

:: THE LACE AND ::  
EMBROIDERY COLLECTOR

A GUIDE TO OLD LACE &  
EMBROIDERY BY M<sup>RS</sup> HEAD

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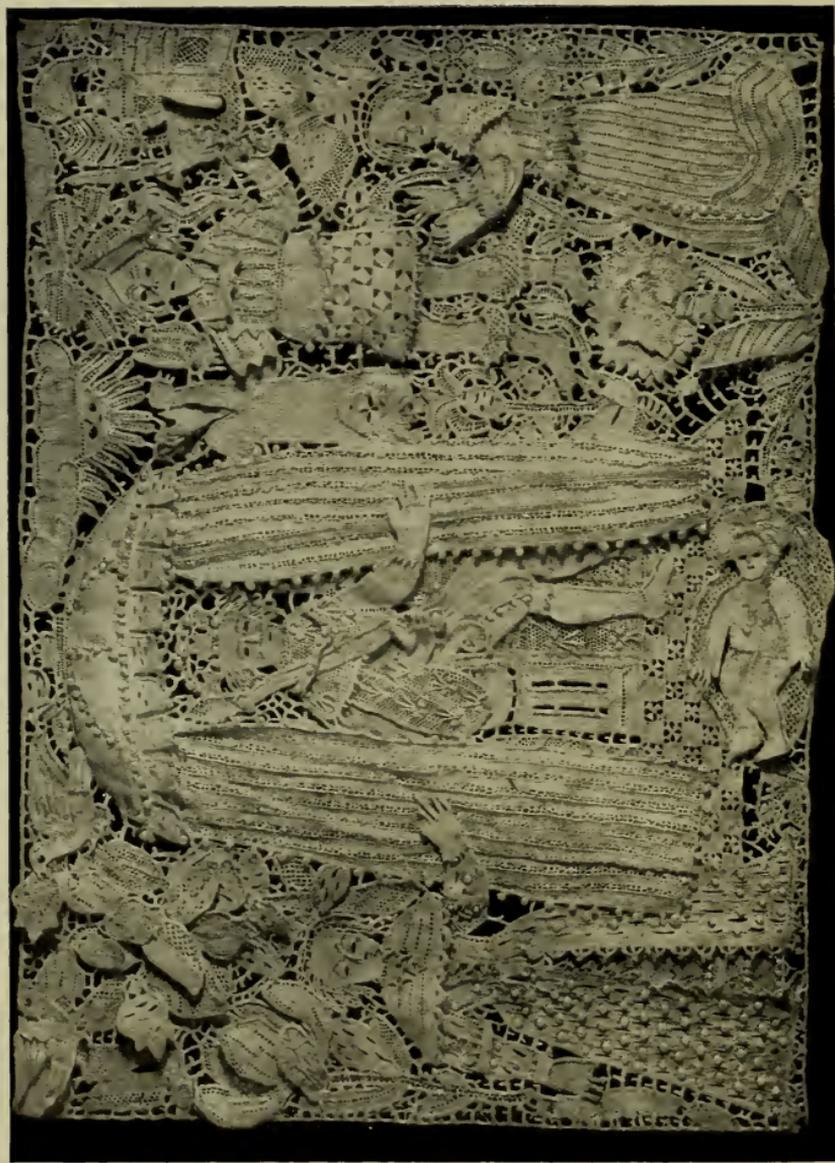
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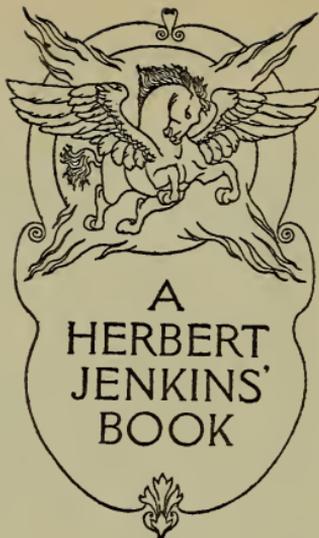
THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON. Needlepoint Lace, English, XVII Century.

# THE LACE & EMBROIDERY COLLECTOR

A GUIDE TO COLLECTORS OF  
OLD LACE AND EMBROIDERY  
BY MRS. HEAD

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## PREFACE

**T**HIS volume is intended primarily for the collector of Old Lace and Embroidery whose means are small. The examples illustrated and described have been selected with special regard to the limitations imposed on him by his modestly filled purse, and, with certain exceptions, they are such pieces as he may reasonably hope to obtain. Among these exceptions are the famous Syon cope, one of the treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the two exceptionally early embroidered bookbindings from the collection in the British Museum, and a few other varieties, the inclusion of which is considered necessary for educational purposes, for it is certainly desirable that even the unaspiring collector should know something of the history and development of his subject. Should he desire to pursue the path of knowledge further, such exhaustive works as Mrs. Bury Palliser's "History of Lace," and Lady Marian Alford's "Needlework as Art," will tell him practically all that is known of lace and embroidery from the earliest times.

The terms used in reference to lace are those which have come to be most generally adopted, without regard to their nationality. Their meaning is fully explained in the Glossary at the end of the book.

My thanks are due to Mr. W. B. Redfern, and the editors of *The Connoisseur* and *The Queen* for their permission to reproduce certain photographs of which they own the copyrights, and to the Directors of the British and Victoria and Albert Museums, for allowing the use of photographs of examples in the National collections. I am indebted also to Miss Elwood and Messrs. Walpole Bros., of Bath, for the loan of pieces of lace for illustrative purposes. The list of Ecclesiastic Embroideries still existing in the provinces is chiefly based on that in Dr. Cox's admirable book, "English Church Furniture."

R. E. H.

BATH, 1921.

## CONTENTS

| CHAPTER   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| PREFACE - - - - -   | 5    |
| LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS - - -                               | 9    |
| I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LACE - - -                          | 13   |
| II. ITALY (I)—NEEDLE-POINT LACE - - -                     | 22   |
| III. ITALY (II)—BOBBIN-LACES - - -                        | 31   |
| IV. FRANCE (I)—NEEDLE-POINT LACES - - -                   | 38   |
| V. FRANCE (II)—BOBBIN-LACE - - -                          | 50   |
| VI. THE LOW COUNTRIES—BELGIUM,<br>FLANDERS, HOLLAND - - - | 60   |
| VII. GERMANY AND NORTHERN EUROPE - - -                    | 73   |
| VIII. SPAIN AND PORTUGAL - - -                            | 79   |
| IX. ENGLAND AND IRELAND - - -                             | 84   |
| X. LACE BOBBINS - - - - -                                 | 101  |
| XI. LACE IN RELATION TO COSTUME - - -                     | 109  |
| XII. THE IDENTIFICATION OF LACE - - -                     | 119  |
| XIII. ON COLLECTING EMBROIDERIES - - -                    | 124  |
| XIV. NEEDLEWORK PRIOR TO THE TENTH CENTURY<br>- - - - -   | 129  |
| XV. FROM 900 TO 1500 - - - - -                            | 134  |
| XVI. FROM 1500 TO 1625 - - - - -                          | 151  |
| XVII. FROM 1625 TO 1700 - - - - -                         | 170  |

| CHAPTER  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| XVIII. FROM 1700 TO 1820 - - - -   | 190  |
| XIX. SAMPLERS - - - -  | 212  |
| A GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN CONNECTION<br>WITH LACE AND EMBROIDERY - - - | 233  |
| APPENDIX A - - - -   | 241  |
| APPENDIX B - - - -   | 245  |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|  | DESCRIBED<br>ON PAGE |
|--|----------------------|
| I. LACE PICTURE : THE JUDGMENT OF SOLO-<br>MON ( <i>Frontispiece</i> ) - - - - | 87                   |
| 2. LACIS, ITALIAN - - - -  | 17                   |
| 3. CUT-WORK WITH PILLOW EDGING, ITALIAN  | 24                   |
| 4. COLLAR LACE, NEEDLE, VENETIAN - -   | 26                   |
| 5. GROS POINT DE VENISE - - - -  | 27                   |
| 6. ROSE-POINT, VENETIAN - - - -  | 27                   |
| 7. CORALLINE-POINT, VENETIAN - - - -   | 28                   |
| 8. GROUNDED VENETIAN - - - -   | 29                   |
| 9. TAPE LACE, GENOESE - - - -  | 33                   |
| 10. MILANESE BOBBIN-LACE - - - -   | 35                   |
| II. (a) ALENÇON LAPPET, (b) ARGENTAN EDG-<br>ING - - - -                       | 46, 48               |
| 12. VALENCIENNES (a) FAUSSE, (b) VRAIE   | 52, 52               |
| 13. (a) MECHLIN LAPPET, EARLY, (b) LILLE<br>LAPPET - - - -                     | 69, 55               |
| 14. POINT D'ANGLETERRE LAPPET - - -  | 65                   |
| 15. (a) BRUSSELS APPLIQUÉ ON "VRAI RE-<br>SEAU," (b) MECHLIN, LATER - -        | 66, 69               |
| 16. (a) BINCHE, (b) TÖNDER WORK - -  | 68, 77               |
| 17. (a) ANTWERP "POLTEN KANT," (b) DUTCH,<br>(c) FLEMISH - - - -               | 70, 72, 71           |
| 18. ENGLISH CUT-WORK SAMPLER, 1648 - -   | 86                   |
| 19. ENGLISH HOLLIE-POINT SAMPLER, 1728 -                                       | 88                   |
| 20. (a) BUCKS "BABY LACE," (b) BUCKS<br>"POINT," (c) OLD HONITON - -           | 95, 94, 89           |

|  | DESCRIBED<br>ON PAGE |
|--|----------------------|
| 21. LIMERICK LACE - - - -  | 99                   |
| 22. BOBBINS - - - -  | 107                  |
| 23. ENLARGED DETAILS; FIVE NEEDLE, ONE<br>PILLOW - - - -           | 122                  |
| 24. ENLARGED DETAILS, PILLOW - - -                                 | 122                  |
| 25. BAYEUX TAPESTRY - - - -  | 141                  |
| 26. SYON COPE - - - -  | 147                  |
| 27. BLACK WORK - - - -   | 92, 155              |
| 28. ELIZABETHAN EMBROIDERY - - -                                   | 160                  |
| 29. ELIZABETHAN GLOVE - - - -                                      | 162                  |
| 30. BOOKBINDING: QUEEN KATHERINE PARR'S<br>PRAYERS - - - -         | 164                  |
| 31. BOOKBINDING: DAILY EXERCISE OF A CHRIS-<br>TIAN - - - -        | 164                  |
| 32. CASKET, TENT-STITCH - - - -                                    | 172                  |
| 33. TENT-STITCH PICTURE - - - -                                    | 172                  |
| 34. FLAT-STITCH PICTURE - - - -                                    | 173                  |
| 35. STUMP-WORK PICTURE - - - -                                     | 177                  |
| 36. STUMP-WORK MIRROR FRAME - - -                                  | 179                  |
| 37. BEAD-WORK PICTURE - - - -                                      | 180                  |
| 38. COLOURED WORSTEDS ON WHITE GROUND,<br>WILLIAM AND MARY - - - - | 185                  |
| 39. YELLOW SILK BACK-STITCH QUILTING -                             | 193                  |
| 40. WHITE QUILTING - - - -   | 194                  |
| 41. APRON - - - -  | 196                  |
| 42. CHAIN-STITCH WALLET - - - -                                    | 199                  |
| 43. CHENILLE CHAIR-SEAT - - - -                                    | 202                  |
| 44. PICTURE, PAINTING AND NEEDLEWORK -                             | 205                  |
| 45. PICTURE, BLACK AND WHITE - - -                                 | 206                  |
| 46. SAMPLER, EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY-                            | 214                  |
| 47. LONG SAMPLER, 1669 - - - -                                     | 217                  |
| 48. SAMPLER, BORDERED, 1749 - - -                                  | 220                  |
| 49. DARNING SAMPLER - - - -  | 223                  |

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## CHAPTER I

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF LACE

**I**T is a pleasant fact that it is not necessary to be a millionaire to indulge in the hobby of collecting old lace. The rich collector, certainly, can aim higher than the poor one; the latter cannot afford to despise all but the absolutely perfect thing; not for him are the albs and altar-frontals of Venetian rose-point, the flounces of Alençon lace of the best period, or the "heads" of finest point d'Angleterre, yet although it is no doubt delightful to be able to buy the best and scarcest of everything, regardless of cost, the humbler collector, with his lean purse, may enjoy the pleasures of the chase more keenly and feel a greater satisfaction when it has resulted in a capture.

The collector of small means will, if he be wise, make up his mind from the outset to get together examples of as many types of old hand-made laces as possible. He will have to content himself probably with very insignificant specimens of the great laces, but as long as they are thoroughly characteristic of their kind, and in fairly sound condition, this limitation need not trouble him seriously. The most unpromising coverts in the way of rag-shops in obscure

back streets will sometimes yield surprising spoil ; a baby's ragged cap may be trimmed with a bit of filmy Flemish lace ; a lamp-mat lined with crude blue sateen and edged with cotton fringe may prove to be a scrap of Venetian flat-point, and a discarded dingy "toilet-cover" a piece of cut-work. These were actual happenings, some time ago it must be confessed, yet even in these days when every dealer in odds and ends has developed the profiteering instinct considerably, there are still bargains waiting for the collector who has patience as well as zeal.

How old is lace? This is one of the inevitable questions of the beginner ; to which the answer may well be another query : What is lace? In the "Oxford Dictionary" there are two definitions : (1) "A string or cord serving to draw together opposite edges (chiefly of articles of clothing) by being passed in and out of eyelet holes (or over hooks, studs, etc.) and pulled tight. (2) A slender, open-work fabric of linen, cotton, silk, wool or metal threads usually ornamented with inwrought or applied pattern." It will be seen that two widely different things have the same name, and this has resulted in an endless series of errors and misapprehensions, many writers having taken the "laces" mentioned in old inventories and household accounts as invariably meaning the "slender open-work fabric," instead of what is often more likely "strings or cords." Something that in a measure answers to the second definition given in the dictionary is undoubtedly of very great antiquity. In the Egyptian Museum of the Louvre is a network fringed at the end which has points in common with the lacis of the fifteenth century ; in the Cluny Museum is a piece of coarse net from a Coptic tomb, which appears to have been made with bobbins ; in the British Museum

are mummy-cloths with drawn thread-work which might have been—but was not—the direct ancestor of that made in Venice in the days of Titian, while the Victoria and Albert Museum possesses a most interesting piece of plaited thread-work taken from a mummy case at Ehnasya (Herakleopolis Magna) during the excavations of 1903-4. In Mr. Thomas Wright's book, the "Romance of the Lace Pillow," a detailed description is given of the way in which this was executed, Miss M. Maidment having discovered the method and made a skilful reproduction. This Egyptian work, however, was plaited in a frame, and although certainly "a slender, open-work fabric" is not lace, although near akin to certain classes of it. The arts of drawn thread-work and netting practised by the ancient Egyptians were lost completely for hundreds of years, to be re-invented only in the fifteenth century, and then not in the East but in Italy.

Hand-made lace is divided into two great classes: that worked with the needle over a pattern drawn on parchment, and that woven by means of bobbins on a pillow, the pattern in this case being pricked on parchment and the threads twisted round pins stuck in the perforations. There are a few so-called laces, certainly, which cannot be placed in either class, such as those worked with needle or tambour-hook on net, or in which the pattern is cut out of muslin and applied to net, but as these are comparatively modern and of small importance, they may be ignored here. The starting-point of both types of lace was indisputably drawn work, but with a difference. Needle-made lace developed from a kind of work on linen carried out by drawing a certain number of threads from the *body* of the material, those remaining

in the section so treated being tied together in groups with a continuous thread so as to form a simple pattern, while the forerunner of bobbin-lace is to be found in the ornamental trimming formed by knotting, plaiting or twisting together threads frayed out from the *edge* of a garment or a piece of stuff.

Possibly earlier than either needle-point or bobbin-lace, certainly contemporary with the drawn-work stage of the former, was the darned netting best known under its French name of *lakis*, a far less cumbrous title than the Italian equivalent of *punto ricamato a maglia quadra*. The meshed ground of *lakis* was netted in the way familiar to modern workers, starting from a single stitch, increasing a stitch on each side until the net was full width, and reducing in the same proportion to one stitch again. On this ground, which was firm and strong, were darned patterns, ranging from the simplest geometrical ones to those of almost fantastic elaboration, and of widely varying subjects. *Lakis* was largely used for ecclesiastical purposes, hence many designs are religious in subject; others depict incidents in classical mythology, or are strange medleys of basilisks, dragons, unicorns, winged lions and other fabulous beasts. The work was usually done in squares, which were afterwards joined as required. Included in the inventory of Catharine de Medici's household goods were 381 squares of *lakis*, unmounted, and 538 in another chest; for this unamiable and crafty royal lady had an inordinate fondness for this darned net, and kept her waiting-women constantly employed in making it for the adornment of her bedchamber. Although *lakis* was certainly made in Italy during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the two earliest pattern-books in which mention of it is found are of German origin.

The first, by Jorg Castel, of Schickau, was published in 1525, and the second, by P. Quinty or Quentell, of Cologne, in 1527, that of the Venetian, Antonio Tagliente, not making its appearance until 1530. The panel of laces illustrated in Plate 2 is Italian, and of the late sixteenth century. It is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where among other specimens there is an altar-frontal described as German, fifteenth century, and another stated to be Spanish, so that it is evident that the art of making laces was widely known and practised. It has been suggested that the looped stitch of laces was the germ of needle-point lace, of the buttonhole-stitch employed in the drawn- and cut-work, and in the punto in aria that followed, but it is more than doubtful whether this is so.

The name reticella first appears in the Sforza inventory of 1493 (to this further reference will be made), but it is not found in pattern-books until nearly a hundred years later, when in the "Corone della nobile et virtuose donne," published in Venice in 1592, Vecellio gives instructions for making punto à reticello. Exactly what reticella was is not clear; the name has been applied by modern writers to drawn-work, cut-work, and so-called Greek lace so indiscriminately as to give rise to confusion, hence it is considered best to avoid its use entirely in this book. As it has been already stated, drawn-work was indubitably the first stage of needle-point lace. The foundation material used by Italian workers was a loosely woven linen from which it was not difficult to pull out threads. When the necessary number had been drawn away, those remaining were closely whipped over, and the firm, stiff bars thus formed connected by buttonhole-stitches so as to produce a simple, geometrical pattern some

variety being effected by the occasional introduction of a darning or in-and-out stitch taken over and under two or four threads. This work was the *punto tirato* of Venice. Probably contemporary with it, although some authorities on the subject consider it to be rather later, was cut-work or *punto tagliato*. This was carried out by cutting away portions of the linen and filling up the holes with geometrical patterns similar to and worked in the same manner as those of drawn-work. In a variant, which strictly speaking is neither cut- nor drawn-work, the threads were not removed but drawn apart from each other and whipped over very tightly so as to produce a ground of small square meshes. The pattern was generally left in the linen, and this was sometimes outlined with a whipped-over cordonnet.

Many pattern-books for drawn- and cut-work were published in Venice during the sixteenth century. First came that of Antonio Tagliente, already mentioned, followed by those of Nicolo d'Aristotile, 1532; Matthio Pagani, 1548; an anonymous volume entitled "*Le Pompe*," in 1557, and many others, an exhaustive list of which and of pattern-books published in countries other than Italy will be found in Mrs. Bury Palliser's "*History of Lace*." "*Le Pompe*," by the way, is the earliest collection of patterns in which mention is made of *punto in aria*, the next stage in the evolution of needle-point lace.

In course of time *punto tirato* became more elaborate of pattern and less dependent on the foundation of linen, of which an ever-increasing number of threads was removed, until in the final phase the ground material was reduced to a very narrow strip, into which the first row of looped (buttonhole) stitches only was worked, the rest being entirely self-supporting.

Thus punto tirato had become punto in aria—the name “stitch in the air” explains itself. Next, the linen vanished altogether, and for it was substituted a foundation of parchment, on which the pattern, still retaining its stiff geometrical style, was drawn. Along the principal lines of this threads were tacked with couching stitches, and these provided the necessary support for the pattern which, at this date, was worked entirely in buttonhole-stitch, the darning stitches being no longer used. From this beginning grew the Venetian point laces which were speedily to become famous throughout the world for their beauty.

From Venice, drawn- and cut-work travelled to other countries, including England (where, as will be shown in another chapter, they took root and flourished), and in some instances their further development into true lace pursued the same course as in Italy. This was notably the case in France, where the stage of the conversion of the connecting bars or brides into the meshed ground or *réseau* was reached almost as early as in Italy. This point will be dealt with in the chapter on French laces.

In connection with the invention of bobbin-lace, there is a fanciful story which is no doubt familiar to many readers. According to this, a Venetian fisher-girl, while thinking dreamily of her absent sailor lover, half-unconsciously twisted the weighted strings that fringed her net into a pattern roughly resembling a branch of coral that had been a gift from her sweetheart. This pretty little tale is, unfortunately, entirely apocryphal, for bobbin-lace had a much less sentimental origin in the knotted lace of which the *macrâmé* of modern times is a revival. The early knotted lace—*punto a groppo* was its Italian name—of the sixteenth century was made of threads or thin cords cut

into short lengths. In the next phase the threads were left long and wound on small pieces of lead, for which reason the first Italian bobbin-lace was called *merletti a piombini*. These leaden bobbins, however, were soon replaced by those of wood or bone, the use of the latter accounting for the name bone-lace which was used habitually in England to indicate lace made with bobbins. With the bobbins came into existence the padded board, which was the forerunner of the lace-pillow, the pricked pattern and the pins round which the threads were now twisted or plaited instead of being knotted. Pins of brass wire were to be had in the sixteenth century, but they were far too costly to be in common use, and the first makers of bobbin-lace were forced to resort to pins of wood or bone. It is said that fish-bones were used for the purpose by Devonshire workers at a later date, and it is not impossible that they were also so employed in Venice.

At the outset there was a very close resemblance between the patterns of needle-point and bobbin-laces; in their earliest forms they were both sharply vandyked edgings with a geometrical design in each point, but the bobbin-made laces were lighter in weight—no small consideration in the days of ruffs—and cheaper, and so they speedily rivalled the older needle-points in popularity.

Genoa and Milan became the chief centres for the making of bobbin-lace. Thence the art found its way to Flanders, and that so quickly that it is not surprising that the Flemings laid claim—and still lay claim—to its invention. The honour, however, undoubtedly belongs to Italy, yet the fact remains that it is practically impossible for the most skilful expert to distinguish between the bobbin-laces of the

two countries in their earlier and coarser stages. It was certainly the Flemish workers who continued to improve and develop bobbin-lace until it reached its zenith in the eighteenth century, some years after needle-point lace had begun to show signs of decadence.

## CHAPTER II

### ITALY (I)—NEEDLE-POINT LACE

**I**N the opening chapter the gradual development of drawn, and cut-work into point-lace has been outlined in brief up to the time when, the last vestige of the linen foundation having vanished, threads were laid over a pattern drawn on parchment to support the initial rows of the "stitches in the air."

Before this stage had been reached, however, drawn- and cut-work had arrived at such a degree of perfection that they were, both separately and in combination, as beautiful and, after finer thread had come to be employed towards the end of the sixteenth century, nearly as delicate in texture as the true lace which followed them. The earlier patterns of drawn- and cut-work were invariably purely geometrical, but later curving lines were introduced, which developed gradually into scroll designs. These did not altogether replace the older Gothic patterns, but were worked contemporaneously with them. As well as the button-hole and darning stitches, a variant of the former, a double-looped stitch, was employed, and there were occasionally introduced in the solid portions of the pattern a knot-stitch which is called *punto avorio*, or *ivory-stitch*, by Mrs. Hungerford Pollen in "Seven Centuries of Lace." A very large quantity of drawn- and cut-work was undoubtedly produced in Venice,

a city already far famed for its magnificent brocades and embroideries, but it is doubtful whether in the sixteenth century there existed any organised industry, most of the beautiful work being made by ladies in their own homes, and in the convents. Possibly the workers designed their own patterns; at any rate, in 1594 Donna Isabella Catanea Parasole published in Venice a pattern-book for "punti in aria" and "punti-a-piombini" (bobbin-lace) under the title of "Specchio delle Virtuose Donne"—the Mirror of Virtuous Women—with many drawings. It was the custom that the marriage-coffer of a noble Venetian lady should contain, besides the ordinary household linen, a specially elaborate set of cut-work valances, coverlets and hangings, in the design of which the arms and badges of the bride's family were wrought. This sumptuous linen was intended for display on occasions of great festivity, such as the Carnival, hence drawn- or cut-work with an armorial pattern has been sometimes called, rather foolishly it seems, "Carnival lace." Besides the vast amount of drawn- and cut-work that were used by the Venetians themselves for the adornment not only of their houses, but of their clothes, in spite of sumptuary laws, much was exported to France and England, where it was in high favour, for the ruff, which, coming into fashion about 1540, was steadily increasing in size and popularity. The French queen, Catharine de Medici, not content with the importation of cut-work from Italy, had brought to Paris a clever Venetian ruff-designer and maker named Frederic Vinciolo. He published in 1587, at the sign of the Golden Star in Paris, a book of patterns, under a terribly lengthy title, of which the first portion is as follows: "Les Singuliers et Nouveaux portraicts et ouvrages des Lingerie. Servans de patrons à faire

toutes sortes de poinctes couppés, lakis, et autres." There were many editions of Vinciolo's book, which became one of the most famous of its kind, the majority being published in France, although an edition was brought out in Turin, and a translation appeared in London in 1591, entitled "New and Singular Patternes and Workes of Linnen."

Venice had many royal customers for her beautiful drawn- and cut-work. The preposterous cart-wheel ruffs, worn by Queen Margot, which were so large round as to necessitate the use of a special soup spoon, with a handle two feet long, were of Italian cut-work, stiffened with brass wire, and the spreading, open ruffs invented by Marie de Medicis, Henri Quatre's second wife, were made of drawn-work in its final stage, when the linen foundation had dwindled to a few threads. In the Wardrobe Accounts of Queen Elizabeth, from 1584 onwards, there are many entries of payments such as this: "For one yard of double Italian cut-work a quarter of a yard wide, 55 shillings and four pence," while prior to the date named cut-work appears over and over again in the long lists of gifts made by obsequious and favour-carrying courtiers to Great Gloriana, who was a true daughter of the horse-leech so far as presents of fine clothes and jewels were concerned. How splendidly decorative cut-work could be, is shown in many of the portraits of the time, as, for instance, in that by Gheeraedts of Mary, Countess of Pembroke—

"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,"

in the National Portrait Gallery, and in that of Lady Elizabeth Paulet, attributed to Daniel Mytens the younger, in the Ashmolean, at Oxford. The cut-work illustrated in Plate 3 is of the early seventeenth

century, and therefore rather later than the period being dealt with, but it is typically Italian. The edging is bobbin-lace.

The name punto in aria is used in the majority of the old pattern-books to cover all the Venetian needle-point laces. Indeed, the name seems to have been applied to some earlier forms of lace than those of which there is a definite record, for "in 1476 the Venetian Senate decreed that no punto in aria, executed either in flax with a needle, or in gold or silver thread, should be used on curtains or bed-linen in the city or provinces" ("History of Lace," Mrs. Bury Palliser). But however this may be, there is no room for doubt about the process of evolution of the famous point-laces of Venice. The first laces to be made purely "in the air" were narrow, deeply dentated edgings, each vandyke complete in itself, and only connected with its fellows by what lace-workers call a "footing," and the uninitiated a "heading," of little more than a few threads cased with buttonhole-stitches. The pattern of this early lace is usually found to be geometrical and very simple, but in a few interesting and rare specimens a queer little human figure, more or less grotesque, or some archaic bird or beast is introduced. Buttonhole-stitch was solely used at this period; brides were limited in number, and as yet there were no fanciful fillings or *à jours*.

By degrees this dentated lace grew more important; the vandykes became blunter and less completely detached from each other, the footing broadened and was elaborated to a slight extent, while brides were more freely introduced. The patterns continued to show the influence of the geometrical cut-work, but they, like those of the latter in its last phase, were occasionally of a more flowing character, and this

tendency steadily increased. A little further advance along the lines indicated brought into existence the Venetian point largely imported into England during the reigns of James I and Charles I, and often vaguely described as "collar-lace" in contemporary documents (see Plate 4).

The next step in the history of Venetian lace leads to the raised points. These are usually divided into two kinds, gros point and rose-point, but by some authorities they are classed together under the latter name on the grounds that the two laces belong to the same period and vary only in detail. But it will probably obviate some confusion if the more generally accepted classification be adopted here.

Although so nearly contemporary there is a great gulf between the so-called collar-lace and the raised points de Venise, the difference, indeed, is a remarkable instance of rapid departure from a slowly and consistently developed type. In even the oldest specimens of the raised points, the patterns are elaborate and rather florid; the solid portions are outlined with a cordonnet, and fanciful fillings are inserted in the spaces. In course of time the cordonnet grew thicker and thicker, until it became the leading characteristic of gros point and one which distinguishes it from all other laces. This outlining is formed of a sheaf, or bundle, of threads, so closely covered with buttonhole-stitch that it is exceedingly stiff and would have a heavy and clumsy appearance were it not for the rows of delicate picots—tiny loops worked in buttonhole-stitch—which fringe its outer edge. All the spaces in the pattern are filled with minute, exquisitely worked "pinhole" diaper and chevron patterns, the whole being so firm and solid that it resembles carved ivory when seen from a little distance. A

detail of an altar-frontal of gros point de Venise, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is reproduced in Plate 5, and in it all the distinctive features of the lace can be seen. It will be noticed that the various sections of the pattern are arranged to touch each other wherever possible, so that but few brides are required. Really good specimens of gros point, the Italian name for which, by the way, was punto tagliato a foliami, are scarce and costly, so that the collector of small means is rarely able to secure one unless he is exceptionally fortunate. He should take care to avoid pieces made up of odd bits of worn-out gros point joined together with modern brides. The large, well-marked solid patterns of this particular type of lace lend themselves well to this kind of patchwork, examples of which are often seen in dealers' shops priced far above their actual value. This, naturally, is small, for any coherent design is of course entirely absent, and in many cases not only are the brides modern, but the old worn-out fillings have been replaced by coarse new ones. An interesting seventeenth-century imitation, if it may be called such, of gros point de Venise is illustrated in Mrs. Hungerford Pollen's "Seven Centuries of Lace." In this the pattern, which is exactly in the style of gros point, is cut out of linen, edged with a heavy cordonnet, and connected by brides with knots on them. There are needle-point à joins, and the general resemblance to the real lace is extraordinarily close.

Rose-point, a flounce of which is illustrated in Plate 6, has the characteristics of gros point, but in a form modified in some respects and elaborated in others. The patterns are less bold and not so sharply defined; the cordonnet is much less thick and heavy, but is edged not merely with one row of picots, but with

two, or even three, while the brides, far more numerous than in gros point, are also picotées. Furthermore, they are studded with tiny needle-point roses, from which it is said the lace obtained the name by which it is best known. It is also called point de neige by reason of its delicate, filmy appearance—as light as a snowflake, in fact. Rose-point was in great demand in England throughout the greater part of the seventeenth century and the first decade or so of the eighteenth, for every man of fashion, whether he could afford it or not, used it lavishly for his falling-collars, his canons or breeches frills, and the ruffles that lined the wide tops of his high leather boots. For the wide ends of the cravats worn at the end of the seventeenth century, gros point seems to have been more in favour than the lighter lace. There are several good specimens of gros point cravats to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery, that worn by Thomas, Earl of Ossory, as painted by Lely, is shown very clearly.

Of the same period, or, possibly, a little later than the raised points, was Venetian flat-point. The patterns of this lace are generally scrolling; the toilé is close and solid, and the fillings are few and not elaborate. The brides, however, are numerous, and are often picotées. A variety of point plat de Venise has come to be known in recent times as coralline point, its name being derived from a fancied resemblance to a branch of coral. As a matter of fact, its characteristic pattern is a mere confusion of meandering lines connected by myriads of brides picotées, in most instances arranged to form hexagons. Coralline point is, perhaps, the least attractive and interesting member of the groups of Venetian needle-point laces, the example illustrated in Plate 7 being unusually graceful in design.

Up to the eighteenth century only point laces with brides were made in Venice, but after the successful production in France of laces with meshed grounds, the Venetian workers, who were an organised body by this time, thought it advisable to follow the fashion, hence the evolution of point de Venise à réseau. The mesh of the Italian lace is very similar to that of Alençon, but is rounder; its patterns are rococo in style and often overcrowded and too florid. A row of tiny meshes outlines the toilé, and if there is a cordonnet it is merely a flat thread placed inside this open bordering. The fillings or à jours of grounded point vary from the little pinhole diapers of the points à brides to the most open and fanciful of à jours. Point de Venise à réseau, the texture of which is very fine, continued to be made throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century, but after 1750 it deteriorated in quality. It was never produced in any considerable quantity, and good examples of it are now scarce. The fine lappet illustrated in Plate 8 is a characteristic example.

With the fall of the Venetian Republic during the Napoleonic era, and the general débâcle that followed, came the end of the great lace industry of Venice. There was, however, a survival of it in a very small way, in the island of Burano, where a coarse and insignificant needle-lace continued to be made until well into the nineteenth century. This lace, which is distinguished by its cloudy, irregular réseau, has stiff, commonplace patterns, with a slight cordonnet. At the modern lace-school, which was founded at Burano by the Queen of Italy about 1872, a variety of laces is made, including reproductions of the best French and Flemish types, as well as of the old Venetian points.

Before turning to the consideration of the bobbin-laces of Italy, something should be said on the vexed question of "Greek" lace. Concerning this, experts of equal authority hold different opinions, but the name has come to be applied to the drawn- and cut-work, often combined with either geometrical needle-points or early bobbin-lace, which was brought from the Ionian Isles during the period of their occupation by the British. It was apparently the custom of the inhabitants to trim the shrouds and wrappings of their dead with this "lace," and quantities of it were obtained from the catacombs—a gruesome idea—and sold to the foreigners when the thrifty and unsentimental natives discovered they were ready and generous buyers. "Greek" lace, however, is quite indistinguishable from that known definitely to be of Italian origin, and as at the date of its production the Ionian Isles belonged to the Venetian Republic, it seems more than merely probable that the lace was imported, there being constant trading communication between Venice and Corfu. It is not impossible that it may, to some extent, have become naturalised in the islands, but there is no evidence of the existence of any considerable lace industry here, while the amount brought away by the English alone was very large.

## CHAPTER III

### ITALY (II)—BOBBIN-LACES

SOME kind of lace made of gold and silver thread with bobbins appears to have been produced in Venice, Milan, Genoa and elsewhere in Italy as early as the end of the fifteenth century, as it is mentioned in accounts and inventories of this period, but it is doubtful whether it was anything beyond a gimp or braid of twisted or plaited threads, akin to the "gold lace" of modern uniforms. There is undoubtedly the often-quoted inventory, the 'instrument of partition' between two Milanese ladies, the sisters Angela and Ippolita Sforza Visconti, dated 1493, in which reference is made to household linen ornamented with cut-work and knotted lace worked "with the needle, bobbins, bones and other different ways." In her "History of Lace" Mrs. Palliser quotes this as given by the Cavaliere Antonio Merli in his pamphlet on Italian laces, "Origine ed uso delle trine a filo de refe," privately printed in 1864, but the importance of the evidence of the Sforza inventory is discounted by the fact that technical terms frequently change their meanings in course of time, so that what was the Italian word for lace-bobbin in 1590 might have been applied to something entirely different a hundred years earlier. With the exception of this rather unreliable piece of documentary evidence there is practically nothing to

show that bobbin-lace was made in Italy prior to the end of the sixteenth century.

The oldest Italian bobbin-lace actually known closely resembled that made with the needle in the same early stage of development. Both were narrow vandyked edgings with a geometrical pattern like the tracery in a Gothic window in each point, but in the bobbin-lace the threads were, of course, twisted or plaited, while there were very few solid portions and the whole effect was lighter and more wiry. This form of bobbin-lace was made at first in Venice as largely as in other Italian cities, but, before long, the headquarters of the industry became established at Genoa and Milan, Venice continuing to remain pre-eminent for needle-point laces.

#### *Genoa.*

This city was famous for its gold and silver laces during the latter half of the sixteenth century, if not earlier. These were made chiefly for export, as there were strictly enforced sumptuary laws in Genoa at that time, and the wearing of such laces was forbidden within the walls of the city, although thread-lace was not prohibited. The oldest local form of the latter is that which has been always called, although, of course, quite erroneously, Genoese point, or in French, point de Gènes frisé. This is a vandyked plaited lace, with a very simple pattern, almost entirely formed of little flat ovals known as wheat-grains or wheat-ears, either placed at intervals along lines, curving or straight, of four-thread plait, or arranged in geometrical devices; the wheat-grains being fastened together by stitches passed, by means of a small hook, through pinholes in the ends of the ovals. This rather poor and attenuated lace continued to be made during the

first two or three decades of the seventeenth century, but by 1630 or thereabouts it was superseded by a different type. In this there were no wheat-grains; the thin connecting plait was replaced by a flat tape with short brides of twisted thread supporting the pattern, and although the vandykes were retained they were broader and blunter. This lace, which was heavier than point frisé, shared the name of collar-lace with its Venetian needle-point contemporary.

Following the collar-lace came the Genoese tape-lace (Plate 9). This is frequently called Genoese guipure, but the term has been so much abused by its indiscriminate application to widely varying classes of lace, both old and modern, that it seems best to avoid its use entirely here. In Genoese tape-lace a convoluted, rather straggling and indeterminate pattern was worked in a flat tape on the pillow, the windings of the design being very closely and carefully followed so as to avoid the least suspicion of puckering at the turns. This completed, brides, sometimes plaited, sometimes twisted, were worked in, and the spaces in the pattern filled with simple *à jours*. This lace was greatly in favour for church purposes; it was made in large quantities, and as it is very strong there is a good deal of it still surviving, a considerable proportion, however, being coarse and unattractive. Lace of exactly the same kind was produced in Flanders contemporaneously, and some of the specimens in the Victoria and Albert are officially catalogued as “? Italian or Flemish,” a fact which should prove comforting to the collector who finds it difficult to identify his examples.

A variety of Genoese tape-lace is known as mezzo-

punto in Italian, point de canaille in French, and in English simply as mixed lace. In this the tape is made on the pillow, but the brides, or the coarse réseau which sometimes takes their place, is worked with the needle. When the tape has been properly made so as to fit the pattern, as in the lace just described, this mezzo-punto is handsome, but it will be found too often that the tape has been woven in a straight piece and then tacked on the lines of the pattern, a labour-saving but exceedingly clumsy method of proceeding, which results in there being ugly folds and puckers at every curve. Much of this mixed lace was produced at Naples as well as at Genoa.

#### *Milan.*

In spite of the Sforza inventory, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, which appears to connect bobbin-lace with Milan as early as 1493, there is nothing definitely known of the lace industry in this city until 1606. In that year Milan lace is an item in the wardrobe accounts of James I of England and his Queen, Anne of Denmark. From this time on it must have been fashionably worn in this country, for in 1616 King James issued an edict prohibiting all his subjects "from using Gold or Silver, either fine or counterfeit, all Embroideries and all lace of Millan and of Millan fashion." The lace banned may have been some variety of the vandyked collar-lace which was made probably in Milan as elsewhere in Italy, or perhaps it was a beautiful but very scarce Milanese lace, of which there is a fine piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This has very boldly drawn scroll patterns, the toilé is closely worked, and there are neither brides nor réseau, the

different sections of the designs being arranged to meet each other as in the case of Venetian gros point.

The lace best known to the collector under the name of Milanese is the only Italian one with a meshed ground, if the Genoese mezzo-punto which has sometimes a réseau be excepted. Milanese grounded lace has a superficial resemblance to mezzo-punto, but is finer, more elaborate in pattern and work and entirely bobbin-made (see Plate 10). The réseau is believed to have been first introduced about the middle of the seventeenth century, and in its early stage the mesh varied, but it eventually settled down into a lozenge-shaped one with four plaited sides, not unlike the mesh of Valenciennes bobbin-lace. But there is this important difference, whereas the tape-pattern of Milanese lace is made on the pillow first and the réseau worked round it on completion, in the French lace pattern and ground are made at the same time. The meshes of the Milanese ground are worked at all angles to suit the curves of the pattern, and if the wrong side is examined, the threads of the réseau will be seen crossing the tape. The designs of old Milanese lace at its best period are sometimes exceedingly complicated. Coats-of-arms and family badges, human figures, lions, eagles, double-headed and otherwise, stags and birds are introduced, the various items being occasionally grouped so as to form a tolerably clearly defined and intelligible whole, but oftener mixed up in what seems a wild and meaningless confusion. Flowers and conventional ornaments in variety are employed to fill up odd corners until the thing is reminiscent of a seventeenth-century stump-work picture with its fantastic medley of kings, queens, mermaids, basilisks,

lions, tigers, unicorns, caterpillars and gigantic strawberries.

Milanese tape-lace touched its highest point about 1700, but its production continued until the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and for some time later at Cantu, near Lake Como, where indeed a lace industry has been carried on until recently, the fabric made, however, having little or no resemblance to the old Milanese type.

The chief laces of Italy have been now described, but the collector must remember that lace was made in almost all parts of the country during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that, naturally, varieties of the leading types came to be evolved locally. Although lacis and cut- and drawn-work were made generally throughout Italy, needle-point lace does not seem to have been worked in the provinces, the peasant laces being bobbin-made, and, as a rule, simple of pattern and thick and heavy of texture. They were used mainly for trimming household linen as they were very strong and durable, and their production continued into the nineteenth century. Mid-Victorian travellers in Italy were able to obtain almost any quantity of these peasant laces for a very moderate "consideration," but now the thick, stoutly-made laces of the old class are scarce, although those of a flimsier and less attractive kind are still made in some towns and villages.

Maltese bobbin-lace may be fittingly noticed in this chapter, as, in its best-known form, it is based on point de Gènes frisé. An earlier variety of Maltese lace had patterns consisting of thin wavy lines, but in 1833 Lady Hamilton Chichester, desirous of improving the art in the island, imported some lace-

workers from Genoa. They introduced the wheat-grain motif of point frisé, and this has been ever since conspicuous in all the patterns, Maltese crosses made of four of the little ovals joined together being especially characteristic.

## CHAPTER IV

### FRANCE (I)—NEEDLE-POINT LACES

IT has been stated in an earlier chapter how drawn-work, cut-work, and punto in aria were brought into France from Italy. Once known, they speedily became fashionable in high quarters, and for many years France, or rather Paris, was Venice's best customer for these dainty and costly products of the needle. It is true that they were copied successfully very soon after their introduction, but, as is so often the case, the imported article was far more prized than that of home origin, even although the two might be exactly equal in quality. It was not the first time, by any means, that Italy had influenced the fashions of France, for vast quantities of silks, brocades, velvets, and gold and silver embroideries had been constantly imported from Venice, Genoa and Milan for years prior to the days of the Bourbon and the Medicis. Catharine de Medici, by the way, was commonly believed to have hired a Florentine poisoner as well as a Venetian ruff-maker, and to have found the art of the former extremely useful in the working out of her subtle political schemes. Skilled Italian craftsmen had been brought to France by Louis XI as early as the middle of the fifteenth century to practise and teach their respective trades, among which poisoning may well have been included,

judging by the reputation of this most Christian king.

In the reign of Henri III the craze for gorgeous and costly clothes had reached an amazing—almost an insane—height; the courtiers of the effeminate king, his “mignons” and “popelirots,” wore not only jewelled necklaces and ear-rings, but the stiffest of stiff corsets to produce the fashionable wasp-waists. The King himself was the most fantastically bedizened of all his court; such soul as he had was absorbed in the niceties of his attire, and to ensure the perfection of the flutings of his vast lace-edged, stiffly-starched ruff, he used the “poking-sticks of steel” with his own royal hands, much to the scandal of his subjects. The ruffs of this period were bordered with the wiry, dentated lace with the geometrical Gothic pattern, of which twenty-five yards were required for the purpose, according to contemporary wardrobe accounts, but by the time the reign of Henri IV had come to its abrupt end, the ruff had been superseded by the graceful falling collar. For this the immediate successor of the early punto in aria, the Venetian needle-point with the broader, blunter vandykes was used. The well-known engravings of Abraham Bosse, especially that of the Lace Shop in the Galerie du Palais, convey a very clear idea of the wide lace collars, deep cuffs, huge shoe-roses—also of lace—and other frills and furbelows worn by gentlemen of fashion during the reign of Louis XIII. His predecessor on the throne had become concerned at the enormous amount of money spent on lace and embroidery by the French aristocracy, and had promulgated sundry and divers edicts which aimed at checking this reckless expenditure on imported luxuries. Louis XIII issued yet more edicts far more drastic than those of Henri IV, but their

increased severity did not impress the modish world in the least and only provoked innumerable skits and squibs and caricatures which greatly amused an entirely unalarmed public which continued to buy its high-priced Venetian points as usual. Some of Abraham Bosse's best-known engravings deal with the possible result of the sumptuary laws. One shows a lady of fashion discarding her fine laces, and with a very ill grace donning a collar of plain linen, while in another is seen a wrathful and disgusted gentleman throwing his beruffled suit to his servant in preparation for dressing himself in a sad suit minus so much as an inch-wide frill. The edicts, however, were not, probably could not be, enforced, and things went on very much as they did before the laws were made. The prodigal expenditure was still unchecked when the young King Louis XIV came to the throne and the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, herself a most extravagant lace-buyer, with truly royal inconsistency, issued yet more edicts. One of these, passed on the eve of the King's marriage in 1661, gave occasion for the celebrated satire in verse, "La Revolte des Passemens," supposed to have been the joint production of a coterie of leaders of fashion whose meeting-place was the Hôtel Rambouillet. In parenthesis, it may be explained that *passemens* or *passement* was the old French word for lace, although by the middle of the seventeenth century *dentelle* was superseding it, and at the present time *passement* is used to indicate the parchment pattern on which the lace is made.

Mrs. Palliser, in her "History of Lace," has given a résumé of "La Revolte des Passemens" which cannot be improved upon, hence it is ventured to quote it in full here, as the skit is of special interest to the collector by reason of the list of laces it contains :

“In consequence of a sumptuary edict against luxury in apparel, Mesdames les Broderies :

“ ‘ Les Poinctes, Dentelles, Passemens  
 Qui, par une vaine despense,  
 Ruinoient aujourd’hui la France ’

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

“ ‘ Encore pour vous, Pointe de Raguse,  
 Il est bon, crainte d’attentat,  
 D’en vouloir perger un estat.  
 Les gens aussi fins que vous estes  
 Ne sont bons que, comme vous faites  
 Pour miner tous les estats  
 Et vous Aurillac ou Venise  
 Si nous plions notre valise ? ’

“ The other laces speak in their turn most despondently, until a ‘ vieille broderie d’or ’ consoling them talks of the vanity of this world, ‘ Who knows it better than I who have dwelt in king’s houses ? ’ One ‘ grande Dentelle d’Angleterre ’ now proposes that they should all retire to a convent. To this the Dentelles de Flandres object ; they would sooner be sewn at once to the bottom of a petticoat.

“ Mesdames les Broderies resign themselves to become ‘ ameublement ’ ; the more devout of the party to appear as ‘ devants d’autel ’ ; those who feel too young to renounce the world and its vanities will seek refuge in the masquerade shops. Dentelle noire d’Angleterre lets herself out cheap to a fowler as a net to catch woodcock, for which she feels ‘ assez propre ’ in her present predicament. The Points all resolve to retire to their own countries, save Aurillac, who fears she may be turned into a strainer ‘ pour

passer les fromages d'Auvergne ' ; a smell insupportable by one who had revelled in civet and orange-flower. All were starting :

“ ‘ Chacun, dissimulant sa rage  
DouceMENT plioit son bagage  
Resolu d'obéir au sort ’

when—

“ ‘ Une pauvre malhereuse  
Qu'on appelle, dit-on La Gueuse ’

arrives in a great rage from a village in the environs of Paris. She is not of high birth but has her feelings all the same. She will never submit. She has no refuge, not even a place in a hospital. Let them follow her advice and 'elle engageoit sa chainette' she will replace them all in their former position. Next morning the Points reassemble, une 'Grande Cravate Fanfaron' exclaims :

“ ‘ Il nous faut venger cet affront,  
Revoltons-nous, noble assemblée.’

“ A council of war ensues :

“ ‘ La dessus, le Poinct d'Alençon  
Ayant bien appris sa leçon  
Fit une fort belle harangue.’

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

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

one and all had figured at some siege or battle.

“ ‘ Qu'avons-nous à redouter ? ’

cries Dentelle d'Angleterre. Not so, thinks Point de Gènes ' qui avoit le corps un peu gros.'

They all swear—

“ ‘ Foy de Passemen,  
Foy de Poincts et de Broderie  
De Guipure et d'Orfeverie,  
De Gueuse de toute façon,'

to declare open war and to banish the Parliament. The Laces all assemble at the fair of St. Germain, there to be reviewed by General Luxe. The muster-roll is called over by Colonel Sotte Depense; Dentelles de Moresse; Escadrons de Neige, Dentelles de Havre, Escrues, Soies Noires, Points d'Espagne, etc., march forth in warlike array to conquer or to die. At the first approach of the artillery they all take to their heels and are condemned by a council of war, the Points to be made into tinder for the use of the King's Mousequetaires, the Laces to be converted into paper, the Dentelles Escrues, Gueuses, Passemens and silk laces to be made into cordage and sent to the galleys, and the gold and silver laces, the original authors of the sedition, to be ' burnt alive.' Finally through the intercession of Love :

“ ‘ Le petit dieu plein de finesse,'

they are pardoned and restored to Court favour.”

The names of the laces that figure in the “ Revolte des Passemens ” are in many instances something of a puzzle. Gueuse was a coarse bobbin-lace familiarly known as “ beggar's lace ” by reason of its poor quality and low price. The name guipure, derived from the French verb *guiper*, to roll, was applied at the time of the satire to a kind of gimp or ornamental trimming made of thin strips of parch-

ment round which silk or metal threads were so closely rolled as to encase it entirely. What point de Raguse was is not known with certainty, but it may have been some variety of cut-work. Aurillac, in Auvergne, was a noted centre for gold and silver guipure made of thin strips of metal wound round a silk core. In Colbert's time the laces made at Aurillac came into the points de France group, of which more will be said later, but the industry died out completely at the end of the eighteenth century.

Sumptuary laws proved hopelessly ineffectual in checking the import of costly lace; they resulted in causing a great deal of smuggling and the destruction by the common executive of some valuable lace, as much as a hundred thousand crowns' worth of point de Venise and Flanders lace being burnt in 1670. Realising the failure of the policy of prohibitive edicts, Colbert, the King's wily minister, changed the plan of campaign and adopted the more rational one of fighting the foreigner with his own weapons. To this end he decided to encourage and improve lace-making in France in every possible way. In pursuance of this very sensible idea Colbert communicated with Monseigneur de Bonzy, Bishop of Beziers, who was then the French Ambassador to the Venetian Republic, and on his advice and with his aid some twenty or thirty skilled lace-workers were sent from Venice to France and settled as teachers of their art at Alençon, a town already famed for its cut-work, and where Colbert's daughter-in-law had a château. A monopoly or "exclusive privilege" for ten years was granted in August, 1665, to a guild or company, and an office and shop were opened in Paris at the Hôtel de Beaufort for the sale of the laces produced. The company

established groups of workers at Sedan, Arras, Le Quesnoy and other towns besides Alençon, and all the laces made in these places and under the control of the company were known *collectively* as points de France. This was their official name and one which has been a stumbling-block to many persons who have failed to realise that there is no *single* variety of lace specially entitled to the name of point de France.

