

THE · BULLETIN · OF  
THE · NEEDLE · AND · BOBBIN  
CLUB  
VOLUME · 3 · NUMBER · 2  
OCTOBER · 1919



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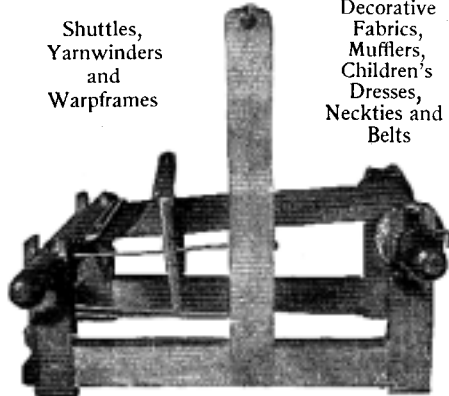
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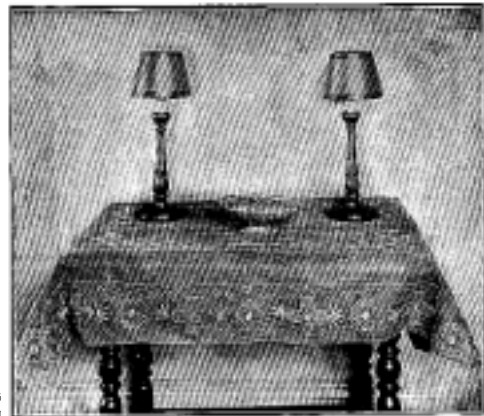
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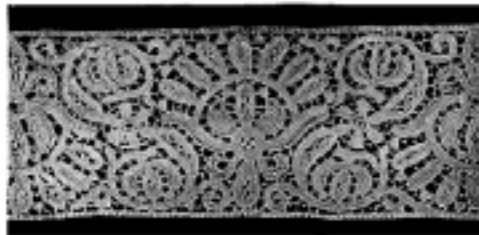
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# BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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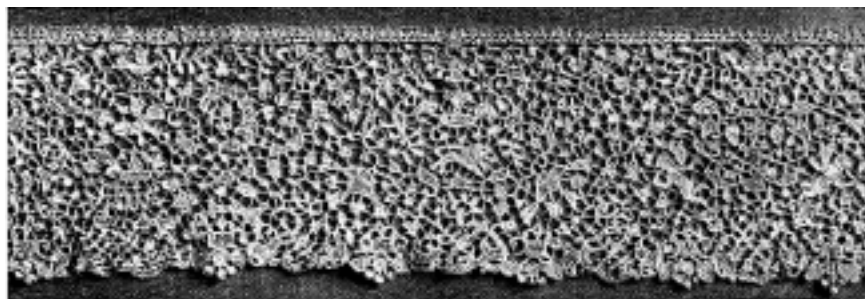
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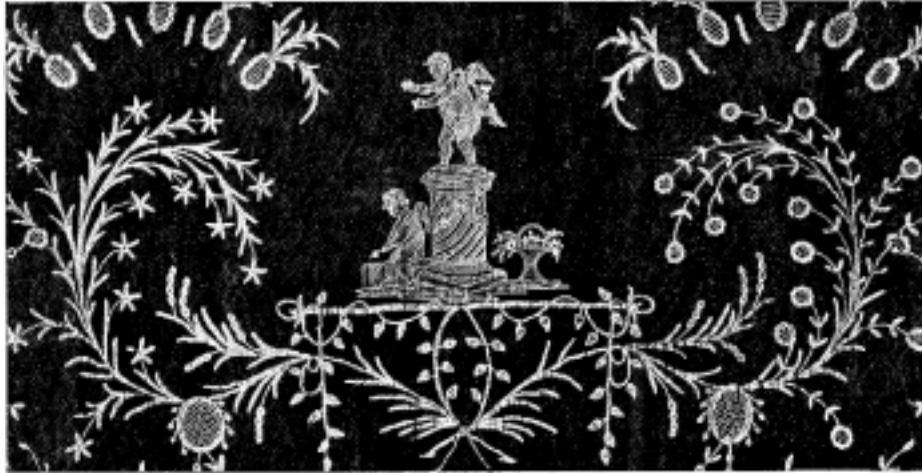






DETAIL OF BRUSSELS FLOUNCE. FLEMISH, ABOUT 1790  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. J. PIERPONT MORGAN, JR.





DETAIL OF BRUSSELS FROUNCE. FLEMISH, ABOUT 1790  
FROM THE COLLECTION

## THE SUMMER LACE EXHIBIT AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

BY FRANCES MORRIS



WHILE the summer loan exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum has been extensively reviewed by the daily press and in the field of magazine literature, inasmuch as the laces were drawn almost exclusively from the collections of our members, the event should not pass unnoticed by the Club BULLETIN.

The fabrics are confined to works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and only slightly over a hundred specimens are shown. This is due to the fact that the scope of the exhibit was necessarily limited to the number of cases obtainable for a proper setting, the tapestries occupying all the space that might otherwise have been availed of for large wall cases. However, the examples held in reserve may perhaps form the nucleus of some future exhibit.

In such a wealth of material it is impossible to select one piece that is more interesting than another, for each has its distinctive charm. Take,

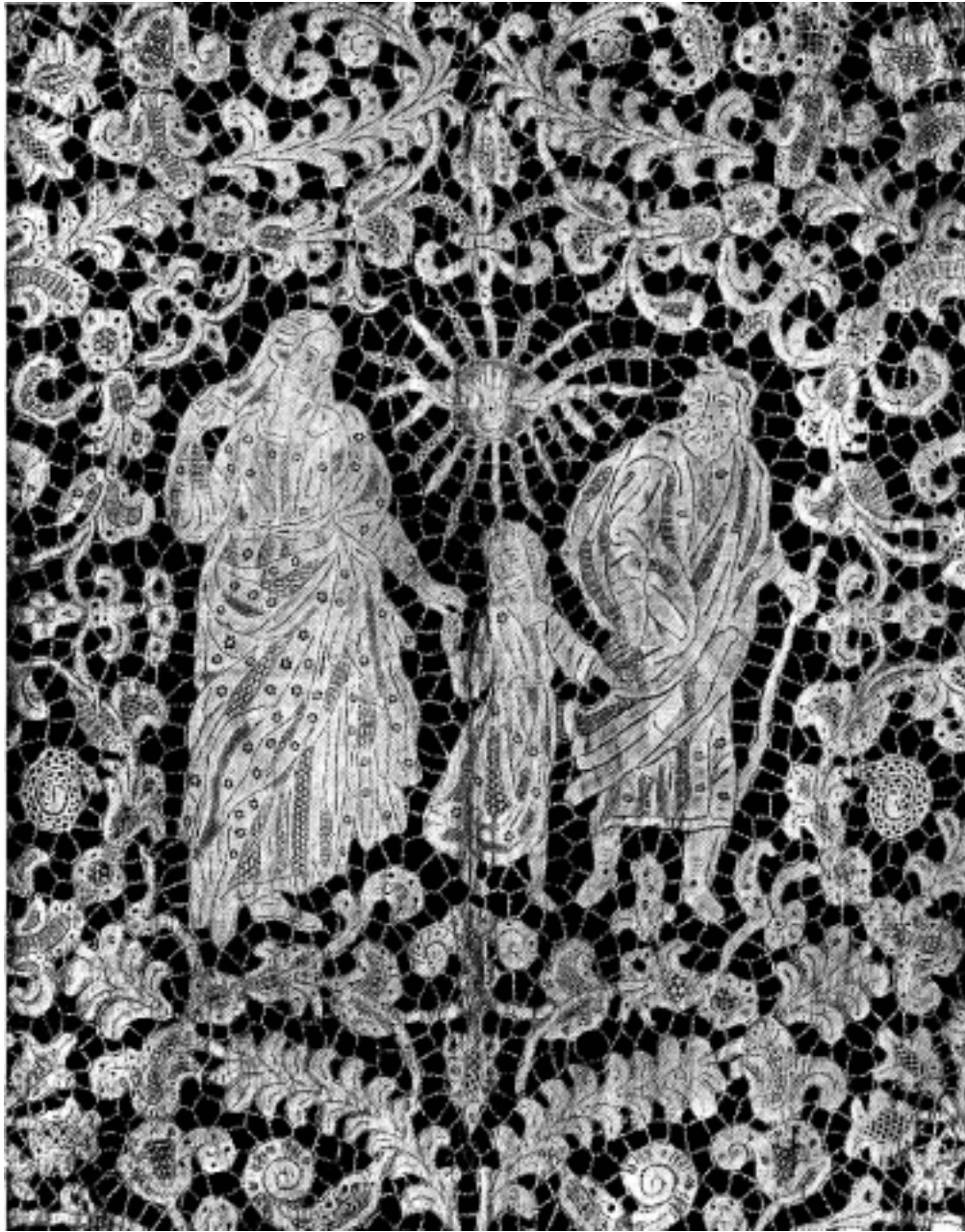
for instance, a beautiful fragment lent by Mrs. Gino Speranza, the pathetic remnant of a needlepoint chalice veil dating from the end of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, with the crowned eagle and winged dragon of the Borghesi arms and the inscription "Ecce Agnus Dei . . ." framing the sacred Lamb in a central medallion. It is difficult to imagine a vandalism that could ruthlessly damage so valuable a document, for without doubt this piece was designed for Cardinal Scipio Borghese, the nephew of Pius V, who was Pope from 1565 to 1572. A second piece of this quality, from the collection of Richard C. Greenleaf, has the same



DETAIL OF CHALICE VEIL. NEEDLEPOINT LACE  
WITH ARMS OF THE GRAND DAUPHIN LOUIS, AND POPE ALEXANDER VII  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. J. PIERPONT MORGAN, JR.

