King of Rome. The design was most elaborate, and part of the pattern consisted of the Napoleonic "N" upheld by cherubs. This piece brought £120 (\$600). A very fine court train was sold at the same time for £140 (\$700),—a



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small price considering its beauty and perfect condition. It measured 3 yards and 32 inches by 3 yards and 4 inches; the centre was filled with a design of leaves, and the border was composed of pansy and morning-glory flowers. A pair of old Brussels lappets reached £10 (\$50) and a small old veil with Prince of Wales feathers in the pattern brought £8 (\$40).

**BINCHE LACE** of the old make resembles the old Valenciennes very closely. Both the towns of Binche and Valenciennes are situated in the province of Hainault, and it was conquest at the end of the seventeenth century which gave the town of Valenciennes to France. Modern Binche lace is machine-made net with bobbin sprigs applied. In the old lace, which was called *Guipure de Binche*, the favourite grounds were the spider and rosette forms. Laces were made at Binche prior to 1686, since in that year they were subject to a royal edict. They were esteemed in France, where not only were there bedspreads, night-ropes, and skirts of *Dentelle de Binche*, but "cuffs of three ranges," fichus and garnitures of the same lace. The designs are floral, covering well the whole extent of the pattern, and the groundwork is delicate and pretty, with more variety than the later Valenciennes patterns.

**MECHLIN LACE** has a place all its own, and at one time was so popular that it gave its name to all varieties of Flanders lace. After 1685 the laces from the different towns became known by their appropriate names, and the real "Mechlin, the finest lace of all," was often called



*PLATE XXXVII.—Portrait of his daughter,  
by Albert Cuyp. Corsage trimmed with  
Flanders Point (1605-1691).*



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“the Queen of Lace.” It is a more transparent and delicate lace than Valenciennes, the flowers and ornaments being exquisitely filmy. It is charming when mounted on silks or satins of pale shades, and it was for such uses that it was esteemed. Before the meshed ground was decided on as the most desirable, the “snowy ground,” or *fond de neige*, was sometimes used. The ground ultimately used, a small hexagonal mesh with short and finely twisted sides, was very clear and pretty. This lace at the time of the Regency and Louis XV revelled in rococo designs. These sobered down later, and while the borders retained their ornate character, with interlacing and delicate sprays which contained a variety of pretty fillings (*à jour*), the mesh body had little flowers, sprays, and sprigs scattered over it.

This pretty, graceful lace was much esteemed for trimmings and head-dresses. Many afternoon caps were carried gingerly about in boxes and baskets when our great-great-grandmothers went out for a social afternoon, and the lace most in vogue was old Mechlin. It achieved its greatest vogue before 1755, when its place for delicate trimmings was largely taken, at least in France, by silk Blonde.

**ANTWERP LACE.** When the rage for Mechlin lace was at its height, all the neighbourhood near Mechlin, Antwerp, and Louvain took to making it. As early as the seventeenth century the industry was started, and while Mechlin was the chief lace made there, a style



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called *Potten Kant* was also made. This was essentially a Dutch lace, and, while in the several centuries of its manufacture it has undergone modifications, it still bears some of the symbols it originally had. This pot lace was an elaborate design figuring the Annunciation, with figures and flowers. Late in the seventeenth century the figures were omitted, and to-day all that remains is the two-handled flower-pot with floral devices straying over from each side. Owing to the symbolism, this lace was at one time in great demand in Spain, whither much of it was sent. But with the destruction of the monasteries it was no longer needed, and now is chiefly made for peasant wear.

**FLEMISH GUIPURE, and TAPE LACES.** Guipure lace was made either with the needle or with bobbins, the heavy parts of the patterns being held together by bars worked with a needle, or by the twisting of the bobbin threads. This old Guipure was very costly, made as it was of gold, silver, or silk threads only, and could consequently be worn only by the royal or rich. Later the name was applied to thread laces and those formed with bobbin-made tapes, in which style of fabric the Flemish easily excelled. The patterns were very bold and striking, the thick portions being varied by different *jours* and merely held together by twisted thread bars making meshes of an approximately round shape, sometimes further embellished with *picots* or loops. The modern tape laces are being very successfully made, the beautiful old fillings being carefully copied.





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These modern tape laces follow, as did the ancient ones, a style of work which was confined to the Netherlands. It was invented by them, and its peculiar characteristics—the use of the fine Flanders thread and the close and regular weaving of the tape—have never been copied. Flemish bobbin lace used frequently to be called *Guipure de Flandre*, to distinguish it from the needle-point laces.

**LILLE LACE.** About the middle of the sixteenth century Lille was not behind her sister cities of the Netherlands in making fine lace. Like so much of the other Flemish lace, her chief product was bobbin-made, and its most marked peculiarity was the ground, a clear simple network upon which the pattern, outlined with a heavy thread, stood out in good contrast. The Lille lace was similar to that of Arras, and the grounds of both were formed by crossing the threads of two sides of the hexagonal mesh and twisting together the two threads on the other four sides. The clear ground of the Lille and Arras laces made them admirable for trimmings when gathered or ruffled up on fichus, kerchiefs, or nightcaps. The more modern laces, however, had grounds powdered with dots or little sprigs, and, while formerly made in both black and white, are now made in white only.

By the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle Lille was transferred to France, and then, after being retaken by Prince Eugene and enjoying a period of Flemish rule once more, it was again ceded to France by the Peace of Utrecht. These changes in government had caused



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many of the lace-makers to seek refuge in Ghent. Still this industry was carried on there, and in 1713, when the French Governor was to be married, the magistrates presented him with costly laces. Madame D'Abrantès, in describing her trousseau, says that the only lace she knew of not to be found there was Lille, which was used only by "ordinary women." Notwithstanding the strictures of the Duchesse D'Abrantès, very exquisite dresses were made entirely of Lille lace. The writer has seen an Empire gown, perhaps worn by some beauty at the court of Napoleon, made entirely of this lace, with the hand-made net closely powdered with open rings instead of solid dots. A wide band of flat-edged insertion is let into the front, and meets a wide band which edges the bottom, and which is composed of five different patterns of insertion fastened together to make the border. There are no sleeves, only little bands crossing the shoulders. The waist is just 5 inches deep in front, and the skirt 44. The garment is perfect, not the least fine thread being broken. It was a "find," being sold by the dealer who had it as an "infant's robe," but the size of the waist and of the armholes showed the error.

Lille, Arras, Mechlin, and Bayeux laces all have a strong resemblance to each other, and have the softness and charm which is always to be found in pillow lace. On account of this very quality it is sometimes preferred to the more costly needle point, which has a crispness, owing to the method of making it, which causes it to fall in less easy folds.



*PLATE XXXVIII.—Duchesse de Nemours.  
Flounces of Point Appliqué. Portrait by  
Winterhalter.*

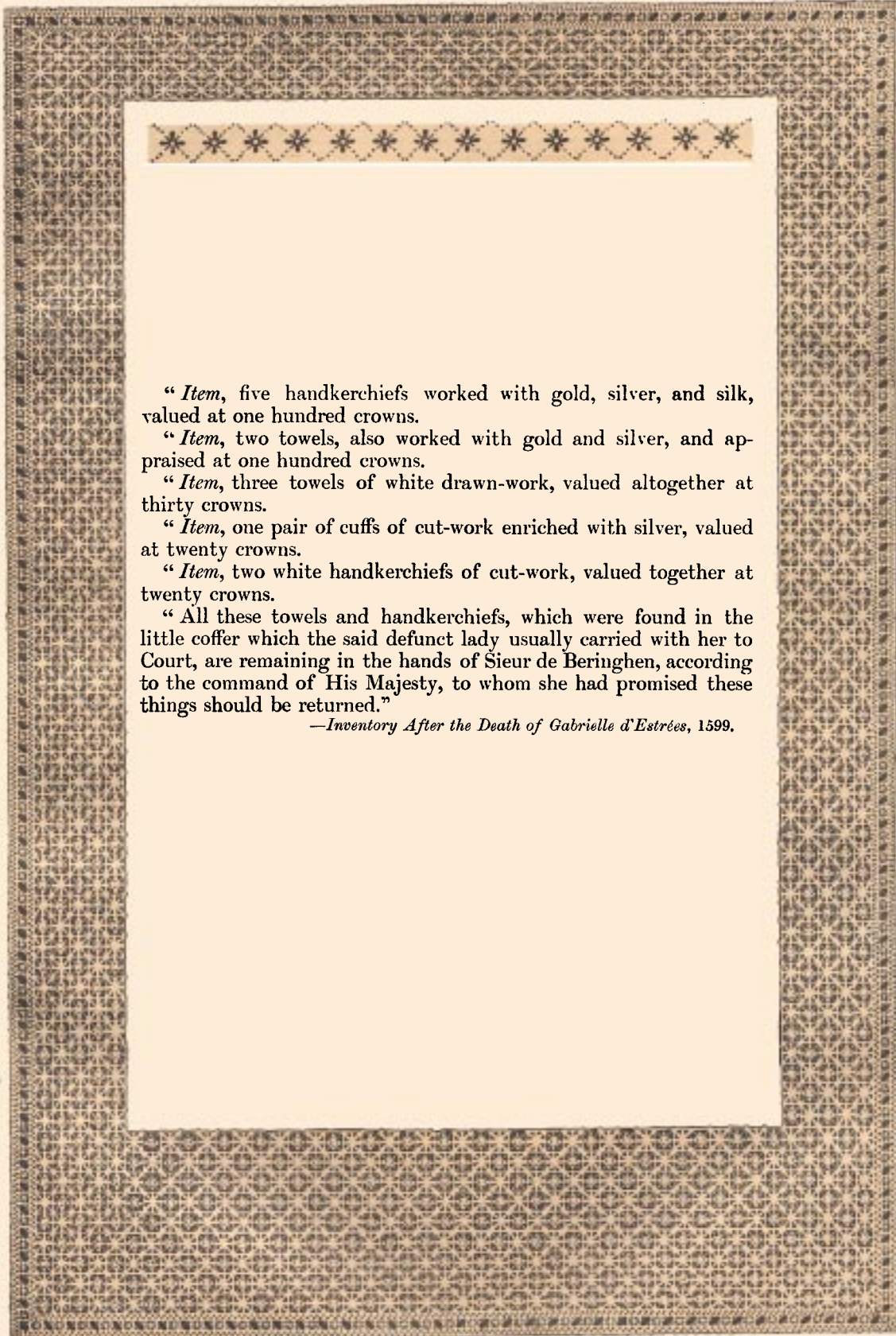


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GUIPURE DE BRUGES is what is now known as *Duchesse* lace, and is a thread bobbin lace of varying degrees of fineness. The pattern is made in sprigs, since it is generally floral, and united by brides or bars. It is popular, as it is a "real lace," and not very expensive in its coarser qualities. Its greatest drawback is that it thickens and draws up when washed. The religious communities of Bruges make most of the *Duchesse* lace, and a similar lace is made in Venice, where it is called "Mosaic lace," since it is built up of small sprigs and pieces.



*Part IV — French and Spanish  
Laces*



“*Item*, five handkerchiefs worked with gold, silver, and silk, valued at one hundred crowns.

“*Item*, two towels, also worked with gold and silver, and appraised at one hundred crowns.

“*Item*, three towels of white drawn-work, valued altogether at thirty crowns.

“*Item*, one pair of cuffs of cut-work enriched with silver, valued at twenty crowns.

“*Item*, two white handkerchiefs of cut-work, valued together at twenty crowns.

“All these towels and handkerchiefs, which were found in the little coffer which the said defunct lady usually carried with her to Court, are remaining in the hands of Sieur de Beringhen, according to the command of His Majesty, to whom she had promised these things should be returned.”

—*Inventory After the Death of Gabrielle d'Estrées, 1599.*



## Part IV — French and Spanish Laces



It was Colbert who said that “Fashion is to France what the Mines of Peru are to Spain,”— and then he proceeded to make good the saying.

While it remains true that for years and years Italy was the arbiter of fashions, France under the Medicis and Valois sparkled with gold and jewels and rippled in costly laces. Cloth of gold and cloth of silver, further enriched by embroidery, jewels, and the richest lace to be had, were not too elegant for both men’s and women’s wear. Clouet’s portraits show how very insignificant the early laces were, mere edgings of little beauty. They were mounted on starched and plaited linen ruffs, called *retondes*. Spanish capes and *collets montés*, as well as chemisettes, called *gorgias*, that covered neck and shoulders, were also worn in the time of Catherine de Medici.

The drawn-work was handsome, and in that or laces or darned netting the workers of the period excelled. Catherine de Medici herself was an indefatigable worker in embroideries and cut-work, and passed many an



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evening at this pleasant labour. She was a strange character, and one thinks of her more naturally as brewing poisons and planning conspiracies than as peacefully working with a needle. After the death of her husband, who was laid out "dressed in a Holland shirt most excellently broidered about the collar and the cuffs," she arranged for herself a mourning costume which she always afterward wore. It was elegant and luxurious, and, most important of all, becoming. It was the custom for widows of high rank, for a certain period after their bereavement, to wear veils when they went out of doors, with high gowns, and turnover linen collars without any lace. They were further expected to remain in absolute seclusion for forty days. Catherine de Medici was the first queen to ignore these customs. She carried the outward mourning, however, into her surroundings, and had a mourning-bed of black velvet embroidered with pearls and powdered with crescents and suns, with all the bed furniture to correspond. She had still another bed draped with darned netting or lacis, and she not only worked this lacis herself, but kept many girls and her servants employed on it also. This lacis was commonly made in squares, as being easy to handle, and a single pattern filled each square. These squares were joined together by an ornamental pattern of stitches, and made very beautiful bed-covers and ornaments for all kinds of household effects.

In the inventory of Catherine de Medici, recorded after her death in 1589, in which the bed already





**P**LAQUE XXXIX.—Court ball in reign of  
Henry III of France (1551-1589). Showing  
extravagance of ruffs.



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mentioned is carefully described, there are also enumerated two coffers, in one of which were 381 of these lacis squares, unmounted, and in the "other were 538 squares, some worked with rosettes or with blossoms, and others with nosegays."

In 1559, when Margaret of Savoy was married, her trousseau contained gold-embroidered dresses and quantities of jewels and lace. The bridal dress was yellow satin, with the bodice embroidered in jewels and gold. Her mantle was trimmed with lace a foot wide, and she had in addition a cloak of cloth of silver trimmed with lynx fur.

By 1579 the ruffs worn at the French court had become preposterous, so large that the simple function of eating was almost an impossibility, and so full that twelve lengths or yards of material were easily tortured into one of them. They were worn by men and women alike, and the grotesque effect presented by a company wearing these monstrosities is shown in many pictures of the period, but they were pleasing to both Catholic and Huguenot alike. The court ladies not only wore what laces there were,—*Point Coupé*, Drawn Work and Darned Net, but they made it also.

Fashion usually holds her sway undisputed, no matter what political upheavals take place. There was an exception to this rule in 1583, immediately after the murder of the Duc de Guise at the États de Blois. Deep mourning only was worn, no gay or fashionable costume was tolerated. If a *demoiselle* was seen wearing



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a ruff, or even a simple *rabat* trimmed with lace, it was torn from her neck and trampled under foot. But this emotion soon passed, and all was once more caprice and folly.

In 1594 Gabrielle d'Estrées wore a "*cotte* of Turkish cloth of gold with flowers embroidered in carnation, white, green, and silver." With this was worn a gown of flowered green velvet lined with cloth of silver and trimmed with gold and silver lace. Thread lace of the finest point was lavished on the neck and sleeves, and even on the back of the gown.

As the Venetians advanced in the art and produced more beautiful lace, the French court demanded it, and were eager to squander such fabulous sums on it that the government thought it time to interfere.

One of the strictest edicts against excessive ornamentation of clothing ever promulgated in any country was issued by Louis XIII in 1629. The chief interest it now has is the enumeration of the ornaments and trimmings then worn. That it was seriously enforced seems hardly probable in view of the pictures of the day, which show splendid costumes for both men and women, decorated with the very articles prohibited. The edict was called "*Regulation of Superfluity in Clothes.*" In Article 133 of the document is the following :

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



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“And we forbid the use of all other ornaments upon capes, sleeves, and other linen garments, save trimmings, cut-work, and laces manufactured in this country which do not exceed at most the price of 75 livres the ell, that is, for the band and its trimming together, without evasion; upon pain of confiscation of the aforesaid capes, chainworks, collars, hats, and mantles which may be found upon offending persons; as well as the coaches and horses which may be found similarly bedecked.”

Under this same monarch lace handkerchiefs and lace-trimmed garments were prohibited to all classes below the nobles. Those under the ban dared not openly defy the decree, so they wore bunches of ribbons and streamers to supply the deficiency. These streamers became known as *galants*.