*Alençon.*

The laces first made in Alençon and its neighbourhood under the new regime were exact copies of the Italian types and practically indistinguishable from the Venetian points, although, according to contemporary criticisms, the French laces were thought to be rather less firm in texture and not so purely white as the imported ones. Flat-point was more extensively made in the Alençon district than the raised kinds. The monopoly was not renewed after its expiration in 1675, and from this time an alteration began to take place in the style of the lace. According to Voltaire, Flemish workers were now introduced as teachers, but whether this were so or not, the influence of the bobbin-laces of Flanders became steadily more and more marked. The patterns grew lighter, finer thread was employed, and the brides were placed at closer intervals until a meshed ground, at first large and open, and then small, replaced them. Thus, about 1717, the famous point d'Alençon was evolved, the patterns at first retaining much of the character of the heavy Italian points, but growing gradually lighter and more delicate until by the middle of the century the last trace of Venetian influence had vanished and the designs, dainty and graceful in the

extreme, were purely French. The most noticeable features in point d'Alençon, besides the beauty of the patterns, are the firmness of the texture and the elaboration of the à jours. The strength and solidity of the lace is chiefly due to the stiffness of the cordonnet, which is made of a thread, or, as some say, a horse-hair closely worked over with buttonhole-stitch. The example of point d'Alençon shown in Plate II, Fig. *a*, dates from the early part of the reign of Louis XVI and is entirely characteristic of the period.

The process of making point d'Alençon was complicated and tedious. The parchment on which the pattern was pricked was tacked down on folded linen, and the outlines of the design traced with double threads laid on the parchment and held in place by couching stitches. Next, the réseau was put in, the distinctive Alençon mesh being hexagonal and made of double-twisted threads (see Plate 23, Fig. 3). The method of working this ground was as follows: first a thread was stretched across the space between two sections of the outlined pattern; then a row of open buttonhole-stitches forming loops was worked along this thread, the needle being put twice through each loop instead of once as in ordinary buttonholing. On reaching the end of the line the thread was taken back to the starting-point, the needle being passed twice through each loop on the way, but without the button-hole-hitch. The thread was then pulled tight so as to produce the twisted line at the base of each row of loops. The processes were repeated until the meshed ground was complete, when the solid portions of the pattern were worked in close buttonhole-stitch and the intricate à jours put in. Finally, the stitches attaching the parchment to the linen were

cut, the lace removed, and the short pieces—about ten inches long—in which it was always made, skilfully joined together by a special worker, the seams being practically invisible.

The patterns of point d'Alençon began to show signs of deterioration during the reign of Louis XVI. The tendency towards replacing the beautiful curving designs of the early period with more or less naturalistic flowers which had begun to show itself some years before, increased to a rather unfortunate degree and the patterns lost something of their dignity and grace. The fillings were gradually simplified until they became poor and mean-looking and the whole style of the lace altered for the worse. The Revolution caused its temporary disappearance, but it was revived during the First Empire, although in a debased form. Point d'Alençon in the early nineteenth century had sometimes a deeply scalloped or vandyked edge, sometimes a straight one; the patterns were stiff, pseudo-classical and very uninteresting, while the ground was often "semé de larmes," that is to say, powdered with tiny oval spots, or dotted with leaflets. The texture of this comparatively modern lace is thin and flimsy, contrasted with that of the older point d'Alençon which, together with its sister lace, point d'Argentan, was considered more suitable, by reason of its solidity, for winter than summer wear; they were "dentelles d'hiver" in the eyes of fashionable Frenchwomen.

With the fall of Napoleon point d'Alençon went out of favour and its production almost ceased, but attempts have been made several times during the last hundred years to resuscitate it, and with a certain limited degree of success by the Empress Eugénie. Lace with some of the characteristics of the later

eighteenth-century type is still—or was until recently—made at Alençon.

*Argentan.*

The needle-point lace produced at Argentan under Colbert's scheme was at first of the Venetian type as at Alençon, twenty-five miles away, and at the other centres of the Government-fostered industry. The development of the meshed ground was almost simultaneous at Argentan and Alençon, but there is a marked difference between the réseaux, as may be seen by comparing the enlargements of the meshes reproduced in Plate 23, Figs. 1 and 3. The Argentan mesh is large and hexagonal, and each of the six sides is worked over in buttonhole-stitch, but in some examples, although the large mesh is employed for the main ground, the smaller Alençon réseau is introduced along the edge of the lace. This combination has a very charming effect. At a later period some of the Argentan workers adopted a twisted mesh which could be executed much more quickly than the buttonhole-stitched one, but this departure does not seem to have been general. The patterns of point d'Argentan had a considerable resemblance to those of point d'Alençon, but were bolder and heavier, as befitted their background of large, stiff meshes (see Plate IIB). Point d'Argentan was at the height of its vogue in the early years of the reign of Louis XV, when it was supplied to the French Court in very large quantities from several flourishing establishments, one of which employed as many as 600 hands. It vanished with the Revolution and was not revived until a comparatively recent date, since when reproductions have been made with some measure of success in France and at Burano. But they are not to be com-

pared with the old point d'Argentan, a lace now as scarce as it is charming.

*Argentella.*

One more lace belonging to the points de France group must not be forgotten. This is Argentella; a variant of point d'Alençon, which has a large mesh with a six-sided dot in the centre. This dotted réseau is known as fond de neige, and œil de perdrix, also as réseau rosacé. Some authorities do not consider Argentella differs sufficiently from point d'Alençon to justify its classification as a distinct lace, and are of opinion that it should be called point d'Alençon à réseau rosacé. Mrs. Palliser's notion that it was of Genoese origin is now generally regarded as erroneous.

There were many other point de France centres established under Colbert's ordinance, Sedan, Rheims, Château Thierry, Loudun, Aurillac, Arras, and le Quesnoy among them, but of their products there is very little known. In the seventeenth century Sedan was celebrated for its cut-work, (it had a royal customer in the person of Charles I, in whose wardrobe accounts there are entries of heavy payments for "Sedan cut-work") and according to M. Lefébure ("Embroidery and Lace") it developed into needle-point, first of the Venetian type with brides, and then with a réseau, but other authorities, notably M. Séguin, do not agree with him. Le Quesnoy was the birthplace of Valenciennes bobbin-lace, and at Arras much gold and silver lace was made, but considerable obscurity veils the identity of the fabrics produced at the other centres of the Government-supported industry.

## CHAPTER V

### FRANCE (II)—BOBBIN-LACE

**C**OLBERT'S scheme for the encouragement of the French lace industry included within its scope bobbin- as well as needle-point lace, but as regards the former his well-conceived scheme was less immediately successful, and it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that it began to be seriously developed in France.

#### *Point de Paris.*

The earliest French lace to be made on the pillow is believed to have been point de Paris—all French laces, whether bobbin- or needle-made were given the generic name of point—which was at first produced in the Faubourg S. Antoine. In "Embroidery and Lace," M. Lefébure states that Comte d'Harcourt settled an old nurse of his, one Madame Dumont of Brussels, in this Faubourg, and obtained from the king a licence permitting her to employ bobbin-lace makers at her establishment there. Madame Dumont and her four daughters had at one time nearly 200 local workers in their employment, and for several years they carried on a flourishing industry. So prosperous was it that Madame Dumont was tempted, unfortunately as it turned out, to transfer it to the more spacious quarters of the Hôtel de Chaumont in

the Rue S. Denis. The move proved a mistake ; the manufactory ceased to be profitable, and before long Madame Dumont retired from its management. Mr. Lefébure does not give the date of the beginning of Madame Dumont's venture, but according to other writers on the history of lace-making in France, point de Paris were produced as early as 1635 in the environs, the workers being chiefly Huguenots. But a good many collectors are of opinion that point de Paris is a Mrs. Harris among laces, and never really existed ! There is some evidence, however, that there was actually a bobbin-lace made in the Île de France towards the end of the seventeenth century under the name of point de Paris, and that it was narrow and of poor quality, with crude, insignificant patterns on the six-pointed star réseau or fond chant, which is also known as Paris ground by reason of its connection with the lace in question. All trace of point de Paris disappeared early in the eighteenth century, and although a type of coarse lace is often sold by dealers under this name, it is doubtful whether there is in existence a single piece with an indisputable pedigree.

### *Valenciennes.*

The finest of all French bobbin-laces, the world-famed Valenciennes, was first made at the town which gave it its name, towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV. It originated apparently at Le Quesnoy, a town which was one of the lace centres under Colbert's ordinance of 1665, but where a lace manufacture of some kind had been established prior to this date by a colony of Antwerp workers under the leadership of a Mlle. Badar. There is no definite record of the transfer of the lace industry to Valenciennes ; the

date can be only inferred from the fact that nothing is heard of Le Quesnoy as a lace-producing centre after the death of Louis XIV, while just about the same time Valenciennes comes to the front with lace markedly Flemish in pattern and texture. The most noteworthy characteristics of early Valenciennes lace, a specimen of which is illustrated in Plate 12, Fig. A, are the flowing scrolls and graceful, although purely conventional, flower motives of the design, and the mixed *réseaux*, two, or even three, being introduced into a single example of lace, and these so closely intermingled with the pattern as to produce a rather confused, although far from unpleasing result. Of these various *réseaux*, by far the most effective is the *fond de neige*, *œil de perdrix* or snowflake ground, similar to that of Argentella lace, but, of course, worked with bobbins instead of with the needle, in which each of the irregular, spidery meshes has a dot within it. Shortly after the accession of Louis XV to the throne in 1715, the lace-workers within the town of Valenciennes adopted a new and regular *réseau* with a lozenge-shaped mesh formed of four threads plaited throughout, the threads being reduced to three at a later period. The inventors of this clear, open but rather uninteresting ground called the new style of lace (see Plate 12, Fig. B), *vraie Valenciennes*, dubbing the older kind, with the mixed and fanciful *réseaux*, which continued to be made in the districts round the town, *fausse Valenciennes*. This strange and scarcely justifiable distinction has led, not unnaturally, to some confusion. Both types of lace, *vraie* and *fausse*, so called, were made on the pillow in one piece, that is to say, pattern and ground were worked at the same time with the same threads. The *toilé* is exceptionally close and even in old Valenciennes, and there is no

cordonnet. The extraordinary fineness of the Flemish thread used was mainly, if not entirely, the cause of the beauty of the texture of the lace, but it has been asserted that the peculiar conditions under which vraie Valenciennes was made, namely in damp cellars so dark that the unhappy workers usually went blind before they were thirty, had something to do with it. But this may be regarded as a piece of fiction, probably originating with the town-workers, who also asserted that it was impossible for lace of the best quality to be produced without the walls even if made by the same worker, with the same thread and on the same pillow! Innumerable pins and a great number of small, light wooden bobbins were necessary in making both varieties of Valenciennes, and the lace was worked in sections about eight inches in length, which were joined on completion. Altogether, the process was a very slow one, and this, combined with the costliness of the fine Flemish flax-thread, made Valenciennes lace an exceedingly expensive luxury. It took ten months, working fifteen hours a day, to complete enough lace, three inches wide, for a pair of ruffles which would sell for 4,000 livres. The Valenciennes trimming of one of Madame du Barry's pillow-cases cost 500 francs, and her lappets of the same lace, over 1,000 francs. Yet, strange as it may seem, Valenciennes never ranked among the most aristocratic laces and it was seldom worn in full-dress.

About the middle of the long reign of Louis XV a change occurred in the patterns of *fausse Valenciennes*, and the scrolls and conventional flowers and leaves were partly superseded by designs of natural flowers—tulips, carnations and roses—beautiful enough in themselves, but neither as graceful nor as appropriate as their predecessors. But, although the patterns

may have lost a little of their charm, the quality of the fabric was at its very best about 1740-50, and only slightly less good from that time up to 1780. It shared the fate of the majority of French laces at the Revolution, and, less fortunate than some of its fellows, it was never successfully revived, although as late as 1840, a few, very aged workers were found able to make a head-dress of vraie Valenciennes as a wedding-gift from the city to the Duchesse de Nemours.

The only place in France where modern Valenciennes, the lace with the lozenge réseau framing simple patterns that is so familiar to everyone, is made, is the frontier town of Bailleul, but it has been largely produced since the beginning of the nineteenth century in Belgium, principally in those districts round Ghent and Ypres which were so cruelly laid waste during the Great War.

### *Lille.*

There is not much interest attached to the bobbin-lace of Lille, for it is commonplace and undistinguished. Yet at one time, the late eighteenth century, it was wonderfully popular in England, and such quantities of it were imported that specimens are easily acquired by the collector. The ground of Lille lace is the hexagonal mesh of which an enlargement is shown in Plate 24, Fig. 1, a réseau known as fond clair, or fond simple, four sides of which are formed of two twisted threads; the threads of the remaining two sides being only crossed, not twisted. The edge of Lille lace is invariably almost straight, never markedly waved or scalloped, and the formal patterns are outlined with the thick, flat, shiny thread which English lace-workers call gimp or trolly thread, as the lappet

shown in Plate 13, Fig. b, exemplifies. The réseau is often powdered with little square dots known as points d'esprit. Lille lace survived the Revolution, but by the year 1800 its most distinctive features had disappeared, and the patterns of the lace then being made were more or less in the style of the later Mechlin laces.

### *Arras.*

Arras was early distinguished for its gold lace, one English name for which, orris- or orrice-lace, is said to be a corruption of the name of the town. An item in the accounts for the expenses of the Coronation of George I is 354 yards of Arras lace, which proves that it continued to be made into the eighteenth century. Under Colbert's scheme it is probable that thread-lace of the Flemish type was produced in Arras, but the kind that is best known under this name is strong, rather coarse and much like Lille, except that the straight edge almost invariably characteristic of the latter lace is replaced by a definitely scalloped one. Arras lace continued to be popular during the Empire, and its manufacture was carried on, although on a steadily dwindling scale, until about forty years ago.

### *Chantilly.*

The silk lace to which this town has given its name was first produced in the early years of the eighteenth century, but long before this a school of lace-making had been started in Chantilly by the Duchesse de Longueville. What kind of lace was then made is doubtful, but it is most likely that it was something in the way of Gueuse or point de Paris; at any rate

it is certain that the manufacture of silk bobbin-lace was a later introduction. Chantilly lace has the six-pointed star ground, the fond chant as it came to be called, of the old point de Paris, but often combined with it is the fond simple or fond clair of Lille. This latter réseau is, as a rule, worked into the spaces of the pattern along the edge of the lace. There is a cordonnet made of a thick, untwisted very shiny silk thread. Chantilly was greatly esteemed by French ladies of rank and fashion and is mentioned over and over again in Royal accounts and inventories. Naturally it fell with its patrons, but its manufacture was revived under the First Empire; it again became the mode and remained in favour for many years. Made of black silk it was particularly popular between 1830 and 1840, but by that time the great proportion of lace made in the Chantilly style came from Caen, Bayeux and Le Puy.

### *Blonde*

is another silk lace produced in the three towns mentioned above, and the districts round them. It was first made about 1745, when unbleached China silk was used for it (hence its name), but pure white and black silks replaced that of a creamy tint before long, although the old name was still adhered to. Blonde has some points in common with Chantilly lace, but is easily distinguishable from the last named by its Lille réseau of untwisted silk, finer than that used for the toilé. At first the patterns of Blonde were very light in style, but during the Napoleonic era they underwent a change and became bold and rather heavy. This departure was in all probability the result of the increasing export of black Blonde to Spain, where it was in demand for

mantillas. The later designs are markedly Spanish in style.

### *Dieppe.*

There was a considerable lace industry at Dieppe during the eighteenth century, and several distinct varieties were produced, the best known being point de Dieppe, which had some resemblance to vraie Valenciennes, but was simpler, required fewer bobbins, and was made in a long strip which was wound round the pillow as the work progressed; dentelle à la Vierge, much used for the wonderful caps of the Norman peasant women, and Ave Maria lace. The distinctive features of dentelle à la Vierge are its small stiff patterns outlined with a flat thread and its réseau known as "cinq trous" (see Plate 24, Fig. 6). Ave Maria lace is very narrow, has a plaited Valenciennes ground, a straight edge and very insignificant patterns. It continued to be made up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

### *Bayeux.*

The earliest laces made at Bayeux were of a very light description and included mignonette, a narrow lace with a clear ground, much in request for caps and head-dresses, and point de Marli, a lace with a fine ground, generally powdered with square dots, and a straight edge finished with loops. Sometimes the net was additionally ornamented with sprigs worked with the needle. These laces were much in fashion between 1765 and 1785 and were produced in great quantities not only in Bayeux but in other towns in the neighbourhood. Late in the eighteenth century Blonde was the chief lace made, and soon after the whole industry almost died, but recovered itself in 1827,

when heavy silk laces began to be made for the Spanish market. In comparatively recent times, thread-laces in the style of Mechlin have been the principal manufacture of Bayeux together with a heavy needle-point lace with brides, called point Colbert in honour of the famous minister.

*Le Puy.*

Le Puy-en-Vélay has been for over two centuries the centre of the great lace-making district of the Auvergne. According to M. Lefébure "a light and open guipure" was produced very early in the history of bobbin-lace, but in the seventeenth century the staple manufacture seems to have been a rather coarse and inartistic thread-lace, which was employed to trim household linen. Although the industry was carried on on a large scale throughout a big district it does not appear to have been uniformly prosperous, as there is evidence to show that in the first years of the eighteenth century there were many bitter complaints of bad trade and applications for the remission by the Government of export duty, from the lace-makers, who also asked for grants in aid of the unemployed workers. About 1760 the manufacture of Blonde lace was introduced with the result of a prompt improvement in trade, and from this time onwards the lace industry in Vélay was a flourishing one; a variety of laces—silk, wool and thread, black, white, and coloured—have been produced in the district. Cluny lace, which was recently very popular in England, originated in Le Puy. The name is purely fanciful, having been suggested by that of the well-known museum in Paris.

As in Italy, the art of lace-making was widespread in France, and as an inevitable consequence there are

many laces which although bearing some resemblance to one or other of the distinct and well-known fabrics, differ in detail. These "odd" laces must always present a troublesome problem to the collector, although, fortunately for him perhaps, they were never largely exported.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LOW COUNTRIES—BELGIUM, FLANDERS, HOLLAND

**I**N an earlier chapter allusion has been made to the rival claims of Italy and Flanders to the invention of the art of bobbin-lace making. Italy's case has been stated already; Flanders bases hers chiefly on the existence of the altar-piece in the Church of S. Gomar at Lierre, attributed to Quentin Matsys (1460-1529), in which is represented a girl making lace on a pillow which she holds on her knees. This is said to have been painted in 1495, and on the face of it the picture seems to provide a strong piece of evidence in support of the Flemish claim. But many possessing an expert knowledge of the Old Masters consider the attribution entirely wrong, and assign the work to Jean Matsys, son of Quentin, who painted considerably later than 1495, but very much in the style of his father. Then there is an engraving by Martin de Vos forming one of a series representing the "Seven Ages of Life," published between 1580 and 1585, in which a young woman is depicted working with bobbins on a pillow. Unfortunately for the Flemish case, however, she is not making true lace, but something in the way of wide gimp or braid, and here we get another instance of the ever-recurring confusion between "lace—a braid," and "lace—a slender open-work fabric." It might also be said, if anything more

were necessary, that Martin de Vos worked for many years in Italy and that all his engravings show signs of the influence of his sojourn in that country. Further evidence against the Flemish claim to priority of invention is to be found in the facts that lace does not appear in Flemish portraits until the extreme end of the sixteenth century, and that no pattern-books for lace were published in Flanders before the seventeenth century.

It is indisputable that, reversing the order of development as it occurred in Italy, lace made with bobbins on the pillow preceded needle-point in the Netherlands. Cut-work was produced in Flanders as early as the time of Queen Elizabeth, who was a regular buyer of it. According to her Great Wardrobe Accounts it was less expensive than that imported from Italy, a yard of "double Flanders cut-work" costing but £1 3s. 4d., against £2 15s. 4d. for the same quantity of "double Italian cut-work," which seems to have been held in higher esteem. From the cut-work, Flemish workers seem to have passed directly to a bobbin-lace in which a flat tape formed an indeterminate floral pattern arranged in broad scallops, brides being placed only where absolutely essential for support. From this point onwards the development of Flemish lace followed the same lines as that of Italy; the scallops disappeared, the tape pattern assumed a bold and flowing Renaissance style and the general resemblance to the Italian bobbin-lace became so close that, as has been said already, it is practically impossible to distinguish between the two, although there are some collectors who consider that the Flemish fabric is to be identified by its finer thread and looser toilé. A scarce variety of Flanders lace made in the first years of the eighteenth century is known as point de

Flandres à brides picotées. In this the segments of a rather confused design are worked separately, and joined on the pillow by bobbin-made brides with many picots. The à jours are simply the "cinq trous" réseau worked loosely.

*Brussels.*

Tape-lace with brides was made in Brussels before 1650, but shortly after this date a meshed ground was adopted, which was worked round the pattern after its completion. One of the special characteristics by which old Brussels bobbin-lace may be quickly and surely identified is this réseau which has two of its six sides made of four threads plaited four times, and the other four of two threads twisted once as shown in Plate 24, Fig 5. Another distinctive feature is the line of open stitches—a row of tiny holes—which outlines the pattern and takes the place of a cordonnet, while a third is the frequent use of two toilés, one as close and even as cambric, the other open and resembling the six-pointed star ground or fondchant on a small scale. (See Plate 23, Fig 6.) Brussels bobbin-lace seems to have been made with these peculiarities almost from the date of the first employment of the meshed ground.

The thread used for the old Brussels laces, and, indeed, for all those made in the Netherlands, was of the finest possible quality. The flax grown in Brabant was always used for it, and according to tradition it was spun in dark, damp cellars—as vrai Valenciennes lace was said to have been made—the moist air of which, combined with the absence of light, rendered the texture soft yet strong. But it is much more reasonable to suppose that the super-excellent quality of the Brussels thread was due rather to the flax itself combined with the

skill of the spinners than to any special conditions, unwholesome or otherwise, under which it was produced.

The most beautiful of all the laces of Brussels is point d'Angleterre which, in spite of its name, is neither point nor English. It must be admitted, however, that there are two opinions as to the nationality of the lace, and that each has its zealous supporters, although those who would claim it for England are in the minority. The majority assert that its misleading name was given to it by the lace-dealers and their allies, the smugglers of the end of the seventeenth century, under the following circumstances. In 1662 the English Parliament passed a law, similar to one already existing in France, forbidding the import of Flemish lace of all kinds. The lace-dealers had no mind to allow their exceedingly profitable business—for lace was much worn at the time—to be ruined by any mere Act of Parliament, so they bought the Brussels lace as usual, had it brought over by the "free-traders," and put on the market in England as of English manufacture, or re-smuggled to France as point d'Angleterre. The latter name came in course of time to be that by which the lace was generally known, although, rather curiously, it is the one now applied in France to *all* Brussels laces indiscriminately. The case for the Brussels origin of point d'Angleterre is supported by a memorandum from the Venetian Ambassador to England stating that Venetian point is no longer in fashion, but "that called English point (punto d'Inghilterra) which you know is not made here but in Flanders, and only bears the name of English lace to distinguish it from the others."

Those who claim this bobbin-lace as a native of England aver that it was made in Devonshire under

the instruction of Flemish refugees who, flying from the persecutions in the Netherlands, landed on the East Coast of England, and made their way to the south-west. A very fine bobbin-lace was undoubtedly produced in Devon at the end of the seventeenth century and a little later, and this had features in common with point d'Angleterre, but judging from the specimens that have survived to the present time, the patterns were much inferior to those of point d'Angleterre. At any rate, for the purposes of this book, point d'Angleterre will be regarded as a Brussels lace of unblemished pedigree and dealt with accordingly. The designs are in some degree not unlike those of *fausse Valenciennes* when naturalistic flowers were beginning to be introduced in combination with the Renaissance scrolls, but the resemblance is confined to the patterns; the method of working is entirely different and point d'Angleterre has certain distinguishing points which render it easy to identify. One of these distinctive marks is the raised rib of plaited threads which outlines the leaves and their veinings, and in some portions of the pattern is substituted for the row of open stitches with which the greater part of the *toilé* is edged, as in the later Brussels laces. The details of the pattern are made separately on the pillow, and the *réseau* put in by hooking threads into the edge of the *toilé* and working the meshes round the pattern. Sometimes when the space to be filled with the ground is very small, the threads are carried across the back of the *toilé*, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Often two different *réseaux* are seen side by side in point d'Angleterre, the typical Brussels ground as shown in Plate 24, Fig. 5, and the *fond de neige* of *fausse Valenciennes*, but in many examples the former is alone employed.

In a very lovely and scarce variety, point d'Angleterre à brides, one or both of the réseaux are introduced in conjunction with brides picotées. In this lace the à jours are occasionally made with the needle.

Point d'Angleterre lappets were extremely fashionable for both English and French Court wear, and very effective are their graceful sweeping patterns which are carried right up to the edge and form a series of irregular curves from end to end of the lappet (see Plate 14). That enormous sums were spent on point d'Angleterre by the ladies of the Court of Louis XV is proved by the accounts and inventories from which Mrs. Palliser gives such interesting extracts in her "History of Lace." Madame du Barry paid 7,000 livres on a set composed of two lappets, a border and cap-crown, cuffs of six tiers (frills), an ell and a half of ribbon made specially and half an ell for a jabot, all the lace being superfine point d'Angleterre. The same lady spent 2,342 livres on a peignoir, 8,823 livres on a "toilette d'Angleterre complet," and many smaller sums on other items of dress. And not only on wearing apparel was this costly lace used in those days of reckless extravagance and luxury; the Duchesse de Bourbon and the Duchesse de Guynes had couvre-pieds bordered with point d'Angleterre; Madame du Barry trimmed her pin-cushions as well as her caps with it, and it was actually used, and not infrequently by the smart ladies of the day, to border their bed-hangings. It was from the first a lace beloved of Royalty, and as late as 1800 the Empress Josephine wore a gown "trimmed with magnificent point d'Angleterre" at the wedding of Mademoiselle Permon to the Duc d'Abrantes. The actual manufacture of the lace, however, had ceased long before that date.

Brussels patterns of small sprigs or sprays worked

on the pillow began to be applied to a net ground, also bobbin-made towards the end of the eighteenth century, this type of lace being called *point plat appliqué*. The ground was worked in narrow strips which, when finished, were joined together with an almost invisible stitch called *point de raccroc* in French, and *fine-drawing* in English. This bobbin-made net ground was expensive to produce, and it is therefore not surprising although regrettable that it was abandoned for machine-woven net directly that was available, which was in the second decade of the nineteenth century. The piece of Brussels lace illustrated in Plate 15A has the hand-made or "vrai" *réseau*.

A modern Brussels bobbin-lace with brides has been popular of late years under the name of *Duchesse*. It resembles Honiton tape-lace, but as a rule its patterns are superior to those of the Devonshire lace.

In Brussels the only needle-point lace of the Netherlands originated, and this was not made until 1720, by which date the bobbin-laces of Belgium and Flanders had been long famous. Early Brussels needle-point, now scarce, is not altogether unlike Alençon, but the *toilé* is less close, the *cordonné* is not so firm, and the ground is formed of a simple looped mesh. At first the lace was worked entirely with the needle, but later in the eighteenth century a bobbin-made *réseau* was fitted round the needle-point pattern, although a limited quantity of lace continued to be made in the older and more expensive way. The manufacture of a piece of Brussels needle-point was never the work of a single pair of hands. According to Mrs. Palliser at least five persons were employed in its production, viz. : the *drocheleuse* for the *réseau* ; the *dentellière* for the footing ; the *pointeuse* for the pattern ; the *fonneuse* for the *à jours*, and the *attach-*

euse for joining the sections of lace. Two more workers are included in Mrs. Palliser's list, the plateuse who made the plat sprigs, and the appliqueuse who sewed the sprigs on the ground, but these would not be required in the making of true point à l'aiguille. When machine-net was invented the needle-point patterns—generally rather small and meagre ones of flowers and foliage—were applied to it, as in the case of the bobbin-made sprigs, and outlines with a rather heavier cordonnet than heretofore. Brussels appliqué with needle-point sprigs, as well as that in which the pattern is bobbin-made, is still produced to a limited extent, but it has been almost entirely superseded of late years by the lace called point à l'aiguille gazé or point de gaze, which first came into fashion in the 'sixties of last century, and has retained its popularity ever since. Point de gaze is an attractive lace, pretty in detail and effective as a whole, although it is wanting in firmness of texture and lacks something of the wear-resisting qualities of the older Brussels laces.

### *Binche.*

There is a tradition that bobbin-lace making was brought to Binche in the fifteenth century by women who came from Ghent in the train of Mary of Burgundy, the daughter of Charles the Bold, but this does not seem to have any foundation in fact, and nothing is actually known of a lace industry at Binche before the end of the seventeenth century. Binche lace strongly resembles fausse Valenciennes in its earliest phase, both as to texture and style of pattern; the réseau varies, but fond de neige and a very light spidery mesh are often introduced, and there is either no cordonnet at all or merely a single fine thread as an outlining to the pattern. The oldest existing and most

distinctly characteristic Binche lace is so fine and close in texture that its pattern is scarcely visible; seen at a little distance it has almost the appearance of a strip of cambric, and it must be carefully examined before the beauty of the fabric and the grace of the design can be fully realised. The moderately fine type of Binche bobbin-lace, such as is the subject of Plate 16, Fig. A, is much more effective and nearly as exquisite in quality. Binche was very fashionable in select Parisian circles during the middle years of the eighteenth century. A pair of cuffs of dentelle de Binche and two fichus trimmed with it are noted in the inventory of the Duchesse de Modène, the daughter of the Regent, in 1761, while in that of Mlle. Charollais, three years earlier, mention is made of a couvre-pieds of the same lace. Some of the later Binche laces show a deterioration in the patterns which show a tendency to become confused and indefinite; they are also coarser in texture. The production of true dentelle de Binche ceased altogether at the end of the eighteenth century, but in comparatively recent times point plat sprigs in the style of Brussels lace have been made in the town and district and sent to Paris where they are applied to machine-woven net.

### *Mechlin.*

The oldest Mechlin lace that can be clearly distinguished from others of Flemish origin may be assigned to about 1720. Prior to that date the name was applied commercially both in France and England to almost all kinds of Flemish laces quite indiscriminately. True Mechlin lace was made in one piece—toilé and réseau at the same time—on the pillow, and its distinctive mesh is hexagonal and formed of two threads

twisted once on four sides, and four threads plaited three times on two sides (see Plate 24, Fig. 4). But before this mesh was finally adopted, various other grounds were tried experimentally, the pretty *fond de neige* being one of those frequently met with, sometimes alone, sometimes combined with other *réseaux*. A flat silky thread outlines every portion of the patterns which in the older laces are Renaissance in style, and have noticeably delicate and varied *à jours*. A specimen of early Mechlin is shown in Plate 13, Fig. A. Widely different are the patterns of the later eighteenth-century Mechlin laces. In these floral ornaments, generally tiny roses or small sprays of unidentifiable blossoms, are placed in a row close to the slightly scalloped or straight edge, the wide expanse of hexagonal mesh being relieved by a powdering of spots, quatrefoils or miniature leaflets. The flowers bordering this type of lace being set as closely together as possible, and repeated without the slightest variation (see Plate 15, Fig. B), produce an exceedingly monotonous effect, but the laces of this period—1770 to 1790—are fully equal in quality of texture to the earlier ones. Mechlin lace of the last half of the eighteenth century was an ideal trimming by reason of its softness for the picturesque *fichus*, the big mob caps and voluminous *cravats* of the period. It was imported very largely into England, and had the doubtful honour of being the favourite lace of Queen Charlotte, whose taste in matters concerning dress was not, as a rule, unimpeachable. Mechlin continued to be made during the First Empire (Napoleon himself is said to have had a particular fancy for it), but its patterns became poor and trivial, the texture deteriorated and with the fall of the Empire its manufacture came to an end.

*Antwerp.*

Lace was made at Antwerp early in the seventeenth century, but of what class is uncertain. Savary in his "Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce" states that a tape-lace with brides was exported from Antwerp to the Spanish-Indies, but this trade must have ceased at an early date, for the solitary lace with which the name of the city can be definitely connected is the well-known bobbin-made potten-kant or pot-lace, which can be traced back to the middle of the seventeenth century. A portrait in the Plantin Museum at Antwerp, of Madame Goos, which was painted between 1665 and 1670, shows that lady wearing this lace with its curious pattern of two-handled pots with flowers or foliage. This design is said to have originated in a representation of the Virgin Mary and the Annunciation Lily which became gradually altered and debased until only the pot or jar—often scarcely recognisable as such—and something in the way of a flower or leaf form, remain. (See Plate 17, Fig. A.) But this is merely a legend; there is no lace in existence which substantiates the story in the smallest degree, nor any definite record of there ever having been one. Potten-kant is made on the pillow in one piece, and the ground is usually of the six-pointed star mesh, although occasionally other grounds, generally of an open, rather coarse type, replace the fond chant. The pattern is outlined with a thick, flat, shiny thread, the toilé is thin and loose, and in some of the better and finer lace the spaces in the pattern are filled with à jours which resemble the snowflake ground of fausse Valenciennes worked on a coarser scale. Even in its finest quality, however, potten-kant was a stout and reliable rather than a dainty lace. It was made extensively in the Béguin ages, and was much used

for trimming the large caps worn by the women of Antwerp and its vicinity to whom, no doubt, its strength and durability appealed.

On the same plate, 17C, is shown a specimen of a rather coarse type of peasant lace, which is usually vaguely designated as "Flemish." It will be noted that it is of the *fausse Valenciennes* style, and has the "cinq trous" ground.

### *Holland.*

It seems rather unaccountable that Holland, a country immediately adjoining Flanders, should have lagged so far behind her neighbour in establishing a lace industry. Not until the middle of the seventeenth century is there any trustworthy record of lace having been made in Holland, although there is a piece of scalloped lace in the Victoria and Albert Museum which is catalogued as "Dutch point" of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, but this attribution must be regarded with some doubt. In 1667 or 1668 bobbin-lace certainly began to be made to some extent in Holland, and from this date the Dutch, who had hitherto worn but little lace, developed a great liking for it, and it is conspicuously in evidence in contemporary portraits. From the first, Dutch lace had a well-marked character of its own; it was no slavish copy of that of any other country, but was remarkable not only for the unusual solidity of its texture, but for the originality of its patterns, simple though they were. The most typical of the early Dutch laces has a peculiarly distinctive design made up of individual scroll forms arranged closely together so as to form an almost solid oval of irregular outline, a series of such ovals being worked along the lace and connected by a pillow-made ground mesh, often of the

“cinq-trous” mesh as in the example shown. Lace of this particular pattern is the one which, above all others, dealers know as “Dutch” lace (see Plate 17, Fig. B). The design varies occasionally, but its salient features remain unaltered, and as the lace is not beautiful by any means, it is difficult to account for its long-continued popularity. Probably, however, its wear-resisting qualities and the severe simplicity of its style were specially attractive to the thrifty, sober-minded Dutch people. Some years after bobbin-lace was first made in Holland, the country was invaded by Huguenot refugees; many of these settled at Amsterdam, and there established a lace-industry, the lace there produced being of the *fausse Valenciennes* type, for which the fine Haarlem flax thread was particularly suitable. A certain quantity of these fine laces were exported to England and Germany until the passing of the prohibition laws, but the trade was never carried on on a large scale as the Dutch required most of the lace for their own use, and the Amsterdam lace manufactory does not seem to have had a long life.

During the eighteenth century drawn-thread work on a muslin or cambric foundation was produced in Holland to some extent. It resembled the Danish Tönder lace (see Chapter VII), but was not so elaborate in pattern or so delicate in texture.

## CHAPTER VII

### GERMANY AND NORTHERN EUROPE

#### *Germany.*

**T**HE immediate forerunners of true needle-point lace, lacis, drawn-work and cut-work, were practised and brought to great perfection in Germany at an early date. In the exhaustive list of pattern-books given in Mrs. Palliser's "History of Lace," many German ones are included, but the majority do not appear to contain any patterns other than those for embroidery, pure and simple. The first German one in which anything akin to lace is definitely mentioned, is the "New Model Buch" of G. Strauben, published at St. Gall in 1593. This is really a reprint of the third book of a famous collection of patterns by Vicellio, of Venice, and contains a number of fine designs for cut-work (*ausgeschitnen Arbeit*). This book is in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum. An earlier volume, however, which is printed in German, but published at Zurich, is that of Froschower, which has a cut on the title-page representing women working at lace-pillows. There are patterns for bobbin-lace included in this book, the age of which may be arrived at, in spite of the lack of a printed date, from a statement by the author that the art of lace-making was introduced into Germany from Italy in 1536, twenty-five years prior to the date

at which he was writing, which makes it obvious that his work must have been published about 1561. In this same year, according to an apparently well-founded story, the art of bobbin-lace-making was brought into the Saxon Hartz Mountains by one Barbara Etterlein, of Nüremburg. She had learnt it from Brabant refugees in the town, and when, on her marriage to a miner called Uttmann, of Annaberg, she settled in the latter place, she taught the work to the women and girls there, and eventually succeeded in establishing a regular industry. From Annaberg, it is said, bobbin lace-making spread over Germany, but it must be pointed out that this does not accord with Froschower's statement quoted above, that bobbin-lace was introduced from Italy into Germany in 1536. What Barbara Uttmann, in all probability, actually did, was to introduce lace-making in the Flemish style into this particular district and to establish it on a business footing. This she seems to have done successfully, for a very large number of persons were at one time employed in lace-making in the Erzgebirge. No doubt the fabric produced under the Uttmann tuition was what is now known as Nüremberg lace, which resembles that of Antwerp, and is much used for peasant's caps. The making of bobbin-lace in the Erzgebirge continued up to recent years, a variety of kinds being produced, including bobbin-laces made of white, unbleached and coloured threads, a black silk lace in the style of Chantilly, and some simple needle-points; but few of them are at all remarkable for quality of texture or beauty of design.

In travel-books and memoirs of the eighteenth century mention is not infrequently made of "Dresden lace." This was not true lace, but very fine drawn-

work on muslin. It was greatly admired in England during the middle years of the century, and both the Anti-Gallican Society and the Edinburgh Society offered prizes for the best imitations of "Dresden point." This so-called lace was very fashionable for ruffles, caps, and the aprons then worn by ladies at all times, save when full-dress was essential. Readers will recall the famous incident at the Bath Pump Room, when Beau Nash stripped the Duchess of Queensbury of the apron she was wearing contrary to the autocrat's regulations, and "threw it at one of the hinder benches among the ladies' women," remarking that "none but Abigails wore white aprons." Mrs. Palliser quotes this story from Goldsmith's *Life of Richard Nash*, with the additional statement that "the apron was of costliest point and cost 200 guineas," but this is not in the original text.

The laces made in Saxony during the eighteenth century were mainly of the torchon type, but there was also produced a coarse, strong tape-lace, called sometimes "eternelle."

When the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685, the Huguenots flying from France were welcomed in some, but not in all, the German cities. The Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William, was among those who received the refugees hospitably and encouraged them to settle in Berlin. Their number included many skilled lace-workers, and the Elector was sufficiently shrewd to perceive the advantages that might accrue to the city through the new-comers. His foresight brought about its due reward, for within a few years there were no less than 400 lace factories flourishing in Berlin. The Elector of Brandenburg's example was followed by the Landgraf of Hesse, who encouraged and granted privileges to the French

Protestants who established lace factories in various towns in the principality. It is understood that the laces made at all these Franco-German centres were of the Alençon type, but no definite trace of them remains, and German lace has long ceased to be of any special interest or importance.

*Denmark.*

Lace-making has never been practised in Denmark on anything approaching a large scale, but at Schleswig some kind of a regular industry appears to have been established in the seventeenth century when laces of the Flemish type were made. At least so the story goes, but the lace on the shirts of Christian IV, preserved in the Museum at Rosenberg Castle, which is officially described as "Schleswig-lace," has nothing definitely in common with any distinctive kind of Flemish lace, having very broad, shallow scallops, and a confused vermicular pattern.

In 1647 lace-makers were brought from Westphalia to Tönder, in Schleswig, in order to improve the quality of the Danish fabric; again, in 1712, Brabant workers were imported for the same purpose, and under these teachers, bobbin-lace, in the style of Mechlin, seems to have been made. The industry was carried on until the early years of the nineteenth century, after which period it gradually dwindled away, although in 1840 there were still traces of it in existence. The later laces produced in Schleswig were mainly of the Lille type.

The "lace" for which Denmark is justly celebrated is the beautiful muslin-work which was produced during the greater part of the seventeenth century, and the whole of the eighteenth, chiefly at Tönder, but in other parts of the country as well. Similar "lace"

has been made in Saxony and Holland, and in recent times in the Philippines and South America, but that of Denmark is far finer and more intricate than any other. Its patterns are usually Renaissance in style, with graceful scrolls and bold conventional flowers arranged in a continuous waving design, and outlined with chain-stitching. The ground is a close *réseau*, formed by drawing out threads each way of the muslin and whipping over those remaining, and the spaces in the pattern are filled in partly with tiny diapers worked in satin-stitch, partly with the most delicate and elaborate of *à jours*. Sometimes the most important part of the design is left in the plain muslin, but as a rule it is filled in with darning-stitch or satin-stitch worked in a series of rows. The edge has broad scallops, which are cut into lesser scallops, and these are finished with very closely worked button-hole stitch. A characteristic piece of Tönderwork, as this "lace" is generally called, is given in Plate 16, Fig. *b*.

#### *Sweden.*

Very little is known of the history of lace-making in Sweden. Gold lace of some kind, probably a loosely woven gimp or braid, was made as early as the sixteenth century, and inventories—those mines of information for collectors—show that at about the same time cut-work began to be extensively used for trimming household linen. Indeed, this art has never ceased to be practised, and the writer possesses some long strips of linen (it is not clear what purpose they were meant to serve) ornamented with bands of drawn and cut-work, in old patterns, which are embroidered with early nineteenth-century dates in the neatest of cross-stitch figures. The strips are

finished at one end with a deep, plaited fringe formed of threads frayed out of the linen. Work of this kind is still done in Sweden, but there is not much, if any, regular trade in it.

A coarse, loosely made bobbin-lace of the torchon type has been produced at Wadstena up to a recent date, and in Dalecarlia there is still made a strong lace with simple, formal patterns, which have not altered at all for the last couple of hundred years. This lace is locally much in request for cap trimmings.

*Russia.*

The first lace factory in Russia was founded at Novgorod by Peter the Great on his return from Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Silk bobbin-lace was made there, but its manufacture lasted but a short time, and no really fine lace has since been produced in Russia.

During the last two centuries, however, a variety of coarse bobbin-laces have been made by the peasants, especially in Eastern Russia, and although very loose in texture and of simple pattern they have often a charm of their own. One of the most distinctive of the laces has broad vandykes or scallops, and a vermiculated pattern formed of tape worked on the pillow, the spaces, which are few, being filled with a coarse, irregular réseau. In the Vologda district torchon lace is made, and both this and the tape-lace just described often have red or blue threads running through the pattern. All such laces are extensively used in Russia for trimming house-linen, although they seem somewhat too coarse and loosely made to be exactly ideal for the purpose.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

#### *Spain.*

**S**PAIN has never had any serious claim to a place among the chief lace-producing countries so far as thread-lace is concerned, but, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, it has had some celebrity for its gold and silver lace, that point d'Espagne so fashionable in France during the later years of the reign of Louis XIII and the earlier ones of that of his successor. Not that all the gold and silver lace known by this name was of Spanish origin ; much was imported from Italy, and some was made in France itself, but the commercial name for all was the same—point d'Espagne. Spain was her own best customer for these metallic laces, as a matter of fact ; they strongly appealed to the Spanish taste for the gorgeous, and were used in profusion for trimming not only clothes, furniture, coaches, beds and banners, but actually for the ornamentation of their sheets and their coffins !

It is said that bobbin-lace-making was learnt by the Spaniards from the Flemings during the occupation of the Netherlands by the former. This is rather open to doubt, but the gold and silver laces are bobbin-made. They are very loosely worked, and their patterns are much more straggling and confused than

those of the Italian laces of the same period, but they are handsome, and are sometimes rendered still more showy by the addition of embroidery in silks of brilliant colours. Such super-ornamented laces, however, are scarce. In 1623, so extravagant were his subjects in the matter of dress, that Philip III thought it advisable to follow the example of some of his royal contemporaries, and to issue edicts prohibiting the use of gold and silver lace, in the vain hope of checking his subjects' reckless expenditure on finery. Men were to wear only plain rabatos or falling collars without lace or cut-work ; for women equally severe ruffs and cuffs were ordained, even the very minor luxury of starch being proscribed. The ban was temporarily suspended during the visit of Prince Charles of England and the Duke of Buckingham, when the "Spanish match" was in contemplation. Indeed, the Queen of Spain herself, hearing the Prince was short of clothes by reason of some lost luggage, sent him "for his convenience" as much richly laced linen as filled ten trunks.

Gold and silver lace continued to be made in Spain, chiefly at Barcelona, Valencia and Seville, up to the end of the eighteenth century, and at the last-named town until still later.

Another lace to which the name of Spanish point is applied, is one which is indistinguishable from the raised needle-points of Venice. It is certain that much Italian lace was imported into Spain for ecclesiastical purposes, and that, during the invasion of the country by Napoleon's troops, a considerable quantity came into their possession, and was sent to France as "Spanish lace." Again, at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1830, more of this church lace fell into secular hands, and finally came into the market as

“Spanish point.” No doubt the imported Italian laces were copied to some small extent in the convents, and there are specimens in existence which differ sufficiently—mainly in the pattern—from those whose Venetian origin is certain, to render it probable that they were actually made in Spain. But these are exceptional; the bulk of the raised “Spanish point,” so called, is undoubtedly Italian. The genuine Spanish product, inspired by the Venetian gros point, has an incoherent and crowded design, in which queer caterpillar-like objects, in high relief, are conspicuous, but although it is not to be compared with its Italian prototype for beauty, it is as interesting as it is rare.

Thread bobbin-laces were imported into Spain, chiefly from Flanders, although some came from France. An attempt was made to reduce these imports in 1667 by increasing the duty from 25 reales per lb. to 250 reales, with the inevitable result of an immediate development of a brisk and profitable smuggling trade, the lace being got into the country in many ingenious ways, much of it being landed at Cadiz in bales as mosquito-netting! In the eighteenth century thread-laces were made at Barcelona and elsewhere. They had uninteresting meagre patterns, a straight edge, and a peculiar *réseau* known as Spanish mesh, which is four-sided and has a sort of dot with a pin-hole in it at each crossing-point. Silk laces were also made in the same style, but the heavy, bold-patterned “Spanish” laces of black and white silk, so much used for mantillas, were mostly imported from Chantilly and Bayeux, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when their manufacture was commenced in Catalonia and in other parts of Spain. At that period a Spanish lady usually wore a dress of bright-coloured satin, thick and rich of texture, the full skirt of which was

trimmed with two deep flounces of black silk lace. Her mantilla was ordinarily of black silk, but when she attended a bull-fight, during the Easter celebrations and on other festive occasions, it was of white lace. According to Ford's "Handbook to Spain," a Spanish woman's mantilla is specially protected by law, and may not be seized for debt.

The fine-meshed ground of the Spanish-made silk laces is less durable than that of the laces of the same style produced in France specially for the Spanish market.

### *Portugal.*

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, and probably earlier, needle-point lace was made in Portugal, but to an inconsiderable extent and mainly by private workers, and in the convents, there being no organised industry. What were chiefly produced seem to have been copies of Venetian points, flat and raised, but in Mrs. Hungerford Pollen's "Seven Centuries of Lace" a curious silk needle-lace is illustrated as "probably Portuguese." The pattern of this lace is a stiff one of formal sprigs and queer archaic birds; it has a well-marked cordonnet formed of a thick thread covered with buttonhole-stitch and a ground of hexagonal but rather irregular meshes.

The drastic sumptuary laws enacted in Portugal in 1749 seem to have temporarily extinguished lace-making, such as it was, throughout the country, but after the great earthquake of six years later, the Marquis de Pombal was permitted to start a bobbin-lace manufactory to give employment to those who had suffered through the disaster. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, in his "Memoirs," mentions a visit to this establishment where the laces made were, in all

probability, thread-laces of simple pattern which, together with silk laces in the style of French blonde, and an imitation of them in darning on machine-made net, are produced in various parts of Portugal up to this day.

At one time Lisbon laces were made largely for the South American market, quantities being regularly exported from Cadiz, but now the principal lace-producing district is north of Lisbon, at Peniche, in Estremadura, where the majority of the women work at the pillow from a very early age.

During the early part of the nineteenth century the Portuguese nuns made lace of thread—so called—spun from the fibre of the aloe. Such lace is light and open and pretty enough in its way. But the aloe-thread, although tough and wiry, has one great drawback—the lace made from it cannot be washed satisfactorily. Aloe-fibre lace is still, or was until quite recently, made in the Philippine Islands.

## CHAPTER IX

### ENGLAND AND IRELAND

*England : Needle-point.*

**D**URING the last half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, drawn-and-cut-work—usually classed together under the latter name—were as much in favour in England as in Italy, France, and other Continental countries. It was used for the adornment of all kinds of wearing apparel, from the shirts and smocks of the laity to the surplices of the clergy, and it was applied lavishly to household linen. In “Point and Pillow Lace,” by A.M.S., an interesting description is given of some Elizabethan bed-linen at Shotton in Warwickshire, which belongs to descendants of the family of Hathaway, of which Shakespeare’s wife was a member. The narrow breadths of linen that form the sheet are joined with a band of cut-work (seaming-lace) about an inch and a half wide ; the bolster-case has a similar but broader one. These pieces are presumably of English make, but it is certain that nine-tenths of the immense quantity of cut-work referred to in the wardrobe accounts, inventories, and lists of gifts to the reigning sovereign, was imported, as was the greater part of the “bone-lace, purles, and passaments” which are named over and over again in these old documents. Purles, by the way, was the name

originally used for an edging of needle-point loops (syn. picots), but it seems to have come to be applied to needle-laces generally, whence, possibly, the Scottish term for lace purlin, or pearlin, is derived.

