

POINT LACE WORK.



HERE appears to be no limit to the display of taste and ingenuity in the art of needlework, and as a graceful occupation for young girls and women, either as a source of mere amusement or profitable employment, point-lace work must be hailed with pleasure.

The antiquity of fancy needlework has been often quoted and proved, and when we remember the difficulties under which our ancestors laboured, we cannot but wonder and admire the skill and perseverance we discover in the works of art now so often to be seen in our exhibitions. If we remember that before 1545 needles were obliged to be procured from abroad, and that the first manufactory in England was established in 1566, we shall not be surprised to hear that the loss of one of these useful little articles—then in a very different form to our present fine and varied needles—was looked upon as a real misfortune.

How little do our careless needlewomen, young and old, who so constantly cry, "Oh, there! I have lost my needle," and as heedlessly turn to their housewives, so as not to lose time, as they say, in searching for the missing piece of steel, and so encourage a species of waste and extravagance—how little, I say, do they consider the advantages they derive from the wonderful progress of needlework arising from the manufacture of the needle, threads, silks of all kinds, as well as the material on which their embroidery may be displayed, nor the great assistance our artists are giving in their beautiful and clear designs! If the use of the needle has lost much of its "cunning," since it was the fashion for ladies to sit with their maidens for hours at their embroidery frames, the advance in the designs and truthful delineation of flower and figure has wonderfully progressed, and in this particular alone much aid has been given to the careful worker.

The present fashion for point lace in all its varieties offers a splendid opportunity for the display of taste and beauty, either in its finer forms for ornaments on dress, or in the coarser qualities, as decorations in almost endless ways.

The work is so pleasant when once mastered that we are sure our young friends will thank us if we can give them some simple rules concerning it.

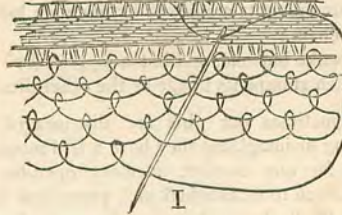
In the first place we would advise the procuring a piece of dark blue or green firm cotton (not glazed), to form a sampler for the patterns of the different stitches. It should be about a quarter of a yard square, or a narrower and longer piece, hemmed all round. This is to be covered with a Honiton braid, with open edge, in squares of about an inch and a-half or two inches; care must be taken to fix the braid firmly, to keep it from stretching. The better plan is to darn the cotton up and down the centre of the braid in vandykes. The size of the lace, needles, and Mecklenburg thread will depend on the quality of the work in hand.

For working patterns a medium-size thread should be used, as the stitches can be more easily shown and copied when not very fine.

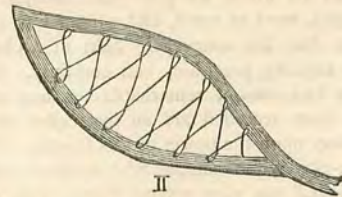
The designs which we give have been carefully drawn from actual work; we therefore hope that they will be found very useful as a beginning to the learner; and empty spaces on the "sampler" can be filled in, as from time to time other patterns are given. The groundwork or first and most simple stitch in "point lace" is the *point de Bruxelles*, and is formed by a succession of stitches passing the needle through one of the *picots*, or open edge, with the thread held down as for a button-hole

stitch, and leaving a small loop between each stitch.

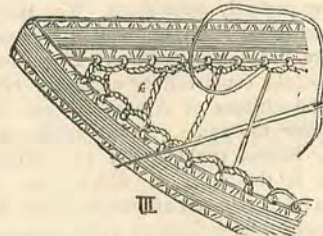
Of course, the beauty of the work greatly depends upon the evenness with which the stitches are made.



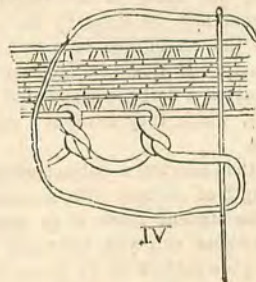
No. 1 will show the method of working this stitch. The work is commenced from left to right, and then backward and forward.



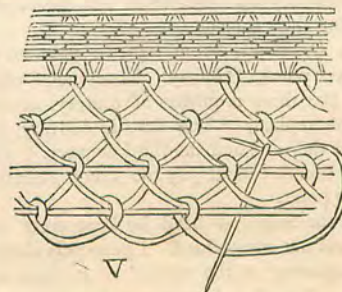
No. 2 is used for veins in leaves, or narrow openings. The thread is simply carried along in herring-bone stitch, if the space is small.



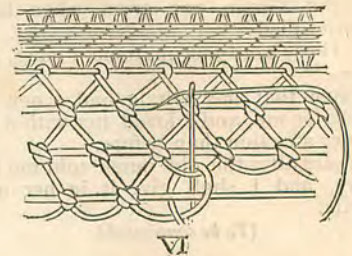
No. 3 is a larger description of leaf or space, and is first worked down one side in simple *point de Bruxelles*, and after turning the corner the thread is taken to the opposite side, and worked round three or four times, forming a cable or firm bar.



