

THE · BULLETIN · OF
THE · NEEDLE · AND · BOBBIN
CLUB

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John Heathcote

1783-1861

ENGLISH INVENTOR OF THE FIRST MACHINE THAT SUCCESSFULLY IMITATED
HAND-MADE PILLOW LACE, IN 1809.

IMITATIONS OF HAND-MADE LACE BY MACHINERY

by

GEORGE MIDDLETON

THE reasons for the attempts to produce imitations of hand-made lace by machinery may be roughly summarized as twofold—to produce an article of such likeness or similarity to that made by hand as will enable it to be successfully substituted at a lower price, and to produce the imitation more quickly and in greater volume than is possible in the case of the hand-made article. The production of machine-made types or styles of lace of an original nature, having no forerunners in the hand-made category, is a natural sequence of accident or of imagination and experiment. In these days of commercial exploitation of everything with the inevitable results of mass production and cheapening of the article, we cannot expect lace to escape, not even hand-made lace; witness the enormous production and cheapness of Chinese hand-made lace. Other arts do not escape; the masterpieces of painting, those of da Vinci, Rubens, Raphael, are finely reproduced in colors, and splendid copies are within the reach of every purse. The art of the singer is now reproduced and he is immortalized by the Victrola, so let us glance briefly at the attempts made to reproduce lace by machinery.

Hand-made laces are produced by two basic principles—needle-point and cushion. In addition to the two types of hand-made lace mentioned, it should be recognized that there are other fabrics, mainly products of Ireland and Belgium made in whole or in part by hand and machine, which are commonly listed as hand-made lace. These include crochet lace (which cannot be regarded as either needle-point or pillow lace, being looped and made with the aid of the fingers rather than pins) and tatting; Limerick lace, consisting of needle-run patterns on machine-made net and two styles of Carrick-ma-cross—appliqué on net, and guipure with needlework fillings. The first Carrick-ma-cross style consists of shapes

cut from cambric, appliquéed on to machine-made net ground and ornamented with fancy stitches, and the second, which has no net foundation, is made by cutting flower shapes from cloth, buttonholing the edges, and joining by picot brides. In addition to these styles there has been, in recent years, a large output of semi-hand-made or *mi-manuelle* laces, mainly in Belgium, called Princess, and d'Alost or Luxeuil, the first being made by forming objects, of machine-made braids, by hand and appliquéing or basting the same onto machine-made net, and the latter by sewing machine-made tapes together with the needle, by connecting brides. Though the materials are entirely machine-made and a good proportion of the construction work is also done by machine, the laces are considered to be hand-made and are usually offered for sale as such.

Textile fabrics which may be classed as lace are produced, in whole or in part by the following machines, listed in the chronological order of invention:

Variations of knitting machines operated in conjunction with Jacquard-attachments.

Bobbinet or plain net machines, including the few in existence known as Mechlin or veiling machines.

Bobbinet-Jacquard machines, formerly known as "Pusher" machines.

Levers lace machines, including the variation known as the go-through machine.

Nottingham lace-curtain machines.

Bonnaz or Cornely machines.

Swiss hand-loom and schiffli or multiple needle embroidery machines.

Barmen lace, or torchon, or single thread braiding machines.

The Farigoule and the Matitsche machines are not considered in this résumé as there are only three of the former in existence and the products of the Matitsche machine are negligible from a commercial point of view; the machine invented by J. de V. Machuca y Llorcha seems to have disappeared.

These varieties listed above, with their mutations, reach the number of seventeen.

The origin of the lace machine must be sought in the kindred trade of

hosiery. In 1586, William Lee, a country parson, who lived at Calverton, near Nottingham, invented the knitting frame. This was absolutely original and not a modification of a previous invention. The various modifications of the knitting frame, which were introduced from time to time, eventually led to the production of a crude net, and at the end of the eighteenth century it was possible to weave a pattern on a ground. The machinery was, more or less, in a state of transition, and slowly, but surely, the crude stocking frame was evolving into the highly elaborate lace machine.

Laces made for upholstery purposes are made on the Raschel machine. The bobbinet machine, invented in 1809, by John Heathcoat, is the original lace machine, from which four other types of machines have been evolved; the product is a plain net with hexagonal meshes similar to those of Point Lille and is made of cotton, silk, and rayon. The Mechlin machine produces a net of the same shape as that of the hand-made lace of the same name. The products of the bobbinet-Jacquard machine originally consisted of imitations of Chantilly lace, and the objects or motifs in some of these patterns are outlined by hand or machine with thicker threads or cordonnets producing the popular style known as "Alençon," and the materials used are cotton, silk, and metal threads. The Levers lace machine produces the greatest variety of styles of all the lace-making machines. In every respect its range is great—imitation of many of the styles of hand-made lace, styles distinctive of the machine, unlimited number of patterns, fineness of texture, material comprising cotton, mercerized cotton, flax, silk, spun silk, worsted, rayon, and metal threads, and size ranging from a narrow lace of half an inch to a flounce of fifty-four inches in width. In addition, such shapes as scarves or streamers, handkerchiefs, and shawls are also made. The Nottingham lace curtain machine produces mainly lace window curtains or panels, and upholstery articles, such as nets, bedspreads, tablecloths, piano scarves, place mats, and runners. The Bonnaz or Cornely machine is a variant of the sewing machine and with a chain stitch embroiders patterns on window curtains of net. The schiffli machine embroiders patterns on net with a stitch similar to that of the sewing machine, and the same machine embroiders patterns on a wool, silk, rayon, and a chemically prepared cotton ground. The wool and silk grounds, being animal fiber, are eliminated by the action of an alkali bath, and the prepared cotton by heat, which reduces the fabric to charred powder which is withdrawn by vacuum

suction; in both instances the cotton embroidery is not touched and remains as a lace, technically known as etched or burnt-out lace. Some few laces are embroidered on a rayon ground which is chemically removed. Lace can be made in greater variety of effects on the schiffli embroidery machine than is possible by any other method, except that of the hand. The diversity is as great as can be produced on the Levers lace machine, but the latter cannot make such a perfect imitation of heavy and raised effects. Laces are made on the schiffli machine at Plauen and St. Gall in imitation of every style of lace, from the heavy Venetian points, with relief, to the lightest and finest old point lace. In addition splendid imitations of cushion and crochet lace are produced. Some are so skilfully made that only an expert in this line can distinguish the difference, and whereas only the very wealthy can afford the genuine lace, the modern lace is made for the masses. The Barmen lace machine produces an imitation of cushion lace with exactly the same plaitings and twistings of the threads as in the hand-made article.

The objection may be raised that products of the Barmen lace-braiding machine and of the schiffli embroidery machine are not made on lace machines, yet the products are commercially lace; and these products are logically classed as lace and not as braid or embroidery, in the same way that carbolic acid, ammonia, and coal-tar products are classed as chemicals and not as fuel.

The knitting, bobbinet, Levers, and Nottingham lace curtain machines originated in England; the bobbinet-Jacquard, the Bonnaz, and the Barmen lace machines in France; and the schiffli machine in Germany. It will be seen that all these machines are not lace machines; the lace knitting machine is a variant of the ordinary knitting machine; the bobbinet-Jacquard, Levers, and Nottingham lace curtain machines are lace machines evolved from the bobbinet machine; the Bonnaz machine is derived from the sewing machine; the schiffli machine is an embroidery machine, and the Barmen lace machine, as previously stated, is an improved braiding machine. Only four of these machines imitate hand-made lace in any of its forms—the bobbinet-Jacquard or Pusher machine, the Levers and Barmen lace machines producing simulations of cushion lace, and the schiffli embroidery machine is the only machine, as already stated, the products of which approach in appearance to needle-point lace, though the same machine makes an excellent imitation of pillow lace.

There is no necessity to show illustrations of bobbinet or Mechlin net,

which have the same hexagonal meshes as those of Lille and Malines laces, and, further, neither the bobbinet nor the Mechlin machine produces patterned fabrics.

It is not possible to show the same pattern made by hand and machine in every case, and those specimens which are the same, when made by the processes, have been acquired by a liberal expenditure of time and trouble. The specimens are numbered in the following order:

Imitations of pillow laces:

Laces made on the bobbinet-Jacquard or Pusher machine:

1. Chantilly lace
2. Lace picture, "Le Marchand de Dentelles" (Size 65" by 37")

The lace made on this machine usually has the objects outlined, by hand or by the Michelet or Beyroux machines, with a thicker thread, the lace then being called "Alençon."

Laces made on the Levers lace machine:

3. Hand-made Valenciennes lace
4. Machine-made imitation of the same pattern
5. Hand-made Point de Flandre
6. Machine-made imitation of the same pattern
7. Machine-made "Potten Kant"
8. Machine-made silk Spanish lace
9. Levers machine-made contrasts—Silk veiling
10. —Wool fabric
11. —Lace tuck

The photographs of the Valenciennes lace are highly magnified to show the identity of texture of the toile and the picots. The specimen of "Potten Kant" has no similar hand-made specimen shown, but is introduced to prove how readily hand-made designs are copied on the Levers lace machine. The specimen of silk Spanish lace is shown to demonstrate in detail the similarity of construction. The three remaining specimens, silk veiling, wool fabric, and lace tuck, are not imitations of hand-made lace but are shown to indicate the wide possibilities of the machine when differently clothed with material, the threads being controlled by variable manipulation from the Jacquard.