Scarfs trimmed with lace came into fashion in 1656, and formed a very graceful adjunct to ladies' attire. They did not meet with the approval of all classes, however, for some disbanded soldiers roaming through the streets of Paris amused themselves by snatching these scarfs from the ladies' shoulders, claiming that it was against the law to wear them. After half a dozen of these offenders had been hanged by the police, the nuisance abated, and scarfs were once more worn in peace. During the carnival of 1659, we are told by Mdlle de Montpensier, —

—“the court masqueraded in delightful fashion. On one occasion Monsieur, Mdlle de Villeroy, Mdlle de Gourden, and I wore cloth of silver with rose-coloured braid, black-velvet aprons, and stomachers trimmed with gold and silver lace. Our dresses were cut like those of the Bresse peasants, with collars and cuffs of yellow cloth in the same style, but of finer quality and edged with Venetian lace.”



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When Colbert came on the scene he profited by the knowledge that the edicts issued by the Valois kings had been evaded in every way, and that the prohibitions of Louis XIII had met with small effect. So, to gain his object of preserving to France her own revenues, he set about the matter in quite a different fashion. To be sure he was at first much hampered by Mazarin, who was not so deeply concerned in stimulating the industries of France but that he could buy and wear both Flanders and Italian laces. But in 1661 Mazarin died, and after this the Minister of Finance was able to take the place he desired in the administration.

Our interest is chiefly concerned in his attitude toward the lace industry, but this was only one of the objects he had in his active mind. Other new industries were started, workmen skilled in every branch of labour were invited to settle in France, inventors were encouraged and protected, and French workmen were absolutely prohibited from emigrating.

He conceived the idea of bringing to France skilled workwomen, so that French lace should rival that of Italy and Flanders, reporting to the King that "there will always be found fools enough to purchase the manufactures of France, though France should be prohibited from purchasing those of other countries."

To learn how best to accomplish his object he applied to the French Ambassador at Venice, Monseigneur de Bonzy, Bishop of Beziers. This prelate recommended sending some women from Venice, where "all the poor



*PLATE XL.—Claudia (1547-1575), daughter of Henry II and Catherine de Medici. Ruff and chemisette of drawn-work edged with purling. One of the earliest French portraits showing lace. Painted by Clouet.*



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families and all the convents make a living out of this lace-making," to teach the girls of France.

The experiment succeeded, and a few years later Colbert wrote to M. le Conte d'Avaux, the successor at Venice of Mgr de Bonzy, as follows:

"I have gladly received the collar of needle-point lace worked in relief that you have sent me, and I find it very beautiful. I shall have it compared with these new laces being made by our own lace-makers, although I may tell you beforehand that as good specimens are now made in this Kingdom."

The town of Alençon had long been a centre for the manufacture of *Point Coupé* and needle-point lace. In 1665, when Colbert was considering where best to place his colony of imported lace-workers, he received a letter from Favier Duboulay, saying :

"It is a fact that for many years the town of Alençon subsists only by means of these small works of lace that the people make and sell."

So what more natural than that this little lace-making town should be chosen? Curiously enough, the greatest opposition Colbert received was from the old French lace-makers themselves, who were so wedded to making the old style of laces that it was almost impossible to teach them the new. However, the minister persisted and was ably assisted by his forewoman, Mme Gilbert, or Mme La Perrière, — authorities differ on this point, — and they soon produced such beautiful pieces that not only was the great Louis himself satisfied, but his courtiers eagerly seized the laces which were exhibited



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as samples, and Alençon was decided to be "the only wear." Not only was *Point de France* (as the new lace was called) the fashion, but the wearing of it was compulsory. All those who were either attached to the royal household or received at Versailles, "could only appear, the ladies in trimmings and head-dresses, the gentlemen in ruffles and cravats of the royal manufacture."

The "Mercure Galant" of 1664 contains the following instructions on the fashions, addressed to a lady living in the country :

"Network coifs were at first dotted, and afterward open-worked. This last is quite a novelty, as are also skirts of *Point d'Angleterre* printed on linen and mounted on silk with raised ornaments. Every woman has bought some."

At a *fête* given at Vaux by the superb Fouquet, Mdlle de la Vallière wore a white gown—

—"with gold stars and leaves in Persian stitch, and a pale blue sash tied in a large knot below the bosom. In her fair waving hair were flowers and pearls mixed together. Two large emeralds shone in her ears. Her arms were bare and encircled above the elbow with gold open-work bracelets set with opals. She wore gloves of cream-coloured Brussels lace."

On August 15, 1665, a company was founded by royal ordinance, with an exclusive privilege for ten years, to manufacture *Point de France* upon a large scale, and made enormous profits during the period of its existence, which ceased in 1675. The state furnished a fund of 36,000 francs in aid of this company; the importation of foreign lace was forbidden; and it was





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specified that all the laces of Venice, Genoa, and Ragusa should be copied in France. In 1671 the Italian Ambassador at Paris wrote home that Colbert was on the way to bring the making of thread lace to perfection. Never was protection more beneficently extended over an infant industry. On November 17, 1667, there appeared still another edict, prohibiting not only the wearing but the selling of *passemens*, lace, and other works in thread of Venice, Genoa, and other foreign countries. On March 17, 1668, this was followed by still another prohibition, declaring that the wearing of these foreign laces was injurious to the country, since the manufacture of lace gave subsistence to many persons living in the kingdom. The last edict regarding feminine attire, which was published in France, was dated 1704.

“Transparents,” as they were called, came into fashion in 1676. Mme de Sévigné writes :

“Have you heard of transparents? They are complete dresses of the very finest gold or azure brocade, and over them is worn a transparent black gown, or a gown of beautiful *Point d'Angleterre*, or of Chenille velvet like that winter lace you saw. These form a ‘transparent’ which is a black dress, and gold, silver, or coloured dress beneath, just as one likes, and this is the fashion.”

When Mme de Montespan was at the height of favour she is described as wearing “*Point de France*, and her hair in numberless curls, one on each side of the temples falling low on her cheeks.”

Little fancy capes made of *Point d'Angleterre* or French lace were called *Palatines* after Charlotte Eliza-



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beth, daughter of the Elector Palatine. She invented them to cover her neck and shoulders, and in winter wore them of miniver.

In 1679 Louis XIV gave a *fête* at Marly, and, in order to encourage the new manufacture, gave orders that each lady of the court, on retiring to her room to change her costume, should find placed ready for her use a costly dress of lace. Even the austere Mme de Maintenon, while sparing in the use of jewels, was very partial to elegant lace, and kept the young girls at St. Cyr busy making it for her.

Nor were the churchmen more abstemious in their use of this rich ornament. Fénelon, the pious Archbishop of Cambrai, had four dozen pairs of costly ruffles. The sleeve ruffles were a more important portion of the costume than one would consider possible. They were arranged in layers as early as 1683, and were known by the name of *engagéants*. These were not the ones which turned back over the sleeve of the dress, but hung over the wrist. By 1688 they had reached their highest expression in France, and so popular were they that by 1690 all England had copied the fashion and was wearing them too. Their proper arrangement was a matter of deep consideration. "I have been told," writes Furetière, "that the wife of President Tambonneau takes a whole hour to put on her cuffs."

The "Fontange," a style of head-dress originated by Mlle Fontanges' tying a lace handkerchief over her disordered tresses, immediately became the mode in



*PLATE XLI.—James Stuart (1688-1766), and his sister Louisa. He wears a cravat of Point de France. The front of her gown, sleeve ruffles, and cap, called a "Fontange," are of the same lace. Portrait by Largillière.*



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England as well as in France. It held its position for ten years, till 1699, and from its modest beginnings grew to be an immense tower. In its perfected state it was composed of pieces of gummed linen rolled into circular bands and used for keeping in place the bows, ribbons, feathers, lace, and jewelled ornaments of which this head-dress, also called the *commode*, was composed. Even little girls, who both at this and subsequent periods were but miniature copies of their mothers, had these huge structures mounted on their heads.

The earliest of the *Points de France* were merely replicas of the Italian laces, and many of the pictures of Colbert himself show him in a cravat which closely resembles *Point de Venise*.

The old Burano laces and early Alençon resemble each other very closely, but little by little France created a fabric of her own. *Point d'Alençon* soon became known as the variety of lace produced at that town. The designs used under Louis XIV are flowing, ornamented with flowers and garlands, horns of plenty, and sheaves. Under the reign of Louis XV they remained much the same, with garlands curiously interwoven, into which were worked patterns of different stitches, the whole presenting a wreathed and garlanded effect of great beauty.

At about the same time that the manufacture of *Point de France* was begun at Alençon there was established at Argentan a similar *bureau*. These two laces were long rivals, and the struggle among the workers at



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Argentan, who preferred old methods also, seems to have been similar to that at Alençon. The directress, Mme Raffy, writes to Colbert thanking him for the notice, publicly announced at Argentan to the sound of the trumpet, that the lace-makers of that town are to work for the *Bureau de la Manufacture Royale*, only.

*Point d'Argentan* has long been considered to be especially distinguished by its hexagonal brides, but there are also Venetian laces which have this same peculiarity. These brides, or really background, are a large six-sided mesh worked over with buttonhole stitch, each side of the hexagon being covered with eight or nine buttonhole stitches, although only about one tenth of an inch long. This gives some idea of the minute ground, which is also very strong.

The towns of Alençon and Argentan were but ten miles apart. Communication was constant. Some authorities, like Mr. Dupont, declare that Argentan was but a branch of Alençon, and that both styles of lace were made in both places. It is quite certain that the two grounds were often combined in one lace, and both laces were made with the same material.

The manufacture of lace at Argentan had become practically extinct by 1701, so fickle is fashion, but Mathieu Guyard, a merchant of Paris, sought to revive it. He claimed that his ancestors and himself, for 120 years, had made laces both black and white in the environs of Paris. That his efforts to revive the industry were successful is very evident, since in 1708 he applied



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for permission to employ 600 lace-workers, re-establish the factory at Argentan, have the royal arms over his door, and be exempt from lodging soldiery. Throughout the whole eighteenth century, and until the storm of the Revolution swept over France, Argentan lace-works flourished. Guyard's children succeeded him, and his successors and a rival house had many battles over royal patronage, which became very acrimonious at the preparations for the marriage of the Dauphin in 1744. Workwomen were enticed from one factory to another, the controller-general was appealed to, and after much fuss and feathers the matter was happily compromised by both firms making all the lace they could, which was not more than enough to supply the royal demand.

The collecting of taxes on various commodities was let out by the farmer-general to various subordinates. In 1707 the collection of the taxes on lace was farmed out to one Étienne Nicholas for the annual sum of 201,000 livres (\$40,200). The duties were 50 livres for each pound of lace, so it would have taken over 4,000 pounds of lace to reimburse Nicholas for his outlay. Of course he would not be content to pay this large sum unless his profits were in proportion, so it seems safe to say that probably as much as 8,000 pounds of lace came into France that year. There was a prohibition against the Points of both Venice and Genoa, so their laces could not be declared in the receipts. Undoubtedly many pounds of them were introduced, however, under other names, or by smuggling.



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On all sides were courtiers and attendants waiting for perquisites by means of which they hoped to eke out an income which would cover the immense outlay to which they were subjected on account of the elegance and luxury demanded, and for which the court set the standard. The ladies wore their berthas and sleeves trimmed with Alençon or Argentan. When the sleeves were short, these ruffles were called *engagéantes*; when long, *pagodes*. The lace trimmings on skirts were *volantes*, or flounces, which were called *tournantes* when they were applied horizontally, and *quilles* when put on vertically. The edge of lace (when not insertion, in which both edges are finished alike) is ornamented on one side and plain on the other. To the plain edge is lightly attached a strip of lace called *engrêlure*, or footing. This, in the old laces, was made of flax thread, like the lace itself; in modern lace it is made of cotton thread.

The patterns for *Points de France*, when not copied from Italian models, had a regularity of arrangement which was not to be found in Italian laces of the same period. It was this very regularity which led little by little to the doing away with the brides or bars and the substitution of a regular *réseau* or meshed background. There are still to be found, in collections, flounces made for the court dames of the *ancien régime*, in which are figures and emblems of the time of the Great Louis.

When the Prince de Conti married Mlle de Blois, the King's wedding gift was a set of toilette hangings



***P**LATE XLII.—Point d'Alençon. Seventeenth  
Century. Style of Louis XIV. Needle point.*





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made entirely of *Points de France*, while other members of the royal family gave her a bedspread and valance of the same costly material. It was this same Mlle de Blois of whom Mme de Sévigné writes in 1674, saying: "She was as beautiful as an angel, with a *tablier* and *bavette* of *Point de France*."

The prodigality in dress at this period in France is scarcely conceivable. Neither men nor women hesitated to beggar themselves to shine in laces and diamonds, and then, when they had squandered everything, still kept on the same wild pace till merchants refused to supply them any longer. On the occasion of the betrothal of the daughter of Monsieur with the Duc de Lorraine, the festivities lasted for several days. Each day for a week Mlle de Blois appeared in a different costume. Once she wore a coat of *Gros de Tours* richly embroidered in gold touched with flame colour. She had on a splendid set of diamonds, and a mantle of gold *Point d'Espagne* six yards and a half long, which was carried behind her by a Duchess. On another occasion her coat and skirt were cloth of silver trimmed with silver lace.

It was at the end of the seventeenth century that the *Steinkirk* came in,— a necktie of the finest muslin edged with lace. This was passed about the neck and tied once, the long ends being twisted and drawn through a buttonhole. The legend is that this fashion of wearing these cravats came about as the French princes were hurrying to battle in 1692, in the engagement between



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Marshal Luxembourg and William of Orange. However this may be, the hit was a happy and becoming one; the style was followed, and women, too, seized on it. Indeed, it became quite general in England as well as in France, and it even crossed the water to America, where in the "court circle" at New York we hear of both *Steinkirks* and *Fontanges*. The feminine fashion of fastening these laced cravats was not by passing them through a buttonhole, but by pinning them on one side of the corsage by a long bar pin. In the prologue to "Don Quixote" we find: "The modish spark wears a huge *Steinkirk* twisted to the waist." Sir Walter Scott, correct in small as well as large details, speaks of Frank Osbaldiston in "Rob Roy" as having his cravat, "a richly laced *Steinkirk*," taken from him by the Highlanders.

With the advent of Louis XV the wearied nation wanted something new. The *Points de France* under Louis XIV had been chiefly remarkable for their meshed grounds, often large in size, the bars being ornamented with little loops or *picots* of thread. The lace mesh was now much reduced in size, a form in which the *picot* could not be used. To counteract this plainness, mesh grounds of different patterns were happily contrasted in the same piece. With the prominence of the ground we may date the falling off of the elegance in design which had distinguished the previous reign. More and more attention was paid to the *jours* or fancy stitches introduced into the filling of the pattern, and this epoch in



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lace-making produced a variety of exquisite stitches which had never before been attempted. Such fillings were inserted like little jewels in the centre of flowers; they extended into medallions, along the edges; they spread into fans and shells infinite in variety, wonderful in beauty. So exquisite were some of these fillings that in small and costly bits of lace they filled the whole background, making a product infinitely richer than when the ground was a simple mesh.

The use of finery which seemed excessive under Louis XIV went even farther under Louis XV. Everything possible was trimmed with lace. The perquisites collected by those connected with the court often rose to immense sums. The ladies of the court attached to the Queen's chamber were nominally paid 150 livres a year, but they were able to sell for their own use the candles which had been once lighted. This item would not seem to be a large one, yet it brought in an income of 5,000 livres. The profit on wax candles was so great that it was shared among many. Those candles which were unconsumed when the play was ended went to the *garde-meuble*, while those that remained after lighting the King's meals were apportioned among others. Every three years the linens and laces of the Queen were renewed in order that the lady of honour and the royal nurse might sell the supply on hand. When the Dauphine died, Mme Brancas at once asserted her rights to all that pertained to her toilette, and this brought no less than 50,000 crowns. The profits of her



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wardrobe brought 82,000 livres. In 1738 the Duc de Luynes writes :

“ To-day Madame de Luynes brought the furnishings which she had chosen for the Queen, and which were shown to the ladies of honor. They were bedspreads for the great and small beds, and pillow-cases trimmed with *Point d'Angleterre* of the same pattern. These furnishings cost 30,000 livres, for Madame Luynes did not renew the handsomest bedspreads for the Queen.”

The old “ furnishings ” were the perquisite of Madame de Luynes, and she seems to have shown unusual consideration for the royal coffers in not renewing the *beaux couvrepieds*.

Even *Point d'Argentan* was not too costly for the trimming of sheets, the lace alone for such a purpose amounting to 40,000 crowns. Aprons were often made of this charming lace, and even children had such with caps and sleeve ruffles to match.