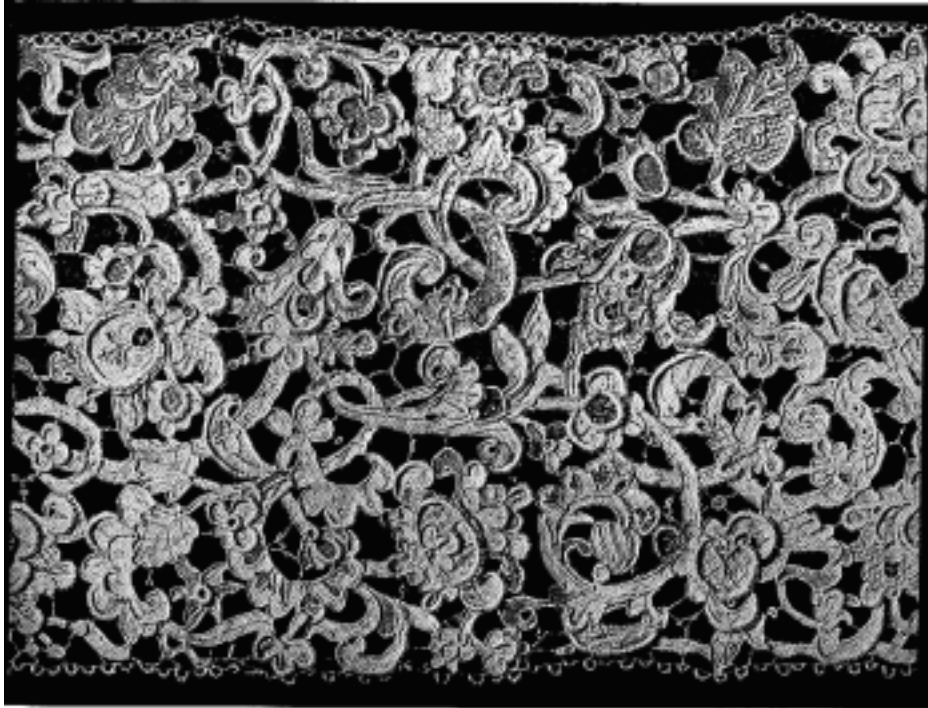
delicacy of technique and charm of pattern; it might readily have been worked by the same hand, or at least in the same convent or atelier.

The arms of another prelate figure in a chalice veil from the collection of Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., a lace-edged linen square that was bequeathed to the Convent of St. Joseph by Mme. Louise de France, daughter of Louis XV, who was herself a member of the Carmelite Order. The two principal motives in the design of the lace are the crowned "L"—the arms of the Dauphin of France—and a three-tier mountain, the arms of the Chigi family. The combination of these two heraldic devices indicates that this lace was originally designed for use on *les langes bénites*, the baptismal linen presented to the crown of France, at the time of the birth of the Grand Dauphin Louis (1661–1714), by Alexander VII (Fabio Chigi), the reigning Pope in 1661. The Italian Provenance of this piece



DETAIL OF BENEDICTION VEIL  
NORTH ITALIAN GUIPURE, LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. GEORGE J. WHELAN

being thus established, it is of further interest to note that as its technique is the same as that of Burano needlepoint, we have here a rare example of the early fabric of that lace centre. This may also be true of the unusual strip of needlepoint showing the Madonna and Child framed



VENETIAN POINT IN RELIEF, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. ROBERT W. DE FOREST

in medallions, examples of which are preserved in the collections of Mrs. Fahnestock, Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., and the Metropolitan Museum. In connection with these two pieces should also be mentioned the medallion chalice veil with its central group, the Virgin and a kneeling donor, worked in a similar stitch, and probably of the same provenance; a piece lent by Mrs. DeWitt Clinton Cohen.

Of somewhat later date is another ecclesiastical piece, a benediction veil, from the collection of Mrs. George J. Whelan, a fine bobbin work similar to those preserved in the Musée Cinquantenaire, at Brussels.

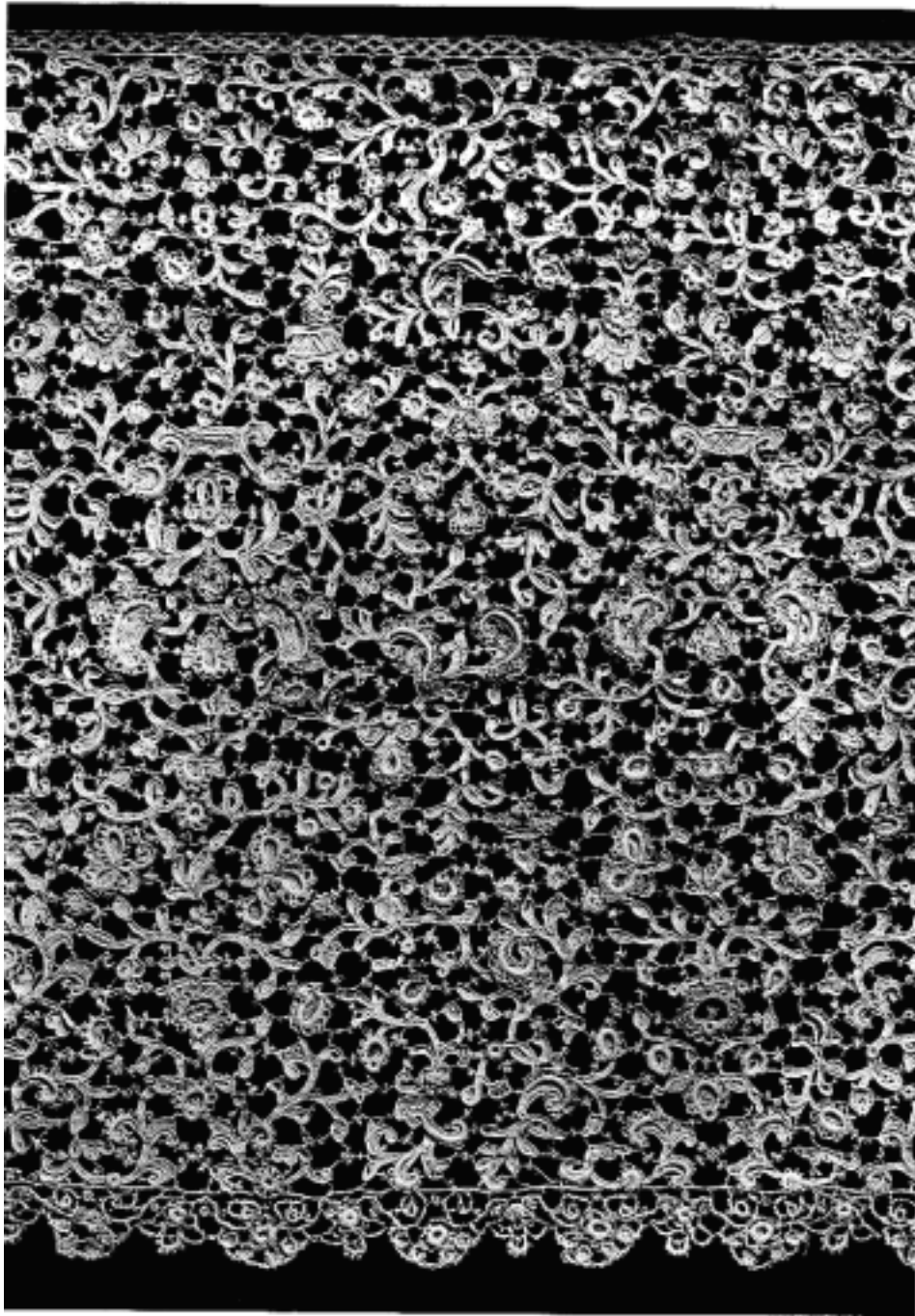


While this veil has many features indicating Flemish origin,—for instance, the central group, which is almost an exact copy of Rubens's "Holy Family,"—the foliated terminals of the scrolling field pattern reflect more truly the Italian type found in the guipures of Milan and Genoa.