Laces made on the Barmen lace machine:

12. Imitation of hand-made Valenciennes
13. The same pattern made by different manipulation on the same machine
14. Hand-made Binche. Le Limaçon
15. Machine-made imitation. Le Limaçon

Laces made on the schiffli embroidery machine:

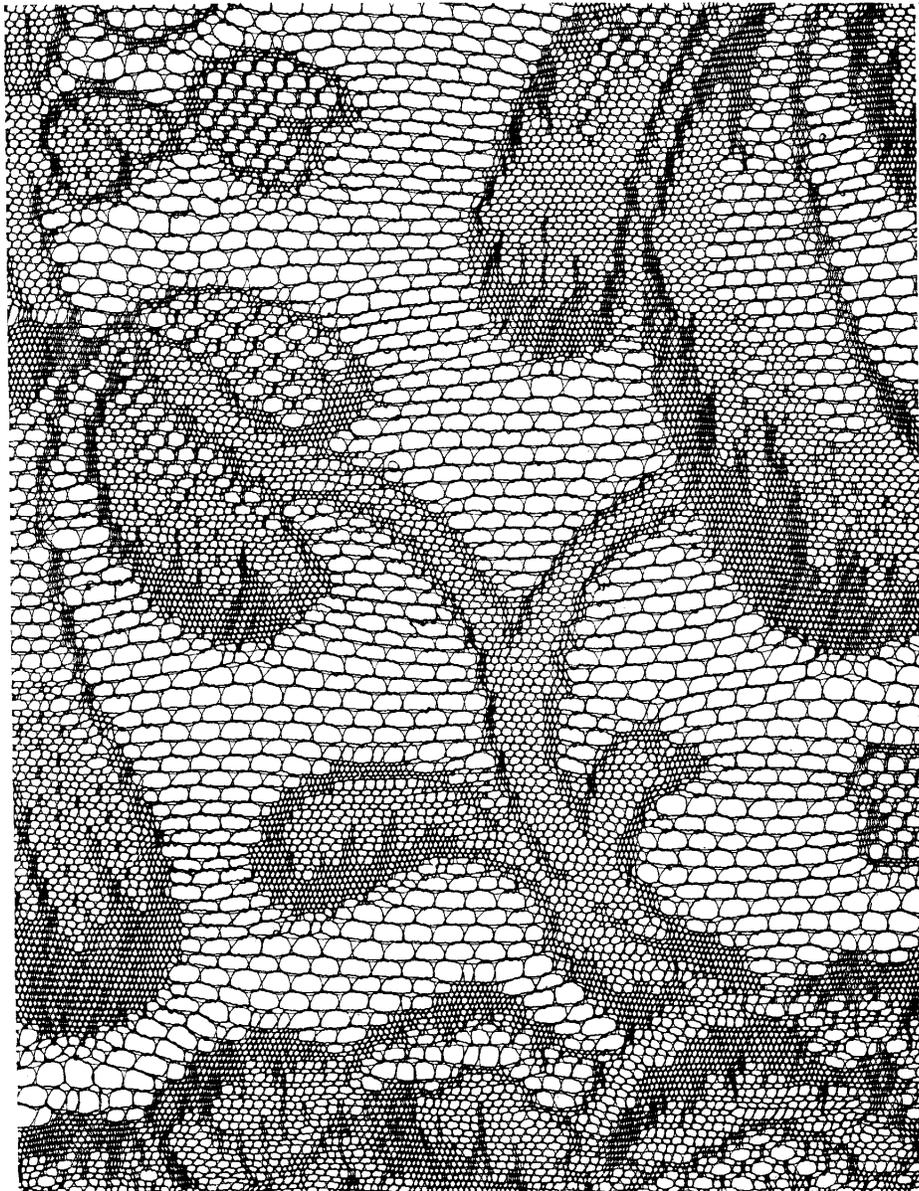
16. Machine-made imitation Duchesse
17. Machine-made imitation Bruges
18. Machine-made imitation Rosaline
19. Machine-made imitation Rosaline
20. Machine-made imitation Guipure

The only machine which can, with any degree of perfection, imitate needle-point lace is the schiffli embroidery machine, the products of which have been burnt-out. There are shown machine-made imitations of the following needle-point laces: Gros point de Venise, Point plat de Venise, Point de Venise à rose, Coralline, Point d'Argentan, Point de France, and Punto in Aria. Further, there are shown some specimens of imitation of Irish crochet lace. In addition, imitations of Cyprus lace, cut work, and Reticella are also produced.

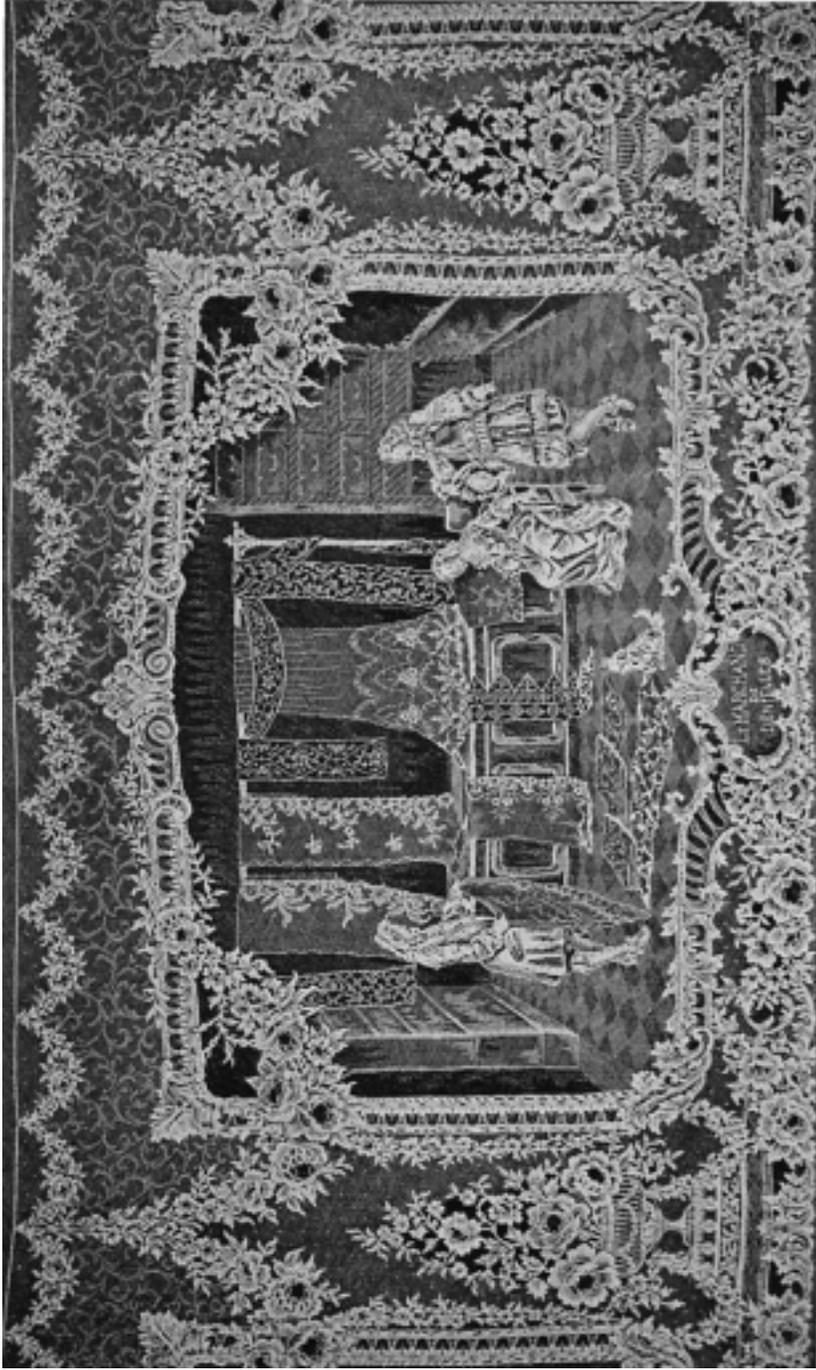
Imitations of needle-point laces:

Laces made on the schiffli embroidery machine:

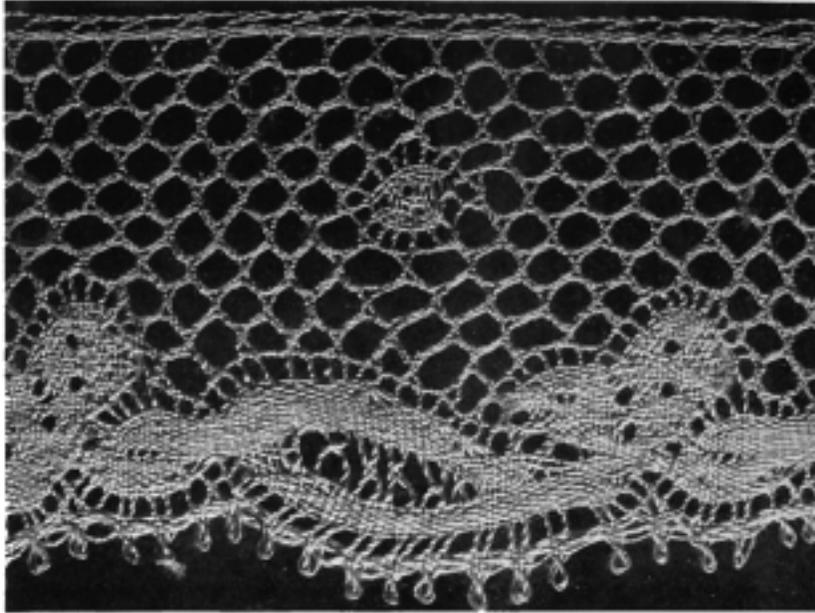
21. Gros point de Venise
22. Rose point de Venise
23. Point plat de Venise
24. Point de France
25. Point d'Argentan
26. Coralline
27. Punto in Aria
28. Points combined with Reticella
29. Black silk lace, mixed bobbin and needle-point laces
30. Imitation of Irish crochet lace
31. Imitation of Irish crochet lace



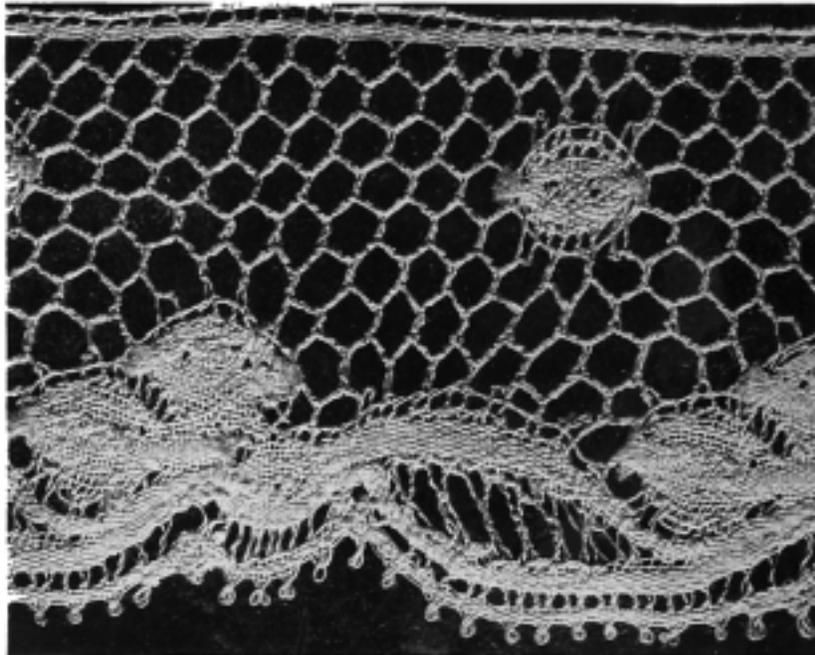
I. CHANTILLY LACE, MACHINE-MADE IMITATION OF HAND-MADE BOBBIN LACE.
MADE ON THE BOBBINET-JACQUARD OR PUSHER MACHINE.



