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*POTTERY; ENAMELS; IVORIES; METAL - WORK;  
FURNITURE; TEXTILE FABRICS; MOSAICS;  
GLASS; AND BOOK DECORATION*

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## LACE.

Hand-made laces are divided into two great classes—the “needle-point” and the “pillow-made”; the former is made with a needle on parchment, and the latter by twisting or plaiting threads from bobbins on a pillow.

Needle-point lace is an offspring of embroidery, and pillow-made lace is the highest artistic development of twisted and plaited threads. The foundation lines or threads of the pattern, various kinds of grounds, and the edging in needle-point lace, are usually worked over with a button-hole stitch in the ordinary course of making, while this distinguishing feature of needle-point lace is absent in the pillow-made varieties.

The earliest forms of lace were known as “lacis,” or darned netting, and a species of embroidery called “cut-work.” One kind of cutwork consisted in cutting, vandyking, or scalloping the edges of collars, cuffs, or garments into various shapes, and overcasting the edges with the button-hole stitch; another kind was when an embroidered design was wrought on stretched network, and the pattern wrought in looped stitches with the needle. This was the transitional form between embroidery and lace work.

“Lacis,” or darned netting, was worked in regulated stitches on a ground formed in squares, called “reseuil,” and sometimes it was formed of pieces of linen cut out and applied to the net. Ornamental open-work of cut linen and other material embroidered with silks of various colours, gold and silver threads, and woollen yarns, were made before the sixteenth century. All these varieties, though akin to lace work, required some kind of a foundation, but lace consists of a combination of threads alone, and has no foundation.

Pattern-books were published in Venice of designs for “cutworks” and embroidery of all kinds as early as 1527,

and later, in 1531, a book was published by Tagliente, giving the descriptions and methods employed for making the various stitches used in embroidery for hangings, costumes, and altar-cloths. Some of the geometric designs in this book have been used for point-lace patterns. The term used by the Italians, *punto in aere* (*aria*), or "point in air," is thought by Mr. Alan Cole to mean needle-point lace. The geometric design (Fig. 276) of

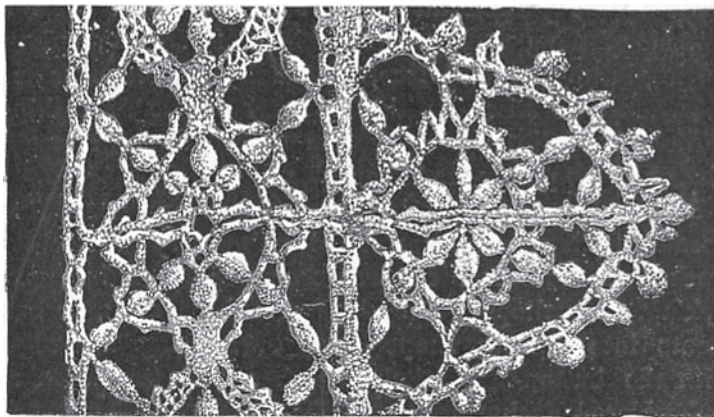


Fig. 276.—Genoese Point Lace.

Genoese point is something very much akin to the *punto in aria* patterns.

At Antwerp and Cologne, and other cities in Germany and Flanders, imitations of the Venetian pattern-books were published, which served the lace makers of those countries for their patterns.

The Flemish lace workers imitated to a great extent the Venetian patterns, and in later years those of the French.

Lace is made in silk, cotton, flax, and sometimes in gold and silver thread, aloe-fibre, and hair.

In the early kinds of lace the pattern was united by single threads covered with button-hole stitch, and edged with little loops, the flowers or pattern made of compact

“clothing,” or woven threads (Fig. 277D), and the ground in its simplest variety by meshes made by plaiting (Fig. 277A), as in the Brussels and Honiton four-thread ground, or in other varieties, by simple twisting (Fig. 277B).

The ground or mesh (*réseau*) is usually hexagonal, and is worked together with the pattern in the Valenciennes, Mechlin, and Buckingham laces, but in the Brussels and Honiton the ground is worked in afterwards, or the pattern is sewn on. Other fancy grounds or “fillings” are called “modes” or “brides,” which consist of little ties ornamented with “picots” or small loops (see Figs. 280, 284). A more elaborate form of fillings may be seen in the

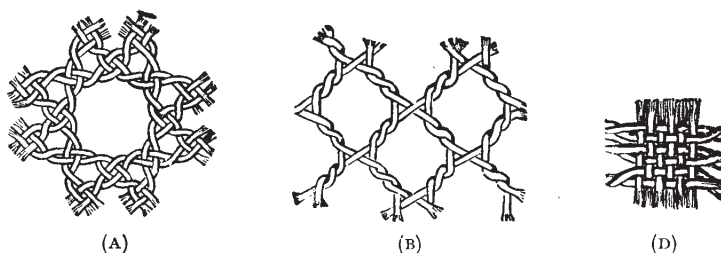


Fig. 277.—A, Brussels ground ; B, Two-thread Mesh ; D, Woven Ground.