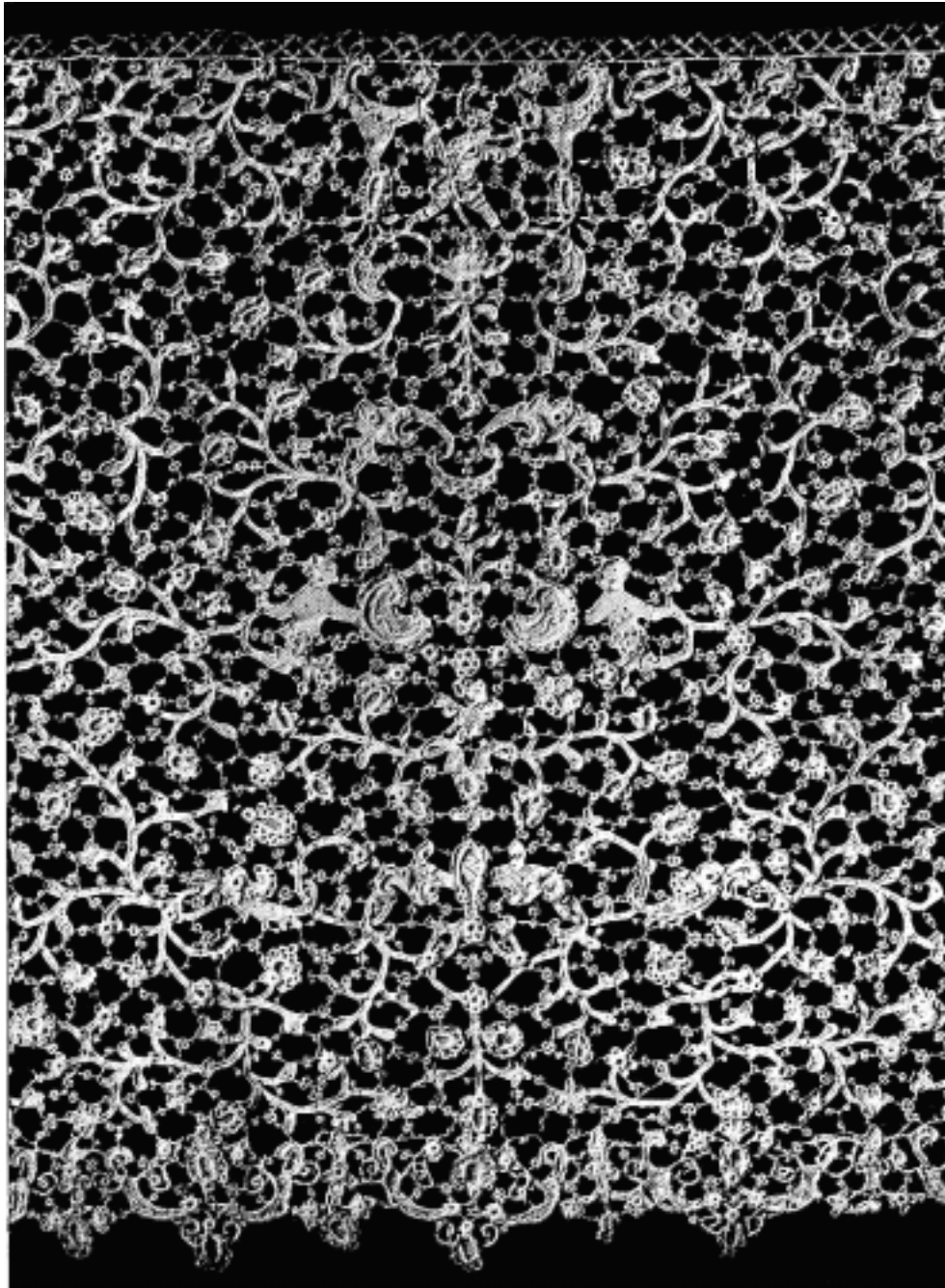


FRENCH NEEDLEPOINT, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE FLORENCE BLUMENTHAL COLLECTION

*Les dentelles à personnages*, always attractive to collectors, are delightfully represented in this exhibit. Especially interesting is the flounce of rose point from the collection of Mrs. Harris Fahnestock, a strip of some three yards in length, perfect in quality and design. In this the designer apparently availed himself of local motifs which mark the work as distinctly Venetian; for have we not here the Doge's herald with his up-raised trumpet, the lion of St. Mark's, the mermaid, sea-horse and dolphin? What could more perfectly reflect the legendary lore that still lingers about the tide-swept isles of the Lagoon?



ROSE POINT. ITALIAN, END OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. JOSEPH PULITZER



ROSE POINT, WITH FIGURE MOTIVES  
ITALIAN, END OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. HARRIS FAHNESTOCK

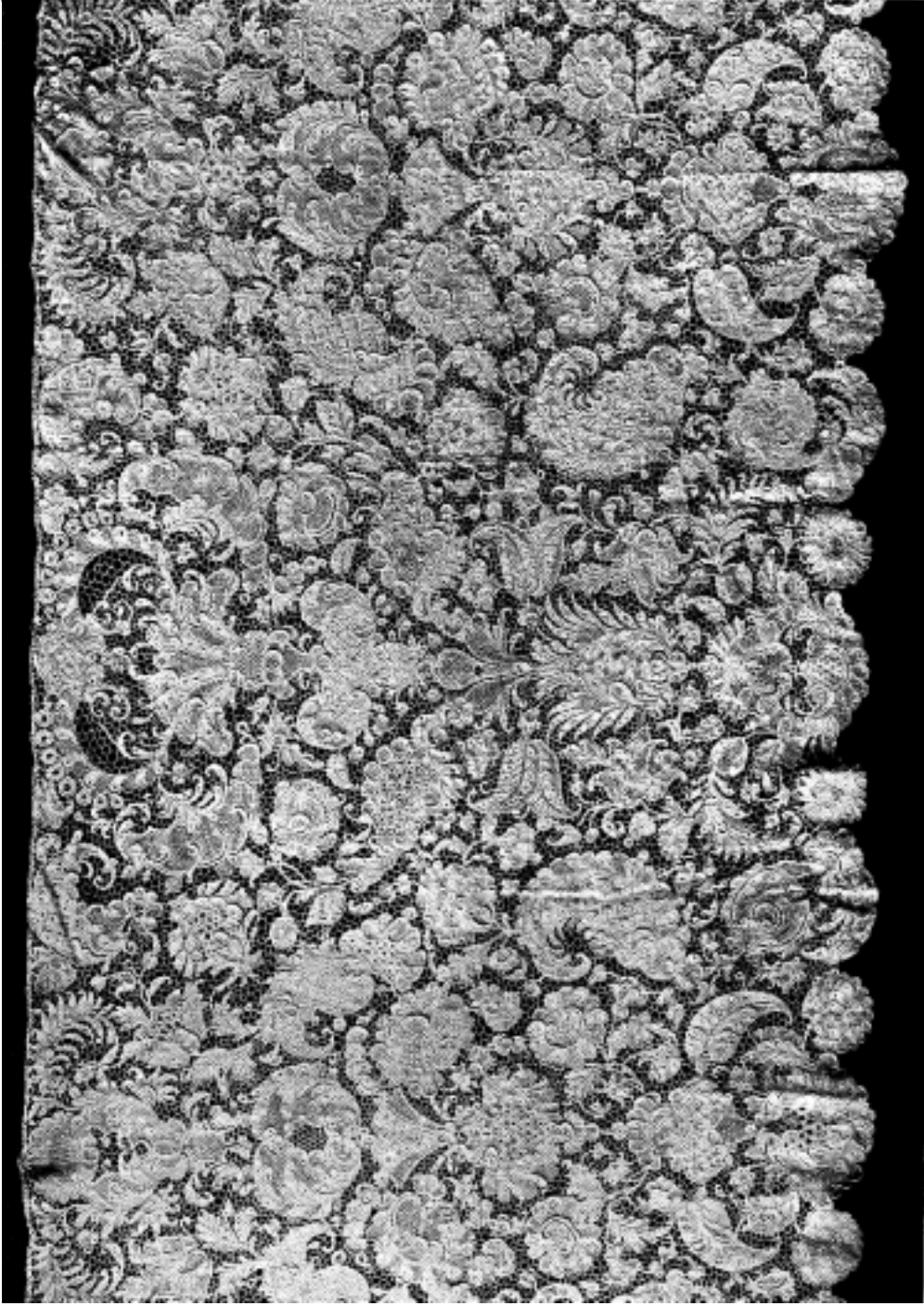
In quite another vein is a strip of old Brussels or point d'Angleterre from the same collection, a dainty bit that mirrors the gay court life of France under Louis XV: the courtier and his lady with attendant cupids, the little page in pursuit of a fleeing dog, the spouting swan, a motif that appears again in another strip of the same fabric, lent by Mrs. William Bayard Cutting, in which the bird motif is much more formal and wears a chain about its neck. A very early use of this device is found in a bit of fine damask preserved in the Cooper Institute Museum, a fragment of North Italian silk weaving of the fourteenth century.

Another figure piece is shown in the *bas de rochet*, lent by Mrs. George T. Bliss, a Bruges fabric of delicate scrolls, in the midst of which appears a charmingly depicted harlequin head wearing a cocked hat plumed with a jaunty feather, and a *ruche*, or, what is more likely, a collar of bells, about the neck.

Some of the most alluring figures, however, are those found in the cases of lappets. These dainty bits of femininity, the *fond de bonnet* and the *barbes* that in the eighteenth century composed the *barbes pleines* of the court beauties of France, form one of the most attractive features of the exhibit. The lappet, which in England is recorded in royal archives of the time of Elizabeth, has always been cherished by England's enthusiastic lace collectors, from which source many of the beautiful specimens in American collections have been acquired. Unfortunately, some of the most choice sets have been dismembered; untoward circumstances having forced the one-time owner to part with her treasured heirlooms piece by piece, they have gradually drifted into private collections on this side of the water, and, in several instances, are once more reassembled in the present exhibit.