During this period still another use was found for lace, to fall from the edges of the masks used by ladies when riding or driving. In fact some of these dainty articles were entirely of the finest black Chantilly, though the ordinary mask was of black velvet with merely a fall of lace, since these answered better both as a protection to the complexion and as a disguise. Louis XV no longer took such an interest as Louis XIV, stimulated by Colbert, had evinced in the industries of France. The pre-eminence of Alençon was disputed, and *Point d'Angleterre* and Malines became equally esteemed. The favourites of the period set the fashions in laces as in most other details of dress, and the Wardrobe Accounts



**P**LATE XLIII.—“Unknown Princesses.” They wear aprons, fronts, sleeve ruffles, and caps of Point d’Argentan. Attributed to Belle (1674-1734).



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of Madame Du Barry are fairly preposterous with the sums spent for Brussels and *Point d'Angleterre*. In these accounts is also mentioned India muslin so fine that a length sufficient to make four dresses weighed but 15 ounces.

While the French laces with which we are most familiar, and which were the most costly and beautiful, were made with the needle, France also had her bobbin laces. Colbert directed that "all sorts of threadwork, both with the needle and with bobbin on the pillow" should be made in the lace-works he established, but the bobbin laces had a later start. The towns where bobbin laces were made under Colbert's administration were Arras, Le Quesnoy, Loudon, and Aurillac. They were soon overshadowed, however, by their better known neighbour, Valenciennes, the place where the most esteemed of bobbin laces were made.

Valenciennes lace attracted but little attention when it was first made. It was not till the eighteenth century that it became esteemed and accepted as one of the laces demanded by fashion. Indeed, none of the pillow-made laces, Mechlin, Valenciennes, or Chantilly, enjoyed the reputation at first which caused the needle points of Venice and Alençon to occupy so prominent a position. Still, the love for lace had been implanted, and the noble work done by Colbert in establishing works all over the Kingdom bore fruit later. While needle-point laces may be said to have reached their supreme heights in the seventeenth century, bobbin-made lace came to



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its fullest expression in the eighteenth century and has never since been excelled.

Under Louis XV fashion demanded soft and filmy laces, which were bobbin-made, the very materials and mode of manufacture making needle point stiffer. The earliest French bobbin laces, like those of other countries at this period (the sixteenth century), were of gold and silver threads, — *Passements* or *Guipures* as they were called. Le Puy and Mirecourt were the best-known places of their manufacture, and these laces are made there yet. The patterns have changed little, being geometric, with formal floral forms and star-like centres.

The making of these laces at the present time is one of the chief industries of Auvergne, where nearly 200,000 women, living simple lives in the mountains, add to their meagre incomes by lace-making. They are able quickly to follow the dictates of fashion, since they can vary the materials with which they work: silk, worsted, and goat's or even rabbit's hair being employed with equal facility. The most popular lace of the last century upon which they have been employed is a black silk Guipure. Cluny lace, a new name for the old-fashioned *pasement*, was also a favourite for a period, the name being derived from the famous Cluny Museum in Paris, where examples of ancient laces are preserved.

The old gold and silver laces are still made, but of course in greatly diminished quantities, since this form of the fabric is no longer used on men's dresses.



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The fancy for laces with fine grounds, which was so marked in the eighteenth century, was a great misfortune to the Guipure-making centres.

*Point de Milan*, another pillow-made lace, suffered also, since it was a lace of scrolls and large effects, the gimp being rather heavy.

The dress of the *élégantes* of the period of Louis XV abounded in every description of sumptuous negligées. Many of these gowns were of the finest lawn and muslin, very richly bedecked with lace, which had to combine the qualities of a filmy lightness and a capability of "doing up" well. Valenciennes lace seemed most happily to combine these qualities. By this time it had passed through the various stages of different ground-works, and the clear square or diamond-shaped mesh had been adopted, its regularity displaying the floral ornament of the pattern to the best advantage.

For elegant dress, when silk lace was demanded, Chantilly, after a period devoted to experiment and struggle, suddenly sprang to the fore. The material employed for the black laces is a silk thread called *Grenadine d'Alais*, and the patterns of the old Chantilly, whether of black or white silk, are distinguished by the introduction of vases and baskets to hold the flowers which form the design. Black laces, however, never had the vogue of white, and were chiefly used by elderly ladies, for shawls, scarfs, and any outdoor garments, or for mounting over a brilliant colour. It is much more in demand now than in either the seventeenth





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or eighteenth centuries, and more workers are engaged in its manufacture.

When Marie Antoinette came to the throne, the heavier laces, except on regulation court robes, were laid aside, and the light pillow-made *Blondes* substituted. The term *Blonde* arose from the fact that the lace was first made with unbleached silk of a pale straw-colour. Two sizes of thread were used: one very fine for the ground, and a coarser one for the pattern. The cream-coloured silk is no longer used, but white and black only. The predilection of Marie Antoinette for this particular make of lace is evident not only from her portraits by Mme Le Brun, but also from the accounts left by her dressmaker, Mme Éloffé, who records dress after dress trimmed with it. Mdlle Bertin, on the other hand, furnishes but one gown trimmed with *Blonde*. The patterns she liked best were with sparsely covered grounds, merely the edge bearing a floral design. The sprigs, dots, spots, and oval-shaped dots called "tears" (most appropriately for the poor Queen), now came in vogue.

Two styles of lace called *Tulle* and "Marli," to be distinguished only by the different shaped mesh, also became popular during the time of Louis XVI. By 1775 there is mention made of a family of lace-makers named Gantes, living in the town of Tulle. The early lace of this character was merely a net ground without ornament. The same name has been given to the machine-made net of later days, and there is enough variety



*PLATE XLIV.*—*Charles de France (1757-1836) and Marie Adélaïde de France. The lace apron, sleeve ruffles, cap and cravat and ruffs are Argentan. Portrait by Drouais.*



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among these manufactured products to have given them definite names, such as Brussels *Tulle*, *Bobbin Tulle*, *Tulle Point d'Esprit*, and many others.

The Marli lace takes its name from the famous *château* of Louis XIV which stands between Versailles and St. Germain. Marli lace was often thickly strewn with tiny square dots (like modern *Point d'Esprit*) and was very diaphanous and exceedingly becoming in ruches and frills.

Marie Antoinette's accounts abound with mention of both *Tulle* and Marli. So great was the demand for these laces prior to the Revolution that statistics show that over 100,000 workwomen were employed in making them. During the last few months of the Queen's life, before she left Versailles, she wore black laces only. When she finally left for Paris, on October 6, 1789, she gave away to her ladies what were left of her laces and fans.

Ladies still occupied themselves in working at this pretty art, with simple patterns; and Rousseau, in his book "*Émile*," speaking of one of the characters being a good needlewoman, says, —

—"but that work which she prefers above all 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."

The Revolution was as much a death-blow to bobbin as to needle-point lace. Valenciennes never recovered, and Chantilly languished for many years, finally taking a new start at Bayeux, where the styles of lace formerly



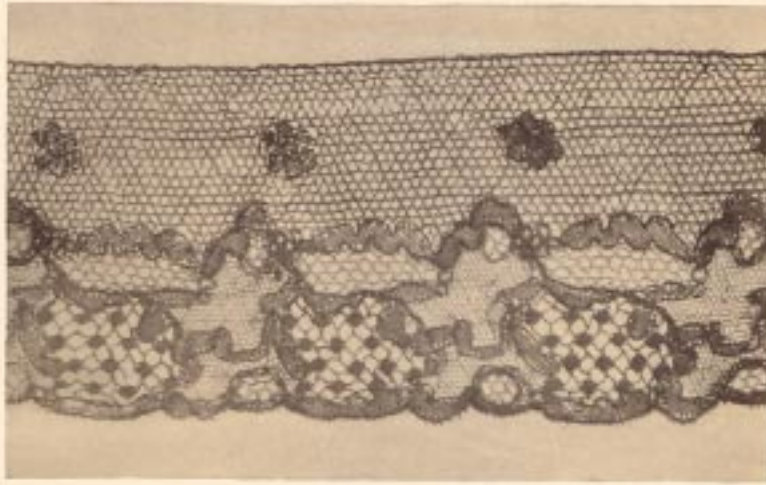
## THE LACE BOOK

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made at Chantilly were revived with great success. Mrs. Palliser says that lace was never more in vogue than in the early days of the first Empire, and the orders given by Napoleon and the members of his family and court were the richest ever received by the French lace-workers. His sister Pauline, Princess Borghese, says herself that she is "passionately fond of lace," and her portraits show that it was always used in some fashion or other on her gowns. The bed-coverings ordered for Marie Louise by Napoleon were made of Alençon, and, besides the bedspread, consisted of tester, valance, pillow-cases, and curtains.

The Empress Eugénie was also fond of lace, and much Alençon was bought for her. She had one flounce of Alençon of such exquisite quality that its manufacture occupied thirty-six women for a year and a half. Marie Antoinette and the Empress Eugénie were, however, equally fond of *Blonde* lace, and in the celebrated portrait by Winterhalter the Empress wears a gown trimmed with it. This piece of *Blonde*,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  yards in length and 20 inches wide, was sold in London in April, 1902, for 48 guineas (\$252),— not a large price considering its history.

Even before her marriage, while Mlle Montijo, she delighted in visiting the lace shops and hunting out choice pieces. In 1865 she organised a competition among the lace-workers of Chantilly and Alençon for two dresses, one of each style, and when they were completed, dressed in the Alençon gown, she distributed



***P**LATE XLV.—A. “Vrai Valenciennes,” showing a bit of fond de neige, or snowy background. Bobbin lace. Early Eighteenth Century. B. Old black chantilly, with double ground. Bobbin lace. Early Eighteenth Century.*



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the prizes. The price given for the gown she chose was £3,000 (\$15,000).

The *layette* of the Prince Imperial was quite as rich as that of his predecessors, the King of Rome, or the "Grande Bébé," as Louis XIV was called. The christening-robe, with its cap and mantle, was composed of Alençon, while the same lace was used for the coverlet of the cradle, the curtains of which were of finest old Mechlin. His frocks, of which there were twelve dozen, were either trimmed or largely composed of this same costly lace, and the caps and aprons of his nurses were also trimmed with it.

There was another bobbin lace often mentioned in the contemporary literature of the day during the sixteenth and succeeding centuries, called *Mignonette*, which was a light, inexpensive trimming and popular among the lower and middle classes. The farmer's wife generally managed to have enough *Mignonette* to trim her best caps, its lightness rendering it admirable for this use. The lace was made from thread bleached and spun at Antwerp, and was never more than two or three inches wide. It was largely exported, and was made not only in Paris, but in Lorraine, Auvergne, Normandy, and Switzerland. This is one of the laces of which an old writer speaks as being exported in large quantities to the "islands of America."

Paris herself was long a lace-making centre, records existing as far back as early in the seventeenth century. The more common laces like *Mignonette*, *Bisette*, and



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*Point de Paris* were those earliest made by the Huguenots who settled there. As finer laces were required these Paris laces improved and became fine and delicate in quality. Gold lace was made in Paris long before the time of Colbert, and was known as *Point d'Espagne*. It was often enriched with pearls and jewels and was renowned all over Europe for its fine workmanship and beauty. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes broke up its manufacture. These makers of gold and silver lace in the time of Louis XIV had their own particular quarter in the Rue Sainte-Honoré and Rue des Bourdonnais, while the thread-lace shops were confined to the Rue Bétizy.

In 1704 a report made to the Chamber of Commerce of Paris estimated that one-fourth of the population, varying in age from six to seventy years and of many conditions of life, supported themselves either wholly or in part by the making of lace. The number fell off greatly, so that in 1850 there were but 250,000 workers. In 1903 there were barely 120,000, and these cannot make a living, as the work is poorly paid, the most skilful earning about two francs for twelve hours' work, while the ordinary workers receive but from 60 to 80 centimes.

But Paris, as several times before, has awakened to the folly of letting such a valuable industry die. On June 16, 1903, the Chamber of Deputies passed two short clauses which were appended to the Code of Education, enacting that in the lace-making departments



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and centres of France special instruction "should be given in lace making and designing, with the object of developing and perfecting the artistic education of the workers."

"Hitherto a child has been compelled to attend the primary schools until the age of thirteen. Now, such laces as the Alençon and the exquisite and rare Rose Point require an apprenticeship of at least five years. Therefore it follows that a girl will be an expense and a burden upon her parents for nineteen years, and at the end of that time, according to present rates of payment, she will be capable of earning only from 60 to 80 centimes at first, reaching 2 francs a day when she has attained great proficiency. Naturally, parents prefer farm labour or domestic service for their daughters, and hence there is a constant drainage from the country districts to the large towns."

If the new clauses be intelligently administered, the new schools of lace design and lace-making will have the very desirable effect of stemming the tide which is rapidly depopulating the country districts, by providing the girls with a means of livelihood at a still early age.

The principal centres of lace-making to-day are Paris, with her revived interest in the art, and the Le Puy district, which, earliest in the field, still holds her own as to quality and quantity of lace made there. The 100,000 lace-makers are scattered along the Haute Loire, and in the Puy de Dome, where the women meet at the house of one whom they call the "béate." This woman, for a small sum, provides a fire and light, and, to help pass the long day, either reads or tells stories. It is in Normandy that the lace-workers, as their ancestors did centuries ago, take their pillows to





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the lofts over the cow-houses, gaining a slight warmth from the beasts beneath them, which obviates the smoke and expense of a fire. These Normandy peasant workers still use the patterns handed down by previous generations, their strong artistic sense enabling them to improve them and give them great grace and delicacy.

Machine-made lace is not so great a rival as one might fear. Real lace always has been and always will be an article of luxury within the reach only of the few, and these will always buy it. In many old French families there are pieces of lace which have been heirlooms for generations, and which have a value to persons of taste and culture beyond even that of the family jewels. We have quoted from the expense account of the Duc de Penthièvre for the year 1738, when his ruffles and sets of lace embraced ells of the most costly makes. That these precious fabrics have been carefully preserved is most certain, since the present Duc de Penthièvre, in April, 1903, presented to his ward, on her marriage with the Marquis Gouy d'Arsy, some priceless old laces. The Comtesse de Chateaubriand is another holder of quantities of antique lace treasures, and interest in reviving this industry is felt not only in France, but in Italy and England as well.

### *Reference List of French Lace*

**POINTS DE FRANCE.** This was the name given during the reign of Louis XIV to those rich laces made in France which were almost exact copies of the Venice



**P**LATE XLVI. — Queen Marie Antoinette  
(1755-1793). The lace on skirt, corsage, and  
sleeves is Blonde. Portrait by Mme Lebrun.



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and Milan laces of the same period. These home-made laces were intended to take the places of Italian and Flemish laces, and they did. Their cost, however, was extreme, so that their wear was confined to the wealthy. The mode of making these laces was similar to that employed in the *Gros Point de Venise*, and it was under the superintendence of Mme Gilbert that the French and Italian workers evolved the beautiful fabric which became known a little later as *Point d'Alençon*. During the time of Louis XIV the groundwork of *Points de France* had been rather regular meshes, which were ornamented by loops or *picots*. Little by little these meshes were reduced in size, and grew to the ground called *petit réseau*, or small mesh. The handsomest of the *Points de France* at the commencement of the eighteenth century was known as—

**POINT DE SEDAN.** The city of Sedan was selected by Colbert as one of his lace centres, and this large-meshed lace, with bold springing patterns, was successfully made there. The lace has a varied thickness imparted to it by different stitches which give high relief in some parts of the pattern. Much of this lace was used on the splendid rochets of the bishops of that time. It closely resembles *Gros Point de Venise*. The use of lace during the reign of Louis XIV was prodigious. Even such visitors as came to the court were presented with cravats, collars, and cuffs by the magnificent Louis.

**POINT D'ALENÇON.** The final evolution of this lace was completed by about 1678, and from this time was



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called by the distinctive title of Alençon. The quality of this lace, which is a needle point, is its crisp firmness, due to the character of the *cordonet*, or outline, to the edge of the pattern, which is made of horsehair, giving it a peculiar wiry feeling, as well as a firmness to which is due the preservation of much of this perishable fabric. Louis XIV and Louis XV were its two greatest patrons, and with the Revolution in 1794 it suffered greatly and has never again assumed the place it once held.