Brussels and Alençon lappets (Figs. 278, 279); in the latter may be seen lozenges and flat hexagons of a solid character set in frames of hexagons and on the intersections of the squares. This groundwork has been termed *réseau-rosacé*.

The outline around the pattern in some laces is called the “cordonnet”; it is an important feature of the Alençon point lace (Fig. 279), where it consists of a horsehair overcast with a button-hole stitch of thread; it is also a distinctive mark of the pillow-made Mechlin lace (Fig. 283), but never occurs in the true or *vraie* Valenciennes.

The oldest of white hand-made laces is the Italian needle-point variety, which is a development of embroidery. It is difficult to give the exact date of the

invention of needle-point lace, for in the earliest specimens of Italian work, in which the patterns are copied from the geometric designs of the Venetian pattern-books, they are usually a mixture of needle-point and of plaited and twisted work, but the latter may have been done with a hooked needle, and not pillow-made. On the other hand, before point lace was so universally made by the Vene-



Fig. 278.—Lappet Brussels; Eighteenth Century.

tians, the pattern-books were published about the middle of the sixteenth century for *merletti a piombini*, or “lace made with leaden bobbins”—probably a species of pillow-made lace—and some Italian work of this kind is still in existence that is quite as early in date as that of the oldest needle-point variety. This would prove that there was little or no difference in the age of either invention, although



perhaps priority ought to be given to the needle-point variety.

Guipure is a name that has been given to lace in which the flowers are united with ties or "brides picotees" (Fig. 280), but the term guipure is more properly a kind of filigree work made with stiffened cords like gimp or wire,



Fig. 279.—Lappet ; Point d'Alençon ; Eighteenth Century.

the pattern being formed of gimp bent into a flattened design by the needle, and united where the forms touch each other (Fig. 281).

The patterns in the early laces were, as we have seen, purely geometric forms, such as squares with circles enclosed, divided by radiating lines and diagonals, rosettes, lozenges, and small trimming borders of rectangular

panels, all worked on foundation lines that resembled in some degree the main lines of a spider's web.

By degrees these patterns developed into a more solid massing of the flower forms, and the ties, or brides, became more irregular, but at the same time more evenly distributed.

Sometimes, as in Venetian point lace, the brides had little flowers worked on them, and in many instances the larger forms were raised to a considerable height or thickness. The groundwork in some of the scroll designs of

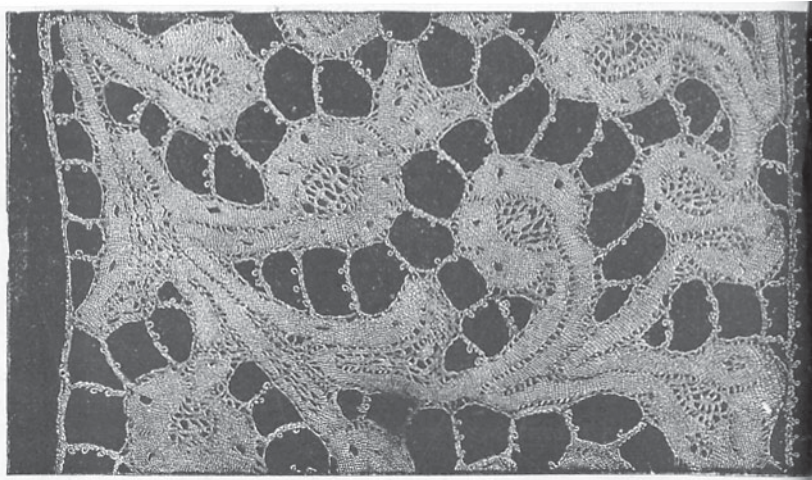


Fig. 280.—Guipure; Flemish; Seventeenth Century.

Venetian point laces is composed of regular hexagons, and this was the starting-point of the future hexagonal mesh grounds.

Raised scroll work is peculiar to the Venetian point laces of the best period—the end of the seventeenth century.

Flemish lace was mostly of the pillow-made variety, but some point work was also executed, principally at Brussels. Mechlin, Lille, and Valenciennes were all famous for their pillow-made laces.