In so short a review of this important exhibit, only a word can be said in passing of the marvelous beauty of the needlepoint flounces that have been brought together. Historically, the wedding lace of Queen Charlotte naturally takes precedence; in beauty of design, however, there are many equally interesting. Take, for instance, the points de France, exhibited by Mrs. George T. Bliss, Mrs. Whelan and Senator Clark; the splendid flounce of flat Venetian from the Florence Blumenthal Collection, and the exquisite flounce of point d'Argentan, lent by Mrs. Herbert L. Satterlee, with its delicate floral sprays, birds and butterflies, illustrating the





FRENCH NEEDLEPOINT, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. GEORGE T. BLISS

high standards maintained by French lace designers in the eighteenth century.

With these great examples of the lace-maker's art may also be classed the pillow-made flounces that are here represented; the marvelous Brussels fabric which, like the Queen Charlotte lace, is one of the many exceptional pieces in the collection of Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr. The patience of the native *dentellière* weaving with cobweb thread the delicate mesh of this piece, finds its parallel in the marvelous strip of rose-point lent by Mrs. George J. Whelan, in which the myriads of picots, fashioned by the skilled needle of the Italian worker, vie with the filmy



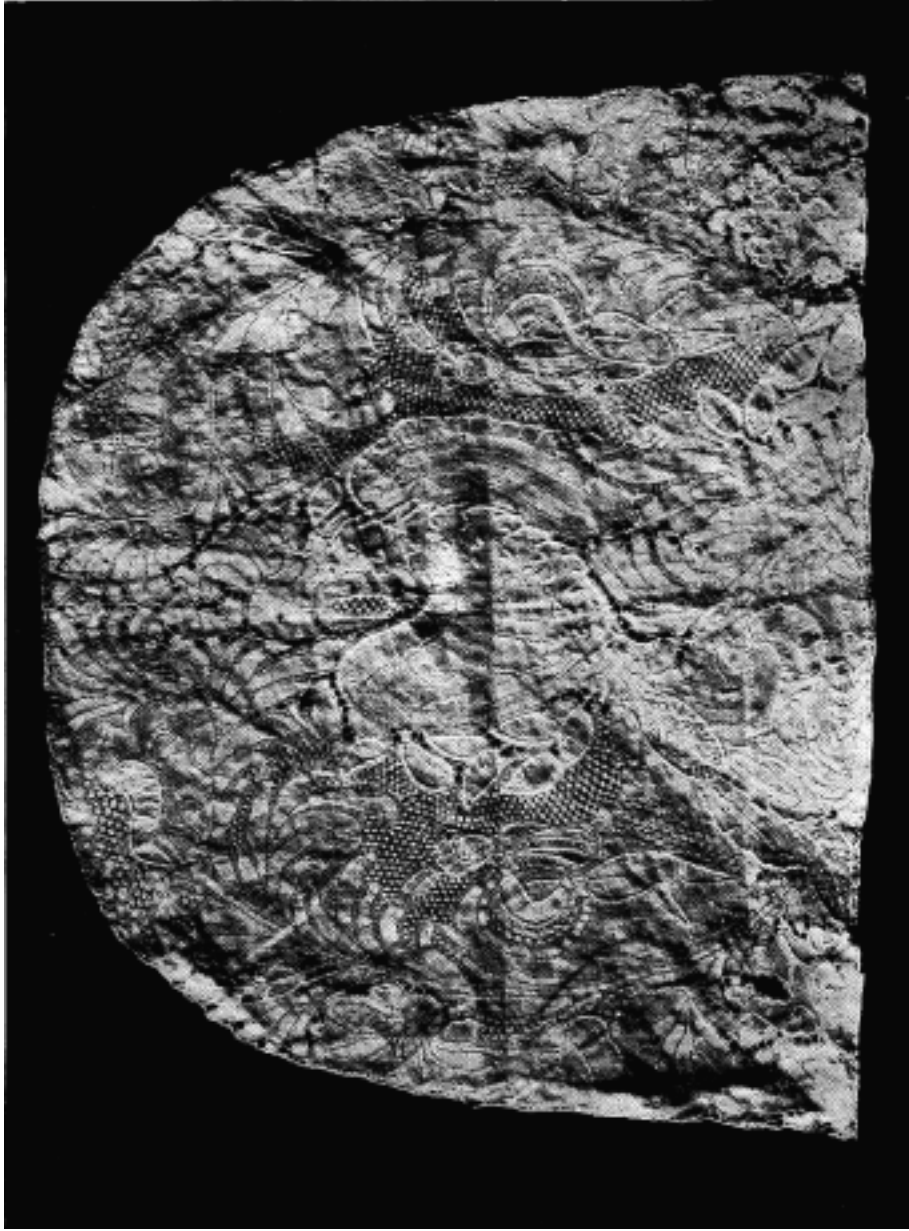
"POINT D'ANGLETERRE." BRUSSELS, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. HARRIS FAHNESTOCK

net so deftly wrought by the play of the Flemish bobbins. The detail of this Brussels flounce, illustrated in the frontispiece,—one of the four groups which appear in its full pattern,—reflects the influence of the painter David; in fact, so exquisite is the drawing that it might almost be attributed to the pencil of this master, inasmuch as he is known to have furnished designs for lace fabrics. Be that as it may, the work is of unusual beauty and ranks among the most beautiful Flemish lace fabrics in existence.

While, as stated above, the art of David furnished models for figure motives, that of Pillement, who, like many another artist of his period, turned to the Jardin des Plantes for inspiration, is reflected in the floral patterns. This is true in the case of the flounce just described, but the resemblance is even more marked in a Brussels flounce of "point d'Angleterre," lent by Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., in which the slender sprays of harebells remind one of the foliage so often employed by that artist as



DETAIL OF POINT D'ARGENTAN FLOUNCE. FRENCH, LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. HERBERT L. SATTERLEE



CAP CROWN, "POINT D'ANGLETERRE." FLEMISH, EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. MC DOUGALL HAWKES



a delicate screen for some charming bit of chinoiserie, a gracefully turned bridge, a turreted pagoda or a stately Oriental poised beneath a spreading umbrella.

But one might go on indefinitely describing in detail each of the hundred and twelve pieces that form the exhibit, and yet much would remain untold, for a volume might be written on the beauties of the Italian needlepoints alone—the lovely “Punto in Aria” with its quaint patterns of angular sprays of lobe-shaped leaves still dependent upon the supporting linen, like a timid child clinging to its mother’s hand; then the pointed petals that, with a more adventurous spirit, peer over the edge, and push forward delicate stems that in time support bell-shaped blossoms which, like simple garden flowers under intensive cultivation, emerge resplendent in the perfected Venetian fabric. In this group of the exhibition particular care was given to the placing of the lace so that the various steps in its development might be followed.

Among the bobbin laces, however, this was impossible, for collectors seem more partial to eighteenth-century fabrics than to the early types of this branch of lace-making, and these were not well represented; many interesting examples, however, are found on cut linen works, such as altar cloths, chalice veils and the like, and probably in an exhibition of that character many varieties would be forthcoming.

The cordial coöperation of our Club members in helping the Museum to make possible so splendid an assemblage of the lace-maker’s art, is something of which the organization may well be proud, and it is to be hoped that the exhibition may be visited, during her stay in this city, by the Belgian Queen, whose interest in the development of the lace industry in her country is referred to in the letter from our foreign correspondent, Mme. Mali-Kefer, of the Musée Cinquantenaire in Brussels (published in this issue).

The exhibition will remain open during October, and the large attendance, especially during the first month, when, on one hot Sunday afternoon in July, over six hundred visitors were recorded,—visitors who gave the cases more than a casual passing glance,—shows an increasing tendency on the part of the public to appreciate and value the beauty of hand-made fabrics, an interest which it is the aim of our Club to foster and maintain.



ITALIAN FILET, LATTER HALF OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY  
BROOKLYN MUSEUM COLLECTION

## THE LACE EXHIBITION AT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

BY CATHERINE T. D. FOX

**D**URING the past summer the Brooklyn Museum has made a special display of lace. The exhibition was composed of the lace given to the Museum by the late Colonel R. B. Woodward, and many specimens kindly lent by lace lovers, among whom were members of the Needle and Bobbin Club. Incidentally, the notable collection of ancient ecclesiastical vestments and Renaissance textiles, the gift of the Rembrandt Club of Brooklyn, was reinstalled and shown in connection with the lace. The exhibition was opened on the afternoon of April 28th, and it is a tribute to the interest and growing influence of the Needle and Bobbin Club that the exhibition was inaugurated primarily for the Club's benefit and entertainment.

