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THE · NEEDLE · AND · BOBBIN
CLUB

VOLUME · 4 · NUMBER · 2

OCTOBER · 1920

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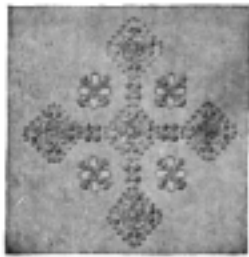
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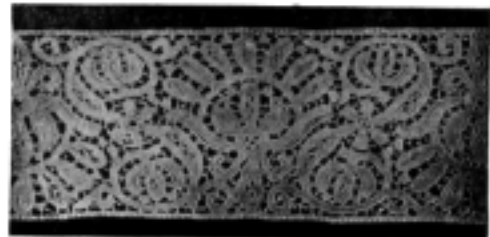
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AMERICAN COLLECTORS

Produced under the auspices of The Needle and Bobbin Club, many of whose members exhibited the Laces here reproduced in the Special Loan Exhibit of Laces held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art during the Summer of 1919.

TEXT BY
FRANCES MORRIS
AND
MARIAN HAGUE

The price of the book, which will sell by subscription, is \$60.00—payable in advance, or at the rate of \$15.00 the part, as issued.

MEMBERS OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB WILL RECEIVE A REDUCTION BY SENDING THEIR SUBSCRIPTION TO MR. R. C. GREENLEAF, LAWRENCE, LONG ISLAND.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

FRANCES MORRIS MARIAN HAGUE
RICHARD C. GREENLEAF GERTRUDE WHITING

Published for The Needle and Bobbin Club

By

WILLIAM HELBURN, INC.
418 Madison Avenue, New York

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Back numbers of The Bulletin of the
Needle and Bobbin Club

Volume I Number 1

Volume I Number 2

*Anyone willing to dispose of these numbers is
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It may be of interest to members to know
that the Victoria and Albert Museum at
South Kensington has asked for a complete file
of the Bulletins.

BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

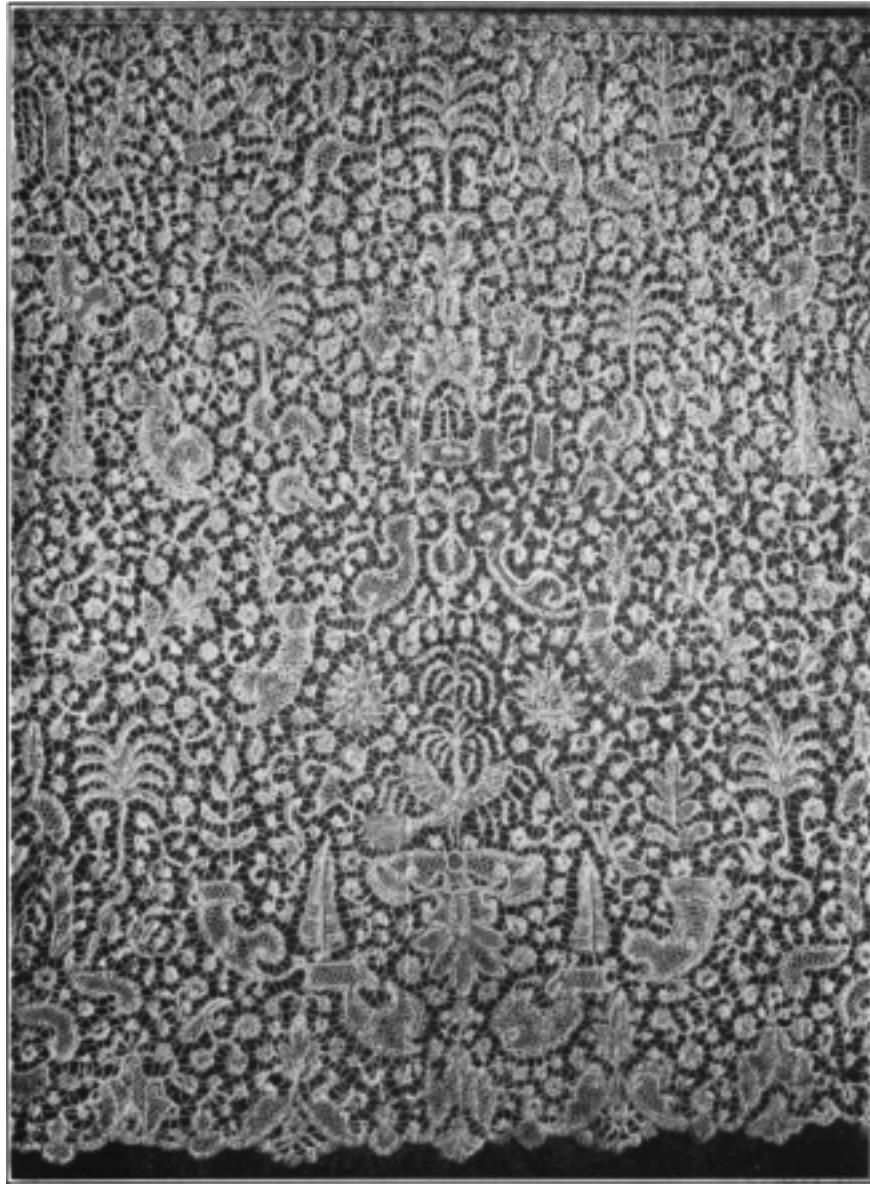
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OCTOBER, 1920

NUMBER 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE GUILD OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CRAFTS

BY GERTRUDE WHITING

AS stated in the June letter sent to all club members, there are many of our foreign women who cannot take regular positions on account of their many children; but through this country's labor-saving devices, have spare time on their hands and during that time are growing discontented. This seems to be the Club's opportunity to step in and do a doubly good work—enlisting the women's interest and attention and making available the embroidery and weaving they learned as children in their native lands.

"The City Where Crime is Play," a pamphlet issued some time ago by the People's Institute, states so much of what the committee feels that I shall not hesitate to quote from it, especially as the People's Institute through Mrs. Howard Mansfield and Miss Cora McDowell brought this opportunity to the attention of the Needle and Bobbin Club.

This whole article could be filled with examples from the ill-explored, neglected art life of the immigrant—examples which would show the immigrant to be a tragically human problem, and a thoroughly hopeful civic problem. The immigrant does not represent a deficit to be made up. The vigor, good will, tradition and talent are there, and eager would be the response if we were to lead the way and point to the outlet for the immigrant's stifled yearning toward the ideal! This the Needle and Bobbin Club seems eminently fitted to do so far as the needle and loom work of the women are concerned; work which we have long ignored and discouraged here. The Club was formed among other things to stimulate, maintain and centralize the making of hand fabrics and to encourage a high standard of textile art. Why then let perish the fine national sewing and weaving arts that have been brought to our shores and that might so greatly enrich America? Why, for instance, continue to permit art tragedies such as that which almost engulfed Italian puppetry?

"Signor Marosi had been an impresario twenty years before, in Messina. He was, like his fathers before him, the keeper of a serious and very ancient art, the folk-theatre of Sicily. This was only a marionette show, but the figures were life-size and their were hundreds of

them. They played the heroic tales of chivalry, bloody melodramas of the Italian civil wars, and morality and mystery plays. Signor Marosi had brought this show, with its art tradition, to America. Marosi had a deep and rich voice, and a rich nature. The Marosi family danced, dialogued, and sang the whole show.