Mary I made an attempt to curb her subjects' over-large expenditure on foreign laces by the time-honoured method of passing sumptuary laws. These prohibited the wearing of "ruffles made or wrought out of England, commonly called cut-work," by anyone under the degree of a baron, while "wreath-lace or passement lace of gold or silver, partlets or linen trimmed with purles of gold or silver, or white workes alias cut-workes, made beyond the sea," were strictly forbidden to any lady whose rank was below that of a knight's wife. Edicts of this kind continued to be issued periodically throughout the reigns of Queen Mary and her three successors on the English throne, but as in France, those who made the laws did not practise what they preached. Charles II, for example, who in 1661 issued a proclamation reaffirming the edict of his father prohibiting the import of "purles, cut-workes and bone-laces," himself bought, in that very same year, fourteen yards of Flanders lace at eighteen shillings a yard. Moreover, he granted to one John Eaton, a licence to import such quantities of lace "made beyond the seas as may be for the wear of the Queen, our dear Mother the Queen, our dear brother James, Duke of York," and other members of the Royal family. Naturally, the king's faithful subjects failed to see why they should not follow the example of their king, and trim their garments with the laces of Italy and Flanders, with or without leave, and they did so, with the kindly aid of the smugglers and their—

“ Five-and-twenty ponies  
 Trotting through the dark—  
 Brandy for the Parson,  
 'Baccy for the Clerk,  
 Laces for a lady, letters for a spy——”

Cut-work nearly, if not quite, equal to that of Continental origin was certainly made in England, but there were apparently very few professional workers, and the industry was carried on on too small a scale to be able to compete with the foreign import. There are, fortunately, still in existence samplers of cut-work patterns which show the high standard which the art had attained in England during the first half of the seventeenth century. The earliest sampler with cut-work patterns in the Victoria and Albert Museum bears the date 1643; that of the specimen illustrated in Plate 18 is 1648. The latter, which is in the writer's collection, has two fine geometrical patterns at the base in which the greater part of the linen ground has been cut away, only sufficient threads being left to support the first stitches of the separate sections of the pattern. In the design immediately above these two bands a rather larger number of threads have been allowed to remain; the hearts which are the conspicuous features of the pattern are worked in buttonhole-stitch with an edging of tiny picots, but the small crosses which fill the square spaces are executed in darning-stitch. Only a few threads, that is to say, about every other one of warp and weft, have been drawn out; those left are worked over with close buttonhole-stitch so as to form a square-meshed, heavy ground, similar to that often met with in Italian drawn-work of a rather earlier period. The pattern of acorns, worked by filling up certain meshes with little cross-stitches, is, however, characteristically

English. The date and two sets of initials, F.M. and W.S., are formed with needle-point braid or tape on a simple ground of buttonholed mesh.

A very curious and interesting seventeenth-century development of English needle-point, is exemplified in the lace picture in Plate 1. The foundation of one of these scarce and—to the collector—exceedingly desirable pieces, was made by stretching threads on linen so as to enclose a rectangular space, in which the design was built up, as it were, from the starting-points provided by the stretched threads with the usual looped stitches of needle-point lace. The subject of Plate 1 is the Judgment of Solomon, and the little panel, which only measures 7 inches by 5 inches is remarkable for the amount of raised and detached work in it. The canopy and curtains of the king's throne, the principal portions of the costumes (which are contemporary), the flowers and foliage, the dead child at Solomon's feet, and the dog emerging from a house in the top right-hand corner, are all raised from the body of the lace. The eyes of the persons represented are indicated by little black beads under needle-point eyelids, and seed-pearls are freely introduced on the costumes and hangings. The lace is very solid and firm of texture, and at a little distance the effect is almost that of an ivory carving.

A few collars of dentated needle-point lace, with patterns English in type, survive to show that such lace was actually made in this country, but not much seems to have been produced, and further than this the development of needle-point did not go in England, for hollie- or holy-point, although later in date, is simpler in every way than the vandyked collar-lace. It is true that some writers on the subject hold the opinion that the hollie-point used to trim baby's shirts

and caps in the eighteenth century is the same lace as that mentioned in inventories of two hundred years previously, but any proof of identity seems lacking. At any rate, the existing examples of hollie-point are all of the eighteenth century, and are, almost without exception, found on little shirts and caps as mentioned above, some of the most elaborate work being on christening sets. The caps, of very fine linen or cambric, have a round of hollie-point with some simple device such as a star or heart forming the centre of the crown, and frequently a strip of the same lace is inserted down the back. The earliest caps, however, have usually only the round in the crown. Strips of point, sometimes bearing dates, initials and even mottoes, are worked on the shoulders of the tiny shirts, and as a rule both caps and shirts are edged with fine, narrow lace of the *fausse Valenciennes* type. Plate 19 reproduces an interesting hollie-point sampler, from which a clear idea of what the lace is like may be obtained. The ground is yellowish linen, and the patterns of hollie-point, together with some pretty ones of cut-work, are worked into the spaces formed by cutting away round and square pieces of the linen. The patterns are chiefly for cap-crowns, and do not include the one most characteristic of hollie-point, which is used almost invariably for the insertions down the backs of the caps and on the shoulders of the christening shirts—that is, the tall lily in a pot. The sampler has the name of its worker, Ursula Slade, and the date 1728 worked in the right-hand square of the middle row of patterns.

The stitch employed in hollie-point is a buttonhole-stitch with a twist in it, the first row of loops being taken over a thread stretched from side to side of the pattern. The lace is always worked from left to

right, the thread being taken back to the starting-point on the completion of a row, and enclosed, as it were, in the next line of looped stitches. The pattern is produced by missing stitches so as to leave tiny holes in the close toilé. Caps and shirts ornamented with this delicate needle-point were evidently very generally in use during the first half of the eighteenth century, and probably later. As they are not at all scarce, few collectors find it difficult to obtain one or two good specimens.

#### BOBBIN-LACE

##### *Devonshire.*

It is said that bobbin-lace-making was introduced into Devonshire by Flemish refugees from the persecutions of Alva in the Netherlands in 1568, but in sober truth nothing definite is known of the industry in this district until well into the seventeenth century. Lace was certainly first made at Honiton, and according to Mrs. Palliser, the earliest mention of this is by Thomas Westcote in his "View of Devonshire." He, writing about 1620, says that at Honiton "is made abundance of bone-lace, a pretty toye now greatly in request, and therefore the town may say with merry Martial :

" " In praise for toys such as this  
Honiton second to none is. "

Early Honiton bobbin-lace was the finest ever made in England, and as has been said in the chapter on the laces of the Netherlands, has much in common with point d'Angleterre, the patterns of the English lace, however, are less well-defined and are characterised by curious worm-like convolutions of the toilé, which are never present in the Brussels designs (see Plate 20).

An interesting passage in Celia Fiennes's "Through England on a Side-saddle" records that at Honiton "they made the bone-lace in imitation of the Antwerp and Flanders lace, and, indeed, I think it as fine, only it will not wash so well, which must be ye fault of the thread." This was in the reign of William and Mary when Honiton lace was at its very best, but the quality of the thread has always been one of the weak points of English lace. No first-class flax thread has ever been spun in this country, and although that imported from Flanders into Devonshire was extremely costly, its price ranging from £70 to £90 per pound in the eighteenth century, it seems to have been inferior to that actually used for Flemish laces of the highest grade.

The fine Honiton laces of the Brussels type disappeared in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and from that date up to about 1800 the history of the industry is a blank. Then Honiton appliqué was introduced. The oldest examples of this lace have patterns of tolerably graceful naturalistic sprays of flowers, worked on the pillow and applied to a net ground, at first bobbin-made, but afterwards machine-woven; but very shortly after this imitation ground was adopted a marked deterioration in the patterns set in. Never superlatively good, they became debased to an extraordinary degree as time went on, until they were nothing more than a confusion of meaningless and indescribable blobs, known to their workers by such appropriate names as frying-pans, bullocks' hearts, turkey-tails, and the like, interspersed with objects resembling caterpillars at frequent intervals. In 1845 or thereabouts the turkey-tails, frying-pans and the rest of the strange devices began to be made of a bobbin-made tape with

brides, sometimes picotées, connecting the sections of the pattern in lieu of the net foundation. These brides were generally made on the pillow, but occasionally were worked in with the needle. The best examples of this class of Honiton lace have certain portions, such as the petals of flowers, in relief and partly detached from the ground, a peculiarity which also distinguishes some of the earlier specimens of the Duchesse tape-lace of Brussels, which indeed resembles that of Honiton in other respects. Some improvement took place in the Devonshire lace towards the end of the nineteenth century; the designs were better drawn and the stitching finer and less slackly worked, but the thread used was poor, hence the texture of the lace has remained unsatisfactory. Still some nice lace has been produced of late years, and it is to be hoped that the efforts made to revive the industry may meet with increasing success.

Trolly-lace, although made in Devonshire, had nothing in common with the Honiton products. It was a coarse lace made with heavy bobbins, and its simple patterns were outlined with a heavy thread. The ground was the six-pointed star *réseau*, or *fond chant*, and the lace was worked round and round the pillow. The name was probably derived from the Flemish *trolle kant*; it had a certain amount of popularity in the eighteenth century, but its production, which was chiefly in the district round Exmouth, has long ceased in Devonshire, although a lace not dissimilar is still made in the Midlands.

#### *Bucks, Beds, and Northants.*

When bobbin-lace was actually first made in the English midland counties is a moot point. There is

a tradition that it was introduced by Queen Katherine of Aragon about 1531, at which date she was living in strict retirement at Ampthill, in Bedfordshire, pending the result of her appeal to the Pope with regard to her divorce by Henry VIII, but there is really nothing to confirm this rather wild story. Certainly there is a lace still made in the district which is known as Queen Katherine's lace, and a ground commonly employed is called kat-stitch, after, it is said, its inventor, the Queen herself. The pattern of Queen Katherine's lace, however, has nothing whatever of the sixteenth century in its style, and kat-stitch is the familiar Paris ground or *fond chant*. If Katherine of Aragon introduced any kind of work into the district, it was probably the black silk embroidery on white linen which she undoubtedly brought with her from Spain. Black-work is described in the *Embroidery* section of this volume, and a portion of a hood so embroidered is illustrated in Plate 27. The hood, which is of the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth or the beginning of that of James I, is edged with a narrow bobbin-lace made of black silk and white thread. This is indubitably contemporary with the hood and possibly of English origin.

Another theory as to the introduction of bobbin-lace-making into the Midlands, is that it came with the Flemish refugees of 1563-8, some of whom are believed to have come from Mechlin, and settling in various villages in the three counties—Bucks, Beds, and Northants—to have taught their special art to the women and girls therein. After the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572, the Flemings are said to have been joined by French refugees, mainly from the Lille district, who, in their turn, introduced the characteristic lace of their native place. There was

a third influx of immigrants following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the majority of these coming from Burgundy and Normandy, and the lace-workers among them naturally gravitated to the towns and villages where those of their own country and their own trade had already found shelter. No doubt the later settlers exercised a very great influence on the English lace industry even if they were not actually responsible for its beginning, but it must be admitted that the early history of lace-making in the Midlands is vague and hazy in the extreme.

An interesting account is given in Mr. Thomas Wright's "Romance of the Lace Pillow," of the efforts made by the proprietors of lace factories in the three counties to prevent the reduction of the duty on imported lace. A petition to Parliament was drawn up in 1815, which after stating the objections to the proposed legislation, supplicated that the House "would not suffer to pass into law a Bill which must endanger the security of this interesting and staple industry which has given employment for the period of one hundred and fifty years to above 150,000 persons." This statement seems to put the commencement of the lace industry at about 1665, but it is possible, indeed probable, that there was something of the sort in existence, although perhaps only on a very small scale, some time prior to this date. It is most likely that the first bobbin-laces made were of the Lille type, but Mrs. Palliser states that she received some laces distinctively Flemish in style from a Mrs. Bell, of Newport Pagnell, who could trace their history back to 1780 when they were bequeathed to Mrs. Bell's father by a relative who had been in the lace trade. The author of the "History of Lace" seems

to have regarded this as some proof that the earliest Bucks lace was of the Mechlin type, but a good many years lie between 1665 and 1780, and, moreover, nothing is more probable than that English workers of the eighteenth century should copy specimens of Flemish or of any other kind of fashionable foreign lace. In fact, copies of Mechlin lace were actually produced with some success in North Bucks as late as the first years of the nineteenth century.

The oldest lace definitely known to have been made in the Midlands is that mis-named—for it is a bobbin-lace—Bucks point (see Plate 20, Fig. *b*). This has a Lille ground, often powdered with square dots, an edge nearly, but not quite, as straight as that characterising the French lace, and patterns which although not entirely without traces of Flemish influence, have their spaces filled with *à jours* in the style of Lille. The pattern is outlined with the wide, flat, silky-looking thread known as *gimp* by Midlands lace-workers. In 1752 the Anti-Gallican Society, which had been founded two years previously, awarded its first prize to a Newport Pagnell worker for fine bobbin-lace, and in 1761 the lace-makers of Bucks presented the young king, George III, with a pair of ruffles, probably of Bucks point. The manufacture of this lace was not confined to Buckinghamshire, but was produced in the adjacent counties as well. Indeed, there was no lace the making of which could be truthfully said to be confined to Bucks, Beds, or Northants, although each county had its special variant or variants. The majority show the influence of Lille in a more or less marked degree, but the *réseaux* differ considerably, both the *fond chant* and the Mechlin ground being employed as well as the *fond clair* of Lille, more than one style of mesh often appearing in

the same piece of lace. Baby-lace, much used for trimming infants' clothes a hundred years ago, was produced in immense quantities in the Midlands. It was a narrow, rather insignificant, but neat and delicate lace with the very simplest of patterns, often nothing more than a sprinkling of dots on a Lille ground and a tiny edging (see Plate 20, Fig. *a*). For the frills of babies' caps it was particularly in favour, and little shaped crowns to match were made to go with it. It continued to be produced until about 1860.

A small quantity of Midlands lace of various kinds, the description of some of which reads oddly enough, was shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Elizabeth Frewen, of Marlow, Bucks, sent collars, cuffs and lappets "made by hand on the pillow, in which an admixture of silk with the thread greatly improves the appearance of the lace." G. Hurst, of High Street, Bedford, showed "Pillow-lace with glass introduced into the figures"! From Thomas Lester, also of Bedford, came "an improved lace fall-piece to avoid joining at the corners," and S. Vincent, of Turvey, near Olney, exhibited names and addresses in lace letters. Soon after the year of the Great Exhibition Maltese lace began to be made in Buckinghamshire, and has continued to be produced, although only to a limited extent, ever since. The patterns of Bucks Maltese differs in some degree from its prototype. The cross formed of four little ovals or wheat-grains, which is almost invariably introduced in the Maltese patterns, is rarely found in the English-made lace, and the ovals when used otherwise, as they frequently are, are generally square, not pointed, at the ends. The edge of the Bucks lace is less sharply scalloped, and occasional signs of the influence of the old Bucks "point" is noticeable in the patterns.

Blonde in both black and white silk was made in the Midlands from 1860 to 1870; the heavy French lace called Cluny has been also copied successfully, and between 1875 and 1885 the fashion for the woollen lace known as Yak lace brought temporary prosperity to the workers of the three counties, while torchon lace of various qualities has been largely produced during the last quarter of a century.

### *Suffolk.*

In Suffolk bobbin-laces of simple patterns, mainly reminiscent of those of Lille, were made. They had much in common with the laces of Bucks, Beds and Northants, but their réseaux were of a more open type and the quality generally inferior. A coarse lace of coloured worsted, made with very large wooden bobbins, was also produced in this country.

### *Essex.*

Very little bobbin-lace appears to have been made in Essex, but at Coggeshall tambour-lace was first worked, as a result, it is said, of the instructions of a French émigré who settled there sometime in the early years of the nineteenth century. The ground of tambour-lace was machine-net on which the pattern was worked in chain-stitch by means of a tambour-hook, a little implement like a very fine crochet-hook with a short handle, the net being tightly stretched on a frame. Coggeshall lace was represented in the Great Exhibition of 1851 by a "dress with two flounces, a fall, a berthe, and a lappet in imitation of Brussels point in tambour-work," which were displayed by Jonas Rolph. Tambour-lace is still made at Coggeshall.

*Wilts.*

Bobbin-laces of the Midlands type, but simpler and coarser, were made at Malmesbury, Downton and elsewhere, but only at Downton is the industry still carried on.

*Hants.*

The only Hampshire lace manufacture of which any trace remains is that of the Isle of Wight. In the past, bobbin-lace of some kind was made in the island, but never to a great extent, and what is known under the name of Isle of Wight lace has a machine-net ground on which the pattern is outlined in running-stitch and filled in with simple *à jours*. The industry was encouraged by Queen Victoria, who was an admirer of the lace, but even twenty years ago there were but few workers left.

## IRELAND

Both needle-point and bobbin-laces were made in Ireland before the middle of the eighteenth century, but never, apparently, on a commercial scale. The Dublin Society, a patriotic association, the avowed object of which was the encouragement of Irish arts and industries, as early as 1743 offered prizes for the best bone-lace and needle-point made in the city, and that year the chief prize of £10 was awarded to one Robert Baker for his ruffles of needle-point in imitation of Brussels lace. Lady Arabella Denny, working in connection with the Dublin Society, did good service in introducing lace-making into the Dublin work-houses, especially among the children there, in recognition of which the freedom of the City of Dublin was conferred on her in 1765. Prizes for lace of home

manufacture continued to be given by the Dublin Society, with apparently satisfactory results, up to about 1780, and as thread imported from Hamburg was employed, the lace produced should have been of good quality and durable. Yet it has disappeared as completely as if it had never existed.

*Carrick-ma-cross.*

There is no record of any lace, either needle-point or bobbin, having been made in Ireland between 1780 or 1790 and 1820, in which year Carrick-ma-cross appliqué, which it is customary to include among laces, was first produced. In this, the pattern is cut out of very fine cambric, applied to net and worked up with needle-point fillings. A rather later variety of this lace is Carrick-ma-cross "guipure," in which the cambric pattern has no net ground, but is held together with needle-point brides. These laces are often very pretty when new, but as the edge of the cambric pattern is merely whipped lightly over, not buttonhole-stitched, they do not stand washing with impunity. Both the appliqué and the "guipure" are still made, chiefly in the southern districts of the county Monaghan.

*Limerick.*

About 1829 tambour-lace began to be made in Limerick. It was introduced from England, but whether from Manchester, where the same style of work was already being made by machinery as well as by hand, or from Coggeshall, in Essex, the original home of the industry, is a question on which opinions differ. The process of working the lace is as follows: the machine-woven net is stretched on a tambour-frame, which consists of two wooden hoops covered

with strips of some soft stuff such as flannel and differing slightly in diameter. The net is spread smoothly on the smaller hoop and the larger one slipped over it, so that the net is tightly strained between the two. The pattern is sometimes sketched on the net, but as it is, as a rule, fairly simple, most workers find the drawing placed in front of them a sufficient guide. Needle-point *à jours* are introduced in some specimens, as in the one shown in Plate 21, but often the entire work is executed with the tambour-hook. Flax thread, cotton and an untwisted shiny silk are all employed for the work. Unfortunately tambour-lace can be accurately copied by machinery, and that such imitations were to be had quite early in the nineteenth century, is proved by a passage in a letter of Miss Edgeworth's, dated 1810: "I have had," she writes, "a most agreeable letter from my darling old Mrs. Clifford; she sent me a curiosity—a worked muslin cap that cost 6*d.*, done in tambour-stitch by a steam-engine."

Run-lace was produced at Limerick a little later than that worked with the tambour-hook. The pattern is outlined with close running-stitches and filled in, partly with the same stitches, partly with *à jours*. Both kinds of lace vary greatly in quality; some specimens—and there are too many of these—have stiff, attenuated patterns worked in coarse cotton, *à jours* being entirely absent, while others have graceful, fairly elaborate yet uncrowded designs executed with fine flax thread, the *à jours* in these better-class examples being often very delicate and pretty.

Laces similar to those identified with Limerick were made eventually in many parts of England as well as on the Continent, by both trade and private workers. They are practically indistinguishable, except

that those in the pattern of which the shamrock appears may be safely concluded to be of Irish origin.

*Youghal.*

The handsomest and most modern Irish lace is Youghal point. This had its origin in a piece of Italian needle-point, which finding its way in 1846 to the Presentation Convent at Youghal, Co. Cork, was there carefully studied and eventually copied by the Mother Superior, who passed on the knowledge she had thus gained to the pupils of the convent school. In course of time, reproductions of Venetian rose and flat-points were made at Youghal, Kenmare, New Ross, and elsewhere, but of late years Irish crochet has been the staple industry of the districts where these five laces were produced, and the output of the latter is now very small indeed.

## CHAPTER X

### LACE BOBBINS

**T**HE very earliest bobbins used in the making of pillow lace were the small pieces of lead already mentioned in the chapter on the development of lace, but these were soon replaced by wooden sticks, probably roughly cut with a knife at first, but later turned in a lathe after the fashion of the very plain and practical bobbins which are in use in Italy up to the present day. But when pillow-lace was first introduced into England, it is said that the bones of sheep's-trotters served as bobbins, and that it was from them that the name bone-lace arose, and not from the custom of using fish-bones in lieu of pins, by reason of the scarcity and high price of the latter. Be this as it may, the first bobbins actually and indisputably known to be employed making lace in England, whether in the South-west or the Midlands, were of wood. Those of Buckinghamshire and the adjoining counties were small, somewhat of the Flemish type and quite without any sign of the exuberant decoration which, a little later, was to render the bobbins of the English Midlands unique among those of all countries. These light-weight bobbins were used in making Bucks "point," and it was not until coarser laces began to supersede the latter that the wood and bone bobbins with their wonderful variety of ornament

in the way of staining, carving, turning and inlaying, and their gay bunches of "spangles" were evolved. It is a very curious fact, indeed, that England, which has never occupied a place in the first line of lace-making countries, should have the most elaborate and distinctive bobbins in the world, beside which the plain, often almost clumsy, bobbins, as much alike as peas in a pod, of the Continental lace districts seem extremely uninteresting. The latter are simply the implements of a trade, and have none of the individuality of the English bobbins which are often records, not only of events in their owners' lives, but of all kinds of public ones, from coronations to executions, and Royal weddings to elections.

The small, plain, Bucks point bobbin was followed in chronological order by the longer bobbin, also of wood, with the bunch of beads at the lower end. These, which are generally called "jingles" by the uninitiated, although their correct but less obvious name is "spangles," are said to have been added for the sake of their weight, but it is probable that they were intended as much for ornament as for any practical purpose. Jingles, or gingles, as the word is usually spelt by the lace-workers, is the name applied to the loose pewter rings on those bobbins which carry the heavy gimp or trolly-thread that outlines the lace pattern. Many different kinds of wood, from pear and apple to oak, are used for these bobbins and their decoration varies in a surprising manner, it being, indeed, almost impossible to find two Midlands bobbins, whether of wood or bone, even in a collection of several thousands, which are precisely alike. Mr. Wright in the interesting and exhaustive chapter on bobbins in "The Romance of the Lace Pillow" gives a list of the local names by which wooden bobbins are

distinguished according to their special type of ornament. *Bitted* bobbins are of dark wood inlaid with slips of light-coloured wood; *tigers* have rings of pewter let into them; *leopards* are dotted with tiny pegs of the same metal, and *butterflies* are adorned with wing-shaped bits of it. Inscriptions are not very often found on wooden bobbins, and when they exist they are usually short. The letters are formed of a series of little holes burnt in with a red-hot wire and filled with red or blue pigment. A few wooden bobbins are decorated with minute coloured beads strung on brass wire and wreathed round the bobbin in which a shallow, spiral groove has been cut to receive them, but these are exceptional, and it is on the bone bobbin, introduced a little later than that of wood, that so much skill and pains has been lavished. Some of these are carved in a single or double spiral twist or with wide, encircling bands alternating with incised and stained patterns; others are inlaid with pieces of bone dyed brown or green and a very large number are ornamented with brass wire let into grooves and often strung with beads. Besides these, there are bobbins piqué with brass, pewter or copper, and—especially attractive to collectors—those familiarly known as church-window bobbins which have “Gothic” apertures within which are little bone balls or miniature bobbins. These slip up and down but cannot be removed; a device in ornament which is frequently seen in Chinese ivory carvings.

Among the most interesting of all the many varieties of bobbins peculiar to the lace-making districts of the Midlands, are the inscribed ones. Of these, the commonest bear merely the Christian name or the initials of its owner or her sweetheart, burnt in along the shank of the bobbin; the most ambitiously orna-

mented have mottoes, proverbs, lovers' soft nothings, or inscriptions referring to topics of the time whose meaning is often lost, and between these two extremes of simplicity and elaboration are many gradations. Here is a list of examples :

For Mary (Jane, Kate or whatever the girl's name may have been).

Lovely Susan (or other name).

Let no false lover win my Heart.

Do you love me? Yes.

Love, buy the Ring.

If I love the boys that is nothing to nobody.

Marry me quick and love me for ever.

To me, my dear, you may come near.

My love is at a distance but always in my mind.

As may be inferred, most of the bobbins with affectionate inscriptions were the gifts of lovers, and in many cases the work of their hands.

The commemorative class of bobbins have such legends as "Osborn for Ever" (John Osborn was returned as M.P. for Bedfordshire in 1806 and again in 1818); "Queen Caroline" and "Waterloo." The executions of local murderers are recorded on bobbins; "Joseph Castle, hanged 1860" is the inscription on the ones made in considerable numbers at the time of the event, and in connection with this Mr. Wright relates that the friends of Castle's wife, who was the victim, were so rejoiced that righteous retribution had overtaken her murderer, that they gave a ball at Luton on the night of his execution and presented each guest with an inscribed bobbin as a memento of the occasion!

The lettering on the bobbins is usually burnt in with a red-hot skewer or piece of wire, pigment being rubbed into the holes, but sometimes it is traced with

little pegs of pewter or brass. Capital letters are always used and the two colours—red and blue—generally alternate.

The spangles attached to the end of the bobbin consist of nine beads (at least that is the orthodox number, but the rule is not very strictly observed), strung on a loop of thin brass wire. There should be two large, ornamental beads at the top; three smaller and comparatively plain ones on either side, and an extra big and gorgeous one at the bottom. The most important beads are often handsome old Venetian glass ones, but beads of cornelian, amber, coral and gold and silver lustre-ware are sometimes introduced, and not at all infrequently the bottom bead is replaced by something entirely different. A quaint old-fashioned button—according to tradition it should be from the sweetheart's Sunday waistcoat—a silver coin, sometimes an old one such as an Elizabethan sixpence or shilling; a lace-dealer's token; or an old pinchbeck seal; such things as these may be found among the spangles of a Bedfordshire bobbin. Besides wood and bone, other materials, including glass, brass and pewter, have been used for bobbins in the Midlands, but eccentricities of this sort can only be regarded as freaks, which in some instances, it is to be feared, have been specially made for the collecting market!

The difference between the lace-bobbins of the Midlands and those of Devonshire, is so great that it is hard to believe that they belong to the same country. Those used in Honiton lace-making are invariably made of wood, chiefly that of the olive or the spindle-tree, are very light in weight, slightly pointed at one end and have a satin-smooth surface. They have no spangles, and although a good many are decorated,

the practice is not so general as in Bucks, Beds, and Northants, and when there is any ornamentation it has no resemblance to that of the bobbins of the Midlands. The Devonshire method is to incise patterns, generally rings of checker-work, stars, chevrons, and little conventional leaves, in the wood and to fill the lines, which are very shallow, with black or red pigment. Initials and dates are occasionally added, and in the Beer district the bobbins are sometimes distinguished by more ambitious designs in which ships, anchors, and even mermaids, are included.

At Downton, near Salisbury, bobbins of the Devonshire type, but shorter and thicker, are employed. They are frequently decorated with very crude patterns, incised and coloured, or with a brown mottling produced by staining with aqua-fortis. Honiton bobbins mottled in this way are met with now and then.

Although the whole range of foreign bobbins can show nothing so interesting or so varied as those of England, some have their attractive points. The oldest of the bobbins used on the long, cylindrical pillows of Peniche in Portugal, are of ivory—not bone, be it noted—often delightfully mellowed by time and long usage, or the dark, curiously-grained Brazil-wood, and form most desirable items in a collection. These old Peniche bobbins vary considerably in shape but the majority have a slightly flattened or elongated knob at the end. The bobbins used for modern Peniche lace are of white wood, and are finished with a large round ball. Spanish bobbins, both old and modern, resemble the later Portuguese, but are of darker wood.

Very slender, delicate bobbins were, and are still,

employed for the laces of Brussels. They are made of dark, polished wood and are prettily turned, the details varying considerably, but the result being always well-balanced and graceful. The majority of Flemish bobbins are small and light in weight, but are plainer and less dainty than those of Brussels.

Bobbins of various types are used in the Auvergne, ranging from big, fat ones with very long thick necks, and flattened knobs at the ends, to little bone ones with shields or "noquettes" of horn whose purpose is to keep the thread clean. This shield is also adopted in Normandy, but the Norman bobbin, which is of white wood, is straight and without a neck, and the shield is a cylinder of thin brown wood. This particular kind of bobbin carries a great quantity of thread.

Valenciennes bobbins are wooden, small, light, and as severely plain as the majority of Continental bobbins, but they are ornamental compared with the straight sticks, roughly trimmed with a knife, with which the coarse Torchon laces of the Russian province of Vologda are made. On the other hand, for the small quantity of pillow-lace produced in Denmark, there are used very smart wood bobbins with prettily turned shanks and ball ends surrounded by grooves into which rings of gay-coloured beads are fitted.

In Plate 22 are illustrated examples of some of the English and foreign bobbins described in this chapter. No. 1 is Flemish (?); 2 Devon, dated 1781, red and black pattern; 3 Auvergne, bone with horn guard; 4 Devon, red and black patterns; 5 Portugal, ivory; 6 Midlands, inscribed "If I love the boys that is nothing to nobody"; 7 Portugal, dark brown wood; 8 Midlands, dark wood inlaid holly; 9 Malta; 10 Midlands, bone inlaid tin; 11 Malta; 12

108 LACE AND EMBROIDERY COLLECTOR

Midlands, dark wood inlaid tin ; 13 Denmark, with coloured beads ; 14 Midlands, bone wound with brass wire ; 15 Brussels, dark wood ; 16 Wiltshire, light wood with dark acid stains ; 17 Valenciennes, dark wood.

## CHAPTER XI

### LACE IN RELATION TO COSTUME

**T**HE manner in which lace has been applied to the adornment of the dress of both men and women, has already received a certain amount of notice in the preceding chapters, but it is proposed to deal with the subject, always an interesting one, rather more in detail here, and to carry the record of fashion in lace-wearing down to a later date.

Something has been said, in the second chapter, of the lavish use of cut-work and early needle-point lace for the ruffs which were worn, in various styles, from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the reign of James I. The vast fluted ruff of the time of Elizabeth, which made its wearer's head look as if served up on a charger, took no less than twenty-five yards of lace to edge its many plaits, and according to that energetic railer, Philip Stubbes, whose "Anatomie of Abuses" was published in 1583, such ruffs which he regarded as inventions of "the devill in the fulnesse of his malice," were "clogged with gold, silver or silk lace of stately price, wrought all over with needle-worke; speckeled and sparkeled here and there with the sunne, moone and starres, and many other antiques rare to behold. Some are wrought with open-work down to the middle of the ruff and further, some with close-worke, some with purled lace, so closed and other

gew-gawes so fastened as the ruff is the least part of itself." The ruff seems to have aroused a most extraordinary degree of ire in the breasts of the puritanical writers and preachers of the time. John King, Bishop of London from 1611 to 1621, was particularly venomous in his attacks on it: "Fashion has brought in deep ruffs and shallow ruffs," he said in one of his sermons, "thick ruffs and thin ruffs and double ruffs. . . . When the Judge of Quick and Dead shall appear He will not know those who have so defaced the fashion He hath created"! And yet there were then, and have been since, many far more objectionable fashions than that of the ruff. The Medicis, or open ruff, which stood out behind the head like a large, open fan, and tapered to the front of the low-cut bodice, was far more becoming to the average woman than its predecessor the "cart-wheel," which men continued to wear, and must have been far more comfortable, especially in hot weather, to which a circular ruff of ample proportions, well-stiffened with—to quote the fiery Stubbes again—"that devill's liquor, sterche," just introduced, does not seem exactly suited. These widespreading ruffs were made chiefly of geometrical needlepoint, and they were held up by supportasses or underproppers, made of wire wound round with gold or silver thread, or silk.

To the ruff succeeded the col rabato, the lace-edged falling-collar which was adopted by both sexes. In the case of men, the collar, which was trimmed with the broad-scalloped "collar-lace" described earlier in this book, was sewn on the very full shirt of fine holland which came into vogue in the reign of Charles I. Turned back cuffs corresponding with the collar were often attached to the wristbands of the voluminous sleeves of the shirts. The falling-collar continued in

fashion, with some variations of shape and size, until the arrival of the periwig with the Restoration, when it was superseded by the cravat which was to have such a long reign, the straight lace berthe at the same time replacing the collar in the case of ladies. The earliest cravats were of fine linen or cambric with ends of heavy Venetian lace sewn plainly to the ends without any gathering. The lace was extremely expensive, the cravat so trimmed, which the Duke of York, afterwards James II, wore on his wedding day, costing £36 10s. In 1692 the formal cravat was abandoned in favour of the Steinkirk which derived its name from the battle in which William of Orange was defeated by the French under the Maréchal de Luxembourg. On this famous occasion the French were surprised, and the officers of the crack cavalry regiments, the pick of the nobles of France, dressing in haste at the sound of the alarm, did not wait to tie their cravats properly, and rode to victory with them half loose and their ends flying in the wind. After this the carelessly twisted "Steinkirk" became the rage for both men and women's wear, and, so far as the former were concerned, the fashion lasted until well into the eighteenth century. Steinkirks were made of gauze or muslin with frills of a fine, soft lace such as Mechlin at the ends, one of which was drawn through a slit like an elongated buttonhole at the left side of the coat.

A dainty accessory to the dress of a lady, which made its first appearance in 1671, and has come into fashion over and over again since, was the lace pelerine. This is said by different authorities to derive its name from (1) pélerin, a pilgrim; (2) pelured, meaning be-furred; (3) palatine, because it was evolved by the young Princess Palatine who, when she came to

Paris to be married in 1671, was so shocked at the low-cut bodices of her new French gowns made à la mode, that she had little pointed capes of lace made to hide their deficiencies.

Ladies' under-garments were profusely trimmed with lace in the seventeenth century, especially after the passing of the Commonwealth. It will be remembered how Mr. Pepys, walking in Whitehall Gardens on May 21st, 1662, saw hanging in the Priory Garden "the finest smockes and linnen petticoats of my Lady Castlemaine's laced with rich lace at the bottom, that ever I saw, and it did me good to look at them." Besides underlinen, handkerchiefs, whisks—a whisk was a neckerchief, Mrs. Pepys bought "a noble one"—caps and coifs, aprons and pinnars were extensively ornamented with lace, generally Flemish. Pinnars were the lace streamers attached to the head-dress, which later came to be known as lappets, these, in the reign of Charles II, being usually pinned up into loops, whence their name is believed to have arisen. According to Fairholt, however, a bib-apron was also called a pinner.

In 1680 the fontange came into fashion. The story goes that the Duchesse de Fontange, Madame de Montespan's successor in the affections of Louis XIV, was one day hunting with the King and a party of courtiers, when her hat blew away. To keep her hair in order she tied a ribbon, a garter or a handkerchief (the various versions of the tale do not agree on this point) round her head so that the ends stood up in front. The effect of this improvised headgear was said to be charming, and a few days after the date of the hunting-party, every woman with any pretence to be considered fashionable had a head-dress à la Fontange. At first this was entirely of ribbon and comparatively simple, but in the course of the ten years

it was in vogue it gradually developed into an erection half-a-yard high composed of silk, tiffany, ribbon, buckram and fluted lace—the commode in fact of the reigns of William and Mary, and Queen Anne. In the portrait by Nicolas de Largillière (National Portrait Gallery) of the Old Pretender and his sister, the little princess's round, childish face is surmounted by a tall commode of point d'Alençon, matching her petticoat and ruffles. To the commode were often attached the pinner's of an earlier date, and these under their new name of lappets remained in vogue long after the disfiguring tower had been replaced by a most reasonable style of head-dress. By the "heads" of lace, so frequently referred to in eighteenth century letters and memoirs, a set—probably two pairs—of lappets seem to have been meant. It seems to have been the strange custom in the eighteenth century to deck the dead for burial in their finest lace; the actress, Ann Oldfield, for instance, who died in 1730, was placed in her coffin wearing "a fine Brussels lace head, a Holland shift with a tucker of double ruffles and a pair of new kid gloves." And in 1763 a young lady was buried in her wedding clothes, which included a "fine point lappet head" (Mrs. Palliser's "History of Lace").

Lappets continued to be worn, looped up in ordinary full dress, and flowing in Court dress, practically throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, and as everybody knows in the latter costume they have survived up to the present day. A plate in Heidehoff's "Gallery of Fashion" for 1798 shows a lady wearing the enormous court hoop which was orthodox until George IV came to the throne and played the part of dress-reformer—a fact which may be placed to his credit. A flounce of Valenciennes lace trims the

aforesaid lady's satin petticoat ; lappets of the same fall from the immensely high head-dress of ostrich feathers ; lace edges the pocket-holes and the top of the low bodice, and the sleeves are finished with ruffles, although these latter are of modest proportions compared to those in fashion some years previously when the wide, drooping frills called engageantes were the mode. It is said, by the way, that these voluminous ruffles were convenient aids to the passing of surreptitious letters, whether billets doux or the secret missives of Jacobite plotters. In the *Lady's Magazine* for 1770 there is a print of " Lady in Full Dress," who is wearing these in their most exaggerated form with triple tiers of ruffles hanging very low. Her hooped skirt is trimmed with a festooned flounce of lace, and the front of the long-waisted pointed bodice is crossed with rows of narrow lace frills.

The dress apron (as distinguished from that intended for practical use) was more or less in fashion from the sixteenth century down to the reign of Queen Victoria, its last appearance being in the form of the " tennis " and " four o'clock tea " aprons of 1875-1880. Undoubtedly the most beautiful of all aprons were those long and wide ones that entirely covered the front of the skirt, and were made entirely of bands of cut-work and dentated, geometrical patterned lace. It was this class of apron, no doubt, that Stephen Gossons had in his mind's eye when in his " Pleasant Quippes for New Fangled Up-start Gentlewomen," published in 1596, he penned the lines .—

" These Aprons white of finest thread  
 So choicely tied, so dearly bought,  
 So finely fringed, so nicely spread,  
 So quaintlie cut, so richly wrought ;  
 Were they in work to save their cotes  
 They need not cost so many grotes."

At the end of the seventeenth century aprons made entirely of lace, often point d'Alençon, or of very fine muslin bordered with deep lace frills, came into fashion, and continued to be worn throughout the first decade or so of the eighteenth century. They were followed by short aprons of embroidered silk or satin which were trimmed with gold or silver bobbin-lace or with fringe, but never with thread lace.

Towards the end of the century lace aprons re-appeared, but they were before long discarded in favour by those of soft white muslin ornamented with drawn-thread work and white satin-stitch embroidery. About this time, indeed, lace went generally out of favour in England, while in France it practically disappeared at the time of the Revolution. The interesting series of fashion-plates, "Costumes Parisiens," published in Paris during the Directory and the Consulate gives proof of this, for during the first years of the period covered, lace is seen to be almost entirely confined to the narrow edgings of close-fitting caps, the clinging, scant gowns being practically without any trimming. In the Year 6 of the Republican Calendar, however, veils "à l'Iphigénie," with wide lace at the hem, and capes bordered with lace frills, made their appearance; twelve months later, the lace frills of the cap became so absurdly deep as nearly to conceal the face of the wearer, and by the Year 10, the citoyennes, abandoning their Republican severity of costume were wearing tunics, fichus and long aprons all trimmed with deep lace, of what kind, alas! is not definitely recorded, but as far as it is possible to judge from the plates it was a light fabric in the style of Lille or late Mechlin.

In England, from 1809 to about 1812 the top of

the very low-cut bodice then fashionable was finished with either a falling frill of rather wide lace, or with a narrower lace tucker, stiffly starched and standing up like a Medicis ruff in miniature. The scanty skirts of the gowns, generally made of muslin or the thinnest cambric, were trimmed with narrow flounces round the hem, or arranged as robings down the front, and the quaint bonnets and hats of the period had a good deal of lace on them. A year or two later the bonnets, which had lost their picturesque quaintness and become merely eccentric, had their vast brims veiled with lace which fell over the edge, and reached to the tip of the wearer's nose. In 1815 the pelerine re-appeared in the form of a pretty little pointed cape made of net or muslin entirely covered with frills of narrow Brussels or Mechlin lace.

Lace was again out of fashion between 1820 and 1830. Gowns were trimmed with ruches of ribbons and sausage-like rouleaux of gauze and other thin stuffs, and the scarves and capes of the day were of the same kind of material with frills of the stuff itself. For the large falling collars, as well as for the pelerines, which were again in vogue, embroidered muslin was generally used. But about 1830-1831 the tide turned in favour of lace again. Evening gowns had deep, fully gathered flounces of lace, festooned or straight round the skirt, and the bodice was trimmed with a tucker as well as a berthe. Long lace lappets or streamers floated, not only from the amazing "morning" caps of the period, but from the monstrous "dress hats" which were worn at dinner-parties and the opera. The pelerine was re-incarnated under the name of mantelet-pelerine; in this form it had double capes with points on the shoulders that reached half-way to the elbows, and long ends in front. It

was made of embroidered muslin or tambour-lace as a general rule. For dress-trimmings at this date, Chantilly and blonde laces were extremely popular, but Brussels appliqué in both black and white was also fashionable. The large veils tied round the crown of the bonnet with a running-string came into vogue in the 'Thirties; they were usually of Brussels or Honiton appliqué, or of the run or tamboured net known as Limerick lace. Many of these veils are still in existence, and a considerable proportion of them have very gracefully drawn patterns.

A fashion plate of a lady in the Court dress of 1831 depicts her in a bodice and train of crimson brocade opening over a petticoat entirely covered with two very wide lace flounces. The bodice has a deep, shaped berthe and narrow sleeve ruffles of lace, and a long lace veil falling from the orthodox ostrich feathers replaces the lappets formerly an indispensable feature in Court dress. It is probable that the option of wearing either veil or lappets at a Drawing Room was first allowed about this time.

With the Eighteen-Forties came the immensely deep lace flounce that entirely covered the skirt save for three or four inches at the top; broad berthés, often draped, and last, but not least, the lace shawl which was to have a life of some twenty-odd years. Some of these shawls, which were made triangular in shape as well as square, were of Maltese bobbin-lace, or Brussels appliqué, while those of cheaper quality were of machine-made lace in the style of Brussels, or imitation "Spanish" lace in silk, thread, or cotton, black or white.

In conclusion it may be noted that the lace fan is quite a modern invention, there being no record of it

prior to the Victorian period, and that the large square wedding-veil with its accompanying wreath of orange-blossoms, was not worn by brides in England until the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE IDENTIFICATION OF LACE

**T**HE first lesson which the budding collector must master is how to distinguish between needle point lace and that made with bobbins on a pillow. This, however, is not a very difficult task, for the difference between the two types of lace is clearly defined and can be easily and quickly recognised if it is borne in mind that :—

(a) In needle-point lace the stitches are all *looped* in the manner of an ordinary buttonhole-stitch, and are worked with a single thread.

(b) In bobbin-made lace the stitches are never looped, but are formed by *twisting* or *plaiting* two, three, or more threads together.

The illustrations of stitches, enlarged to ten times their actual size in Plates 23 and 24 will make this fundamental difference clearer than any written description, no matter how lengthy and detailed, although in the case of exceptionally fine lace, a close examination may be necessary before a certain conclusion can be arrived at. The distinction between the two methods of working is perhaps most plainly discernible in the brides, or connecting bars, but if the toilé or solid part of the pattern is carefully scrutinised, it will be seen that in needle-point lace it is composed of rows of buttonhole or looped stitches, while

the *toilé* of bobbin-lace is woven, as it were, the threads passing over and under each other. Mixed laces, i.e. those in which a bobbin-made pattern is connected by needle-point brides, or grounded with a needle-point *réseau*, are apt to puzzle the beginner, but a very small amount of experience will enable him to recognise them, and, after all, their class is not a large one.

It is seldom difficult to detect machine-made lace. Buttonhole stitch is never found in it, and although it has been possible since the 'Eighties of last century to produce a plaited stitch by machinery, the process is complicated and consequently expensive, hence in the bulk of machine laces the threads are only twisted or woven together. The *toilé* is often slightly ridged or ribbed, and always very even; the repeats of the pattern are generally more meticulously regular than in hand-made lace; the edge is frequently lacking in finish and firmness, and the texture is either too soft or too stiff and generally too light in weight in comparison with the "real" fabric. It must be remembered, however, that there are a few laces to which the foregoing rules do not apply in their entirety. Most important among these are the heavy silk laces of the Chantilly-Spanish type in which the bold and handsome floral patterns, although woven by machinery, are outlined with a run thread put in by hand. Such laces have a very deceptive appearance if of good quality, as is often the case, and even collectors of some experience have been known to hesitate over them.

Machine-made laces rarely boast of any definitely characteristic style, and it is scarcely too much to say that there has never been any serious attempt to copy accurately by mechanical power the great eighteenth

century laces. The late Valenciennes laces with their extremely simple patterns and lozange réseau, are successfully and largely made by machinery, and some really pretty laces with patterns in the style of late Brussels appliqué have been produced, but point d'Alençon, point d'Argentan, the Venetian needle-points and the fine Flemish bobbin-laces have remained unimitated probably because they are inimitable.

To identify modern hand-made copies of old laces is not always an easy matter if they are carefully executed as, for instance, is the case with the beautiful reproductions made by the workers at Burano. But, fortunately or unfortunately, according to the point of view, much, indeed most, modern hand-made lace may be recognised by the inferior thread used, this being usually a mixture of cotton and flax, or in some cases of cotton alone, and by the paucity of stitches in the work, defects which are responsible for a disagreeable flimsiness of texture and a tendency to shrink when washed. Apropos of thread it may be said here that the idea, which has found its way into print more than once, of hand-spun thread being joined every twenty or twenty-five inches is not only erroneous but absurd. Those who hold this theory give as their reason that a woman spinning with a distaff could not reach further than the distance named, therefore the incessant breaking and rejoining of the thread was unavoidable. There is, however, nothing to prevent a distaff-spun thread being of any length; besides, the spinning-wheel superseded the distaff very early in the history of lace. Therefore, the suggestion which has been made in all seriousness by some writers, that if when a piece of lace is unpicked the thread has not got a join every two feet, it is modern, may be regarded as an absolute fallacy.

Although the illustrations of réseaux and toilés are sufficiently clear to speak for themselves, it may be an additional help to the collector if they are briefly described here. In Plate 23 are shown the following:—

Fig. 1. The réseau of Point d'Argentan. The sides of the hexagonal mesh are completely covered with buttonhole-stitch.

Fig. 2. The "vrai" réseau of Brussels needle-point; a simple looped stitch.

Fig. 3. The réseau of Point d'Alençon. The hexagonal mesh is of double-twisted threads, the looped stitches having a horizontal thread twisted through them before the next row of loops is begun. This makes the réseau appear to run into lines.

Fig. 4. The ground of Hollie-point. This curious lace is made of looped stitches. The method of working is described in the chapter dealing with English laces.

Fig. 5. The toilé of Point d'Alençon (which is similar to that of other needle-point laces) with the distinctive stiff cordonnet covered with buttonhole-stitch.

Fig. 6. The close toilé or ordinary bobbin-lace, and the open toilé more definitely characteristic of Brussels lace, but also introduced in other kinds.

The enlargements in Plate 24 are of bobbin-made réseaux only.

Fig. 1. The réseau of Lille lace, also known as fond simple and fond clair. The hexagonal mesh is formed of two threads only. These are twisted once on four sides out of the six, and simply crossed on the remaining two.

Fig. 2. The réseau of "vraie" Valenciennes. Each

of the four sides of the lozenge-shaped mesh is of four threads plaited.

Fig. 3. The réseau known as fond chant ; Paris ground and wire ground.

Fig. 4. The réseau of Mechlin lace. Four of the six sides of the mesh are made of two threads twisted twice ; the two other sides are formed of four threads plaited three times (compare Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. The réseau of Brussels bobbin-lace. Two sides of the hexagonal mesh are made of four threads plaited four times, and the remainder of two threads twisted twice (compare Fig. 4).

Fig. 6. The réseau known as " cinq trous " which is sometimes found in Flemish lace. It derives its name from the five small holes which appear at the crossing point of the threads forming the mesh.

A carefully arranged lace-album is a possession of considerable value to a collector as a reference book. It should contain pieces which, no matter how small, are purely characteristic of their kind. They should be sewn to the cardboard leaves of the album with very fine cotton, not, according to a too prevalent and most barbaric custom, stuck down with paste or gum. The name of each lace should be written beneath it on the album leaf, or better still, type-written on a small adhesive label.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ON COLLECTING EMBROIDERIES

**T**HE collector of modest means has in these days but a poor chance of obtaining embroideries of earlier date than the second decade of the seventeenth century. If he is born under a lucky star, he may pick up perhaps an odd bit of pre-Reformation Church-work, or a bit of Elizabethan secular embroidery; but speaking generally, he may count himself fortunate if he can acquire, at anything approaching a moderate cost and within a reasonable time, a tolerably representative collection of needlework produced in England between the accession of Charles I and the end of the eighteenth century. As a matter of fact, the collector who cannot afford to spend an unlimited amount of money on his hobby is well advised if he specialises from the outset. Let him make up his mind to get together as many good examples as he can of say, samplers, needlework pictures, embroidered book-bindings, or needlework applied to costume, and to this end devote his money and energy. A thoroughly complete and carefully made little collection of even such trifles as bags and purses, or pin-cushions and needle books, can be easily of more value and interest than a heterogeneous mass of inferior examples of the needlework of many countries and periods, not thoroughly repre-

sentative of any one, and without historical sequence. Unfortunately; it requires considerable strength of mind to resist the temptation of the red herring across the track, and to abjure that which is "such a wonderful bargain, although not really in my line you know!"

The beginner who lives in or near London has the great advantage of being able to study the great collection of embroideries in the Victoria and Albert Museum; while the sales at the famous auction-rooms are something of an education in themselves. The country collector is handicapped, and must get his knowledge as best he can from more experienced friends with similar tastes, and from books, helped perhaps by occasional visits to the nearest antique shop. But even so, if he has the instinct for the right thing, lacking which no collector can hope to be successful, he will soon find his feet, although he will no doubt have to pay more or less for his experience.

It is perhaps permissible for the collector in the first stage of his career to make discreet purchases of defective bits of embroidery for educational purposes, provided they are cheap, but as a rule poor and imperfect examples should be avoided. Pieces that are ragged, badly stained, mildewed or moth-eaten are really dear at any price, and to buy them is unwise, unless they are of such exceptional age and rarity that the collector cannot expect to obtain better specimens of their kind. A piece that has been very extensively restored is perhaps an even less satisfactory speculation than one that is torn and dirty, as although its appearance may be better, embroidery that has been reapplied to new material, or has had the ragged old ground adroitly concealed with laid-stitch, or the rubbed-away parts of the work put in afresh with artificially faded silks, is not the original thing by any means, and

its value is proportionately decreased. How far renovations are justifiable is a moot point, but it is certain that any mending necessary to prevent a piece dropping into fragments is admissible, although there is much to be said against actual restorations. In any case, cleaning and repairing, except of the simplest kind, are best carried out by skilled professional hands. Of the first process, the amateur should attempt nothing beyond a little careful dusting with a very soft brush, or better still with one of the little pairs of bellows that our great-grandmothers used to blow the dust from the multitudinous bows of their Sunday bonnets, or cautious sponging with ammonia in the case of bead-work, or with benzine in that of wool or silk embroidery. The splits often found in silk or satin grounds may be closed by means of strips of very thin silk pasted at the back, and the securing of loose stitches, or even a small darn, is not beyond the powers of any ordinary plain needlewoman. But if serious repairs are essential and the embroidery is worth spending money on, it should be sent to a specialist in such work.

