



FLOUNCE GIVEN BY THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB TO THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY—1920.

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB FLOUNCE AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE lovely flounce of Brussels bobbin lace of the early eighteenth century which was given last May in the name of the Needle and Bobbin Club to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, of New York, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary is shown on the frontispiece. A group of about a dozen members of the Club contributed the necessary fund for the purchase of the lace, but in order that the whole club might have a share in this gift, which will become a part of one of the great lace collections of the world, the sum of ten dollars was contributed from the Club Treasury.

The Flounce has been exhibited in a central case in the room in which the most magnificent flounces are shown, and its label bears the name of the Club as donor.

Various members of the Club, living in New York, who have always been deeply interested in the welfare of the Museum, had felt that they would like to share in some way in marking its fiftieth birthday, so when a piece of lace was brought to their attention which had been sent to this country from France for inspection by a member of our Club, and when it was found that not only could it be secured very advantageously on account of the rate of exchange, but also that it would be of real value in the Museum's collection, not duplicating other examples, but enriching the series which illustrates the art of the Flemish lace makers, it was decided to offer this piece to the Museum in the name of the Club.

The letter of acknowledgment from the Museum was sent to Miss Gertrude Whiting, the President of the Club, who has placed it among the records of the Club.

The flounce measures three yards, eight inches in length and is eighteen inches wide. Its technique is very typical of the laces of Brussels of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the types of mesh employed:—the plain *toilé*, the *grillé*, the *cing trous*. The scrolls of the design are connected by *brides picotées*, and the finely braided relief-work characteristic of Brussels lace may be seen on the trees, outlining petals of flowers, on the wings of the birds, etc.

A few details of the design lift it out of the current type into the group

of unusually interesting examples of its period. The design might be said to represent a garden, much conventionalized and kept entirely within the bounds of lace design. The principal figure of the pattern has in the center a fountain in the form of a bowl with a bird on the top, with wings and tail spread, and with a tall spray of water issuing from its beak and falling back in drops. On each side are what might be little clipped obelisk-shaped trees, beyond them on each side a little tree of less formal shape, and near these a third form suggesting a palm-tree. On each side of the fountain is a large many-petalled flower, and as one's enthusiasm for the lovely fabric grows one feels that the conventionalized scrollings which surround this group of the fountain, flowers, and formal trees suggest some sort of architectural balustrade or boundary separating the fountain from other parts of the garden, but leading upward to a smaller figure like a little shrine or pavilion with what seems like another tiny fountain under its arch. There is also a second bird-form, of slightly different drawing from the first, also with head upturned and with what is either a fountain or a many-leaved branch in its mouth.

All these motifs are set on a field of leafy scrolls, held together by "brides picotées," which, perhaps carried out the idea of the flowery parterre of a garden.

We do not know for just what use this lovely flounce was made. Similar pieces were used sometimes for the borders of albs and for use in churches, but the lavish use of precious lace was the fashion of the time when this piece was made, and, to judge from the pictures of that day, it might have been used on ladies' dresses, or even on covers for dressing tables. One need only dip into Mrs. Palliser's treasury of records of the use of lace in the past to visualize the picturesque scenes in which this flounce may have taken part.