Returning to the development of patterns in lace, we find that France led the way in design from the early years of the eighteenth century. Prior to this time, Colbert, the Minister of Louis XIV.—whose far-sightedness in the matters of art did so much for France—succeeded in establishing lace-making centres at Alençon, Argentan, Quesnoy, Arras, Rheims, &c., and the patterns of lace then in favour partook of the prevailing style of Louis-Quatorze ornament with a mixture of floral forms, more or less realistic in character (Fig. 279). The latter

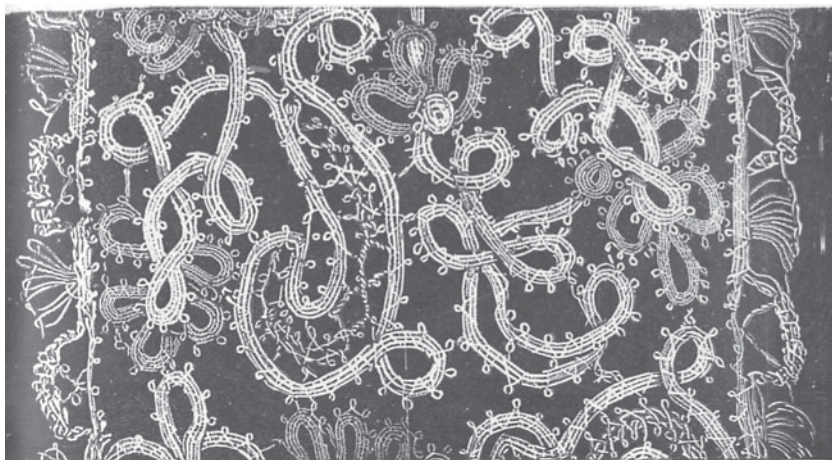


Fig. 281.—Guipure Lace; Italian; Seventeenth Century.

illustration is that of a lappet of “point d’Alençon” fabric, which is the most elaborate and most expensive of all French laces. Another French point lace is that known as “point d’Argentan,” and if not a variety of Alençon lace, is very much like it. This lace is noted for its clear and strong-meshed ground.

Valenciennes lace, made in the French town of that name, is one of the oldest pillow-made laces, dating from the fifteenth century; the best Valenciennes, however, has been made at Yprès, and is a very soft and flat variety



of fabric, with the meshes plaited, not twisted, has no cordonnet around the edges, and is very floral in design. "Fausse" Valenciennes is an irregular and slightly coarser variety than the "vraie" or true Valenciennes. Mechlin lace is similar in design to Valenciennes, but has the cordonnet outline, and has the meshes of the ground partly twisted and partly plaited (Fig. 283).

Lille and Arras laces have fine single grounds: four of the six sides of the mesh are formed by the twisting of two threads, and the other two sides by simply crossing



Fig. 282.—Finest Raised Venetian Point.

the threads. Lille was formerly famous for its black straight-edged laces. Chantilly laces were made in white and black silk, but now similar black silk laces are made at Bayeux in Normandy, and at Auvergne, an old-established centre. Laces are now made in all kinds of materials.

Brussels lace has always been a much-prized variety: it is made both in the "*point à l'aiguille*" or needle-point, and in "*point plat*" or pillow-made, and sometimes it is a mixture of both, where the flowers are made separate in

needle-point and are worked in afterwards to the various "modes" and mesh or net grounds. The Brussels mesh is peculiar in having two of its hexagonal sides longer than the other four, the former two being plaited with four threads, while the latter four are composed of a two-thread twist, and the cordonnet is well raised around the pattern and is plaited. The patterns in Brussels lace are of all kinds, but are chiefly imitations of French designs; it is a common thing to find Alençon and other French patterns copied in this lace. In France, Brussels lace

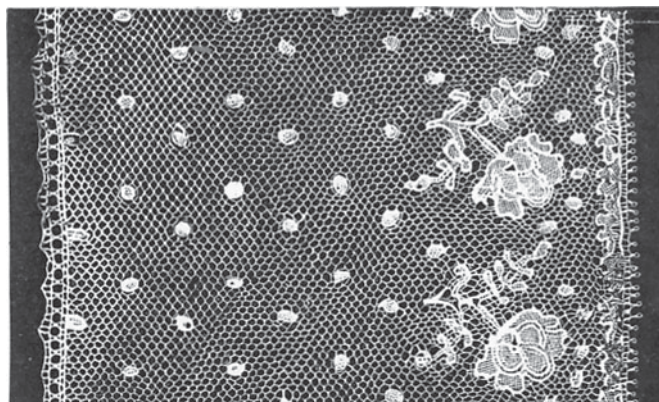


Fig. 283.—Border of Mechlin Lace.

was known by the name of "point d'Angleterre," from the fact that great quantities of it were imported, and also smuggled into England during its prohibited importation in the lace-weaving period of Charles II.