How may embroidery be dated with certainty? This is a question frequently asked by the budding collector, and it is one not at all easy to answer. There are, of course, points as regards style of patterns, materials and stitches which help to indicate the age of examples, and these will be noted seriatim in the chapters dealing with needlework of different periods, but they cannot be regarded as absolutely safe guides to the date of a piece. The embroidery of the past was executed almost entirely by private workers in their own homes which were often in the heart of the country where new fashions did not penetrate quickly, and so the old designs continued to be worked

on the same kind of home-spun, hand-woven stuff, year after year, generation after generation; the older needlewomen passing on to their descendants the designs and stitches they had been taught in their youth. So that while modish ladies in Town were working patterns in the Chinese taste with crewels, their country cousins might still be toiling over the elaborations of stump-embroidery. In fact, all styles and classes of needlework overlapped more or less.

In connection with the age of embroidery, the collector will be wise if he puts little or no faith in the wonderful histories so often supplied with specimens by their vendors. He should certainly pay nothing extra for them, unless the statements are very well supported by written evidence. This apron may be the identical one that Beau Nash pulled off Prior's "Kitty ever fair" in the Pump Room at Bath; that collar may have been worked by Jane Austen and mentioned in a letter to her sister Cassandra; those dainty garters with their embroidered mottoes may have belonged to the famous eighteenth century beauty Lady X—; but where are the proofs? Usually there is not a vestige of one. Myths grow up round family relics in the most unaccountable way; one generation gets confused with another; the granddaughter forgets, or partly forgets, what her grandmother told her when she was a child; the surmise of yesterday becomes the certainty of to-day; a guess is transmuted into a solid fact, and so it comes about that the most honest and truthful people frequently give amazingly incorrect and misleading histories of their own possessions. It is true that more than a few collectors have a weakness for buying pieces of needlework with tales attached to them, but a flair for the right thing, backed with common sense and a

little experience, is a more reliable guide to the authenticity or otherwise of a piece of old stitchery than the longest and most circumstantial tale, unsupported by documentary evidence, ever told by the would-be seller.

In the case of picture embroideries the costumes of the figures are a great help towards the assignment of the right date. The work may be later, but obviously cannot be earlier, than that indicated by the costume. In bindings the date of the book bound is something to go upon, although not very much, as the binding is often far later than that of the volume itself.

The embroidery collector has very little to fear from forgeries. One or two classes of late seventeenth and eighteenth century embroideries have been reproduced of late years, but deliberate fakes are seldom met with. Dates, however, are sometimes added, or genuine ones altered so as to increase the apparent age of the piece; the former fraud is usually fairly easy of detection as the figures are rarely of the correct type for the period, but the alteration of a figure or two is more likely to escape notice, especially if the work is carried out with a bit of old silk unpicked from some obscure corner. Dated pieces, therefore, should be always very closely scrutinised.

A catalogue should be begun simultaneously with the collection. Every purchase should be entered in a rough log-book with its description, the source whence it was obtained and the price paid for it. Later, when the collection has grown sufficiently large, a carefully detailed catalogue should be made and illustrated if possible with photographs of at least the principal pieces. From the permanent catalogue the record of prices may be omitted, if the owner feels it would be to him less painful reading without them.

## CHAPTER XIV

### NEEDLEWORK PRIOR TO THE TENTH CENTURY

“The art of sewing is exceeding old  
As in the Sacred Text it is enroll’d  
Our parents first in Paradise began.”

JOHN TAYLOR.

**T**O begin at the very beginning, so far as is known, of the history of embroidery is to go back to a period too remote to be of interest to the collector pure and simple, that is to say, the collector as distinguished from the archæologist; yet it seems desirable that some slight outline should be given here of the early stages of the development of what is one of the oldest of arts.

The practice of ornamenting woven fabrics with the aid of needle and thread was evolved or invented in various parts of the world, probably at the outset to mark rank, or distinction, religious or social. The Greeks, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians have all left records in stone or pottery or metal, in bas-relief and vase and bowl, of the embroideries with which their wearing apparel, their tents and hangings and horse-trappings were adorned; but of these actual things not a vestige remains save with one or two notable exceptions. Many pieces of embroidered fabrics have been found in the tombs of Upper Egypt, only fragments it is true, yet sufficiently preserved

by the dry atmosphere of the country to make it possible to form a clear idea of their designs, and the stitches and materials with which they were executed. There are in both the British and Victoria and Albert Museums good collections of Egyptian and Christian Coptic embroideries assigned to dates between the sixth and ninth centuries. Some of these are pieces of linen worked with coloured wools in looped tufts after the fashion of the "Turkey work" of the sixteenth century, the designs as a rule being simple geometrical ones, or stem and leaf patterns. Other fragments of linen, thought to be portions of garments, are embroidered in flat running stitches in flax and wool; and from tombs in the same district (Akhnim) are many bands of woven tapestry partly worked over with the needle, some of which are said to date from the second century A.D.

In the tomb of the Seven Brothers near Temriouk in the Province of Kouban on the Sea of Azof were some scraps of embroidery done in chain and short stitches with yellow flax-thread on a ground of dull reddish-purple woollen stuff. These relics are—or were—preserved in the Hermitage at Petrograd, and according to the "Compte Rendu de la Commission Imperiale Archéologique," 1878-9, in which there are facsimile illustrations of the embroideries, these relics are Greek and of the fourth century B.C. M. Lefébure, however, in his "Embroidery and Lace" assigns them to the third century A.D., and states that they are Byzantine. Byzantium was certainly famed for its wonderful embroideries after the commencement of the Christian era, and according to contemporary accounts it was of the most gorgeous description, the fabric of the ground being in many cases completely covered with plates of thin gold

sewn on in patterns. Gold thread was largely used also, but it seems probable that this was mainly introduced in the weaving rather than worked in with the needle, but the difficulty of determining whether the wonderful things described by Byzantine as well as other writers were really woven or embroidered is almost insuperable. In any case, however, this early work could not have been very fine, the clumsiness of the needles, which were made at first of bone or box-wood and then of metal, rendering delicacy of stitchery out of the question. A remarkable example of late Byzantine embroidery was found in the tomb of Gunther, Bishop of Ratisbon, who died in 1062, the work itself, however, dating from the seventh century. The subject of this curious piece is the Emperor Constantine as master of the Universe mounted on a white horse and receiving homage from the East and West personified as Rome and Constantinople, represented as two queens wearing mural crowns and offering the Emperor a helmet on the one hand and a crown of peace on the other. The style of design strongly resembles that of the celebrated Byzantine mosaics.

From the fifth century A. D. onwards much embroidery was worked in France for the use and embellishment of the churches as well as brought by Greek merchants for the same purpose. Whenever a great church with its monastery was built there sprang up a colony of skilled workers. Hangings, mortuary cloths and vestments of all kinds were wrought on linen with worsteds, silks or heavy gold thread. The stitches mostly used were simple satin-stitch, or long-and-short stitch supposed to be the "opus plumarium," so called by reason of its producing the effect of a bird's plumage, which was reintroduced to English

needlewomen in the revival of embroidery of the late 'seventies of last century under the translated name of feather-stitch. A great deal of the gold thread was couched as it was too thick to pass through the linen ; that is to say, it was laid flat on the stuff, two or more threads side by side, horizontally, vertically or diagonally across the design and held in place by short crossing stitches of silk often arranged to produce diaper patterns. This gold laid-work or couching has continued to be an important feature of ecclesiastical embroidery throughout the centuries down to the present day. As time went on, vestments came to be more and more elaborately ornamented with needlework, the mitres, gloves and shoes of the bishops ; the copes with their hoods or pluvials, the chasubles, maniples and dalmatics of the clergy in general were all richly adorned with embroidery in silk and gold and silver thread often combined with plates and strips of beaten gold and precious stones. Practically there are no existing examples of such work older than the eighth century, and written records alone must be depended on for any information concerning it, but there are enough specimens dating from the time of Charlemagne (767-814) extant, to enable the collector who is also something of a student of the history of embroidery, to follow its development. The great Emperor himself had a great love for gorgeous needlework, and his garments, especially those worn on state occasions, were covered with the most splendid of embroidery in gold and jewels, as is described in his life, " *Vita Karolis Imperatoris* " by a contemporary monk, Eginhard, Abbot of Seligenstadt. Charlemagne's mother, Bertha of the Big Feet, was a skilled needlewoman herself ; the princesses, her daughters, equalled her in the art, while St. Giselle,

Bertha's sister, founded convents in Provence and Aquitaine, where much fine embroidery was produced. Preserved in the Cathedral of St. Etienne at Metz is a cope which is said to have been originally the imperial mantle of Charlemagne. It is of red silk embroidered in colours and gold, with a palm-tree, spread eagles, serpents and strange beasts of a distinctly Oriental type. It is nearly semicircular and about  $3\frac{3}{4}$  yards in diameter. There is a coloured illustration of it in Hottenroth, "Le Costume, nouvelle série." In the Treasury at St. Denis are sandals or slippers said to have belonged to the Emperor which are covered with rich embroidery, and there is a so-called dalmatic of Charlemagne in the Vatican. Concerning this, however, there has been much controversy. It was formerly regarded as an example of Gothic work of the thirteenth century; but it is now considered to be Greek of the eighth century, and is possibly actually the dalmatic worn by the Emperor when he sang the Gospel at High Mass at his coronation by Pope Leo III, although the work is singularly fine for so early a date. On the front of the dalmatic, which is of blue silk semé with crosses, is embroidered Christ in Glory, with saints and angels below, while on the back is the Transfiguration. The whole has been extensively but very cleverly repaired and the effect is still beautiful.

The period has now been reached when the art of needlework began to be successfully practised in England under the Anglo-Saxons, and at this point a new chapter may fittingly begin.

## CHAPTER XV

FROM 900 TO 1500

**T**HERE is no doubt that the art of embroidery began to develop in England not very long after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Early in the eighth century Aldhelm, bishop and church builder, records the skill of English embroiderers ; and not many years later it was found necessary to reprove nuns in general for being fonder of embroidery and weaving than of the singing of psalms and the reading of devout books. And although the greater part of Anglo-Saxon needlework was executed in religious houses for ecclesiastical purposes, a considerable amount was done by secular women of all ranks, above that of peasants, for household or personal use. The dress of both sexes was simple ; that of a man of the upper classes consisted of short breeches, a close fitting cloth tunic reaching to the knees, with a belt of the same material ; which, together with the edge of the tunic and the wristbands of the long tight sleeves, were embroidered either with worsted or gold thread according to the rank of the wearer. Over this tunic was worn either a short cloak reaching barely to the knees, or a long and wide one draped round the body after the fashion of a Roman toga. The cloaks, whether large or small, were frequently embroidered in a similar style

to the tunic, that is to say, with small crosses or circles surrounded by dots or rays, either powdered all over the garment, or arranged to form borders. The costume of an Anglo-Saxon lady was a long wide-skirted dress with tight-fitting sleeves, over which was sometimes worn a super-tunic with open sleeves. The indoor head-dress was a coverchief, and for outdoor wear an ample hooded cloak was donned, all these garments being embroidered in the same way as the tunic and cloak of a man. Such costumes, male and female, are depicted in the Cottonian and Harleian MSS., but of the garments themselves nothing tangible remains; unless it be in the fragments of those copes and altar-hangings which once formed the cloaks of some royal or noble Anglo-Saxon who gave or bequeathed them to the Church according to a custom frequently observed at that period. Thus King Edgar (956-978) presented to the monks of Ely a mantle for conversion into a cope, and Witlaf, King of Mercia, bestowed his coronation robe of rich silk worked with golden apples to the Abbey of Croyland, which was fortunate enough to possess also vestments of silk embroidered with gold eagles, the gift of King Canute, and hangings equally gorgeous given by the Abbot Egebric. It is, however, unlikely that these last ever formed part of the personal belongings of their donors.

Of the few, the very few, fragments that remain of all the splendid church embroideries produced in England during the Anglo-Saxon period, the most famous are the stole and maniple found in the year 1826 in the tomb of St. Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral. These time-worn relics are all that are left of the richly worked gifts, which included two chasubles, a stole and maniple, altar-cloths, hangings and other

things, made by King Athelstan to the shrine of St. Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street in 934. The maniple and stole, both imperfect, which are at Durham, are of linen embroidered with red, green, blue and purple silks and gold thread, the lining being silk. In the centre of the stole is the Agnus Dei, with figures of the prophets on either side. These are much mutilated. In the middle of the maniple is represented the Hand of God issuing from the sky, with St. Sixtus and St. Lawrence on the right, and St. Gregory and St. Peter the Deacon on the left. Portions of embroidered inscriptions on both stole and maniple are still decipherable, and those on the reverse sides record that the stole and maniple were caused to be made for Bishop Fridestan by order of Queen Aelfflaeda, the wife of Edward the Elder. Her marriage took place in 900 and she died in 916, and Bishop Fridestan held the See of Winchester from 905 to 931. How vestments, worked for a bishop of Winchester, got as far north as Durham appears something of a puzzle at first glance; but a clue may be found in the fact that King Athelstan, who gave the embroideries to the shrine at Chester-le-Street when he visited it in 934, was the stepson of Queen Aelfflaeda. She probably died while the vestments were still unfinished, and the king for some reason gave them to St. Cuthbert's shrine instead of to the Bishop. They were removed with the body to Durham in the middle of the tenth century. The fineness of the embroidery of these relics testifies to the skill of the English workers, who, however, were not to reach the zenith of their fame for another three hundred years.

The development of the art of embroidery in England was entirely unaffected by the Norman Conquest. Indeed the invaders could teach the Anglo-Saxons

nothing in the way of needlework ; on the contrary, they were amazed, according to William the Conqueror's chaplain, William of Poitu, at the splendour of the embroidery executed by the English. The coronation robe of William himself was of Saxon work, and that its beauty was equally appreciated by Queen Matilda is suggested by the bequest by her will, dated the year of her death, 1083, to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, Caen, of "my tunic worked at Winchester by Alderet's wife, and the mantle embroidered in gold which is in my chamber, to make a cope," another instance, it may be noted in passing, of secular garments being bequeathed for ecclesiastical purposes. If indeed the Bayeux Tapestry is to be taken as a typical example of the needlework executed by the Norman ladies at the time of the Conquest, their immense inferiority to the Anglo-Saxon embroiderers of the period is obvious ; for the crudity of the drawing, the entire lack of proportion and perspective, and of light and shade, the coarseness of the stitchery and the arbitrary use of the few colours employed in this world-famous piece, make it as unsatisfactory as a work of art, as it is interesting as a unique historic document made with the needle instead of the pen.

The Bayeux Tapestry is not, of course, tapestry at all, as it is wrought with the needle, not woven in the loom, but the name has at any rate the sanction of long usage. The so-called tapestry consists of a strip of coarse linen, now brownish in colour, over 230 feet long and about 18 inches in width, and is divided into seventy-two panels or compartments, in each of which is worked an incident in the history of the conquest of England, ending with the death of King Harold and the rout of the English. The embroidery is executed in harsh worsted, strands of

which are laid on the linen and couched down, the faces, hands and legs (when bare) of the 623 persons (all male but three) represented being simply outlined. Above each division is an explanatory inscription in Latin, and at the top and bottom are narrow borders worked with designs representing some of Æsop's fables, scenes of husbandry and divers strange birds and beasts.

The earliest mention of the Bayeux Tapestry is in an inventory of the ornaments of the Cathedral of Bayeux dated 1476, in which it is described as "Une tente très longue et étroite de telle à broderie de ymages et escripteaulx faisans representation du conquest d'Angleterre, laquelle est tendue environ la nef de l'église le jour et par les octaves des Reliques." In 1562 the tapestry had a narrow escape from destruction when the Cathedral was sacked by the Calvinists; it escaped injury probably because it was removed to some place of concealment, but from this date for nearly 230 years nothing is heard of it, and it seems to have been entirely forgotten by the outer world. In 1724, however, M. Lancelot, a member of the Académie des Inscriptions became the possessor of an unidentified drawing of a portion of it, which so aroused his interest that he eventually set on foot enquiries in the hope of discovering what the drawing represented—whether a bas-relief, a fresco or stained glass—and where it was. M. Lancelot's search was entirely without result, but the paper he had written on the subject having been read by Father Montfaucon, a Benedictine of Saint Maur, the latter became so convinced of the antiquarian value of the original of the drawing, that he made independent investigations, which led to the discovery that the sketch represented a portion of the tapestry so long lost

sight of. Father Montfaucon sent a draughtsman to Bayeux to make a drawing of the embroidery, and published engravings from it—which were anything but accurate as it turned out—together with a commentary in his “*Monumens de la Monarchie Française*” in 1730. At this time the tapestry was in two pieces, but these were afterwards joined together. Universal interest was excited by Father Montfaucon’s discovery, an interest which has been maintained up to this time, so that it seems to be extremely unlikely that this wonderful piece of history in needlework will ever again be allowed to fall into obscurity.

In 1792 it had another hair-breadth ’scape; for in that year it was commandeered to make an improvised tilt for a military wagon, and was only rescued by the exertions of the Commissary of Police, M. le Forestier, who contrived to furnish some material better suited to such a purpose, carried off the precious tapestry and stored it temporarily in his house. Two years later it again ran considerable risk of being destroyed, this time at the hands of a revolutionary mob, but it was now in charge of a Commission for the protection of works of art in the district of Bayeux, and the Commissioners deposited it in a hiding-place, the secret of which was well kept. In 1803 the tapestry was taken to Paris by order of Napoleon, and there exhibited for a year. So much interest was taken in it, that the Parisians were unwilling to part with it; but in spite of some opposition it was returned to Bayeux, where it was taken charge of by the Municipal Council, in whose possession it still remains, having never been returned to the Cathedral. For many years the tapestry was exhibited in the Hôtel de Ville mounted on rollers in a barbarously destructive manner, but happily it was rescued from

this perilous position in 1842, when it was removed to a special building and mounted under glass.

It used to be generally accepted that the Bayeux Tapestry was worked by the wife of the Conqueror, Queen Matilda and her ladies; that it was indeed, to quote the Countess of Wilton ("Art of Needlework," 1840), "the proud tribute of a fond and affectionate wife, glorying in her husband's glory, and proud of emblazoning his deeds." But unfortunately this pretty story has no foundation in fact. It seems to have been known by the authorities of the Cathedral as "*La Grande Telle du Conquest d'Angleterre*," but when discovered by Father Montfaucon it was called in Bayeux "*La Toilette du Duc Guillaume*," and there was some kind of a legend that it was worked by the direction of Queen Matilda. This was the germ of an attribution which was not definitely made until the tapestry was shown in Paris in 1803, when it was officially described as "*la tapisserie brodée par la Reine Mathilde, épouse de Guillaume le Conquérant*." It was not long, however, before archæologists began to throw doubt on this version of its origin; for as early as 1812, the Abbé de la Rue, Professor of History in the Academy of Caen, published a monograph in which he endeavoured to prove that the tapestry was the work of the Empress Matilda, the daughter of Henry I, who married in 1127 Geoffrey Plantagenet, as her second husband. Mr. F. R. Fowke, to whose book "*The Bayeux Tapestry*," one of the best of the many written on the subject, the writer is indebted for most of the information given here, thinks that the work was executed to the order of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. Mr. Hilaire Belloc, whose admirably illustrated volume, "*The Book of the Bayeux Tapestry*," was published in 1914, dismisses

the Queen Matilda story as "the guesswork of an antiquarian don," and gives what appear to be fairly convincing reasons for concluding that the tapestry was executed "certainly later than 1140; almost certainly later than 1150, and probably as late as 1160." He bases his conclusions on the evidence of dress, accoutrements and armorial bearings or badges, and on the fact that the chain of incidents represented in the tapestry follow tolerably closely the Roman de Rou written by the Chronicler and Poet Wace about 1160. It would seem, however, that as Wace was a Prebendary of Bayeux, his poem may have been influenced by the pre-existent tapestry.

In 1871 the Lords of the Committee of the Council of Education obtained permission from the Municipal Council of Bayeux to have the tapestry photographed. In spite of many technical difficulties, this was carried out successfully, and one of the enlarged reproductions made from negatives then obtained, and correctly coloured, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. From this the illustration given in Plate (25) is taken. The scene here depicted is explained by the legend "*Hic Harold mare navigavit et velis vento plenis venit in terra Widonis Comititis;*" i.e. : Here Harold sailed the sea and with wind-full sails came to Count Guy's land. Men are embarking hawk and hounds, while a man on the steps calls to the rest of the party who are still drinking in an upper chamber. The larger vessel is shown making sail, the sailors attending to their various duties, directed by the master who is steering with an oar. The main body of men seem to be seated and have fixed their shields overlapping along the top of the bulwarks, ready in case of attack.

Of English needlework of the twelfth century very little is known. The chasuble and mitre pre-

served in Sens Cathedral are said to have belonged to Archbishop Thomas à Becket, murdered in 1170, but they are doubtfully English, and the same must be said of the mitre at Munich, embroidered with the martyrdom of Thomas à Becket on one side and that of St. Stephen on the other. On the other hand some fragments of vestments found in 1870 at Worcester in a stone coffin, which was probably that of Bishop William de Blois, who held the See from 1218 to 1236, are certainly English and may be assigned with some degree of confidence to the twelfth century. The embroidery is worked in gold thread and silks on a ground of silk which was probably once red. Some shreds of embroidered vestments of the thirteenth century were found in 1861, in the tomb of another Bishop of Worcester, Walter de Cantelupe, the successor of William de Blois. Of the very few other examples of twelfth century work are the sandals and buskins of an archbishop which were found in a tomb, probably that of Hubert Walter (1193-1205) in Canterbury Cathedral some years ago. They are of silk with embroidery in gold and silver thread.

By the middle of the thirteenth century English ecclesiastical embroidery had become famous on the Continent by reason of its immense superiority over that produced by the workers of Spain, France and Italy. According to Matthew Paris, Pope Innocent IV (1246), noticing the beauty of the orphreys on the copes worn by some of the great dignitaries of the Church, asked whence they came. On learning they were of English origin, he exclaimed, "Truly England is our garden of delight; in sooth it is a well inexhaustible, and where there is much abundance from thence much may be extracted." Orders were thereupon dispatched to the heads of the Cistercian Order

in England to obtain vestments of English embroidery for the Papal Choir. From this time onwards to the end of the fourteenth century English embroidery was exported in ever increasing quantity, and not only do the records and inventories of foreign churches bear ample witness to this, but there are still actually existing in their treasuries magnificent vestments of undoubtedly English origin. Among the numerous richly embroidered vestments belonging to the Cathedral of Anagni, near Rome, are some of these, and in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Rome, is the cope called St. Sylvester's (it had nothing to do with the saint personally, but was dedicated to him), which is English of the thirteenth century. The embroidery of this cope represents scenes from the lives of Christ and of the Virgin Mary, and of the martyrdom of Saints, worked under canopies supported by pillars formed of twisted vine stems, with birds within octagons as capitals, and angels with musical instruments above in the spandrels. The ground of this fine cope, the border of which has unfortunately vanished, is executed entirely in gold. In the Civic Museum at Bologna there is a cope of English work which in certain points of design and execution resembles that of St. Sylvester, but the arcading, or series of canopies, differs in outline and the subjects are all taken from the history of Our Lord, with one exception; this is the martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket. Other copes of English origin and of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries remain at St. Bertrand de Comminges in the Department of Var (two specimens), Toledo, Madrid (this cope was formerly in the Daroca College) and at Pienza. The cope from Ascoli, too, which was purchased by the late Mr. Pierpont Morgan and afterwards restored by him as a gift

to the Italian Government, has also all the distinctive characteristics of English embroidery of the thirteenth century. These characteristics, as described by Mr. Kendrick in "English Embroidery," are: (1) The working of the faces in spiral lines starting from the centre of the cheek, the rounded effect produced being accentuated by pressing up the embroidery from the back by means of a knobbed metal rod made hot; (2) the shaven upper lips of the bearded men; (3) the remarkably high and broad foreheads of the figures; (4) the introduction into the design of the winged seraph on the wheel, from the Vision of Ezekiel; of birds within the spandrels of the arcading; vine, oak and ivy foliage, leopards' heads with protruding tongues and foliated lions' masks. Mr. Kendrick adds "that no monopoly can be claimed for some of the characteristics among them—such as the seraph or the vine foliage—but where a combination of them is found, it is fairly safe to conclude that the work is English."

The spirally worked split-stitch mentioned as specially distinguishing English ecclesiastical embroidery of the thirteenth century was considered by a distinguished authority on the subject, the late Canon Rock, to be the "opus Anglicum," or "Anglicanum" of contemporary MSS. He was, moreover, of opinion that "opus plumarium" was long-and-short stitch; "opus consutum," applied embroidery; and "opus pulvinarium," cushion stitch, his conclusions being based, in the main, on information derived from Dugdale's "History of St. Paul's," and certain entries in inventories. But as a matter of fact the whole subject of the nomenclature of stitches is wrapped in obscurity, and the correctness of Dr. Rock's inferences is now regarded as doubtful. In the course of centuries,

stitches have been re-discovered, re-invented and re-christened over and over again, until almost every one is, or has been, known by several entirely different names. There are in existence long lists of stitches given by old writers, some of the names in which are familiar enough to the workers of to-day, but in the majority of instances it is practically certain that the modern stitch has no resemblance to that similarly entitled three or four hundred years ago. Furthermore, as Mr. Lewis F. Day writes in "Art in Needlework," "when this confusion is complicated by the invention of a new name for every conceivable combination of thread strokes, or for each slightest variation upon an old stitch, and even for a stitch worked from left to right, instead of from right to left, the task of reducing them to order seems almost hopeless."

Of the early English ecclesiastical embroidery still in existence in the country of its origin, the most celebrated is the Syon cope, which after passing through many vicissitudes, is now housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The following is a summary of its story: In 1414 a monastery was built and endowed by Henry V at Isleworth for nuns of the Order of St. Bridget, and given the name of Syon. This religious house had a staunch lay friend in the person of Master Thomas Graunt, an official of one of the Ecclesiastical Courts, and in the records of the Syon Monastery (now in the British Museum) mention is made of rich gifts received from him, of which the cope is one. It is, however, of the end of the thirteenth century, so had been in existence for over a hundred years before the house at Isleworth, but nothing is known of its earlier history. Some authorities infer that as the shields of arms which form the design of the orphreys are those of Warwick-

shire families, the cope was probably worked in a convent at Coventry; but as the orphreys are of later date by about half a century than the cope itself, and were obviously added as a repair, this conclusion does not seem to be altogether satisfactory. When on the dissolution of the monasteries the Syon nuns fled from England, they took the cope with them, and bore it safely throughout their long wanderings through Flanders, France and Portugal. Eventually they settled in Lisbon, where their ill-luck pursued them, for their convent was twice wrecked by earthquake. In 1830 the community and the cope returned to England, and thirty-four years later this splendid vestment became the property of the nation for what now seems the absurdly small price of £110. The foundation material of the cope is linen canvas, but of it nothing is visible, the whole surface being entirely covered with a design of interlacing barbed quatrefoils grounded with a chevron pattern in red and green silks alternately and outlined with gold. The spaces between the quatrefoils are all grounded in green, and in each is worked a six-winged seraph on a wheel. In the quatrefoils are represented Christ Enthroned extending His right hand in benediction to his mother, who is seated on a throne beside him; the Crucifixion; St. Michael overcoming Satan; the death and burial of the Virgin Mary; Christ with Mary Magdalene in the garden; Christ overcoming the unbelief of St. Thomas; and in the remaining quatrefoils are the Apostles. The faces are worked in the spiral split-stitch, to which reference has already been made as a characteristic of English embroidery of the period. The draperies are worked in split, chain and long-and-short stitch, the chevron patterns filling the spaces between the quatrefoils are done in the

short upright stitches, which centuries later came to be known as cushion stitches, and a peculiar feature of the work is the way in which bundles or hanks of thread are laid at the *back* of the linen and held in place by some of the embroidery stitches being passed over them. This padding gives solidity to the work, and has probably rendered it more durable. The cope is illustrated in Plate 26.

One of the most interesting examples in England of early fourteenth-century Church work is the altar-frontal at Steeple Aston, in Oxfordshire. This has been made out of a cope and has, of course, been shockingly mutilated in the process. The ground is silk, now of a dull cream colour, and on it are embroidered the Martyrdom of Saints within interlacing ivy and oak foliage springing from foliated masks. Heraldic lions of a very quaint type with protruding tongues, are introduced in the design, and in the orphreys, now placed at the ends of the altar-frontal, are angels mounted on horseback and playing divers musical instruments. A large portion of the embroidery is carried out with gold thread and cords, the rest being worked in soft silks of various colours.

A decline in the quality of the ecclesiastical embroidery produced in England set in about the middle of the fourteenth century. The designs became clumsier and less well balanced, the figures lost their grace and there was a marked falling off in the actual stitchery, the flesh, in particular, being worked with much less care. It is worthy of note that there was a corresponding deterioration in the art of illuminating MSS, during the same period.

Things began to improve early in the fifteenth century, and towards the end of it some very fine examples of embroidery were produced. The style

of the work executed after the revival, however, varied markedly from that of the period prior to the commencement of the decline. Instead of linen or canvas as a ground material, velvet or silk damask was used, and the series or tiers of rounds, quatrefoils or arcadings enclosing scenes or single figures, were replaced by a central subject, such as Christ Enthroned, the Assumption of the Virgin, or the Crucifixion, surrounded by detached devices, among which the winged seraph on a wheel frequently appeared. Spangles were often introduced as well as a great deal of gold-thread work, this being of a very light type compared with the massive embroidery of the two preceding centuries. A very fine cope of about 1500, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, exemplifies this alteration in style. The material is purple velvet, and the central subject is the Assumption, with Tudor roses, fleurs-de-lis and six-winged seraphs as ground devices.

Scattered throughout the churches of England, sometimes in remote villages, are, or were, until a comparatively recent date, many examples of fifteenth-century embroidery. At Baunton, Gloucestershire, was an interesting altar-frontal of alternate stripes of red and yellow silk, over which double-headed eagles were worked at regular intervals. In the centre were the Rood with St. Mary and St. John, and below was a very curious rebus. "An eagle rising grips by the back a white ass, below the ass is a golden barrel or tun from the bung-hole of which issue two seeded or flowering branches. The most likely solution of this rebus is that it stands for the name of the donor, one John As(h)burton, the eagle standing for John, and the plant growing out of the tun being intended for burs. . . ." ("English Church Furniture," by

J. Charles Cox, LL.D., and Alfred Harvey, M.B.). This frontal is still in existence but in a private collection.

Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire, quaintest and most picturesque of towns, possesses not only a fine cope of red velvet powdered with gold stars and having orphreys embroidered with eight saints under canopies, but a pair of altar-frontals worked with the Annunciation and the Assumption in white silk damask. One of the frontals was intended to hang before the altar, and the other at the back as a reredos, and it is believed that these at Chipping Campden are the only perfect pair of this date—*circa* 1500—remaining in England.

Of other specimens of old embroideries remaining in English churches, a list is given in Appendix A.

Of the secular embroideries of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries nothing remains except some tattered scraps, such as the surcoat of Edward the Black Prince which hangs above his tomb at Canterbury, but there is plenty of evidence that needlework was more or less extensively applied to the ornamentation of both clothes and household furniture during the whole of the period named. The domestic accounts of royal and noble personages show that paid embroiderers formed part of their establishments, in the wills and inventories are many records of embroidered garments, mantles and tunics and hoods, as well as wall-hangings, carpets and beds, and if further proof is needed, there are the various sumptuary laws forbidding the wearing of embroidery by persons below a certain rank.

Hangings to cover the bare stone walls were almost a necessity in those days, and in the houses of the wealthy these were often of velvet decorated with

coats-of-arms, mottoes and badges in heavy gold thread, which were probably worked on linen and applied to the ground material. Humbler folk contented themselves with hangings of linen carivas, or coarse woollen stuff, embroidered with worsted. A monk of Chester describes in the fifteenth century a large hall hung with English needlework with the story of "Adam, Noe and his shyppe," the twelve sons of Jacob and the plagues of Egypt ("Old English Embroidery," by F. and H. Marshall).

The bed-hangings were very important items in the furnishing of a great house, and very sumptuous some of the sets must have been, if the description in wills and inventories is even moderately accurate. Edward the Black Prince's widow bequeathed to her son Richard II a "bed of red velvet embroidered with feathers of silver, and heads of leopards of gold with boughs and leayes issuing out of their mouths." This must have been gorgeous, but more attractive still, perhaps, is the description of the bed of black satin embroidered with white lions and gold roses, which the Earl of March bequeaths in 1380. There are records in other wills of beds embroidered "with gold swans with branches and flowers of divers colours," with "woodbine flowers of silver" on red and black silk, and with fetterlocks on black velvet.

Handsome as all these embroideries must have been, the great period of secular needlework was yet to come, beginning as it did with the early years of the sixteenth century and lasting until the reign of the first Stuart King.

## CHAPTER XVI

FROM 1500 TO 1625

**D**URING the first years of the sixteenth century no radical change occurred in the characteristics of English embroidery, whether secular or ecclesiastical. It is said, apparently with some reason, that during this period a number of French embroiderers were employed in England, but if so, the work of the time shows no sign of foreign influence, although imported stuffs, velvets, silks, tissues and brocades were increasingly used for the ground of embroideries, especially after the accession of Henry VIII to the throne.

There is in the Victoria and Albert Museum an altar-frontal, or, as Mr. Kendrick describes it, a panel, of the early part of the sixteenth century, of crimson velvet, embroidered with a figure of St. Katherine of Alexandria holding a book and a sword. The wheel of her martyrdom is in front of her, and behind her is a figure of her enemy, the Emperor Maximin who was responsible for her death. The embroidery is worked in couched gold thread and coloured silks, and formal groups of English flowering plants surround the figures. The work has been applied to a new ground.

In the same museum there is also a chasuble, which was together with two others formerly at Hexham,

of black velvet with orphreys of crimson velvet. It is embroidered with angels blowing trumpets and holding scrolls with the inscriptions "Surgite mortui," and "Venite ad iudicium." Alternating with the angels are figures representing the dead rising from their graves, each of the subjects being surrounded by rays formed of lines of spangles.

In former days every guild or fraternity had its mortuary cloth or pall, often more than one, and in the case of the wealthier companies they were made of very costly materials and richly embroidered. Fortunately a considerable number of these palls are still in existence, the majority dating from the sixteenth century, although there are a few which may be assigned to an earlier period.

Of the seven palls now remaining of the many that once belonged to the London Companies, that of the Fishmongers is perhaps the most celebrated. According to tradition it was used at the funeral of Sir William Walworth in 1381, and this story is repeated in its description in the "Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibition of Embroideries," held in the South Kensington Museum in 1873, and accepted by M. Lefébure in his "Embroidery and Lace." But as Mr. Alan S. Cole points out, in a note to his translation of the book in question, the arms embroidered on the pall are those of the Stock-Fishmongers and the Salt-Fishmongers united into one, having as supporters a merman in gold armour and a mermaid with a looking-glass. As the two companies were not amalgamated until 1536, the work cannot be earlier than this date. It is of course just possible that the arms are later additions, but there is nothing to suggest that this theory is likely to be correct. The material of the pall is red and gold brocade of Flemish origin; a great deal of

laid-work in gold thread is introduced into the embroidery, and a considerable part of the work is carried out in long-and-short stitch with silks. On each of the hanging portions at the ends of the pall is the figure of St. Peter, seated, holding the keys of Heaven, and on either side an angel swinging a censer, while in the middle of the longer pendent panels the saint is represented receiving the keys from Christ. This centre design is flanked by the arms of the Company as already described.

The Vintners' Company has a very fine sixteenth-century pall of velvet and cloth of gold, elaborately embroidered with the story of St. Martin of Tours, the arms of the Company and bunches of grapes; and no fewer than three palls were presented to the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1562. The Saddlers', Brewers', Coopers', Leather-sellers' and Founders' Companies are also in possession of palls dating from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

Many churches and some provincial towns own handsomely embroidered palls, and of these perhaps the one belonging to the church at Dunstable is the most celebrated. It was originally given to the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist by Henry Fayrey, who died in 1516, and its ground materials are crimson velvet and gold brocade of Florentine weaving. On its hanging panels are worked, not only the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, but many figures representing members of the Fayrey family, the arms of the Haberdashers' and Mercers' Companies and several woolpacks. The figures are all remarkable for their grace and beauty of line.

Other famous palls are at Worcester (Clothiers' Company); Norwich (St. Gregory's Church), and Sudbury, Suffolk.

An interesting type of secular embroidery, introduced at the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII, was the "Spanish black-work," which is believed on good grounds to have been brought from Spain by Katherine of Aragon. The ground of this was invariably white linen, and the work was carried out in black silk, either alone or combined with gold thread. It was used for all kinds of personal garments as well as household linen; unsuitable as it may seem, Henry VIII wore shirts adorned with black-work; it bordered Queen Katherine's bodices and trimmed her "shetys of fyne Hollande cloth"; it was introduced on such widely different articles as jerkins and caps and "pillow-beres," and a little later it is on record that Mary Tudor wore "smockes" worked with Spanish stitches in black and gold. Possibly she may have embroidered them herself, for that melancholy Queen spent many of the long hours of her life in needlework. According to Taylor, the Water Poet—

"Her greatness held it no disreputation  
To hold the needle in her Royal hand,  
Which was a good example to our Nation  
To banish idleness throughout our land.  
And thus the Queen in wisdom thought it fit  
The needle's work pleased her and she graced it."

Black-work is seen in many of the finest portraits of the time. In the National Portrait Gallery there are King Henry and Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, in shirts wrought with black, and Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, in a tight-fitting under-bodice, similarly embroidered; at Hampton Court is the portrait of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, attributed to Gwillim Stretes, which shows the subject wearing under his scarlet jerkin a shirt with long ruffled

sleeves, covered with the fashionable needlework; in the possession of Viscount Dillon is a portrait by Sir Antonio More of Sir Henry Lee (1520-1611) in a black slashed doublet over a white shirt worked in black with armillary spheres and elaborate knots; while to Jesus College, Oxford, belongs one of the several pictures of Queen Elizabeth which represent her in a gown adorned with devices in black. And these are but a few instances out of many.

The designs most frequently seen in the earlier examples of black-work, of which there are a fair number still remaining, consist of continuous curving stems covering the surface of the linen; from these stems spring semi-naturalistic flowers—roses, carnations and honeysuckle are usually among them—outlined in stem-stitch, and most skilfully shaded by means of myriads of tiny speck-like stitches, as exemplified in the hood shown in Plate 27. The main stem is generally worked in some kind of knotted or plaited stitch, with thicker silk than that used for the rest of the pattern, or in gold thread. Sometimes the curving stems are of the vine bearing leaves and grapes, a very fine pillow-case with this pattern, the property of Viscount Falkland, being illustrated in Mr. Kendrick's "English Embroidery." Next in order of popularity to the curving stem designs came small geometrical ones, and in the later, that is to say, the Elizabethan pieces, are seen queer devices of birds and beasts, evidently copied from wood-cuts in books of emblems; while in a few of the larger examples scenes from classical mythology are represented, but these are exceptional. There are a number of good examples of Spanish black-work in the Victoria and Albert Museum, from which the collector may learn

what admirable results the needlewoman of the sixteenth century contrived to obtain from the simple combination of black silk and white linen. The addition of gold thread may add to the richness of the effect, but on the whole it detracts from that delicacy and refinement which are mainly responsible for the charm of the pieces worked entirely in black. And it is easy to understand how the sober, dignified beauty of the black-work must have been accentuated by its contrast with the brilliant colours, costly materials, and heavily massed stitches of the embroideries contemporary with it. It is not surprising that it remained long in fashion. In 1539 the New Year's gifts made to King Henry VIII included shirts of holland, wrought with black silk; Queen Mary, as already mentioned, wore smocks of Spanish work, and a similar garment was the strange present of Sir Philip Sidney to Queen Elizabeth on New Year's Day, 1578. To the same Royal lady, Lady Zouche gave a pair of "pillow-beres"—i.e. pillow-cases—of holland, wrought with black silk, and among the items in the inventory of that "bitter shrew," Bess of Hardwick, the famous and much-married Countess of Shrewsbury, are curtains wrought with black silk needlework. It was not until after the first Stuart king had ascended the English throne that Spanish black-work went out of fashion, after a season of popularity that had lasted nearly a hundred years.

Throughout the whole of the reign of Henry VIII the application of embroidery to costume became more and more extravagantly profuse. Everything that man or woman could wear, from caps and gloves and shoes to under-garments, were lavishly ornamented with stitchery. The patterns were more restrained and less fantastic than they became in the reign of Elizabeth,

but the actual embroidery, in which there was much raised gold-work could scarcely have been more gorgeous. During the greater part of the reign of Henry VIII designs showed some traces of Italian inspiration, specially noticeable in the worked book-covers of the time. With Anne of Cleves came a fancy for patterns of the Flemish Renaissance type, but this soon passed, and the Italian style again predominated until the accession of Mary I, whose tastes were essentially Spanish.

The famous meeting of Henry VIII and Francis I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold took place in 1520. According to contemporary accounts the embroideries on the tents, banners and horse-trappings, as well as on the costumes of the knights forming the retinues of the sovereigns, were splendid, beyond the power of words to describe. Stuffs of the most costly kind, silks, velvets, brocades, damasks, and cloths of gold and silver were worked with quaint mottoes, symbolic devices, badges and cyphers in gold and silver and colours. At a tournament held on the occasion of his wedding in 1515, it will be remembered, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the brother-in-law of King Henry, had the trappings of his horse half-grey "frise" (frieze) and half cloth-of-gold. On the frise was embroidered :

Cloth of frise be not too bold  
That thou art matched with cloth of gold.

And on the cloth-of-gold :

Cloth of gold do not despise  
That thou be matched with cloth of frise.

Unfortunately little or nothing is known of the technical details of these wonderful embroideries, and not a ves-

tige remains by which they may be reconstructed even in imagination.

To all intents and purposes, the art of ecclesiastical embroidery in England was killed by the Reformation. Much of the beautiful work belonging to the Churches and Monasteries was wantonly destroyed ; melted down for the sake of the gold and silver in it, or sold to foreign buyers. A chasuble and two dalmatics, for instance, now in the Chapter-house at Valencia, were purchased by two Spanish merchants, Andrew and Peter de Medina, when the vestments and ornaments belonging to Westminster Abbey were sold at the Dissolution. Their subjects are scenes from the Life of Christ, and in the background of one the Tower of London is depicted ! The custom of giving or bequeathing articles of secular costume for ecclesiastical purposes had continued to be practised into the sixteenth century, and as late as 1525 Sir Ralph Verney the younger directed in his will that the gowns of Dame Anne Verney, his late wife, " doo make vestments to be given to churches " according to the discretion of his executors. After 1538, however, the position was reversed ; copes were cut up into cushion-covers, altar-cloths used for upholstering chairs, and the fine needlework of chasuble and dalmatic transferred to bed-hangings or window-curtains, remnants of these mutilated and desecrated vestments still existing in their transformed state in old houses throughout the country. Destruction was the order of the day, and the professional embroiderers suffered severely by the loss of their trade. But as some compensation, the already existing fashion, amounting, indeed, to a craze, for embroidery on secular costume, continued to increase, until in the reign of Elizabeth the highest point of extravagance in needlework

applied to dress was reached. It is said, that before the Virgin Queen came to the throne, her taste in clothes was of the soberest and that she wore the plainest and simplest garments, but if this is true it is probable that her circumstances were responsible, for she showed herself excessively fond of embroideries from the time of her accession to her death. It was she who granted the charter of incorporation to the Broderers' Company in 1561, which resulted in the work of trade embroiderers in the City of London being maintained at a very high level, for all they produced had to be submitted for examination at the Hall of the Company, where, if good enough, it was passed and stamped, but if of inferior quality impounded and destroyed—a drastic proceeding, but one which was for the ultimate benefit of the art as well as the public.

When Queen Elizabeth died there were no fewer than three thousand gowns, most of them embroidered, in her wardrobe. It is therefore no wonder that the economically minded King James should have insisted that his wife, Anne of Denmark, should take over some of her predecessor's splendid clothes for her own wearing when she came to London. What these gorgeous dresses were like may be gathered from Queen Elizabeth's innumerable portraits. Some are embroidered with exquisite natural flowers—roses, carnations, woodbine and pansies—worked in delicate coloured silks, lavishly intermingled with spangles and gold thread, either the heavy type, which was sewn on the stuff, or the thin thread known as "passing," because it was drawn through the material. Others of the wonderful gowns are worked with emblems—it was the age of emblems—such as that worn by the Queen in the portrait at Hatfield, which is embroidered

with human eyes and ears, "symbolical, no doubt," writes Mr. Kendrick, "of the vigilance and wisdom of the illustrious wearer," or with a strange medley—probably emblematic also—of those queer animals, birds and insects, which were so freely introduced in the tent-stitch and stump-work pictures of the next century. In the author's collection is part of an Elizabethan dress (Plate 28) which is embroidered with a design of wavy stems bearing naturalistic flowers of various kinds, half-hidden among which are beasts—a lion and a squirrel among them—birds and insects, mostly drawn on a very small scale. The embroidery is nowhere absolutely solid, the flowers and other details of the pattern are bordered, as it were, with long-and-short stitch in blue, rose-red or gold-coloured silks, or outlined with thin gold thread; the centres of the flowers are filled with minute French knots, and the caterpillars, conspicuous among the insects, are formed of bits of peacocks' feathers sewn on the linen ground, which is thickly powdered with silver spangles. The caterpillars on this piece are unusually perfect; peacock's feathers were frequently used for such purposes in the embroideries of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, but being peculiarly liable to attack by moth they have generally completely vanished.

Embroidered gloves were in fashion throughout the greater part of the sixteenth century, and some specimens are said to have been the personal property of Henry VIII, although, in perhaps the majority of them, the style of neither design nor work seems to agree with this attribution. During the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth New Year's gifts of embroidered gloves were made to the Royal ladies by those connected with the Court, the number of pairs thus presented

being sometimes astonishing. In 1556 Queen Mary received from "Mrs. Zyzans, a peire of gloues wrought with silke"; from "Anthony Anthony, a peire of gloues with lowpes of golde, lyned with crymson vellat, in a boxe"; and from "Baker, Confessor, foure peire of gloues, two of them furred, thother two lined," besides many others, plain and ornamented. Her successor on the throne, always more ready to receive than to give, encouraged the custom, and not only at the New Year, but on every possible occasion did she graciously accept presents of gloves (and other things), the handsomer the better for the interests of the donor. In 1578, when Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge, the Vice-Chancellor humbly offered a pair of gloves "perfumed and garnished with embroidery and goldsmith's wourk, price lx<sup>s</sup>." In the same year the Queen received, besides many pairs of plain "swete gloves"—i.e. perfumed—two pairs from the Lady Mary Grey, with four dozen buttons of gold, in every one a pearl, and from Lady Mary Sidney a pair with twenty-three buttons of gold with a diamond in each. In the Ashmolean Museum is a pair of gloves presented to Queen Elizabeth when she visited Oxford, but which accidentally or intentionally she left behind her. They are of white kid, very clumsily shaped according to modern notions, and made with moderately deep gauntlets covered with heavy embroidery in gold thread of the class known as bullion, that is to say a fine corkscrew of very thin wire which is sewn down on the ground material. The base of the thumb is encircled with embroidery; the gauntlet is edged with gold fringe, and as is usually seen in gauntlets of this particular shape, i.e. cut without much "flare," it is open at the side, the edges being connected by straps matching the gauntlet. In some gloves of

similar style, one, two, or three bands of ribbon are substituted for the leather straps. An entirely different type of gauntlet appears on other gloves, presumably of the same period; instead of straps being employed to permit the gloves being pulled up over the full sleeves of the time, the gauntlets are not only wider at the top but are cut into tabs. Each of these tabs is usually delicately embroidered with flowers in silks and gold thread and edged with gold lace. There are a few good examples of sixteenth century gloves in the Victoria and Albert Museum, as, for instance, the very fine pair, of which one is illustrated in Plate 29. These are of light brown leather, with deep gauntlets of white silk embroidered with coloured silks, gold and silver thread and spangles; they are English of the Elizabethan period. The collector who is specially interested in this subject should make a point of studying Mr. W. B. Redfern's admirably illustrated book, "Royal and Historic Gloves and Shoes."

The sixteenth century was the great period of embroidered bookbindings, in fact there is but one example that can be assigned to an earlier date, this being the famous Felbrigg Psalter, which is a manuscript of the thirteenth century in a worked canvas binding of the fourteenth—probably the oldest embroidered bookbinding in existence. It has a very gracefully drawn representation of the Annunciation, in fine split-stitch of silks of various colours, on a background of fine gold thread. Unfortunately, it is now in such poor condition that a photographic reproduction here is impracticable.

The next surviving embroidered binding, in order of date, is a collection of sixteenth century tracts in the British Museum, which is assigned to about 1536,

in spite of the fact that unlike the majority of early embroidered bindings its ground is satin, not canvas or velvet. Much more interesting, and with the advantage of a definite date, is a manuscript by Princess, afterwards Queen, Elizabeth, the "Miroir or Glasse of the Synneful Soul," translated "out of frenche ryme into english prose, joyning the sentences together as well as the capacitie of my symple witte and small lerning coulde extende themselves," and dated: "From Assherige, the last daye of the yeare of our Lord God 1544. . . . To our most noble and vertuous Quene Katherin, Elizabeth her humble daughter wisheth perpetuall felicitie and everlasting joye." This volume, now one of the treasures of the Bodleian Library, is bound in canvas, and may have been embroidered by the Princess herself, although she was only in her eleventh year at the time. The embroidery, however, is not elaborate, as it consists merely of a bold design of interlacing strap-work carried out with gold and silver braid and enclosing the initials K.P., those of Queen Katherine Parr, to whom the book was a gift. In each corner outside the strap-work is a pansy, and the whole of the ground is filled in with short horizontal stitches of blue silk. There are a few other sixteenth century embroidered bindings in existence, the ground material of which is canvas, including another one believed to have been executed by the Princess Elizabeth in 1545, which is in the British Museum. The book is a manuscript, written by the Princess Elizabeth, of prayers composed by Queen Katherine Parr, and translated by the Princess into Latin, French and Italian, and dedicated to Henry VIII. The binding measures  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches by 4, and is grounded with short horizontal stitches, in red silk, set closely so as to entirely hide

the canvas. On this, in the middle, is a large monogram in blue silk and silver thread, perhaps intended for the letters of the word "Katherine." The letter H in red silk and gold thread above and below is set between pansies of yellow, purple and gold thread, with green leaves (Plate 30). Another binding in the British Museum, also on canvas, is "The Daily Exercise of a Christian," dated 1623. The ground in this example is of silver thread in close chain-stitch, completely covering the canvas. From a grassy hillock at the bottom rises a curved stem bearing buds, leaves, and a very large heraldic Tudor rose, worked in tent-stitch with coloured silks. The book still contains its original marker, consisting of an olivet covered with coloured silks and silver thread, to which are attached plaited silk laces (Plate 31).

Most of the existing embroidered bindings of this period are velvet, of which there are a number of fine examples in the British Museum, including some splendid volumes that belonged to Henry VIII. Very fine needlework in silk is seldom seen on these bindings, velvet being a fabric that does not lend itself to this style of embroidery, and the design is, as a rule, carried out mainly in gold and silver threads, cords and gimps. Where silk embroidery is used, it is usually applied, that is to say, it is completed on canvas or linen, cut out, and then sewn down on the velvet ground. A Bible of Henry VIII's (1543) has its crimson velvet binding entirely covered with a beautiful arabesque pattern of fine gold cord, surrounding the Royal Cypher within a circle, a Tudor rose being introduced at each corner of the cover.

