Two extremely fine examples of Brussels point de gaze lace have lately been added to the Museum's collection through the generous gift of Mrs. Edward S. Harkness and are now to be seen in Gallery H 19. They are particularly welcome additions to our collection as they illustrate the closing chapter of lacemaking in the grand manner and serve to complete the story of this art. The gift includes a flounce and matching border, probably intended for trimming a bodice. Both embody the same design, the narrower piece showing it in a simpler form. Against a ground of cobweb delicacy are placed fleurs-de-lis, fern fronds, and Queen Anne's lace, as the main motifs, with lilies of the valley, pansies, single roses, forget-me-nots, daisies, and stalks of foxglove surrounding them; above this, a miniature ivy vine, entwined with tiny roses and fern sprays, completes the pattern.

The lace has, in addition to the interest of its truly exquisite workmanship, the charm of association with the luxurious court of the Second Empire. It is said to have been made to the order of the Empress Eugénie and may very well have been worn with one of those fabulous gowns such as we see in the well-known Winterhalter painting now at the Château de Malmaison, where the empress is shown surrounded by the ladies of her court. Here every costume is draped with filmy lace, either white or black. The Empress's love of lace, which amounted to a passion, is reflected in all the dressmaking of the period, where flounces, sleeve ruffles, and berthas of lace were de rigueur in formal costumes. This trend of fashion had the double effect of prolonging the production of handmade lace, owing to the royal patronage given the lacemakers, and of encouraging the immense development of its manufacture by machine, as a result of the great demand for machine lace on the part of the less wealthy.

Our search to discover any existing proof that our lace belonged to the Empress Eugénie has been unrewarded. No record of her having owned it has come to light, nor have we been able to find any picture showing her wearing it. However, in the course of our search we found two pieces very similar to ours, which were once owned by a royal personage, and this suggests that our lace was undoubtedly made for someone of high position and great wealth. These pieces—a Brussels flounce and border which belonged to the Empress Elizabeth of Austria—were shown in an exhibition at the Österreichisches Museum in Vienna in 1906. Moriz Dreger, who wrote the catalogue for the exhibition, dated them in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. While they are not identical in design, they are very evidently from the same workshop as our examples. Further search brought to light a lace border even closer to ours in design, shown at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. This lace, possibly Chantilly, is black, and the catalogue states that it was made by "Verde de Lisle Brothers, Brussels," Verdé-Delisle et Compagnie, later identified with the Compagnie des Indes, was a lacemaking firm that had business houses in Brussels and Paris and won prizes at all the international expositions from 1862 to 1881. A fourth piece, of black Chantilly, apparently a copy of the Centennial example, made by Georges Martin of the Compagnie des Indes, was shown at the Musée Galliera, Paris, in 1904.

It would seem that our flounce and border were made sometime between 1865 and 1875, during the latter part of the crinoline period, and that Verdé-Delisle Company were the lacemakers who produced it. The pattern was evi-
Flounce of Brussels needlepoint made between 1865 and 1875
dently one of great popularity, copied more than once from the exquisite Brussels examples but in simpler techniques and with slight changes in design.

The method of making Brussels *point de gaze* demanded the utmost skill, as the motifs and ground were formed simultaneously, by means of the same thread. The lace was made in small sections, the joinings concealed by small sprigs or leaves, and the entire piece was made by the same laceworker. Mrs. Palliser in her *History of Lace* gives the period from 1867 to 1875 as the high point in the production of this lace.

The luxurious living that encouraged lace-making of such distinction vanished with the fall of the Second Empire, and with it went the last of a great tradition, but our laces still serve to remind us of this period of brilliance and charm.

*The Empress Eugénie. A lithograph after a portrait by Winterhalter*