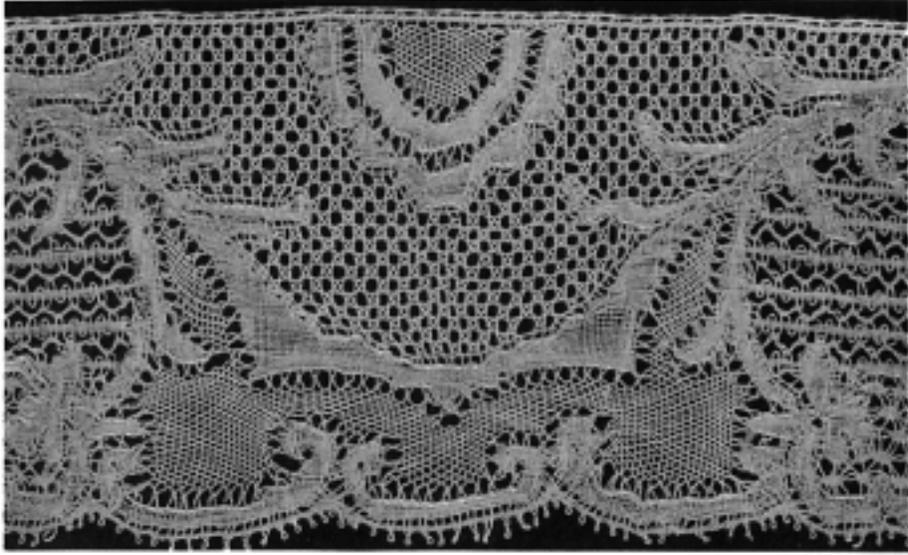
2. LE MARCHAND DE DENTELLES. (SIZE 65 INCHES X 37 INCHES.)
MADE ON THE BOBBINET-JACQUARD OR PUSHER MACHINE.



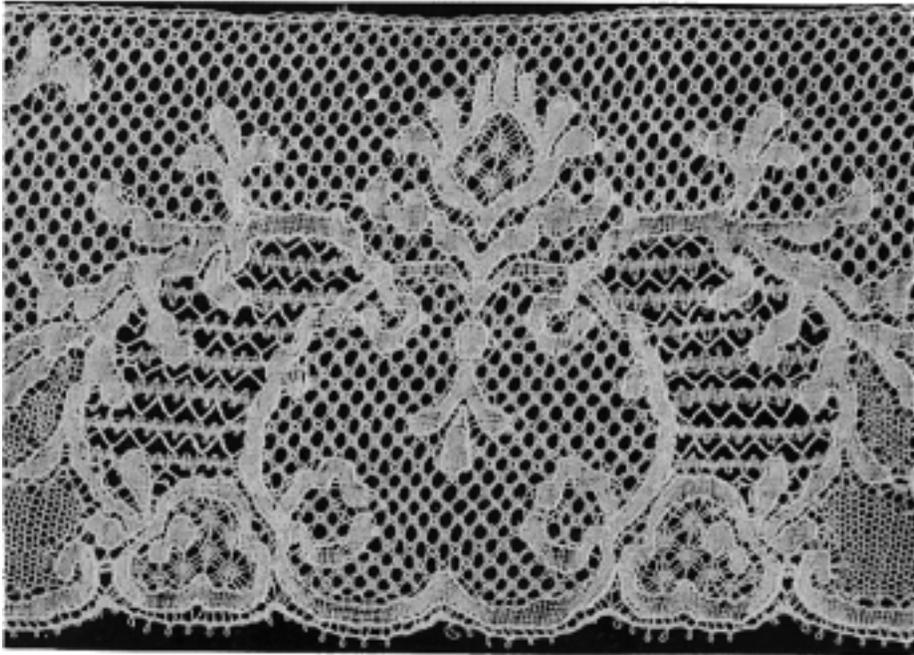
3. HAND-MADE VALENCIENNES LACE.



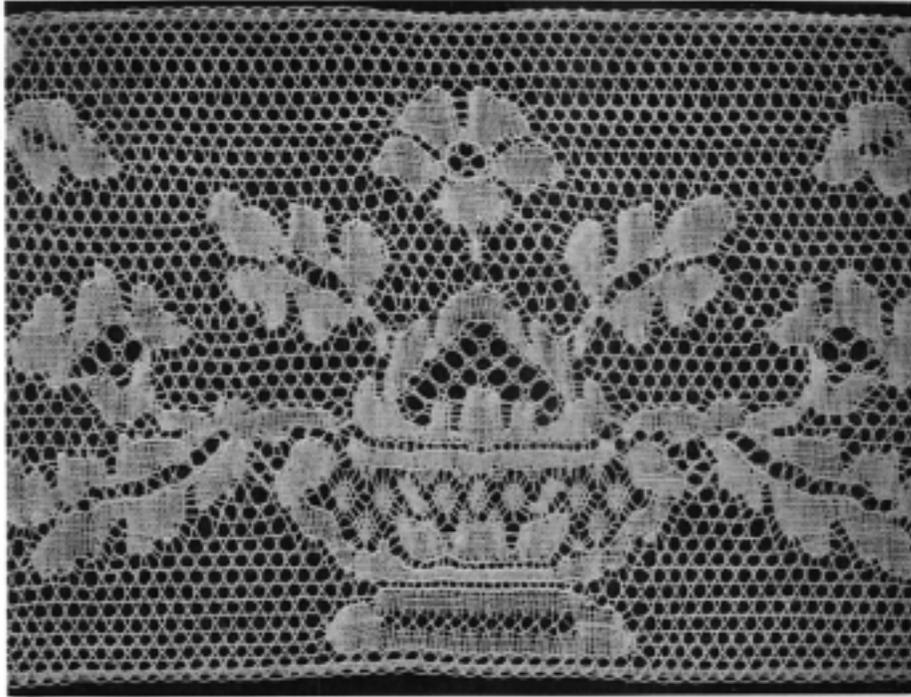
4. FRENCH MACHINE-MADE VRAIE VALENCIENNES CALAIS VAL. OR "FIL PASSÉ" LACE.
MADE ON THE LEVERS LACE MACHINE.



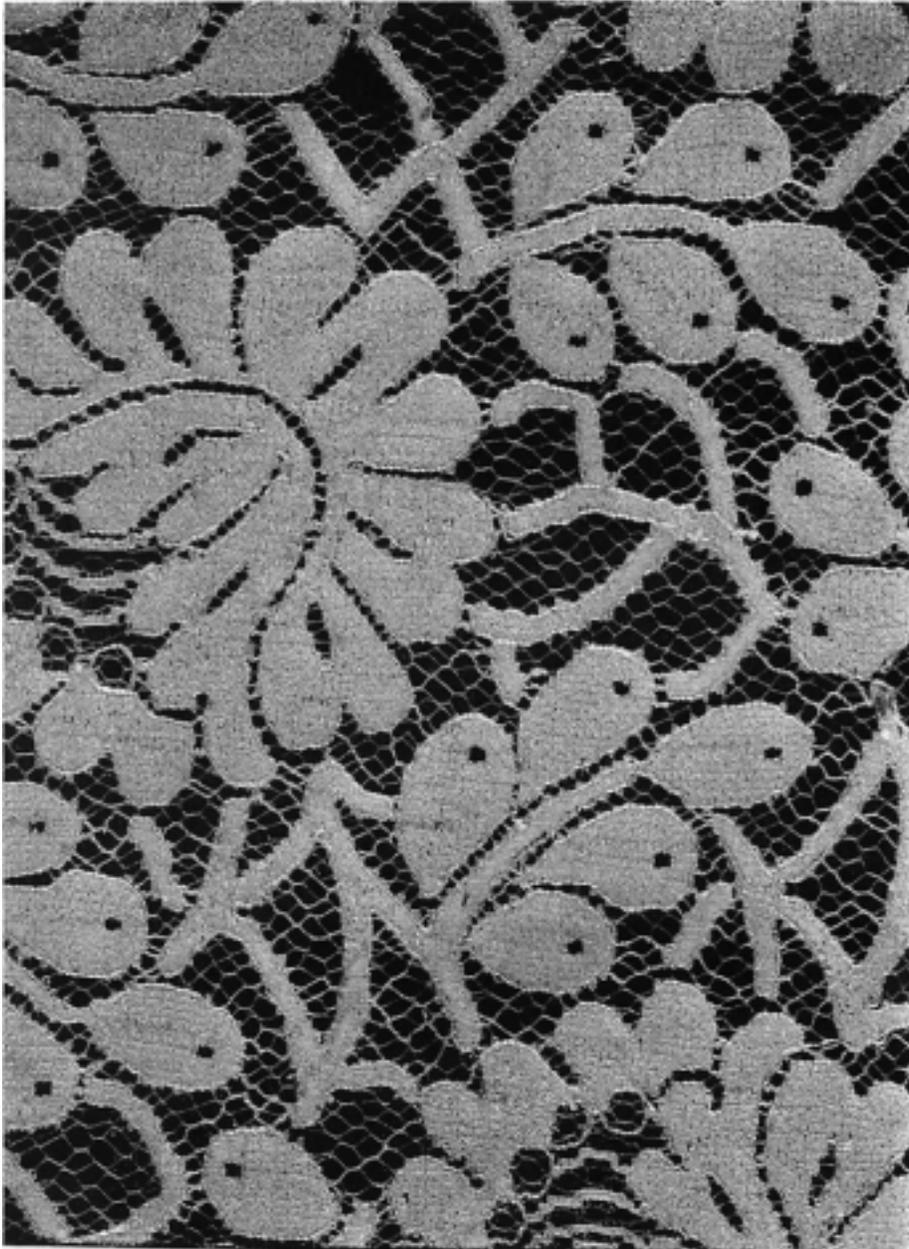
5. POINT DE FLANDRE, HAND-MADE.



6. MACHINE-MADE IMITATION OF THE SAME PATTERN.
MADE ON THE LEVERS LACE MACHINE.

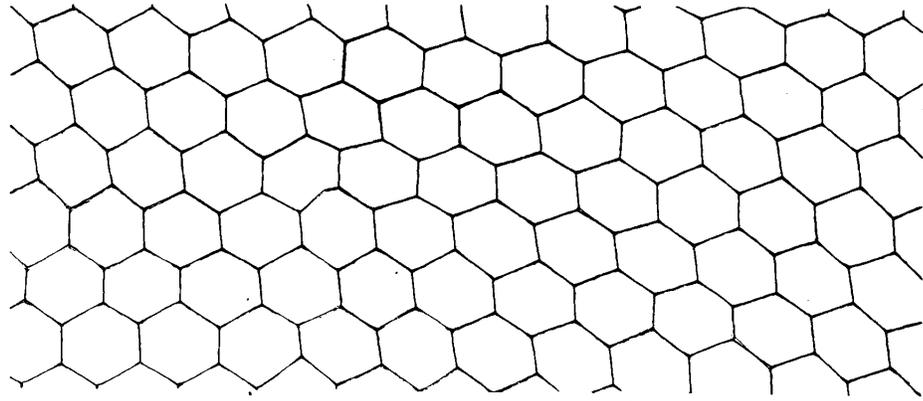


7. "POTTEN KANT," MACHINE-MADE.
MADE ON THE LEVERS LACE MACHINE.