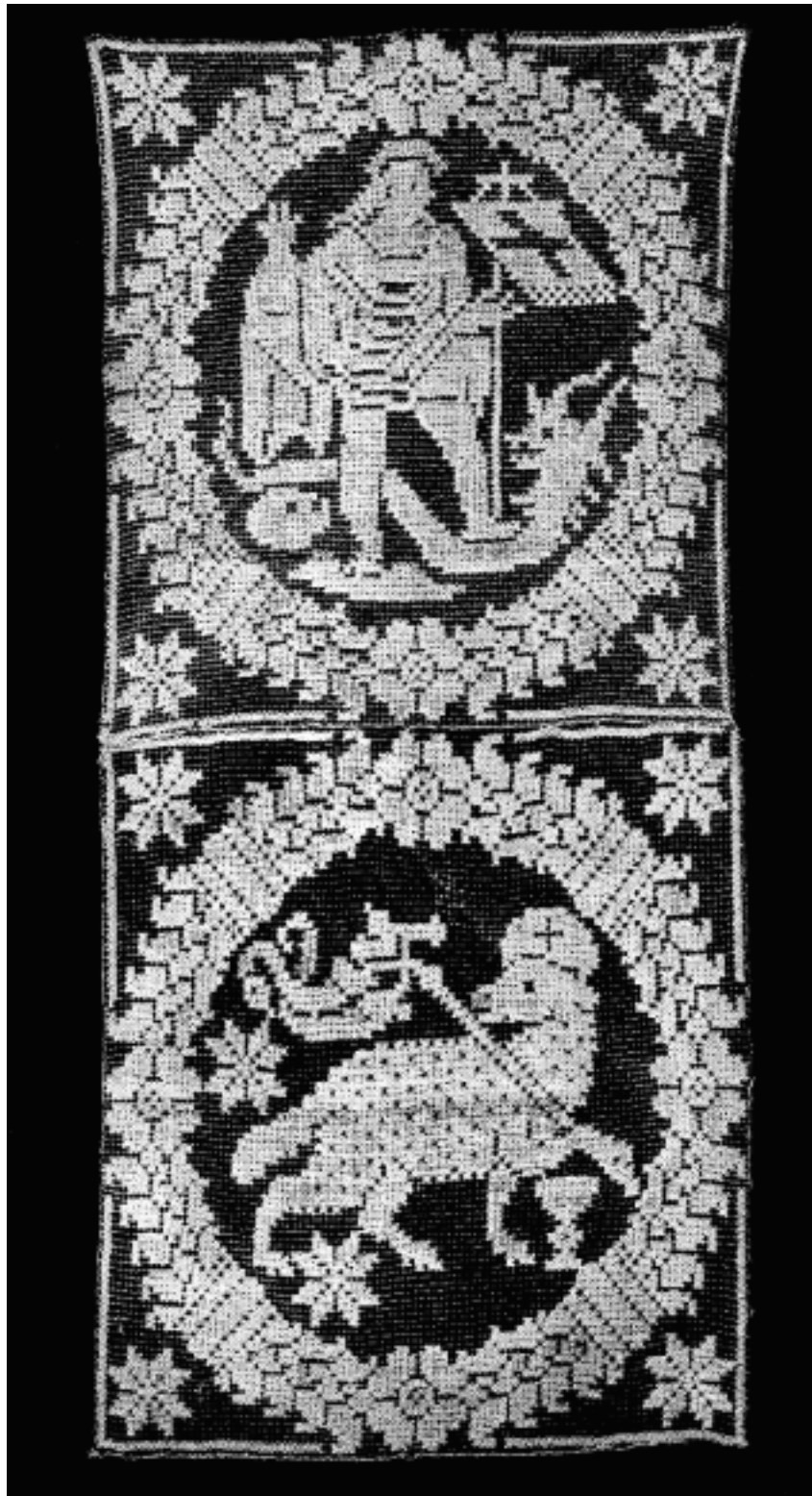
The cases were arranged in the galleries and corridors surrounding the central rotunda, on the top floor of the Museum. On the occasion of the opening, tea was served to the members of the Club and other guests from a refectory table placed under the dome of the rotunda. The fine old Italian silk and velvet draperies hanging from the walls, the rich hues of the copes and dalmatics, the marbles and terra-cottas, the altar with its furnishings of lace and velvet and gilded candlesticks, the "Ma-

donna and Child" of Andrea della Robbia suspended above it, and the tapestries, were a fitting background to the lace which was the main feature of the exhibition. To further emphasize the Renaissance atmosphere, the tea table was spread with filet over Genoese velvet. In the centre stood a large majolica jar filled with a mass of spring flowers. Candles burned in old Italian candlesticks, and for other practical purposes of the table the plates and bowls were Hispano-Moresque and other faïence from the Museum's collection. The company present numbered six hundred. A touch of contemporary interest was lent to the afternoon by the presence of some beautiful children dressed in Alsatian costumes and carrying baskets of flowers. They were chaperoned by Mrs. Cass Gilbert and were there in the interest of the American Committee for Devastated France.

The exhibits so graciously placed at the disposition of the Museum included specimens of Venetian needlepoint, point de France, point d'Alençon, point d'Angleterre, point appliqué, point de Gaze, filet, Valenciennes, some Holland, Spanish and Honiton; from Ireland there were Limerick, point d'Ardée, and Youghal. Some handsome veils in particular added charm to the exhibition, two of them "court" veils of point appliqué, interesting from the historical standpoint. The one lent by Mrs. Moore, having been specially ordered by Napoleon for Marie Louise, shows the imperial crown and eagle with the monogram underneath. The mesh is powdered with the bee and the border is composed of tulips and foliage. The other is said to have been worn by the ill-fated Marie Antoinette and later by the Empress Josephine. The motifs employed were the narcissus, rose, tulip and wheat. It is of exquisite quality, both as regards texture and design.

A striking feature of the loans was the filet. About twenty-five important examples of this effective lace were installed in a small skylighted room leading off from the rotunda. A soft radiance shone from above on the filet pieces hung on the creamy-toned walls in frames which for contrast were ebonized. The room was further embellished by the "Danæ" of Rodin and two other sculptured marbles. A notable example was a Sicilian strip seven feet long by two feet wide, of the late fifteenth century, the contribution of Mrs. Helen Foster Barnett. Concerning this panel, it is the opinion of one authority that "its chief ornamental fea-

tures, horsemen, figures of men and women, and chimera, bear no relation to each other, but their general character, as well as their archaic treatment, suggests the influence of design seen in the first period of Sicilian embroidery, a design which was made up of Arabian motives. The piece was made for domestic purposes, the fact that no ecclesiastical symbols occur in the decoration showing that it was not intended for the uses of the Church." Another example was a vertical strip in which two independent sections were repeated. One section showed a figure resembling Saint George and the Dragon, and the other the Paschal Lamb. Both were enclosed in circular bands which resemble the "tondi," much affected by the Florentine painters, although the design is probably Portuguese. Rosettes occupied the spaces in the corners of the section. The reaching out toward balanced design in this specimen shows the transition from the primitive. In the same room was a rare work of the sixteenth century. It represented Orpheus with a viol playing to the beasts, and was a copy of a design taken from G. A. Vavassori's book of design, published at Venice in 1546. There was a second edition in 1556. The rare quality and general mellow appearance of the fillet would suggest that it was executed shortly after the book appeared. The two end borders of a linen cover, joined, made an exhibit of very great interest. The motive of the design was a fountain with the water spouting from human heads, the fountain supported on each side by a unicorn. Other spaces were filled with peacocks, acorns and oak leaves. A similar design was repeated as a narrower border with fringe below. The specimen was obviously of a later date than the Orpheus piece, but of the same century. Instead of the rather primitive scattering of detail of the latter, it presented a most sophisticated fulness of design. With the balanced arrangement of its figures and elaborate border it showed that it was inspired by all the sumptuous ideas of the Renaissance at its height. Contemporary with this interesting pattern was a linen cover with a beautiful border showing an heraldic lion utilized for pure ornament in a series of scrolls. The piece was edged with vandyked needlepoint. Its effect, as may be seen in the illustration, was elegant and highly imaginative. Another sixteenth century piece, lent by the writer, was a vertical panel. Here again we have detached figures, in this instance an heraldic bird, horses, boats and the repeated motive of a man and woman with



ST. GEORGE AND THE PASCHAL LAMB. FILET, SIXTEENTH CENTURY, PORTUGUESE (?)  
LENT BY MRS. FREDERIC B. PRATT



joined hands, attired in the rich dress of the period. Supplementing the white filet were two silk covers, one azure blue and the other a soft and mellow pink, both mounted with deep borders of colored filet. The darning is carried out in delicate shades of silk and linen threads. The pieces are beautiful examples of Italian seventeenth-century workmanship.

The reason that the Museum gave a special installation to filet was both to emphasize its place in lace history and to suggest in a measure its



ORPHEUS. ITALIAN FILET, SIXTEENTH CENTURY  
LENT BY MRS. JOHN REILLY

use for practical purposes. One of the earliest types of lace, it has retained its popularity through the succeeding generations because of the persistent use of it in the church and in the household. Unlike the more costly needlepoint wrought to adorn the persons of the select few, filet has always been known familiarly by the mass of the people at their devotions and in their homes. It has and suggests the true folk spirit. Its adaptability to the needs of modern life is obvious, and if the making of hand-made lace is to be encouraged in this country, filet should receive the same superior consideration that it has enjoyed in Italy through the activities of the "Industrie Femminili Italiane."

Special mention should be made of a collection of fifteenth century Umbrian weaves in the form of towels, in which are the motives peculiar to the fabric—the Perugian griffin, the Guelph lion, the stags and dragons.

The Rhodian, Greek and Balkan embroideries lent sprightliness to the display with their variegated colors and pronounced but handsome designs with motives of figures and flowers. Mention should also be made of an exhibit of covers and spreads of early cut work, many of them combined with squares or bands of filet, colored drawn linen, and embroidered linen and muslin of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from Italy, France and Belgium.

