



LACE OF THE VANDYKE PERIOD  
BY MRS. F. NEVILL JACKSON

It was during the seventeenth century that hand-made lace was at the most elaborate and beautiful stage of its development, and as, on account of its fragility, the history of lace is largely dependent on pictorial art for authentic evidence, rather than on actual specimens, few of which survive the wear and tear of centuries, the portraits painted by Vandyke are most valuable records of the varieties of needle-point and bobbin laces known at this period, and also of the mode of the moment in wearing them.

Though forms of openwork ornamentation, such as cut work and netting, were known in very early times, and the rude mending of a frayed edge with interlacing threads has been considered as lace in embryo, the history of lace in the sense of the word in which we now use it begins with the sixteenth century, though in an inventory of the property of a member of the Sforza Viconti family, of Milan, are enumerated several special makes and designs at the end of the fifteenth century.

In the pictures of Carpaccio in the Belles Artes Gallery at Venice "passements," the galloons or gold laces of the present day, are seen. It is this variety of rich trimming, so nearly allied to lace, that is so profusely shown both in the portrait of Paola Adorno Marchesa Brignole-Sale by Vandyke, which is now in the Palazzo Rosso gallery at Genoa, and in the second portrait of the Marchesa in the collection of the Duke of Abercorn. Thirteen rows of the costly ornament form a robing and edge the under-dress. The large neck and sleeve ruffs are ornamented with the flax thread "purlings" characteristic of the period. These were somewhat loosely-twisted threads resembling the torchon lace of the present day, and were largely made by the peasants all over Europe.

In England this early variety was very generally called "bone" lace, on account of the threads being wound on the dried bones of small animals before the more modern bobbins were in general use: it

is likely also that "bone" had some connection with the small splinters of bone in use at the period instead of pins, which, though invented in the previous century, were still too costly to be used by the working classes.

"Twenty-five yards of fyne bone lace" appears



SIR THOMAS CHALONER  
BY SIR ANTHONY VANDYKE, SHOWING A DEEP FALLING  
COLLAR OF LACE WITH SCALLOPED EDGE

as an item in a wardrobe account of the day, that amount being required for the edging of a ruff. Later, Queen Anne purchased "great bone" lace and "little bone" lace at Winchester and Basing, both towns then being on the borders of the lace-making districts, which were much more wide in extent in England at that time than they now are.

After Carpaccio, Frans Pourbus and Holbein carried on the painted history of lace, showing

HENRIETTA MARIA  
QUEEN OF  
CHARLES I.

By Sir Anthony Vandyl.





SERENISS. ET POTENTISS. D. HENRICA-MARIA BORBONIA. DEI GRATIA  
MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ. FRANCIÆ. ET HIBERNIÆ  
REGINA. ETC.

## Lace of the Vandyke Period

with characteristic detail the delicate guipures and lace-edged ruffs of the sixteenth century, but it was for Anthony Vandyke to show in those magnificent portraits, which are still the delight of the connoisseur and the despair of the modern artist, the true value of lace as an accessory of dress in pictorial art.

There is a subtle charm in fine hand-made lace



ERNEST II., GRAF VON MANSFELDT  
BY SIR ANTHONY VANDYKE, SHOWING COLLAR OF  
GUIPURE POINT AND LACE-EDGED SCARF

which is not easily explained, though all acknowledge the graceful and softening effect of ruffles and falls of lace. Never does a woman look so attractive as when she wears old lace, and the charms of youth are considerably enhanced by its beauty. Though the costliest wear it never vulgarizes, and who will deny that had Vandyke desired his princely and wealthy sitters to display jewels to the extent that lace was worn, half the charm of his portraits would have been missed?

To Vandyke's refined and artistic sense the glitter of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, beautiful though they be, would have been offensive; but lace, in its comparatively quiet richness, never obtrudes itself—its true worth is only recognised by those whose taste has been trained to see its restrained value.

To the Italian influence at the end of the sixteenth century was due the fashion which obtained throughout Europe of wearing ruffs decorated with the Reticella or geometric point lace; for the glory of Venice, Genoa, and Padua had not yet been usurped by Paris in setting the fashions; and we are thankful that Vandyke's portraits—being painted during a transition in the modes—show examples both of the ruffs and *cols rabbutus*, or falling lace collars for the men, and upstanding Medici collars, besides the flat, deep lace corsage trimming of the women, and remain to us as examples of the beauty and grace, even in extravagant modes, when treated by a master hand.

In several of Vandyke's portraits, that of Rubens's wife in particular (*see page 111*), it will be seen that the ruffle fashion survived at the wrist some years after the wearing of the neck ruff had been discontinued, the mode being far too becoming to be lightly relinquished.