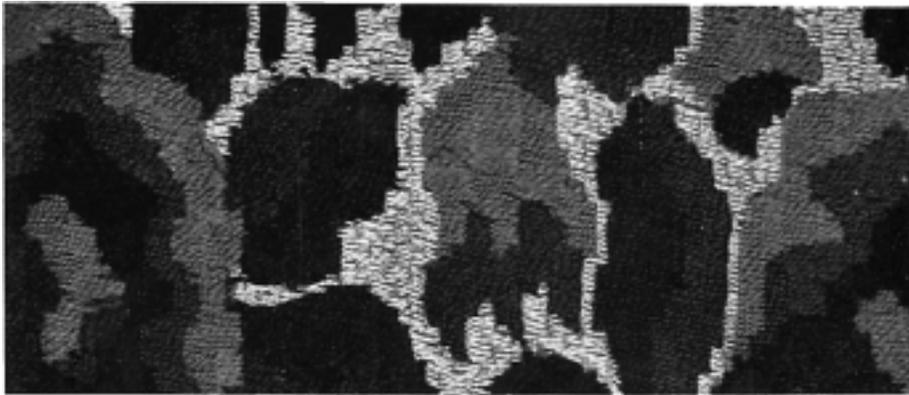


8. SILK SPANISH LACE, MACHINE-MADE.
MADE ON THE LEVERS LACE MACHINE.

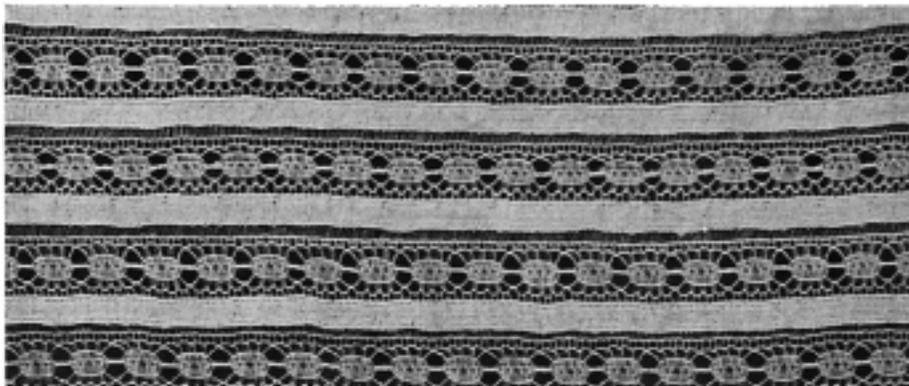
CONTRASTS



9. SILK VEILING.

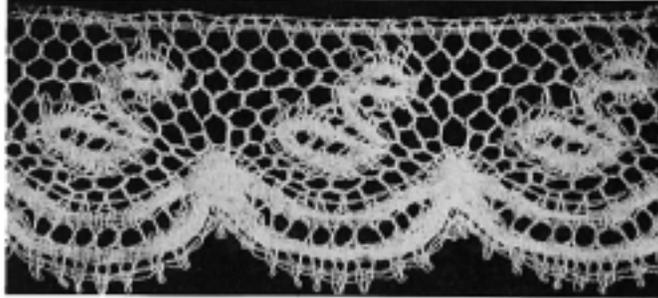


10. WOOL FABRIC.

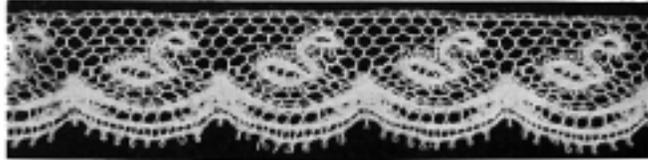


11. LACE TUCK.

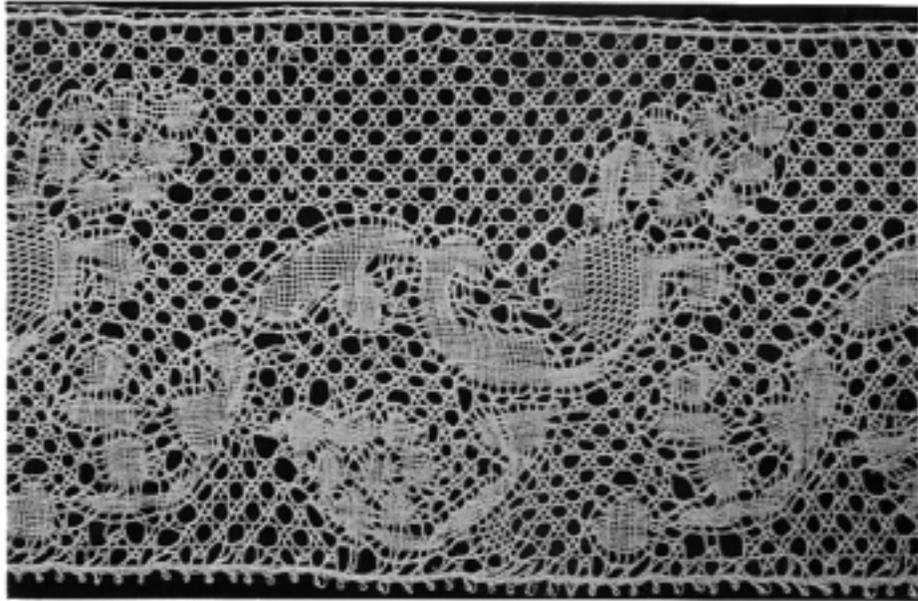
9, 10 AND 11 MADE ON THE LEVERS LACE MACHINE.



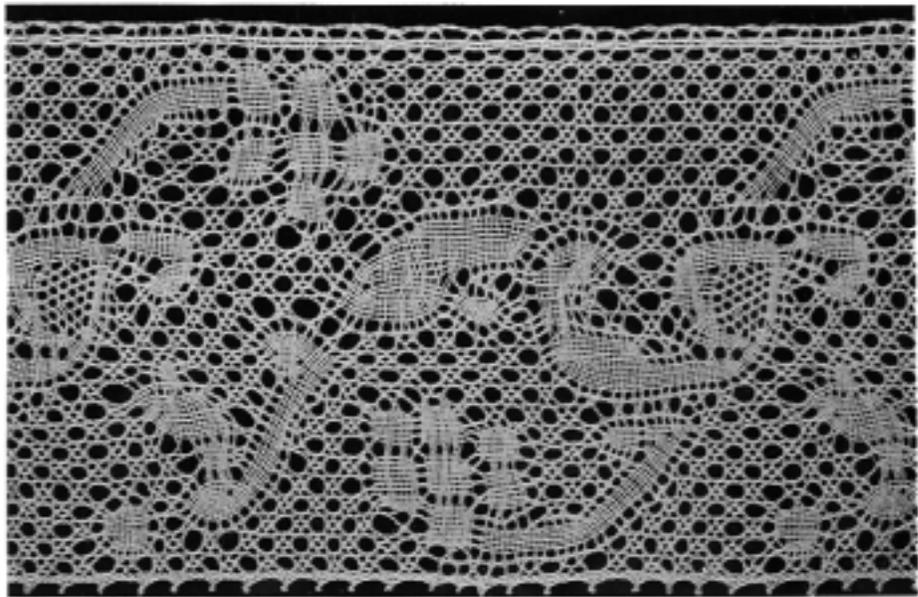
12. IMITATION OF HAND-MADE VALENCIENNES.
MADE ON THE BARMEN LACE MACHINE.



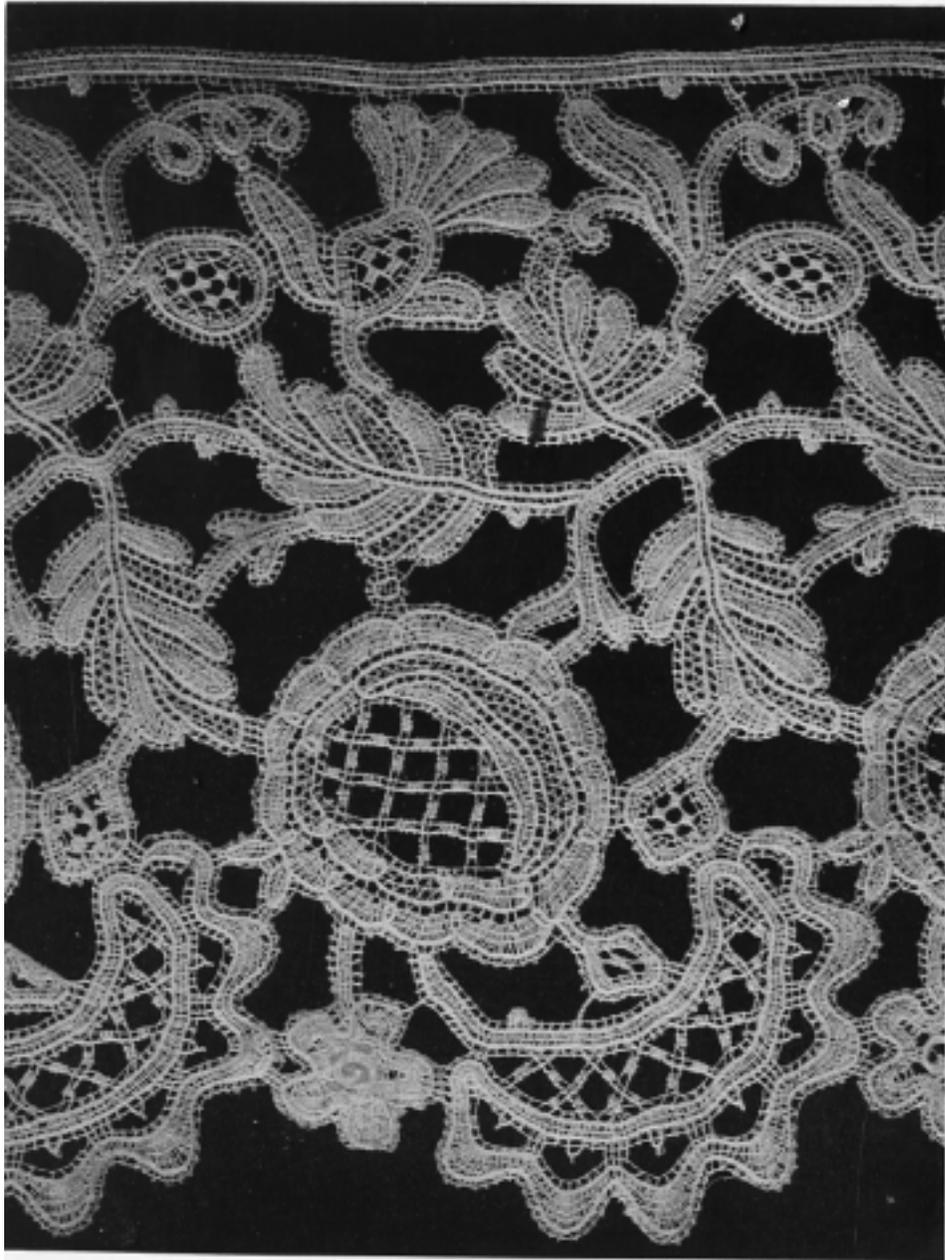
13. THE SAME PATTERN MADE BY DIFFERENT
MANIPULATION ON THE SAME MACHINE.