The process of making Alençon is tedious in the extreme. After the grounds became small, the buttonhole stitch was too thick and clumsy, and a lighter and clearer mesh was found to be necessary. After much experimenting this grew to be the hexagonal mesh known as the distinctive Alençon ground. The lace is made in sections, each part by a different worker, and the sections are afterward joined by nearly invisible stitches. The pattern is printed on bits of parchment about ten inches long, green being the colour commonly used, as showing up the lace better. The pattern is then pricked, and the parchment is stitched to a piece of coarse linen. The outline of the pattern is then laid on the parchment in two flat threads held in place by tiny stitches which go through the holes in the parchment. This is the first stage, and is the only part of the work done by this particular workwoman. The laid outline is then given to another worker, who fills in the ground, or *réseau*. The worker of the flowers uses a long needle, and her task is to make the buttonhole



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stitch, worked from left to right, giving an evenness which is one of the greatest beauties of this lace. Then come the special workers of the various fillings or *jours*, which give so much variety, and then, this section being complete, a sharp knife is used to separate the lace from the parchment, and the final and trying work of uniting all the bits into one perfect piece is all that remains.

When the groundwork was a "bride" ground, of a large six-sided mesh, the labour was even greater, as each of the six sides was worked over with seven or eight buttonhole stitches. This firm ground and the horsehair introduced into the border made this lace particularly desirable for those towering head-dresses worn by French women for so many years. The chief drawback to this lace was that it washed badly, since the horsehair thickened and spoiled the shape of the lace.

The wedding dress of the Empress Eugénie consisted of four flounces of Alençon which completely covered the white satin skirt, and the same lace was also used on the high-necked corsage and on the sleeves.

The prices paid for these laces in auctions to-day compare favourably with what they brought in the hey-day of their fame. Within the past year, at Christie's, in London, an Alençon panel for a dress front, 44 inches deep and 17 inches wide, brought £43 (\$215). A length of 2½ yards of flouncing 14 inches deep, showing a charming design of flowers tied up with ribbons, sold for £46 (\$230).



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A famous English collector of fine old laces was Sir William R. Drake, and, by the way, it is chiefly men whom the collecting fever strikes most deeply. Not only to such subjects as books and furniture do they confine themselves, but to such feminine subjects as china and lace are they ardently devoted. Mr. Paige bequeathed to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts his splendid collection, which it took him years to gather. Sir William Drake's, unfortunately, came under the hammer, and some of the specimens were sold at Christie's, April 24, 1902. The prices of some of the choicest of these pieces are given to serve as a criterion to owners and buyers, although it was acknowledged that the prices brought on this occasion were unusually high, but the quality and condition of the pieces must be taken into account. The highest price paid was £460 (\$2,300) for a flounce of *Point d'Argentan*, 4 yards long and 25 inches deep. The pattern was a bold and graceful one with scrolls and arabesques appearing among the flowers. A length of *Point de Venise*, 58 inches long, and 24 inches deep, with conventional flower pattern, brought £360 (\$1,800). There was a third piece of lace, 4 yards of the finest old Italian Rose Point, which, although but 11½ inches deep, brought the large sum of £420 (\$2,100), making the cost \$525 a yard. The exquisite workmanship and nearly perfect condition of this piece brought out many competitors.

White lace is always more in demand than black, for at this same sale some fine black Chantilly, 23 inches



*PLATE XLVII. — La Duchesse d'Angoulême.  
Flounces of black chantilly lace. Nineteenth  
Century. Portrait by Winterhalter.*



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wide, brought but £2 (\$10) a yard, while 3½ yards of 8-inch width fetched but a guinea (\$5.25).

At the present time Alençon lace is made in Alençon, Bayeux, and even in Venice. It is being imported in fair quantities to America, since each year there is a slowly increasing demand for "real lace," as it is called in distinction from that which is machine-made. It does not take the rank it once did: Brussels, Mechlin, and Valenciennes taking precedence over it.

**POINT D'ARGENTAN.** Like Alençon, Argentan is also a needle-point lace, these two being the only needle-point laces of France with a net ground. The name Alençon is a much more familiar one than Argentan, although the two laces were originated at about the same time; yet the output from Argentan never reached the amount made at Alençon. In 1744, when the manufacture of lace was progressing briskly, there were at Argentan about 1,200 workers, while at Alençon and its neighbourhood the number was close to 8,000. This was the period when, in order to supply the demand, work-people were enticed from one town to the other,—to the great uneasiness of the superintendents who had large orders to fill.

In 1788, according to that indefatigable traveller, Arthur Young, the industry at Argentan was very flourishing, since the value of the lace made there exceeded 500,000 livres (\$100,000). The Revolution killed the manufacture of this lace, which was revived in 1808, but failed in 1810. By 1874 it was once again





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re-established, and the lace is still made in small quantities. The difference between the two laces is chiefly a matter of grounds, that of Alençon being a *réseau* or small-mesh ground, while that of Argentan was coarse enough to be called a "bride" or bar ground. The patterns are larger, bolder, and more scroll-like, the relief higher, and the workmanship coarser and more effective, from its close patterns and clear bride ground, than the more minutely worked Alençon. The hexagonal bride, the great characteristic of Argentan lace, has sometimes worked within each mesh a small six-sided solid dot. This particular style of ground was called *réseau rosacé*. Another famous ground was the *bride picotée*, or *bride bouclée*, as it was called, since each bride or bar was ornamented with four or five little loops or *picots* of thread which gave it a very ornate appearance. The style of manufacture is similar to that of Alençon.

The other well-known laces of France—Valenciennes, Chantilly, Blonde, and Tulle—are all bobbin laces. The first province in France to establish the making of pillow lace was Auvergne, and its earliest product, the precious gold and silver laces, was largely exported to Spain, since the consumption of these rich trimmings in that country largely exceeded the home manufacture. Even in the face of the fact that many of the inhabitants of France depended on this industry for their support, they were harassed by sumptuary edicts of the most stringent character.



***P**LATE XLVIII. Spanish needle point. Sixteenth Century. Photograph by Charles Balliard.*



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In 1639 the Parliament of Toulouse issued a decree which the seneschal of Le Puy made known to the inhabitants throughout the town at the sound of the trumpet. This decree prohibited, under penalty of a large fine, "everybody of either sex, quality, or condition from wearing any sort of lace, whether of silk or white thread with glittering *pasement* of gold or silver, real or false."

It can be imagined into what a desperate condition such a foolish move threw the lace-makers of the region. They were rescued by the eloquence of a Jesuit priest, who prevailed on the Parliament in 1640 to revoke the decree, and for his good offices the lace-makers chose him as their patron saint, and St. François Régis is still invoked by the lace-workers of Auvergne.

The Aurillac laces of gold and silver were in demand at court. A mantle of "*Point d'Aurillac* gold and silver" belonged to the Prince de Conti, and it was also used for veils, sleeves, and guards or bands bordering garments.

**CLUNY LACE.** The Guipure made at Le Puy and an old variety of lace has of late years been called Cluny lace. It is a coarse lace with brides or bars, and is very effective, particularly when made in black. The old patterns were fine and graceful, both in scrolls and in floral forms, and there is a certain rich elegance to the black lace which makes it seem strange that it has not become more popular. The earliest history of this style




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of lace is entirely lost. It was the trimming called *Opus Filatorium* in ancient times, and then was *Opus Arachneum*, or Spider Work, in the Middle Ages. Patterns for this work filled the pattern-books of the sixteenth century, and it was superior to darned netting in having wheels, circles, and raised stitches to give it variety. While this was a needle lace, its modern namesake is a bobbin lace, geometric in character, and following the antique patterns more or less closely.

VALENCIENNES. The name Valenciennes was not applied to this lace until the eighteenth century. Its first home, at the period when Colbert was superintending the lace industry of France, was Le Quesnoy. The lace produced there, however, was very unlike that into which it ultimately grew, the details of ornamentation and of ground passing through different phases. Lace has been made in this region, with bobbins, since the fifteenth century, when it is said that a worker named Chauvin started lace-making. The early styles, with small bars or ties, were replaced by different grounds, one of the most famous being the "*fond de neige*" or snowy ground, formed by little dots regularly made between the twisted meshes. The clear open ground with the diamond-shaped mesh is of perfect regularity. The pattern and mesh are made by the same threads, passing through the hands of one worker only. There is no heavier thread for outline as in the case of Mechlin and some other Flanders lace, and the beautiful and durable quality of this lace is one of its



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great merits. When the desire for choice laces was at its height, the making of this lace in its perfection was carried on in the town of Valenciennes, so this name was bestowed upon it. Only the lace made actually within the town limits was called *vrai Valenciennes*; that made outside, whether in France or Belgium, was called *fausse Valenciennes*. The Revolution was responsible for the disappearance of this industry from the town of Valenciennes, and what was French loss was Flemish gain.

The modern Valenciennes is much less ornate and elaborate than the old. The French lace owed its superiority to the greater number of times the bobbin was twisted in forming the mesh, and it was this frequent twisting which caused the lace to be so costly, since it required so much time to complete even one inch.

Arthur Young, whom we have quoted before, says that in 1788 Valenciennes lace about three inches wide, for gentlemen's ruffles, cost about 216 livres (\$43) an ell (48 inches). Some lace-workers could make but half an ell (24 inches) in a year, and the wages were but 20 to 30 sous a day. Even at such starvation prices there were 3,600 workers in the city alone, carrying on their labour in dark, damp cellars, since under such conditions the thread worked more smoothly. No wonder that the trimming of one of Mme Du Barry's pillow-cases cost 487 francs (\$97), and that a pair of lappets were priced at 1,030 francs (\$206).



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A piece of lace made throughout by the same hand was more valuable, when this could be certified, than that made by several workers. It is to be conceived how great the extravagance was when it is taken into account that this was never a "dress" lace, and never appeared on *grande toilette* of either men or women.

CHANTILLY LACE, a bobbin lace made of silk, was first made early in the eighteenth century at a lace school founded by the Duchesse de Longueville. It was here that the double ground which characterises this lace was evolved and made, in the form of narrow edging laces. The second epoch was that of Guipures of silk, both white and black, the latter being the black silk *Blonde* lace which made Chantilly famous. They were not highly esteemed at first, but after they received the sanction of the court they became very popular. The old patterns, in either black or white, are quite remarkable for the presence of vases or baskets which hold flowers, and which are similar to the forms of Chantilly pottery made at the same period. Sprays, branches, and vines spring from the vases and show to admirable advantage upon the clear ground. The grenadine silk thread used for the black laces sometimes loses its brilliancy in the constant twisting of the bobbins, and this has given rise to the idea that this lace is sometimes made with an admixture of flax thread.

The ground or mesh is lozenge-shaped, crossed at opposite ends by horizontal threads. This forms what



*PLATE XLIX. — White Spanish Blonde.  
Eighteenth Century.*



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was called the double ground. Many charming fillings are introduced into the flowers, and are called by a variety of fanciful names, such as *vitré*, *mariage* or *cinq trous*.

The disappearance of a lace from the town of its birth, and its reappearance in another quarter or even in another country, is one of the strange features of this industry. During the nineteenth century the making of black lace was revived at those busy lace centres, Caen and Bayeux, where many thousand workers are engaged in making Chantilly, which far exceeds in beauty and delicacy the old laces. A large variety of textures is the great feature of this modern lace, many grounds being introduced into each piece, with proportionate variety in the pattern or *toilé*. The French black silk laces greatly excel in beauty those made in Belgium, the latter being less varied in their gradations, and less rich in the beautiful openwork which outlines leaves, flowers, and scrolls in the Normandy laces.

**BLONDE LACE.** Under the general heading of *Blonde* will be included *Blonde de Caen*, as well as *Blonde net*. White silk bobbin lace was first made at Caen about 1745, taking the place of the flax laces previously made there. The early laces were creamy in colour, and were sometimes called Nankin, as the silk of which they were made was imported from China. Gradually they improved in colour, as the preparation of the silk was also improved, and these delicate white silk laces were much





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sought on account of their beauty and becoming quality.

Two sizes of thread are used, one for the mesh and another for the pattern, and both pattern and mesh are made by one worker. It was not till about 1840 that black laces in the white lace patterns were made, and became almost as much the vogue as the white.

BLONDE NET was a silk bobbin lace with a fine net ground and a heavy pattern. The ground is clear and fine, and the pattern or *toilé* is worked with a broad flat strand which glistens prettily, and to this rather showy quality it owes its success, since it is not distinguished by beauty of pattern or by any particular artistic merit.

MIGNONETTE LACE, or *Blonde de Fil*, is another fine light bobbin lace, early in use and much esteemed even before the great Colbert took in hand the lace industries of France. Before the middle of the sixteenth century it was an important trimming, and was made from fine flax bleached and spun in Flanders. It was never made more than an inch or two in width, and so light and delicate was it that it was a favourite trimming for caps. It has survived where costlier laces went down, and is still made in large quantities. The spelling of it varies greatly, from "mennuet" to "minuit," according to the nationality and taste of the speller.

COLBERTEEN, so often mentioned in English satires of the seventeenth century, was a coarse network lace with a large open mesh, used only for edging towels, sheets, etc. It is curious that only this third-rate lace



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should have been named after the great minister who did so much for the industry in France.

DENTELLE is the French term for lace. It was not applied, however, till the end of the sixteenth century; before that time laces were called *passemens*.

DENTELLE FUSEAU is bobbin lace.

DENTELLE DE FIL is a term covering several varieties of simple thread laces like *Torchon*, or *Dentelle à la Vierge*.

DIEPPE POINT, as lace made at this town was called, in its finer varieties is of the same nature as Valenciennes, but much simpler, so that fewer bobbins are used. This kind of lace has been used since the sixteenth century by the peasant women of Normandy for trimming those marvellous caps with long lappets which are so esteemed in prosperous families and handed down from one generation to another. Flemish thread was used for this lace, both black and white, and the most elaborate patterns did not cost over 30 francs an ell. A school was re-established at Dieppe in 1826, by some sisters from a convent, for even this simple product has suffered from the throes of the Revolution, as well as by the demand for costlier laces by the aristocracy.

There are several small inexpensive laces which have been, and to some extent still are, made in France.

CAMPANE LACE was an ancient lace, now unknown. Much mention is made of it in the contemporary literature of the times, and it was frequently used as an edging, sewed upon muslin ruffles, or even upon narrow




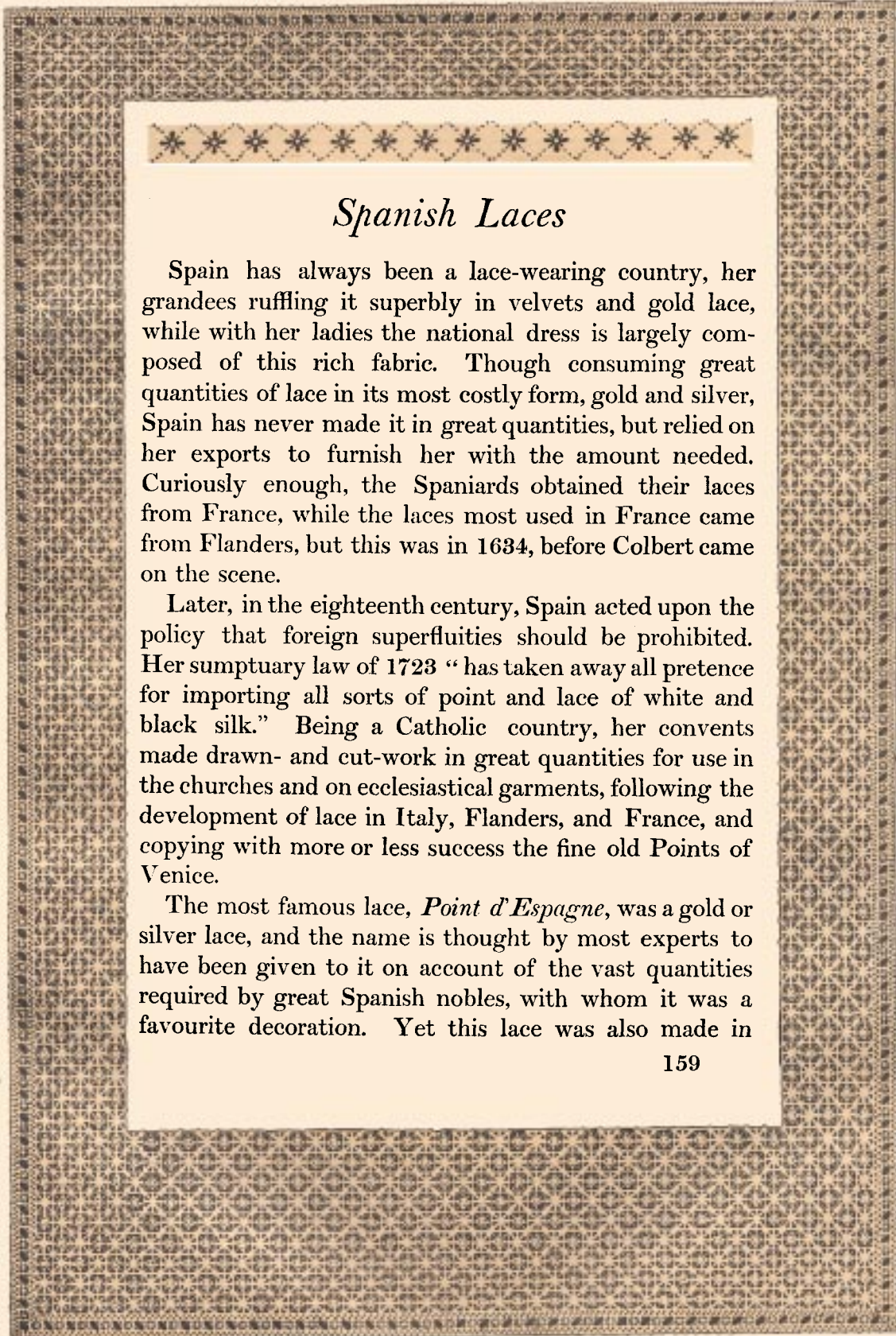
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laces to increase their width. As early as 1690 we find it called "the King of narrow pricked lace." It was a bobbin lace, and the word "pricked" referred to the fact that the pattern was pricked upon parchment. This lace was made not only of flax for those who desired it, but also of gay coloured silks and even of gold. These latter laces were for trimming doublets and mantles.