"The Marosi theatre was a neighborhood center for three blocks around. It was regularly patronized by several hundred Italians. They came in family groups, and in groups of friendly families. The physical air was bad enough, but the social air was delightful. Few of the patrons talked English, but they sang thrillingly in Sicilian dialect, and they were a unit upon the moral questions which were raised in the marionette dramas. Fourteen years ago there were six other marionette shows in New York, every one of them a true neighborhood center for hundreds of people. When they passed away—for all of them but one are gone—New York City was the loser not only of a child-like and really beautiful form of drama, the oldest form which survives in the western hemisphere, but of a vital social center. That whole group of a thousand and more Americans-in-the-making, whom the marionette theatre had held together, could have been transplanted to a school building, following the marionette show, which could easily have been transplanted, and they could not only have been gradually infused with every good American influence, but their own richness of social inheritance could have been preserved for New York, which needs it.

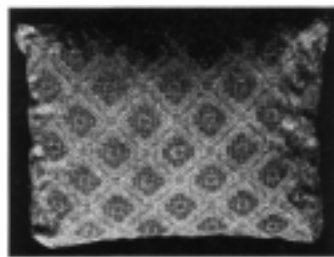
"The Marosi equipment is now in a garret, and Signor Marosi has gone into the plumbing business. The boys roll cigarettes for a living. They are good people—there is no better human material, no better social capacity in New York, than in the Marosis and their circle. There is no more pathetic loyalty to friends, to family and traditions and to the social ideals which they know.

* * * * "The immigrant of America is a victim and a menace, and it is totally unnecessary for him to be either. He is eager to be a good American. He has his gifts for us. He is here to stay."

So too could the foreign women be brought into friendly social sewing or lace-making circles where interest in this country would be spurred by our interest in the women's native products, and their delight in gaining a little extra money in the free hours when household cares could temporarily be put aside. At the Needlework Guild of the Ukrainian Settlement we are told that "bright-eyed, clear-skinned," happy-looking

babies sometimes accompany the women to the working bee, reflecting the calm of their mothers—a restful content, produced by creating something beautiful and inwardly satisfying.

In order to start and build up such a work of conservation and Americanization, the Directors of the Needle and Bobbin Club have formed a committee or branch, which they are calling the Guild of the Needle and Bobbin Crafts. To organize its work, form and keep files of information, arrange exhibitions, start new groups through the help of the settlements, show the immigrants how to adapt their knowledge to our current uses, enroll Guild members paying small annual dues, et cetera, a competent teacher and organizer, director or executive will be needed; and it is hoped that before many months the Guild may have received enough to engage such a manager and start upon active, helpful work. The Club's president in June sent out over three hundred letters telling members of what was contemplated, and asking their immediate cooperation. A quantity of other letters were dispatched through the kindness of Miss McDowell and the People's Institute, to craft groups throughout the country in an effort to obtain detailed information. Typical, sectional industries, such as those of the Mountain Whites, and of old New England communities will also be included that their work too may be conserved and encouraged. It is hoped in the early spring to hold a very representative exhibit of all these characteristic laces, embroideries, weaves and tapestries.



CUSHION COVER AND LITTLE BAG MADE BY ITALIAN WOMEN IN NEW YORK

THE CANADIAN FOLK HANDICRAFTS SOCIETY

“Great oaks from little acorns grow.”

BY MISS MARY M. PHILLIPS

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN HANDICRAFTS GUILD

THE end of the rail has reached at last a primitive little village on the shores of a many-armed lake in the heart of the mountains: a train, crawling up the steep winding grades like some monstrous serpent, behind its snorting, puffing engine, brings a party of campers to pitch their tents on a clearing at the head of one of those many arms, several miles from the settlement: on the other side of the clearing is a log house, with barns and stables built in the same manner, where “Monsieur et Madame” pursue an active, thrifty life aided by their numerous children, the latter no negligible asset in pioneer conditions.

The campers need milk, so after a hot walk to the farm they willingly rest in the kitchen while Monsieur tells the story of hewing the logs for the first cabin, clearing field after field from the surrounding forest; bringing up a family; sending them off into the world; marrying again and bringing up a second family, eighteen children in all; with no near neighbors, no shops, no railway. Madame then suggests a visit to the attic—there the reason why her family look so well cared for as well as the source of much of the prosperity is made clear. Such a wonderland! The spinning wheels and looms; the shelves filled with cloth, linen and catalogue; some of it dyed from roots, bark, berries and grasses in soft tones of blues, browns and greens, with here and there a touch of bright yellow; bundles of straw braid ready to make hats (those wide-brimmed, pointed-crowned hats that are such a protection from the sun); rolls of hides tanned for “les bottes sauvages,” mocassins and harness; sheep skins for mats; stores of maple sugar and syrup; bacon and hams; herbs for seasoning and for medicinal purposes; in fact the Swiss Family Robinson themselves were not better equipped on their marvelous Island; moreover there were added, with intention, touches of form or color having the sole object of making these necessary, every day articles pleasing to the eye.

Then into the mind of the Artist came the thought—Why should this knowledge and skill be lost with the coming of the Railway bringing its daily freight of factory produce from the outer world? It is true that the Pioneer age is passing away from the Country and the manufacturing age is upon us, but here we still have handicrafts that in the Old World are being revived for artistic as well as other values. Why not encourage and retain them while knowledge and skill are yet with us, adapting the things produced to the needs of present conditions, thus giving pleasure and benefit to both makers and purchasers? Is it not worth while to increase the appreciation of good workmanship and true beauty applied in the making of things required by all for many and different purposes? Is it not worth while to give the craftsman the support of wider sympathy in his greater joy of creation, and by adequate remuneration enable him to occupy leisure time in making something which he alone can? No factory can give the touch of character that marks the individual's work.

And so the Acorn fell.

During the final decade of the last century the thoughts of men and women were occupied with many new movements in the realms of Art, Science, Social Life and Religion. Recent discoveries involving changing conditions entered into all phases of life, the social status of women in particular giving rise, perhaps, to an exaggerated emphasis being laid upon women's work as women's work, but yet by the formation of Women's Clubs developing power which had hitherto lain dormant. Ruskin and Morris having entered their protest against the ruthless destruction of individual expression in the Applied Arts, in consequence of the development of manufacturing processes, an aroused interest in this form of art expression became general, leading a Women's Art Society in Montreal to take up the study of these minor arts in addition to their other work. Lectures and exhibitions were held to encourage the application of artistic powers apart from the painting of pictures.

Eventually, in the autumn of 1900, the Society held a large and important Exhibition of Arts and Crafts, both old and modern work being shown. This contrasting method of arrangement was arresting and instructive, many valuable and beautiful examples were brought to light, opening the eyes of hundreds of visitors to the value of things they had hitherto passed blindly by. The catalogue, carefully compiled and unusually full of information, was itself a choice specimen of the Printer's

Craft. A small section of the Exhibition was given over to a display of Canadian work, where the excellent and unsuspected variety decided the Society to hold another Exhibition, purely Canadian, as soon as possible with the object of developing Canadian handicrafts.

The Acorn had sprouted.

More than a year elapsed before this project could be carried out, but in the meantime notices were sent broadcast over the Dominion in order to give time for preparation, these circulars stating also that if sufficient encouragement were received a permanent sales depot would be established.

This Exhibition, though not as large, was possibly more definitely instructive than the former, the unique and beautiful collection of Indian crafts alone claiming serious study as well as admiration. Many people became interested in the idea of encouraging Canadian home art industries, and the general success of the Exhibition apparently warranting the venture "Our Handicrafts Shop" was founded May, 1902, in Phillips Square, Montreal, in charge of a special committee with separate funds. It aimed to be a practical means of encouraging home art industries, not only for the money which the sale of such work would bring to workers, particularly in remote districts where money is a rare commodity (and rarer still in the hands of the women), but through sales assured by wider markets, to retain and develop artistic taste and skill as well as habits of thrift and industry, the pursuit of such crafts developing powers which bring riches greater than money into the life of the individual and the nation.