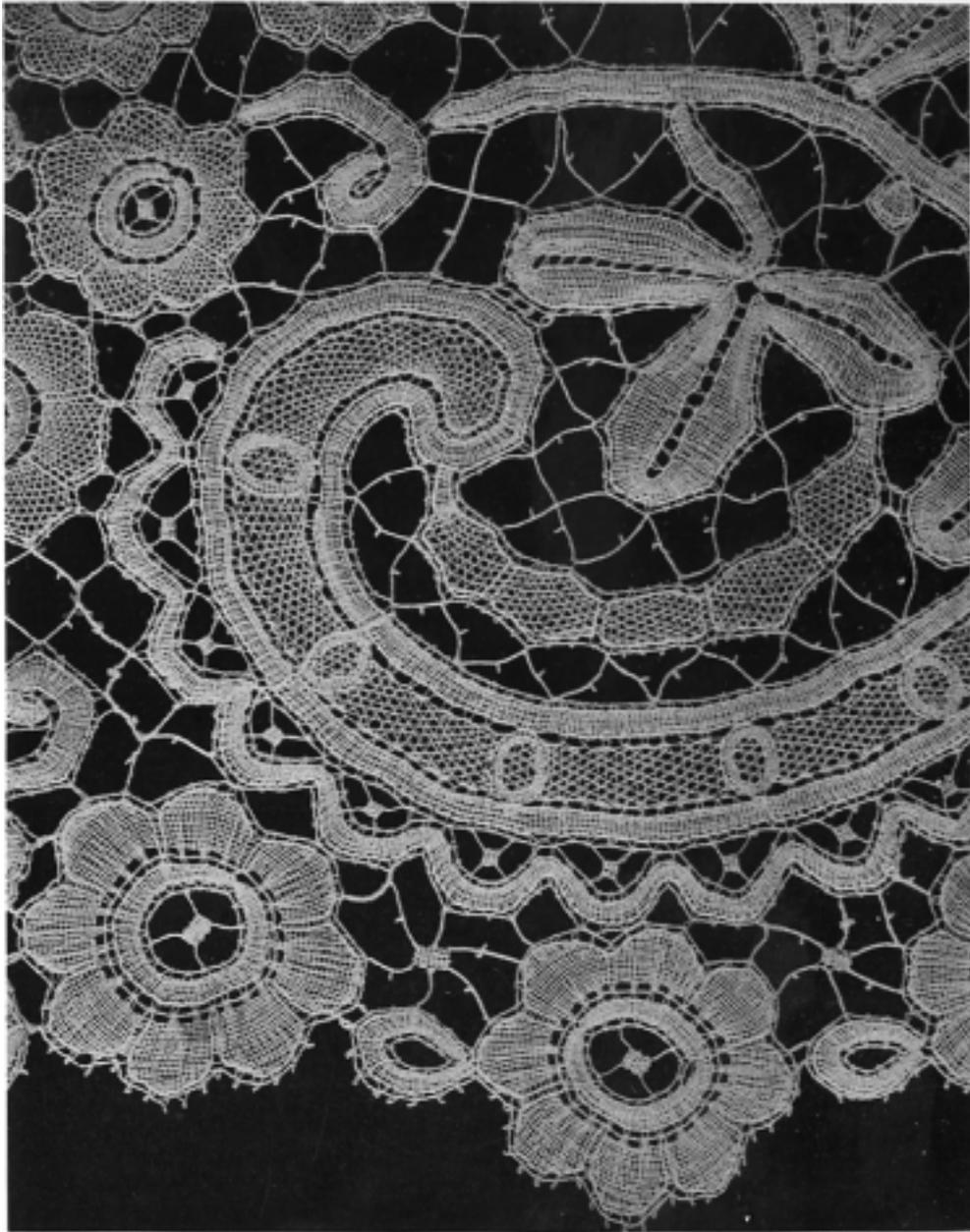
14. BINCHE LACE, HAND-MADE. LE LIMAÇON.



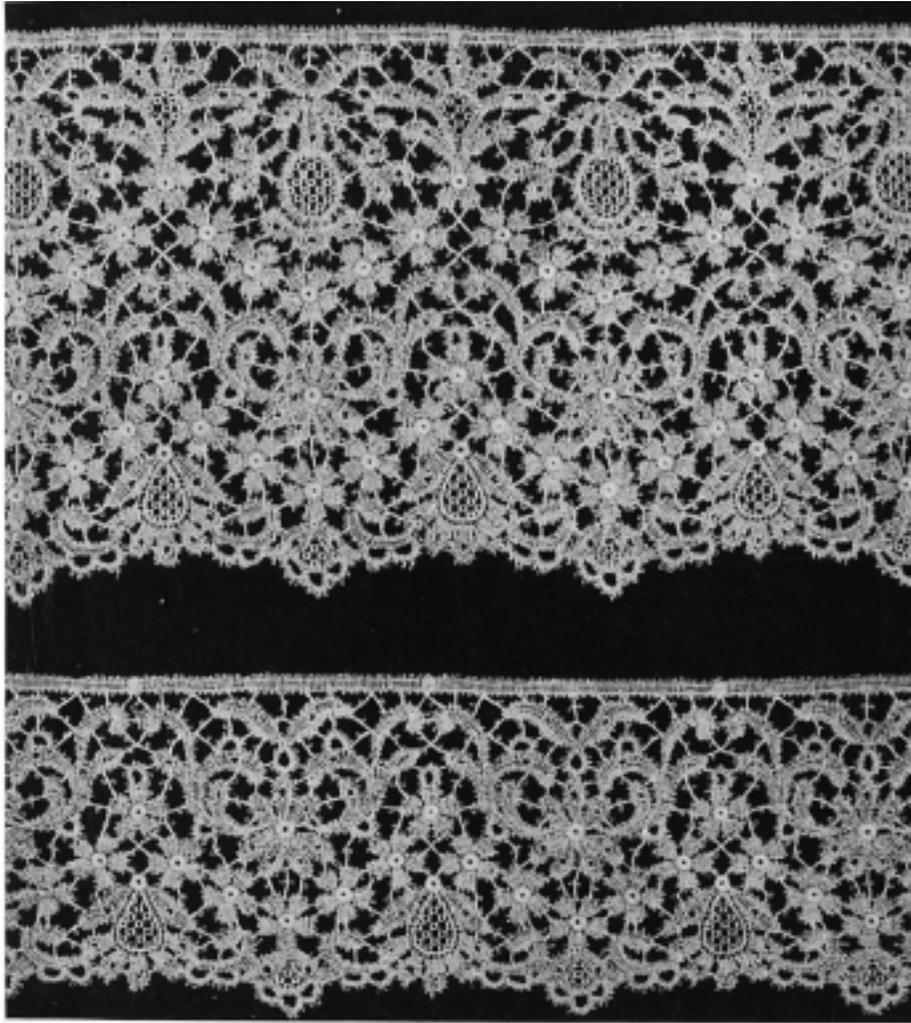
15. MACHINE-MADE IMITATION. LE LIMAÇON.
MADE ON THE BARMEN LACE MACHINE.



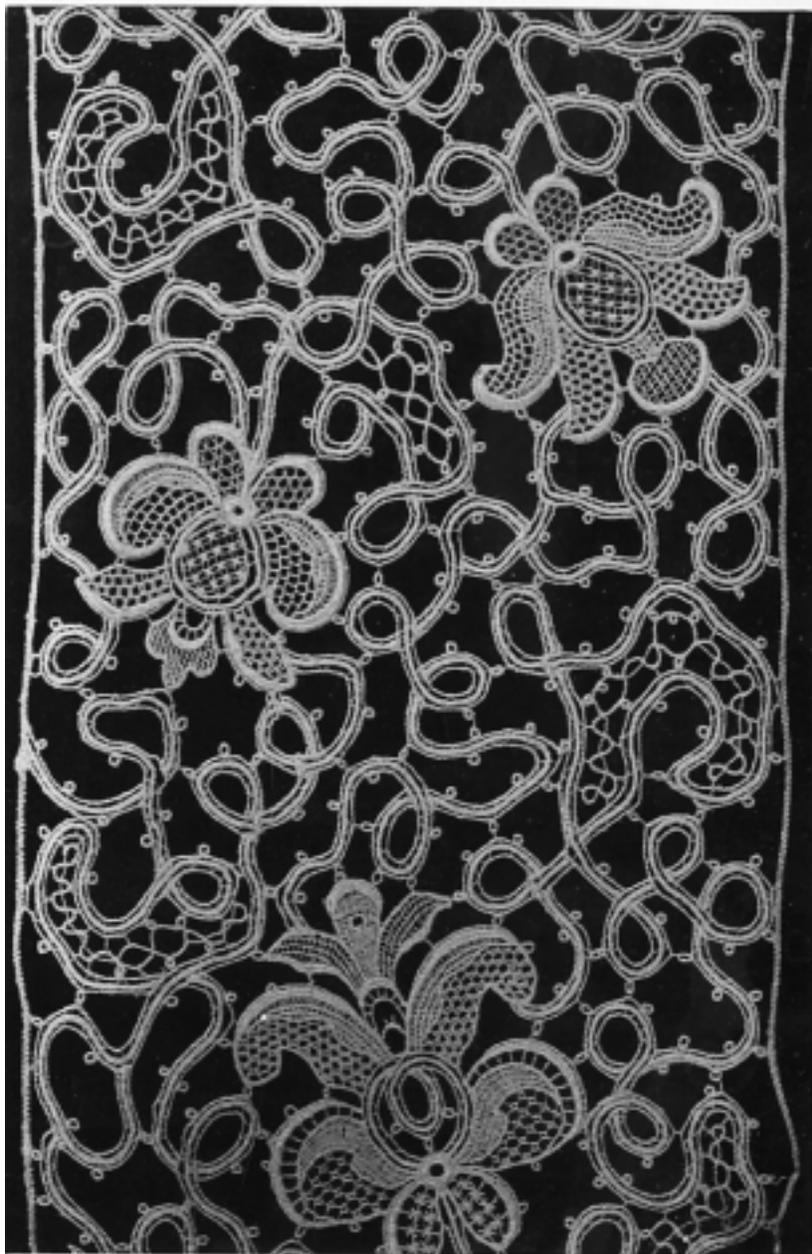
16. DUCHESSE LACE, MACHINE-MADE.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