GREUSE or Beggar's lace was another simple trimming, bobbin-made, and rather resembling modern *Torchon*. It was called "beggar's lace" on account of its coarse quality.



**PLATE L.**—*A. Chalice veil. Spanish needle point. Seventeenth Century. B. Silk Maltese bobbin lace. Nineteenth Century.*



## *Spanish Laces*

Spain has always been a lace-wearing country, her grandees ruffling it superbly in velvets and gold lace, while with her ladies the national dress is largely composed of this rich fabric. Though consuming great quantities of lace in its most costly form, gold and silver, Spain has never made it in great quantities, but relied on her exports to furnish her with the amount needed. Curiously enough, the Spaniards obtained their laces from France, while the laces most used in France came from Flanders, but this was in 1634, before Colbert came on the scene.

Later, in the eighteenth century, Spain acted upon the policy that foreign superfluities should be prohibited. Her sumptuary law of 1723 "has taken away all pretence for importing all sorts of point and lace of white and black silk." Being a Catholic country, her convents made drawn- and cut-work in great quantities for use in the churches and on ecclesiastical garments, following the development of lace in Italy, Flanders, and France, and copying with more or less success the fine old Points of Venice.

The most famous lace, *Point d'Espagne*, was a gold or silver lace, and the name is thought by most experts to have been given to it on account of the vast quantities required by great Spanish nobles, with whom it was a favourite decoration. Yet this lace was also made in



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Spain, largely by the Jews, and after their expulsion in 1492 the manufacture decreased greatly, while the demand still continued. As much of these splendid laces were sent from Italy and Flanders, and so great were the sums spent for them, the importation of them was finally prohibited by the government, save such as were necessary for ecclesiastical purposes.

Lord Tyrawley, writing from Lisbon to the Duke of Montague in the first half of the eighteenth century, describes his meeting with the Patriarch on his way to court in his litter, —

—“which was of crimson velvet, laid all over with gold lace; followed by his body coach of the same. He had ten led horses, richly caparisoned, and attended by six-and-thirty footmen in crimson velvet clothes finely laced with gold, every servant having a laced cravat and ruffles, with red silk stockings.”

The history of lace in Portugal is approximately the same as it was in Spain, and the dress and equipages of the Portuguese nobles were as extravagant, in the eighteenth century, as those of the Spanish grandees.

During the sixteenth century, when Flanders was Spanish territory, the Spaniards learned all that the Flemings had to teach in the art of bobbin laces, and of twisting and plaiting gold threads.

The convent laces were, however, chiefly made of thread, rich and heavy, and resembling the *Gros Points de Venise* from which they were copied. There were finer laces made, too, like the choice French and Italian laces, and at the dissolution of the monasteries, about the



## FRENCH AND SPANISH LACES

middle of the nineteenth century, many of these laces were released and sold. Now were revealed for the first time specimens of those rich fabrics on which many a nun spent her eyesight and her life, and unfinished pieces of lace still stitched on their bits of parchment, marked with the name of the sister who was expected to make it, are parts of the property preserved in the convents. They followed the plan of working separate small bits, the pieces being afterward joined by a superior worker, but the laces are in no way distinctive. These delicate laces are not, however, those which suited Spanish taste. After the gold and silver laces, which were sometimes further enriched by embroideries in colour, came the silk lace, both white and black, made in heavy patterns on a net ground.

The gala dress of the Spanish *signora* calls for a white lace mantilla, which is not in the least becoming to her dark style of beauty. This is made of very heavy silk embroidery on net, or is a heavy bobbin lace with a net ground. The black lace mantilla, and lace flounces, two of which were often mounted upon a skirt of brilliant satin, composed the dress of the rich Spanish beauty, and were of this same heavy lace. The simplest mantilla for ordinary occasions was of silk, but this was embellished by a flounce all around it of hand-wide lace.

The earliest sumptuary laws of Spain make no reference to lace, but Philip III, in 1623, required the wearing of simple *rebatos*, without cut-work or lace, for men, and collars and cuffs for women, neither sex being



## THE LACE BOOK

allowed the use of starch. Gold and silver lace was especially prohibited, but this prohibition was repealed for the period of Prince Charles's visit. Spain was long celebrated, and with justice, for the elegance of her silk fabrics and her gold and silver lace, mention of all of which is numerous in the French and English inventories and Wardrobe Accounts of the period. During Queen Elizabeth's time she had a mantle, in the year 1587, trimmed with "bobbin lace of Spanish silk," and from this date downward, coats, mantles, petticoats, and beds were trimmed with it. A Spaniard, writing of Barcelona in 1683, says that not only are gold and silver edgings made there, but also those of silk, thread, and aloe, "with greater perfection than in Flanders."

By 1667 so much thread lace was brought into Spain from France as well as from Flanders that the duty was raised from 25 to 250 reals per pound. This necessitated much smuggling, and quantities of lace, under the name of "mosquito net," were brought into Spain via Cadiz, and there are records of the seizure of many vessels.

The gold and silver lace was used for other purposes besides cloaks, gowns, and mantles. Banners were edged with it; hats were laced with it for servants as well as for their masters; shoes were trimmed with it, as also carriages and furniture; and, most curious of all, sheets were embellished with it to the depth of several inches. The most famous of these metal laces were made at Seville, Barcelona, and Valencia.





*PLATE LI.*—*Henrietta Anna, Duchesse d'Orléans (1644-1670). Showing a bertha of straight-edged lace. An early representation of Point de France.*



## FRENCH AND SPANISH LACES

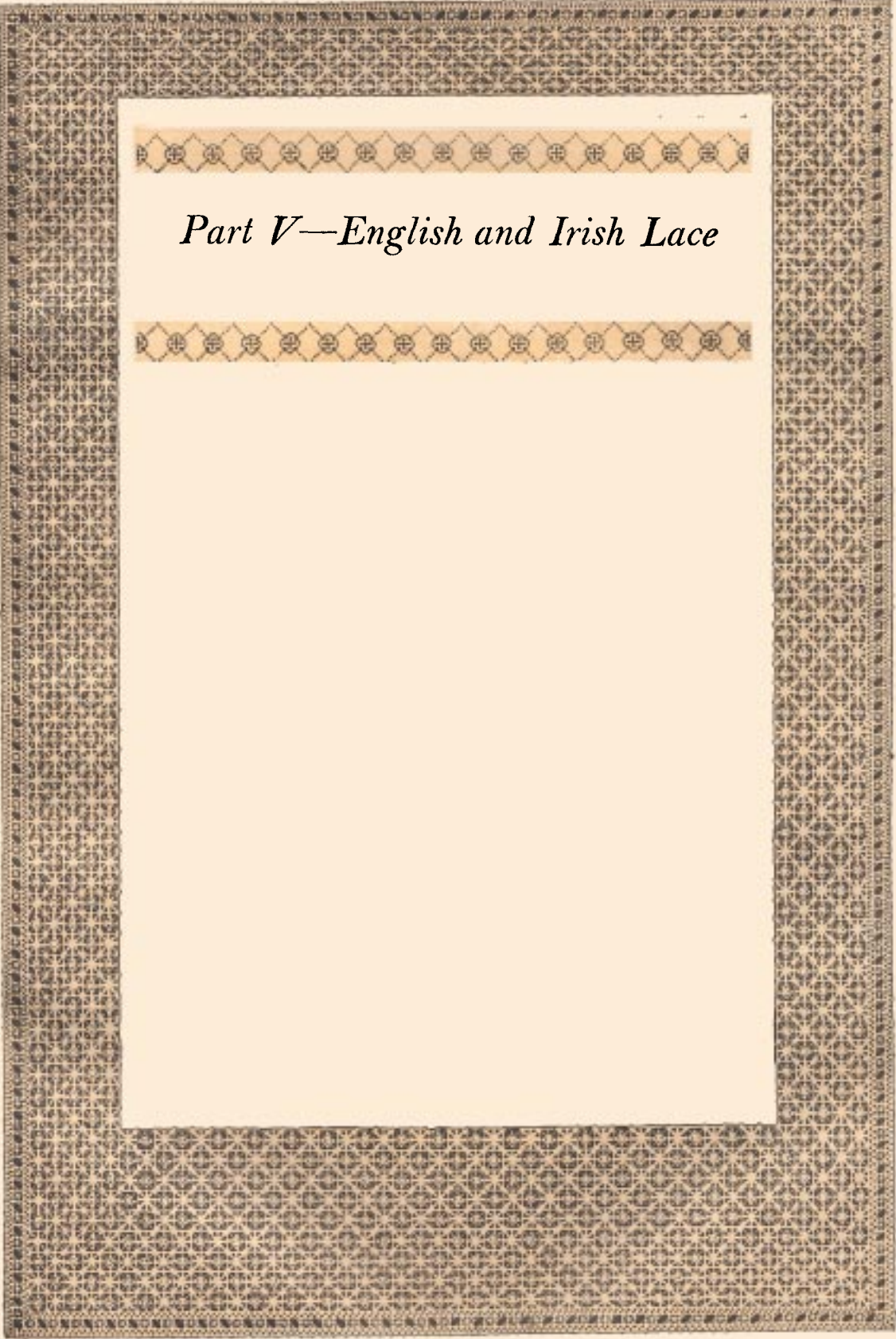
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The silk *Blonde* lace, which we call to-day "Spanish lace," and which is made in scarfs, mantillas, flounces, etc., was made at Catalonia and Barcelona, and its characteristic is a heavy pattern on a fine net ground. This ground is not nearly so durable as that made at Bayeux or Chantilly, where this lace, with patterns in "Spanish taste" are made to suit the Spanish market.

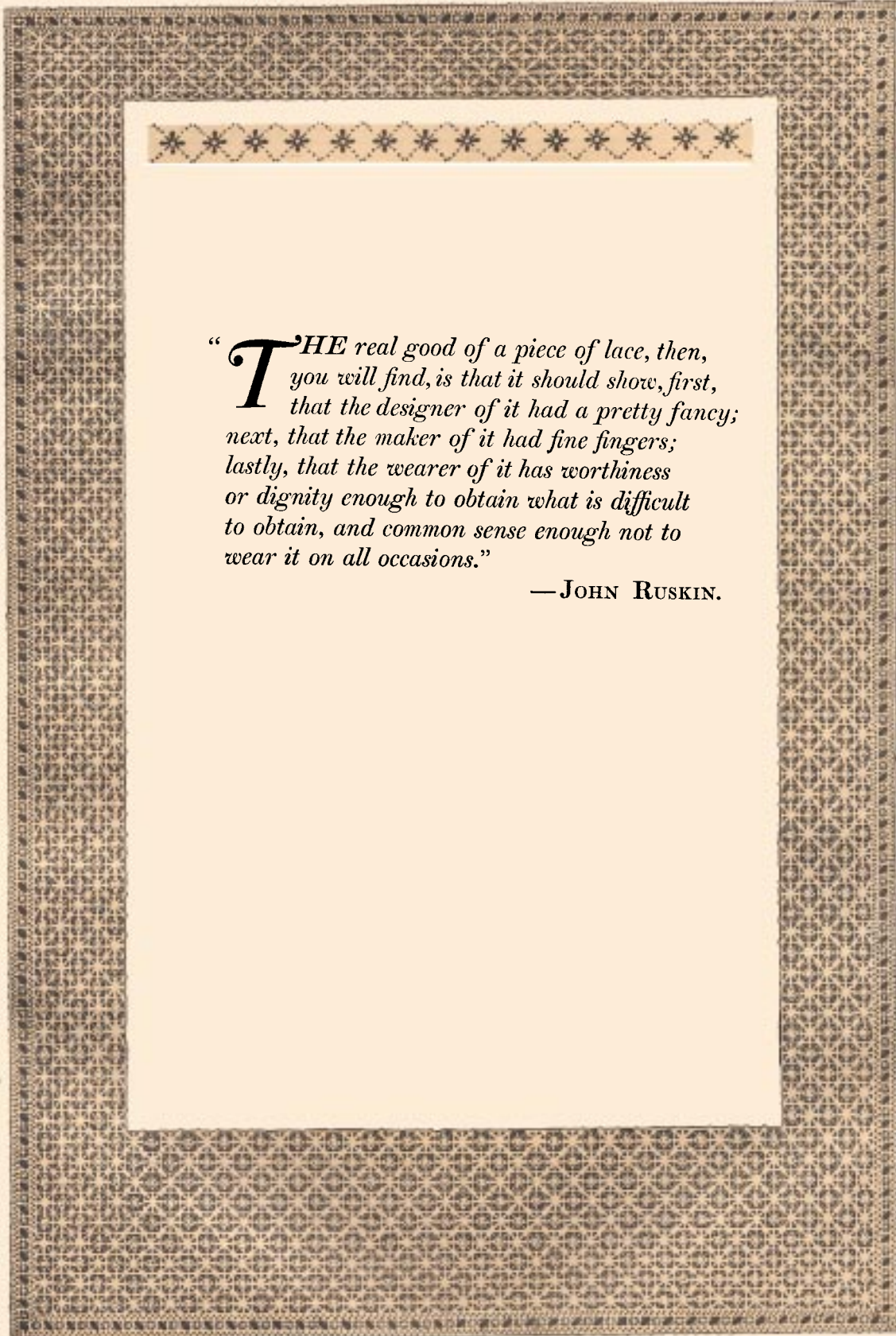
There are no lace manufactories of any note in Spain, the custom always having been for the women and children to work at the lace in their own homes. Many people are employed in silk bobbin lace-work now and the patterns and workmanship are constantly improving. Children do much of the work, beginning as early as four years of age, and after a little practice are able to handle with skill six or seven dozen bobbins.

A curious custom prevails in Spain, and in Portugal as well, of trimming coffins with lace. This fashion has been followed for hundreds of years, and as the coffins themselves are generally pink, blue, or white, and overlaid with gold or silver lace, they present a very tawdry appearance.

The chief claim which Spain and Portugal have for modern lace is for their imitation Chantilly lace, which is exported in considerable quantities. The black silk lace enriched with coloured silks and gold threads is no longer made, and but small quantities of the metal laces, which once made Spain so famous in the world of fashion.



*Part V—English and Irish Lace*



*“THE real good of a piece of lace, then, you will find, is that it should show, first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy; next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common sense enough not to wear it on all occasions.”*

— JOHN RUSKIN.



## *Part V—English and Irish Lace*



HERE is scarcely a woman who at one time or another has not had a desire for a piece of lace known as “English thread.” This term is so broad and covers so great a variety of makes and styles that it is quite bewildering for the novice to determine whether her bit shall come from “Bedford, Bucks, Dorset, or Devon.”

In the making of lace, England was not in the field as early as either Italy or Flanders, and the Italians took advantage of their forwardness in the craft to send to England lace of “Venys gold,” as well as that of Genoa, Lucca, and Florence.