Exhibitions were gathered and sent out from this little "Shop" to other parts of the Dominion and the United States with many fears and misgivings, for insurance, carriage, damage and loss were heavy risks to be faced. However, at the end of the first year, over and above expenses the workers had been paid \$904.30; the Committee were duly elated and spurred on to redoubled efforts.

The Acorn had grown into a little oak plant.

While all crafts were equally encouraged it was found that in the Province of Quebec the arts of spinning, weaving and dyeing linen and wool were practised to a greater extent than elsewhere. The demands for products so useful as well as artistic grew rapidly; in fact the looms were likely to be kept as busy as in the days when the family depended upon them for their clothing.

Needlecraft was also stimulated by the exhibition of beautiful Russian embroideries made by the Doukhobors, that strange race to whom the Canadian Government granted lands in the North West when they emigrated from Russia to enjoy religious freedom and immunity from military service in a country where the call to war then seemed the most improbable of events. The hardships of their first winters in a new land were largely mitigated through the skill of their women with the needle. A quantity of their embroideries were placed in Our Handicraft Shop where the beauty of design, colour and technique called forth admiration.

In 1905 the little oak plant had grown so fast that it was generally realized that it required the undivided attention of a separate organization. Financial responsibilities were becoming heavier and with a semi-commercial aspect necessitated wider powers than could be exercised by the parent society under which the special committee worked. Thus, in 1905, the "Canadian Handicrafts Guild," a body of men and women, came into existence to care for a vigorous oak sapling.

As set forth in its constitution, the "Canadian Handicrafts Guild" is a benevolent association for the purpose of encouraging, retaining, reviving and developing Canadian Handicrafts and Home Art Industries, providing markets for the same, facilitating and spreading habits of industry and thrift, holding and taking part in exhibitions, providing any kind of instruction connected with the objects aforesaid, and carrying on all sorts of business operations necessary for the said objects, but without personal profit to the members of the Guild.

That the Guild has not neglected its charge may be briefly shown by the following summary of its activities since 1905.

Exhibitions have been held throughout the Dominion and others sent to London, Dublin, Melbourne (Australia) and the United States.

County and Provincial Fairs have been visited and work judged by experts from the Guild.

Assistance given to start the weaving industry in connection with Dr. Grenfell's Mission in Labrador.

A Technical Library established.

The nucleus of a Crafts Museum collected.

Donations of rare specimens of Indian work made to the Museum of the Montreal Art Association.

A pamphlet on Home Dyeing, compiled by the Prince Edward

Island Branch, published in English and French.

Prize Competitions held, practically annually.

Branches and numerous Agencies established.

Paid to Workers—in 1905.....\$ 4,804.62

Paid to Workers—in 1919..... 63,346.48

The Acorn has grown into a healthy young oak tree with branches stretching across the Dominion. May it live and flourish as an oak tree should, sound of heart and strong of limb, deep rooted in the soil.

Thought may properly be given to the technical, the aesthetic, the human side of the Guild's work included in, but not obviously expressed in the foregoing facts and figures.

The farm referred to at the beginning of this article has given place to a large country house and grounds; the little village has become a small town with a busy railway station from which hundreds of passengers speed away to their country houses and camps scattered among the hills and lakes throughout a radius of many miles; these houses are furnished in great measure from "Our Handicrafts Shop" for, alas, in this district where the little acorn grew, the inhabitants are allowing, with short sighted policy, things which they could make as well themselves to be provided by others from other parts of the country. But old ideas of thrift have given place to modern ideas of "get rich quick," with as little labour as possible, and "spend as you go." They do not realize that much leisure time could be used to greater advantage than it apparently is at present, particularly by the young people, in occupations which would be enjoyable as well as profitable without interfering with their chief work in life.

But five hundred miles away the Guild may lay claim to founding a real village industry with present signs of stability. There a small purchase of a few dollars' worth of rag weaving not very many years ago has been multiplied to many thousands in the past year. Owing to this and general prosperity, this small community is now living in comfort, not as formerly, dependent upon the season's herring catch and potato crop for the winter supplies.

It is strange how certain work becomes characteristic of places and people without apparent reason, surviving in one place, dying down in another and reviving again—how and why, it is hard to say. In this little village by the sea, settled by refugees from France after the Edict of

Nantes, by exiled Acadians and soldiers from Wolfe's regiments, a characteristic craft has survived and developed. Whether these French refugees, whose relations settled in England and founded the silk weaving industry there, are responsible for handing down to their descendants in a country where silk manufacture was impossible, a peculiar skill in the fine weaving of common cotton rags, showing rare taste in a delicate harmony of colour, is a point that may be left to the opinion of the reader according to the measure of his or her belief in hereditary power. The fact remains that from nowhere else does the Guild receive such well made, artistic work of this kind.

In Prince Edward's Island, a Branch of the Guild has developed a rug making industry with gratifying results due to the careful attention given to design, colour and technique by devoted members. In connection with this craft the Branch has also done most valuable work for the art of home dyeing by compiling the result of painstaking research experiments and tests relating to the use of natural dyes and publishing them in pamphlet form. This pamphlet the Guild republished later in French. A few years ago excellent heavy cloth was made in the Island but it is a matter for regret that an industry so staple in character should apparently be dying out.

At present the chief source of supply for homespuns both for men's and women's wear is the north shore of the St. Lawrence where the amount derived from the sale of their handicraft forms no inconsiderable portion of the inhabitants' income as the demand for these serviceable and attractive materials grows steadily.

Here, and elsewhere in Canada, a heavy cloth was formerly made, similar to Irish frieze, but rather closer and harder in texture, usually a light grey in colour. The cloth was closely woven and then shrunk, the surface raised with teazles, matted, smoothed, steamed and pressed until impenetrable to wind and weather, rain and sleet rolling off it like water from a duck's back.

From this cloth, and sometimes from a dark blue blanket cloth, was made a coat that merits special description; and though today it is almost unknown except in the pictures of Kreighoff or Julien, yet it was so fitting for the climate that it used to be generally worn by men and boys in stormy winter weather. The Blanket Coat worn by members of Snowshoe Clubs is a descendant.

It was cut double breasted, with a fly hiding the buttons, and close

fitting, the seams were piped with red, epaulettes of several layers of red and blue cloth cut in a semi-circle and pinked at the edges in a dove-tail pattern were set into the top of the sleeve; a "capuchin" or hood was buttoned to the collar and when drawn over a "tuque" formed a perfect protection against the wildest storm.

With this "capote" was worn the "ceinture flechée," that sash of many colours, intricate stitch and design, handed down from the days of the old voyageurs who used their sash for more than one purpose. They were known by the name of "L'Assomption" sashes in the Hudson Bay Company's Stores, as they used to be made in that district and strange to say, during the Exhibitions of 1902 and 1905, an old woman from that place could be seen making one.

It is a common error to suppose that these sashes are woven on a loom; they are really braided with strands of many colours spun from lamb's wool into a very fine and tightly twisted, hard, smooth yarn. The strands are cut to the length desired, including the fringe; a sufficient amount is left for this at one end, then the strands arranged in groups of colours and knotted side by side upon a flat stick the width of the sash. The worker beginning at this end gathers half in each hand and braids with thumbs and forefingers towards the centre and back again. The loose end naturally becomes twisted and has to be straightened from time to time. Owing to the fine, smooth texture and durability it has been said that these sashes were made of silk and had moose hair interwoven, but the writer has never seen any old specimen made of silk, and as for moose hair, it is too coarse and brittle for the purpose.