17. BRUGES BOBBIN LACE, MACHINE-MADE IMITATION.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



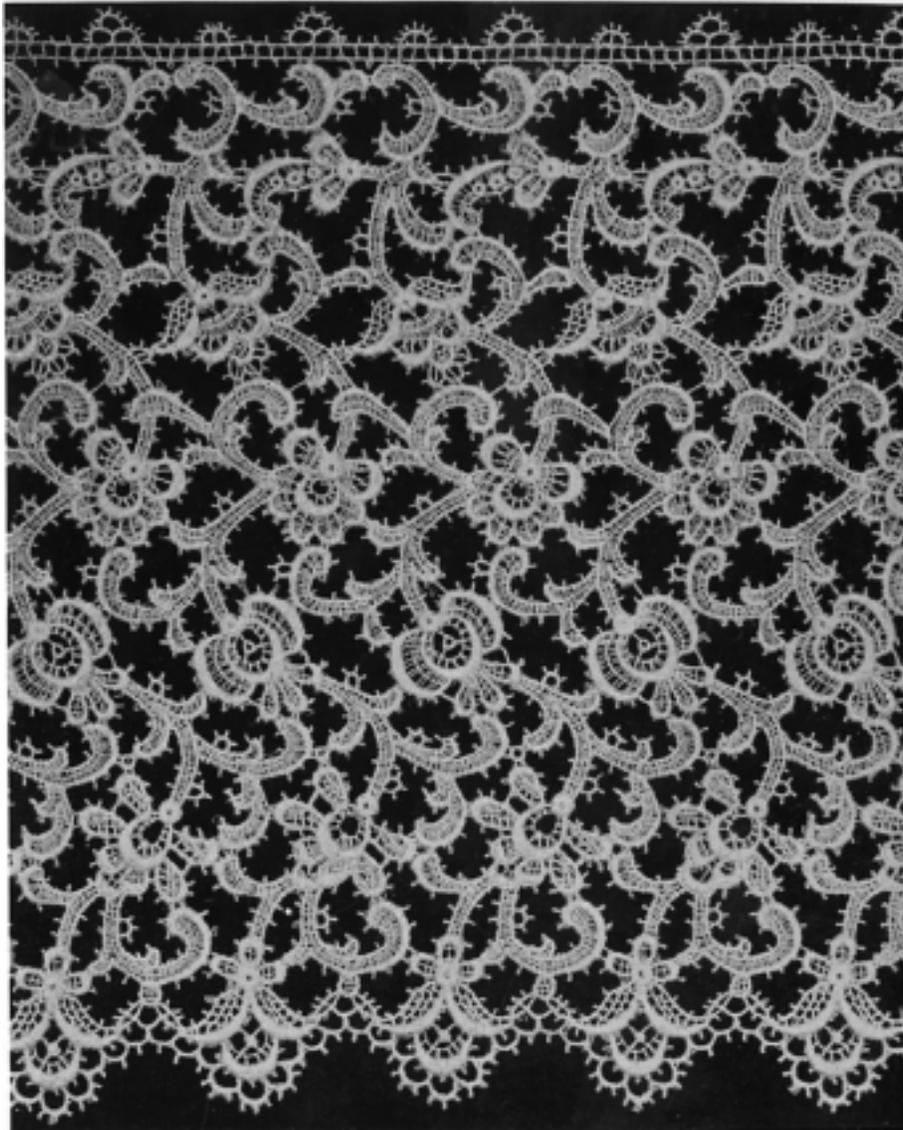
18, 19. ROSALINE LACE, MACHINE-MADE IMITATION.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



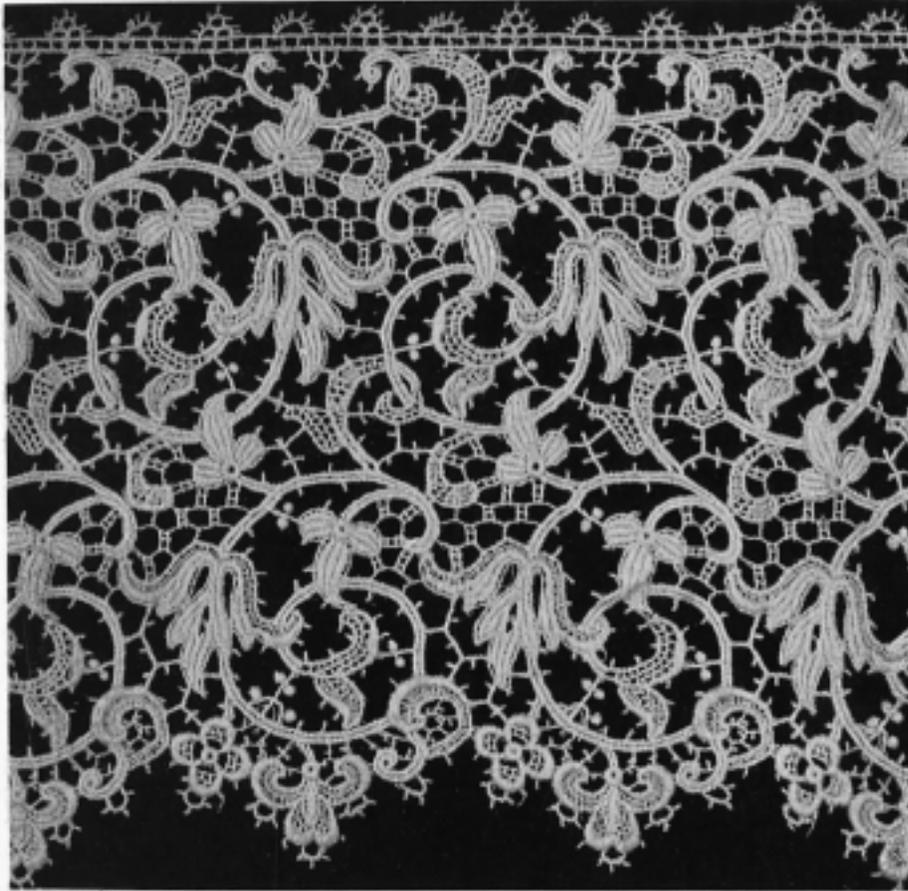
20. GUIPURE LACE, MACHINE-MADE IMITATION.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



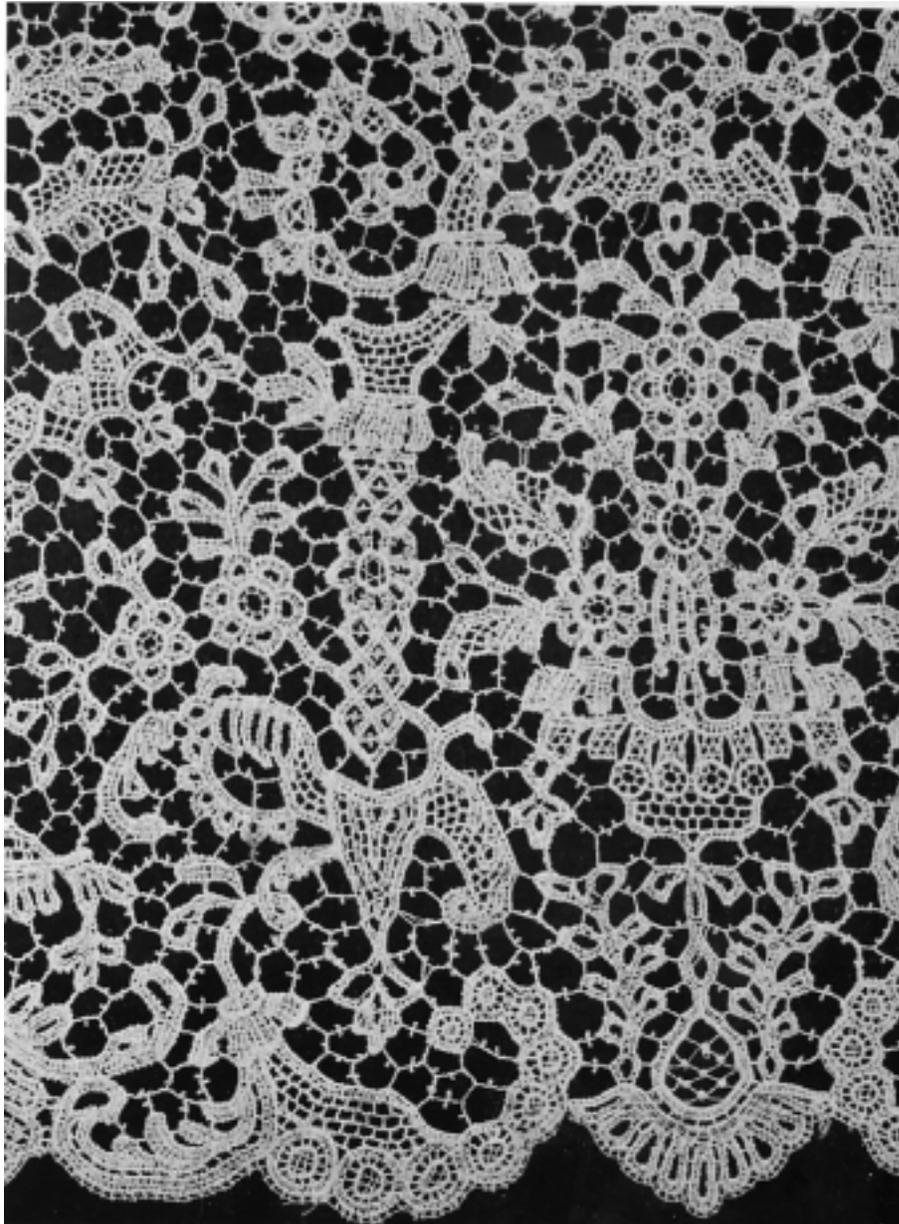
21. GROS POINT DE VENISE, MACHINE-MADE COPY OF HAND-MADE NEEDLE-POINT.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