A novelty was two "lambas" or shawls from the Island of Madagascar,



ITALIAN FILET, EDGED WITH NEEDLEPOINT. LATTER HALF OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY  
LENT BY MRS. JOHN REILLY

spun from raw silk and dyed with vegetable dyes, contributed by Miss Young. Beautiful old jewelry, belonging to Mrs. Lockwood and Mrs. St. Clair McKelway, and some fans were arranged among the lace as a related feature.

As to the Woodward collection, it was given to the Museum in 1915. It consists of one hundred and sixty-nine pieces, originally assembled by Count de Besselièvre, of Paris. The nucleus of the Museum's permanent collection has been formed through the purchases by Colonel Woodward at the d'Avaray sale earlier in the same year. The golden age of lace making of Italy, France and the Netherlands, covering the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is here represented in great variety and richness. The Woodward collection forms a remarkably graphic and instructive epitome of the history of lace during its best period.

The members of the Club who were among the exhibitors are Mrs. Frederic B. Pratt, Mrs. Luke Vincent Lockwood, Mrs. William H. Moore, Mrs. John Reilly, Mrs. Helen Foster Barnett, Miss Gertrude Young and Mrs. William Henry Fox. The Pratt Institute, with which the Brooklyn Museum enjoys such cordial relations, also exhibited from its own ample and choice collection, and valuable pieces were lent by other friends.

It is refreshing to record an excellent attendance at this display, and to note the fact that at the Metropolitan Museum there was another lace exhibition during the summer. It is fair to say that up to within a few years of the immediate past, such an exhibition of this very specialized art would have been impossible. At all events, the public would have been indifferent to it, perhaps bored by it; but to think of two lace exhibitions held at the same time in the same city, with every indication of popular interest! To use Whistler's favorite expression, "Incredible, public taste is certainly looking up!"

#### MARIE STUART'S INTEREST IN FILET

Queen Mary Stuart made a will in 1560 which still exists in the Record Office at Edinburgh. After disposing of her jewels, she concludes by bequeathing "tous mes ouvrages masches et collets aux 4 Maries, à Jean Stuart, et Marie Sunderland, et toutes les filles";—"masches" with *punti a maglia*, being among the numerous terms applied to filet. Cf. Bury-Palliser, p. 22.

## BELGIUM'S NEW LACE SCHOOLS

NOTE BY THE EDITOR. The following letter has been received from Mme. Mali-Kefer, one of our foreign members. We take great pleasure in publishing it, as it is of more than usual interest, showing that, in spite of Belgium's agonizing four years and more, one of her stellar industries is not to perish. Let us congratulate all those who have made possible the "renaissance" of the lace industry in Belgium.

**T**HE dear little Belgian Queen, whose intelligence and generosity would naturally prompt her to take a great interest in lace workers, has created a society, "Les Amies de la Dentelle," who are to carry her intentions through.

The first thing it did was to form a normal school for teachers to enable them in turn to teach lace in a graphic way. Lace-making for many years had been taught by the most old-fashioned methods, each child being shown separately the different and successive steps it had to take, thus losing much time, and, moreover, obtaining only a routine knowledge and a very mechanical skill. It was like learning music by heart and by ear, and not by sight. And sometimes, if the lace worker married into another province where a different kind of lace was sold (for the various kinds still remain localized, as you know), she was unable to decipher the new kind she had before her eyes.

It was therefore decided to follow a French method used in Le Puy, France. A very large, light green cushion is put against the wall, cords of several colors, representing the threads, and big hat pins in place of the usual pins are used, so that fifty little girls may see the whole process from their benches. They each have their own little cushions with the same colored threads, and you should see their joy when they play what seems to them an easy game.

This school had to be established in a convent, because the greater part of the teachers are nuns, and they come and spend a few months there to

learn this very simple, modern way of teaching. They learn also that it is necessary for lace workers to unite in a syndicate or trade union.

In short, we fight to our best ability against the dreadful drawbacks of solitary work. The convents, always a little behind the times, have not fought vigorously against this evil, but they are willing to help now. There are also many lay teachers in the normal school.

Still another school was necessary,—one for the teaching of lace design. The reason why the old designs have always been adhered to is that technical specialists are not, as a rule, artists, and artists have not the patience to learn the technique of lace, a knowledge so necessary to produce a good design.

We have, fortunately, found an artist, an intelligent woman, who undertook this heavy task. And now, although the school began work just a few months before the dark days of the war, and had not been advertised, it has helped two or three dozens of young girls to earn something like a livelihood. A clear, rational method has been created which will be published soon, showing how decorative art principles may be applied to the requirements of each sort of technique. Different are the designs of uncut thread laces such as Valenciennes, old Flemish lace, Cluny, etc., and the designs of what a celebrated edict of Louis XIV named “*dentelle à pièces rapportées*,” which do not need the same calculations. Different are needle design requirements, and so on.

We hope to render lace-making more interesting for the worker, and make her more proud of it. We hope to get a better salary for her, and a finer and more intelligent work in return.

Our normal school is in Bruges, one of the largest lace centres, where the pupils come quite spontaneously; while our lace design school is in Brussels, centre or market of lace, commercially, where the big merchants live and where museums, books, lectures, fashions, shops, help young girls to have taste,—more so than in provincial towns. But these two schools are in contact, the one working for the other.

The “*Amies de la Dentelle*” instituted “*concours*” for lace design, and, according to their funds, help and survey other schools. During the war we became a group of the National Committee and gave work to 45,000 women, more or less. The Americans helped us most beautifully. Mrs. Brand Whitlock worked hard to send us customers. She was made Hon-



orary President of our Lace Committee. And now that regular commerce is recuperating, we resume our work of "Enseignement et conciliation entre les patrons et les ouvrières"—for we think they are both necessary and interesting.

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## BELGIUM

NINETEEN FOURTEEN

A THREAD of gossamer! A lovely line  
Set by a master in a brave design;  
A hand that toiled while spun the world through space;  
Peace, patience, labor—then the Belgian lace!

A brush, a palette, and the colors ground,  
True to the life that spread those colors 'round;  
Touch upon touch, each of the next a part;  
Peace, patience, labor—then the Belgian art.

A noble model in a builder's mind,  
Month after month, year after year refined;  
Stone upon stone, built up with pious care,  
And then Malines Cathedral in the air!

Ah, gracious God! What demon is so fleet  
To lay time's wonders, ruins at our feet?

BLANCHE WILDER BELLAMY.

## PLYING THE NEEDLE AND THE BOBBIN TO-DAY

BY FLORENCE N. LEVY

GENERAL MANAGER OF THE ART ALLIANCE OF AMERICA

**A**RE the arts of plying the needle and the bobbin to be considered as belonging only to the past, or shall they be encouraged in the United States to-day? In the answer to this question lie problems not only of the preservation and continuation of these arts, but of matters of sociologic, economic, and national importance.

Many will say that inventions have relegated handiwork into the past and that machinery can turn out better and cheaper goods than can be made by hand. Granting this for moderate and lower priced objects, those that are needed by the thousand yards, there still remains the fact that the success of the manufactured article depends chiefly upon the design; that is, it depends upon the idea of an individual, executed by hand and later translated in such a way that it can be repeated in quantities by the machine. The American manufacturer, deprived by the war of his foreign-trained designer, will find himself far behind in the struggle for trade unless he wakes up and helps in establishing industrial art schools in the United States.

The economic importance of industrial art in the commercial development of this country has been recognized by the Bureau of Education at Washington, through the recent publication of a thirty-two-page pamphlet entitled, "Industrial Art, a National Asset," which contains a series of graphic charts and descriptive text by H. M. Kurtzworth, director of the Grand Rapids School of Art and Industry.

The sociological influences of the handicraft are hinted at in the above-mentioned pamphlet, which states that: "The effect of environment upon

character and the industrial arts upon environment indicates definitely now, as it has in previous chapters of the history of the race, that the fate of the Nation lies in the hands of the workmen and designers even more than warriors or statesmen. In choice of the furnishings of American homes, two-thirds of which, by the way, must be chosen according to the dictates of incomes of less than \$15 per week, the average citizen finds his chief opportunity to express his instinct for the beautiful. Imagine the effect for good or evil of over one hundred and two million 'artists' thus creating an environment in over eighteen million dwellings for the increasing twenty-two million families."

And what of the power of the other third whose incomes are over \$15 a week? For whom were the beautiful old tapestries, embroideries, and laces made? For the wealthy of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries who wanted the work of artists to adorn special places in their homes, their churches, and their municipal buildings. It was not beneath the dignity of Raphael to design the cartoons for the Vatican tapestries, and Boucher and others did a similar service in their time, while Holbein is known to have designed as small a thing as the decoration for a lady's needle-case. The nineteenth century alone neglected its designers and did little to encourage its craftsmen! Shall the twentieth century make the same mistakes and go down in history as lacking the vision to encourage its contemporaries even while praising and paying enormous sums for the work of bygone ages?

When hand-woven fabrics, laces, embroideries, and tapestries were made as works of art and for the joy in the work, they were full of human emotion, and live to-day as something rare and beautiful because of the hand touch that no machine can emulate. The love of making things can be reborn and used to great advantage in the world at the present time, and especially in the United States. It will open up avenues of employment to many people who are at present non-wage earners and dependent upon their families for a livelihood.