The work of making these sashes is much too slow and painstaking to appeal to the modern worker or to be profitable under present conditions, but the art need not be lost as the Guild has descriptive records, including photographs, and one member at least who can make them.

From the Lower St. Lawrence comes also that unique tufted decoration which is woven, not embroidered with a needle, in quaint patterns, full of meaning for those who care to read the motifs of historical, ecclesiastical or natural origin, such as the "fleur de lys," "Marie et Joseph" and the "Pine tree" or the "Snowflake."

Flax is also grown, prepared and woven into linen and sometimes dyed with the true old indigo dye. But the temptation to meet the de-

mand for fashionable colours leads away from Nature's durable, soft but less vivid tones.

So far old Canada and her crafts have been considered, but the new settlers in the great North West have a claim upon the Guild's care and have not been neglected.

English and Irish laces, embroideries, linens and fancy weaving from foreign settlers, wood carving, metal work, leather work—examples of all have been received and every encouragement given to retain these crafts. The Branches in the West send to Headquarters in the East work to be sold, as well as selling in their own sales depots. Just because the settlers in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and the Far North come from many countries, bringing with them varied skill, it is yet too soon for special crafts to have become localized, and the people are so fully accupied in adjusting themselves to their new environment that the amount of these by-products, the output of leisure hours is not large.

Turning from thoughts of the new settlers in our land to its original owners the question may well be asked:—Is the Canadian Handicrafts Guild doing anything to preserve the wonderful crafts of the Indian? Yes. From Coast to Coast members of the Guild have journeyed giving most careful attention to the preservation of knowledge and skill still existing among our Indian tribes, endeavouring, in the face of many difficulties, to adapt themselves to civilized needs while retaining purity of design and workmanship. The West Coast baskets made from cedar bark, roots and grasses are so far less influenced by the white man's ideas and materials than any other craft, much to their advantage. From the North come bead, silk, and fine porcupine quill embroidery on cloth and deer skin, also carvings on bone from the Eskimo—from the plains transparent bead work made on looms, and embroideries; from Ontario porcupine quill work on birch bark; from Quebec and the Maritime Provinces sweet hay baskets, splint chair seats, snow shoes and other work.

To sum up—the Guild tries to help individuals to help themselves in their own homes by exercising a craft in which they have the greatest natural aptitude and to inculcate knowledge of the pleasure, benefit and dignity of hand labour well done.

The story has been often told but bears repetition, of the poor crippled boy lying helpless and well nigh hopeless—a burden upon his

mother, until restored to energy and self respect by a member of the Guild who taught him to make baskets. Today he is a grown man supporting the family.

Realizing very fully from intimate knowledge the restlessness of the younger generation in rural districts and the undue exodus to the cities, the Candian Handicrafts Guild is doing its part toward making country life more attractive.

Traveling Exhibits are sent out, articles written for the Agricultural Journals, and personal visits paid, when exhibits are explained and practical information given. Prize Competitions are held annually also, with especially tempting prizes for boys and girls.

It is felt that too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the importance of training both boys and girls to take an intelligent interest in making things with their own hands—for to observe, to investigate, to plan, in order to make or produce, never fails to bring the reward of fuller and more useful lives.





PHILIPPE DE LASALLE.

A "MISE EN CARTES" OF PHILIPPE DE LASALLE

A PROPOS of the universal interest shown in the improvement of American standards of design, especially in the field of textile fabrics, a few notes on a *mise en cartes* by Philippe de Lasalle recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art may not be amiss.

This working pattern for the weaver, with four others of unnamed designers, was included in a collection of eighteenth century brocades purchased in Lyons last spring, and is now displayed with the others in the corridor of textiles, where a special exhibit of these weaves has been installed. While the Museum owns no fabric of Lasalle's design, the works of two lesser important men are shown, one a splendid strip of satin brocade by Salembier; another, a fragment by Jean Revel, who was the first to introduce naturalistic floral motifs.

The little town of Seyssel, lying at the foothills of the Juras where the mountains slope down into the lovely country of the Department of the Ain in Eastern France, was the picturesque setting chosen by Providence as the birthplace of this peer among French textile designers, Philippe de Lasalle, the span of whose life covered the most thrilling years of the eighteenth century.

Born in 1723, just prior to the accession of Louis XV, he not only lived to see the overthrow of the Bourbons with all the horrors that accompanied the downfall of that royal house, but, broken in spirit and ruined financially, he survived the tumultuous years of the Consulate and the Directoire and in the closing year of his life witnessed the birth of the Empire with Napoleon on the throne of France.

Of humble parentage, his life was that of any village lad until his aptitude for drawing placed him first under the tutelage of Sarabat, a prominent Lyonnais painter, and later with Bachelier and Boucher in Paris; masters who, with their contemporaries, had laid the foundations of the new school of ornament, the flamboyant rococo that was to replace the grandiose baroque style of the seventeenth century. In Italy the rococo was well developed, in fact had reached the height of its popularity there before it appeared in France, where Juste Aurèle Meissonnier (1693-1750), the Genoese, whose works afforded the French de-



MADAME DE POMPADOUR BY QUENTIN DE LATOUR.

signers a new field of inspiration, may be said to have been the pioneer of the movement.

Toward the end of the century and in the closing years of the reign of Louis XIV, while the delicate architectural traceries and the chinoiserie motifs familiar in the works of Berain still lingered, there appeared as well a curious type of ornament suggesting the cubistic forms of to-day. The Lyons fabrics remained formal and overweighted in their patterns until the period of the Regency, when there developed a gradual breaking away from a well-balanced symmetry, a marked deviation from the perpendicular, with the introduction of grotesque fruit and floral branches combined with bits of landscape, architecture and figures.

With the accession of Louis XV the country, so long shadowed by the declining years of a world-weary monarch, was ready to welcome a regime that would free it from the depressing atmosphere that had pervaded the royal household; and the brilliant court established by the young king stimulated every line of industry throughout the realm.

At Lyons the designers and weavers quickly responded to the new note, and the stylistic variations of the fabrics of this period reflect the gay atmosphere of Versailles. The ornate style of the preceding century held no attraction for the debonair courtiers and the French beauties that graced the charming pastorales of such men as Watteau, Boucher, Lancret and Pater; and in the flowered patterns of their costumes we find none of the stilted formality of the seventeenth century weaves.

While all through these years of transition various types of ornament were developing which here and there reflected an exotic influence readily traceable to the introduction of foreign goods brought into the country by visiting embassies from the Orient, or to the enlarged trade of the East India Company, naturalistic floral motifs increased in popularity both in the field of ceramics and fabrics and soon became the established vogue. To meet this demand weavers bent their energies toward perfecting the loom, while court designers, often working for both industries, turned to the Jardin des Plantes for inspiration; and the *mises en cartes* produced by these men prove the thorough technical training of eighteenth century craftsmen.

For many years Jean Revel, a clever draughtsman and weaver, who, as has been said, was one of the first to break away from the conventional and introduce natural motifs, had been working at Lyons to improve the mechanism of the loom; and it was he whose ingenuity evolved the "point



THE DANCE BY WATTEAU.

rentré" by which the weavers were enabled to reproduce the delicate half-tones that so enhanced the exquisite beauty of the woven floral patterns designed by the French masters. One of the most lovely silks of this type, possibly designed by Douet or Ringuet, two men of first rank among the designers of the day, is shown in Van Loo's portrait of the Queen, Marie Leczinska, painted in 1747, and another in La Tour's portrait of Madame de Pompadour, shown in the accompanying plate. Still another illustration, expressing all the charm and naiveté of the French coquette gowned in a rich brocade, is the delightful figure in "The Dance" by Watteau.