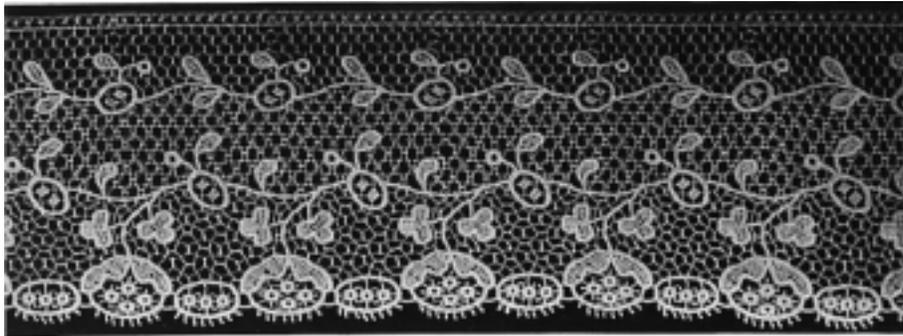
22. ROSE POINT DE VENISE, MACHINE-MADE COPY OF HAND-MADE NEEDLE-POINT.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



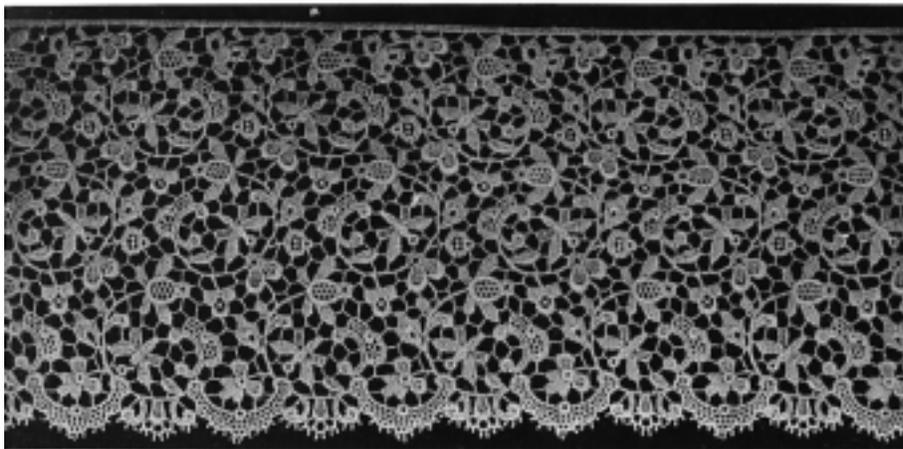
23. POINT PLAT DE VENISE, MACHINE-MADE COPY OF HAND-MADE NEEDLE-POINT.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



24. POINT DE FRANCE, MACHINE-MADE COPY OF HAND-MADE NEEDLE-POINT.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



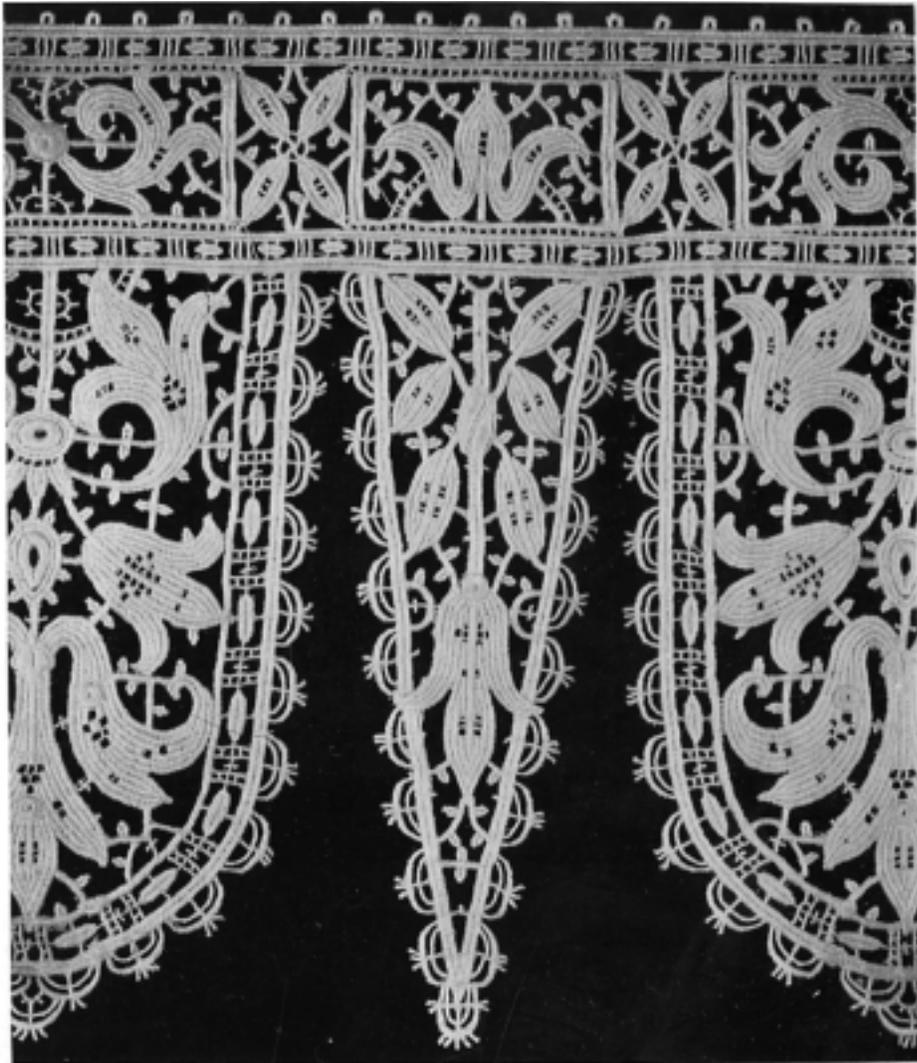
25. POINT D'ARGENTAN.



26. CORALLINE.



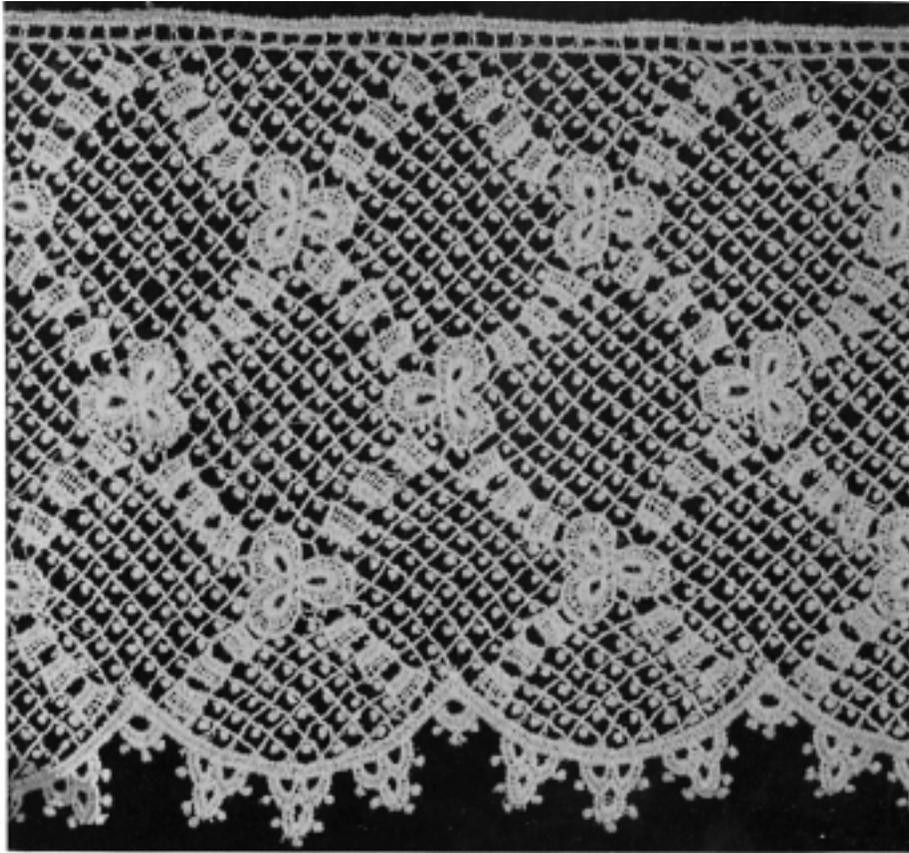
27. PUNTO IN ARIA, MACHINE-MADE COPY OF HAND-MADE NEEDLE-POINT.
25, 26 AND 27 MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



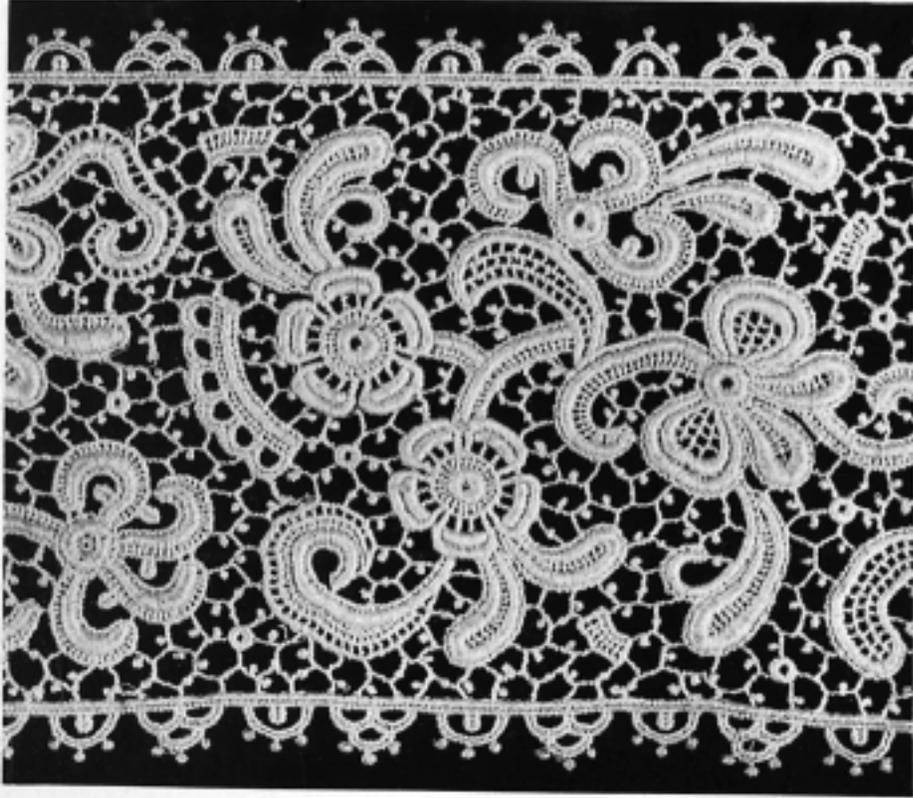
28. POINTS COMBINED WITH RETICELLA.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



29. BLACK SILK LACE, IMITATION OF MIXED BOBBIN
AND NEEDLE-POINT LACES.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE.



