

SOMETHING ABOUT LACE.

THERE is probably no article, not a necessity, which has employed so many heads and hands, and been the subject of such varied interests, as lace. The making of it has given employment to countless nunneries, where the ladies, working first and most heartily for the church, have also taught this art to their pupils as an accomplishment or a means of support. It was, indeed, so peculiarly the province of the religious that, long after it was done in the world, it still bore the name of "nun's-work."

In those old days when railroads were not, and when swamps and forests covered tracts of land now thick with villages and cities, country ladies made fine needle-work their chief occupation; and it was the custom in feudal times for the squires'

daughters to spend some time in the castle, in attendance on the *châtelaine*, where they learned to embroider and make lace. It was then a woman's only resource, and was held in high esteem. In the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, one Catherine Sloper was laid to rest, in 1620, with the inscription on her tombstone that she was "exquisite at her needle."

Millions of poor women, and even men and children, have earned their bread by this delicate labor; women of intelligence and fair estate have devoted their lives to it; and noble and regal ladies have been proud to excel in the art.

It is related that when Cardinals Wolsey and Campeggio went down to the palace at Bridewell to seek an interview with the repudiated wife of Henry VIII., they found her seated

among her ladies embroidering, and she came to meet them with a skein of red silk around her neck. In those days they wrought and made lace with colored silk. We can imagine how the bright floss must have trembled over the tumultuous beatings of that wronged heart during the cruel interview that followed.

But the work of Catherine of Aragon was not for vanity's sake, nor even to pass the heavy hours. In her native Spain the rarest laces were made for the church, and not only nuns, but ladies of the world, wove pious thoughts in with that fairy web. Perhaps nowhere else, save in Rome, was the church lace so rich as in Spain. Images of favorite saints and Madonnas had wardrobes of regal magnificence, changed every day, and the altars and vestments were no less regally adorned.

Beckford writes that, in 1787, the Marchioness of Cogalhudo, wife of the eldest son of the semi-regal race of Medina Cœli, was appointed Mistress of the Robes to Our Lady of La Solidad, in Madrid, and that the office was much coveted.

It is supposed that the peasantry of Bedfordshire, in England, first learned lace-making through the charity of Queen Catherine. While at Ampthill, it is recorded that, when not at her devotions, she, with her ladies, "wrought a needle-work costly and artificially, which she intended for the honor of God to bestow on some of the churches."

The country people had the greatest love and respect for the disgraced queen; and, till lately, the lace-makers held "Cattern's Day," the 25th of November, as the holiday of their craft, "in memory of good Queen Catherine, who, when trade was dull, burnt all her laces, and ordered new to be made. The ladies of the court followed her example, and the fabric

once more revived." Lace was and is considered a suitable present from a king to a pontiff. These earlier gifts were, it is true, sometimes of gold and silver lace wrought with precious stones, but they were scarcely more costly than the later white-thread points. In the Exhibition of 1859 was shown a dress valued at 200,000 francs, the most costly work ever executed at Alençon. This Napoleon III. purchased for the empress, who, it is said, presented it to his Holiness the Pope as a trimming for his rochet. Also, so early as the XIIIth century, the English cut-work was so fine that, according to Matthew Paris, Pope Innocent IV. sent official letters to some of the Cistercian abbots of England to procure a certain quantity of those vestments for his own use. His Holiness had seen and admired the orfrays of the English clergy.

The finest specimens extant of this old English work (*opus Anglicanum*) are the cope and maniple of S. Cuthbert, taken from his coffin many years ago in the cathedral of Durham, and now preserved in the chapter library of that city. One who has seen them declares them beautiful beyond description.

This work seems to have been at first used only for ecclesiastical purposes, and the making of it to have been a secret preserved in the monasteries.

Nor have the clergy been merely the wearers of lace. We hear of monks being praised for their skill in "imbrothering"; and S. Dunstan himself did not disdain to design patterns for church lace. Pattern-books for these needle-laces were made by monks as well as laymen, and plates in them represent men seated at the embroidering frame. Some of these old pattern-books of the XVIth cen-

ture are preserved in the library of S. Geneviève at Paris, inherited from the monastery of that name. These books are prized and sought for as some of the earliest specimens of block-printing. But few remain, and doubtless their high price prevented them from being made in great numbers. Their place was taken by samplers, into which were copied the patterns desired. From these old lace-samplers come the later alphabetical samplers, which many now living will remember to have made in their youth.