Thus it was that when the youth Philippe de Lasalle attained his majority in the third quarter of the century and his name was beginning to attract the attention of the connoisseurs, he was handicapped by none of the technical difficulties encountered by Revel and his fellow-workers in their early attempts to produce realistic floral effects in loom work; for a loom capable of meeting the requirements of the trade was ready to respond to the inspiration of the artist's brush, and the masterpieces of Lasalle found a waiting market at a time when the sumptuous taste of the court demanded an elegance and quality on which it never hesitated to spend lavish sums. It was in this atmosphere that Lasalle developed; and when the crash of the revolution swept all before it, it carried with it the life-blood of his genius. The height of his career was reached at a time when a blasé clientèle was becoming weary of the rococo, and the art of Lasalle struck a new note, a note that suggests a slight reversion to the balance and symmetry of the time of Louis XIV; and although his work reflects the same joyous beauty that marks the Louis XV period, there is, as well, a dignity and restraint, a certain formality, so cleverly handled that no slightest suggestion of the enormous effort required in its production is felt.

Despite the fascination there is in the chinoiserie of Pillement and Gillot, the exquisite draughtsmanship of whose work is reminiscent of the charm of Bérain, the pastorales of the Huets that live in the *toiles de Jouy*, the beauty and grace of the garlands and trophies so popular in the Louis XVI period, the work of Lasalle is unique and places him far in advance of his contemporaries in the field of textile design.

No truer appreciation of his art has been expressed than that penned by one of his own countrymen, M. Cox, Director of the Musée Historique des Tissus of Lyons, whose tribute is given herewith.

"Technician of the first order, he had the infinitely rare quality of being able to execute his productions from the first stroke of the pencil to the last play of the shuttle. His greatest period was under Louis XVI. Lyons had the good fortune to count him among her workers, and it is to him that she owes the greatest glory of her fabrique. . . . His style is simple, large, forceful and of admirable drawing; with a touch direct and bold he places in juxtaposition high lights, half-tones and shadows without availing himself of the 'point rentré.' A few touches of black cleverly distributed are one of his characteristics. To him silk was sufficient and he used neither gold nor silver, nor did he make use of velvet, although he sometimes produced the effect of velvet by the introduction of chenille. In fact everything of his is of incomparable workmanship.

"But it is of Philippe de Lasalle the artist that we would speak. First, without question, he is essentially French; French by his absolute realism; a realism inherent in French taste. . . . He is equally French in the exquisite choice of his models. It was the flower garden, not the vegetable plot, that furnished his flowers. His animals are among the most graceful, the most rich in coloring, the most expressive of nobility; the downy warmth and sweetness of his dove, of his partridge; the opulence of his pheasant and of his peacock, the elegance of his swan, etc., which reflect the true French quality of all times, qualities that we fail to find in some of our neighbors who do not hesitate to delve in the mire for repugnant reptiles to serve as an inspiration for their ornament.

"Philippe de Lasalle is also absolutely of his time by the ensemble of his decorative motifs. Yet while resting in the tradition of that charming epoch that had given an attractive form to the most ordinary objects, his art had a much broader vision.

"Under Louis XVI there were two irreconcilable schools, the one representing the triumph of beauty and the grace of prettiness, the other, identified with the painter David, finding a more austere beauty in the formulas of the classical antique. To the former we owe the decoration of the Petit Trianon; to the second, the Pantheon. Philippe de Lasalle by essence is of the first school; but while the art of his confrères became more or less insipid and trifling, his is marked by an elegance, a sumptuous opulence, which only a genius such as his could conceive. Everyone is familiar with the exquisite coquetry of the hangings, all in white, of the apartments of Marie Antoinette at Versailles. Let us compare them



SILK DESIGNED BY P. DE LASALLE.

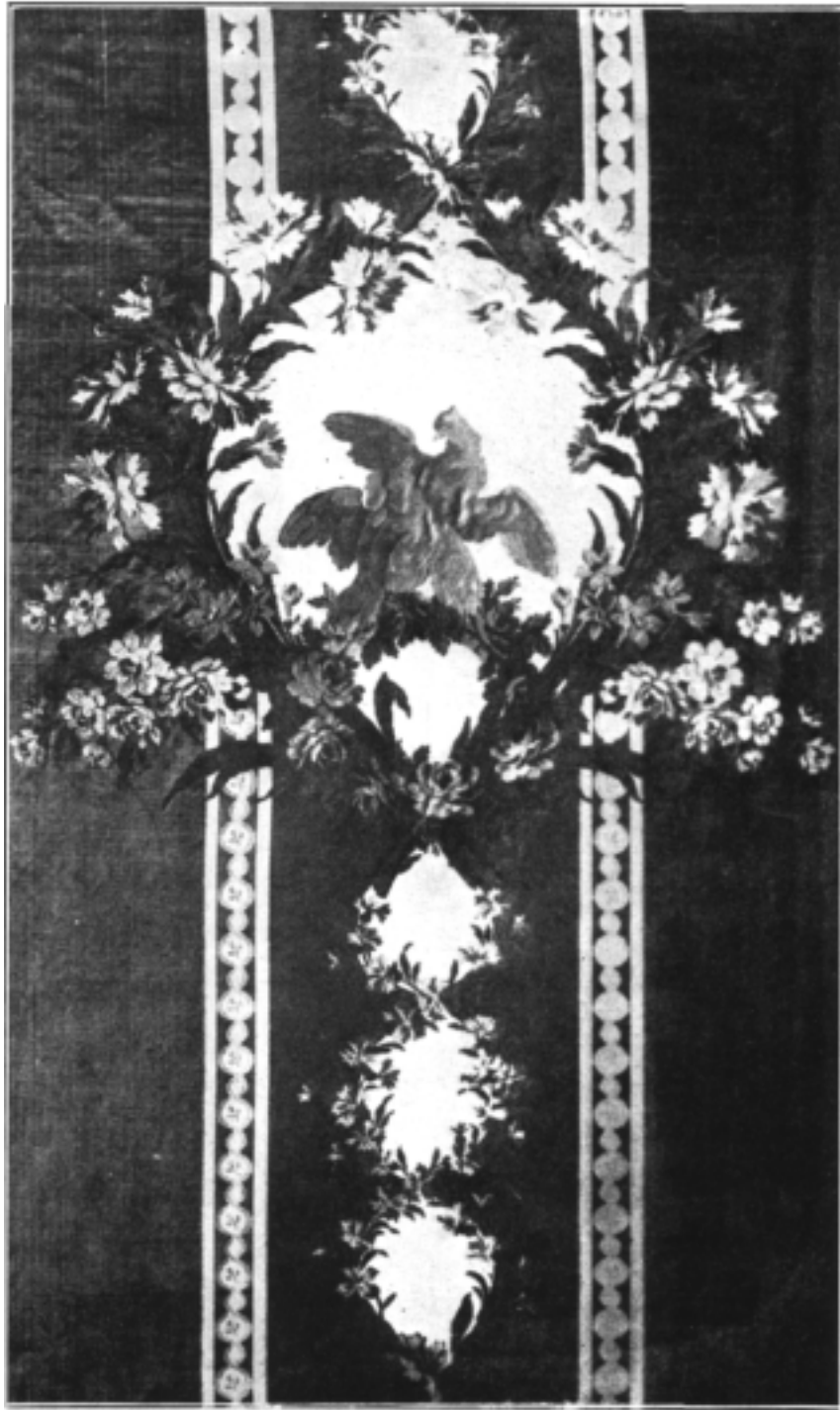
with those of the magnificent chambers of the same queen at Fontainebleau. Here Philippe de Lasalle loses none of the graces of his time, but he raises them to a dignity equal to that attained by the best fabriques of the Louis XIV period yet with none of the extravagance of that period. Who knows? If the Revolution had not broken out he might have been perhaps the point of departure in an evolution culminating in the renaissance of a decadent style.