Ancient Spanish point-lace was like the Venetian raised work, but much of the so-called Spanish lace was really Flemish, and was largely imported from the Spanish Netherlands.

Honiton in Devonshire, and Buckinghamshire are the chief centres of the lace making in England. Honiton lace is pillow-made, and is similar to Brussels in fabrica-

tion, the designs of which were originally sprigs of flowers, but have developed to a kind of guipure work held together by "brides" (Fig. 284).

Buckinghamshire lace is also pillow-made, and resembles Flemish lace in design, but is a little more irregular and weaker in drawing.

Irish lace is known under the name of Carrickmacross—a kind of cut linen work; Limerick—a species of embroi-

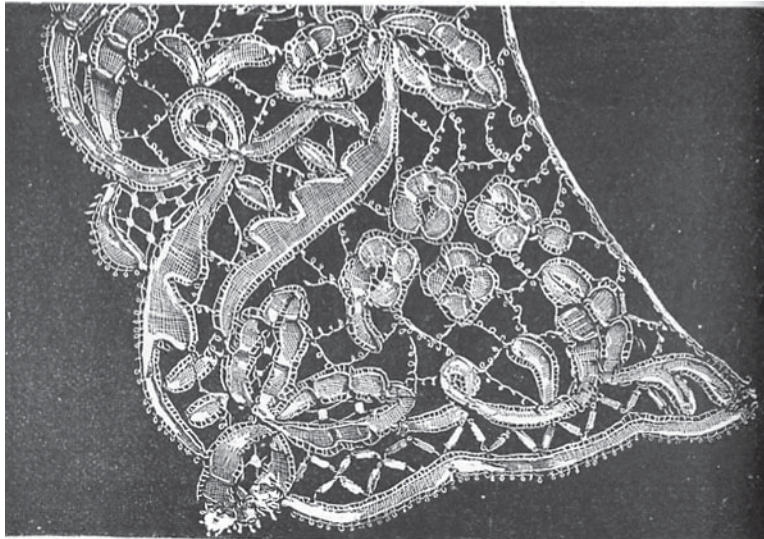


Fig. 284.—Honiton; Modern.

dery; and point lace, made in Ulster and elsewhere in Ireland (Fig. 285).

Many efforts have been made in recent years to revive the Irish lace-making industry, which have been attended with a good measure of success, particularly in the schools attached to the convents.

A great modern revival of lace making has taken place in the island of Burano, near Venice, which dates from the year 1872. This is due to the energy and ability of

Madame Bellario, assisted by the patronage of the Queen of Italy and other members of the royal family. The variety made is the needle-point, and the designs are mostly good copies of the old Venetian and seventeenth-century French patterns.

Machine-made lace has been brought to an advanced state of perfection, and Nottingham in England, where the first machines were set up, is now the great centre of this industry. The machine on which lace is made is a development of the stocking-knitting machine,

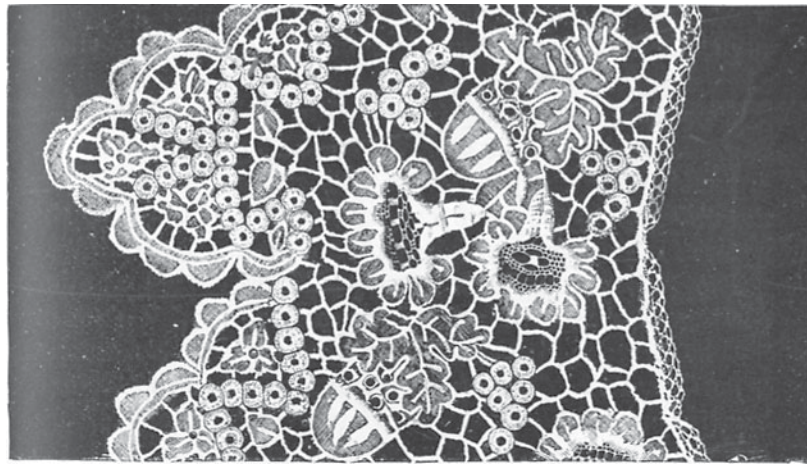


Fig. 285.—Irish Point; Modern.

and lace nets were first made on these machines about 1770. Heathcote, of Nottingham, invented the bobbin net machine, and Leaver invented the lace machine which is still in use with various improvements and modifications. Almost any kind of lace can now be imitated by the machine, but it is easily distinguished from the hand-made varieties by the greater regularity of texture, the absence in the machine-made point lace of any imitation of the button-hole stitch and of the elaborate plaiting that is found in the pillow hand-made laces.