NEEDLE AND PILLOW.

"And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen, wrought with needle-work."

BEZAHEEL and Aholiab, signally elected by the Almighty to instruct the children of Israel when they were commanded, through Moses, to present offerings for the work of the service of the sanctuary, are mentioned in Holy Writ as having been filled with wisdom of heart to work all manner of work—of the engraver, and of the cunning workmen, and of the embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen; and long before God's chosen people were delivered out of bondage, the Egyptian artificers embroidered their robes of State, their linen garments, and the linen wrappers of their mummies, with consummate skill. The Sidonians, and Phrygians also, were accomplished workers in the art of embroidery, and it is recorded that the Phrygian women caused all the finest quality of their workmanship in that line to be called by their name—"Vestes Phrygianæ." The Grecian maidens, we know, were adepts in the use of the needle, their best efforts equalling in beauty and finish the finest paintings by the most renowned of the Grecian artists. Did not Arachne perish in consequence of her attempts to rival Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, in this, her favorite pastime?

Early in the history of Rome (621), Attalus, King of Pergamus, was the acknowledged inventor of the method of embroidering with gold; and Mrs. Miller tells us, in her letters from Italy, 1777, referring to a wonderfully well executed statue of Diana, at Portici, that the Roman ladies of a very early period edged their purple gowns with lace an inch and a half broad. Scandinavian tumuli testify, by needles of gold and other implements found in them, that nations far removed from civilization practised this handicraft. Peruvian chieftains laid elaborate embroideries of gold and silver, on feathers, at the feet of their Spanish conquerors, and the wild tribes of America, years before Columbus was born, wove their own hair and shining serpent skins together, on their trophies of war.

Such are some of the evidences that can be produced to show the remote antiquity of needle-work.

In the Anglo-Saxon poem of "Beowolf," we read that in the great wine chamber

> There shone variegated with gold,
> The web on the walls;
> Many wonders to the sight—
> Of each the warriors
> That would gaze on it became visible.

The Saxon term for a curtain or hanging, was *wahrift*—and in the will of Wynfloeda, we find the bequest of a long *heal wahrift*, and a short one.

The dwellings of the higher classes of the period, appear to have been com-

completely and splendidly furnished; their walls were hung with silk, richly embroidered with gold. Ingulphus mentions some hangings ornamented with golden needle-work. Royal and noble ladies plied their needles for the adornment of the church—St. Dunstan himself furnishing the designs. Edgitha, queen of Edward the Confessor, was "perfect mistress of the needle," and all the daughters of Edward the Elder were famous as needle-women. In feudal times it was the practice for knightly families to send their daughters to the castles of their suzerain lords, there to be trained to embroider—a custom which, in the more primitive countries, continued even to the French Revolution. Taylor, the water poet, sings of Catherine of Arragon—

Her days did pass
In working with the needle curiously.

In all the convents needle-work was a part of the daily employment of the nuns. Even the monks have been commended for their skill in embroidery. In Westminster Abbey, 1620, the epitaph of Catherine Sloper reads,

Exquisite at her needle.

Again, Evelyn writes of his daughter, that "she had an extraordinary genius for whatever hands can do with the needle."

Probably the most wonderful specimen of hand-work with the needle known is that executed in the days of William the Conqueror, attributed to his queen and her maidens, and known as the Bayeux Tapestry. It is twenty inches wide, and two hundred and fourteen feet long, and is divided into seventy-two compartments, each bearing a superscription in Latin. Napoleon caused this great work to be exhibited in Paris in 1803.

From open-work embroidery we derive the production of lace by hand-work with the needle, and from this last, we reach the origin of lace as produced by the pillow and its instruments; and the honor of its invention is now clearly traced to Barbara Uttman, of Saxony.

Lace is defined as a plain or ornamental net-work, wrought of fine threads of gold, silver, silk-flax, or cotton, interwoven. The English word lace is derived from the Latin word *lacinia*, signifying the hem or fringe of a garment. Many of the earlier laces were made by the threads being passed or interlaced one with the other, and were defined as *passement*, which, when the toothed edge was added, became *passement dentille*. Lace consists of two parts—the ground and the flower-pattern or gimp. The plain ground is styled in French, *entoilage*, on account of its containing the flower or the ornament, which is called *toile*, from the flat, close texture, resembling linen. The honey-comb net-work, or ground, is of various kinds, viz.: wire-ground, Brussels-ground, trolly-ground, etc.; fond-clair, fond-double, etc. All lace is terminated by two edges—the pearl, picot or couronne—a row of little points at equal distances, and the footing, a narrow lace made to keep the stitches of the ground firm, and to sew the lace to the garment upon which it is worn.