"He was decorated by Louis XVI with the Order of St. Michel, a distinction carrying with it a pension of 6,000 livres. Demands for his work flowed in from at home and abroad.

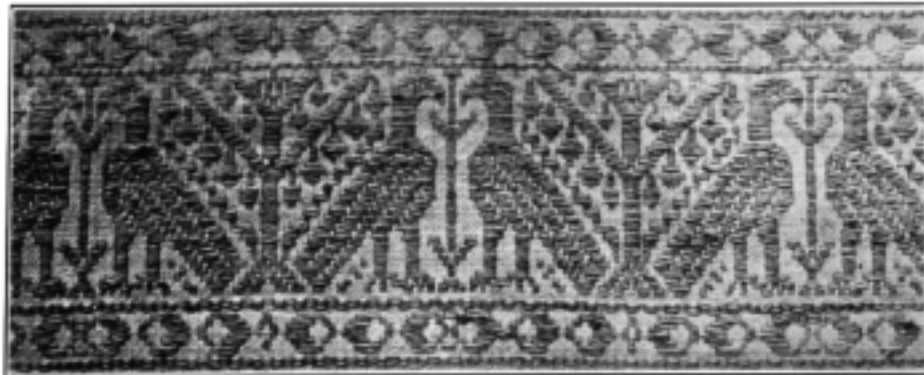
"The Revolution was his complete ruin, not only materially but also artistically. The fashion of the day no longer demanded the sumptuousness which had been the glory of Philippe de Lasalle. His work was the personification of refined luxury, a fashion that was brought suddenly to a brutal end. His talent needed the inspiration of a cultivated and distinguished clientèle that did not stoop to bargaining. The parsimonious economy of the *nouveaux riches* was incompatible to his art. Too old to change his manner, he found no way to express himself. Nothing more cruel could have happened to his genius. Napoleon gave him not a single command. In the last years of his life he did hardly anything more than interest himself in developing the mechanism of the loom, painfully working in an atelier of the palace Saint Pierre, which had been conceded to him by the municipality of Lyons. It is there that he died.

"Now that time has consecrated the work of the artist, the name of Philippe de Lasalle brings to a brilliant close the history of the industry of Lyons under the ancient régime."

NOTE:—The "Mise en Cartes" which is the subject of this article proved to be too delicate in coloring to make a satisfactory reproduction.



SILK DESIGNED BY PHILIPPE DE LASALLE.



ITALIAN WEAVE OF THE 16TH CENTURY IN THE M. M. A.

AN EXPERIMENT IN WEAVING

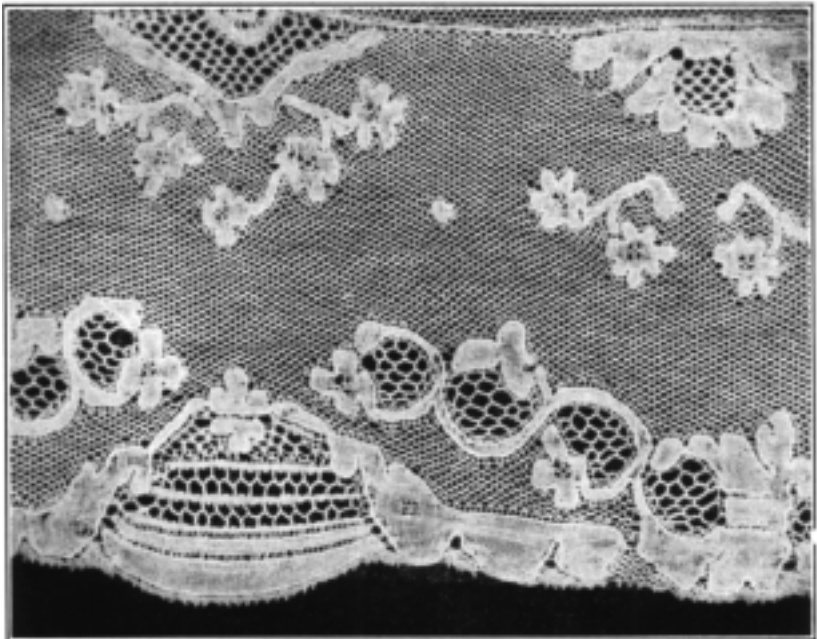
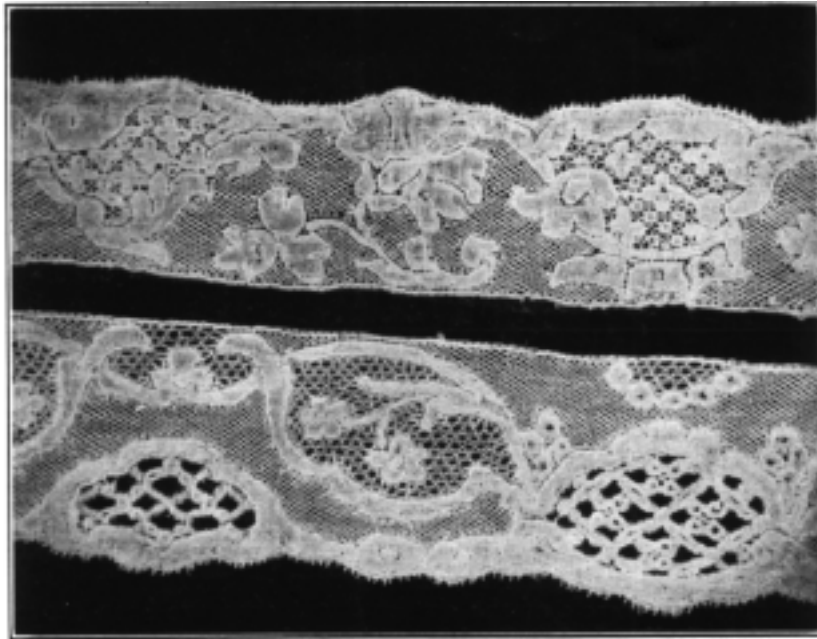
Looking through the collection of fabrics in the Museum Textile Study Room one day Miss de Neergaard chanced upon an Italian towel, a blue and white weave of the sixteenth century, and with this as a model she worked out the pattern shown below.

The Perugian towels of the sixteenth century have been reproduced by a modern Italian Industry with considerable exactness.