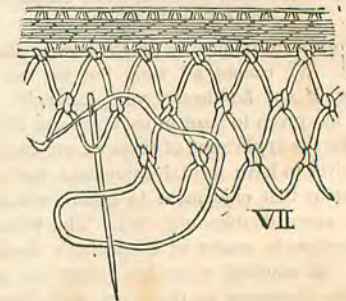
No. 4 is called the knotted stitch. The illustration clearly indicates the manner of working it. The thread, when turned round the needle, is held close by the thumb on the left hand before drawing the needle through.



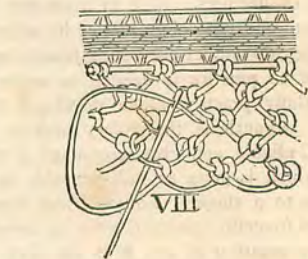
No. 5 is the *point barré* stitch. It is worked from the left to the right side in *point de Bruxelles*, and then the thread carried back beneath the first row, and worked in with every stitch on the next row.



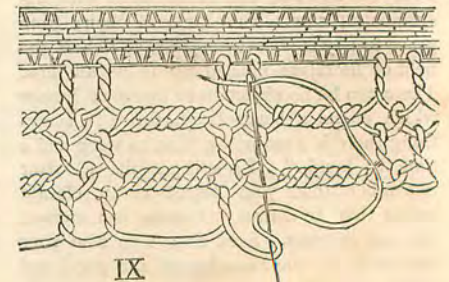
No. 6. Commence the same as No. 5, forming the knot or cross-stitch. The needle is passed through the loop and under the bar, as shown in illustration.



No. 7, *point filet*. Put the needle through a *picot*, and pass the thread once round the needle before drawing it through; return in same manner.

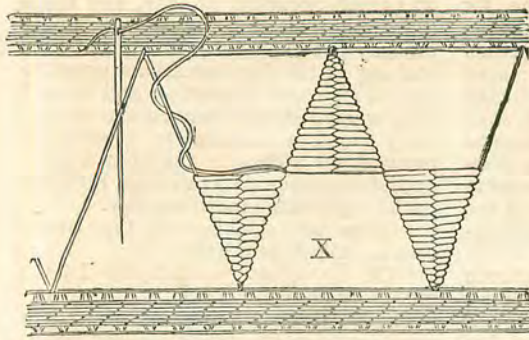


No. 8. *Point dentelle* is worked the same as *point de Bruxelles*, excepting that a second stitch is placed in each loop.

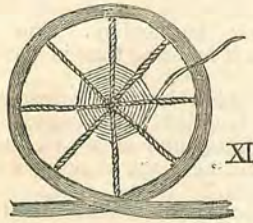


No. 9. This pattern is made with loose loops of different sizes, and twisting the thread twice round the needle. The second row is worked with one *point de Bruxelles* between the narrow space, and several button-hole stitches over the longer space. The first row is worked from right to left.

No. 10. Alternate cones. Take the thread across in vandykes at equal distances; then commence at one point to pass the needle



over one and under the other thread of the vandyke a sufficient number of times to reach midway, keeping the lines very close together; then carry the thread round the upper part of the foundation, and fasten it to the braid, working downwards for the upper cone.



No. 11 is the "wheel" pattern, a very useful stitch for filling in round spaces. Make a line across in a straight direction and work back to centre by twisting the thread several times round the bar, then form the other seven bars in the same manner: finish them with a stitch in the centre. The close spider web in the middle is made by passing the needle over and under each bar until the width required is worked.

This lace is specially suitable for the large collars and cuffs worn with velvetene costumes at the present time; broad and narrow laces for trimmings, for coverings for mantle shelf hangings, and bands over some bright coloured lining for the edges of fancy table-covers are among the many uses to which this elegant work can be applied.

We hope to give patterns for the different styles in some future number of "Our Work Basket."

STORIES IN MINIATURE.

AT A WEDDING IN HIGH LIFE.



THE young Colin, Earl of Balcarres, had won for his bride a charming Dutch lady, Mauritia de Nassau. The wedding day arrived, a noble party were assembled at the church, and the bride was waiting for the bridegroom; but, to the dismay of the company, no bridegroom appeared.

Colin, who was a volatile youth, had quite forgotten the day of his marriage, and was discovered at home in his dressing-gown and slippers, quietly eating his breakfast.

Thus far the tale is comical enough, but many a tear has been shed at its conclusion. Colin hurried to the church, but in his haste left the ring in his writing-case. A friend in the company gave him one, the ceremony went on, and without looking at it he placed the ring on the finger of his fair young bride. It was a mourning ring, with a death's head and cross-bones.