Handsome as were the bindings of the middle of the century, those of the reign of Queen Elizabeth exceeded them. Most celebrated among them is

the magnificent Bible printed in 1583, once owned by the Queen herself, and now in the Bodleian. The pattern is a very graceful one of curving rose stems bearing flowers, buds and leaves, worked partly in silks—more freely used in embroidered bindings of this period than in those of the time of Henry VIII—and gold and silver thread, the lesser blossoms being worked entirely in silver, and the main stems formed of silver cord between lines of gold thread. A delicate little wavy pattern of gold cord, green silk and pearls borders the main design, and the back is divided into four compartments by lines of gold cord and pearls, a single Tudor rose, with leaves being worked in each of the two middle panels, and a formal spray or tiny bush of roses in those of the top and bottom. Mr. Cyril Davenport, in "English Embroidered Book-bindings," draws attention to the curious fact that Henry VIII used the red rose of Lancaster as a badge by preference, while on Queen Elizabeth's books the white rose of York oftener appears. Both sovereigns, however, also used the combined Tudor rose.

Some of the Elizabethan bindings are rather spoilt by the crowded design and consequent clumsiness of the embroidery. Metallic cords of various thicknesses, gimps and braids were mixed with bullion and pearls and closely massed together, until the effect was, if rich, equally confused and over-weighted. Yet these bindings were always dignified and had nothing of the grotesque inappropriateness of the preposterous stump-work bindings which followed them in the seventeenth century.

How embroidery was employed in interior decoration in the time of Queen Elizabeth is demonstrated by the collection of worked hangings, panels, furniture-covers, and other things preserved at Hardwick Hall,

a mansion which is a store-house of wonderful specimens of old-time stitchery, the value and interest of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. The famous Countess of Shrewsbury was an industrious and capable needle-woman, and no doubt some of the pieces in which her initials appear were actually the work of her own hands, although it is probable that the majority of them were executed by her ladies under her supervision. She had a characteristic fancy for introducing her initials wherever possible, as the parapet of the Hall, with its repeated "E.S." standing out against the sky, bears witness. A great deal of the embroidery at Hardwick Hall is appliqué, notably the set of black velvet hangings, on which are figures representing the Virtues and Sciences. These are on a very large scale, and are perhaps less really beautiful than curious. More artistic, and also more definitely characteristic of the period, are panels of red velvet with scroll-work appliqué enclosing crests, badges and initials. There are also some unusually early examples of fine tent-stitch embroidery, chiefly panels, now framed, but some of which, according to the inventory, were originally mounted as cushions.

In this wonderful old mansion are several pieces of needlework which are believed to have been executed by Mary Queen of Scots while she was in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury. The Queen was never actually quartered in the existing Hall, as it was not completed until after her execution, her place of imprisonment being an earlier building, of which only the ruins remain. In this older Hall hung those magnificent tapestries of the fifteenth century which the Vandal Countess tore down, cut into strips, and nailed over the bare walls and rafters of her half-

finished house into which she was in frantic haste to move and where they remained in this mutilated state until a few years ago, when the fragments were skillfully pieced together again and restored to something very near their original state. The most interesting specimen of Mary of Scotland's embroidery at Hardwick is a panel worked in tent-stitch with coloured silks and gold and silver thread. Roses, lilies and thistles, emblems of England, France and Scotland, are salient features of the design, the flowers being in lozenge-shaped compartments formed by twisted stems. On an oval in the centre of the panel is the name Maria, ensigned by a crown, which, on the whole, may be regarded as fairly conclusive evidence of the identity of the worker.

A variety of embroidery, if it can be so called, specially identified with the sixteenth century, although it continued in fashion much later, is Turkey-work. This was an imitation of Oriental carpets carried out by passing doubled strands of wool through canvas, knotting them in, and clipping the wool in front, thus producing a surface with a thick close pile, soft yet firm, and capable of resisting hard wear. Work of a very similar kind was twice re-introduced in the nineteenth century under the names of raised wool-work and rug-work, but it is hardly necessary to say that there is no resemblance whatever between the designs of the two widely separated periods. The patterns of Turkey-work were usually composed of closely massed flower-forms, rather confused and overcrowded in effect, but rich and dignified as a whole. There are many records of Turkey-work "cupborde cloths," cushions and "foot-carpetts" in inventories and wills dating from the middle of the sixteenth century, and in the Victoria and Albert Museum there

is a chair upholstered with this embroidery, which has the date 1649 on the back, so that its vogue seems to have lasted for fully a hundred years.

English needlework underwent no important change during the twenty-two years of the reign of James I, its general style remaining much the same as in the time of his predecessor on the throne. Women's dress was rather less lavishly ornamented with stitchery perhaps, but that of men continued to be as gorgeous as ever. The heavily wadded doublet and breeches, which had begun to come into fashion in the reign of Elizabeth, strongly appealed to the timid king, who saw an assassin lurking in every corner, by reason of their dagger-proof qualities, hence they were more and more stuffed and padded, until their grotesque bulkiness was the subject of general derision and gave rise to an abundant crop of satires, skits and jests of all kinds. The doublet, with its protruberant "peas-cod" front, was usually of plain velvet, brocade or satin; but the huge "bombasted" breeches, shaped like an exaggerated peg-top and crammed with horse-hair, wool, or even bran, were generally handsomely embroidered. The patterns, as a rule, were crescents, stars, and other formal devices, arranged to form perpendicular stripes, and worked in coloured silks and gold and silver thread, to which quantities of seed-pearls were not infrequently added. Cut-work was sometimes substituted for, or combined with, embroidery on these amazing breeches, which were also often slashed to show a lining of contrasting colour. This lining was pulled through the slashes to form a series of puffs, each aperture being outlined with embroidery.

Gloves ornamented with needlework continued to be much worn, but their patterns were more formal

yet lighter in character than those of the preceding reign, and much of the embroidery was carried out in gold and silver cord, gimp and spangles. There are still surviving several pairs of embroidered gloves, believed to have either belonged to King James, or to have been gifts from him, and in these the Scotch thistle is introduced with the English rose. The fact of the thistle and the Tudor rose appearing together in a piece of needlework may be taken to denote, as the collector should remember, that it is not earlier than the reign of the first Stuart King; the shamrock is, of course, a badge of comparatively modern introduction.

## CHAPTER XVII

FROM 1625 TO 1700

**T**HE last traces of the Tudor influence in embroidery had disappeared by the time that Charles I ascended the throne. Patterns were simple, but they lacked much of the beauty and originality of those of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, and showed a tendency to monotony and triviality, while the actual stitchery shared in the general deterioration. The dress of both men and women had undergone a notable change, it was far less elaborate and costly, and although rich and handsome stuffs were used, they were no longer covered with embroidery so heavily enriched with gold and silver that their weight must have been terribly tiring to the wearer, particularly in hot weather. The short-waisted bodices of the time were sometimes worn over waistcoats embroidered with naturalistic flowers, and when, towards the end of the reign, stomachers or stiff-pointed bodice-fronts came again into fashion, they were generally ornamented with fine needlework. Embroidered gloves continued to be worn, but here again the trend of popular taste towards simplicity and formality of design is evident, the patterns worked on those of the second quarter of the century being neat rather than handsome. Much of the embroidery, too, was done with fine metal

ords or braids which called for less skill in handling than the loosely twisted silks of the day.

About this time tent-stitch or petit point, to give it the French name by which it is best known to many collectors, began to be applied to all manner of articles. It had been introduced nearly a hundred years earlier, but it was not until the end of the reign of James I that it seems to have been at all largely worked. During the last three quarters of the seventeenth century, bags, cushions, caskets, book-covers and, most important of all perhaps, pictorial panels were embroidered in this stitch on a ground of fine strong brownish canvas. In this particular work, a single stitch is taken over each crossing of the warp and woof threads of the material, and the close-set rows of small slanting stitches form a flat even surface which is exceptionably firm and durable, so that as a happy consequence there are still many good specimens of petit point in existence. Dealers and their kind, by the way, are given to call panels worked in this particular stitch, "tapestry" pictures, a name which they apply with equal inaccuracy to the coarser mixed tent and cross-stitch pictures of Queen Anne's reign, and, with still less excuse, to the Berlin wool atrocities—"Mary Queen of Scots weeping over the dying Douglas," and "Haddon Hall in the days of yore"—of the early Victorian era.

In the earlier examples of tent-stitch embroidery the ground was frequently worked in silver "passing" which shows up with good effect the gay tints of the silks employed in the actual pattern. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a charming little bag (No. 316, 1898) joined to a pin-cushion by a plaited silk cord, both of which are worked in the way described. On the bag appears a formal tree bearing bright-

coloured flowers, and the pin-cushion has a similar but rather less stiff design. There is a larger pin-cushion, also in the Museum, embroidered in petit point with fruit, flowers, and the strange birds and insects characteristic of Stuart embroidery on a ground of silver thread. Such fillings are occasionally seen in the worked pictures of the period, but they are exceptional in large pieces. In the same Museum is also a casket or miniature cabinet with fine tent-stitch embroidery, which is illustrated in Plate 32.

For the subjects of tent-stitch pictures classical mythology was drawn upon, but far oftener the scene or series of scenes depicted was taken from the Old Testament or the Apocrypha. The stories of David and the wife of Uriah the Hittite, the Judgment of Solomon, Esther and Ahasuerus, Tobit, and Susannah and the Elders being those most in favour with the needlewomen of the time. The subject of Plate 33 is rather obscure, it may perhaps represent Charles I having refreshments offered to him by some loyal lady; but this is little more than a guess. The piece, however, is a good and characteristic example of a petit point picture of a rather early date.

Now and then Charles I and his Queen were subjects of such pictures, but they were much less frequently portrayed in tent-stitch than in the high-relief embroidery or stump-work which, coming into fashion a little later than petit point, continued to be produced side by side with it almost to the end of the seventeenth century. A rather scarce variant of the absolutely flat tent stitch picture has certain salient parts of the design slightly raised by means of pressure applied from the back (as in the Church work of the thirteenth century), and the hollows thus produced filled up with a composition of silk-ravellings and paste. In

another variety, such portions as the leaves of trees, petals of flowers, and wings of birds and butterflies were worked separately in close lace stitches over little frames or shapes of thin flexible wire, and when finished sewn to the main body of the embroidery.

Another type of needlework picture contemporary with that of tent-stitch, or possibly a little later, was worked in long and short stitch. An example of this class is shown in Plate 34. This is a panel of white satin, embroidered with figures representing the cardinal virtues; in the centre is Chastity holding a lily in her right hand and a dove in her left, and enclosed in an oval worked in knot stitches and silver thread. Beyond this is a wide flat scroll design in coloured cords sewn down with silver thread and finished at the sides and top with floriations worked in flat long and short stitches with pale yellow and blue silks. The amber and white robes of the figure are embroidered in the same way, but the face, shoulders, arms and feet are merely outlined. In the corners of the panel are female heads representing Justice, Temperance, Patience and Fortitude, worked in flat stitches in shades of amber, blue and green, each within a circular frame of silver thread slightly padded. At the top of the panel are two birds and at the bottom a basilisk and a cockatrice. The ground is thickly dotted with silver spangles.

The curious raised embroidery known as stump-work which made its appearance in England during the first half of the seventeenth century is believed to have been suggested by the Church-work in very high relief that was produced on the Continent, especially in Germany, during the sixteenth century and earlier. It was supposed formerly that stump-work was invented by the "Sisters" of Little Gidding, the

nieces of Nicholas Ferrars, and that the book-bindings carried out in this kind of embroidery were all executed by members of the community. But there is no evidence whatever to support this theory, beyond the fact that the "nuns" were skilled book-binders as well as needlewomen, and one no longer hears of "Little Gidding work" being used among collectors as a synonym for stump embroidery. This in its English form is without doubt the most grotesque and eccentric of any sort of decorative stitchery ever conceived and executed. It is entirely without artistic merit; in truth, it is often but little removed from downright ugliness, yet it has a fascination of its own by reason of the marvellous skill and ingenuity by which its innumerable component parts, the silks, spangles, beads, braids, wires, peacock's feathers, corals, pearls, talc and lace have been wrought into a more or less harmonious whole with the aid of a variety of fine and intricate stitches, such as may be supposed Taylor, the Water Poet, had in mind when in the "Praise of the Needle" prefixed to the 1640 edition of a pattern-book called the "Needle's Excellency," he wrote:

"Fine ferne-stitch, finny-stitch, new-stitch and chain-stitch,  
 Brave bred-stitch, Fisher-stitch, Irish-stitch and Queen-stitch,  
 The Spanish-stitch, Rosemary-stitch and mowse-stitch,  
 The smarting whip-stitch, back-stitch and the cross-stitch  
 All these are good and these we must allow,  
 And these are everywhere in practice now."

The pads or "stumps," so called, whence this fantastic embroidery derived its name, were as a rule made of rolls of wool, tow or horse-hair graduated in size to suit the portion of the pattern which was to be raised and secured in place by a lattice-work of long stitches. Sometimes, however, instead of

these soft pads, stumps of wood carved to shape, moulded wax or canvas stiffened with glue were used. For the ground of the majority of stump-work pictures white satin was chosen, but the more important and therefore the most highly raised parts of the design, such as the principal figures, were often worked separately on linen, probably in a frame, and afterwards applied to the satin, the join being hidden by a line of purl or narrow gimp. The faces of the figures were usually worked in split-stitch with untwisted silk, but in some examples the stump was merely covered with satin on which the features were indicated by a few adroitly placed stitches. To represent the hair masses of knotted stitches or loops of silk purl were generally employed, but a few ambitious workers used real hair, much to the detriment of the embroidery eventually, for it has not lasted well, and the figures on which it was used now present a rather bald-headed appearance.

Infinite labour was expended not only on the costumes of the principal personages in the scene depicted, but on every detail, no matter how insignificant. The dresses were always beautifully worked, some times in lace-stitch detached from the ground—*punto in aria* in fact—with coloured silk, but were made sometimes of satin daintily embroidered with tiny bright-hued flowers. The ermine robes of kings and queens were sometimes represented by a looped stitch worked over a very fine mesh, and afterwards clipped to produce a fur-like surface, while their crowns were formed of heavy bullion thread sewn on the ground material and further adorned with pearls and paste. Paste, pearls and coral, indeed, were lavishly introduced on the quaint little doll-like figures, not only in the

form of necklaces, earrings and buckles, but on the gowns and suits, and a quantity of all kinds of metallic thread was invariably used, but more especially in the earlier pieces some of which are executed almost entirely in this medium. In these older specimens, moreover, the whole or almost the whole design is raised, whereas in the later ones there is usually a considerable amount of flat embroidery. As to the subjects, whether the stump-work was applied to caskets, book-covers, or panels for wall-decoration, they were Biblical in nine cases out of ten, and very much the same as those of the tent-stitch pieces, but representations of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, and Charles II and Katherine of Braganza, are met with occasionally, as well as those of unknown cavaliers and ladies, or ladies alone. But no matter what the actual subject may be, there are certain features all or some of which are invariably introduced as accessories. A castle with many turrets and chimneys and rows of windows filled with talc, is somewhere or other in the background, together with a rainbow and a sun in splendour ; at the sides of the panel are flowers such as natural tulips and carnations, or formal Tudor roses, worked as a rule in flat stitches ; or trees with padded trunks, the foliage worked in French knots or lace-stitches and Brobdingnagian fruit, made of wooden balls cased with buttonhole stitch. At the base of the panel or book-cover there is probably a rock-pool containing a frog, a fish and a mermaid, flanked almost certainly with a lion and a leopard of the heraldic species, while, dotted here, there and everywhere, are rabbits, beetles, snails, caterpillars and butterflies, all drawn with a fine disregard of anything in the way of proportion. Attempts have frequently been made to read definite emblematic

meanings into these things, but without any very convincing result, and it is more than probable that they are entirely without symbolic significance, and are merely conventional stop-gaps inserted wherever the designer or embroiderer thought an empty space required filling. A typical specimen of a stump-work picture is shown in Plate 35. It represents the Queen of Sheba presenting gifts to Solomon. Here we have but a few of the usual accessories. The castle, as befits the climate, has no chimneys; a dog seated level with the umbrella is gazing wistfully at a coney on the other side of the tent; in a rock-pool which surrounds the fountain at the base of the picture, a dog is swimming after a duck and a fish. The tent and all the clothes of the figures are of close lace stitch worked separately and sewn on; the hair is formed of little coils of silk and knots. The large flower sprays in tent and basket stitches which occupy the corners are also applied.

Some stump-work pieces, especially those of early date, have the ground studded more or less thickly with silver or gilt spangles, not stamped out of a sheet of metal according to the modern way, but formed of small wire rings hammered flat. The difference between spangles made by the two methods is easily perceptible on careful examination. Portions of peacock's feathers, as used in Elizabethan embroidery, were also employed in stump-work, but as a rule very little of them remains.

It would seem obvious that embroidery so highly raised, and in which so many frail materials were combined, was only fitted to be framed and glazed, yet not only was stump-work applied to book-bindings and caskets, but small cushions were covered with it. These were usually stuffed with hair or tow, and the

embroidered cover stiffened by a lining of parchment so that they could hardly have been meant for use as head-rests. It has been suggested that they were Bible or Prayer Book cushions, but it seems equally likely that the embroidery was mounted in this manner with no other idea than that of displaying it to the best advantage. Stump-work caskets vary much in style and degree of elaboration. Some are nothing more than square boxes fitted with writing apparatus, a pair of perfume bottles, a box or two, a mirror, and at least one "secret" drawer, generally very easy to discover. In these simple caskets the lining is usually rose-pink velvet or silk, with edging of silver gimp. Caskets of a higher grade are small, upright cabinets, with doors covered with stump-work which, when opened, disclose a number of little drawers generally faced with the prettiest of floral patterns worked in long-and-short and satin stitches. There are several handsome seventeenth century stump-work caskets in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but such things rarely come in the way of any but wealthy and well-known collectors, save when they are in a very bad state of preservation. Stump-work caskets in sound condition are in truth exceedingly rare. The raised-work is too often frayed and torn, the colours are faded, and as they seem to have been generally put together in a very flimsy fashion, the little cabinets themselves are too often nothing more than wrecks. Caskets covered with tent-stitch have stood the test of time far better than either those cased with stump-work or long-and-short stitch embroidery, the long, rather slack stitches of the latter giving way if exposed to the wear and tear of ordinary use.

Mirrors with wide borders of stump-work, such as

that shown in Plate 36, are counted amongst the treasures for which the heart of the embroidery collector specially yearns. They are scarce, but not absolutely unobtainable even at the present time, although their price has risen enormously during the last few years. In the majority of these interesting pieces of work, the square or oval panel of looking-glass in the centre is flanked by a king and queen in their royal robes, standing or enthroned under canopies; the usual castle appears above the mirror, the rock-pool complete with mermaid, etc., below it, the lion and leopard fill the bottom corners, and there is the customary indiscriminate powdering of strange birds, beasts and insects. The frames in which these bordered mirrors are mounted are as a rule plain oak or walnut, but occasionally they are of English lacquer, as in the case of the beautiful mirror in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while a few are of turtleshell or horn backed with red and gilded paper. The specimen shown in Plate 36 is quite typical in design. The dresses, etc., are mainly in lace stitches, but the queen's robe is satin embroidered with flowers.

Stump-work shared the general eclipse of decorative embroidery during the severely utilitarian days of the Commonwealth; it was revived at the Restoration, and went entirely out of fashion, apparently with great suddenness, before the Revolution of 1688. Pictures in tent and flat stitch continued to be produced after the disappearance of stump-work, but they underwent a change as regards subjects, Arcadian scenes with fashionably dressed shepherds and shepherdesses dancing to the music of pipe and tabor, replacing the Biblical scenes of the older pieces. Sarsenet, too, was often substituted for satin as a ground material, and metallic threads and spangles were no

longer used save to a very limited extent. In the long-and-short and satin-stitch pictorial panels of this date, French knots were largely employed to represent the hair of the human figures, the fleeces of sheep and the foliage of trees.

A great deal of bead work was done during the seventeenth century, being applied to all the articles for which stump-work and flat silk embroidery were considered suitable at that period. There were several distinct methods of carrying out this work; for comparatively large pieces the beads were threaded on strong silk, and the resultant strings sewn down by means of couching stitches over a pattern drawn with pen and ink or pencil on the silk or satin ground (Plate 37). Not infrequently portions of the design were raised by means of pads covered with the foundation material across which the strings of beads were sewn in close rows. When smaller articles were to be decorated, the beads were sewn singly on the ground, or in the case of bags or purses, made into a network by means of a kind of double button hole stitch worked with the needle. Knitted bead bags were not introduced until a later date. Peculiar to the reign of Charles II were the open shallow baskets—no doubt intended to hold needlework—made of beads. In these curious articles the base consists of a panel of thin wood or mill-board covered with satin on which a design of figures, usually a cavalier and lady, or flowers, is embroidered with strings of beads according to the first method described above. The sloping sides of the basket are made of a close lattice-work of thin wires on which beads are strung in some characteristic Stuart pattern, and the basket has a trimming of ribbon and beaded tassels. Unfortunately it is exceptional to find such baskets in

even moderately sound condition, and like the historical little girl :

“ When they are good they are very very good,  
When they are bad they are horrid.”

Nothing has a more deplorable appearance than a bead-basket with its ribbons grimy and tattered, and the bent and broken wires from which the beads have vanished sticking out like the ribs of a wrecked ship.

It should not be forgotten by the collector that the beads used in English embroidery of the seventeenth century were coarse, irregular in shape, and made in only a few and rather muddy colours. It was not until the eighteenth century that the fine delicately tinted Italian beads were imported from Murano and completely superseded the clumsier home productions.

Amongst the most interesting—and the scarcest—examples of the patient skill of seventeenth century needlewomen are the embroidered miniatures. Many caskets, panels and other pieces of the period are worked with heads or entire figures evidently intended to represent certain persons, usually royalties, but in these the likeness, always vague, depends on the accentuation of certain well-known peculiarities, such as the pointed beard of Charles I, the swarthy chin tuft of his son, and Katherine of Braganza's strange mode of dressing her front hair which struck John Evelyn so forcibly. The miniatures, on the contrary, are actual portraits copied in most cases from a painting or engraving, and in spite of the limitations of their medium have often some artistic merit. The subject of the majority is Charles I, and there is no doubt that in many instances they were worked after his death by loyalist ladies in pious memory of their ill-fated sovereign. It is said

indeed that hair cut from the King's head was mingled with the silks used for the embroidery of such miniatures, but this may be nothing more than a tradition. There is a very fine miniature after a portrait of Charles I by Hollar, in the Victoria and Albert Museum; one similar, probably worked by the same hand was until recently in the author's possession, and a third and different one, smaller and less satisfactory as a likeness, is in the Wallace collection. These miniatures are worked mainly in a combination of split and long-and-short stitches. A copy of Bacon's Essays in the Bodleian Library has a miniature of the Duke of Buckingham, to whom the book was given by Bacon himself, embroidered on the cover in small upright stitches. The actual binding itself is of green velvet, and the oval portrait is enframed with arabesques worked in gold and silver cord or braid. In the British Museum is a copy of the Psalms printed in 1642, which has on either side of its cover a tiny portrait of Charles I worked within a circle and surrounded by conventional flowers and leaves, in the embroidery of which much gold thread and cord are introduced. This volume measures but  $3\frac{1}{4}$  by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Embroidered book-bindings continued in fashion during the whole of the seventeenth century; but whereas the majority of the sixteenth century bindings had velvet as a ground material and were embroidered with gold and silver purl, cord and thread, most of those of the later period now being dealt with are of satin worked chiefly, though rarely entirely, with silks. The designs of these satin bindings vary greatly in style. In some, scenes from the Old Testament are depicted in raised, or partly raised, embroidery, and a characteristic example of this type is a New Testament in the collection of needlework bindings in the British

Museum. On one cover of this is Abraham's Sacrifice, and on the other appears David with his harp, to the strains of which a comical little dog seems to be listening attentively. Portions of the costume, which is that of the time of Charles I (the date of the Testament is 1625), are worked in close needle-point lace stitch and raised by means of waxed paper underneath. The most familiar features of stump-work are not absent from this binding, the sun with its rays, the butterfly, the birds, the rose and the tulip are all crowded into the odd corners of covers measuring but  $3\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches, with a result not altogether happy. The interest of such bindings is great if only by reason of their scarcity in good condition, but they are in truth neither beautiful, save in their stitchery, or appropriate to their purpose. Far more attractive on their merits, are those satin bindings which are embroidered in flat stitches with flowers in bright yet soft-tinted silks often outlined with fine gold thread, the grounds being frequently dotted with spangles each of which is sometimes sewn on with a tiny seed pearl. Of this class of binding both the Bodleian Library and the British Museum have excellent examples.

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, needle-work was but sparsely applied to clothes after the reign of James I, and during the Commonwealth of course it was practically taboo, unless Jasper Mayne is to be taken seriously when in "the City Match" (1639) he writes:

" . . . She is a Puritan at her needle too,  
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."

After the Restoration embroidery was again introduced on gowns, still it was chiefly confined to the stomachers, which were almost invariably enriched with needlework. Many of these fronts, which were made detachable so that they might serve for several bodices, have survived to this day, and the majority are very pretty. Most are of satin or sarsenet, stiffened with linings of canvas and buckram, but a few, evidently meant for morning wear, are of linen embroidered with white thread. These latter have no stiff lining, but are equipped with little pockets at the back to take the ends of a wide wooden stay-busk. The silk and satin stomachers are usually embroidered with flowers in brilliant colours, sometimes on a ground worked with a diaper or vermicular pattern back-stitched with yellow silk, or filled in with solid embroidery in silver or gold thread. In a few of the earlier examples some parts of the design are padded up in the stump-work style, but these are not very commonly met with. Nearly all are finished at the lower end with little square tabs, finely embroidered and bound with ribbon, and some have a simulated lacing of coloured cord sewn across the whole front.

The Revolution of 1688 brought about a remarkable change in the whole style of English embroidery. With the advent of William and Mary came that fancy for patterns in the Oriental taste which had held sway in Holland for some time previously, and before long it prevailed equally on this side of the North Sea, although in the designs of some of the earlier of these Anglo-Oriental embroideries there are evident some traces of the purely English patterns which preceded them.

In the new work, which was largely applied to bed curtains, coverlets and window hangings, a striking

feature was the series of trees with slender twisted stems which, starting from a range of grassy hillocks at the base of the curtain or counterpane, stretched right up to the top. Huge leaves and strange exotic flowers grew appropriately on these fantastic trees, and amongst the contorted boughs often perched long-tailed crested tropic birds. The foundation material for this needlework was either heavy twilled linen or a stuff woven of cotton and flax mixed, and for the stitchery rather harsh crewels only slightly twisted were used. Although the bizarre designs were undoubtedly suggested by those of the printed cotton fabrics imported into Holland and England from Masulipatam, the colours in the western embroideries are generally found to be much less vivid than those of their Oriental prototypes, soft blues, greens and browns replacing to a great extent the brilliant reds and yellows of the palampores. The stitches used in this embroidery, which is often incorrectly called Elizabethan or Jacobean, are long-and-short for the solid parts of the work, and stem or chain-stitch for the tendrils and leaf stalks, a variety of fancy stitches being inserted as fillings for some, if not all, the leaves and flowers. The piece illustrated in Plate 38 is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It shows the Indian influence very strongly, and is worked in worsted on a ground of mixed cotton and linen.

This late seventeenth century embroidery in crewels has been extensively and cleverly reproduced during recent years, and although primarily worked without "intent to deceive" when such copies have lost their first freshness and in the course of time fallen into the hands of unscrupulous, or even merely ignorant, dealers, they are certainly admirably calculated to entrap the

guileless collector. The best of these copies are worked on hand-made linen, and if the colours of the worsteds have been carefully chosen and only the *old* stitches introduced, it is not at all easy to distinguish between the production of the seventeenth century and that of the twentieth. If however the ground is machine-woven linen, generally identifiable by its extreme evenness of texture and comparatively light weight, and if the crewels are dyed in modern aniline shades, especially in mauve, bluish-pink and yellowish-green, the youth of the piece is at once betrayed. Furthermore the appearance of a commonplace stitch, known as coral- or feather-stitch, and much used on cheap calico underwear, must be regarded as a danger signal, for it is rarely, if ever, seen in genuinely old work. The patterns of Anglo-Oriental embroidery of the William and Mary period were not long ago copied by Indian workers with pleasing results as far as decorative effect went, but as they were usually done entirely in chain-stitch and on a thin cotton stuff, the resemblance to their seventeenth century models is but superficial and unlikely to deceive even the least experienced collector.

The needlework produced on the Continent during the last half of the seventeenth century had but little in common with that executed in England during the same period. During this time very fine embroideries both ecclesiastical and secular, in Renaissance design, were being worked in France, Spain and Italy, but especially in the last-named country, in flat stitches with a combination of twisted and floss-silks and gold and silver thread on white satin or brocaded silk. Much of this embroidery was done in laid-stitch in elaborate and often beautiful patterns. In Italy appliqué embroidery was produced extensively during

the seventeenth century, especially that which has been designated "inlaid appliqué," a name which seems to contradict itself. It is the result of cutting out the same pattern in two distinct materials, say velvet and brocade, and inlaying the velvet pattern into the brocade ground and vice versa. These inlays are edged with cord, gold thread or couched strands of silk, and if the two materials are of agreeably contrasting colours, the effect is very good, especially in the case of large hangings.

Another variety of Italian needlework was much used for covering chairs and stools at this particular time and later. This is best known as Bargello or Florentine embroidery, and its distinguishing feature is its zig-zag design worked in close-set upright stitches in silks of many carefully shaded colours. The zig-zags are arranged in rows fitting into each other, and entirely covering the ground with what is decidedly a dazzle pattern. Bargello work has never been entirely out of vogue since its introduction into England in the eighteenth century; it was very popular during the 'forties and 'fifties of last century, when it was executed in Berlin wool of lurid hues, and quite lately it has been again in fashion for chair seats.

Embroideries worked at Goa, no doubt by the natives under Portuguese instruction, were imported into Europe during the seventeenth century, and some admirable examples in the form of coverlets are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The ground is linen, and on this is worked chiefly in chain- and back- or quilting-stitches amazingly elaborate designs which, as far as they can be interpreted, appear to represent Biblical subjects strangely blended with mythological ones. The Judgment of Solomon is seen side by side with the Judgment of Paris; Adam and Eve are

confronted by Diana and Actæon ; while centaurs, syrens, fawns, harpies and all manner of strange birds and beasts play parts in the queer medley. For such embroidery yellow silk alone was often used, but sometimes mixed and very bright colours were introduced. Needlework of a similar kind was produced in the Dutch East Indies and imported thence into Holland, it is therefore possible that it was directly or indirectly responsible for the sudden vogue in England after the Revolution of back-stitch or quilted embroidery. That simple quilting had been practised by many generations of needlewomen prior to the seventeenth century is, of course, a well-known fact. Quilted garments were worn under armour in the Middle Ages, quilted coverlets were certainly in use tolerably early in the sixteenth century, while some ornamental quilting seems to have been used on wearing apparel in the reign of Charles I, but only to a limited extent, and the quilting period in the history of embroidery may be said to have begun about 1688 and ended with the coming to the English thorne of the first George.

The back-stitch embroidery of the end of the seventeenth century was much employed for the adornment of bed-hangings with coverlets to match, but waistcoats, caps, petticoats, and other articles for personal use were also worked in this way. Two thicknesses of linen, or one of linen with a backing of much coarser linen or even of stout cotton stuff, were quilted together with a small lozenge or a vermicelli pattern done in the most even and finest of back-stitch with bright yellow silk. Over this diapering small sprays or bunches of naturalistic or semi-naturalistic flowers were worked in chain- or long-and-short stitch, either in yellow or multi-coloured silks.

In the older examples the embroidery is usually all in the one tint—yellow.

Other varieties of quilted embroidery were evolved during the latter part of the reign of William III, but these will be more properly dealt with in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XVIII

FROM 1700 TO 1820

**T**HE influence of Oriental art on English embroidery began to die out after the first few years of the eighteenth century had passed, still throughout the reign of Queen Anne, curtains, coverlets and valances continued to be worked with the tall, tapering stemmed trees, the fantastic flowers and leaves, and the strange tropic birds which were so vividly reminiscent of the printed cottons of the East. Contemporary with them, during these later years, were the hangings of fine white linen, embroidered with patterns of a decidedly Chinese type, either in thin crewels or silks. The stitches used were chain, satin and long-and-short, and the colours were of the brightest, contrasting very strongly with the dull and sombre tints of the heavier work which preceded this class of embroidery. Instances of the way in which the Oriental note continued to appeal to English workers of this period are to be seen in many of the designs of the sets of furniture-covers and panels for cheval screens, worked in a combination of tent- and cross-stitches, of which an immense number was produced during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In the majority of these there is a centre scene (generally taken from classical mythology) worked in tent-stitch

with fine crewels, which is surrounded by arabesques or rococo scrolls executed with coarser crewels in cross-stitch, which is bordered in most instances by a plain ground of cross-stitch in one colour. The costumes of the figures are in the main classic, but such incongruities as Chinese birds, pagodas, and even black pages carrying fans or umbrellas are often introduced, while any flowers that may be included in the design are almost invariably typically Chinese. Work of a very similar class was produced in France at about the same time, but in this the details accord better with the subject and produce a far happier result. In these French pieces, the drawing of the draperies is generally remarkably good.

A little later in the century, soon after the accession of George I, English workers abandoned the mixed classic and Oriental designs for their furniture covers and screens. No longer were Diana bathing, Venus and Adonis and Orpheus with his Lyre the favourite subjects, they were superseded by pastoral scenes, with shepherds and shepherdesses in gay contemporary costumes coquetting under shady trees in which perch birds that have still a trace, perhaps the very last, of the Oriental influence in their long tails and brilliant plumage. Very soon silks began to be used in combination with the crewels, especially for the high lights and to tent- and cross-stitches were added cushion-stitches, i.e. straight, short, upright stitches arranged to form simple diaper patterns. Such stitches, worked in silk, were often used for the grounding of small screen-panels, etc., the actual design being done in tent-stitch with crewels. It must be confessed that much of the tent- and cross-stitch work produced after 1725 was extremely ugly. The figures are ill-drawn, the grouping

is awkward, and the whole design badly balanced and unpleasing. Its sole charm lies in its "quaintness"—much abused word! At this period sets of furniture covers were frequently worked with the family coat of arms; but these, although correctly represented, are somewhat lacking in interest for the average collector. Cross- and tent-stitch embroidery remained in fashion for upholstery up to the end of the reign of George II. In Mrs. Delany's "Life and Correspondence," cross-stitch work is included among the many varieties of embroidery therein mentioned, the earliest of her allusions to it being found in a letter to her sister, Anne Granville, in 1737, in which she alludes to pieces of cross-stitch then in progress for a set of chairs and a screen.

Very little church embroidery of any kind was produced during the eighteenth century, but an altar in the south aisle of the church of Axbridge, Somerset, has an interesting tent-stitch frontal of 1720, which was worked by Abigail Penrose, whose monument, with her kneeling effigy, rises behind the altar. The embroidery is fine, and is said to have taken seven years in the working.

The needlework pictures of the first half of the eighteenth century were practically of one kind only. Contrary to the general rule that definite types of embroidery die out very slowly, one style overlapping its successor, stump-work, in which so many pictorial panels were executed during the reigns of Charles I and Charles II, disappeared suddenly and completely with the close of the century, and from that time onwards to about 1740, embroidered pictures were merely replicas on a reduced scale of the designs of the fashionable chair-seats and screen-panels worked in tent- and cross-stitch combined. From the date

given above, to the beginning of the reign of George III, very few needlework pictures were produced at all. Their working was apparently no longer a popular form of occupation or amusement, and it was not until 1760, or thereabouts, that the embroidered picture came to its own again, and its reappearance was then made in a very different form, as will be described later in this chapter.

Up to the middle of the eighteenth century quilting, as a mode of ornamenting not only bed-hangings, counterpanes and other articles for household use, but the costume of both men and women, continued in fashion. The particular variety described in the preceding chapter, in which sprays or bunches of flowers were embroidered on a ground of white linen, quilted in a vermicular or lozenge pattern, with bright yellow silk, had not gone out of favour by any means, and an example of early eighteenth century date is shown in Plate 39; but at this date the quilting was as often executed in white thread which formed, perhaps, a rather better background for the bunches of gay flowers. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a counterpane which shows this style of work at its best. It is of the usual white linen, quilted all over with white thread in elaborate and wonderfully varied devices, those of the border being arranged in a series of panels and including a ship, a camel, a mermaid, and a merman, dogs, birds, fishes and other objects. In the centre a wreath and four corner sprays are worked in bright-coloured silks on the quilted ground, and the initials "E. S." and the date 1703 appear in one of the compartments of the border. An effective variation on ordinary quilting was done by tracing the pattern, simple or complicated, on linen, and tacking a thin cord over the lines. An outer layer of linen,

generally rather thicker, was laid over this, and the two thicknesses of material were then quilted together with double rows of running- or back-stitch, one on either side of the concealed cord. Towards the middle of the century finely quilted linen waistcoats were affected by smart men for morning wear, and equally elaborate quilted caps were donned by them when they doffed their hot and heavy wigs. In the author's collection there is a linen waistcoat which is deeply bordered with a beautiful pattern of conventional leaves and small flowers, carried out mainly in back-stitch quilting, relieved by clusters of French knots here and there and by an unusual kind of eyelet-stitch, which is used to fill spaces in the pattern. Rows of holes are pierced in the linen with a stiletto and lines of back-stitch worked through these holes each way, so that every eyelet has four stitches through it. When the stitches are pulled tight the effect produced is that of a neat diapering of tiny holes, divided by lines of back-stitching. The pocket flaps are covered with embroidery to correspond with the border. A portion of this waistcoat is shown in Plate 40.

The art of quilting was extraordinarily popular in the American Colonies, especially in New England, where, indeed, the most elaborate quilted counterpanes have continued to be produced up to the end of the nineteenth century, if not up to the present time. Mrs. Morse Earle, in "Home Life in Colonial Days," gives a very interesting account of the wonderful patchwork which generally formed the basis of the quilts, in the earlier examples of which bits of fine old India chintzes and printed calicoes often form the oddly named patterns—the "Dove in the Window," the "Love Knot," the "Sugar Bowl" or "Job's Trouble." The counterpanes were stretched

on a "quilting frame" when the patchwork was completed, and that truly American institution, a quilting "bee," was responsible for its rapid completion. Mrs. Morse Earle mentions a quilting-*bee*, held at Narragansett in 1752, that lasted ten days. The quilting designs most in favour seem to have been a fern-pattern with variants, and conventionalised leaves or flowers, but simple lozenges or circles were adopted as patterns for quilts of a less pretentious class.

In England women of all classes wore quilted petticoats, the quality of which varied with the social position of the wearer, ranging from those of coarse linen, quilted in a simple pattern in running-stitch, to skirts of silk or satin, back-stitched with an elaborate diapering in coloured silk over which flowers were embroidered in silks and gold and silver thread. Quilted mittens too were worn in the eighteenth century, and there are several examples, mostly of linen quilted with white or yellow thread, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Somewhere about 1725 the apron, never entirely out of fashion, began to be regarded as an important part of a modish lady's dress, and much labour and skill were expended on its embroidery and trimmings. Fortunately a good many specimens survive in sound condition to this day, and they are usually very pretty. The material is silk or satin, most frequently white or yellow; some are worked with the daintiest of floral sprays powdered over the main part of the apron, and connected to form the border, while others have bolder designs of bigger and less naturalistic flowers and foliage starting from the hem and tapering up nearly to the waistband, or are ornamented with scroll-patterns executed partly in

silk gimp. The work is done for the most part in flat stitches with soft silks of bright but delicate colours, but gold and silver thread are often introduced for the stems and as an outlining to some of the flowers. Spangles are occasionally employed and in some handsome aprons, with designs of the larger, more conventional type, the chief parts are worked in laid-stitch, with gold thread sewn down with silks of various colours. There are in existence aprons of the time of George II which are markedly Chinese, not only in the style of the pattern but in the method of working it with long very regular satin-stitches, which show alike on both sides. Floss, or very slightly twisted soft silks of brilliant decided colours, are used, and there is very little attempt at shading, the tints being sharply defined. Probably the custom frequently followed at that period of sending silk and satin garments, or pieces intended for garments, from England to China to be embroidered, accounts for the peculiarities of these aprons.

The width and length of aprons varied from year to year according to the caprice of fashion, but those of the earlier Georgian times are short and broad, a typical example measuring 23 inches in length, and 45 inches in width. It is pleated so closely at the top that it is less than 12 inches wide where it is sewn into the narrow silk waistband. This apron, which is illustrated in Plate 41, has really practical inserted pockets, and is edged with the knotted "fly-fringe," which was one of the two most popular trimmings for aprons, the other being a loosely made bobbin-lace of silver thread. Aprons of a slightly later date are less full, and the real pockets are replaced by sham pocket-holes represented by ovals of embroidery.

The great period of embroidery in this century, as applied to costume, may be said to have begun about 1730, and to have lasted until George III had been on the throne some ten or fifteen years. During this time, especially during the first half of it, a vast amount of money was spent by fashionable people on embroidered coats and waistcoats for the men, and gowns and petticoats for the women. The costumes for wear at Court were extravagant in the extreme, as may be learnt from Mrs. Delany. On January 23rd, 1738, she sends her sister an account of some of the dresses worn on the occasion of Frederick Prince of Wales's birthday. That of Lady Huntingdon (Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, later to become celebrated as the founder of the religious sect which still bears her name), she describes in detail as "the most extraordinary. . . . Her petticoat was black velvet, embroidered with chenille, the pattern a large stone vase filled with ramping flowers that spread almost over a breadth of the petticoat from the bottom to the top; between each vase of flowers was a pattern of gold shells and foliage embossed and most heavily rich; the gown was white satin, embroidered also with chenille, mixed with gold ornaments, no vases on the sleeve, but two or three on the tail. It was a most laboured piece of finery, the pattern much properer for a stucco staircase than the apparel of a lady—a mere shadow that tottered with every step she took under the load." On this particular occasion Mrs. Delany found "nothing extraordinary among the men; much finery, chiefly brown, with gold or silver embroidery, and rich waistcoats."

Chenille, by the way, had not been long introduced at the time Lady Huntingdon's amazing gown was worked, and no doubt it was at first expensive, for it

was not until many years later that it came to be generally used in embroidery. It was first manufactured in France, and its definition in the "Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française" as "un tissu de soie velouté qui imite la chenille," which explains the origin of the name, chenille, being the French word for the furry caterpillar which English children call woolly-bear. Chenille was and is usually made of silk, but that indefatigable needlewoman, Mrs. Delany, preferred woollen chenille with a linen core. This, however, was very little cheaper than that of silk, and probably less effective.

Many of the gorgeously embroidered suits and gowns of the time of George II were no doubt imported from France, where at that period the art of embroidery had reached a very high pitch of perfection. A ban was laid on imports of gold and silver embroideries during this reign, but there were ways of circumventing the law, which in this case was certainly "a hass," and no doubt the smuggled foreign goods became British produce when they had been safely "run." The majority of the embroidered coats and waistcoats of the middle of the eighteenth century are worked in flat stitches (satin, stem and long-and-short) with floss silk, with which coloured spangles are often combined as well as gimps and cords. An unmade waistcoat piece in the author's collection, is an exception, as its pretty pattern of tiny roses is worked with tightly twisted silks in the most even and finest of chain-stitching on the ground of cream-coloured striped satin. Chain-stitch embroidery of this type worked with a firm, wiry, silk was much in fashion during the last half of the eighteenth century, and all kinds of things, from letter-wallets to furniture, were adorned with it. It had the merit, an inestimable one in the eyes of the

collector, of being exceedingly lasting. The date of the wallet illustrated in Plate 42 is fixed beyond doubt by a letter still remaining in one of the pockets. In this, which is dated January 15th, 1790, the writer says:—"I have taken the liberty to beg your acceptance of a letter-case which has no other merit than being offered by a truly grateful heart. Had I had longer notice I should have endeavoured to have offered something prettier." But an apology for the dainty case, with its fine chain-stitch embroidery in soft pinks and greens, was surely superfluous.

Towards the end of the century embroidery was almost confined to Court suits and dresses. Indeed even the latter were oftener ornamented with lace, fringe, ribbons, puffings of gauze and clusters of feathers, than with needlework. In the *Fashionable Magazine* for 1786 there is an interesting description of the clothes worn at a Court Ball given at St. James's in honour of George III's birthday, and from this may be gathered how great a change had occurred in the style of trimming. What a contrast there is between the Countess of Huntingdon's Court gown, as described by Mrs. Delany in 1739, and the purple silk, veiled with Brussels lace, and edged with rolls of crêpe, in which Queen Charlotte appeared at the Ball of 1786! There is not a hint of embroidery being applied to any of the dresses of which such full details are given in the Magazine. The Ladies Spencer wore pale blue, with "Vandyke scollops" and silver fringe; the Duchess of Hamilton's dress was of pea-green, trimmed with lace, and that of Miss FitzRoy was white lute-string, ornamented with blue and silver ribbon. Pretty, perhaps, and certainly not too expensive to suit the economical Court of George III and his thrifty Queen who taught her daughters cross-stitch

on the cane seats of the nursery chairs to save canvas, but how tame after the gowns of black velvet with stone vases and ramping flowers ; of white satin worked with brown hills and gold tree-stumps, little green banks with weeds and nasturtiums ; or with garlands and flower-pots of silver, which were worn when Mrs. Delany, then Mrs. Pendarves, was a gay young widow.

But although men dressed soberly enough in plain coloured suits and striped or checked silk waist-coats, on ordinary occasions in 1786, their Court clothes were laden with the most gorgeous embroidery. On the occasion of the Birthday Ball aforesaid, the Prince of Wales, then twenty-four, and a "perfect Adonis" according to the hack-writers of the time, wore "a Gala suit of Orange-coloured silk serge, superbly embroidered in silver, studded alternately with blue and white stones, and with spangles of the same colours. The Ground was also variegated all over with a uniform mixture of spangles and stones, so plentifully dispersed over the whole as to give the appearance of brilliant network to a cursory observer. The sleeves were entirely silver tissue, embroidered with blue stones and spangles."

Towards the close of the reign of George II the fashion of covering furniture with needlework began to decline, brocades, damasks, and plain silks being more used for upholstery purposes, still, to a certain extent, chairs and settees were covered with cloth, to which panels of tent-stitch were applied, or worked over canvas tacked on the material, the threads of the former being drawn out on the completion of the work. The designs were confined usually either to coats of arms or to bunches or baskets of pseudo-naturalistic flowers. The basket of the period (it is met with in embroideries of all kinds,

including samplers) was oval, had high sides sloping outwards at the top, and small ear-like handles at the ends. This stiff basket held equally formal sprays of flowers. It has as little in common with the graceful high-handled basket of the Louis XVI style, as have the fat and stumpy roses and tulips that generally fill it, with the lovely trails of blossom that overflow the French type of basket that played so important a part in the designs of English embroidery a little later in the century.

Bed-hangings, during the latter part of the reign of George II were frequently of linen, thin in texture compared with that used for the same purpose in the time of Queen Anne, embroidered in chain-stitch with worsted, the patterns ranging from the simplest curved stems, with meagre little flowers at long intervals, to more elaborate wreaths or bouquets. Similar designs were carried out in silks, usually of a tightly twisted kind, but, on the whole, worsted was the accepted medium for embroidery of this class at the time in question. There are many interesting descriptions scattered through Mrs. Delany's correspondence of the various sets of chair-covers, curtains, "beds" and screens worked by her during her long and busy life, but these cannot be unreservedly accepted as representative of the embroidery of her time, as not only were the patterns always drawn, but the actual mode of working often invented by that accomplished lady herself, and the materials in many instances were made to her specifications. In 1743 Mrs. Delany and her sister, Mrs. Dewes, worked a set of bed-hangings for the use of the latter with white linen applied on a nankeen ground. The pattern was an elaborate one of leaves of different kinds connected by love-knots, all being cut out of the linen, sewn to the nankeen

ground and then outlined and veined with lines of knotting, of which Mrs. Delany made great quantities. Knotting was introduced at the end of the seventeenth century and was a favourite occupation of Queen Mary II, who

“ When e'er she rode in coach abroad  
 · Was always knotting thread.”

This form of knotting was worked on a board or lace-pillow and was really a simple kind of macramé done in one “ filling ” stitch only, but the knotting of Mrs. Delany's day was a kind of knotted trimming, cord or gimp, for which a long, pointed, and often ornamental and costly, shuttle was used.

Sets of chair-covers were embroidered by Mrs. Delany with chenille on a cloth ground, but it is difficult to believe that the worsted chenilles she employed could give as rich and brilliant an effect as the silk chenilles that were so freely introduced into the embroideries of the last half of the eighteenth century. Chenille plays a great part in the splendid specimens of needlework, far superior to any contemporary English work, that was produced in France during the years between 1750 and 1790, but it is generally combined with the finest silk embroidery executed in satin-stitch, long-and-short stitch, and very fine chain-stitch. Plate 43 illustrates one of a set of white satin covers for chair-seats, with bed valances and curtain borders to match, which are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. These are embroidered with a graceful design of garlands of flowers, birds and musical instruments, mainly in chenille, combined with chain-stitch in silks ; the plumage of the birds, however, being worked in long-and-short stitch. They are charming and admirably exemplify the skill and taste

of French designers and workers at the end of the reign of Louis XV. Very little gold thread was introduced into French embroideries of the last half of the eighteenth century. This was not entirely the result of a freak of fashion, but was due in some measure to the extraordinary craze for "parfilage," called in England "drizzling," i.e. unpicking and untwisting gold thread, which seized the "Society" ladies of Paris in the days when Marie Antoinette was a beautiful and thoughtless girl. This odd mania led to the destruction of all kinds of rich embroideries; ladies of rank went about armed with scissors and a "drizzling-bag" to hold the spoil of gold unravelled from fringes, laces, epaulets, or embroideries begged, bought, or stolen! It was positively dangerous while this queerest of queer fancies prevailed for anyone to appear in public in a garment adorned with gold embroidery or braiding; the Duc de Coigny was bold enough to go to an entertainment in a new coat remarkable for its sumptuous gold embroidery, which proved too great a temptation for the great ladies who were his fellow-guests to withstand. One suggested that the trimmings of the coat would unravel beautifully, and the next moment the tiny pairs of sharp-pointed scissors were out and the unlucky man's smart coat was stripped in the twinkling of an eye of every vestige of its golden adornments, the fragments of which were duly sold to the Jews for the bare value of the metal, the proceeds going to swell the pin-money of the aristocratic robbers.