As long as Marie de Medici lived, the upstanding collar, which still bears her name, worn either close to the back of the neck or in the more graceful manner edging the *decoltage*, as in the portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria and of Helena Forman, was used with its edging of fine guipure lace. An interesting modification in the make of this lace is noticeable when the extravagance of the

ruff having disgusted the exquisites of the European Courts, the falling lace or cambric collars with deep scalloped border of point, together with outside sleeve decoration or *manchettes à revers*, were worn. The Guipure, chiefly made at Genoa, which is so frequently represented in Vandyke's portraits, was usually worked in geometric designs, the heavy portion of the pattern in bobbin-made tape being united and the openings filled with ornamental stitches; these stitches, on the introduction of the fashion of the falling collar, became heavier and more

## The Connoisseur

emphasised, a kind of Point d'Esprit, of grain-shaped enrichment, being added on account of the desirability of weight in the lace, so that it should hang down gracefully (as is shown so well in the portrait of François, Prince of Savoy Carignan, painted in 1634) rather than stand out as for the edging of a ruff, which had hitherto required lightness and delicacy rather than weight.

It must not be imagined that all Genoa point was made in Italy. In order to supply the enormous demand, Guipure or tape lace of this description was made at most of the European lace districts of the period, with the exception only of those of Belgium, where the characteristic lace of Flanders, with its close workmanship and exquisite fineness of thread, so suitable for bobbin work, was mainly produced.

The Guipure of the seventeenth century was an extremely ornamental and artistic production, and should on no account be confounded with the modern Guipure, for the word is frequently misapplied to modern Honiton and Maltese laces and their Buckingham imitations, or to the coarse raised points of Venice. The Guipure d'Art of the nineteenth century, or Filet Guipure, is the modern survival of the Opus Filiatorium or Darned Netting, one of the earliest type of openwork ornamentation. Genoa laces have been celebrated from the earliest times (the gold and silver laces of Cyprus being first reproduced there about the beginning of the fifteenth century). The same designs were also made in silk, as we see in Vandyke's full-length "Portrait," where quantities of this silk lace or guipure, "parchment" lace as it was called in England, forms the rich trimming of the whole costume.

Gold, silver, and silk laces trimmed all the cavalier dresses, and such trimming was used also on the liveries of lacqueys and servants; in women's dress also it played an important part, and has helped, with the more elaborate, though less showy, flax thread lace, in emphasising the "Vandyke" form of all trimmings, this name having been given to the pointed scallop shape by a generation which has become familiar with it through Vandyke's pictures.

Points de Gênes are mentioned amongst the effects of Marie de Medici, but it was not until the seventeenth century that the beautiful flax thread laces of Genoa were of European celebrity.

The transition from the gold and silver to the

flax thread shows an interesting page in the legislation of the time. It is to the stringency of the Sumptuary laws that we owe the exquisite flax thread lace, for when the costlier material was forbidden the lace workers substituted for gold and silver thread the homelier flax, and from the moment when the increased facility in working was felt, and the added grace and beauty of flexibility was seen in the flax thread lace, it was realised that the less costly material would lend itself to designs of such



QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA  
BY SIR ANTHONY VANDYKE, SHOWING THE UPSTANDING  
MEDICI COLLAR EDGING THE DECOLTAGE

intricacy and beauty as had never been thought of in connection with the metal threads.

In Vandyke's time it was the bobbin lace, a *piombini*, that is, made with iron-weighted bobbins to increase the tension of the thread, that was so highly valued. Needle-point, as well as bobbin laces, were made in Genoa; both "piece" lace and lace edgings by the yard; knotted laces resembling the modern *macramé* were also produced.

We are not aware that any example of this latter variety is shown in a picture by Vandyke, but the contemporary engravings of Abraham Bosse and

HELEN FOR-  
MAN, SECOND  
WIFE OF  
PETER PAUL  
RUBENS  
BY SIR  
ANTHONY  
VANDYKE  
SHOWING  
LACE RUFFLES  
AT THE  
WRISTS



## The Connoisseur

Callot frequently show it on household linen; the long fringed ends of the huckaback towels of the present day, with their few meagre knots to prevent fraying, are a survival of the handsome seventeenth century borders of intricate design made entirely by knotting the warp of the linen.

Perhaps it was the refinement of taste in Anthony Vandyke which led him to appreciate so highly the beauty of lace, for the painter, brought up amongst the artistic *entourage* of a Flemish town in the seventeenth century, encouraged in artistic effort by the great Guild of St. Luke (which existed for the sole purpose of fostering and encouraging

Painted, successively serving to enhance the glory of the painter in Italy.

The refinement of Vandyke's taste in dress and living, and also in his choice of subjects, was in strong contrast to that of the majority of his fellow-countrymen abroad. The Flemish student of the seventeenth century was too often a somewhat debauched and rough member of the community, delicate only in the handling of the brush, but choosing the boorish society he loved as the subject for his pictures. Even the strong claims of a co-nationality in a foreign land would not induce the fastidious Vandyke to become a participant in the



THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I. BY SIR ANTHONY VANDYKE

artistic taste), and emulating the work of such masters as Rubens and Van Balen, would be keenly sensitive to the minutest details. Certain it is that during his visit to Rome, where he stayed for two years, he was nicknamed *il pittore cavalieresco* on account of his carelessness in expenditure and pleasure only in what was of the best and most beautiful.