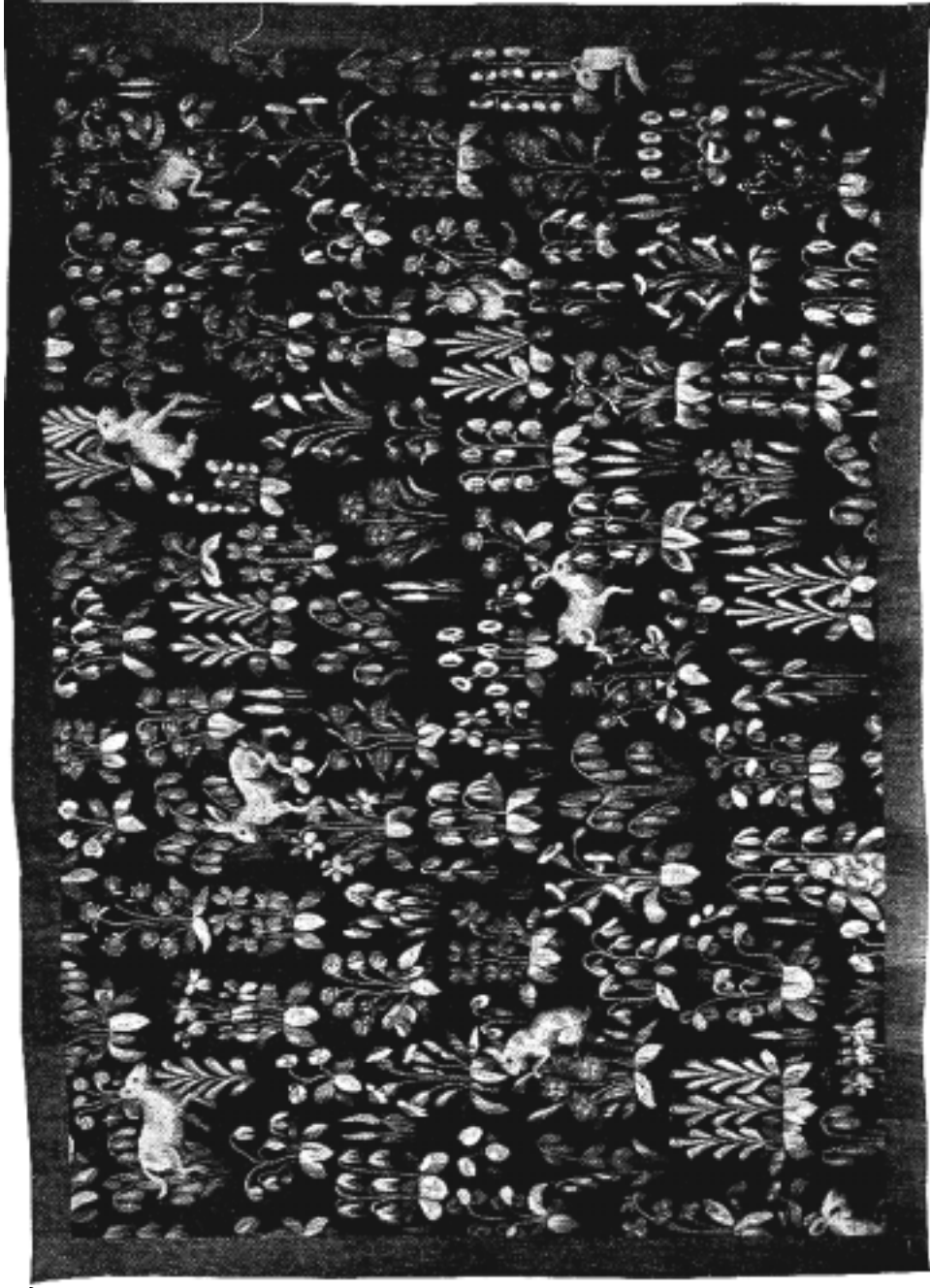
There is, for instance, the tapestry industry in which Italy, France, Flanders, and Spain have in all centuries taken great interest. Recently, the *London Daily Telegraph* stated that Lord Bute has been endeavoring to revive tapestry weaving in Scotland. He has had fine buildings erected and designs for the weavers provided by a Scottish painter. A

great panel measuring  $32\frac{1}{2}$  by  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and representing a Highland hunting scene, has been completed and is said to be the largest piece of tapestry yet produced in Scotland. This completion of the first of a contemplated series of panels has relation to a scheme under consideration by the British State authorities whereby tapestry weaving would be taught to a small, selected group of disabled men, providing orders could be secured. Arrangements are said to be now practically completed, the men are selected, the looms are ready, and instruction will be given by experts at the London County Council School of Arts and Crafts.

What is being done in Great Britain, and probably in France, could also be done in the United States. This is a piece of work in which the Needle and Bobbin Club could take the initiative. There are two or three commercial tapestry industries already established here, but the individual craftsman needs to be encouraged to do really personal work, each piece carefully designed for a special place and dyed and woven with loving care. The illustration that accompanies this article shows a Mille Fleurs tapestry from the New York studio of Manuel Gengoult, who dyes his wools, designs tapestries and needlepoint, and teaches both these beautiful arts.

The weaving of rugs, curtains, and draperies of all kinds by hand can become an important feature of the textile industry. The small looms found in the homes of French and Italian villagers produce some of the most expensive brocades that we import. The weaver is generally an old man, sometimes an old woman, but always an expert, and work is never lacking for the little loom. These people are happy until they die—always plying their trade. People are unhappy because they are idle and dependent; by giving them occupation, dissatisfaction will disappear. Similarly, hand-made tweeds are produced all over Scotland in the cottages by the elderly people, and this does not in any way interfere with the great mills run by machinery all over the British Isles. The mills copy the hand-made fabrics and sell them cheaper to the general public, but the hand-made fabrics continue to hold a special place in the textile world.

The beautiful art of embroidery is comparatively unknown in this country. There is unlimited opportunity for decoration of all types and joy in the designing and making of the embroideries. Our churches would be beautified by tapestries and embroideries, and the children, see-



MILLE FLEURS TAPESTRY. BY MANUEL GENGOULT



ing that these arts are appreciated, would wish to learn them and gradually there would be developed the much talked of "artistic industries"; thrift would flourish, as all idle fingers would then be busy filling our land with wanted, beautiful hand-made textiles.

Last January, the Needle and Bobbin Club did a valuable service to designers by holding an exhibition of beautiful antique fabrics, in the galleries of the Art Alliance of America, during the period of the third exhibit of American hand-decorated textiles. The graceful designs and glowing colors of these old-time weaves were rich in cultural influence and inspiration.

A step further might be taken by coöperating systematically with the Art Alliance of America in its development of the artistic industries among the foreign population. The very successful exhibition of Foreign Handicraft held by the Art Alliance of America in its galleries, last June, included work by nineteen nationalities, many of them plying their craft in the galleries. This demonstrated effectively that we have craftsmen in this country capable of doing excellent work if the proper encouragement is given. Plans are now under way whereby orders can be placed through the Art Alliance for execution by these craftsmen in their own homes, the designs being carefully supervised by an expert who will also see to it that the craftsmanship is of the highest character.

THE TRAVELING COLLECTIONS OF THE  
NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

BY MARIAN HAGUE

SINCE the meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club, last spring, for the discussion of a traveling collection of lace and needlework for study purposes, an unusually interesting one has been arranged and is now in use.

It consists of two parts, one relating to the history of lace and suitable for students of college standing or for teachers of the history of textiles, design, etc., and the other set of cards for those whose interest in practical work and technique is greater than in the historical side.

The first part is made up of about seventy cards, each one holding one or more bits of lace, and with an excellent series showing types of both needle and bobbin laces of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

This collection, in its original form, as lent to the Club by a generous and public-spirited member, contained some most unusual and charming pieces, and now between fifteen and twenty additional pieces have been contributed by other members which have filled in some important links in the historical sequence.

The series of needlepoint cards begins with specimens of Italian cut-work and "Fili tirati" of the sixteenth century, followed by borders and squares of "Reticello" of geometrical design. Next come some excellent bits of "Punto in Aria" of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and these gradually develop into the true "Venetian point," with bits that show its various forms,—the so-called "flat Venetian," the "Gros

Point" with its raised work and heavy flowers,—culminating in the "Roselline" or "Rose point," of which there is a charming little piece—only a fragment, but of lovely quality. There are several examples of the type of Reticello or cut-work, done in England in the middle and end of the seventeenth century; several squares such as were inserted in the "care cloths," bed covers, aprons, and linen for church or household use, and among other pieces is a strip of the flat shallow scallops such as appear on the men's falling collars in the portraits of that time.

Some little pieces of the precious "points de France" are there, as they were made in France after the supremacy in lace had passed from Venice to the schools fostered by Colbert under Louis XIV, and examples of the eighteenth century Alençon and Argentan laces remind us of the fashions of the Regency, of Louis XV, and of Marie Antoinette, who wore her Alençon in winter, and the lighter bobbin-made "Angleterre" and Mechlin in summer.

The bobbin laces are also illustrated by some rare pieces, beginning with the types shown in the early pattern books, such as "Le Pompe," published in Venice in 1557, and the designs of Isabella Catanea Parasole of 1597 to 1615.