The term “lace,” often used in the expense accounts of sovereigns from the time of Edward IV (1460), has always been supposed to mean the trimming, instead of which it refers to the strings or ties by which various parts of the garments were kept together, pins not then being in common use. The statute of the third year of Edward IV’s reign enumerates the following wrought goods not to be imported, and ladies were to rely on home manufactures for “laces, corsets, ribbands, fringes,



## THE LACE BOOK

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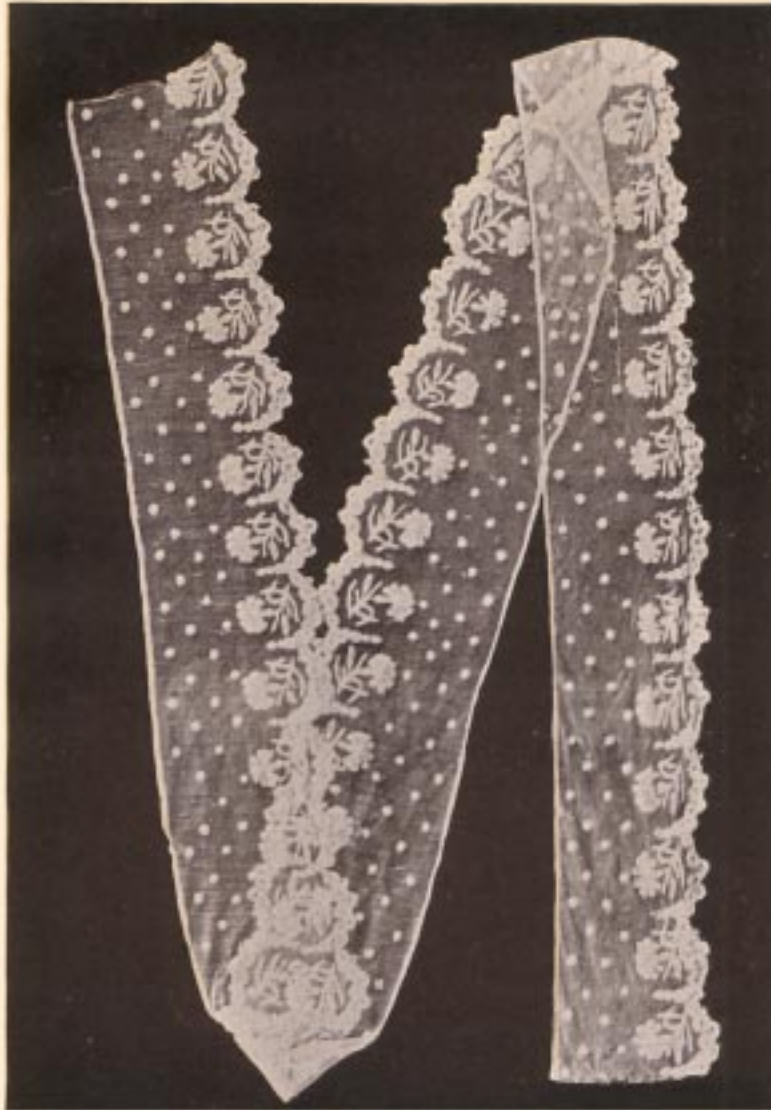
twined silk, embroidered silk, laces of gold, points, bodkins, scissors, pins, purses, and patterns," also "cards and dice." During the incarceration of the unfortunate Henry VI in the Tower of London in 1471, various sums were paid at the Exchequer for his maintenance, and among the items given was one of "£9 10s. 11d. for twenty-eight ells of linen cloth of Holland and expenses," which refers probably to the making of it into shirts.

The writers of the period being chiefly men, poems and satirical essays were directed against the gentler sex, even though the prevailing modes prescribed equal elegance for both men and women. Sir Richard Maitland (1496-1586), a noted Scotch jurist, amused himself when off duty by writing poems, one of which, called "Satire on the Town Ladies," has the following lines :

"Their wilicoats maun weel be hewit,  
Broudred richt braid, with pasments sewit."

The earliest English records of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries call this trimming *pasement* and *dentelle*. Mrs. Palliser says that the first mention of the word "lace" in any English inventory is in that of Sir Thomas L'Estrange of Hunstanton, county of Norfolk, in 1519. There was but a single yard, and it was valued at eightpence, "to trim a shirt for hym."

All during the first half of the sixteenth century lace appears but sparsely in the inventories and accounts. Gold lace was increasing in amount, and by the time Queen Elizabeth sat on the throne the edicts against



*PLATE LII.—Old Honiton, with needle-made ground and carnation sprigs. Early Eighteenth Century.*



## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

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cut-work and lace, framed by Henry VIII and renewed by Queen Mary, were no longer enforced, since the Virgin Queen loved too well the gewgaws from France, Italy, and Flanders, to deny herself the use of them.

By this time there were resident in London many rich and powerful merchants from both Italy and Flanders. One of the most famous was Messer Leonardo Frescobaldi, the well-known "Master Friskiball" of Shakespeare. He was one of the merchant princes of the day, and supplied to royalty "damask gold," gilt axes, hand guns, and other merchandise.

Cardinal Wolsey, who turned to advantage every instrument that came to his hand, besides buying the rich Venetian goods, used these merchants in various ways, as news-gatherers, messengers, etc. Some of them married English women and became English subjects, having thus exceptional advantages for selling the "Venys laces of riche gold," and those also jewelled.

Rich dresses were worn on all occasions. When the unfortunate Earl of Arundel, who was tried for high treason in 1589 because he expressed his joy "when the Spanish Armada entered the Channel," appeared before the jury of twenty-five peers at Westminster, he was clad in a "wrought velvet gown, furred with martins, laid about with gold lace, and fastened with gold buttons." Another prisoner of the Tower, the Earl of Essex, went to the block in 1597 in a wrought velvet gown and a small ruff, which latter he put off before kneeling to receive the fatal stroke.





## THE LACE BOOK

“Bone lace,” so often mentioned in the inventory of Queen Elizabeth, and even in that of her predecessor, signified a bobbin lace, since bits of bones from various animals and birds were used as bobbins and as pins around which the lace was woven.

The fashion of garments during the period of Henry VIII and of Mary precluded the use of much lace even if it could be obtained, since they were so slashed and cut, puffed and jagged, and covered with flat braids of metal or silk, that there was little room for anything else. The Elizabethan ruff, which was introduced from France about 1560, was made of the finest drawn-work and edged with lace of geometric pattern but of great beauty.

About ten years later the Wardrobe Accounts fairly bristle with mention of cut-works, *passemments*, drawn-work, chain lace, petticoat lace, and a dozen other varieties which have now become nothing but names, but which show that the English Queen sought every means to add to her appearance by the richness of her “appryl.”

Chain-stitch was one of the forms of trimming of which there are many early entries in the Great Wardrobe Accounts. Spanish stitch, which had been introduced by Queen Catherine, was much used on linen underwear, and, as it was easy to make and stout to wear, many apprentices and young tradesmen had it on their collars. This did not suit the Queen at all, and she put a quick stop to all such borrowing of fashions



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from their betters by ordering that the next apprentice so caught should be publicly whipped in the hall of the Guild to which he belonged.

A contemporary, speaking of the gowns of the period, says of them :

“Some are of silk, some of velvet, some of grograin, some of taffeta, some of scarlet, and some of fine cloth of 10, 20 or 40 shillings the yard. But if the whole garment be not of silk or velvet, then the same must be layed with lace two or three fingers broad all over the gown; or if lace is not fine enough for them, he says, they must be decorated with broad gardes of velvet edged with lace.”

So much for feminine attire.

By 1595 the peasecod-bellied doublet was quilted and stuffed with four, five, or six pounds of bombast, the exterior being of satin, silk, velvet, camlet, gold, or silver stuff, “slashed, jagged, cut, carved, pinched, and laced with all kinds of costly lace of divers and sundry colours.”

Gascoigne, who about 1570 wrote his “Satire on the Court Ladies,” gives them credit for unbridled folly in copying men’s clothes :

“Women masking in men’s weeds,  
With Dutchkin doublets, and with jerkins jagged,  
With Spanish spangs and ruffles set out of France,  
With high-copt hats and feathers flaunt-a-flaunt,”—

—and many other extravagances beside.

Jasper Mayne, who wrote some comedies illustrative of city manners in the time of Charles I, also wrote some poems. He was archdeacon of Chichester, and, as might be expected, had little sympathy with the



## THE LACE BOOK

Puritans and their tenets of faith. One of his satirical poems, written about 1650, was called "The Puritanical Waiting-Maid," and her mistress thus describes the maid's foibles :

"She works religious petticoats ; for flowers  
She'll make church histories. Her needle doth  
So sanctify my cushionets! Besides  
My smock-sleeves have such holy embroideries,  
And are so learned, that I fear in time,  
All my apparel will be quoted by  
Some pure instructor."

The cloaks of both sexes were faced with costly lace of silver, gold, or silk, and with members of the court the wearing of rich clothes was a positive necessity.

Arabella Stuart, that unfortunate princess whose debts and matrimonial difficulties caused her to pass many weary years in the Tower, never lost her taste for fine clothes. Her last appearance at court was June 4, 1610, when her cousin was created Prince of Wales. The Queen gave a grand masque called "Tethys' Festival ; or, the Queen's Masque." The dresses were designed by Inigo Jones in honour of the occasion, and the Lady Arabella took a leading part. She was "Nymph of the Trent," all the ladies representing different rivers. She wore one of those elaborate and costly costumes which added so much to her money difficulties. Her "head tire was composed of shells and coral. The long skirt of her gown was wrought with lace waved round about like a river, and on the edges sedge and seaweed, all of gold."



## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

Aprons were an article of feminine attire upon which lavish work was employed, drawn-work alternating with strips of sheer muslin, and the whole bordered by wide needle lace of the finest patterns.

The apron was used by the highest and lowest rank alike, and was so much a part of stately dress that even the poets noted them. In 1596 Stephen Gosson wrote of them thus :

“These aprons white of finest thread,  
So choicelie tide, so dearlie bought,  
So finelie fringed, so nicely spred,  
So quaintly cut, so richly wrought ;  
Were they in worke to save their cotes,  
They need not cost so many grotes.”

Quite a number of the effigies in Westminster Abbey, which give such a good idea of contemporary costumes, show beautiful aprons edged and guarded with lace, some dated from 1641, showing how many years this fashion continued.

During the reign of William III they became quite an indispensable article of dress. They were at that time small and very short, and trimmed all around with edging lace. The lady's apron at the time of Queen Anne was exceedingly rich, since besides being largely composed of needlework it was also decorated with gold lace and spangles.

Besides the personal use of lace it was used for bed and table linen, and in the accounts of the Darrell family (1589) mention is made of curtains of “Wedmoll lace, rings, curtain-rods, and making, 18s.”



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There is still to be seen in Anne Hathaway's cottage at Stratford-on-Avon a linen chest containing, among other things, a linen sheet with a strip of cut-work down the middle, with pillow-cases to match. These are marked "E. H.," and are said always to have been used by the Hathaway family on special occasions, such as births, deaths, and marriages. Many of the old English families are proud of similar linen which has been in use two or three centuries and carefully preserved.

Laces were sold in England, as well as on the Continent, by travelling merchants who went from one town to another. They were also sold at the various fairs, which were such important occasions in the early history of England. At one of these fairs, held in the chapel of St. Etheldreda (or St. Audrey, as she was more often called), daughter of King Auna, who established the Abbey of Ely, lace of a coarse quality was sold which became known as "Tawdry lace." Shakespeare mentions it in "Twelfth Night," and from it has no doubt come our word "tawdry," signifying something showy and coarse.

In an old play written in 1607, called "Lingua ; or, the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses for Superiority," is given a list of many of the articles of a lady's wardrobe. So many things made or trimmed with lace are enumerated that we give an extract. One of the characters says :

"Five hours ago I set a dozen maids to attire a boy like a nice gentlewoman, but there is such a doing with their looking-glasses,



***P**LATE LIII.—An unusually wide and beautiful piece of bobbin-made Buckinghamshire lace. Eighteenth Century.*



## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

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pinning, unpinning; setting, unsetting; formings and conformings; painting of blue veins and cheeks. Such a stir with sticks, combs, cascanets, dressings, purls, fall-squares, busks, bodices, scarfs, necklaces, carcanets, rabatoes, borders, tires, fans, palisadoes, puffs, cuffs, ruffs, muffs, pusles, fusles, partlets, fringlets, bandlets, fillets, corslets, pendulets, amulets, annulets, bracelets, and so many *lets* [*i.e.* stops], that she is scarce dressed to the girdle, and now there is such a calling for fardingales, kirtles, busk-points, shoe-ties, and the like, that seven peddlers' shops, nay, all Stourbridge fair, will scarcely furnish her."

In a comedy of the same period, called "Eastward Hoe!" one character says to her sister:

"Do you wear your quoif with a London ticket, your stamen peticoat with two guards, the buffen gown with tuftaffetie cap and velvet lace."

By 1640 the hood and fardingale appear, and dress for both men and women is distinguished by its rich ornate sleeves and elegant falling collar.

The wearing of the periwig crossed the water from France about 1645, as the Grand Monarch had started the fashion, and the lace collar gave place to the *jabot*, or laced band. The English term for this article was neck-cloth or cravat, and the edging was rich Brussels or Flanders lace.

The ceremonial life of English royalty was always a subject of grave moment. The procession through the city to Westminster at the coronation of a monarch has always been, even down to our own day, a spectacle where the greatest magnificence and taste were displayed. We have the words of a contemporary to describe that procession when Charles II was crowned on April 23,



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1661. After giving the order of the procession, the positions of the nobility, the great officers of state, the royal household, the principal gentry of the kingdom, etc., he goes on to say :

“It were in vain to attempt to describe this solemnity; it was so far from being utterable that it was almost inconceivable; and much wonder it caused to outlandish persons, who were acquainted with our late troubles and confusions, how it was possible for the English to appear in so rich and stately a manner, for it is incredible to think what costly clothes were worn that day; the cloaks could hardly be seen what silk or satin they were made of, for the gold and silver laces and embroidery that were laid upon them: besides the inestimable value and treasure of diamonds, pearls, and other jewels, worn upon their backs and in their hats; to omit the sumptuous and rich liveries of their pages and foot-men; the numerousness of these liveries and their orderly march; as also the stately equipage of the esquires attending each earl by his horse's side; so that all the world that saw it could not but confess that what they had seen before was but solemn mummerly to the most august, noble, and true glories of this great day. Even the vaunting French confessed their pomps of the late marriage with the Infanta of Spain, at their Majesties' entrance into Paris, to be inferior in state, gallantry, and riches to this most glorious cavalcade from the Tower.”

Charles II himself on this auspicious occasion wore a robe or sort of surplice of fine lawn trimmed with Flanders lace at eighteen shillings the yard. This, too, in face of the fact that he had issued a proclamation enforcing an act of his father prohibiting the entry into the Kingdom of foreign bone lace.

The next year, 1662, another Act was passed, prohibiting bone lace cut-work and *passemets*; all foreign bone lace being forfeited, and a penalty of £100 (\$500) to be paid by the offender.





## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

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The King, however, and the royal family seem to have considered themselves exempt from such stringent laws, and the curious Latin of the Great Wardrobe Accounts are rich in items of lace both from Flanders and Venice, to trim the King's cravats, shirts, pillow-beres, tooth and toilet cloths.

The dignity of the nation was upheld by its ambassadors abroad, whose dress, as well as that of their household, was very magnificent. Lady Fanshawe gives the following description of her husband's costume on a state occasion at Madrid in October, 1644, when he was ambassador. She says that he was—

—“dressed in a very rich suit of clothes of a dark *fillemonte* brocade, laced with silver and gold lace, nine laces, every one as broad as my hand, and a little silver and gold laid between them, both of very curious workmanship. His suit was trimmed with scarlet taffety ribbon, his stockings of white silk upon long scarlet silk ones; his shoes black with scarlet shoe-strings and garters; his linen very fine laced with very rich Flanders lace; a black beaver buttoned on the left side with a jewel valued at £1,200.”

The comparative moderation of the Commonwealth produced, as was natural, a revulsion in favour of unlimited extravagance, and no one chronicles it more pleasingly than Pepys. His diary for 1662 records the laces worn by the ladies of the court, his own expenditures, and what Mrs. Pepys was able to get from him for her own wear, and many other references to the modes as, for example :

“Went with my wife, by coach, to the New Exchange, to buy her some things; where we saw some new fashion pettycoats of



## THE LACE BOOK

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sarcenett, with a black broad lace printed round the bottom and before, very handsome.”

He has for himself a “white suit with silver lace to his coat.” Pepys was never quite satisfied if his things did not show for their full value, and one of the entries in his diary, recording that he and his wife went to church, says :

“My wife had on her new petticoat that she bought yesterday, which indeed is a very fine cloth and a very fine lace; but that being of a light colour and the lace all silver, it makes no great show.”