This silly fancy for unpicking and spoiling expensive trimmings does not appear to have been a particularly popular amusement in England, still metallic threads were but sparsely introduced into the embroideries of the last forty years of the eighteenth century, the

designs of which show signs of French influence in their increased grace and delicacy of line. Many varieties of dainty needlework on satin and sarsenet were produced by English workers during this period, and among the most attractive examples are those mounted as panels, usually oval or shield-shape, for the pretty slender pole-screens of satin-wood or mahogany, which were then in high fashion. Wreaths, or garlands tied with true lovers' knots embroidered in flat stitches and French knots with silks of the brightest yet most harmonious and delicate colours, or scroll designs worked with spangles of divers shapes and tints, surround prints on satin, after Angelica Kauffmann and Lady Diana Beauclerk, in some of the most charming of these little panels. Some very beautiful embroidery, worked with comparatively wide ribbons, was executed as early as the reign of George I, but it was not until about 1780 that the very narrow China ribbons were introduced which lent themselves so admirably to finer embroidery better suited to the decoration of pole-screens. Fashionable for the same purpose too, were designs of birds, worked in long flat stitches on paper, the background of foliage and sky being lightly washed in with water-colour.

Combinations of embroidery and painting became very popular at this time, especially for the pictorial panels, which after an almost total eclipse of some thirty or forty years had come into fashion once more. In the type most appreciated by present-day collectors, a sketch, original, or copied from a contemporary, or nearly contemporary, print, was made with brush or pencil on a ground of white satin, sarsenet, or lutestring, the faces, arms and hands of the figures were completely finished in water-colour, and the sky

and landscape washed in with the same medium. The remainder of the drawing was then worked over in flat stitches of irregular lengths, carefully following the lines. French knots were used to represent the hair of human figures, the fur of animals, and sometimes the foliage of trees (Plate 44). The sketches which formed the foundation of these pictures were often the work of some poor professional artist, thankful for a fashion that enabled him to earn an honest penny by supplying such drawings at so much a dozen to the pupils of the Miss Pinkertons of the day. Robertson, the miniaturist, owns to having done a considerable amount of this work in the early days of his career.

The favourite type of design in these pictures was the ultra-sentimental; a lady in clinging, flowing garments wept over the tomb of Werther, placed offerings of flowers on the shrine of Love or Friendship, or cut her sweetheart's name on the bark of a tree. Well drawn and worked by a skilful hand such pieces are exceedingly pretty, but at their worst they are ugly and clumsy, while of all embroidered pictures they are the easiest to imitate. The collector should be indeed particularly cautious when he contemplates the purchase of an eighteenth century worked picture of which a water-colour sketch on silk or satin forms the basis. Excellent reproductions of such pieces have been made during the last twenty-five years, some simply for their decorative value, some for other and less praiseworthy reasons, and it is often difficult to detect the modern copies unless the back of the work can be examined, and this is seldom feasible in the case of a framed piece. Speaking broadly, however, filoselle, not floss, nor twisted silk, is used in the modern pictures, and

the colouring is either unnaturally bright or evenly dull and subdued all over to imitate fading. And if silk is used for the ground it is not the thin yet firm sarsenet of our foremothers' worked pictures, but a much thicker sort. When the back of the embroidery can be examined it is generally fairly easy to distinguish between an eighteenth century piece and one produced in imitation of it over a hundred years later.

There were several variants of the partly colour-washed, partly worked pictures of the closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening ones of the nineteenth. A fairly common type has the faces, hands and arms, etc., of the figures painted on paper, carefully cut out, pasted on the silk or satin ground, and the remainder of the design embroidered in silk, blended with chenille, or crewels, or both. In a third variety a print was pasted on linen and worked over with silks or crewels, the stitches passing through both print and linen backing. This last class was near akin to the dressed prints fashionable at the same period, and to the coarsely worked little pictures, with crude engravings of religious subjects as their base, which are still sold mounted in cheap frames for a few pence in France and other Roman Catholic countries.

Contemporary with the embroidered and painted pictures in the colour-print style were what are familiarly known to collectors as "black-and-whites," of which an example is shown in Plate 45. These are copies of line or stipple engravings, or pen-and-ink drawings, done with black sewing silk and the ravelings of lutestring or some similar stuff, on white sarsenet, or, in the later examples, satin. In a few of these pictures, the sky has been washed in with water-colour, and brown, grey and white silks mingled

with the black to produce more marked effects of light and shade, but in the majority the whole of the work is carried out in black silk, the careful and judicious spacing of the irregular flat stitches being solely relied on for shading. Dealers often describe the finer specimens of this kind of picture as "worked in hair," but this is very seldom actually the case. At any rate, during a collecting experience extending over twenty years, the author has only met with one pair of pictures undoubtedly executed in human hair. These are very small landscapes, embroidered with hair in shades of brown, auburn and grey (which probably once grew on the heads of members of the worker's family), but the effect is not entirely satisfactory, as hair is too stiff and wiry to be a perfect medium for needlework. A pretty, late eighteenth century type of black-and-white picture has for basis a small print on white satin which is partly worked over with straight stitches, varying in size and closeness of grouping, but all very minute, the smallest being mere specks. This class of picture is scarce, a rather regrettable fact, as it is decidedly pleasing. Black-and-whites deteriorated very much after 1800, the designs became ill-drawn, with crooked bridges, lop-sided houses, wobbly trees, and an equal lack of perspective and proportion; while instead of fine sewing silk and ravellings, thick embroidery silk was used with a clumsy and unsatisfactory result. Still, as late as the Great Exhibition of 1851 black-and-whites of the old fine kind seem to have been produced occasionally, for amongst the items in the catalogue of that monstrous jumble-sale there is one of "A North-West View of Lincoln Cathedral, worked upon white silk, with the rovings of black lutestring and manufacturer's silk."

The last half of the eighteenth century was undoubtedly the era of fine bead embroidery, but unfortunately English needlewomen cannot lay claim to the production of much of the very best work, the greater part of which was certainly of French origin. In the earliest—i.e. that made between 1745 and 1760—and highest class of this embroidery, beads of an extraordinary degree of fineness were used. So tiny are they that no modern needle will pass through them, and as the needles of a hundred and fifty years ago were coarser than those of to-day the beads must have been threaded by means of a waxed end of silk tipped with a bristle. There are in existence some beautiful pieces of this superfine work, mostly in the form of rather large hand-bags, in which the beads are sewn down on strong net or the finest canvas. The patterns as a rule are dainty wreaths, clusters, or baskets of flowers, worked in beads of many delicate colours, on a ground of opaque ones, of one tint only. Most of the later pieces are made with rather coarser beads, and include such things as purses, wristlets, pin-cushions, and flat watch-guards, in which the beads are connected by knitting, or by weaving with threads in a small hand-loom, a method of making which, strictly speaking, places them outside the scope of this book. Nearer akin to embroidery is the method employed in making the beadwork casing of the many pretty trifles in the way of bonbonnières, needle-cases and the like which were produced in both England and France during the Consulate and First Empire. In this the beads were strung according to pattern on fine flexible wire, which was wound round the box or needle-case of wood or pressed horn, and interwoven, as it were, with button-hole stitches in strong silk. Some passable bead pictures were worked

on fine canvas at this period, the beads being sewn singly on the ground, certain portions of which were sometimes designedly left uncovered.

In the last years of the eighteenth century embroidery with white cotton, on white muslin, became extremely fashionable for gowns, collars, scarves, pelerines, and the long and rather dowdy aprons of the day. The muslin was very soft in texture, and the work was done in chain or satin-stitch, with simple fillings resembling those introduced in the embroidered net known as Limerick lace. Many patterns for muslin work were issued in the various lady's magazines published between 1790 and 1815, but with few exceptions they have no artistic merit, being as a rule either hackneyed geometrical devices, or debased adaptations of the designs characteristic of the time of Louis XVI, such as clumsy baskets of ill-drawn flowers, connected by attenuated love-knots, or meagre festoons of leaves, from which depend at intervals long wiggly cords with bunchy tassels at the ends. But there are still extant a number of actual examples of muslin embroidery worked between 1790 and the end of George III's reign the patterns of which are not only pretty but appropriate to their purpose. A little embroidery seems to have been done at this time on a material known as cat-gut, a very stiff square-meshed net which is mentioned at a much earlier date by Mrs. Delany as a material used as a ground for embroidered toilet-covers and similar articles.

In 1798, in Old Savile House on the North side of Leicester Square, was opened the "Gallery of Pictures in Worsted," by Miss Mary Linwood, of Leicester, which for nearly fifty years was to be one of the sights of London for country cousins. These pictures, on

which the worker had expended, and continued to expend until some twelve years before her death in 1845, an incredible amount of labour, were full-sized copies of celebrated paintings by both Old Masters and contemporary artists. They were sketched by Miss Linwood herself on a ground of thick tammy-cloth, woven specially for her, and worked in soft crewels of shades dyed to her order. The stitches are irregular in length and their arrangement follows no fixed rule, as may be seen in her portrait of Napoleon Buonaparte, in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The collection at Savile House was added to from time to time until the pictures numbered sixty, hung with various stage accessories, which were supposed to enhance their effect. After Miss Linwood's death, with a few exceptions which she disposed of by will (her great *Salvator Mundi*, after Carlo Dolci, was left to Queen Victoria), all were sold at Christie's, but they were no longer admired by a fickle public, to whom the Berlin wool monstrosities had begun to appeal, and the prices realised were very small compared with the values which had been placed upon the pictures some years previously.

Although, according to modern notions, Miss Linwood's worked pictures were but monuments of misplaced labour, they had more to recommend them from an artistic standpoint than the vast majority of the part-colour-washed, part-embroidered pictures of the earlier years of the nineteenth century. These, as far as the mode of production was concerned, were the lineal but debased descendants of the pictures in these mixed mediums, of the end of the preceding century. The subjects of these later pictures were mostly scriptural—Christ and the Woman of Samaria, and Rebecca at the Well were two favourite ones—

both drawing and colouring were of the crudest, and the work was carried out with coarse ill-arranged stitches, in a combination of chenille, crewels and silks.

A favourable example of these pictures (which are unfortunately usually of large size) may be advisedly admitted into a representative collection of English needlework ; but from the close of the reign of George III to the era of William Morris and his coadjutors, embroidery, as an art, ceased to exist in this country.

## CHAPTER XIX

### SAMPLERS

IT is reasonable to suppose that the sampler is as old as the art of decorative embroidery itself, for it would be but natural that from the outset some kind of record should be made of patterns and stitches, not only for copying by skilled needlewomen, but for instructional purposes. Hence the sampler, in one form or another, is common to almost all countries. Nevertheless, it is not possible to trace its definite history very far back. In England the earliest mention of a sampler seems to have been made by Skelton in his "Garlande of Laurell," published in 1523 :

"The Sampler to sowe on  
The laces to embraide."

Twenty-three years later Margaret Tomson, of Freston-in-Holland, Lincolnshire, in her will, proved at Boston, bequeathed to her sister's daughter, Alys Pynchebeck, her "saumpler with semes," and in an Inventory of Edward VI made in 1552, one of the items is a parchment book containing a "sampler or set of patterns worked on Normandy canvas with green and black silks."

There is a reference to a sampler in the "Tragedy

of Solimon and Perseda," by Thomas Kyd, published in 1559 :

"When didst thou with thy Sampler sit sewing?"

and in the literature of the end of the sixteenth century allusions to it are fairly numerous. Here are two Shakespearean ones :

"O! is all forgot?"

All school-days' friendship, childhood's innocence.  
We, Hermia, like two artificial godes,  
Have with our needles created both one flower,  
Both on one Sampler sitting on one cushion."

"Midsummer's Night's Dream," III, 2.

"Fair Philomela she but lost her tongue  
And in a tedious Sampler sewed her mind."

"Titus Andronicus," II, 5.

The sampler is mentioned still more frequently by the writers of the seventeenth century. Milton introduces it in "Comus" :

". . . Coarse complexions

And cheekes of sorry grain will serve to ply  
The Sampler and to tease the housewife's wool";

and Herrick in "The Wounded Heart" :

"Come bring your Sampler and with art  
Draw in't a wounded heart";

while Jasper Mayne in "The City Match," published in 1639, writes :

"Your schoolmistress . . . teaches  
To knit in Chaldee and worke Hebrew Samplers."

Apropos of this last quotation, the writer once picked up a sampler which among its alphabets included one of Hebrew characters, but, sad to say, it could not be assigned to an earlier date than the nineteenth century.

Unfortunately, no sampler bearing a date prior to the reign of Charles I is known to be in existence, and none whose general style justifies its attribution to an earlier period. The type of sampler which is believed to be the oldest surviving, is illustrated in Plate 46. The ground is of loosely woven, canvas-like linen, thin and wiry in texture, and brownish in colour, and on this small, detached patterns, some purely geometrical, others representing conventional flower forms, are dotted about without any attempt at symmetrical arrangement. These devices, some of which are similar to those found on bags and purses of the first half of the seventeenth century, are worked partly in tent-stitch, partly in close lace-stitches, with gold and silver thread used sometimes alone, sometimes in combination with coloured silks. The sampler in Plate 46 has the initials M.C. worked in one corner and a coat of arms, that of the family of Chichester, in the centre. It is possible that this sampler and its like may be assigned to the reign of James I, but if so the type survived until well into the middle of the century, for the writer has seen a characteristic specimen dated 1657, a period with which the long, narrow sampler, with its series of horizontal band-patterns, is more generally connected. It is curious that two such widely divergent styles of sampler should have been worked contemporaneously, but it is evident that this was so.

The long sampler of the seventeenth century sometimes measures as much as a yard, while its width rarely exceeds seven or eight inches. It is a collection of patterns pure and simple, and has no trace of that pictorial element which developed in the sampler of the following century with the unfortunate result that it became a mere show piece worked by

Miss at her boarding-school and brought home to be framed and hung up in the best parlour.

The band-patterns which usually cover three parts at least of a characteristic long sampler, are nearly always quite as remarkable for the grace and dignity of their design as for the fineness and beauty of their stitchery. Rather unaccountably they do not resemble those of other embroideries of the period, such as were introduced on costume for instance, and the late Mr. Gleeson White in an article on Samplers published in the *Studio* Winter number for 1896-7, just when an interest in the subject was awakening, expressed the opinion that the patterns in question were copied from, or suggested by, those of Oriental embroideries. It seems much more probable, however, that they had an Italian origin. The band-patterns of nine out of every ten—the proportion may be larger—long samplers of the seventeenth century include a very curious one in which are introduced grotesque, gnome-like little male figures, each holding in an extended hand an object which appears to be something in the way of a trophy. Between every pair of these queer creatures is a stiff, conventional tree-form. The details vary, sometimes the little men are merely outlined in back-stitch, but oftener they are completely clad in close-fitting garments worked in flat satin-stitch or surface lace-stitch, and, as a rule, they are represented with very bushy hair. It has been suggested that these figures should be placed in the category of the Greek Erotes and the Cupids of the Renaissance, but this ingenious idea does not seem to have anything definite to support it. But in Italian embroidery on household linen of the sixteenth century are found band-patterns with figures bearing trophies which have a strongly marked general resem-

blance to those worked on the English samplers of a hundred years later. The Italian patterns are executed on the white linen in crimson silk; the men wear swords, are less farouche in appearance than their English equivalents, and are sometimes placed alternately with little women of the same type, but the stiff tree-forms are there, and the likeness between the patterns as a whole is far too close to be merely coincidental. Moreover, an even stronger resemblance is noticeable in the case of a pattern in which a peculiar device of an S with barbed ends alternates with upright, conventional flowers. The queer, wiggly SS of the Italian napery borders, and those of the band-patterns of the English samplers, are hardly distinguishable one from the other. Embroideries were largely imported from Italy into England during the seventeenth century, and it is easy to imagine how their patterns were copied, with more or less alteration, by English sampler-workers, who were not mere school-children, it must be remembered. Or it is quite possible that Italian needlework teachers were responsible for the introduction of the patterns to their English pupils. It is difficult to understand, however, why the designs in question should have been worked, in England, on samplers alone.

The sampler of the seventeenth century has no enclosing border, the bands of embroidery run across the whole width of the strip of linen; an alphabet is not an inevitable feature, and when included, the letters are often crude in style and badly drawn. The name of the worker and the date are too frequently absent, and when present they are apt to be squeezed into some obscure corner, where they are easily overlooked. The stitches chiefly employed are back-stitch, flat satin-stitch, a close lace-stitch (buttonhole),

worked on the surface of the linen, and cross-stitch, but occasionally tent-stitch, cushion-stitches of various kinds, and French knots, are also introduced, many of these stitches being worked so as to show the same on both sides of the material. The silks used are soft and very slightly twisted.

A very desirable type of Stuart period sampler is that which has, in addition to the embroidered band-patterns, some of drawn- and cut-work, combined with diaper-patterns worked entirely in satin-stitch with white thread. In Plate 47 is shown a portion of a "long" sampler which has these features in addition to band-patterns, including one with the little dwarfish men, an alphabet and the date 1669. A very fine, although rather late, seventeenth century sampler, in which cut-work and embroidery are combined, is that of Elizabeth Mackett, dated 1696, in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The cut-work sampler, illustrated in Plate 18, is described in the chapter dealing with English lace (p. 86).

The Stuart-period samplers are usually in far more perfect condition than those worked fifty or a hundred years later. This may seem strange at the first glance, but the reason is not far to seek, for, as they were simply used as pattern-rolls to which reference was only made when necessary, they were kept safely rolled up in drawer or chest, when not actually in use. The collector may come across, by great good luck, one of these early samplers still mounted on its original little roller in the shape of a parchment cylinder, or a wad of horsehair, wool, or hay encased in paper.

The production of samplers did not entirely cease during the Commonwealth, but specimens bearing dates between 1650 and 1660 are not often met with. Those that do belong to this decade differ in no marked

way from either their immediate predecessors or those worked between the Restoration and the Revolution. Towards the end of the century, however, a gradual change took place. The sampler still remained long and narrow ; its ground material was still unbleached, soft, rather coarse, linen, but not only were two or more alphabets and a row of numerals introduced between the band-patterns (which were themselves showing signs of decadence in style), but a text, a proverbial saying, or an adaptation of a book- or fly-leaf rhyme were often added. Much in favour were the doggerel lines :

“ A. B. is my Name,  
 And with my Needle I wrought the same,  
 And had my skill a-been better  
 I had a-mended every Letter.”

And another popular inscription was :

“ Look well to what thou takest in hand,  
 For learning is better than money or land,  
 When land is gone and money is spent  
 Then learning is most excellent.”

Samplers of this later seventeenth century class continued to be worked until well into the reign of Queen Anne, and rather unaccountably, their patterns remained practically uninfluenced by the great change which had occurred in the style of embroidery in general after William and Mary ascended the throne. The proportions of the sampler, though, had begun to alter by slow degrees ; it grew shorter and wider, and the space devoted to alphabets, numerals, verses, and the like steadily increased. The cut-work had almost disappeared with the seventeenth century, but the band-patterns including that of the little men, lingered, although in an ever-deteriorating form. The

lettering improved, and the verses became slightly more ambitious. Here is one from a sampler of the reign of Queen Anne :

“ Not land but learning makes a maid compleat,  
Not birth but breeding makes her truly great,  
Not wealth but wisdom doth adorn her state,  
Virtue, not honour, makes her fortunate.  
Made and worked by me, Sarah Smith, April 18, 1710.  
Vivat Regina.”

The enclosing border began to appear on samplers in the second decade of the eighteenth century, the earliest one with a border, so far as is known, being dated 1718. The border was not generally adopted until some fifteen years later when the sampler had lost much of its interest and beauty. By that time the old band-patterns had disappeared save in a few cases where odd fragments of them were introduced among flowers, vases, trees, crowns, hearts, niggling little border-patterns, alphabets, numerals, and verses. About 1720 or a year or two later, linen of a particularly hideous shade of dark yellow began to be used—happily, not very largely—as a sampler ground, and remained more or less in vogue until 1735–40. Alphabets in a variety of styles are usually found on a sampler of this date ; the majority are worked in cross-stitch so executed that the stitches form a neat little square on the wrong side of the material, but for some, eyelet or bird’s-eye stitch is employed. This is worked by piercing a series of little holes in the linen and whipping their edges over as in the *broderie Anglaise* of Early Victorian days. In a variant of this, the over-casting or whipping stitches are alternately long and short, so as to surround each tiny hole with rays as it were. Other alphabets are worked in flat satin-stitch, and occasionally one is

met with which is done in a kind of close herring-bone stitch. In the seventeen-thirties straggling, naturalistic flowers worked in satin- or long-and-short stitch frequently formed the border of the sampler, which by this time had become in shape and proportions much what it remained to its end, but these flowery edgings, which were often bright and pretty, were soon superseded by narrow cross-stitch borders often of conventionalised pinks or strawberries, but sometimes geometrical. (See plate 48.)

Contemporary with this class of sampler was a type which showed signs of the influence of the great religious revival which was then affecting the whole of England. The Ten Commandments, Psalms and lengthy hymns, worked in small insignificant and severely plain letters fill the whole of the rectangular piece of linen, save for the small space wherein the pious worker has recorded her name and the date. It must be confessed that this particular kind of sampler is decidedly lacking in interest; it has none of the individuality even of the sampler of a slightly later date in which a ferociously Calvinistic verse is combined with the frivolous accessories of hearts and baskets of flowers, crowns and bird-cages. Here is an example of such a verse :

“ No tongue can tell, no pen can well express,  
The punishments prepared for wickedness.  
The quickest thought by no means can conceive  
What they shall suffer who ungodly live.”

And another :

“ There's not a sin that we commit  
Nor wicked word we say  
But in Thy dreadful Book is writ  
Against the Judgment Day.”

Two gruesome little pairs of rhymes popular among

sampler workers—or rather their parents or teachers, for the poor children themselves would hardly choose them—of this period, the third quarter of the eighteenth century, are the following :

“ When greedy worms my body eat  
Here you may see my name complete.”

And

“ When I am dead and laid in grave and all my bones are  
rotten,  
By this may I remembered be, when I should be forgotten.”

As time went on the sampler grew more and more pictorial in style. Houses of all kinds, from stately red-brick mansions with portico and many windows to humble cottages ; pigeon-cotes, windmills, dogs, cats, sheep, ducks, plants in pots and many other objects, animate and inanimate, were introduced among the alphabets, numerals and moral verses. Adam and Eve, sometimes decorously clad in contemporary costume, occasionally appear, and in a few specimens a curious survival of the embroidered pictures of the Stuart period is seen in a lion and a tiger glaring at each other from opposite corners. Many of the sampler verses of the last half of the eighteenth century are priggish effusions worthy of Mr. Barlow, and it is open to doubt whether they expressed in any degree the true feelings of the unlucky little girls who had to spend so much time over their tedious working. Here are a couple of examples of this “ poetry ” :

“ Religion and Duty happy I am taught,  
And Needlework to this perfection brought,  
To read the Scriptures and my parents love,  
In hopes to gain the Heavenly Joys above.”

“ Next unto God, dear parents, I address  
 Myself to you in humble thankfulness  
 For all your care and charge on me bestowed,  
 The means of learning unto me allowed.  
 Go on, I pray, and let me still pursue  
 Those Golden Arts the vulgar never knew.”

Although by this time the sampler was well on the downward path, yet it was by no means invariably unpleasing. The alphabets, of which as many as five or six were often introduced, are rarely found to be really badly drawn, and they are usually agreeably varied in style. They are worked in satin-, eyelet- or cross-stitch with bright-coloured silks. Now and then bands of the zigzag pattern known as Bargello, Florentine or Hungary stitch relieve the monotony of the niggling little cross-stitch border patterns, and in some instances sprays of flowers, or baskets filled with them, well drawn and nicely worked, fill the centre of the sampler with good effect.

The regrettable introduction of a woollen stuff known as tammy- or sampler-cloth took place about the middle of the eighteenth century, and during the last thirty or forty years of it linen was rarely employed as a ground for samplers. The result of the change was disastrous; the woollen fabric fell an easy prey to moths, and as a natural consequence few ordinary samplers of this particular period have survived quite without injury, while many are honeycombed with holes, and useless to the collector. Luckily, however, for the very finest samplers a thin but firm and rather stiff, muslin-like material called tiffany was preferred to the abominable tammy, the former being all but invariably employed for the ground of those samplers of darning-stitches which were worked from 1780 to about 1810. In these, small square pieces

of the tiffany were cut out, and the holes so made, filled up with fine darning that sometimes reproduced the texture of plain linen, or of the tiffany itself, sometimes damask patterns. These latter, which were meant to teach the darning of table-linen, were generally worked with silks of two colours. It will be found in some of these samplers that the ground has not been actually cut away, but that the darns have been simply worked on the tiffany ; a much easier method of execution, but one far less satisfactory as an instructional process. The darning-patterns are usually arranged round a vase, basket or bunch of flowers, which is also worked in darning-stitch. Most of these samplers (see plate 49) come from the Eastern Counties, an interesting instance of the way in which certain distinct types are confined, or almost confined, to particular districts. A class specially characteristic of the North of England, for instance, has a ground of open-meshed brownish-yellow canvas on which are worked alphabets of large letters and very simple patterns in worsteds of one or two colours only. Scottish samplers are remarkable for the traces they show, even as late as 1840, of the seventeenth century band-patterns, every vestige of which vanished from English ones before George II came to the throne. A peacock, moreover, is almost an inevitable feature in the design of a Scottish sampler, and its alphabets are, as a rule, florid in style. There is nothing markedly distinctive about Irish samplers, save the frequent introduction of certain religious emblems indicative of the workers' Roman Catholic faith.

Embroidered maps, or map-samplers, as they are often called, were worked from 1770 to the beginning of the reign of George IV. They are not particularly interesting as there is a great monotony about them,

but if a collection of samplers is to be thoroughly representative it must contain one or two specimens. The older maps are generally worked on white satin or sarsenet ; the countries or counties are outlined with two rows of chain- or stem-stitch in different-coloured silks, and the names of places are worked—generally with a sublime disregard of geographical facts—with black sewing silk. In an upper corner the figure of Britannia, or a wreath enclosing the name of the country represented, often appears, to which are sometimes added the name of the worker and the date. Maps embroidered entirely with black silk, so finely that the effect is that of a pen-and-ink drawing, are occasionally seen, and in a nineteenth-century variety the ground is fine canvas on which the outlining and the names are worked in cross-stitch. The commonest map-samplers are of England and Wales ; next come those of Europe, and, a long way after, the Hemispheres. Maps of English counties, which are more interesting than any others, are scarce, but may be sometimes picked up, generally in more or less poor condition.

Samplers worked in beads are rare ; they belong to the end of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth, and their patterns are those of the ordinary sampler of the period carried out with small, many-coloured glass beads sewn one by one on the material, usually the moth-attracting woollen tammy.

A small proportion of samplers have a special interest attached to them as being records of public events. In the Exhibition of Samplers and Embroidered Pictures held at the Fine Art Society's rooms in Bond Street some twenty years ago, the oldest specimen of what may be termed the commemorative type shown, was dated 1693 and celebrated, rather long after the event, the landing of William of Orange. A sampler

of 1802 commemorates the Treaty of Amiens by an Ode to Peace, and later in the nineteenth century samplers were worked in memory of Queen Charlotte, Queen Caroline and Princess Charlotte of Wales. One referring to the death of George IV's unhappy wife is evidently the production of a keen sympathiser with that lady, for it is worked with the following lines, within a black border :

“ On earth denied th' Imperial Crown,  
 Refused to share her husband's throne,  
 Heaven pitying viewed her, and in love  
 Gave the celestial throne above.  
 Her daughter dear forced from her arms  
 And she was sore opprest,  
 To foreign lands she went forlorn  
 Quite void of happiness.”

Perhaps the very oddest of commemorative samplers is one which celebrates the visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822. For some unaccountable reason the main feature in the design of this sampler is the multiplication table worked, with an austerity entirely appropriate, in black silk. Below is the inscription “ Scotland hails with joy the Visit of her Sovereign,” the name Mary Hulton and the date 1822. Numerals and an alphabet of capital letters form the border, all being worked in the same sombre hue.

From 1810 the deterioration of the sampler proceeded apace. Houses, a fearful edifice entitled “ Solomon's Temple,” lists of the names of relations, or moral “ poems ” of great length and equal dulness, occupied most of its space, and the few patterns introduced were paltry and commonplace in the extreme. For the first quarter of the nineteenth century the woollen tammy-cloth continued to be used, although it was occasionally replaced by an open make of linen resem-

bling fine canvas. The whole of the work was executed in cross-stitch with silk or fine worsted.

The introduction of Berlin printed patterns for cross-stitch, and Berlin wool with which to work them dealt the sampler its death-blow. A travesty of it, a terrible thing worked in gaudily coloured fluffy German wool on stiff cotton "Penelope" canvas, continued to be produced by schoolgirls throughout the 'forties, and into the 'fifties of last century, and then even that poor shadow vanished.

Foreign samplers may be permitted a place in a collection, although early specimens of these are exceedingly scarce. Indeed it seems probable that in some countries, of which Portugal is one, samplers were not worked prior to the eighteenth century. At any rate, none appear to be in existence which can be assigned to an earlier date.

American samplers of pre-Revolution days are, as might be anticipated, practically indistinguishable, so far as patterns and stitches go, from their English contemporaries. Two good seventeenth-century samplers are illustrated in Mrs. Morse Earle's "Child Life in Colonial Days," the most interesting of them being dated 1654, and having worked on it the names of Miles and Abigail Fleetwood, who were connected with Oliver Cromwell through his eldest daughter, Anne, who married Charles Fleetwood. The Fleetwood sampler has, in addition to the characteristic band-patterns, the figures of three ladies and two gentlemen in contemporary costumes. A late American sampler, until recently in the possession of the writer, has for ground a peculiar woollen material, not unlike the English tammy, but of more open mesh, harsher in texture and of a dull light green. It is worked in pale-coloured silks with alphabets of rather

straggling letters, numerals, a few ordinary border-patterns and an inscription which is copied verbatim here :

“ Lydia Burrill, her Sampler. This I did in the 10 year of my age in 1800.

O, Washington, Thrice Glories name,  
What do reward can Man decree.”

“ Do ” evidently stands for due.

Samplers were produced in Germany in the seventeenth century, and according to Mrs. C. J. Longman's Note on Foreign Samplers in Mr. Huish's " Samplers and Tapestry Embroideries," the earliest were small and square. Those worked in the eighteenth century were long and narrow, like the English seventeenth-century type ; their material was a rather thick cream-coloured linen on which various devices in the way of wreaths, vases, birds, etc., were worked in cross-stitch. There was generally an alphabet and sometimes diaper-patterns worked in satin-stitch and French knots with white thread. In another kind of German sampler, belonging to the early nineteenth century, the work is done entirely in black silk. There is generally a florid alphabet at the top, and the rest of the sampler—which is usually square or nearly so—is filled up with formal patterns ranging from the stiffest of conventional plants in pots, to diamonds and hexagons arranged in rows, with, in some instances, single capital letters, crowns or little birds between them. The whole is worked solidly in cross-stitch, and the effect is decidedly gloomy and unpleasing.

Darning samplers of fine quality were produced in both Germany and Belgium earlier, and continued to be worked later, than in England. A very good Belgian example in the writer's collection bears the

date 1841. Danish samplers are mainly devoted to patterns of Tönder work, but there are some which are not unlike the English pictorial sampler of the late eighteenth century. Of the latter type are the samplers of Holland, but their alphabets are remarkably large and florid, while occasionally a characteristically Dutch house forms the central feature in the design. A specimen in the Victoria and Albert Museum has the arms of the city of Amsterdam at the top. Russian samplers are not commonly met with in this country, but the writer has one which is of white linen, hemstitched and measuring fourteen inches square. It is worked in cross-stitch with detached patterns, an alphabet of Russian characters and a double-headed eagle, for which red and blue cotton are solely employed.

Samplers do not appear to have been very generally worked in France, and there are not many specimens in English collections. There is a finely worked French sampler of the late eighteenth century in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has a wonderfully elaborate design including flowers of many kinds, a cornucopia, a temple, a classic altar and a grotto embroidered in silks and gold thread on white silk. In the writer's collection there is an equally elaborate and beautifully worked French sampler of about the same date, which has a ground of thin stuff resembling the English tammy, but of finer, smoother texture. In the centre is a foreign coronet and an intricate monogram within a very gracefully drawn little wreath worked in silver, and silver-gilt thread mingled with touches of rose, blue, green and rose silk. Below is a Watteau-like scene with shepherd and shepherdess in dainty eighteenth-century costumes, sheep, fruit-laden trees, birds, flowers, and a fountain, all embroidered in long-

and-short stitch with floss-silks of very delicate colours. Sprays of flowers in various flat stitches fill the upper portion of the sampler, and at the base is a series of squares, forming a band, in various flat stitches, the whole being surrounded by a pretty scrolling border in satin-stitch. The two samplers described above are characteristic in every detail of their period and nationality, although they are neither signed or dated. Nineteenth-century samplers of rather poor quality bearing French inscriptions and signed with French names in the majority of instances must be assigned to the Channel Islands. When the inscription is polyglot, as is sometimes the case, there is no doubt in the matter.

Of the samplers of South Europe, those of Spain are most interesting. The specimens in existence date from about the middle of the eighteenth century to the second decade of the nineteenth. They are generally of rather large size, are made of heavy cream-coloured linen, and are finished at the corners with little tufts or tassels of coloured silks. Their patterns, consisting chiefly of well-drawn geometrical borders, are arranged in series of short sections round the four sides, leaving a small rectangular space in the middle in which detached ornaments are sometimes worked, or, occasionally, the arms of the worker's family, or those of the convent where she was taught to use her needle so deftly. Like the majority of foreign samplers, those of Spain have no inscriptions beyond the name of the worker, perhaps that of her convent-school and possibly the date, and all these may be absent. When they are present they are usually to be found round the centre space, within the enframing border-patterns. The colouring of Spanish samplers is rich and harmonious, and the embroidery

in cross and satin-stitches is invariably extremely well executed with rather thick silk. In a few examples some traces of Moorish influence are faintly apparent in the patterns, but these are exceptional.

Between the sampler of Spain and that of Portugal there is a great gulf fixed. The latter, as a rule, is a strip of rather coarse yellowish linen, on which is worked with bright-coloured twisted silks a medley of objects scattered about with complete disregard of anything approaching order or symmetry. A ship in full sail, a soldier, a couple of men carrying an image in a shrine, a windmill, a pierced heart, a child or two, and some conventional flowers, may be seen dotted over a strip of linen measuring some 24 inches by 12 inches, facing some in one direction, some in another, according to the caprice of the worker. A straggling script alphabet may appear in one corner, a few numerals in a second, while the worker's name or initials may be tucked into a third, and the fourth left blank. Dates are seldom inserted; when they do appear they are of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. There is one point about a Portuguese sampler worthy of note; it is rarely, if ever, quite finished; there is always one small portion left imperfect. This seems to point to an interesting survival of a very ancient superstition, certainly not peculiar to Portugal, that the absolute completion of any piece of work is apt to be followed by the death of the worker.

As far as is known, the earliest Italian samplers were entirely of patterns of cut- and drawn-work, and of these there are a few—a very few—in English collections. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a small square Italian sampler, worked with what may represent Aesop's Fable of the Fox and the Grapes, which is assigned to the late eighteenth or early

nineteenth century. In the same Museum are four samplers from Perugia, with elaborate designs of the "pictorial" type, two of which are dated 1820 and 1855, while the other two, which are undated, are attributed in the catalogue to about the same periods respectively.

In the Near East—Turkey and the neighbouring States—pieces of thin soft muslin are worked with small sections of embroidery patterns in bright-coloured silks and tinsel, and these may be certainly classed among samplers. They are pretty bits of stitchery enough, but entirely lack that individuality which is so largely responsible for the charm of the bulk of the samplers worked in Western countries.

Reproductions of old samplers scarcely exist, at any rate they are so few that the collector may regard them as negligible. Dates, however, are fairly often tampered with, they are picked out, worked in, or altered, and if such additions and emendations have been cleverly done they are not easy to detect. Happily, it is sometimes the case that attempts to increase the apparent age of samplers defeat their own ends, as when 1820 is transmogrified into 1620 by picking out a few stitches at the top of the 8, the sampler itself being a big square one of woollen tammy with a quotation from a nineteenth century poet on it!

As to the arrangement of a collection of samplers, few owners can resist the temptation of framing their best specimens and using them as wall-decorations, therefore they can be only advised to hang them where direct sunlight will not fall on them, and to have them very carefully mounted. Perhaps the best way of doing this is to have a stout backing-board rather larger than the sampler covered tightly with either

velvet or cloth of some inconspicuous and suitable colour, such as dull green or brown, and to fasten the sampler to this by means of very small, sharp pins used as nails. Good quality brown-paper, by the way, is not to be despised as a background if economy has to be strictly considered. Unframed specimens may be tacked on sheets of stiff paper, or thin cardboard, and stored flat in drawers or portfolios, but it is advisable to keep the long samplers of the seventeenth century rolled on cardboard cylinders.

It adds greatly to the value and interest of a collection of samplers, if it is carefully catalogued. The samplers should be classified, and the material, style of pattern, measurements and inscriptions noted in detail in every case.

#### DATES TO BE REMEMBERED BY SAMPLER COLLECTORS.

|  |           |      |
|--|-----------|------|
| Date of earliest sampler known to be in existence                                | -         | 1638 |
| „ „ earliest sampler with enclosing border                                       | -         | 1718 |
| „ „ introduction of deep yellow ground material<br>(about)                       | - - - - - | 1722 |
| „ „ introduction of woollen Tammy or sampler<br>cloth (about)                    | - - - - - | 1740 |
| „ „ introduction of tiffany (about)  | - - -     | 1770 |
| „ „ earliest embroidered map known   | - -       | 1777 |
| „ „ latest survival of seventeenth century band-<br>patterns in English samplers | - -       | 1741 |

## GLOSSARY

### OF TERMS USED IN CONNECTION WITH LACE AND EMBROIDERY

*A jours.* Fr. Syns.: modes (Fr.); fillings, lead-works (Eng.).

Fancy open stitches introduced in spaces in the pattern of both bobbin- and needle-point lace.

*Appliqué.*

A. Term used to describe a method of working lace in which the pattern is made separately and sewn on a net ground when completed.

B. A class of embroidery in which the pattern is cut out of one material and sewn on (applied) a ground of another, or on one of the same material but contrasting in colour.

*Back-stitch.*

A stitch in embroidery worked by bringing the needle up through the material from the back on a traced line, inserting it a little behind the point where it came out and bringing it up again the same distance beyond. It is then put into the hole made when it was drawn out the first time, and again brought out further forward. Back-stitch was much used in the quilted embroideries on linen of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

*Bars* v. brides.

*Brides.* Fr. Syns.: bars, legs (Eng.).

The ties in bobbin and needle-point lace which connect and support the pattern when there is no net ground.

*Bobbins.*

Elongated spools of wood or bone with a "neck" at the upper end round which the thread used in making lace on the pillow is wound.

*Bobbin-winder.* Syn. turns.

A small wooden wheel by means of which the thread is wound on the lace bobbins.

*Button-hole Stitch.*

The simple loop or hitch which is the fundamental stitch in needle-point lace of all kinds. It was extensively used as a surface-stitch (*q.v.*) in the stump-embroidery of the seventeenth century. It is rarely found in very early work.

*Chain-stitch.*

An embroidery stitch worked by putting the needle in from the back, pulling it through and holding the thread down with the left thumb. The needle is then inserted at the point whence it came out, a small portion of the ground material taken up on it and the thread drawn through, the point of the needle being kept above the held down thread. Thus is formed the first link of the chain. The stitch is of great antiquity and was extensively introduced in Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastic embroidery. It fell into disuse during the greater part of the seventeenth century at the end of which, however, it re-appeared. Chain-stitch has always been conspicuous in the needlework of Oriental countries.

*Cordonnet.* Fr. Syns.: gimp, trolly-thread (Eng.).

The thread or cord used to outline the pattern in certain laces. It may be simply a single thread coarser than that used for the body of the lace (e.g. Mechlin); a thread whipped or buttonhole-stitched over (e.g. point d'Alençon); or a bundle or sheaf of threads similarly encased (e.g. point de Venise).

*Cross-stitch.* Syn.: sampler-stitch.

An embroidery stitch formed by crossing two slanting stitches so that their four points mark out a perfect square, the threads of the linen or canvas being always followed. It is an old stitch but appears but rarely on

English samplers prior to the seventeenth century, though in eighteenth century samplers it is the principal stitch. Cross-stitch worked in crimson silk was much used as a grounding stitch in Italian household embroideries of the sixteenth century, the pattern being left in the plain linen.

*Cushion-stitch.*

A name sometimes applied to cross-stitch, but more generally used to indicate the diaper-patterns formed of groups of straight stitches of varying length which are introduced as grounds or fillings, in embroideries of many periods and nationalities.

*Cut-work.* Syn.: point coupé (Fr.); punto tagliato (Ital.).

The immediate ancestor of needle-point lace. From a piece of linen portions were cut out and the holes thus made filled with bars of thread cased with buttonhole-stitch and forming a geometrical pattern.

*Darning-stitch.*

The stitch in which the samplers of damask darning are executed is the one familiar to every stocking mender, save that the number of threads under and over which the needle is passed varies according to the pattern to be copied. There is a surface darning-stitch sometimes seen in old embroideries in which threads are carried from side to side of the space to be filled and others darned in and out of them, the needle only passing through the ground material at the edges of the pattern.

*Drawn-work.* Syn.: punto tirato (Ital.).

A type of needlework closely allied to, and contemporary with, cut-work. The foundation was loosely woven linen, out of which a certain number of threads were drawn, those remaining being whipped or buttonholed over so as to produce either a simple, square-meshed net-work, or a more or less elaborate geometrical pattern. There are many later varieties of drawn-work.

*Fillings* v. à jours.

*Footing.* Syn.: engrêlure (Fr.).

The upper edge of a piece of lace, usually straight. Often incorrectly called heading.

*Gimp* v. Cordonnet.

*Gingles* or jingles (Eng., Midlands).

The loose pewter rings which distinguish the bobbins on which is wound the heavy outlining or trolly thread. The name is often wrongly applied to the spangles (*q.v.*).

*Ground*. Syn.: fond (Fr.).

Properly the brides or net supporting and connecting the pattern of a lace. The term, however, has come to be used to indicate net only; that is to say, a *grounded* lace is generally understood to mean one with a net ground.

*Guipure*.

A name derived from the French verb *guiper* and applied in the seventeenth century to a kind of *passementerie* made of cord or thick thread, wrapped round with silk or thin strips of metal. The term is now used rather loosely to denote any rather coarse lace in which the pattern is formed of tape or braid and held together by brides.

*Herring-bone Stitch*.

This is so much used in modern needlework, and is so seldom seen in early embroidery, that it is scarcely necessary to describe it here. Worked very closely so as to produce the effect of a plait it was introduced in English embroidery of the seventeenth century, mainly for stems and tendrils, and open herring-bone stitches in some variety are found among the fillings of the big leaves and flowers of the heavy crewel embroidery of a slightly later date. The plait-like herring-bone stitch is a conspicuous feature in Turkish needlework.

*Knot-stitch*. Syns.: ivory-stitch, punto avorio (Ital.). A stitch introduced in early Italian cut-work.

*Knotted Stitches*.

The best known of these is the *French knot*, which is worked in the following way. The needle is brought up from the back of the material at the exact point where the knot is to be. The thread is then held tight under the left thumb, the point of the needle put under it, and the thread twisted round the needle once or more, according to the size of knot desired. The needle is

then inserted close to the place whence it came out and the knot pulled tight. Although the name is modern, French knots were introduced in English embroidery as early as the sixteenth century at least, and much old Chinese work is executed entirely in very fine knots of this kind. *Bullion-knot* is worked in the same way as French knot, but the thread is twisted at least eight or nine times round the needle and the long roll so formed is sewn down on the material either in a straight line or as a loop according to the requirements of the pattern. Looped bullion-knots were often used to represent the hair or wigs of the figures in stump-work, although masses of irregular knot-stitches sometimes served the same purpose. These were produced by twisting the thread round the needle an indefinite number of times and tightening up the knots with an uneven tension.

*Lacis*. An early term for darned netting.

*Laid-work*. Syn. : couching.

Embroidery carried out by laying strands of gold or silver thread or silk on the surface of the material, and securing them in position by short transverse stitches. The latter are frequently arranged to form a diaper pattern and the work is sometimes slightly raised by a padding of wool or cotton under the laid threads. Laid-work in gold thread plays an important part in mediæval ecclesiastical embroideries, and in Spanish and Italian work of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Couchéd floss-silk is also very largely used in these embroideries.

*Lead-works*, v. à jours.

*Long-and-short Stitch*. Syns. : crewel-stitch, feather-stitch.

An embroidery term applied to a mode of filling a given space with rows of alternating long and short stitches ; each row fitting into that immediately preceding it, the exact length and the slope of the stitches being graduated to suit the contour of the pattern. Long-and-short stitch was employed in both secular and church embroidery at least as early as the fourteenth

century, but after the middle of the eighteenth century it went out of fashion until it was re-introduced during the revival of artistic needlework in the 'seventies of last century.

*Looped Stitch.* Syns. : (modern) plush-stitch, rug-stitch.

This is worked by passing the silk or wool over a small mesh and securing the loop thus formed by a tent-stitch (*q.v.*). When a sufficient number of rows of loops have been worked, they are cut through with sharp scissors, and the whole surface evenly clipped all over. In seventeenth century embroidered pictures looped-stitch is often employed to represent fur.

*Passing.*

Gold or silver thread thin enough to pass through the ground material of embroidery.

*Pearlin* or pearling.

The Scottish name for lace.

*Picots.* Fr. Syn. : purls (Eng.).

Small loops worked on the brides or cordonnet of lace.

*Picoté.* Fr.

Ornamented with picots, e.g. brides picotées.

*Pillow.*

The tightly stuffed cushion on which bobbin-lace is made. Its shape and size vary according to locality.

*Pillow-stand.* Syns. : maid, horse.

The three-legged wooden stand used by English lace-makers to support the pillow.

*Point de raccroc.* Fr. Syn. : fine-drawing (Eng.).

The all but invisible stitch by which lace-makers join net.

*Purl.*

Fine gold or silver wire twisted after the manner of a corkscrew but very closely. Sometimes the wire is covered with coloured silk. Much used in seventeenth century embroidery.

*Purl-edge.*

A very narrow braid with purls along one side which is sewn on the edge of a piece of lace as a finish.

*Purls* v. picots.

*Réseau.* Fr.

The bobbin or needle made net ground in which the lace pattern is set.

*Satin-stitch.*

To work this embroidery stitch the needle is brought up at the edge of the pattern across which the thread is taken, and the needle inserted exactly opposite the point whence it was drawn out. The thread is taken back on the wrong side of the work and the needle brought out as close as possible to the starting place of the first stitch. Satin-stitch embroidery should have a perfectly smooth even surface, the stitches lying as closely together as possible. It is chiefly used for working small designs ; when employed for large patterns the stitch is worked in a succession of rows. In working *surface* satin-stitch the thread is taken back on the *right* side of the material, not underneath, a method which economises silk but renders the embroidery flatter and less rich in appearance. Modern satin-stitch is usually worked over a padding of soft cotton, but this is seldom found in old work.

*Semé.* Fr.

Powdered or dotted. Often used in reference to the dotted ground of Lille bobbin-lace.

*Spangles.*

Coloured beads strung on loops of brass wire and attached to lace-bobbins to increase their weight. Peculiar to the English Midland Counties.

*Split-stitch.*

An embroidery stitch similar to stem-stitch (*q.v.*) except that the needle is brought up *through* the preceding stitch, which it splits. This is the stitch believed by some authorities to be the opus Anglicanum of early writers ; it was employed, worked spirally from a centre, for the faces in old ecclesiastic embroidery (e.g. the Syon Cope) and, worked vertically, for those in the embroidered pictures of the seventeenth century.

*Stem-stitch.* Syn. : outline-stitch.

This is worked by taking a long stitch forward on the material and a shorter one back on the wrong side, a process which, when repeated, produces a line of stitches slightly overlapping each other and slanting a little. Stem-stitch was used in embroidery from the seventeenth century, but not to any great extent until the needlework revival of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

*Surface-stitches.*

A term applied to those stitches in which the thread is kept almost entirely on the surface of the material.

*Tent-stitch.* Syn. : petit point (Fr.).

This is half a cross-stitch, i.e. a stitch taken over the crossing point of the warp and woof threads of the canvas or linen. It was first employed in English embroidery towards the end of the sixteenth century, and from the beginning of the reign of Charles I to that of William and Mary it was much used in working pictorial panels, caskets, book-covers, etc. During the first quarter of the eighteenth century it was combined with cross-stitch for furniture-covers and screen-panels.

*Toilé.* Fr. Syn. : cloth-work (Eng.).

The solid part of a lace pattern.

*Trolly.*

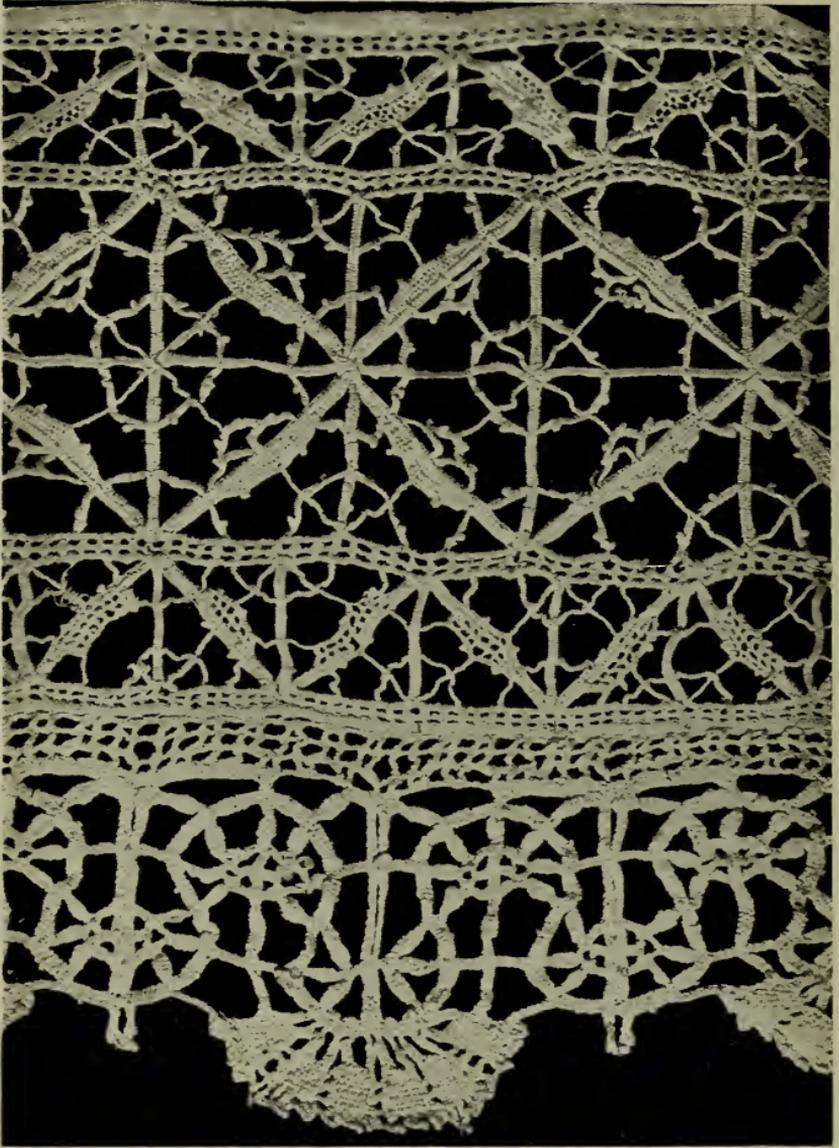
A. V. Cordonnet.

