

**EMBROIDERY AND LACE; THEIR
MANUFACTURE AND HISTORY FROM
THE REMOTEST
ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT DAY. A
HANDBOOK FOR AMATEURS,
COLLECTORS, AND GENERAL READERS**

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Embroidery and Lace; Their Manufacture and History from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Day. A Handbook for Amateurs, Collectors, and General Readers by Ernest Lefébure & Alan S. Cole

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ERNEST LEFÉBURE & ALAN S. COLE

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A HANDBOOK FOR
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BY
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TRANSLATED AND ENLARGED, WITH NOTES, BY

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*Author of "Ancient Needlepoint and Pillow Lace," Descriptive
Catalogues of the Lace, Tapestry, and Embroidery Collections
in South Kensington Museum, etc.*

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX WOODCUTS.

LONDON:
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1888.

PREFACE.

THIS book has been compiled with the view of supplying a link which has been missing in the history of embroidery, no serious work on this fascinating subject having been hitherto published. This may appear strange when one reflects that few arts have been more universally practised. True, several books have been written about various classes and aspects of embroidery. Amongst others, there are Lady Marian Alford's *Needlework as Art*, Miss Dolby's *Church Embroidery*, Miss Higgins' *Handbook of Embroidery*, Dr. Rock's *Textile Fabrics*, and the Countess of Wilton's *Art of Needlework*. Some of these are rather out of date; none can be held to fulfil the same purpose as Monsieur Lefébure's book in dealing with the technical character of embroidery, and in presenting a succinct and comprehensive sketch of its history, to instruct needlewomen and to

serve as a guide to amateurs interested in the subject.

Lace-making is more fortunate than embroidery in having been historically discussed by many authors, to whom we are indebted for the principal facts which appear in the chapters devoted to this industry ; their names are so frequently cited in the course of our remarks, that it seems unnecessary to mention them here. We are none the less indebted to them for assistance in the second part of this work.

We have adopted the classification of needlepoint laces, and those made on the pillow with bobbins ; a classification which is of primary importance, and has not been effectually established by writers who have preceded us. This will help readers to detect different makes of laces most diverse in appearance, and it will guard them from confusing one class with the other. Lace is the most poetic of all textile tissues, and has been sung in verse. So far from veiling beauty, it surrounds it with a filmy aureole or environment of such appropriateness as to have inspired many poets. The historian's duty,

however, is to take account of precise facts; we have therefore borrowed but little from the legends and verses concerning lace-making.

Our aim, moreover, is not only to give instruction by a record of facts, but, above all, to centre interest upon the *rôle* which woman's labour plays in the artistic productions of the world. And the temptation presents itself of inquiring whether it is not rather by the needle and the bobbin than by the brush, the graver, or the chisel, etc., that the influence of woman should assert itself in the arts. She is sovereign in the domain of art needle-work; few men would care to dispute with her the right of using those delicate implements, so intimately associated with the dexterity of her nimble and slender fingers. But do intelligent women sufficiently encourage the results of this association? Could they not give more attention, study, and effort, to stimulate a fuller development of artistic work produced by the needle and the bobbin?

To bring such questions home to impressionable natures of generous aspirations, is, we hope, to instigate in many directions a progress of knowledge and opinion through

which it may be recognized that the productions of embroidery and lace-making are worthy of standing upon the same level with those of painting, engraving, and sculpture, and of being represented in our public museums.

The satisfaction that we have rendered some service in writing the following pages, will confer upon us the best recompense for a work to which we have striven to bring all our ability, coupled with the affection in which we hold our industry.

We should mention that this translation contains a number of additional notes, and modifications of certain statements. This is the case, for instance, in respect of Egyptian work referred to on p. 24, and of Greek embroidery (p. 46), where a new illustration is given. Again, the description of Irish laces has been enlarged, and six new engravings have been inserted (pp. 249—254).



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