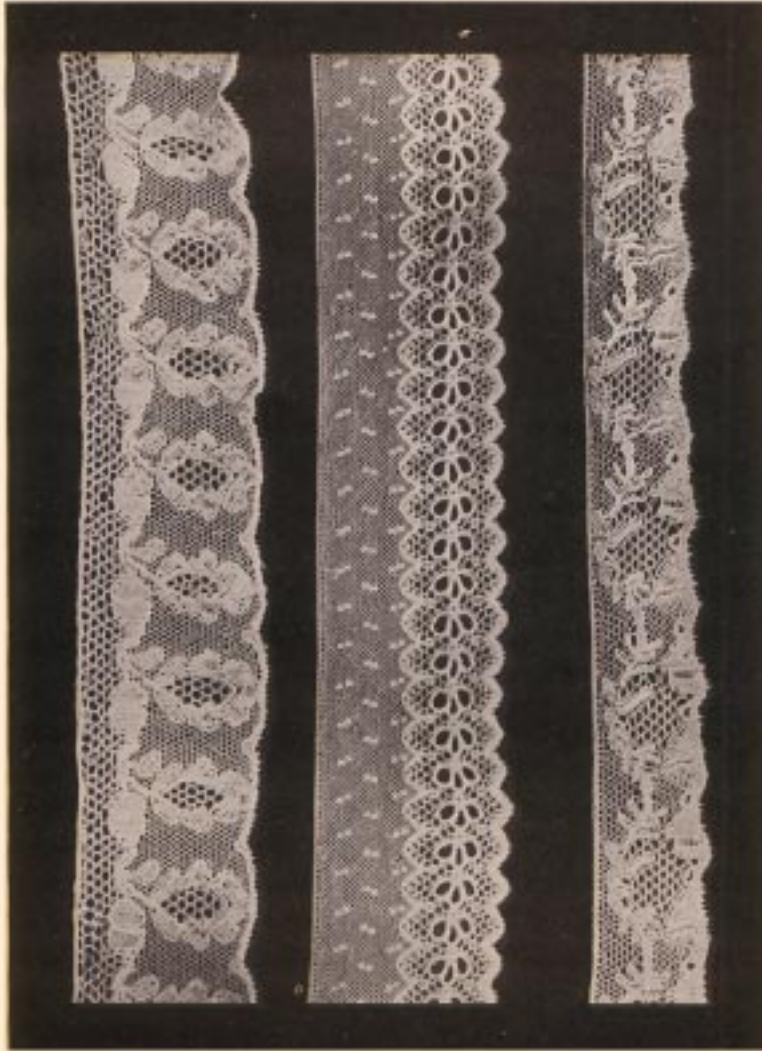
He heard that the King (Charles II) rode in the Park, so he went to see him.

“By and by the King and Queene, who looked in this dress, a white laced waistcoate and a crimson short petticoat, and her hair dressed *à la negligence*, mighty pretty; and the King rode hand in hand with her.”

On another occasion he takes his wife to drive in the Park for the first time in a coach of their own :

“My wife extraordinary fine, with her flowered tabby gown that she made two years ago, now laced exceeding pretty.”

With this desire for lace reaching through all classes, of course many women, Mrs. Pepys among the number, made it with more or less success for themselves. Pattern-books were scarce and came high, and from this need of patterns for domestic work came the samplers, or “Sam cloths,” as they were called. Fifty years before the time of Mrs. Pepys there is mention of samplers. In Chappell’s “Popular Music of the Olden Time” it is



*PLATE LIV.—A. Devonshire Trolly lace.  
B. Bedfordshire “Baby lace.” C. Bucking-  
hamshire Trolly lace. All are bobbin laces.*



## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

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stated that there was a collection of songs entitled: "The Crown Garland of Golden Roses" (1612), and among them was "A Short and Sweet Sonnet Made by One of the Maides of Honour upon the Death of Queen Elizabeth, Which She Sewed upon a Sampler in Red Silk; to a New Tune, or Phillida Flouts Me."

The ordinary sampler was not so elaborate a work of art as this, but a strip of linen, occasionally mounted upon a little roller, on which strip were embroidered patterns, samples of drawn-work and lace, which could be kept for reference or lent to friends.

The earliest known English sampler that is dated is a small bit of linen six and a half inches long by six inches wide, dated 1643. It consists of two strips of very beautiful lace, one in conventional design, and the other having two figures, a Cupid drawing his bow at a lady who holds up her hand in protest. The foundation is a coarse brown linen, and, in addition to the date, Elizabeth Hinde, the maker, has worked her name on a little strip of finer linen which is sewed to the bottom. This is in the South Kensington Museum, London. Most of these early samplers, many fine examples of which are preserved in London, were long and narrow bits of linen with a variety of embroidery patterns worked on them in silk, and with only one or two bits of cut-work or lace work.

In the eighteenth century the fashion for embroidering quaint verses prevailed, and such good moral mottoes as the following are by no means uncommon:



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“Look well to what you take in hand,  
For larnin is better than house or land,  
When land is gone and money spent,  
Then larnin is most excellent.”

A sampler made by Mary Saunders was “wrought in the ninth year of her age, one thousand seven hundred and seventeen,”—the above in the finest stitchery, and with a quantity of patterns, also with a “magic square” filled with numbers.

Like most old things, samplers have had a remarkable rise in price during the past few years. Very large sums have been given for even mediocre examples. At a recent sale at Sotheby's £8 (\$40) was given for a sampler in good condition, dated 1679, while one less perfect brought £6 4s (\$31).

While it is true that lace was made in England, indeed in London itself, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that the manufacture extended over an area which included the counties of Dorset, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Oxford, and Devon, it was only foreign laces which were worn at court and by men and women alike. The making of lace never seems to have become an important staple in any part of England, and in many counties where once the industry flourished there are now no traces left of it.

The laces of England, chiefly bobbin-made, are said to have been taught to English workers by the industrious Flemings. Certain it is that the old patterns



## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

were of the graceful flowing designs which are distinctly Flemish. English Trolley lace, an early make, closely resembles the same named lace of Flemish make. Many of the Flemings who fled from the persecutions of Alva settled in the neighbouring counties of Bedford, Bucks, and Northampton, and pursued their craft, so it is no wonder that the lace of these three counties is practically similar; and is worked in the same fashion, with a net ground and flat pattern, as are many Flemish bobbin laces. The women and children were not the only workers at lace. Berkeley, in his "Word to the Wise," reads a reproof to Irish labourers by drawing pictures of English thrift:

"They meet at one another's houses [the men], a jolly crew, where they merrily and frugally pass the long dark winter's evenings working at their different manufactures of wool, flax, or hemp."

"In other parts you can see him of an evening, each at his own door with a cushion before him, making bone-lace."

The peasant might weave the lace, but it can be imagined that the fabric made by the toil-worn fingers of labourers could not be comparable with that woven by the trained and delicate fingers of women. So the court still wore foreign lace.

In the reign of William and Mary, about 1702, there were several changes in costume. The full ornamental sleeve gave place to a tight one, but at the elbow there was a full fall of lace in the form of ruffles or lappets. The hair was built up on cushions and surmounted by an erection of lace and ribbons arranged in tiers, and



## THE LACE BOOK

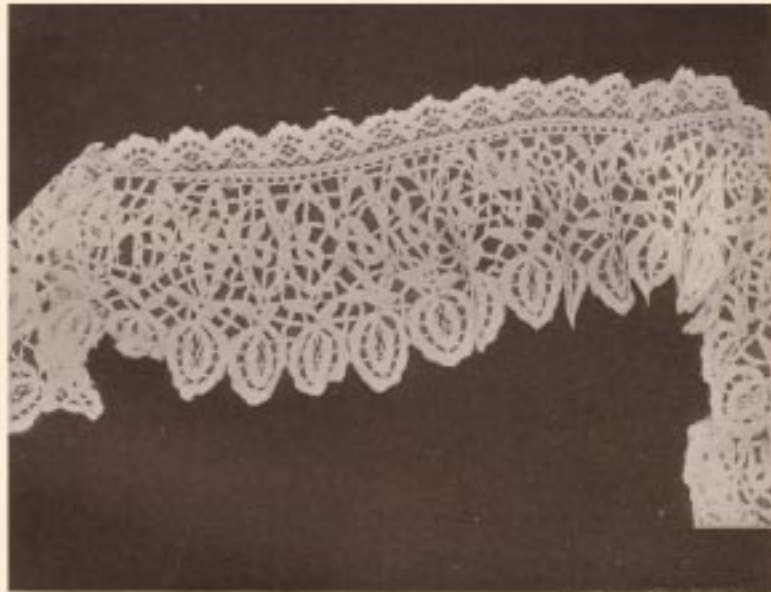
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called a tower, or *commode*. Streamers of lace fell down on either side, and are spoken of as "pinner edged with Colberteen," a name often given to French lace in English records.

In the manufacture of bone lace the county of Buckinghamshire surpassed her sister counties in receiving recognition for this fabric, which, however, was accounted inferior to that of Flanders make. Before 1623 there had been less made here, since in that year we read that owing to the monopolies of James I the people suffered great distress, owing to "the bone lace-making being much discaied."

The southern part of Buckinghamshire was justly celebrated for the lace produced, contemporary writers calling it of the finest quality, and some of it was certainly very beautiful. By 1680 the lace from High Wycombe was in great esteem, and, beside edging, was made in veils and other piece lace.

The "baby laces" of Northamptonshire, while not appearing particularly early, are very pretty. Of course the earliest are quite frank copies of Flanders lace, with bright clear grounds, and simple little patterns, generally floral, running along the edge. While these laces are all bobbin-made they are called "point," a term usually applied to needle laces, and their fineness and beauty bring them well into competition with early Mechlin and Brussels. These narrow laces remained in fashion many years as the trimming for infants' caps. When the style had become obsolete



*PLATE LV.—A. English bobbin-made lace.  
Seventeenth Century. B. Honiton. Bobbin-  
made. Middle of the Nineteenth Century.*





## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

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in England, it still remained in America, and a great quantity of these laces were exported till about the middle of the nineteenth century.

Not only are these laces charming in quality and pattern, but the reasonable price at which they were sold made them very desirable. Very choice designs could be bought at \$1 a yard, few coming higher than \$1.50. Many of these laces were made by children, chiefly girls, beginning with those only eight years old. They worked from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M. in summer, with two hours taken out for meals. In winter the hours were from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M., so it is not a wonder that lace-makers lose their sight early, since the insufficient light furnished must have rendered the work most trying. A candle-stand with one solitary candle was placed in the centre of the room. Around the candle in hollow wooden cups were set bottles of very thin glass filled with water. These concentrated the light, and there were three girls to each bottle, one candle being deemed sufficient for eighteen girls, seated on stools of varied heights. The pillows were exceeding hard and covered with blue butcher's linen. There were various cloths in addition for the lace to lie on, to cover the pillow with when not in use, and to keep the lace in as it was made. The pins were of very slender brass wire made on purpose for this work, some with larger heads than others. The bobbins, as in other lace-making countries, were generally of turned wood, made of the requisite weight by the addition of bright-coloured beads, which made a



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“dressed pillow” with, say, 300 or 400 bobbins, a very gay affair.

The wedding trousseau of Queen Victoria was trimmed with English laces only, and this set such a fashion for their use that the market could not be supplied, and the prices paid were fabulous. The patterns were most jealously guarded, and each village and sometimes separate families were noted for their particular designs, which could not be obtained elsewhere. Such laces as these were what were used on Queen Victoria's body linen. Her coronation gown was of white satin with a deep flounce of Honiton lace, and with trimmings of the same lace on elbow sleeves and about the low neck. Her mantle was of cloth of gold trimmed with bullion fringe and enriched with the rose, the thistle, and other significant emblems. This cloth of gold is woven in one town in England. The present Queen's mantle was made there also. Queen Victoria's wedding dress was composed entirely of Honiton lace, and was made in the small fishing village of Beers. It cost £1,000 (\$5,000) and after the dress was made the patterns were destroyed. Royalty has done all it could to promote the use of this lace, and the wedding dresses of the Princess Alice and of Queen Alexandra were of Honiton also, the pattern of the latter showing the design of the Prince of Wales's feathers and ferns.

The county of Devon is the seat of the handsomest and most important of all English laces. Before the



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making of bone lace, which is so frequently mentioned in early lace records, laces made with the needle had been fabricated. It is a matter of legend rather than of history that bobbin lace was introduced into England by Dutch refugees somewhere about 1568. Be this as it may, there are no traces, in Queen Elizabeth's voluminous records, of Honiton lace, and the earliest mention of it is in 1620, by Westcote, who wrote a pamphlet called "View of Devon," and speaks of "bone lace much in request, being made at Honiton and Bradninch."

Forty years later English lace was more in demand. Foreign as well as the home markets bought it, and in 1660 an ordinance was issued in France that some mark should be attached to thread lace made in England, as well as to that made in Flanders.

England was very well pleased that her thread lace should be a staple in the market, since it cost but a little to buy the necessary material, and children and weakly persons could be utilized in its manufacture. The importation of foreign laces was never encouraged, but in 1698 it was proposed to repeal some of the prohibitions against them. This aroused those interested in the buying and selling of English lace, and they drew up and sent to the House of Commons a petition which gives a very clear idea as to how important the manufacture of home laces had become.

After speaking of the manufacture of bone lace as "ancient" the petition goes on to say that heretofore



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Parliament had considered it wise to prohibit the importation of lace from foreign ports.

“This has revived the said Languishing Manufacture, and there are now above one hundred thousand in England who get their living by it, and earn by mere Labour £500,000 a year according to the lowest computation that can be made; and the Persons employed on it are for the most part, women and children who have no other means of Subsistance. The English are now arrived to make as good lace in Fineness and all other respects as any that is wrought in Flanders, and particularly since the last Act, so great an improvement is made that way that in Buckinghamshire, the highest prized lace they used to make was about eight shillings per yard, and now they make lace there of above thirty shillings per yard, and in Dorsetshire and Devonshire they now make lace worth six pound per yard.”

“The Lace Manufacture in England is the greatest, next to the woollen, and maintains a multitude of People which otherwise the Parishes must, and that would soon prove a heavy burthen, even to those concerned in the Woollen Manufacture. On the Resolution which shall be taken in this affair depends the Well-being, or ruin of numerous families in this Country.”

The number of people quoted as getting their living in Honiton by this industry was 1,341. The little town of Honiton was twice destroyed by fire, first in the year 1756, and again in 1767. The first of these two fires was the more disastrous, and was always known in the annals of the town as the “Great Fire.” Three years before this, in 1753, a Mrs. Lydia Maynard won a prize of fifteen guineas offered by the Anti-Gallican Society for the encouragement of lace-makers. She exhibited six pairs of ladies’ lappets, which were said to be of “unprecedented beauty.” The Honiton lace was also the widest lace made in England.



***P**LATE LVI.—Irish crochet lace. Nineteenth  
Century.*



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While the earlier Devonshire laces followed those of other countries in their gradual development, they took as models the beautiful pattern of the *Gros Points* of Venice and made an imitation of them with bobbins. Honiton lace as we know it, is, however, a direct growth from Brussels lace, where the sprigs were made separately and then woven into the net ground. England could not produce the exquisite thread that was necessary to make this lace of required fineness, and was indebted to Flanders for this precious flax.

The ground of the Honiton Guipure is formed of brides, while in the finest old Honiton the ground is worked with a needle, which of course greatly increases the cost.

The bobbin Honiton net was also extremely costly, being made of Flanders thread costing as much as £90 (\$450) a pound, and in strips about two inches wide. The way this net was paid for was curious, since the worker laid it out on a counter and received for payment as many shillings as would cover it. This was the ground alone, so that a Honiton veil or large piece like a shawl would be valued at a hundred guineas or more. A favourite pattern was the butterfly and acorn, which was copied from a very popular design of *Point d'Angleterre*.

The French Revolution, besides paralyzing the making of lace in France had a disastrous effect on its manufacture in England. The two wars with America still further worked havoc, and the revival



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of the classic style in dress was also against it. But the worst blow of all was the invention of machinery to make net, which dates from 1768. In the years 1808 and 1809 an Englishman named John Heathcoat, of Nottingham, obtained patents for machines to make bobbin net, which laid the foundation for the successful making of machine-made lace. A few years later (1813), John Leavers still further improved these machines, and his inventions are still in use.

Joseph Marie Jacquard, a Frenchman of Lyons, invented a marvellous machine for the weaving of silk, for which he finally obtained recognition, and before he died, in 1834, he had the satisfaction of seeing it in general use. Part of his apparatus applied to lace net machines has enabled manufacturers to weave all sorts of patterns in imitation of hand-made lace. Still further improvement by another Frenchman has resulted in an even more perfect machine, known as the *dentellière*, the use of which is at present restricted, since the product of this machine is more costly than hand-made lace.

Every day the rich and elegant appreciate more clearly that lace, like gems, should be the "real thing," to be that ornament for which its beauty intended it. Ruskin says :

"The whole value of lace as a possession depends on the fact of its having a beauty which has been the reward of industry and attention. That the thing is itself a price—a thing everybody cannot have. That it proves, by the look of it, the ability of the maker; that it proves, by the rarity of it, the dignity of its wearer.



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. . . If they all chose to have lace, too, if it ceases to be a price, it becomes, does it not, only a cobweb?"