B. The large bobbin carrying the trolly thread or gimp (Eng., Midlands).

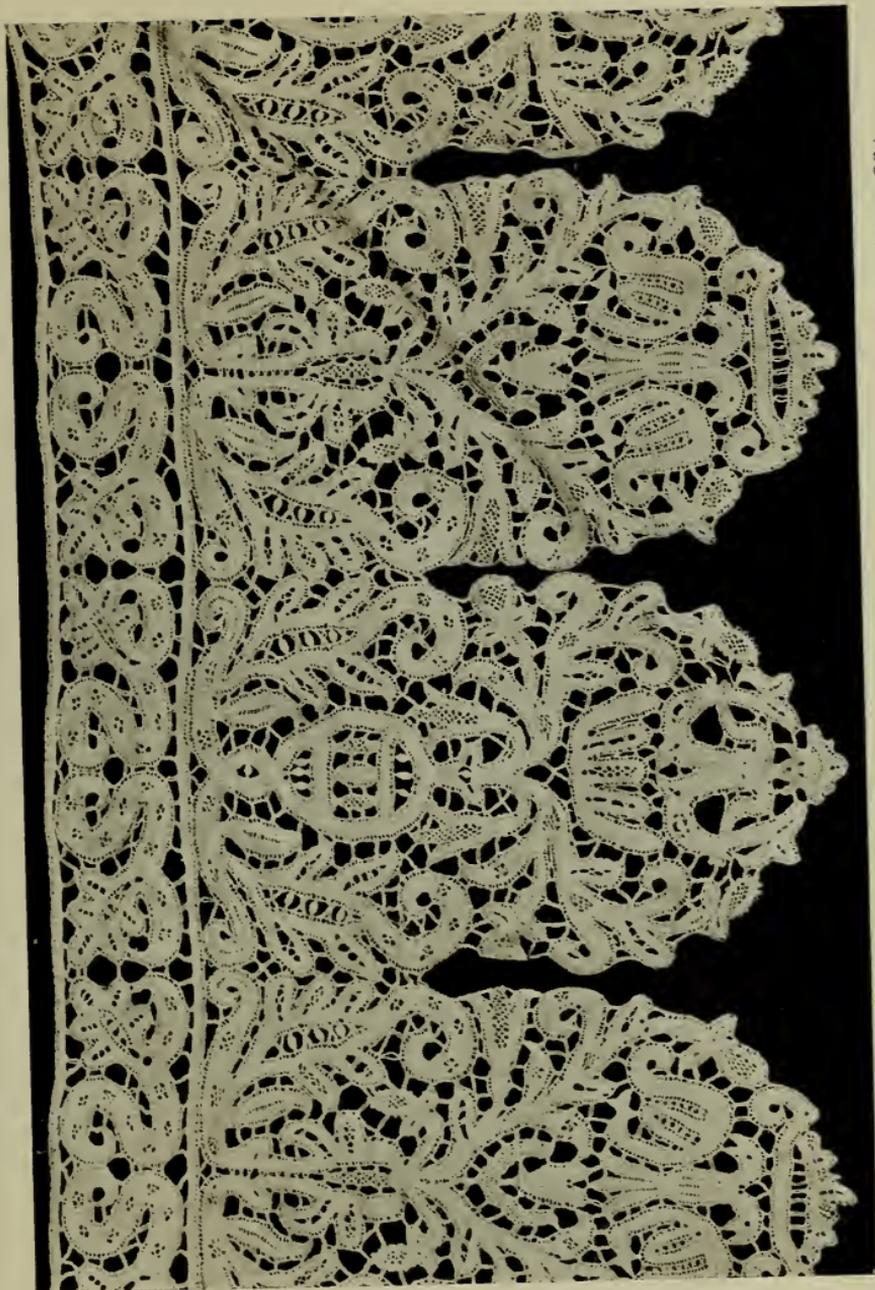
C. A coarse lace formerly made in Devonshire.



LACIS or Darned Netting. Italian, late XVI Century. V. & A. Museum. (Page 17.)



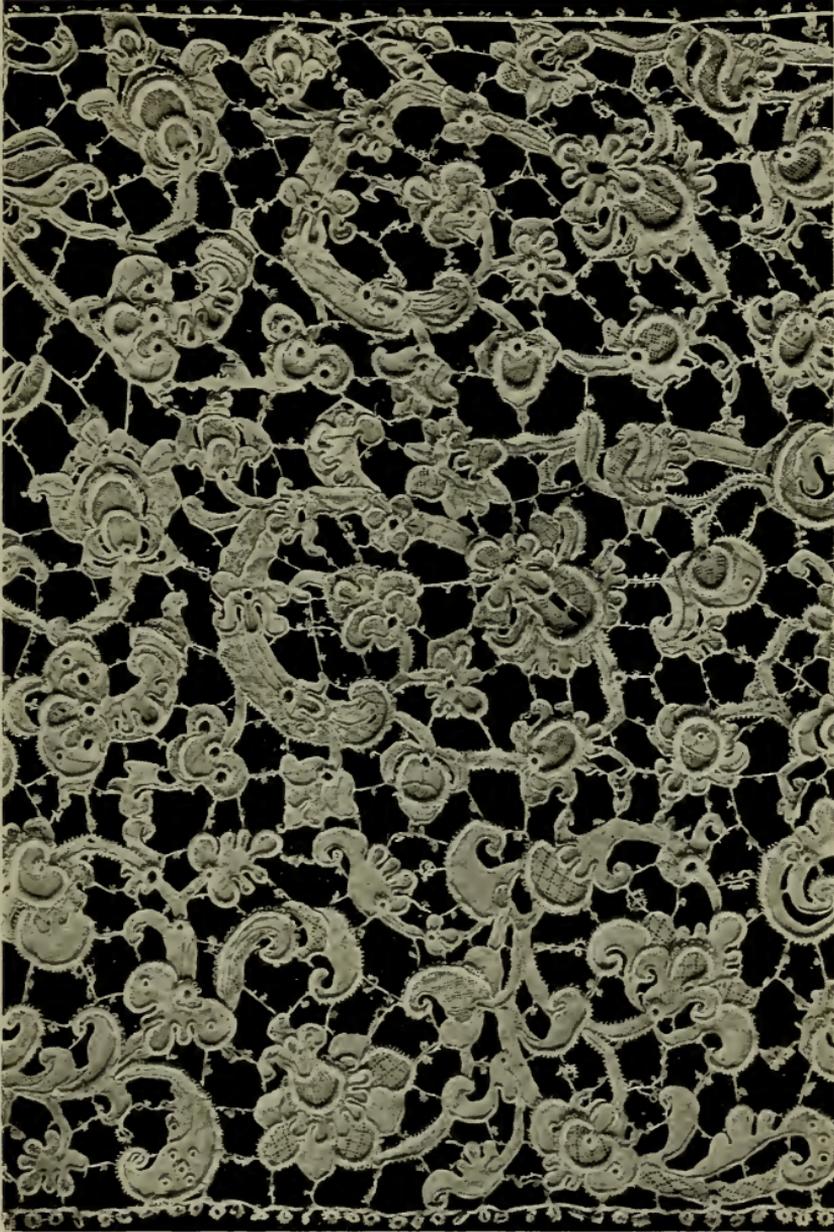
CUT-WORK, with Pillow-Lace Edging. Italian, XVII Century. (*Page 24.*)



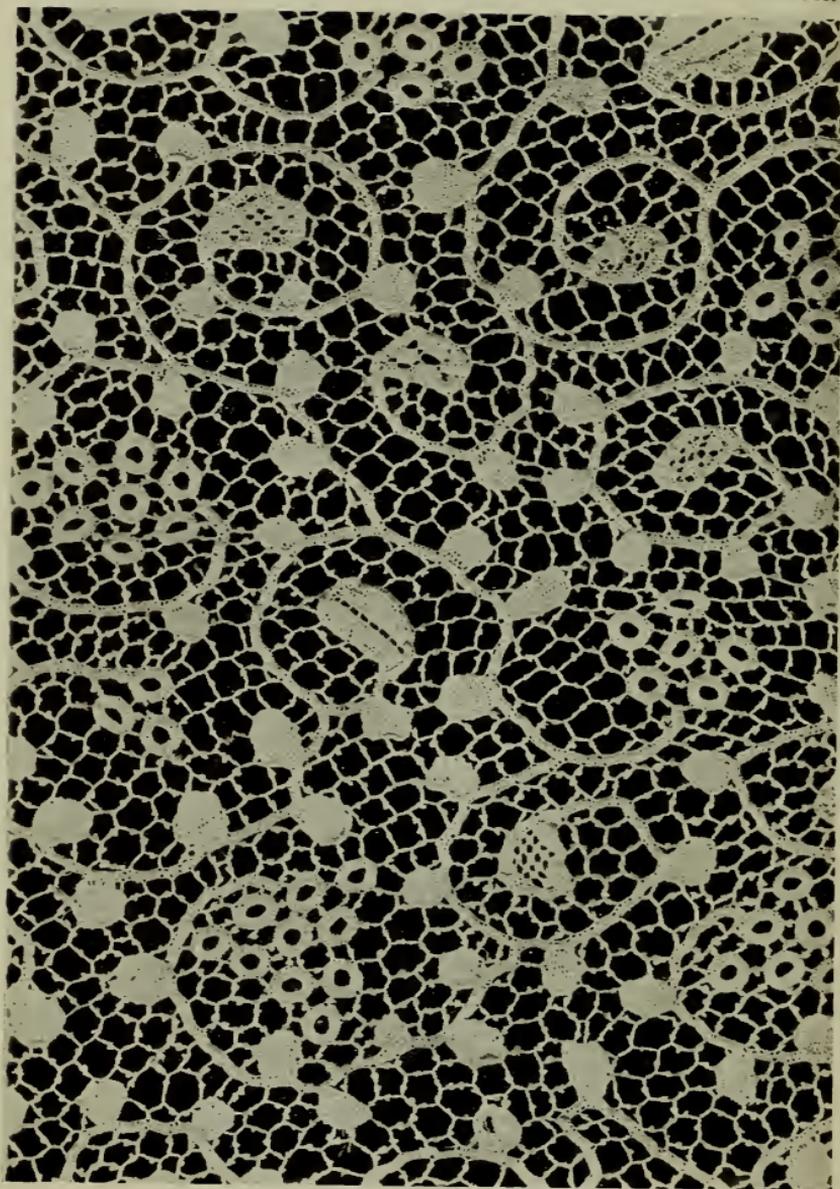
COLLAR LACE. Needlepoint, Venetian, XVII Century. V. & A. Museum. (*Page 26.*)



GROS POINT DE VENISE. XVII Century. V. & A. Museum. (Page 27.)



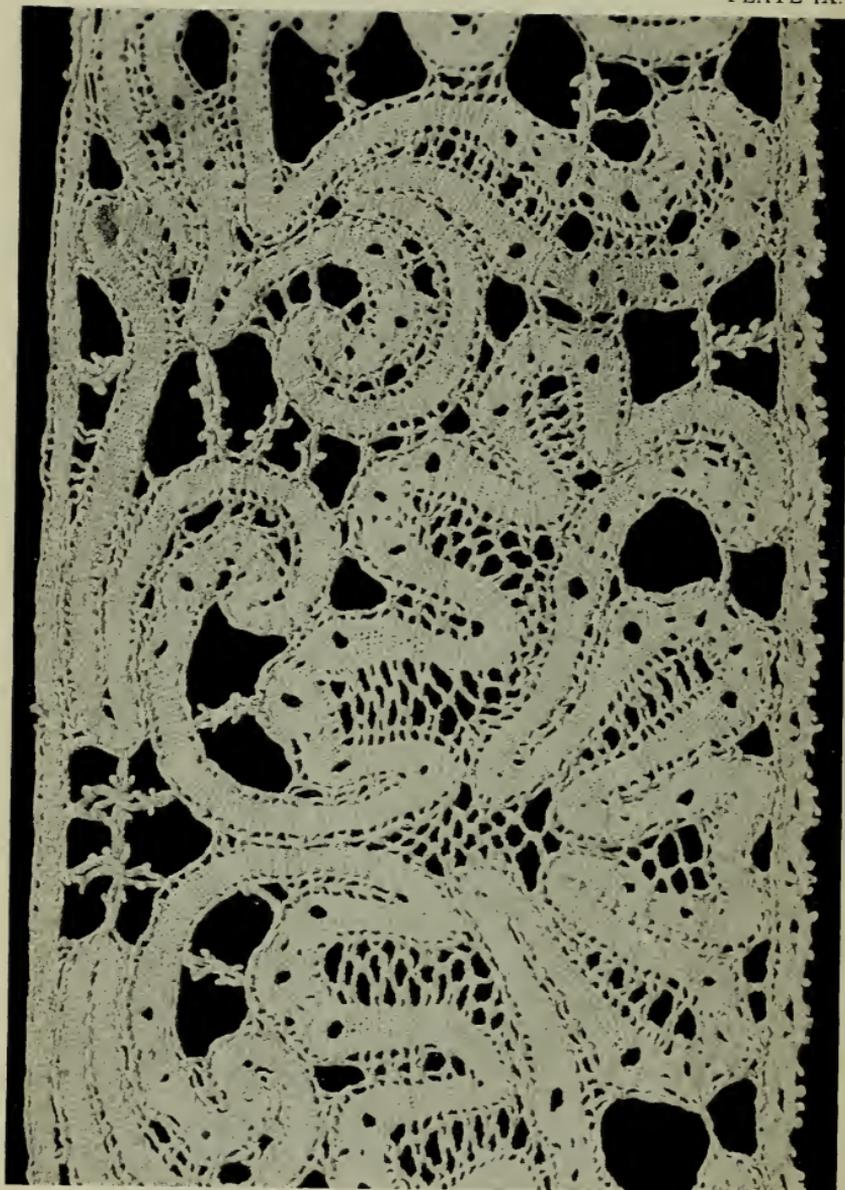
ROSE POINT. Needle Lace, Venetian, XVII Century. V. & A. Museum. (*Page 27.*)



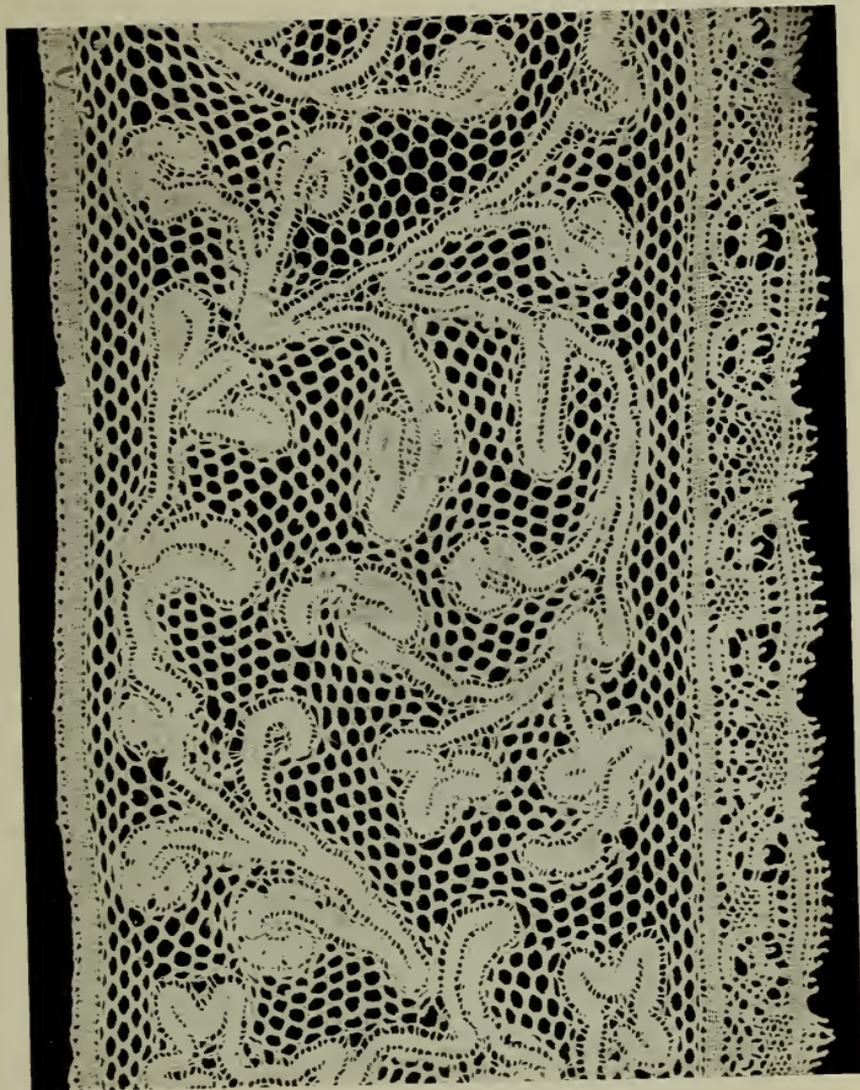
CORALLINE POINT. Needle Lace, Venetian, XVIII Century. (Page 28.)



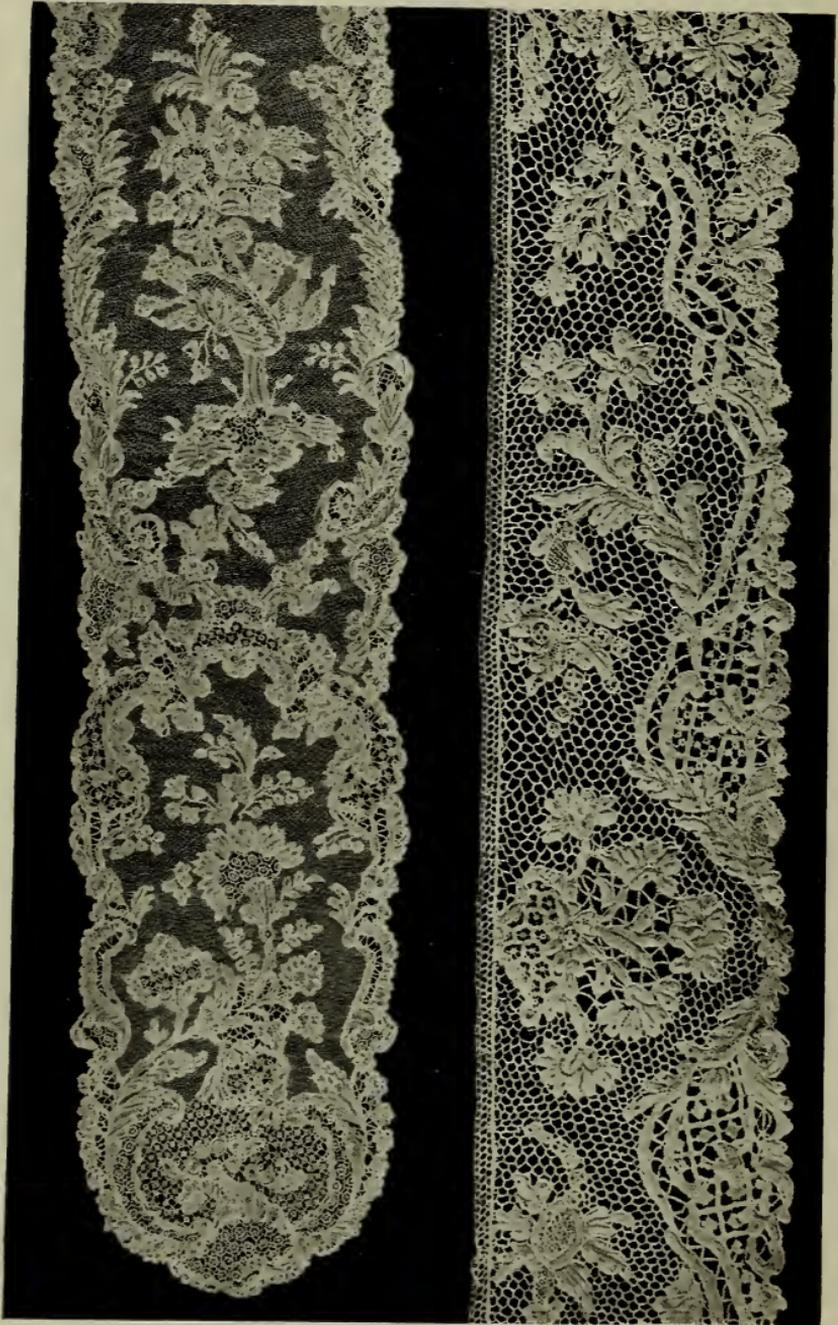
LAPPET. Grounded Venetian Needlepoint. XVIII Century. V. & A. Museum. (*Page 29.*)



TAPE LACE. Bobbin-made Genoese, XVII Century. (Page 33.)



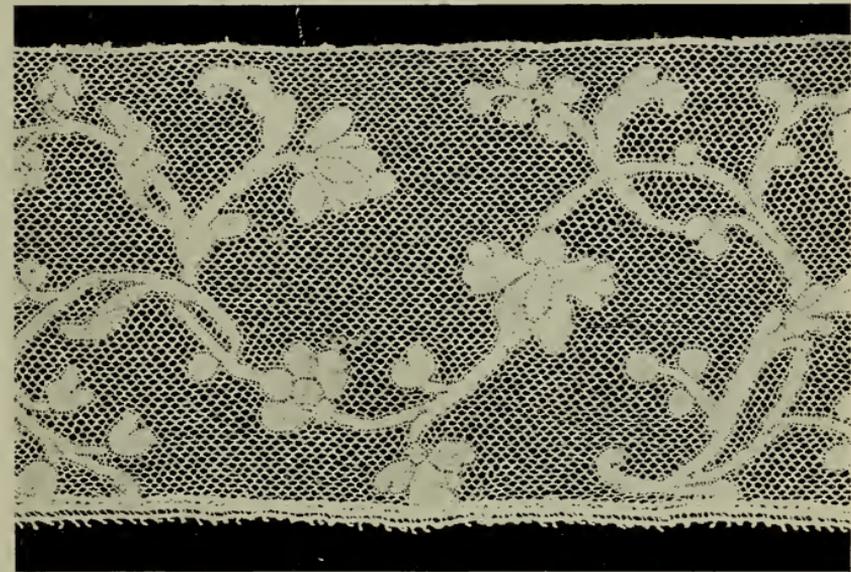
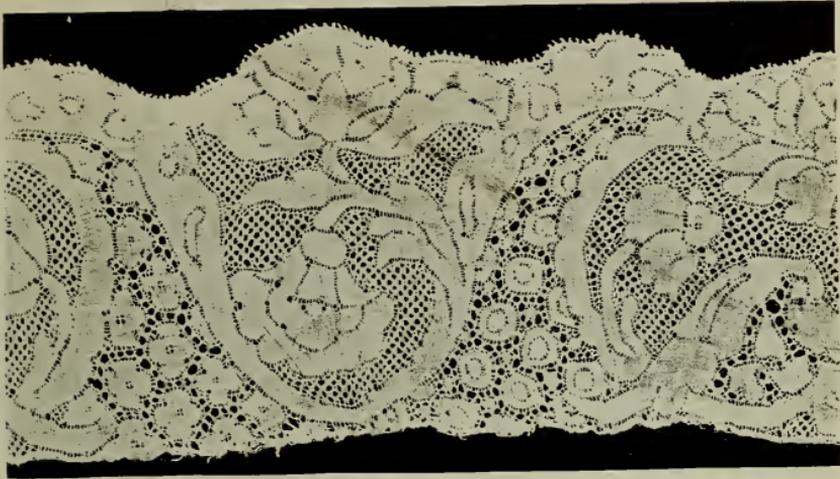
GROUNDING BOBBIN LACE. Milanese, XVIII Century. (Page 35.)



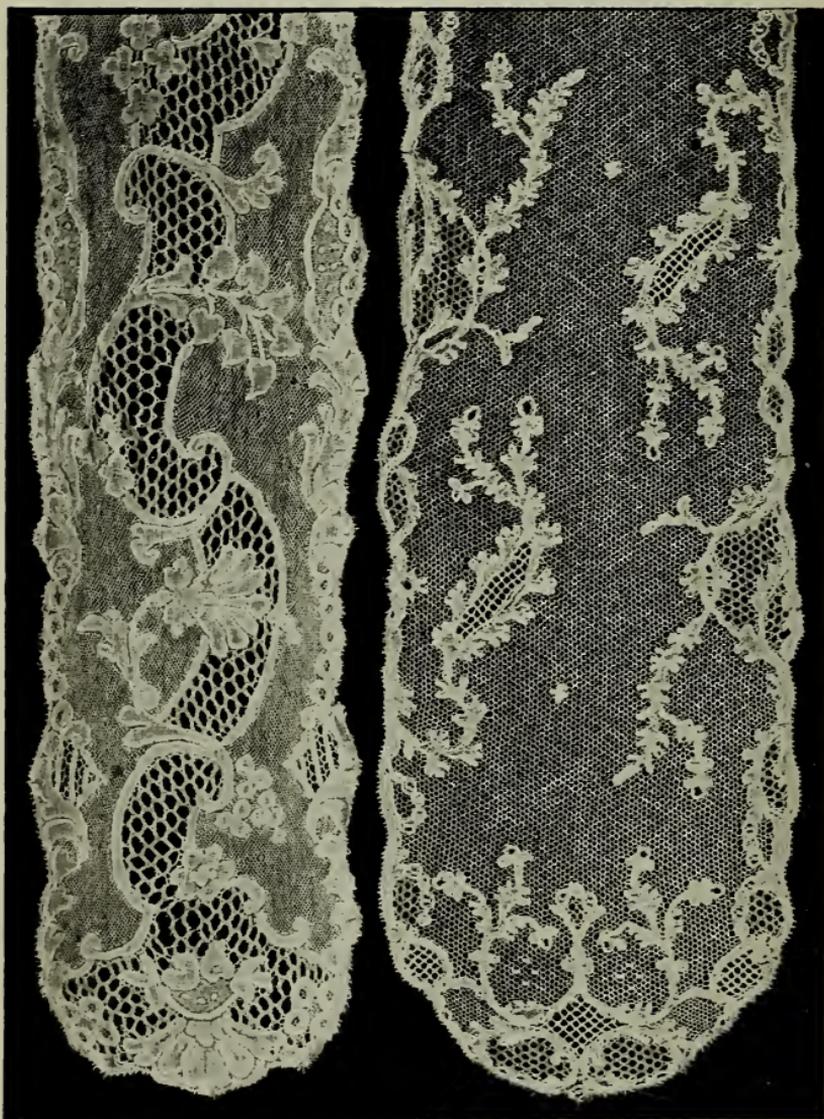
a

b

(a) LAPPET, Alençon. (Page 46.) (b) EDGING, Argentan. (Page 48.) Needlepoint, French, XVIII Century.  
V. & A. Museum.



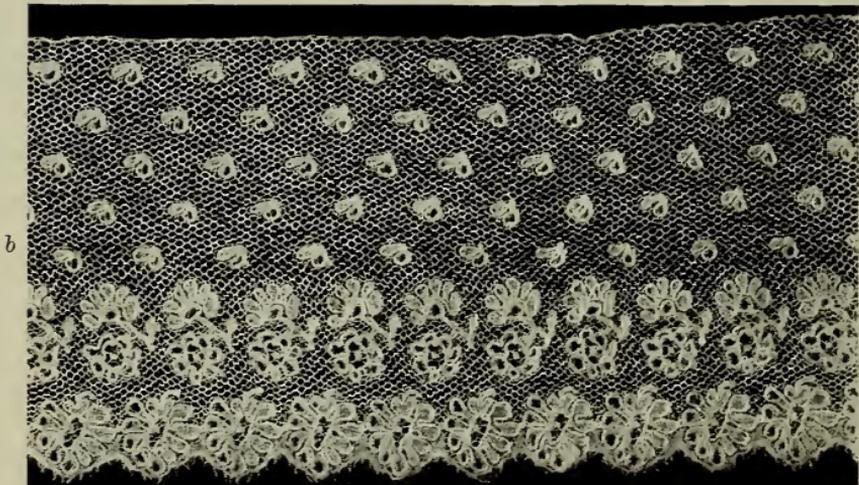
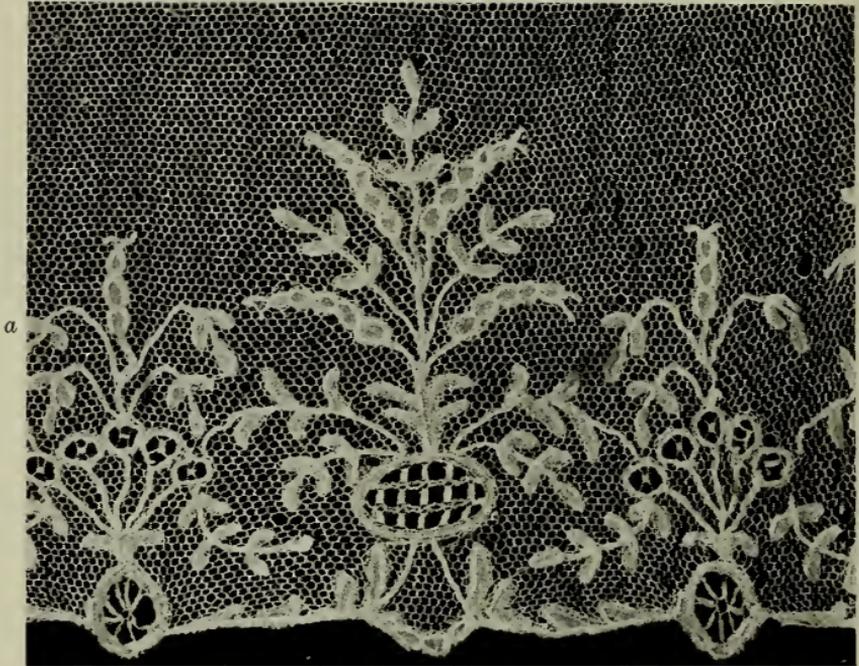
VALENCIENNES EDGINGS. (a) Fausse. (Page 52.) (b) Vraie. (Page 52.)  
Bobbin-made, French, XVIII Century.



LAPPETS, Bobbin-made. (a) Mechlin, early XVIII Century. (Page 69.)  
 (b) Lille, late XVIII Century. (Page 55.)



LAPPET, POINT D'ANGLETERRE. Brussels Bobbin-made,  
XVIII Century. (Page 65.)

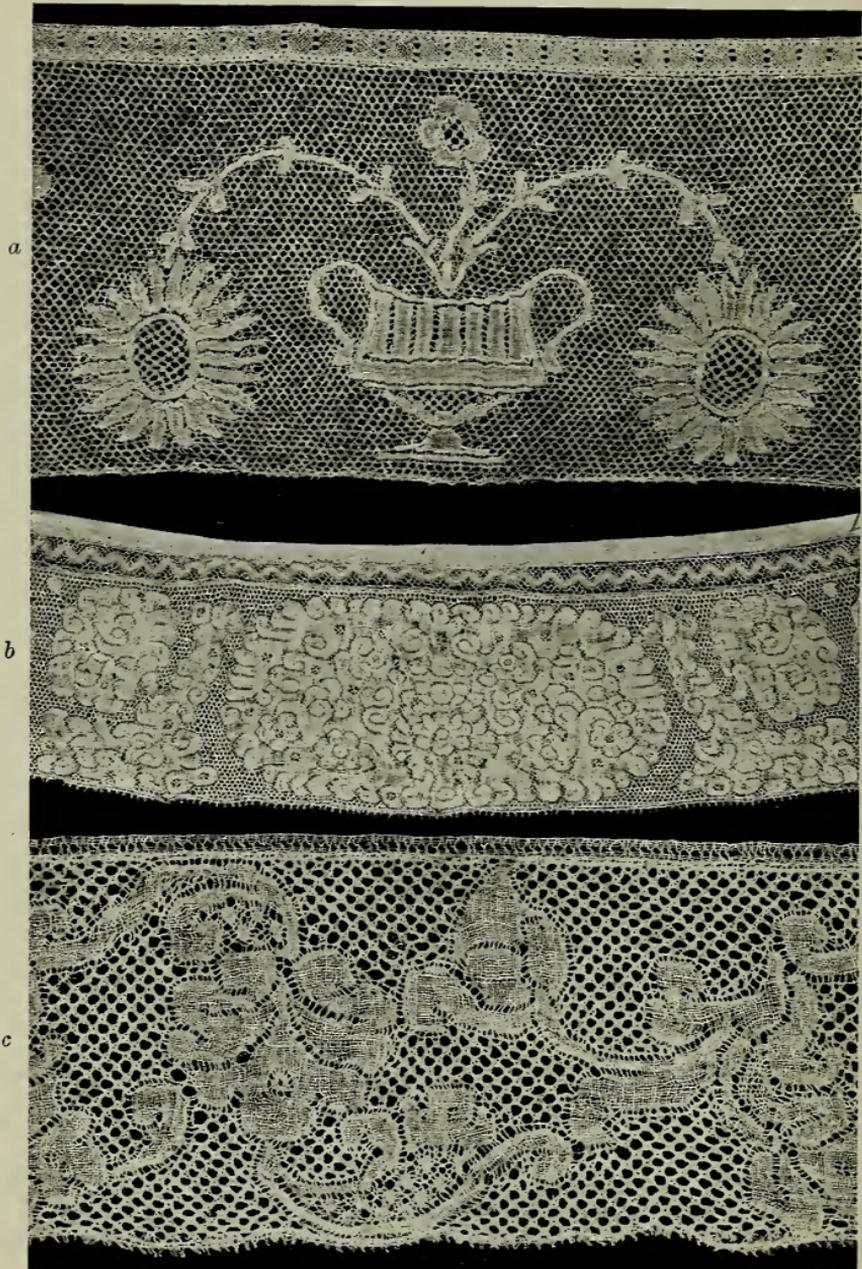


- (a) FLOUNCE. Brussels Bobbin-made appliqué, on vrai réseau, XVIII Century. (Page 66.)
- (b) EDGING. Mechlin Bobbin-made, XVIII Century. (Page 69.)



EDGINGS. (a) Binche Bobbin-made, early XVIII Century. (Page 68.)

(b) Töuder "Lace." Embroidery and drawn-work on muslin,  
XVIII Century. (Page 77.)



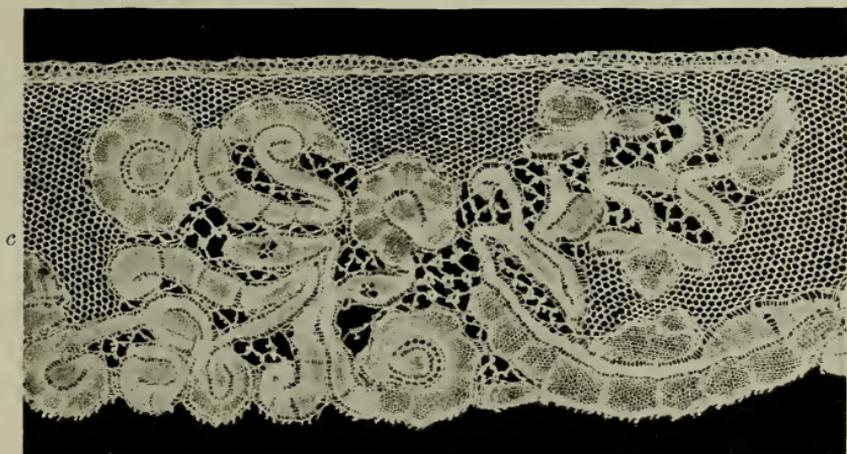
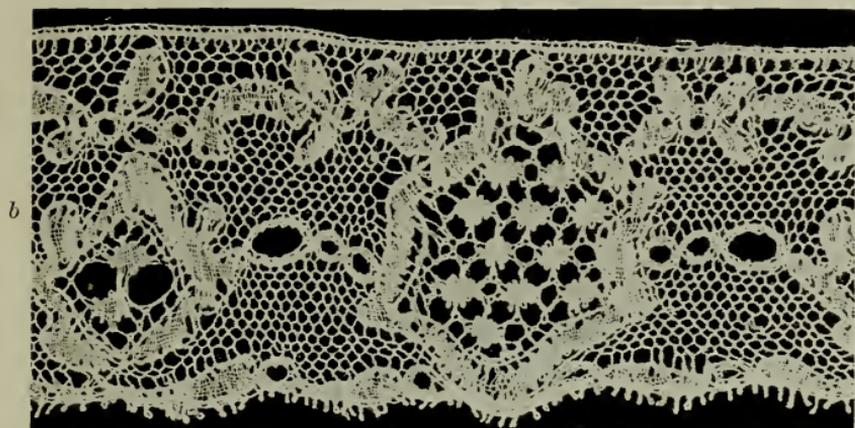
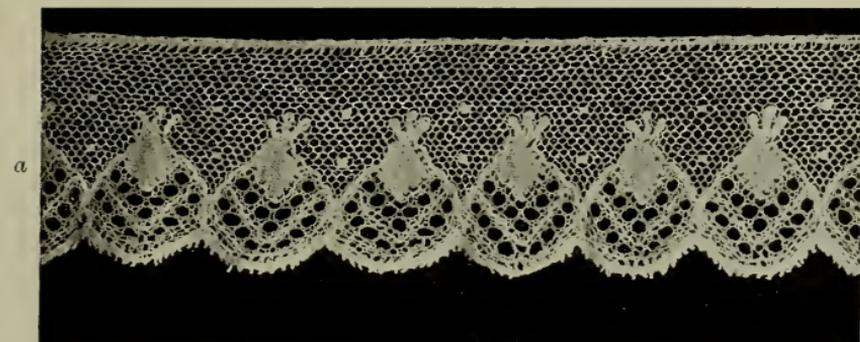
BOBBIN EDGINGS. (a) Antwerp Potten Kant, XVIII Century. (Page 70.)  
 (b) Dutch, XVII Century. (Page 72.) (c) Flemish, XVIII Century.  
 (Page 71.)



SAMPLER. Cut and drawn work, English, 1648. (*Page 86.*)



SAMPLER. Holly point and cut-work, English, 1728. (Page 88.)



EDGINGS. Bobbin-made English. (a) Bucks Baby Lace, XIX Century. (Page 95.) (b) Bucks "Point," XIX Century. (Page 94.) (c) Honiton, XVIII Century. (Page 89.)

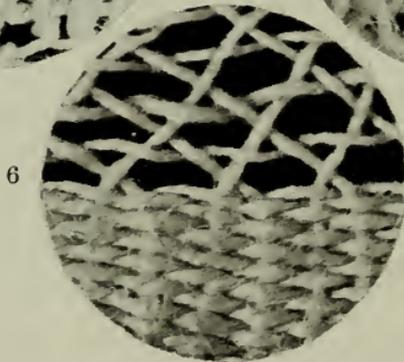
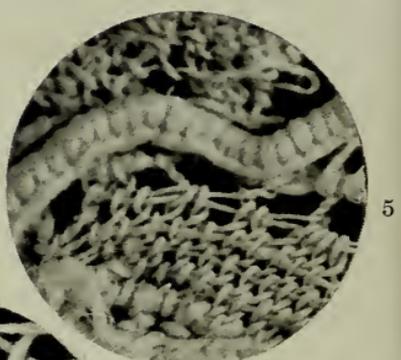
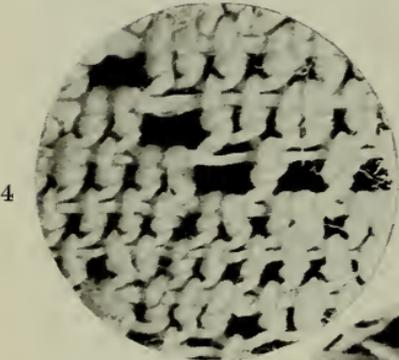
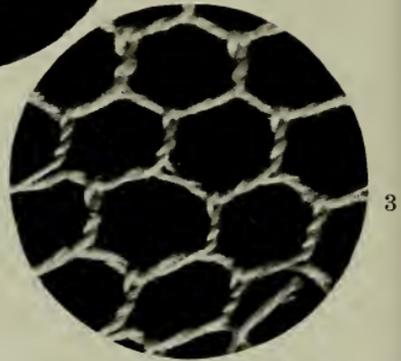
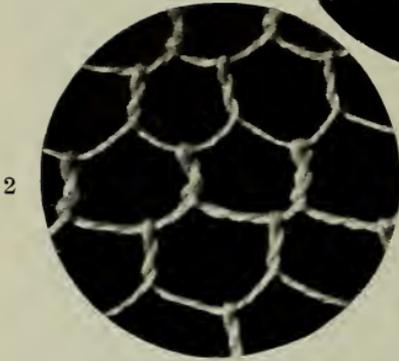
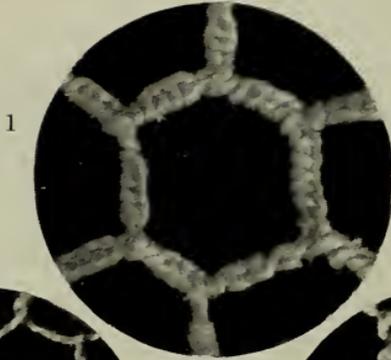


LIMERICK "LACE." Embroidered net, Irish, XIX Century. (Page 99.)



LACE BOBBINS.

- |             |                  |              |              |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 Flanders. | 5 Portugal.      | 9 Malta.     | 13 Denmark.  |
| 2 Devon.    | 6 Midlands.      | 10 Midlands. | 14 Midlands. |
| 3 Auvergne. | 7 Portugal.      | 11 Malta.    | 15 Brussels. |
| 4 Devon.    | 8 Midlands.      | 12 Midlands. | 16 Wilts.    |
|             | 17 Valenciennes. | (Page 107.)  |              |

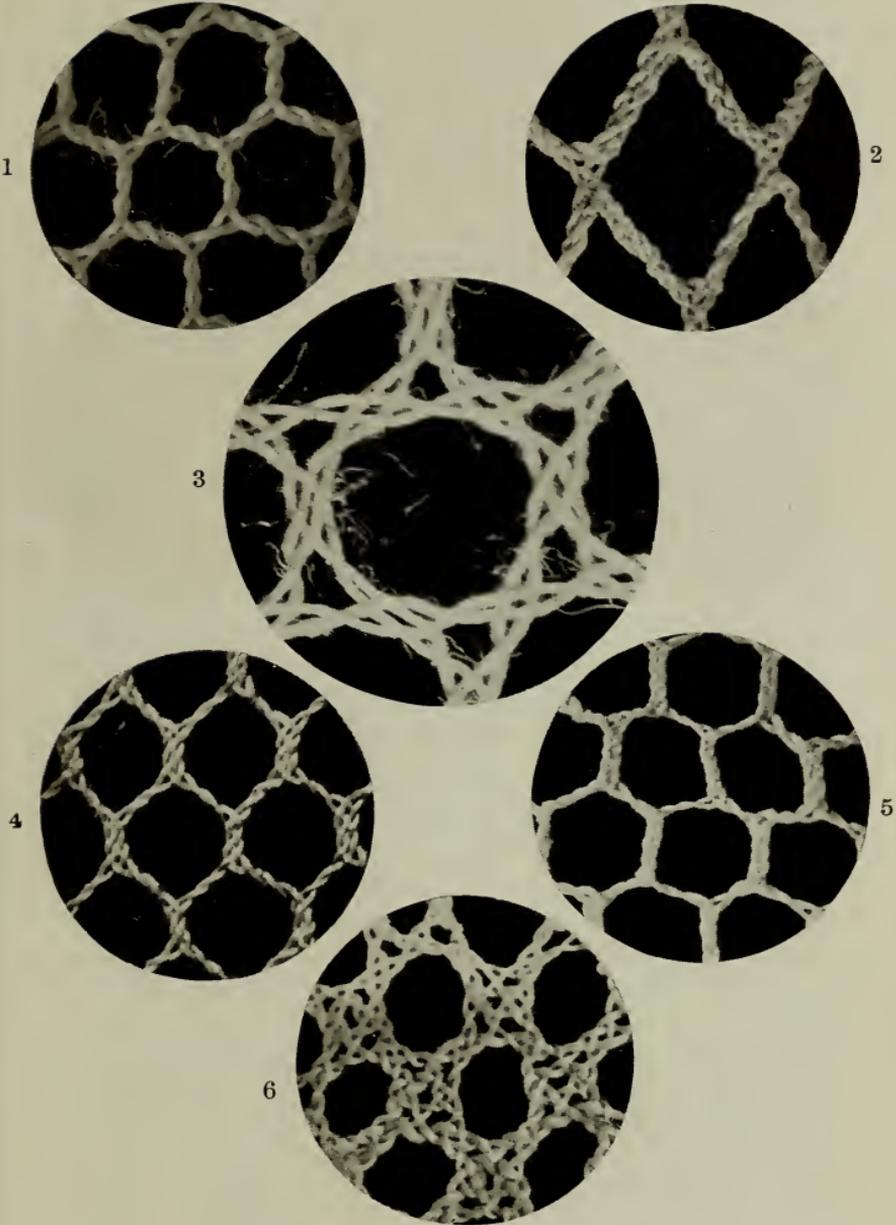


NEEDLEPOINT DETAILS. (Page 122.)

1 Argentan.  
2 Brussels.

3 Alençon.  
4 Holly Point.

5 Alençon Toilé.  
6 Bobbin Lace Toilés.



BOBBIN GROUNDS. (Page 122.)

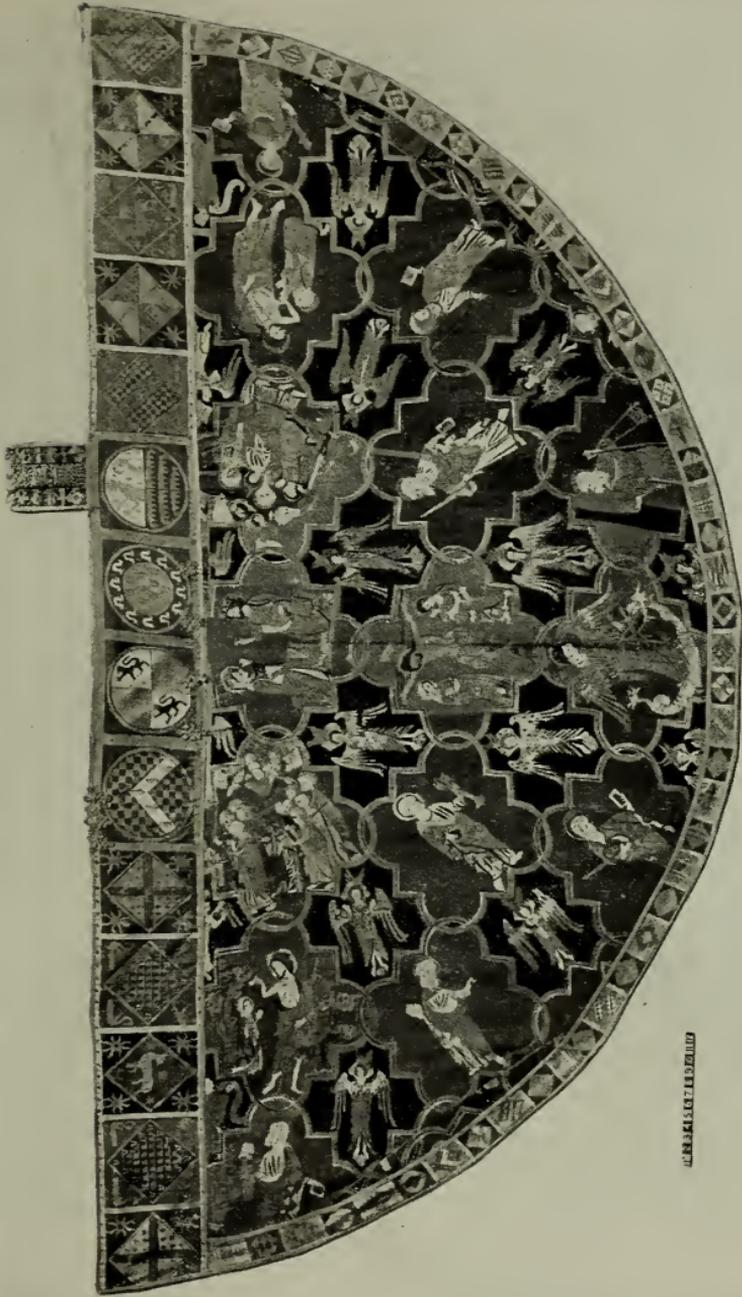
1 Lille.  
2 Valenciennes.

3 Fond Chant.  
4 Mechlin.

5 Brussels.  
6 Cinq Trous.

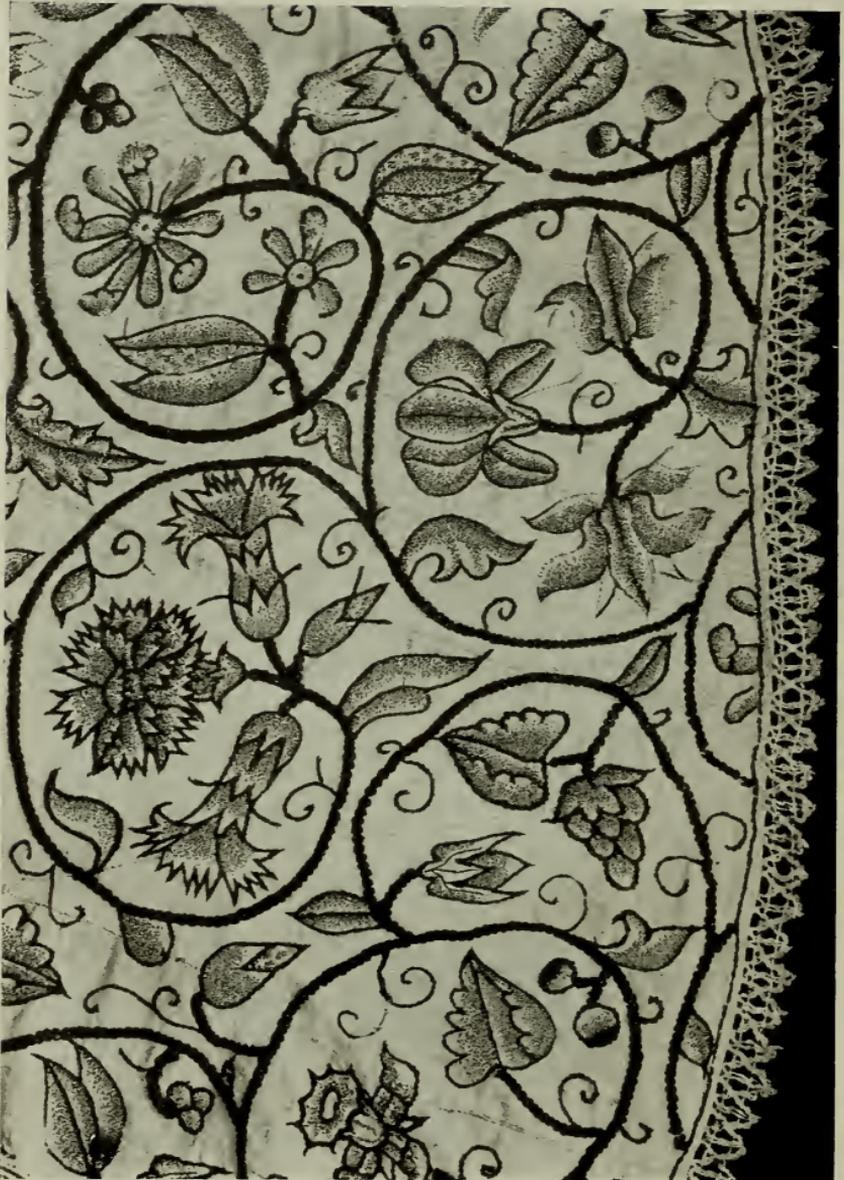


Portion of THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY. Norman, XI Century. Photo by V. & A. Museum. (Page 141.)