30. IMITATION OF IRISH CROCHET LACE.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



31. IMITATION OF IRISH CROCHET LACE.
MADE ON THE SCHIFFLI EMBROIDERY MACHINE. (BURNT-OUT LACE.)



A PLATE FROM LA MODE ILLUSTRÉ OF 1867 SHOWING COSTUMES BY THE MAGASINS
DU LOUVRE USING MACHINE-MADE LACE.

BOOK NOTICES

COTTON IN MEDIEVAL TEXTILES OF THE NEAR EAST. By Carl Johan Lamm. Paris, 1937.

The subject chosen by the author's study in this valuable contribution to the analytic study of Near Eastern fabrics is stimulating to the imagination as it covers a field of research that heretofore has been more or less overlooked.

The text, rich in historical and technical data, is greatly enhanced by the seventy-one illustrations of pattern drafts, etc., and the twenty-four plates of fabrics selected from the collections of the Arabic Museum, Cairo; the National Museum, Stockholm; the Museum of the History of Culture, Lund, and the Röhss Museum of Arts and Crafts, Gothenburg.

This work is one of the most interesting books on textile fabrics that has appeared in recent years.

AMERICAN NEEDLEWORK. By Georgiana Brown Harbeson. New York, 1938. \$15.00.

This volume, with six illustrations in full color and nearly four hundred halftones, proved an attractive book for the Christmas trade. The author, Mrs. Harbeson, one of the foremost designers in the field of modern needlework, has to her credit a number of important exhibition pieces, among which is the outstanding portrait of Mme. Galli Curci, now privately owned by a New York collector.

The book presents an historic outline of the development of various stitch forms and techniques found in the needlework of American women and records important works of each period. The subjects covered range from the work of the American Indians—the porcupine-quill embroidery, the bead needlework, and the primitive fishskin needlework found among the Indians of Alaska—to the work of the present day.

Among the distinguished early American embroidery treasures is the

Stump Work Picture worked by Rebekah Wheeler in 1664, at the age of nineteen, one of the first settlers of Concord, Massachusetts—an English technique transplanted by the American pioneers, of which this, perhaps, is the only work of its kind produced in America. Then there is the needle-point card table top worked by Mary Otis in 1754, and the historic embroidered chair seat, one of twelve worked at Mount Vernon, Virginia, by Martha Washington. From this period, on through the nineteenth century up to the modern and ultra modern work of today, the author has placed on record a notable display of the work of American needlewomen, all of which is supplemented by descriptive text delightfully couched in terms that reflect artistic appreciation and a thorough technical knowledge of her subject.

The work should prove of great interest and value to anyone devoted to the art of the needle.

KENTUCKY COVERLETS. By Lou Tate. 1725 Third Street, Louisville, Kentucky, 1938. 75 cents.

This booklet, fully illustrated, is the result of several years' work that Miss Tate has devoted to the study of the local handicraft of her native countryside. An enthusiastic weaver, she decided to undertake the problem of tracing the development of early coverlet patterns from old drafts that she felt must still survive among the farming people of her district; she describes the long horseback rides in ante-bellum Cumberland River country, the zest at the end of a hot, disappointing day of research in suddenly locating a collection of drafts of some long gone weaver and copying them by old-time lamplight, all of which gives a delightful personal touch to the technical side of her text.

The coverlets assembled are arranged according to "family," and as there are often many names for the same pattern, the oldest name has been retained until an authentic name is located. At present Miss Tate has collected over three thousand pattern drafts—only a fraction of the data available on the subject.

This little booklet is a worthy contribution to the history of hand-weaving in America.



TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST PATTERN BOOK SHOWING NEEDLE LACE DESIGNS.
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.



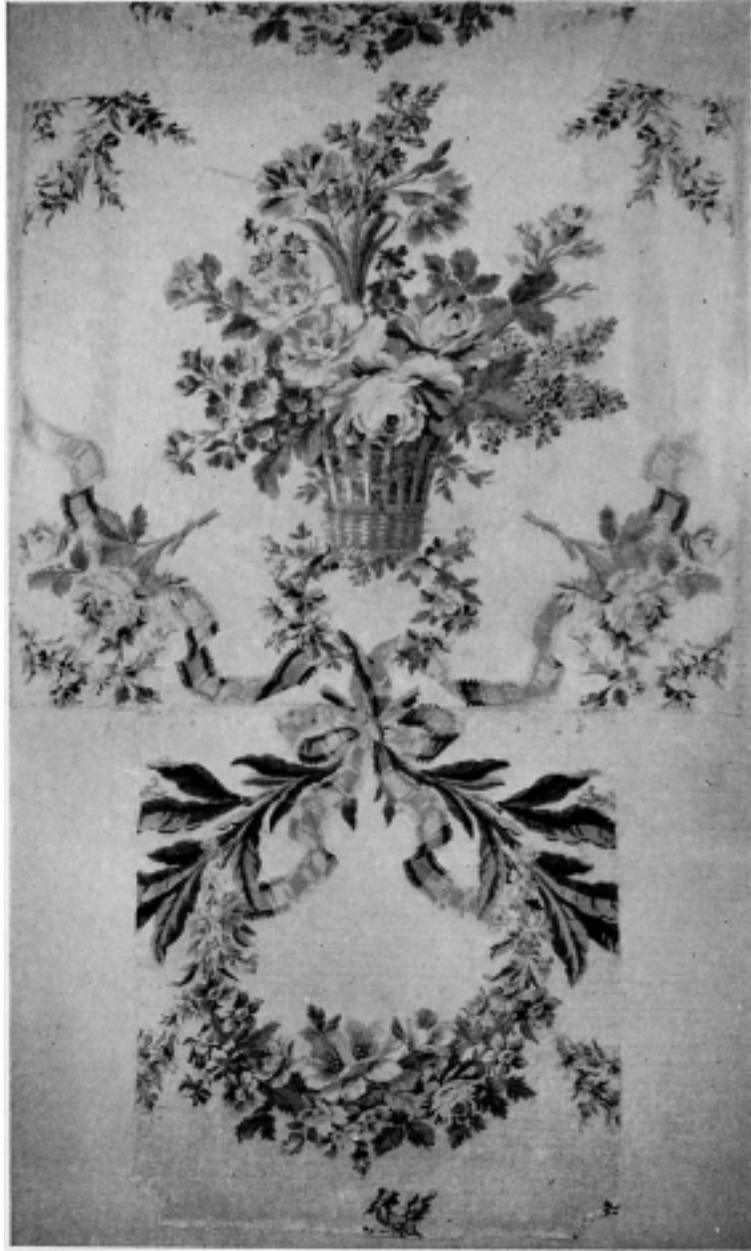
CLUB NOTES, 1938-1939

*March Fourteenth, 1938.*¹ On Monday afternoon, March fourteenth, through the courtesy of the Director and Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Club was favored with a private view of a Special Exhibition of Early Pattern Books, Lace, Embroidery, and Woven Textiles which was installed in four of the galleries of the Print Department.

Our Club has been actively interested in the Pattern Book Collection at the Museum since 1918 when several of our members presented the then recently organized Print Department with a rare volume printed at Augsburg by Schonsperger in 1529, a work which has since proved to be one of the three earliest known of such books. That the Club has continued its interest in the collection, now one of the most important of its kind, is shown by the fact that in this show all the laces and embroideries, except those drawn from the Museum's own collection and from the Cooper Union Museum, were lent by members of the Needle and Bobbin Club.

Among those exhibiting, Mrs. DeWitt Clinton Cohen headed the list with thirty-four pieces of exquisite needlework and laces, while equally important examples were those lent by Mrs. Gino Speranza, Miss Bliss, Mrs. Albert Blum, Mrs. Luke Vincent Lockwood, Miss Hague, and Miss

¹This note, which more properly belongs in Volume 22, No. 1, is printed here as an interesting addendum to Mr. Middleton's article on "Machine-made Lace." The accompanying illustration reproduces the title page of the first pattern book in which designs for needle lace were produced.



SILK BROCADE FROM A DESIGN CALLED LE PANIER FLEURI BY PHILIPPE DE LASALLE.
WOVEN IN LYONS C. 1770.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, ex collection, H. A. Elsberg.

Morris—contributions that gave life to the pages of the little books so treasured by the needleworkers of their day.

This beautifully arranged exhibit, showing old patterns side by side with contemporary work of the same design, aroused so much interest that it remained open a month longer than originally planned and was visited repeatedly by devotees of the art. It should also be recorded that much of the success of the undertaking was due to the patient research work of our Vice-President, Miss Hague, who was untiring in her efforts to locate pieces for the exhibit, and to Miss Margaret Daniels of the Museum Staff, who has specialized in the subject of pattern book lore and who is also a member of the Club.

December Eighth. In honor of our late valued member, Mr. Herman A. Elsberg, the members of the Club were invited to an exhibition of his collection of rare textile fabrics of all periods at his gallery in East Fifty-Seventh Street.

In his youth Mr. Elsberg spent many years in Lyons, the great textile center of France, where he devoted himself to the study of the history and technique of weaving, in later years becoming established as a merchant and designer of hand-loom silks of the finest quality. Interested in the historical side of the subject and being in touch with all of the old-time weavers of the district, Mr. Elsberg was able to collect many rare documents of Lyons eighteenth century weaves, one of which is illustrated herewith.

Always generous with his knowledge, his courteous cooperation will be sorely missed by his many friends.

January Twenty-Sixth. Among our members, one of the most enthusiastic collectors is Mrs. Robert Monks to whom the Club is again indebted for a delightful afternoon when Mr. Alan J. B. Wace of Cambridge University lectured on her Greek Island embroideries. Two of the Club members volunteered to wear costumes from the collection, and the lecture was also illustrated by lantern slides, showing the various uses of the embroideries in the homes of the people.

Some years ago Mr. Wace, whose classical studies have brought him in touch with every phase of Greek art, developed an interest in Greek embroideries; as a result he made an extensive trip through the Ægean, and the historical data assembled at that time was most interestingly presented in his lecture.

February First. Through the courtesy of the Brearley School, the members of the Club were invited by Mrs. Frank H. Holden to see an interesting group of Toiles de Jouy—selected from her large collection—illustrating the work of Jean Baptiste Huet, the great animal painter of the eighteenth century, who was head designer of the Oberkampf factory at Jouy, France, from 1783 to 1811. The designs of this master marked the great epoch in the art of printed fabrics. The collection was hung in the large entrance hall where tea was served.

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