### *Varieties of English Lace*

**HONITON LACE.** Of all English laces this has been the most esteemed and the most costly, as well as the most beautiful. It is a bobbin lace, with a bride bobbin ground, or with a net bobbin ground or, in rare cases, with a net needle ground.

From the early days of lace-making in England, about Queen Elizabeth's time, lace was made in Honiton, the coarse bone or bobbin laces as well as the more expensive laces of gold and silver. Not only were there the original English workers with their primitive methods and patterns, but in the sixteenth century there came many Flemish refugees, bringing with them superior facility and new patterns of sprigs and fillings which their neighbours soon learned to copy. The name "Honiton" had not then been applied to the laces from this place; but they were called Bath Brussels lace, no doubt on account of the Flemish workers and because the method of manufacture is similar.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that the making of the Honiton pillow-made ground, once so famous, has become a lost art, and the beautiful sprigs which were once applied to it, either by being worked or sewed into it, are now put on machine-made net or connected by needle or bobbin brides.

Modern Honiton is not so beautiful as the old,





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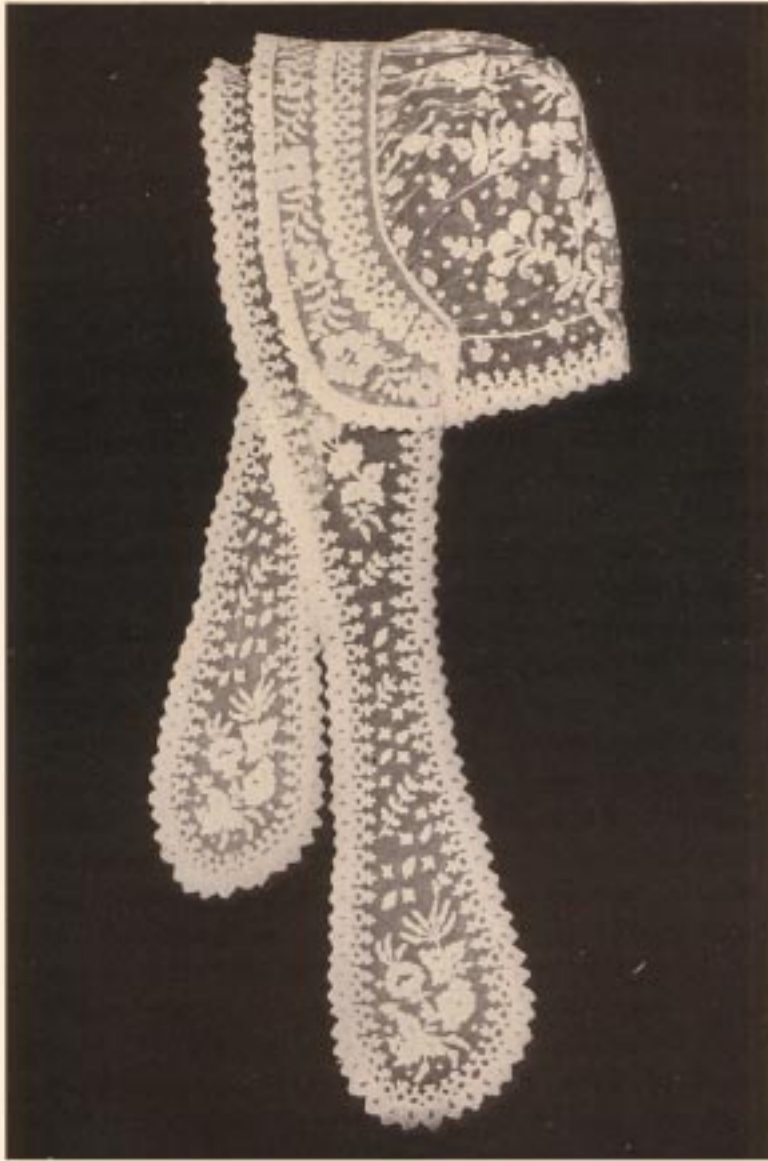
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although there has been a revival of interest in the making of this lace, and a finer variety of sprigs are now made. Fifty or sixty years ago the patterns used were commonplace and lacking entirely in grace and beauty, as the workers became discouraged from the lack of appreciation and the poor sale for their wares.

HONITON GUIPURE is the name applied to the modern product, and its manufacture is somewhat on the old plan. After the sprigs are made, on a pillow with bobbins, of course, they are basted on coloured parchment paper to suit the shape of the piece of lace desired, and the space between is filled in with needle stitches, or "purlings," which are bobbin-made extremely narrow braids or tapes with little loops on one edge. The effect is very delicate and pretty.

HONITON APPLIQUÉ, like that of Brussels, consists of sprigs applied to net, formerly hand-made, now made by machine. The most common of the Honiton *Appliqué* was, of course, white thread sprigs mounted on thread net; but black silk laces were also made in Devonshire, the best of them coming from Honiton. The usual sprigs were made on the pillow with black silk, and were transferred to a fine, machine-made silk net. This made an exceedingly beautiful lace, not so heavy as that we know as Spanish lace, and yet of more body than Chantilly. It was made in wide flounces, in shawls, and in large pieces, and for a while was very popular.

Black silk sprigs were also made into narrower pieces and bits like *barbes* and lappets by the same method as



*PLATE LVII.—Limerick Appliqué lace. Lawn,  
on machine-made net (1840).*



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the white thread sprigs; that is, they were sewed on paper, and brides or bars were used to fill in the spaces around them and connect the sprigs. No black silk laces have been made in Honiton for the last quarter of a century, the workers that are left confining themselves to the making of the white thread laces.

**DEVONSHIRE LACES.** Next to Honiton, Trolly lace was the best known of all the laces made in Devonshire. None of the lace made here seems to have been an original growth, except Honiton, since the Trolly lace was copied from Flemish lace of the same name, and *Point d'Angleterre*, as a certain variety of Brussels lace was called, was also successfully copied in Devon. In this, as in the Honiton, the sprigs were made first, and the bobbin-net ground worked in around them. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Devonshire workers could rival their Flemish instructors, and present as beautiful specimens of this lace, with as great variety in fillings of fancy stitchings, as if it had been made by nimble Flemish fingers in Brussels itself.

Beside these expensive laces, quantities of narrow and coarser laces were made in Devon also, something in character like the modern Torchon.

The Trolly lace is distinguished by having a heavier looking thread in various parts of the pattern. This is always made by twisting the threads of the bobbins together, never by the introduction of a coarser thread. The making of this lace has seriously declined, cheap machine laces taking its place.



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**BEDFORDSHIRE LACE.** Like the Devonshire lace, the Bedfordshire also drew its inspiration from the Flemings, who literally spread all over the world the art of making bobbin lace. The lace of "Beds" is very different from that of Devon, resembling the work of Lille, which has a clear ground with a dainty little close pattern on the edge. One particular pattern of lace made early in the nineteenth century was known as "Regency Point." It had a clear, delicate ground, made of twisted instead of plaited threads, and with a heavy edge, quite elaborate in design. It is no longer made, since the elaboration of the ground took so long that the more quickly plaited *réseau* was found more profitable. Much "Baby Lace," narrow in width, is made here and sold all over England by peddlers. It is a pretty and inexpensive trimming, and its durable quality has always kept it alive, though unfortunately less is made each year, and only in the coarser patterns.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LACE.** Many lovers of lace consider a fine piece of lace from "Bucks" almost superior to Honiton. The peculiarity of this lace, which is made with bobbins, is that the pattern or sprig is made at the same time as the ground. Lace-making was an old industry in Great Marlow; it flourished long before 1623, and in 1626 a school was founded by a generous patron called the "Free School of Great Marlow," where boys were taught to read and write, and girls "to knit, spin, and make bone lace."

The ground of this lace is always pretty, being clear



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and open, and in it are introduced sprigs, leaves, and dots, not unlike those of old Mechlin, while the patterns themselves are flowers, scrolls, and medallions ornamented with numerous different fillings and grounds. The softness of the lace is one of its chief charms ; and, although the lace suffered a decline, by 1884 a number of fine specimens made from old patterns were exhibited in London, and there is enough demand to occupy a limited number of workers.

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LACE.** In this county the laces chosen for reproduction were of the type known as Valenciennes, made now chiefly in Holland and England. The oldest laces made here, besides the *fausse Valenciennes*, were copies of the old Flemish designs, some of them even having the fine old Brussels ground, which was known as "point" ground. This referred only to the fineness and clearness of the ground, not to the fact that it was made with a needle, since, like all other English laces, that of Northamptonshire was made with bobbins. Sometimes the ground was made by men, the delicate pattern with its twisted bobbin *cordonet* being worked in by the more skilful fingers of women.

At one time about the middle of the nineteenth century all these laces found a good market in America and England's colonies. The market has declined with the advent of pretty and durable machine laces, and it is only by constant encouragement that the workers at hand-made laces can be kept at their pillows.



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*Irish Lace*

FOLLOWING as closely as she was able upon the heels of England, Ireland passed through the various stages of drawn- and cut-work before she finally emerged into the making of lace. That her women were ever devoted to fine works with the needle is a matter of history, while this oracle is dumb as to how much lace was actually made in Ireland.

Indeed, the lace history of that unfortunate country is directly the reverse of most other nations, since the fame for making this ornamental fabric is of recent growth, and has been acquired while the skill gained by centuries of effort in other lands slowly died for lack of appreciation.

About the middle of the eighteenth century the Irish were able to make very excellent imitations of Brussels lace, and her ardent patriots encouraged in every way both the making and wearing of this fabric. Bone lace was made in greater or less quantities, little being exported from England, and the children in the work-houses were set to work upon the simpler forms of it.

Gold and silver lace in limited quantities was also made, but it was not till nearly the middle of the nineteenth century that Ireland awoke to her possibilities in this direction. Then, too, it was the convents that first found in this industry relief for some of the misery of her people.

Not only is lace now made with considerable success, of both needle and bobbin varieties, but it is also



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crocheted in beautiful patterns with thread of either cream-colour or white, showing knotted as well as raised Guipure, in Greek and Spanish patterns.

Drawn- and cut-work are also made in different countries, and at the beginning of the twentieth century Ireland is successfully making seven kinds of lace, namely: crochet, flat needle point, raised needle point, embroidery on net, cut-work, drawn-work in old Italian style, and bobbin laces.

Unfortunately some of the choicest of these laces lose in effect from the poor quality of the thread used, since it is almost impossible to get it of pure flax, and an admixture of cotton makes it work up thick and fluffy. Flax is grown in Ireland in considerable quantity, and the spinning of the thread has long been a matter of machinery, so that with encouragement we may expect to see Ireland assume a place in this industry which she never held in earlier times, while richer countries lose their dearly bought pre-eminence. The choicest lace is that made at Youghal, and half a dozen other places, in imitation of Brussels lace. It is called —

**IRISH POINT.** This lace is made entirely with the needle in many cases, the different sprigs being united by needle-point bars. Sometimes the sprigs are mounted upon machine-made net, being carefully sewed to it so that the net can be cut away behind the pattern, giving a light and delicate appearance. In Kenmare, County Kerry, much of this lace is made at the Convent of the Poor Clares, and it is somewhat superior in quality to



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that made at Youghal, since great care is taken to have the thread entirely flax. The Guipure from this county is particularly fine.

An imitation of the old Venetian Point is made very successfully at New Ross, the heavy old Rose-Point patterns being copied with the greatest care. Indeed, some of these designs are reproduced in a marvellous manner with the crochet-needle, the nuns of the Carmelite Convent at New Ross being very proficient.

CARRICKMACROSS LACE is also an adaptation from another country, and is made in both Guipure and applied patterns. The Guipure is almost cut-work upon fine lawn, in which the pattern is traced and worked around or closely overcast, the intermediate bits of cloth cut away, and the spaces filled in with various fancy stitches. This work has not the solidity of the old cut-work made on coarse linen with heavy threads or silk. To compete with the machine-made trimmings, it must be sold at not too great a price, and so too much time cannot be spent upon it. The *Appliqué* is made on net, as previously described.

LIMERICK LACE is a combination, too, of cut-work and embroidery, and hardly comes under our definition of lace. Since 1829 this work has been made, though it has suffered at various times from loss of workers by emigration and other causes. As Lady Vere and Lady Arabella Denny were patron saints to the lace-workers of other counties, Charles Walker was the good genius who brought Limerick lace to perfection. There are





*PLATE LVIII.—A. Point de Gaze. Modern  
Brussels needle point. Nineteenth Century.  
B. Point d'Alençon. Nineteenth Century. Made  
in Venice.*



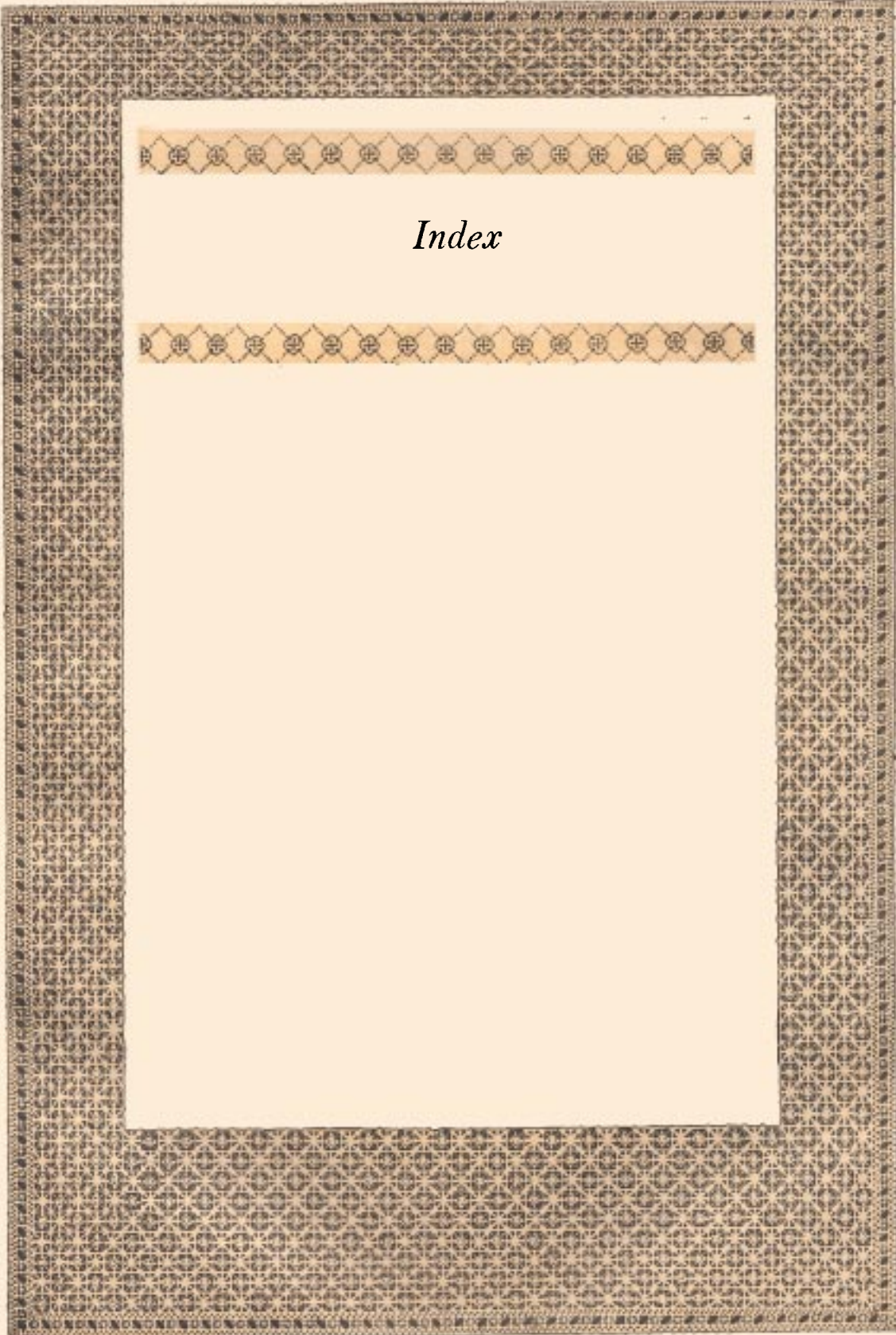
## ENGLISH AND IRISH LACE

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three styles of this trimming made, the most beautiful being Tambour, in which the patterns are embroidered and worked upon machine-made net.

There is also a revival of the old-time Lacis, in which the pattern is run with a heavy thread into a coarse net, and which is called "run lace."

*Appliqué* is a fine cambric laid over lace, with the pattern of the design run or stitched down, and the background then cut away so as to show the lace net through.



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