Lace is classed as point and pillow. The first is made by the needle on a parchment pattern, and is termed needle-point. Point also means a particular kind of stitch, as point à la reine, point de Paris. The manner of making pillow-lace is as follows: The pillow is a round or oval board, stuffed so as to form a cushion, and placed on the knees of the work-woman; on the pillow a stiff piece of parchment is fixed, with small holes pricked through to mark the pattern. Through these holes pins are stuck into the cushion. The threads with which the lace is formed, are wound upon bobbins—formerly bones—now small round

pieces of wood about the size of a pencil, having around their upper ends a deep groove, so formed as to reduce the bobbin to a thin neck on which the thread is wound, a separate bobbin being used for each thread. By the twisting and crossing of these threads, the ground of the lace is formed. The pattern is made with thicker thread than that used for the ground-work. Such has been the pillow and the method of using it, for three centuries and more.

In 1665, the principal laces known were, point, bisette, gueuse (beggar's lace), campane, mignonette, point double, Valenciennes, Mechlin, gold lace, guipure. At the present time, the most celebrated laces have been classed in the following manner: Brussels is considered the most valuable. There are two kinds. Brussels ground, having a hexagon mesh, a twist of four threads of flax to a perpendicular line of mesh; and Brussels wire-ground, made of silk, meshes partly straight and partly arched; the pattern is worked separately, and set on with the needle. Mechlin, having a hexagonal mesh, three flax threads to a perpendicular line, with the pattern worked in a net. Valenciennes, an irregular hexagon, two threads, partly twisted and plaited at the top of the mesh, with pattern worked in a net, similar to Mechlin. Lisle, a diamond mesh, two threads to a pillar. Alençon, called blond, hexagon mesh, two threads, twisted similar to Buckingham lace; and Alençon point, two threads to a pillar, octagonal and square meshes alternately.

In the manufacture of lace, France takes the lead. It is all made with bobbins upon a small pillow, except at Alençon, where the needle is employed. The materials used are hand-spun linen thread, cotton-wool, silk, and gold and silver thread. Point d'Alençon is the only lace made with pure linen hand-spun thread. It is worth (the thread) £120 the pound. Point d'Alençon is made entirely by hand, and each part is executed by a special work-woman. It takes twelve persons to complete a piece of this lace. Napoleon's bed furniture, when he was married to Marie Louise, was in part—tester-curtains, coverlet, pillow-cases—all of the finest "Alençon à bride;" and at the Paris exhibition of 1851, a flounce was exhibited which had taken thirty-six women eighteen months to complete. Its value was 22,000 francs. In her lace-making department, France employs more than a quarter of a million lace-makers. Belgium is the great rival of France in the manufacture of laces. The chief varieties are known as Brussels, Mechlin, and Valenciennes. The finest kind of Brussels lace is made of very fine flax, and is very costly. Mechlin is the prettiest of laces, fine, transparent and effective; it is made in one piece on the pillow, and has the character of embroidery; hence it is sometimes called *broderie de Malines*. Valenciennes lace is made altogether on the pillow, with one kind of thread for pattern and ground, and is the same, wherever made, as that made in the city of Valenciennes. The Valenciennes of 1780 was of a quality far superior to any made in the present day. Some of it may still be found in the markets. The last important piece made within the city walls was a head-dress of "vraie Valenciennes," presented by the city to the Duchess de Nemours on her marriage in 1840.

The manufacture of English laces commenced in the sixteenth century. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, and the valleys of Dorset, continue to be famous localities. The number of lace-makers in the counties of Buckingham, Northampton, Bedford and Oxford, was, in 1862, 25,000. Honiton lace, made at Honiton, once held in such high valuation, lost its prestige in the eyes of the public after the exhibition of 1851, work of inferior quality having been mingled with the good. Bobbin-net machine lace was first made by a Notting-

ham frame-work knitter in 1768. Heathcote's machine was patented in 1809. Up to the year 1831, plain net and quillings were the chief produce of the bobbin-net machine. In 1839, the Jacquard principle was applied to the Leaver machines, and new sources of manufacture at once developed themselves. In 1851, 3,200 bobbin-net machines were in operation at Nottingham, and the number of hands employed was 133,000. The year 1823 is memorable for the "bobbin-net fever." Mr. Heathcote's patent having expired, all Nottingham went mad. Every one wished to make a bobbin-net. Clergymen, lawyers, doctors, actors, shop-keepers—all embarked their capital in lace-making, and proprietors of bobbin-frames realized, by working upon them, twenty, thirty, and forty shillings a day. Nottingham, Loughborough, and all the adjoining country, became the scene of an epidemic mania. Hundreds tormented themselves day and night with projects of bobbins, pushers, point-bars and needles. Hundreds lost business and standing, while many, failing to realize any sort of gain from their visionary schemes, sunk down into despair and committed suicide.

C. A. B.