The portraits by Frans Hals (1584–1666), Van Dyck (1599–1641), Mierevelt (1567–1641) and many others show their sitters wearing such lace as we find on the cards of this collection, and it is easy to follow the course of the fashions in "collar laces" through the seventeenth century.

There are also some bits of what was called "Valenciennes" and "Binche" in those days,—quite different from the Valenciennes that was developed later,—cobwebby bobbin laces of the late seventeenth century, such as were used for the "Fontange" head-dresses so popular with the French beauties of the court of Louis XIV and their English sisters at the courts of James II and William and Mary. There are some pieces which formerly were parts of "lappets," and sleeve ruffles that show us the perfection of workmanship of the Flemish lace workers during the eighteenth century, such as a lovely bit of the Brussels, so-called "Angleterre," of the Regency period, and a series of mechlins of charming design and technique, dating from the middle of the eighteenth to the very late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

In addition to these more ancient and precious pieces there is a little

group of cards showing the modern laces of the nineteenth century, such as Chantilly, Brussels (both needle-made and bobbin), Valenciennes, Irish crochet and Carrickmacross, Honiton, Buckingham, etc., some of which happily make us feel that there is hope that the lovely traditions of skilful workmanship and delight in the production of beautiful things may still be preserved in this changing world even though some forms seem to deteriorate for a while.

It is hoped that the cards showing modern work and technical details may be helpful to workers in Occupational Therapy as well as teachers of sewing or handicrafts. They are available either with or without the first set.

In addition to pieces of needlework or lace of rather simple workmanship but good as to design or color, there are some cards showing the processes of cut-work, and of macramé and knotted thread work, and it is intended to add others as opportunity offers. Those wishing to borrow either of these sets of cards should apply to Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, 32 Cathedral Avenue, Garden City, Long Island, explaining the purpose for which the collection is desired, and the care that would be given it. The cards should be handled as little as possible, naturally, and guarded carefully against any loss or damage. If this collection gives not only interest and pleasure to lovers of lace, but is of value to students of design and technique and of interior decorating, those who have prepared it will feel well repaid for their efforts.

## CLUB NOTES

### THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB OF LITCHFIELD

The following interesting report from Miss Quincy, President of the Needle and Bobbin Club's first Auxiliary, marks an important step in the history of its development.

**A**T the Third Annual Meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club, held at the Metropolitan Museum on February 24, 1919, a request was made and permission courteously granted to form an auxiliary society at Litchfield, Connecticut, to be known as the "NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB OF LITCHFIELD."

It was desired "to bring together" at Litchfield and from its vicinity "those who love lace, embroidery, weaving, and kindred occupations," in an auxiliary society affiliated with the Needle and Bobbin Club in New York, with objects similar to, and in accord with, those already so auspiciously begun.

These aims included the wish "to encourage and maintain interest in hand-made fabrics; to promote these interests in the United States; to afford opportunities to meet and to discuss lace and allied subjects"; also "to contribute towards the education (or the support) of a lace-worker, a weaver, or an embroiderer, and to give awards to workers in lace, embroidery, or weaving." It was further desired to encourage the interest of amateurs in the uses of the shuttle; also, to attain an enlarged and cultivated knowledge of the history of lace, textiles, and embroideries.

It has been further desired to make a special study of the adoption of plant life to lace design, as in the days of the lace industry in France, when the Jardin des Plantes furnished the motifs for lace and textile designs of the eighteenth century.



THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB OF LITCHFIELD was formally organized on July 16, 1919, at the residence of Miss Quincy, and the following officers were elected:

Honorary President . . .	MRS. VANDERPOEL
President . . . . .	MISS QUINCY
Honorary Vice-President	MISS FRANCES MORRIS
Vice-President . . . . .	MRS. CHARLES B. CURTIS
Secretary . . . . .	MISS ALICE KINGSBURY
Recording Secretary . . .	MISS THOMAS
Treasurer . . . . .	MRS. HAZEL VANDERPOEL
Assistant Treasurer . . .	MRS. F. S. DELLENBAUGH, JR.

together with the Honorary Managers, Miss Gertrude Whiting and Miss Marian Hague, the Managers and Chairwomen of Committees.

A memorial gift of one hundred dollars from Mr. Henry Robinson Towne of Litchfield and New York, in memory of Mrs. Towne, to be known as the "Cora Towne Memorial Fund," has enabled the society to undertake its first activities under the most favorable auspices.

The appropriations for the Memorial Fund, of which an outline is given, have enabled the society to enlarge its horizon from the beginning.

The study of lace has been encouraged by the offer of a prize in lace design, the technique of lace to be later developed under instruction.

The society has decided to make a special study of American lace from Colonial times to the present day, and to form a small collection of photographs of American portraits in which lace, embroidery, and fine needlework, together with noted periods in costume, predominate.

The society has also selected the darning stitch for special study, following its development from the simple stitch of repair through the dainty stitch required for fine linen and muslin, ascending again to the delicate embroidery stitch in silk of the designs of William Morris, the poet-painter and designer of England, to the final step, when the homely stitch attains the nobility of lace and is seen at first in its filet grounds, and finally in the long silken stitch of the old Abruzzi lace of Italy and in the "Blonde" laces of France and Spain.

That the outline of the aims of the first auxiliary society might be

clearly understood and made practical for application, it has been thought wise to arrange the society in three groups:

- I. The group of lace.
- II. The group of weaving and textiles.
- III. The group of embroidery.

The group of embroidery to consist of:

- I. Ecclesiastical embroidery.
- II. Secular embroidery and fine needlework.

Each group to have its own Honorary Chairman, together with its Chairman, who will keep a careful record of special activities and have freedom in the discussion and ultimate selection of activities connected with their particular group. The appointment of the members of their own committee is also trusted to their discretion.

APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE CORA TOWNE MEMORIAL FUND. An award to be given to the most skilled lace worker among the Oneida Indians, trained by the Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association, for excellence in lace.

The Cora Towne Memorial Award . . . Twenty-five Dollars.

#### I. LACE

A prize in lace design, introducing plant and flower motifs, adapted from American flora, suitable for needlepoint or bobbin lace.

The Cora Towne Memorial Award . . . Ten Dollars.

#### II. WEAVING AND TEXTILES

An appropriation for the acquisition of a loom designed by Mrs. Vanderpoel and Dr. Childs, material for weaving, and a small sum for prizes for the people of the Kentucky mountains, competing in the art of weaving, under instruction.

The Cora Towne Memorial Gift . . . Twenty Dollars.

#### III. EMBROIDERY

1. Ecclesiastical embroidery.
2. Secular embroidery and fine needlework.

An appropriation for instruction in fine needlework and darning (with prizes) in the high schools of Litchfield.

The Cora Towne Memorial Fund . . . Twenty Dollars.

## NOTES

EXHIBITION OF EMBROIDERIES. During the winter the Club proposes to hold an exhibition of embroideries, the exact date and place to be decided upon later.

If all periods of embroidery were to be shown, it would necessarily make a very large collection, therefore the Exhibition Committee has determined to limit the periods from the earliest times until the close of the sixteenth century. Being the first Club exhibition of embroideries, we are anxious to make it of great interest, and to adhere to the same high standard of former exhibitions.

The Exhibition Committee requests Club members to notify Mr. Richard C. Greenleaf, Lawrence, Long Island, of fine specimens in their collections which they would be willing to lend.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE BULLETIN. The Editor is very anxious to obtain three copies of Volume II, Number 2, of the BULLETIN, for the purpose of completing sets in certain public libraries. Members willing to sell their copy will greatly oblige the Committee by communicating with the Editor, Richard C. Greenleaf, Lawrence, Long Island.

THE CLUB LIBRARY. The Litchfield Auxiliary has very kindly presented the Club Library with a copy of "The Tale of the Spinning Wheel," written by two members of the Auxiliary, Elisabeth Cynthia Barney Buel and Emily Noyes Vanderpoel.

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE FUND FOR NEEDY AND ORPHANED LACE MAKERS will be interested in the following report recently received from Mme. Grimpel, an active worker in the American Ouvroir Funds, who has selected these eleven young lace-makers as beneficiaries of the Club for the coming winter.

The money allotted to each will furnish many necessities of which these war-stricken people have long been deprived.

JEANNE BARBUS, *Chanac*. A young woman who helps support a brother maimed in the war.

MLLE. BESTION, *Racoul de Trimas, near Marbreejols*. A good worker on very fine lace, despite poor eyesight.

ANNA BOULET, *Vimenet, near Aumont*. A young woman handicapped by poor eyesight but an excellent worker.

MARIE COUREL, *Marbreejols*. A young lace-maker, the twelve-year-old daughter of a widow, who has helped in the support of the home since she was seven years of age.

ALET GUINLIN, *Virnenet*. A young woman, eighteen years of age, who has worked at lace-making since she was eight years old.

REINE MEISTRE, *Meyrnais*. A cripple, nineteen years of age, who does beautiful work.

MARIE PIGEAT, *Aumont*.

MILLE. NIEL, *Chanac*.

MILLE. DELTOUR, *Aurillac, near Baunassac*.

These three girls, excellent workers, were instrumental in finding work for all the young women in their respective villages, enabling them to maintain a livelihood during the war.

HELENE GALL, *Marbreejols*.

MARIA CRESPIN, *Marbreejols*.

# BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 8TH, 1916

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