

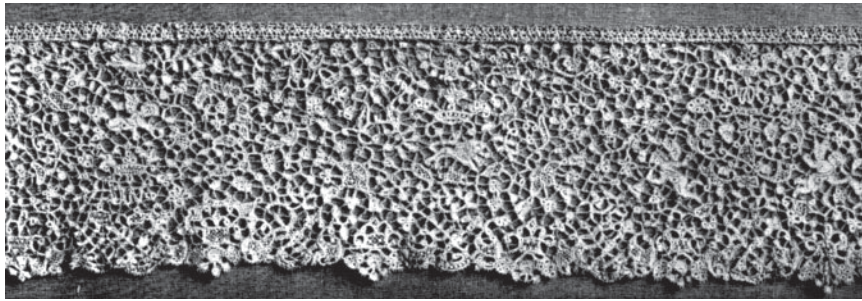


QUEEN ELIZABETH

FROM A PRINT BY WILLIAM ROGERS (C. 1595-1600)

ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE COSTUME IS THAT IN WHICH THE QUEEN IS SAID TO HAVE RECEIVED  
HER VICTORIOUS FLEET AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE ARMADA



FLEMISH LACE WITH MONOGRAM OF WILLIAM III OF ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

## AN ELIZABETHAN PATTERN BOOK<sup>2</sup>

BY FRANCES MORRIS

**T**WO monuments loom high against the horizon in the history of needlework: England's ecclesiastical embroidery of the thirteenth century, an art that has never been surpassed in the delicacy of its technique, and Italy's Venetian lace that in the exquisite refinement of its beauty reflects the splendor of the closing years of the Renaissance.

But despite the supremacy attained by Britain's mediæval craftsmen and the rich heritage bequeathed by them to needleworkers of succeeding generations, lace-making never gained the supremacy there that it did on the Continent, where, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, the art was already so far developed that pattern books for embroidery and lace were in current circulation.

Few of these books, however, survived the wear and tear of constant usage to which they were subjected, many having been destroyed by the popular method employed in transferring the patterns by pricking the original plates. Nevertheless several of these appeared in a collection of rare books on design and ornament exhibited during the past winter at The Grolier Club, and a small group may be seen in the lace galleries of

<sup>1</sup> Attributed to the wardrobe of the Prince of Orange, William III of England (1689-1702). Cf. crowned lion and cherubs supporting the letters  $\Xi$ WE also crowned.

<sup>2</sup> *New and Singular patternes and workes of Linnen. Serving for patterns to make all sortes of Lace edging and Cut-workes Newly invented for the profite and contentement of Ladies and Gentlewomen, and Others that are desirous of the Arte.* London: Imprinted by J. Wolfe and Edward White, 1591.

Quoted in Watt's *Bibliographia Britannica*; also in Mrs. Bury Palliser, London, 1901, p. 482. Through the courtesy of the owner, Mr. W. A. White, this rare publication is on exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a supplement to the collection of laces.



New and Singular  
Patternes & workes  
of Linnen.

Wherein are represented unto vs  
the seauen Planets, and many  
other figures serving for Pat-  
ternes to make diuers sortes of  
Lace.

Newly inuented for the profite & con-  
tentment of Ladies, Gent.women,  
& others, that are desirous of thi.  
Arte.



LONDON  
Imprinted by Iohn Wolfe.  
1591.



*Fleur de Lys.  
London*

TITLE-PAGE FROM WOLFE'S PATTERN BOOK



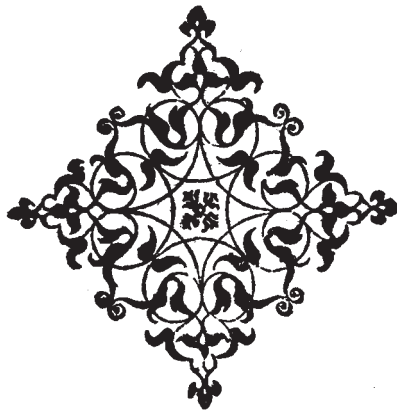
The Epistle to the  
Reader.

**H**aving framed a body  
of the best & rarest ma-  
ner in true perfection,  
of sundrie sortes of de-  
uises or workes, as well  
for frame workes, as o-  
ther Needle workes: I deuised with  
all dilligence and industrious studie to  
satisfy the gentle mindes of virtuous  
women, by bringing to light thinges  
neuer before as yet seene, nor commit-  
ted to print: All which deuises are so  
framed in due proportion, as taking  
thē in order, the one is formed or made  
by the other, & so proceedeth forward,  
whereby with more ease they may bee  
sewed & wrought in cloth, and keeping  
true accompt of the threads, maintaine  
the beuty of the worke. And more,  
who desyret to bring the worke into a  
letter

## To the Reader.

lesser form, let them make the squares lesse, and if greater, then enlarge them, and so may you worke in diuers sortes either by stitch, pounning or pouldering vpon the same as you please. Also it is to be vnderstood, that these squares serue not onely for cut workes, but also for all other manner of sewing or stitching: noting withall, that they are made to keepe the worke or deuise in good order, and euen proportion. And if yee will that the squares be greater, make of two one, and of foure two, and so they will be larger: And in this maner may you proceed in all.

God prosper your desires.



the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where the only known copy of the first edition of *Parasole* is preserved.

Exhibitions such as the one arranged by The Grolier Club are not only of inestimable value to those interested in research work, but are also helpful in bringing to the surface treasures that otherwise might remain hidden for years. As, for instance, in this case, where a well-known bibliophile modestly produced a volume that proved to be the only recorded copy of the first English pattern book, a reprint of *Vinciolo* published in London by J. Wolfe and Edward White for Adrian Poyntz in 1591.

Just about the time this book was published, cut-work, or *opus scissum*, was becoming popular in England, it having made its first appearance among the New Year Offerings to the Virgin Queen in 1577; and *reticello*, or the geometric type of lace, sometimes referred to as "compas" lace, was in great demand for the elaborate ruffs that were at once the pride and despair of many a feminine heart. England had long been at war; the Armada had been defeated and in the few years of relaxation prior to the devastation of London by the plague in 1593, the brilliant court of Elizabeth amused itself with every sort of diversion. French and Italian fashions were the order of the day, and poets and playwrights were in favor; Spenser had just published his "Faerie Queene"; Will Shakespeare, whose star was in the ascendant, was devoting himself to his earlier love dramas and irritating his contemporaries by the excellence of his play-acting. Competition was rife on every side in the field of letters, and in the world of fashion, and women vied with one another in the extravagance of their lace-trimmed ruffs. In the course of a few years lace began to appear among the simpler folk, for expert needlewomen were keen to venture upon this new field of artistic handiwork, and there was an increasing demand for patterns. Occasional books had drifted into England, and one enterprising Fleming went so far as to publish a pattern book for the English market entitled "Neawe Treatys: concernynge the excellency of needleworke," etc. This quaint volume was produced by a William Vosterman, who had a workshop in Antwerp between the years 1514-1542. Poyntz, however, provided patterns straight from the court of France, and his alluring "New and Singular patternes and workes of linnen \* \* \* Newly invented for the profite & contentement of Ladies and Gentlewomen, & Others \* \* \* desirous of the Arte," furnished a delightful