This was immediately after his residence in Genoa (then one of the most important lace centres of the world), in 1623, when the "White Boy" in the Durazzo Palace, "The Tribute Money," the magnificent portrait of the Marchesa de Brignola in the Brignola Palace, and many other pictures had been

students' orgies, and their annoyance at being both eclipsed and despised by their fellow-countryman gave rise to some malignant rumours which were spread abroad at this time. It has even been said that the slanders which were circulated had the effect of driving Vandyke from Rome; but this is hardly likely.

It must be remembered that the seventeenth century was the age of great extravagance in dress. At all the European Courts, that of Paris especially, the luxury in dress knew no bounds; in 1613 a petition was signed by the nobles for the increase of their pensions on account of the exigencies of

**GEORGE  
DUKE OF  
BUCKINGHAM  
AND  
HIS BROTHER  
FRANCIS VILLIERS  
1636**

By Sir Anthony Vandyke







*George Duke of Buckingham with his Brother Francis 1636.*

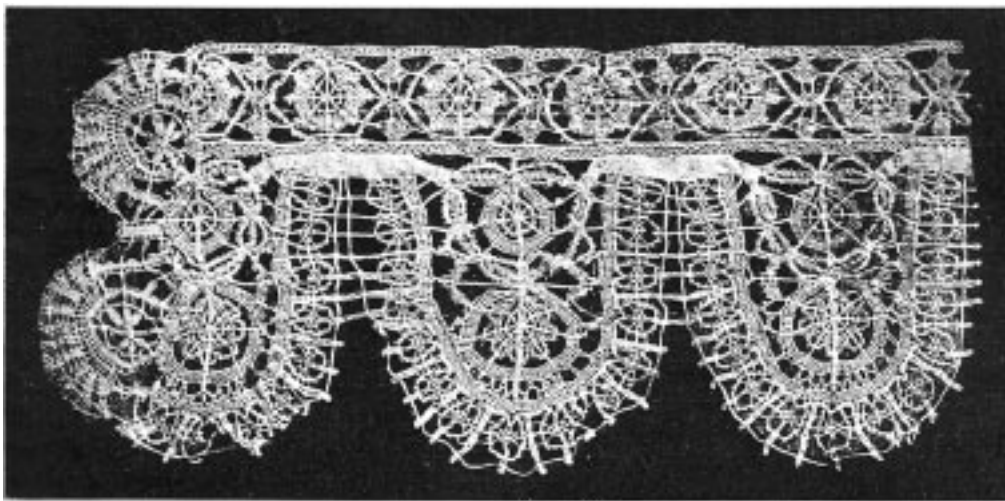
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fashion. The costliest point laces were used for ruffs or collars and cuffs, dozens of yards of silk and metal guipures ornamented the cloaks and costumes, point lace edged the scarf-like garter, double and treble rows of hand-made lace fell over the tops of the high boots, and lace-edged rosettes orna-

up his residence in London in the house allotted to him by the king at Blackfriars. His studio became the resort of a fashionable crowd, and the king himself would frequently arrive in his barge from Whitehall and spend an hour in the painting room watching the handsome artist at his work,

sitting for one of the thirty-six portraits which are known to have been painted of him by Vandyke, and talking with the master, who was a brilliant conversationalist.

No fewer than twenty-five portraits of Queen Henrietta Maria are undoubtedly from his hand.



ITALIAN BOBBIN-MADE LACE WITH VANDYKE EDGE, 5½ INCHES WIDE

mented the toes. The Church was not behindhand in the prevailing fashion, and the priests' vestments, the dresses of the saints, altar linen and hangings were of costliest points.

Women were even more prodigal than men in the display of lace collars, ruffs, aprons, jupes, tippets, and hoods; and not only were their persons richly adorned with lace, but household linen was considered incomplete without enrichment of *points coupés*; bed-hangings of resieul, pillows, sheets and toilette hangings were trimmed with guipure, or were made entirely of costliest Point de Flandres.

Vandyke's delicate appreciation of the refined accessories of living made him an immense favourite with the *dilettante* society in every European capital; for like the great portrait-painter of the eighteenth century, Sir Joshua Reynolds, he excelled in painting gentlefolk. It was in 1632 that he took

Perhaps the one showing the finest examples of lace is that where Prince Charles, an infant of about a year old, is in her arms, and Prince James, in a rich velvet dress with collar, cap and cuffs, bordered with guipure, stands by her side.

When royal magnificence is guided by a Frenchwoman's taste, it is little wonder that special grace is shown; certainly, the characteristic deep lace collar of the period in this portrait is daintily fastened across the breast in an unusual and effective manner, and the richness of the flax thread web is enhanced by the flesh tints and satin painted in a manner which belongs to Vandyke alone. In this picture, as in all others by the great master, it will be noticed that however delicately the lace may be worked out in detail, it still retains its proper place as an accessory only, subordinate in interest to the face and form of the wearer.