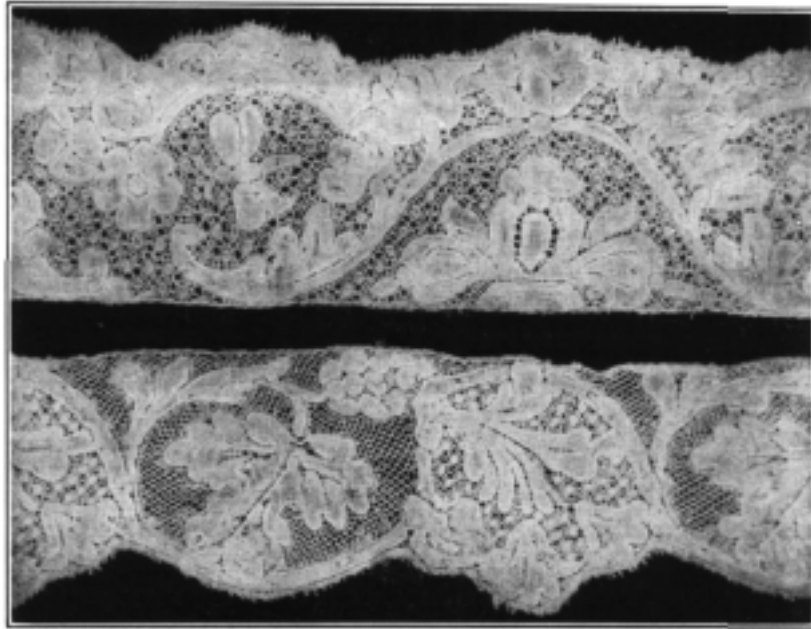
Those who are familiar with the old pattern books (such as Vavasore's of 1530), know that the patterns which appear to be for cross-stitch or filet are mentioned in the preface as suitable for weaving also. There is a complete file of reproductions of these early pattern books in the Library of the Metropolitan Museum.



MODERN WEAVING BY MISS DI NEERGAARD.



LACES OF MECHLIN TYPE WORN ON BOHEMIAN PEASANT CAPS.



BOHEMIAN LACE BONNETS

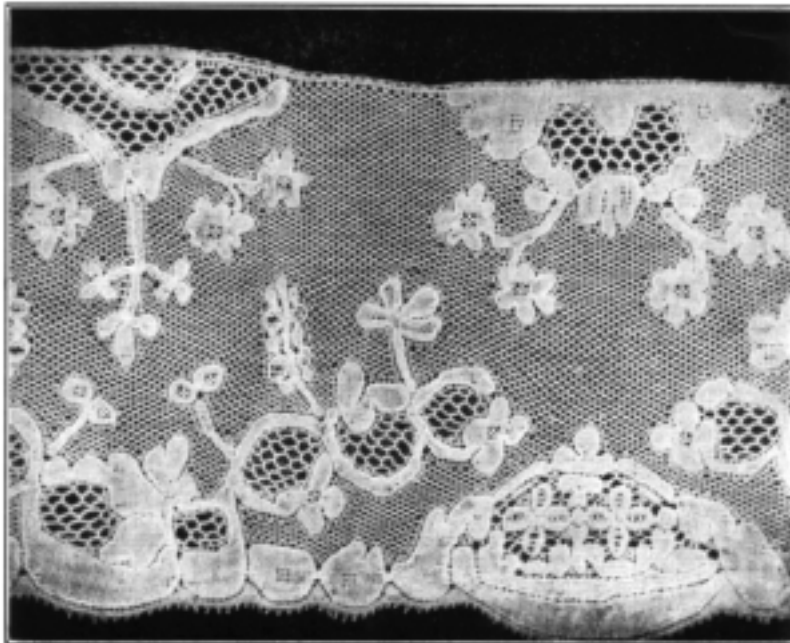
ABBIE C. MAHIN

THE accompanying photographs are of some of the Mechlin lace I have in the National Museum in Washington, all of which came from Reichenberg, the center of a large district of Bohemia.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the women of this district wore very beautiful, heavily embroidered, gold and silver bonnets with lace borders. The rank of the woman was indicated by the quality of the lace and the height of the border at the crown, and the bonnets were handed down from mother to daughter. This picturesque headgear is no longer worn, and when I was in Bohemia eighteen years ago, the antique dealers were cutting up the heavy gold and silver embroidery and melting it for the sake of the metal. The lace I was able to buy was at very reasonable prices. The gold and silver bonnets were worn on occasions of ceremony, such as weddings, et cetera, and at church. For ordinary wear in fine weather, there were white bonnets wonderfully worked with knots—with lace borders; and for rainy days, black embroidered ones with black lace borders.

The wide Mechlin lace of the two photographs has a réseau of two braided sides and four twisted ones, and is four inches wide. I have never found these two designs of Mechlin lace in any Flemish or Belgian plates and have always felt that these wide Mechlin laces used on the gold bonnets, might have been made in the mountains of Bohemia; or, if not, that they might have been made in Mechlin especially for the Bohemian trade. I had a friend in Reichenberg who had a large portrait of her grandmother, wearing an Empire gown and a gold bonnet with this same design of Mechlin lace. This friend had given to the Reichenberg Museum the gold bonnet with the lace still on it.

She told me that she and her mother had bought fine real lace from an old man who came from the mountains of Bohemia every spring with whatever lace, either bobbin or needle, the people had made during the winter, and his father had come before him to sell to her grandmother and friends. As it happened, the old man came while I was there and I bought from him a handkerchief of the most perfect Point de Gaze I have ever seen; but he told me there was no one then living in the mountains who could make the finest bobbin laces, such as I had; but they could make any fine needle lace.



BOOK NOTES

COLLECTION D'ANCIENNES ETOFFES EGYPTIENNES
DECRIRES PAR ISABELLE ERRERA, BRUSSELS, 1916

MADAME ISABELLA ERRERA'S Catalogue of the Ancient Egyptian fabrics in the Musée du Cinquantenaire at Brussels will delight all those who have enjoyed her thorough and intelligent scholarship in the two preceding volumes, the Catalogue de Broderies Anciennes and Catalogue d'Etoffes Anciennes et Modernes.

The Brussels collection is fairly representative of the different types of fabrics known to us through the excavations of Forrer, Gayet and others at Akhmim, Antinoë, etc., and it contains examples of the ancient textiles dating back to the first dynasty (5000-4750 B. C.), the latest pieces dating from about the twelfth century A. D. While there are few pieces that may be classed as monumental, all are interesting as illustrating ancient handiwork, and many are of unusually good quality, design and size. The catalogue will be of the greatest value to all students of the history of textile fabrics as until now so little has been written on the dating of the so-called Coptic stuffs. Of course much of the dating in this book is tentative, marked with an interrogation point, but Mme. Errera's noting of the attribution of similar pieces by other authorities is very valuable.

STICKEREI-TECHNIKEN FÜR SCHULE UND PRAXIS
EMILIE STIASNY, VIENNA, 1910.

These plates show in a very clearly comprehensible manner the working of a large number of embroidery stitches such as are used especially in the peasant embroidery of south-eastern Europe, including the stitches used in the work that comes to us from Bulgaria and Turkey. It does not touch as many forms of needlework as does the encyclopedia of Thérèse de Dillmont, but includes some stitches not to be found in that or in Miss L. Pesel's very comprehensive volumes. The pictures are so clear that the foreign language of the text would make little difference in its usefulness. The author was teacher of Art Embroidery in the Imperial schools in Vienna.

A GUIDE FOR THE LACE LOVER
BY CLARA M. BLUM DUTTON, 1920

This book, recently published by Dutton and written by a member of our club, will be more fully noticed in the next number of the BULLETIN.

DISCOVERIES OF SIR AUREL STEIN

Discoveries of Sir Aurel Stein in China, as reported in the Burlington Magazine for July, August and September, showing marvelous fabrics dating back to the first and second centuries B. C. of most interesting and complicated design, appeal to all students of history; and his studies of the trade relations of Europe and the Far East in the early centuries of the Christian era are surprisingly romantic reading. His former discoveries dated back to the ninth century, the Tang Dynasty.