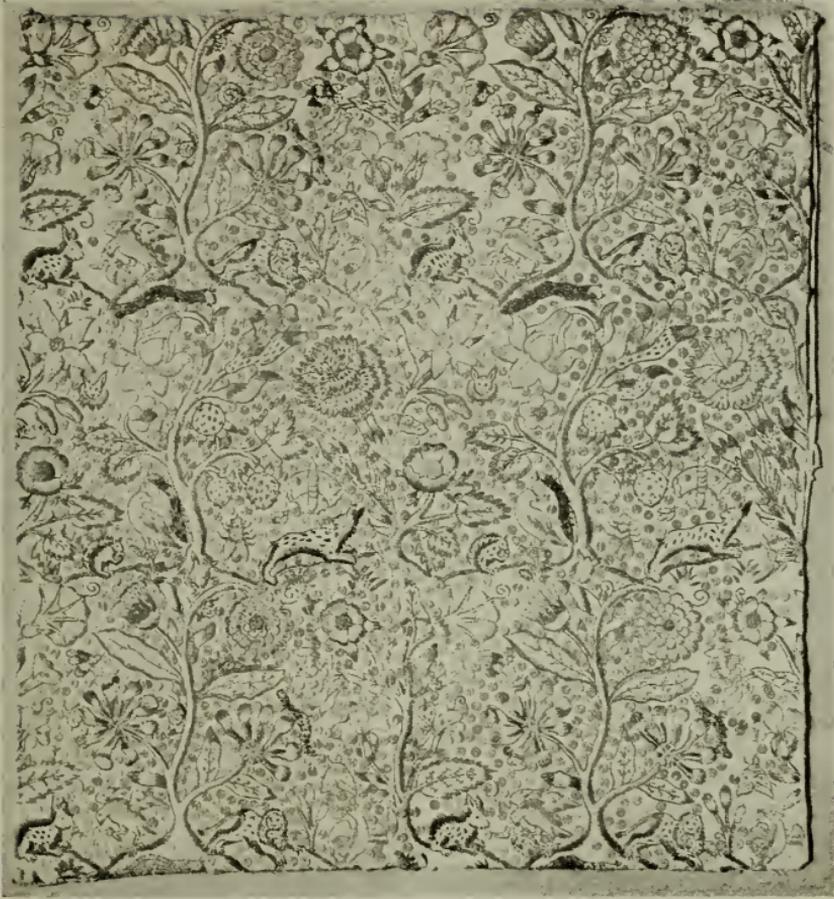


THE SYON COPE. Late XIII Century, English. V. & A. Museum. (*Page 147.*)

W. & A. MUSEUM



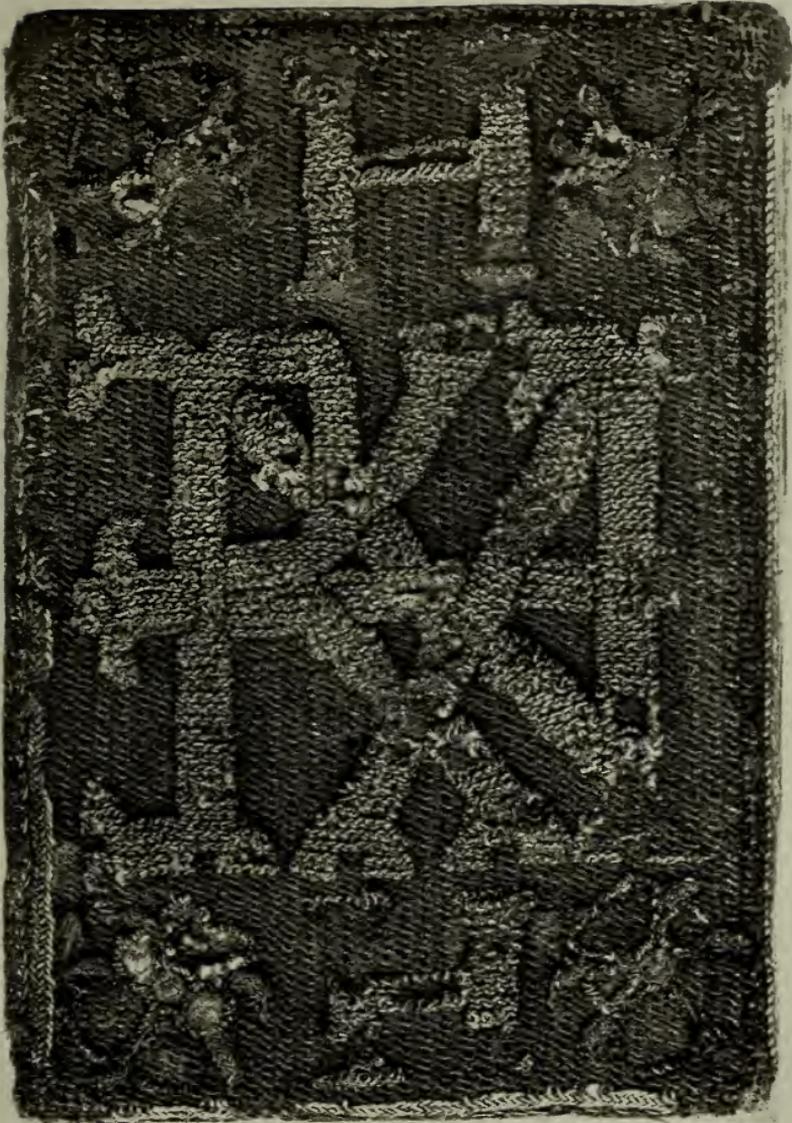
PORTION OF HOOD IN BLACK WORK, edged with black and white bobbin lace. English, cir. 1600. (*Pages 92, 155.*)



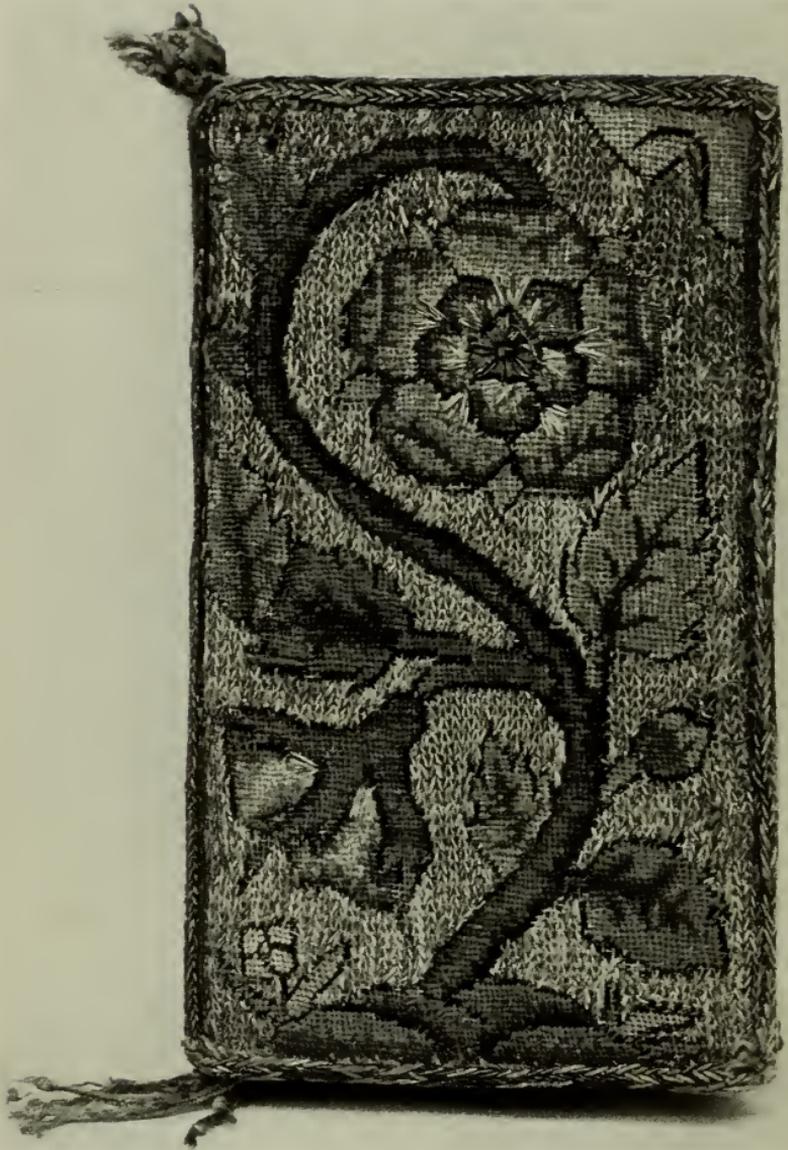
PORTION OF A DRESS, worked in coloured silks and silver spangles on white linen. English, cir. 1600. (*Page 160.*)



GLOVE, embroidered with coloured silks, gold and silver thread and spangles. English, late XVI Century. V. & A. Museum.  
(Page 162.)



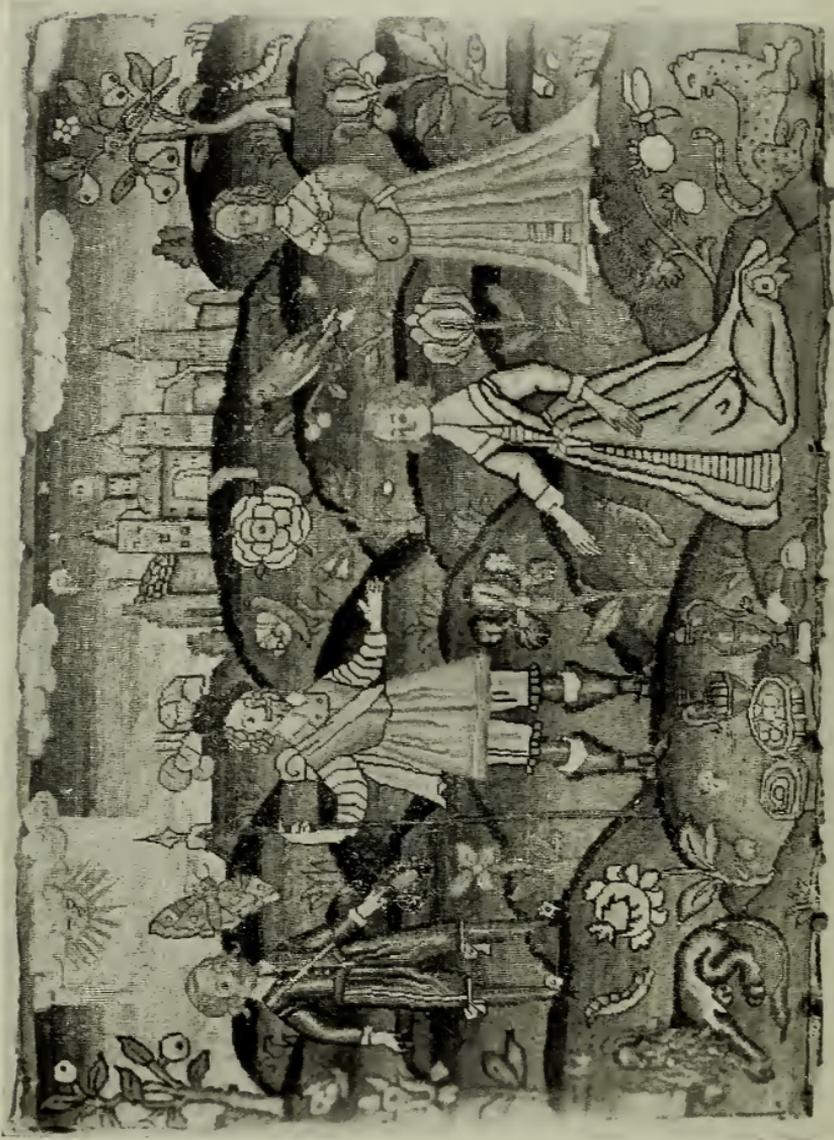
PRAYERS OF QUEEN KATHERINE PARR. Canvas binding embroidered with coloured silks and gold and silver thread. English, *cir.* 1545. British Museum. (*Page 164.*)



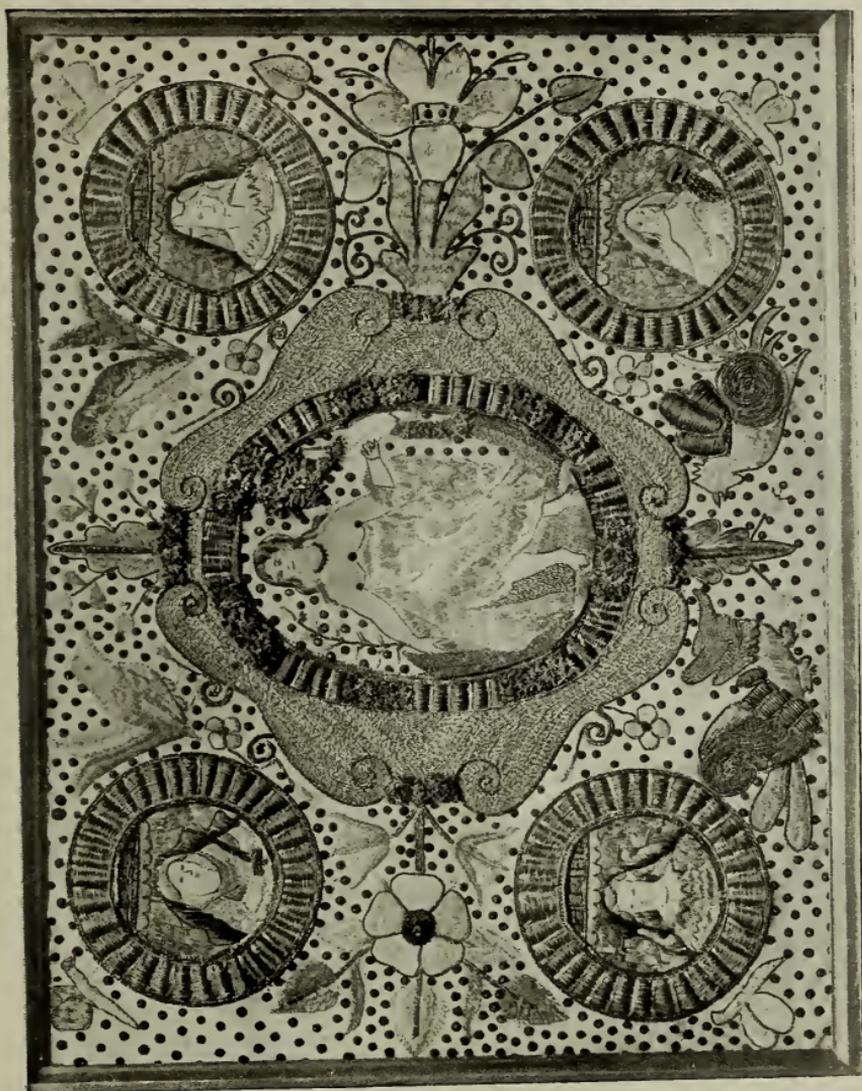
THE DAILY EXERCISE OF A CHRISTIAN. Canvas binding embroidered in silver thread and coloured silks. English, cir. 1623. British Museum. (*Page 164.*)



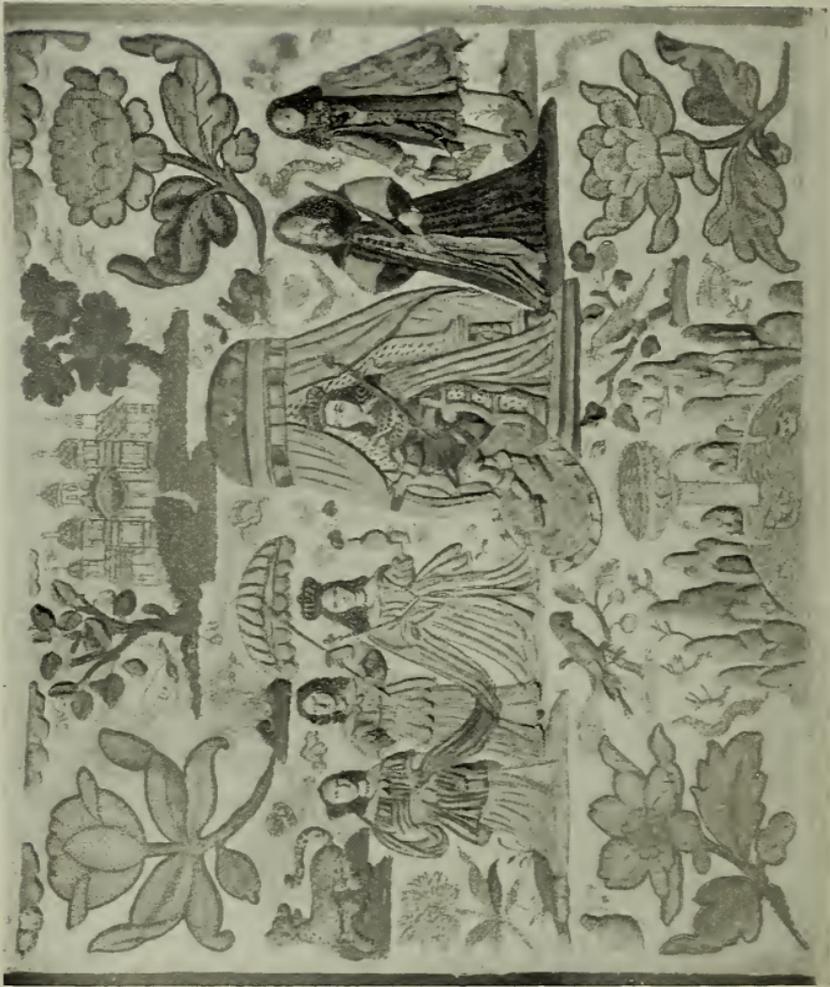
CASKET, embroidered in tent stitch, English, XVII Century.  
V. & A. Museum. (*Page 172.*)



PICTURE, worked in tent stitch with silks on canvas ground.  
English, XVII Century. (Page 172.)



PANEL, worked in flat stitches with coloured silks, silver thread and spangles on white satin. English, XVII Century. (Page 173.)



PICTURE in stump work representing Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.  
English, XVII Century. (*Page 177.*)



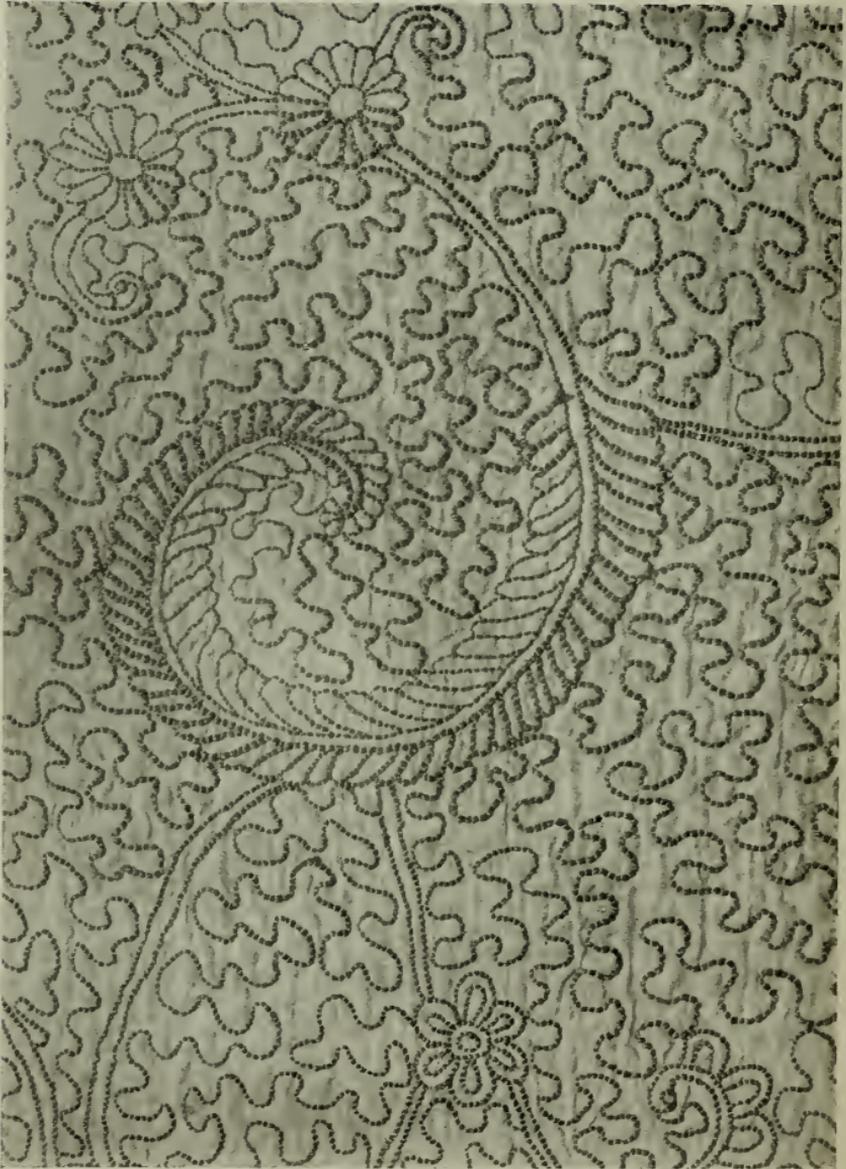
MIRROR, with stump-work border. English, XVII Century. (*Page 179.*)



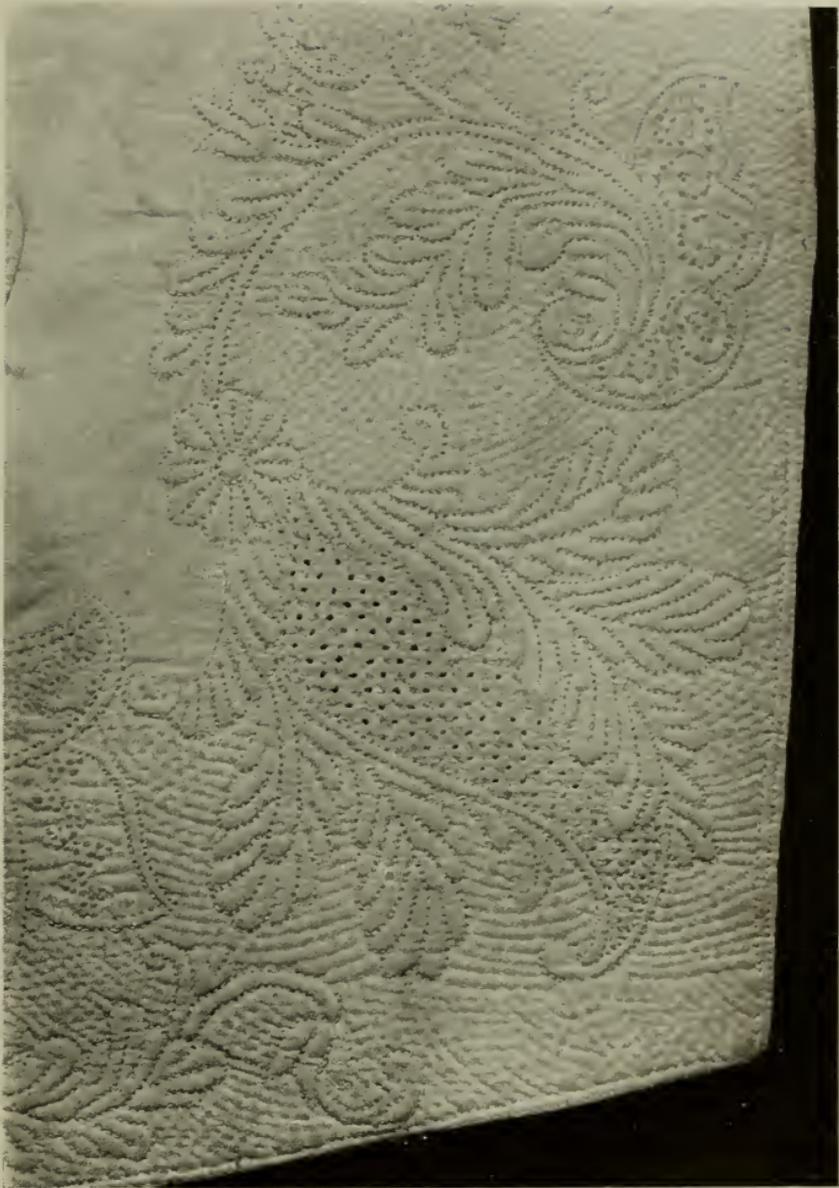
PICTURE, in bead embroidery on satin. English, XVII Century. (*Page 180.*)



HANGING. Linen embroidered with coloured worsteds. English, *temp.* William and Mary. V. & A. Museum. (Page 185.)



QUILTING, in back-stitch with yellow silk on white linen.  
English, XVIII Century. (*Page 193.*)



White Linen WAISTCOAT quilted with white thread. English,  
XVIII Century. (*Page 194.*)



White Silk APRON, embroidered with many coloured silks in long-and-short stitch.  
English, XVIII Century. (*Page 196.*)



Portion of White Silk LETTER-CASE, embroidered in chain-stitch with coloured silks. English, XVIII Century. (*Page 199.*)



CHAIR SEAT of white satin, embroidered with chenille and silks of various colours.  
French, XVIII Century. V. & A. Museum. (*Page 202.*)



PICTURE, partly painted in water colour, partly embroidered on white silk ground. English, XVIII Century. (*Page 205.*)



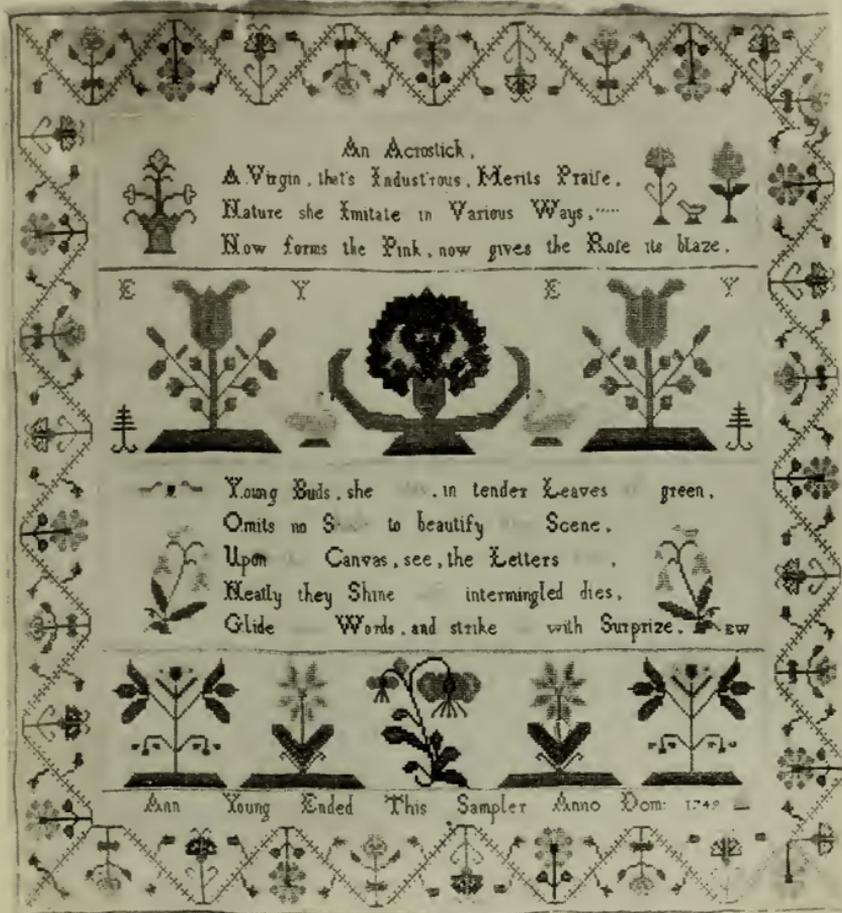
PICTURE, embroidered with black and white silks on white silk ground. English, dated 1797. (*Page 206.*)



SAMPLER, worked with coloured silks and gold and silver thread on brownish linen. English, early XVII Century. (Page 214.)



SAMPLER, worked with coloured silks and white thread on unbleached linen. English, 1669. (Page 217.)



SAMPLER, with border, 1749. (Page 220.)



SAMPLER. Darning in plain and damask patterns, flowers also darned. (Page 223.)

## APPENDIX A

### EXAMPLES OF ECCLESIASTICAL EMBROIDERY IN THE ENGLISH PROVINCES

IN CHURCHES EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

#### BEDFORDSHIRE.

Biddenham. Altar frontal, sixteenth century.  
Dunstable. Pall, sixteenth century.

#### BERKSHIRE.

Aldworth. Altar cloth, 1703.  
Wantage, St. Mary's Home. Pall, fifteenth century.

#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Cambridge. University Museum of Archæology. Canopy,  
sixteenth century.  
Ely Cathedral. Cope, fourteenth century.  
Lay Hall, Altar cloth.

#### CUMBERLAND.

Carlisle Cathedral. Three copes, fifteenth and sixteenth  
centuries.  
Corby Castle. Cope.

#### DERBYSHIRE.

Hardwick Hall. Altar rail coverings made of copes, etc.  
Trusley. Altar cloth, 1713.

#### DEVONSHIRE.

Culmstock. Altar frontal and cope.  
Tedburn. Cope, fourteenth century.

#### DORSETSHIRE.

Arne. Linen cloth, seventeenth century.  
Dorchester Museum. Pulpit cloth from Wool church.  
Lyme Regis. Tapestry (?), fifteenth century.

## 242 LACE AND EMBROIDERY COLLECTOR

### DURHAM.

Durham Cathedral. Stole and maniple, tenth century, five copes.

Whickham. Altar cloth, eighteenth century.

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Bitton. Altar frontal, seventeenth century.

Buckland. Altar cloth from fifteenth century cope.

Chipping Campden. Cope, fourteenth century; two frontals, sixteenth century; hanging, fifteenth century.

Cirencester. Pulpit cloth from fifteenth century cope.

Clifford Chambers. Altar cover and two cushions.

Littledean. Pall or altar cloth from fifteenth century tunicles.

Minsterworth. Altar frontal from cope.

Newnham. Altar cloth from fourteenth century vestment.

Northleach. Altar frontal from two copes.

St. Briavels. Altar frontal, seventeenth century.

Sudeley Castle. Altar cover from Winchcombe church.

### HAMPSHIRE.

Bourne St. Mary. Altar cloth, 1687.

Mattinglay. Altar cloth, 1667.

Mottisfont Abbey. Frontal, pulpit cloth, 1633, book-covers from Holy Ghost Chapel, Basingstoke.

Portsmouth Parish Church. Altar and pulpit cloths, 1693.

Romsey Abbey. Altar cloth, fifteenth century.

Shaldon. Pulpit cloth, 1655.

### HEREFORDSHIRE.

Bacton. Altar cloth, sixteenth century.

Kinnersley. Part of vestment.

### HERTFORDSHIRE.

Anstey. Altar cloth, 1637.

### KENT.

Barley [? Herts. or Lancs.]. Altar cloth.

Canterbury Cathedral. Buskins and sandals, thirteenth century, the Black Prince's surcoat.

East Langdon. Pulpit cloth from fifteenth century cope.

Hollingbourne. Altar and pulpit cloths, seventeenth century.

Oxney [? Stone in Oxney or East Langdon]. Pulpit cloth.

## LANCASHIRE.

Stoneyhurst College. Fifteenth century cope.  
Warrington. Vestment.

## LEICESTERSHIRE.

Lutterworth. Fragment of fifteenth century vestment.

## LINCOLNSHIRE.

Careby. Altar frontal from fifteenth century cope.  
Sleaford. Altar cloth.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Skenfrith. Cope.

## NORFOLK.

Barsham, West. Linen altar cloth, 1637.  
Bircham, Great. Altar cloth from sixteenth century  
cope.  
Kettlestone. Fragment of vestment.  
Lyng. Altar cloth from three fifteenth century vest-  
ments.  
Norwich, St. James. Altar cloth from copes.  
,, St. Gregory. Palls, fifteenth century. Altar  
cloth from cope.  
,, St. Peter Mancroft. Tapestry, 1573.  
Wymondham. Corporas case.

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Cogenhoe. Cushion cover *c.* 1500. Altar cloth, 1580.  
Peterborough. St. John Baptist. Velvet cushion. Cope  
orphreys.  
Weston Favell. Altar cloth, 1698.  
Whiston. Altar cloth, 1704.

## OXFORDSHIRE.

Forest Hill. Altar cloth.  
Oxford. St. John's Coll. Copes and dalmatics fifteenth  
century, antependium, chasuble, altar-pillow, etc.  
Steeple Aston. Desk and altar cloths from fourteenth  
century cope.

## SHROPSHIRE.

Alveley. Altar frontal.  
Cheswardine. Pall, 1770.  
Tong. Altar frontal.  
Ludlow Museum. Fragment of cope ?

## SOMERSETSHIRE.

- Axbridge. Altar cloth, 1720.  
 Chedzoy. Three frontals from cope.  
 Glastonbury, St. John. Pall from cope.  
 Othery. Frontal from fifteenth century cope.  
 Pilton. Pulpit cloth from sixteenth century cope.  
 Taunton Museum. Frontal from cope from Chapel  
 Allerton.  
 ,, Council Chamber, Arms of Taunton from a  
 frontal of St. Mary's.

## SUFFOLK.

- Hessett. Corporas case, fourteenth century.  
 Sudbury. Pall, fifteenth century. Pulpit cloth, sixteenth  
 century.

## WARWICKSHIRE.

- Compton Verney. Stole, fourteenth century.  
 Oscott College. Cope, sixteenth century.

## WILTSHIRE.

- Hullavington. Frontal from fifteenth century chasuble.  
 Salisbury Cathedral. Chasuble, sixteenth century, cope.  
 ,, St. Thomas. Frontal, fifteenth century.  
 Sutton Benger. Desk hanging from fifteenth century  
 vestments.  
 Wardour Castle. Chasuble, early sixteenth century  
 (The orphreys are Flemish).

## WORCESTERSHIRE.

- Stoulton. Frontal from sixteenth century cope.  
 Worcester Cathedral. Fragments of twelfth and thir-  
 teenth century vestments.  
 ,, Clothiers' Company. Pall from fifteenth cen-  
 tury vestments.

## YORKSHIRE.

- York. St. Mary Bishop Hill. Cope.

## APPENDIX B

### BOOKS USEFUL TO THE COLLECTOR OF EMBROIDERY AND LACE

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# INDEX

(NOTE : The chief reference comes first.)

- ALBUM, Lace, 123  
 Alençon lace, 45, 44  
   how made, 46  
 Aloe-fibre lace, 83  
 American quilting, 194  
   samplers, 226  
   South, lace, 77  
 Amsterdam lace factory, 72  
 Anagní vestments, 143  
 Angleterre, point d', lace, 64,  
   63  
 Anglo-Oriental embroideries,  
   184  
 Anglo-Saxon needlework, 134  
 Antwerp lace, 70  
 Appliqué, inlaid, embroidery,  
   187  
 Aprons in fashion, 114  
   needlework, 195  
 Arcadian shepherdesses, etc., 191  
 Argentan lace, 48  
 Argentella lace, 49  
 Aria, punto in, how made, 19  
 Aristotile, d', pattern-book, 18  
 Armorial needlework, 192  
 Arras lace, 55, 45, 49  
 Ascoli cope, 143  
 Aurillac lace, 44, 49  
 Auvergne bobbins, 107  
 Ave Maria lace, 57  
 Axbridge altar frontal, 192
- BABY lace, 95  
 Back-stitch quilting, 188  
 Bailleul lace, 54  
 Barcelona lace, 81, 80  
 Bargello work, 187  
 Barry, Mdme. du, Lace for, 65  
 Baskets, bead-work, 180  
   of flowers, Embroidered, 200
- Bayeux lace, 57, 56  
   Tapestry, 137  
 Bead-work, 180  
   baskets, 180  
   fine, 208  
   samplers, 224  
 Bedfordshire lace, 91  
 Bed-hangings, xviii. cent., 201  
 Bed-linen, Hathaway, 84  
 Beer bobbins, 106  
 Belgian sampler, 227  
 Berlin lace, 75  
 Berthe, Lace, 111  
 Bess of Hardwick, 166, 156  
 Bible, Queen Elizabeth's, 165  
 Binche lace, 67  
 Black and white pictures, 206  
 Black-work, 154  
 Blonde lace, 56  
 Bobbin and needle-lace, differ-  
   ence, 119  
   lace, origin of, 19  
 Bobbins, 101  
   Auvergne, 107  
   Beer, 106  
   Brussels, 106, 108  
   Bucks, 101 *et seq.*  
   Denmark, 108  
   Devon, 105, 107  
   Downton, Wilts, 106  
   Flemish, 107  
   French, 107  
   gingles on, 102  
   jingles on, 102  
   Malta, 107  
   Midlands, 101 *et seq.*, 107  
   Normandy, 107  
   Peniche, 106  
   Portugal, 106, 107  
   Russia, 107

- Bobbins—  
   Spanish, 106  
   Valenciennes, 107, 108  
   Vologda, 107  
   Wilts, 106, 108  
 Bologna cope, 143  
 Bone-lace, 20, 101  
 Bookbindings, embroidered, 162,  
   182  
   velvet, 164  
 Borders on samplers, 219  
 Boxes, embroidered, 178  
 Brandon, Chas., Duke of Suffolk,  
   157  
 Braunton, Glos., altar cloth, 148  
 Broderers' Company, 159  
 Brussels appliqué lace, 66  
   bobbins, 106, 108  
   lace, 62  
   needlepoint lace, 66  
 Bucks bobbins, 101 *et seq.*  
   lace, 91  
   point, 94  
 Bullion gold thread, 161  
 Burano lace, 29  
 Byzantine embroidery, 130  
  
 CAEN lace, 56  
 Canaille, point de, lace, 34  
 Cantu lace, 36  
 Carnival lace, 23  
 Carrick-ma-cross lace, 98  
 Caskets, embroidered, 178  
 Castel, Jorg, Pattern book, 17  
 Catalogue, forming a, 128  
 Catalonia lace, 81  
 Catherine de Medici, inventory,  
   16  
 Cat-gut, embroidery on, 209  
 Chain-stitch embroidery in col-  
   oured silks, 198  
 Chair covers, xviii cent., 202  
 Channel Islands samplers, 229  
 Chantilly lace, 55  
 Characteristics of xiii cent.  
   English embroidery, 144  
 Charlemagne's cope, 133  
 Château Thierry lace, 49  
 Chenille, 197  
 Chinese taste, Embroidery in  
   the, 190  
 Chipping Campden (Glos.) cope  
   and frontals, 149  
  
 Christian, Daily Exercise of a,  
   embroidered binding, 164  
 Church work in xviii. cent., 192  
 Classical Mythology in embroi-  
   dery, 190  
 Cleaning needlework, 126  
 Cluny lace, 58  
   Midlands, 96  
 Coggleshall lace, 96  
 Colbert brings lacemakers from  
   Venice, 44  
 Collar lace, 26  
 Commemorative samplers, 224  
 Commode, Lace, 113  
 Coral lace, Story of, 19  
 Coralline point, 28  
 Costume, lace in relation to, 109  
 Cravat, 111  
 Crochet, Irish, 100  
 Cross- and tent-stitch upholstery,  
   192  
 Cushions, stump-work, 177  
 Cut-and-drawn work, 22  
 Cuthbert's, St., Tomb, needle-  
   work from, 135  
 Cut-work, English, 86  
   how made, 18  
   sampler, 86, 217  
  
 DAILY Exercise of a Christian,  
   embroidered binding, 164  
 Dalecarlia lace, 78  
 Danish samplers, 228  
 Darned netting or lacies, 16  
 Darning samplers, 222  
 Dates to be remembered by  
   sampler collect ors, 232  
 Dating embroidery, 126  
 Denmark bobbins, 107, 108  
   lace, 76  
 Devon bobbins, 105  
   lace, 89  
 Dieppe lace, 57  
 Downton bobbins, 106  
   lace, 97  
 Drawn- and cut-work, 22  
   work, how made, 17  
 Dresden lace, 74  
 Drizzling or parfilage, 203  
 Dublin lace, 97  
 Duchesse lace, 66  
 Dunstable pall, 153

- Dutch drawn-thread work, 72  
 East India embroidery, 188  
 lace, 71  
 samplers, 228
- EGYPTIAN embroidery, 130  
 lace, 15
- Elizabethan dress, 160  
 embroidery, 159  
 embroidery, so-called, 185  
 gloves, 161
- Elizabeth, Princess, bookbinding, 163  
 Miroir or Glasse of the Synneful Soul, 163  
 Q. Katherine Parr's Prayers, 163  
 Queen, Bible, 165  
 Ruffs, 24  
 Wardrobe, 159
- Engageantes, lace, 114
- England, cut-work, 86  
 lace, 84
- English xiii. cent. embroidery, peculiarities of, 144
- Erzgebirge bobbin-lace, 74
- Espagne, Point d', 79
- Esprit, points d', in lace, 55
- Essex lace, 96
- Exmouth lace, 91
- FALLING collars, 110
- Fans, Lace, 117
- Fayrey pall, 153
- Felbrigge Psalter, 162
- Ferrars, Nicholas, 174
- Fish-bones in lace-making, 20
- Fishmongers' pall, 152
- Flat-point, Venetian, 28
- Flemish bobbins, 107  
 lace, so-called, 71
- Florentine embroidery, so-called, 187
- Flower-baskets, embroidered, 200
- Fontange, lace, 112
- Footing or heading, 25
- Foreign samplers, 226
- Forgeries, 128  
 in samplers, 231
- Framing samplers, 231
- France, Edicts against lace, 39  
 Point de, lace, 45
- French bobbins, 107  
 samplers, 228
- Froschower, lace pattern-book, 73
- GAZE, Point de, 67
- Genoa lace, 32
- German lace, 73  
 samplers, 227
- Ghent lace, 54
- Gidding, Little, Sisters, 173
- Gimp, 94, 43
- Gingles, bobbin, 102
- Gloves, Elizabethan, 161  
 Embroidered, 160, 168, 170
- Goa embroidery, 187
- Greek lace, 30
- Grounds, various lace, 122
- Gueuse, Point de, lace, 43
- Guipure lace, 43  
 meaning of, 33
- HANTS lace, 97
- Hardwick Hall embroideries, 165
- Hathaway bed-linen with lace, 84
- Heading or footing, 25
- Henry VIII bookbinding, 164
- Hexham chasuble, 151
- Holland lace, 71
- Holy-point lace, 87
- Honiton appliqué lace, 90  
 lace, 89
- Huntingdon, Countess of, dress, 197
- INLAID appliqué embroidery, 187
- Inventory, Sforza, 31, 17
- Ionian Isles lace, 30
- Ireland lace, 97
- Isle of Wight lace, 97
- Italian samplers, 230
- JACOBAN embroidery, so-called, 185
- Jingles, bobbin, 102
- KATHERINE of Aragon and black-work, 154  
 and lace, 92  
 Parr's Prayers, 163

- Kenmare lace, 100  
 Knotting, 202
- LACE, definition of, 14  
 its identification, 119  
 origin, 15  
 two prime divisions, 15
- Lacis or darned netting, 16  
 in pattern books, 17
- Lappets in vogue, 113
- Legends on samplers, 218 *et seq.*
- Le Puy-en-Vélay lace, 58, 56
- Le Quesnoy lace, 51, 49, 45
- Lille lace, 54
- Limerick lace, 98
- Linwood, Miss, worsted pictures, 209
- Lisbon lace, 83
- Little Gidding, Sisters of, 173
- Long-and-short-stitch panel, 173
- Loudun lace, 49
- MACHINE-MADE LACE, detection of, 120
- Maidment, Miss, demonstrates Egyptian lace, 15
- Malmsbury lace, 97
- Malta bobbins, 107  
 lace, 36
- Mantilla, Spanish, 82
- Map samplers, 223
- Margot, Queen, ruffs, 24
- Marli, point de, 57
- Mary Queen of Scots needlework, 166
- Mechlin lace, 68  
 réseau, 69
- Medici, Catherine de, inventory, 16
- Mezzo-Punto lace, 33
- Midlands bobbins, 101 *et seq.*  
 blonde lace, 96  
 Cluny lace, 96  
 lace, 91
- Milan grounded lace, 35  
 lace, 34
- Miniatures, embroidered, 181
- Miroir or Glasse of the Synneful Soul, 163
- Mirror frames, embroidered, 178
- Mixed lace, 34
- Monaghan lace, 98
- Muslin embroidery, 209  
 Tønder-work, 76
- Mythological subjects, 190
- NAMES of stitches, 145
- Naples mixed lace, 34
- Needle and bobbin-lace, difference, 119
- Needle's Excellency, pattern book, 174
- New Ross lace, 100
- Northants lace, 91
- Normandy bobbins, 107
- Novgorod lace, 78
- Nürnberg lace, 74
- OPUS anglicanum, 144  
 consutum, 144  
 plumarium, 131, 144  
 pulvinarium, 144
- Oriental taste, embroideries, 184
- PAGANI, pattern-book, 18
- Parasole, pattern-book, 23
- Parilage, or drizzling, 203
- Paris, point de, lace, 50
- Passements, la revolte des, 40
- Pastoral scenes in needlework, 191
- Pattern-books, Castel, 17  
 Cut- and drawn-work, 18  
 d'Aristotile, 18  
 Froschower, 73  
 Le Pompe, 18  
 Needle's Excellency, 174  
 Pagani, 18  
 Parasole, 23  
 Strauben, 73  
 Tagliente, 18, 17  
 Vinciolo, 23
- Peasant lace, 36
- Pelrine Lace, 111
- Pembroke, Mary Countess of, 24
- Peniche bobbins, 106  
 lace, 83
- Petit point, 171
- Philippine Islands aloe-lace, 83  
 "lace," 77
- Pictorial samplers, 221
- Pictures, lace, 87  
 black and white, 206  
 partly water-colour, 204  
 reproduction of, 205
- Pillow-lace, origin, 19

- Point d'Alençon, how made, 46  
 d'Angleterre lace, 64, 63  
 de canaille lace, 34  
 de gaze lace, 67  
 de gueuse lace, 43  
 de Marli lace, 57  
 de Raguoë lace, 44  
 d'Espagne lace, 79  
 de Venise à réseau lace, 29  
 gros, de Venise lace, 26  
 petit embroidery, 171  
 raised Venetian, lace, 26  
 rose, lace, 26  
 Spanish, 80
- Points d'esprit in lace, 55
- Pole-screen panels, 204
- Pompe, Le, pattern-book, 18
- Portraits painted showing lace,  
 24
- Portugal bobbins, 106  
 lace, 82  
 samplers, 230
- Potten Kant, 70
- Punto avorio, 22  
 in aria, 25  
 tagliato, 18  
 tirato, 18
- Purles, 84
- Purlin, 85
- QUEEN ELIZABETH'S Bible, 165  
 Katherine of Aragon, black-  
 work, 154  
 lace, 92  
 Katherine Parr's Prayers, 163  
 Margot, ruffs, 24  
 of Scots, Mary, needlework,  
 166
- Quilting, 193, 188  
 American, 194  
 waistcoats, 194
- RAGUSE, point de, lace, 44
- Reproductions of embroidered  
 pictures, 205
- Reproductions of xvii. cent.  
 worsted work, 185
- Réseaux, various, described, 122
- Restoring embroidery, 126
- Reticella, 17
- Revolte des Passements, La, 40
- Rheims lace, 49
- Ribbon embroidery, 204
- Rose point lace, 27
- Ross, New, lace, 100
- Ruffs, 109
- Run-net lace, 99
- Russia bobbins, 107  
 lace, 78  
 samplers, 228
- SAMPLERS, American, 226  
 bead-work, 224  
 Belgian, 227  
 borders on, 219  
 Channel Islands, 229  
 Commemoration, 224  
 cut-work, 86, 217  
 Danish, 228  
 darning, 222  
 dates worth remembering, 232  
 Dutch, 228  
 earliest type, 214  
 foreign, 226  
 forgeries, 231  
 frames for, 231  
 French, 228  
 German, 227  
 Italian, 230  
 lace, 86, 217  
 legends on, 218 *et seq.*  
 long, 214  
 map, 223  
 pictorial, 221  
 Portuguese, 230  
 Russian, 228  
 Scotch, 223  
 Spanish, 229  
 Storing, 232  
 tammy cloth, 222  
 tiffany, 222  
 Turkish, 231
- Saxony lace, 75
- Schleswig lace, 76
- Scotch samplers, 223
- Seaming lace, 84
- Sedan lace, 49, 45
- Seville lace, 80
- Sforza inventory, 31, 17
- Shawls, lace, 117
- Shottery, Warwicks, bed-linen,  
 84
- Shrewsbury, Countess of, 166,  
 156
- Spain, lace, 79

- Spangles on bobbins, 102  
 old and modern, difference,  
 177
- Spanish black-work, 154  
 bobbins, 106  
 point, 80  
 samplers, 229
- St. Cuthbert's tomb, needle-  
 work from, 135
- Steeple Ashton altar cloth, 147
- Steinkirks lace, 111
- Stitches, names of, 145
- Stomachers, embroidered, 184
- Storing samplers, 232
- Strauben, pattern-book, lace,  
 73
- Stump-work, 173  
 book-bindings, 176  
 caskets, 178  
 cushions, 177  
 mirror-frames, 178  
 pictures, 175
- Suffolk, Duke of, Charles Bran-  
 don, 157  
 lace, 96
- Sweden lace, 77
- Syon cope, 145
- TAGLIENTE, pattern-book, 18, 17
- Tambour-work lace, 98
- Tammy-cloth samplers, 222
- Tape-lace, Genoese, 33
- Tapestry, Bayeux, 137
- Taylor, the Water Poet, 174
- Tent-stitch, 171  
 and cross-stitch upholstery,  
 192
- Tiffany for samplers, 222
- Tönder lace, 76
- Traditions, useless, 127
- Trolley lace, 91
- Turkey-work, 167  
 samplers, 231
- UTTMANN, Barbara, 74
- VALENCIA chasuble, 158  
 lace, 80
- Valenciennes bobbins, 107, 108  
 fausse and vraie lace, 52  
 lace, 51
- Veils, lace, 117  
 wedding, 118
- Venetian flat point, 28  
 gros point, 26  
 imitated, 27  
 grounded lace, 29  
 lace, development of, 26  
 raised point, 26  
 rose point, 27 26,
- Venise, gros point de, lace, 26  
 point de, à réseau lace 29
- Verney, Sir Ralph, will, 158
- Vierge, dentelle à la, 57
- Vinciolo pattern-book, 23
- Vintners' pall, 153
- Vologda bobbins, 107  
 lace, 78
- WADSTENA lace, 78
- Waistcoat, quilted, 194
- White on white muslin needle-  
 work, 209
- Wilts bobbins, 106, 108  
 lace, 97
- Woollen sampler-cloth, 222
- Worsted lace, 96
- Wright, Thos., "Romance of  
 Lace-pillow," 15
- YAK lace, 96
- Yellow silk back-stitching, 188
- Youghal lace, 100
- Ypres lace, 54

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