On perceiving it at the close of the ceremony the bride fainted away, and the evil omen made such an impression on her mind that on recovering she declared she should die within the year, and her presentiment was too truly fulfilled.

THE LOST RING.

Of all extraordinary stories regarding the loss and recovery of rings—and there are some extraordinary ones, and well authenticated too—the following is the strangest we have ever met with:—

A servant boy was once sent into a country town with a valuable ring. He took it out of its box to admire it, and in passing over a plank bridge let it fall on a muddy bank. Not being able to find it, he ran away, took to sea, finally settled in a colony, made a large fortune, came back after many years, and bought the estate on which he had been servant.

One day, while walking over his land with a friend, he came to the plank bridge, and there told his friend the story.

"Why, friend," said he, pushing his stick into the mud, "this is the very spot on which the ring dropped."

When the stick came back the ring was on the end of it.

AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART.

When Theodore Hook was once travelling by coach there were but two inside passengers—a very pretty but very delicate-looking young lady, attended by a homely-looking maid.

The coach stopped for twenty minutes to allow of dinner. Hook returned first to his place; the maid next. During the absence of her young mistress Hook said to her in a tone of great sympathy—

"Your young lady seems very unwell?"

"Yes, sir, she suffers sadly."

"Consumption, I should fear?"

"No, sir, I am sorry to say it is the heart."

"Dear me! Aneurism?"

"Oh, no, sir! it is only a lieutenant in the navy."

It was an illness from which she would probably recover.

THE KING OF THE CATS.

Sir Walter Scott used to tell a story about a guidman who was returning to his cottage one night, when, in a lonely, out-of-the-way place, he met with a funeral procession of cats, all in mourning, bearing one of their race to the grave, in a coffin covered with a black velvet pall.

The worthy man, astonished and half frightened at so strange a pageant, hastened home, and told his wife and children what he had seen, when a great black cat that sat beside the fire raised himself up, exclaiming, "Then am I king of the cats!" and vanished up the chimney.

The funeral seen by the guidman was that of one of the cat dynasty.

"On that account," Sir Walter would add, "I am inclined to treat my cat with great respect, from the idea that he may be a prince *incog.*, and may some day or other fall heir to the throne."

THE VALIANT KNIGHT AND THE SLEEP-WALKING LADY.

In the olden time a knight who loved a lady at Greystoke, on the Lake of Ulleswater, went forth to win renown. He succeeded in making himself famous, but he was so long of returning, and the lady heard so much of his deeds in

behalf of distressed damsels, that doubts at length stole into her heart as to whether he still loved her.

These doubts disturbed her mind and she began to walk in her sleep, directing her steps towards a waterfall where she and the knight used to meet. Under a holly-tree beside the fall they had plighted their vows. This was the limit of her dreaming walks.

The knight at last returned to claim her. Arriving in the night, he went to the ravine to rest under the holly, until morning should permit him to knock at the gate of the tower; but he saw a gliding white figure among the trees, and this figure reached the holly before him, and plucked twigs from the tree and threw them into the stream. Was it the ghost of his lady-love or was it herself?

She stood in a dangerous place. He put out his hand to save her, as he thought, from falling. The touch awakened her. In her terror and confusion she slipped from his grasp into the torrent, and was carried down the ravine. He followed and rescued her, but she died upon the bank, not, however, without having fully understood that her lover was true, and had come to claim her.

The knight devoted the rest of his days to mourning his lost love; he built a cell upon the spot, and became a recluse for her sake.

BETWIXT THE CUP AND THE LIP.

There is a well-known proverb, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." This proverb comes to us from the Greek, and has a very striking story connected with it.

A man had a number of slaves, who were occupied in planting and otherwise laying out a vineyard for him, and he treated them with extreme cruelty. At last one of them, the most ill-used, prophesied that for his severity he should never drink of its wine.

When the first vintage was completed, the master bade this slave fill a goblet for him, and taunted him with the non-fulfilment of his prophecy.

The other replied with the words which have since become proverbial. As he spoke, tidings were hastily brought of a huge wild boar that was wasting the vineyard. Putting down the cup, the master went out to meet the wild boar, and was slain in the encounter. Thus the proverb arose.

THE SECRET OF PERFECTION.

All *our* girls are striving after perfection, each in her separate calling, so here is a short story for every one to lay to heart.

A friend once called on Michael Angelo, one of the greatest geniuses Italy has ever produced, and found him finishing a statue. Some time afterwards he called again; the sculptor was still at work. His friend, looking at the figure, exclaimed—

"You have been very idle since I saw you last."

"By no means," replied Michael Angelo. "I have retouched this part and polished that; I have softened this feature and brought out that muscle; I have given greater expression to the lip and more energy to that limb."

"Well, well," said his friend, "but these are trifles."

"It may be so," answered Angelo, "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."

