

[Illustration: 430.--Linen Braid.]

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The BRAIDS are of various widths and kinds. None but pure linen braid should be employed; those with machine-made edgings are eschewed by many lace-workers, the plain, loose-woven linen braid of various widths and qualities being alone acceptable to experienced hands.

But all ladies do not care to be at the trouble of edging the braid, and will find Nos. 426, 428, 430, and 431 very useful. No. 429 is a plain linen braid with a vandyked edge, which works out very prettily. No. 431 is an edged braid with open holes, in imitation of the point lace work of the fifteenth century.

Point lace cords resemble the satin stitch embroidery in their close, regular smoothness; the price is 1s. per hank, and they are of various thicknesses, from the size of a coarse crochet thread up to that of a thick piping cord. These cords are used to ornament the braid, and are closely sewn on the braid, following its every outline, and serve as beading to the edging, being always sewn on the outer edge alone. The finer kinds of this cord are used in place of braid where very light work is needed, as in the point lace alphabet which forms the frontispiece of this work. Directions for laying on the cord when employed as braid are given on page 500. When used as a finish only, and to impart the raised appearance of Venice and Spanish lace, it is fixed on the braid by plain, close sewing. The thread used should be Mecklenburg linen thread; that of Messrs. Walter Evans and Co. we strongly recommend as being of pure linen, washing and wearing well; it is pleasant to work with, from the regularity and evenness of the make. The numbers run thus:--2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 30, 36, and 40--and will be found adapted for every kind of lace stitch. No. 2 is the coarsest, No. 40 the finest, size.

In working point lace the following directions must be attended to: Begin at the left hand, and work from left to right, when not otherwise directed, as in reverse rows. Before cutting off the braid run a few stitches across it to prevent it widening. Joins should be avoided, but when a join is indispensable, stitch the braid together, open and turn back the ends, and stitch each portion down separately. When passing the thread from one part to another, run along the centre of the braid, allowing the stitches to show as little as possible. In commencing, make a few stitches, leaving the end of the thread on the wrong side and cutting it off afterwards. In fastening off, make a tight button-hole stitch, run on three stitches, bring the needle out at the back, and cut off.

Having now completed our list of materials, we can proceed to lay on the braid.

[Illustration: 442.--Mode of Placing the Braid.]

TO PLACE THE BRAID.--No. 442 shows the design traced upon paper or

tracing cloth, and lightly tacked to a foundation of leather or toile ciree. Run on a straight line of braid for the lower edge, with fine stitches, working as shown from left to right. Take another piece of braid, or the other end of the same piece, and begin to lay the braid by "running" stitches in its centre, keeping it as smooth and even as possible. The outer edge presents no difficulty, but the inner edge will not lie evenly without being drawn in by a needle and thread, as follows:--Thread a No. 9 needle with No. 12 Mecklenburg thread about 20 inches long, fasten the thread to one point, and insert the needle in and out of the edge of the braid, as if for fine gathering; this thread when drawn up will keep the braid in its place. Two or three fastening off stitches should be worked when each circle, half circle, or rounded curve of a pattern is finished, as the drawing or gathering thread remains in the work, and forms an important, though unseen, part of its structure.

As much of the beauty of point lace depends upon the manner of placing the braid, ladies cannot bestow too much pains upon this part of the work, which is a little troublesome to beginners. Many fancy shops now undertake this braid-placing for ladies, who can have their own pattern braided and commenced or braided alone at trifling expense. Among these may be mentioned the following houses:--Goubaud, 30, Henrietta-street, Covent-garden. Boutillier, Oxford-street, W.

The stitches used in point lace may be divided into--

STITCHES PROPER, or points.

CONNECTING BARS.

FINISHING EDGINGS.

WHEELS, ROSETTES.

The term point lace, or lace stitches (points), has of late been applied to every stitch executed with Mecklenburg thread, and many stitches are erroneously named by modern writers. As there are more than one hundred stitches employed in this beautiful art, much study and opportunity of seeing specimens of old point lace is required to give a novice any idea of the various kinds of point lace; but by attention to the following stitches the rudiments of the art may be easily acquired and very beautiful lace produced.

The first stitch is POINT DE BRUXELLES, or Brussels lace stitch. This stitch, as may be clearly seen in illustration No. 433, is a simple button-hole stitch worked loosely and with great regularity. The whole beauty of Brussels lace depends upon the evenness of the stitches. This stitch is sometimes employed as an edging, but is more often worked in rows backwards and forwards, either as a groundwork or to fill spaces, as in the point lace collar, No. 496.

[Illustration: 433. Point de Bruxelles (Brussels Lace).]

[Illustration: 434.--Point de Bruxelles (Brussels Lace Worked in Rows).]

Brussels Point is the foundation of nearly all the lace stitches.

POINT DE VENISE (Venetian or Venice Point) is worked from left to right, like Brussels point. Work one loose button-hole, and in this stitch work four button-hole stitches tightly drawn up, then work another loose button-hole stitch, then four more tight button-hole stitches in the loose one, repeat to the end of the row, and fasten off.

[Illustration: 435.--Point de Venise (Venice Point).]

[Illustration: 436.--Petit Point de Venise (Little Venice Point).]

PETIT POINT DE VENISE (Little Venice Point) is worked in the same manner as Point de Venise, but one tight stitch only is worked in each loose button-hole stitch. This is a most useful stitch for filling small spaces.

[Illustration: 437.--Point d'Espagne (Spanish Point).]

No. 437.--POINT D'ESPAGNE (Spanish Point) is worked from left to right as follows:--Insert the needle in the edge of the braid, keeping the thread turned to the right, bringing it out inside the loop formed by the thread (see illustration No. 437); the needle must pass from the back of the loop through it. Pass the needle under the stitch and bring it out in front, thus twice twisting the thread, which produces the cord-like appearance of this stitch. At the end of each row fasten to the braid and return by sewing back, inserting the needle once in every open stitch.

[Illustration: 438.--Close Point d'Espagne (Close Spanish Point).]

No. 438.--POINT D'ESPAGNE (Close) is worked in the same way as open point d'Espagne, but so closely as to only allow the needle to pass through in the next row. This stitch is also worked from left to right; fasten to the braid at the end of each row, and sew back to the left again.

No. 439.--TREBLE POINT D'ESPAGNE is worked in exactly the same way as the open and close point d'Espagne, as may be seen in illustration No. 439.

Three close stitches, one open, three close to the end of each row. Sew back, and in the next row begin one open, three close, one open, then close to the end; repeat the rows as far as necessary, taking care that the close and open stitches follow in regular order. Diamonds, stars, and various patterns may be formed with this stitch.

[Illustration: 439.--Treble Point d'Espagne (Treble Spanish Point).]