FIELD NOTES

SUGAMO THREAD

FOR years experiments have been conducted with a view toward utilizing the long strands of one of the evergreen seaweeds abundant in and about Japan—*Phyllospadix scouleri*, called sugamo, ebino, ryugano and other names. It is much hated by fishermen and swimmers, for its waving arms frighten the fish and enmesh unwary bathers. The plant readily attaches itself to rocks and though often cut down, will, so long as any root remains, continue to grow. Sometimes this kelp-like alga attains a height of sixteen feet. It blossoms in the spring and ripens in September; so can be collected in either the fall or the winter. As it does not spoil, fishermen can put it aside till a dull season comes, and then cure it for spinning. It is boiled in lye for about two hours and permitted to cool slowly. This process weakens or rets the tough skin, which can readily be removed by washing. The remaining substance is boiled for a short while at a low temperature in rice water and then rinsed. The fibre is similar to cotton, which gains strength by being combined with sugamo, and can thus combined, withstand water for many months. As no special apparatus or knowledge is needed in gathering and preparing this weed, and since it grows profusely, it may indeed come into very great use and have a decided effect upon the cost of cotton.

A NEW LACE MACHINE

It is claimed that only an expert can distinguish between real lace and that made on the machine recently invented by two Derbyshire mechanics. The power to plait or braid is the distinguishing feature of the new apparatus, which can be attached to the ordinary Levers machine, thus supplementing the latter's ability to twist. The old invention uses only one set of jacquards; the new employs two: one set of which controls the action of the warp threads; the other, that of the bobbins.

CLUB NOTES

THE TRAVELING COLLECTION

THE traveling collection returned from its winter's journeys in really excellent condition, showing that it had been handled with great care by its various borrowers, which was very gratifying to the committee responsible for it. It was carefully gone over during the summer, several new cards were added, and more new cards are in preparation now. A group of twenty-two pieces were contributed from the collection of the late Mrs. Pinchot, and fourteen were given by Mrs. J. West Roosevelt. Among these new pieces are some interesting seventeenth century pieces as well as various charming eighteenth century types, and some good modern bits.

The cards were loaned to the Litchfield Auxiliary of our Club for a week or two in September and were much enjoyed there. In October they went to the Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis, from there to the Museum in Cincinnati, then follows the Art Association of Columbus, Ohio, and the itinerary for the near future includes the Art Association at Richmond, Indiana, the Museums at Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

With such an appreciative public enjoying this collection it is hoped that the Club members who have small pieces of good quality which they can spare will be willing either to give or lend them to this work.

Inquiries may be made of Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan at the Garden City Hotel, Garden City, L. I., N. Y., who has arranged the itineraries, or pieces may be sent to Miss Marian Hague, 161 East 82nd Street, New York, who has done the mounting of the laces.

The second collection, of more technical cards, was loaned during the summer to the teachers in the Occupational Therapy Department at Bellevue Hospital (New York). This collection consists at present of some thirty cards, showing as clearly as possible the processes in various forms of needlework, macramé knotting, knotted fringes, etc., and some bits of peasant embroideries, and weaving and lace work of various nationalities. It clamors for more examples, which should be of types useful to practical student workers, to give suggestions for stitches, colors or designs.

ANTIQUÉ LACES OF AMERICAN COLLECTORS

The Publication Committee expects to issue Part III of *Antique Laces of American Collectors* before Christmas. Part IV, with the Notes, should soon follow. Members wishing to subscribe are urged to do so through Mr. R. C. Greenleaf, Lawrence, L. I.

The parts so far issued have received many gratifying compliments from more than twenty Museums, Educational Institutions and Public Libraries in this country, and several from foreign countries, including the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington.

THE GUILD OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CRAFTS is a branch of work developed by The Needle and Bobbin Club and has no connection with any other organization.

This statement is prompted by the fact that there seems to be some confusion regarding our own Guild and the Society for the Revival of Household Industries and Domestic Arts, which has its headquarters in New York.

THE LITCHFIELD AUXILIARY

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB OF LITCHFIELD entertained its members and invited guests on the afternoon of Friday, September 17th, at a lecture given by Miss Marian Hague, Second Vice-President of the Needle and Bobbin Club of New York, and an Honorary Manager of the Needle and Bobbin Club of Litchfield.

The subject of the lecture was "The Relation of Lace to Embroidery," illustrated by examples from the earliest times. Miss Hague's delightful review of the history of the stitches that lead to the realm of lace was greatly appreciated.

The lecture was followed by an exhibit of Shawls, Laces and Embroideries in the possession of the friends of the Needle and Bobbin Club of Litchfield as well as of the Club itself.

The exhibit of Shawls was unique, and comprised examples of the Cashmere, or India Shawl, especially appreciated by an earlier generation, together with the Paisley Shawl and the embroidered Chinese Crêpe Shawl.

The place of honor in the exhibit was given to a very beautiful India Shawl of orange color, loaned by the Honorary President of the Club, Mrs. Vanderpoel, purchased in Paris, many years ago.

Miss Harriet Colgate Abbe, of the Needle and Bobbin Club of New York, and of Litchfield, having recently made a careful study of the Shawl, these unique treasures were exhibited under her supervision, with reference to delicacy of woven or embroidered detail, together with the place of weaving.

The numerous Shawls of Cashmere, Chuddah and Paisley, by their coloring and variety, gave a charming setting to the laces and embroideries.

Among the laces were lengths of rare Venetian Needlepoint, loaned by Miss Alice Wolcott, while among the embroideries, an antique embroidered Greek veil was loaned by Mrs. Robert Abbe. A veil of hand-wrought American lace of delightful design and delicacy, of the year 1831, a singularly beautiful specimen, loaned by the Misses Kingsbury, will remain as a loan, among the collections of the Needle and Bobbin Club of Litchfield.

MARY PERKINS QUINCY, President
The Needle and Bobbin Club of Litchfield.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

SINCE the meetings reported in the April BULLETIN, the following events have taken place:

The Annual Meeting for 1920 was held on February 3rd, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the meeting was addressed by Mr. M. J. Robinson on "The Preparation of Flax for Spinning."

On March 4th Mrs. Woods showed her collection of "Paniers Fleuris" to the members of the Club.

On November 12th Mrs. Howard Mansfield held a meeting on behalf of the travelling collections, which are in such great demand that it is hoped that members will help to increase the size and quality of the two collections we have.

On November 19th Mrs. Philip Kerrison showed her very interesting collection of looms and hand-woven textiles, including spinning wheels and flax grown and prepared and spun by her.

The Annual Meeting for 1921 will be held at the Metropolitan Museum on February 3, 1921, and other meetings at members houses will soon be announced.

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 8TH, 1916

Headquarters in New York City

THE AIM OF THE CLUB

TO stimulate and maintain an interest in handmade fabrics—lace, embroidery, weaving, tapestry—and to centralize such interest: to help in the maintenance of a high standard for decorative arts.

ADVANTAGES

LECTURES on kindred topics by eminent authorities.

NOTICES of sales, exhibits, books, and magazine articles mailed to enrolled members.

BULLETIN, illustrated, containing papers on allied subjects, bibliographies, and working patterns, published semi-annually; advertisements of teachers, schools, books, workers' supplies—thread, wool, bobbins; articles for sale—antique lace, et cetera.

CIRCULATING LIBRARY available to members—books free for one month: two cents a day rental thereafter; express charges payable by borrower.

WORKING PATTERNS from museum specimens for sale at minimum prices.

EXHIBITIONS by club members and their friends.

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LITCHFIELD AUXILIARY

OF

THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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BULLETIN OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

PUBLISHED SEMI-ANNUALLY BY THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB

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