

ancient Greeks. We read how Minerva, goddess of wisdom, though she scarcely can be said to have encouraged the art, took it under her especial patronage, and dire was the punishment inflicted upon Arachne, who dared to rival the goddess in this her favourite pursuit:—

“Arachne once, as poets tell,  
A goddess at her art defied;  
But soon the daring mortal fell  
The hapless victim of her pride.”<sup>9</sup>

In Homer, and other early authors, we have constant mention of veils,<sup>10</sup> cauls, and networks of gold, as well as of embroidered garments, while the outer tunics of the Egyptian robes of state, as depicted on the tombs, appear fashioned of a looped network or crochet, darned around the hem in patterns of gold, silver, and divers colours, realising the saying of Isaiah: “They that work in fine flax, and weave networks.”<sup>11</sup> It was doubtless from the Egyptians that the Israelites learned the art.

Alexander the Great and Augustus Cæsar both showed their estimation of the needle; and the perfection of the Phrygian women caused all fine embroidery to be called by their name.<sup>12</sup> Gold threadwork was known to the Romans.

The author of “Letters from Italy,”<sup>13</sup> speaking of the cabinet at Portici, mentions an elegant marble statue of Diana, dressed “after the purple gowns worn by the Roman ladies; the garment is edged with a lace exactly resembling point; it is of an inch and a half broad, and has been painted purple.”

But nations far removed from civilisation were by no means ignorant of this handicraft, as the discovery of gold needles and other working implements in the Scandinavian tumuli can testify. Of these works little now exists even in the Northern museums.

<sup>9</sup> Goldsmith.

<sup>10</sup> So Pallas:

“Within her father’s threshold dropped  
her veil

Of airy texture—work of her own  
hand.”

*Iliad*, book viii., Lord Derby’s trans.

And again, when Diomed wounds  
Venus, his spear pierces

“Th’ ambrosial veil, the Graces’ work.”  
*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Chap. xix. 9. Also: “Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail”—*Ezekiel* xxvii. 7; and again, ver. 16: “Syria was thy merchant . . . they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and brodered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.”

<sup>12</sup> “Opus phrygianum.”

<sup>13</sup> In the years 1770 and 1771. By an Englishwoman (Mrs. Miller). London, 1777.