Large quantities of rich old lace were lost in the last century, when the French Revolution brought in gauzes and blondes, and fashion tossed aside as worthless these exquisite products of the needle. In Italy, where the custom was to preserve old family lace, less was destroyed; but in England it was handed over to servants or farm people, or stowed away in attics, and afterwards burned. Some ladies gave point-laces which now they could not afford to buy, to their children to dress their dolls with. Sometimes it was thrown away as old rags.

In the church, however, fashion had no power, and old lace has been usually preserved. Some collections are exceedingly valuable. Notable among these is that of the Rohan family, who gave princes-archbishops to Strasbourg. Baroness de Oberkirck, in *Memoirs of the Court of Louis XVI.*, writes: "We met the cardinal coming out of his chapel dressed in a soutane of scarlet moire and rochet of inestimable value. When, on great occasions, he officiates at Versailles, he wears an alb of old lace of needle-point of such beauty that his assistants were almost afraid to touch it. His arms and device are worked in a medallion above the large flowers." This alb is estimated at 100,000 livres.

It is impossible to exaggerate the extent to which lace was used prior to the French Revolution, or the immense extravagance of the sums spent on it. Everybody wore it, even servants emulating their masters and mistresses. It trimmed everything, from the towering Fontanges, which rose like a steeple from ladies' heads, to the boot-tops and shoe-rosettes of men. Men wore lace ruffles not only at the wrist, but at the knee, lace ruffs, cravats, collars, and garters; and bed furniture was made of lace, or trimmed with it, costly as it was. A pair of ruffles would amount to 4,000 livres, a lady's cap to 1,200 livres. We read that Mme. du Barry gave 487 francs for lace enough to trim a pillow-case, and 77 livres for a pair of ruffles. Lace fans were made in 1668, and lace-trimmed bouquet-holders are not a new fancy. When the Doge of Venice made his annual visit to the convent *Delle Vergini*, the lady abbess used to meet him in the parlor, surrounded by her novices, and present him a nosegay in a gold handle trimmed with the richest lace that could be found in Venice.

Voltaire says that the mysterious Iron Mask was passionately fond of fine linen and rich lace.

So extravagant had the use of this luxury become that in England there was an outcry against it, and the Puritans laid great stress on discarding vanity in clothing.

We have a little scene illustrative, between the Princess Mary and Lady Jane Grey. The princess had given the maiden some gorgeous dresses trimmed with lace. "What shall I do with it?" asks Lady Jane. "Gentlewoman, wear it," was the reply, a little vexed, may be. "Nay," says Lady Jane, "that were a shame to follow my Lady Mary against God's will, and leave my Lady

Elizabeth, which followeth God's will."

"My Lady Elizabeth," however, set aside her scruples before long, and, when queen, did not hesitate to adorn herself as bravely as she might, though she had no mind her fashions should be copied by the vulgar; for we read that, when the London Apprentices adopted white stitching and guards as ornaments for their collars, Queen Elizabeth forbade it, and ordered that the first transgressor should be publicly whipped in the hall of his company.

There is another incident, which, as one of the sex in whom vanity is supposed to be prominent, we take special pleasure in relating.

The Puritan nobles had not in dress conformed to Puritan rules as strictly as some desired, the foreign ambassadors dressing as richly as ever. When, therefore, the Spanish envoy accredited to the Protectorate of Cromwell arrived and was about to have an audience, Harrison begged Lord Warwick and Colonel Hutchinson to set an example by not wearing either gold or silver lace. These gentlemen did not disapprove of rich clothing, but, rather than give offence, they and their associates appeared the next day in plain black suits. But, to their astonishment, Harrison entered dressed in a scarlet coat so covered with lace and *clinquant* as to hide the material of which it was made. Whereupon Mrs. Hutchinson remarks that Harrison's "godly speeches were only made that he might appear braver above the rest in the eyes of the strangers."

Lace has frequently employed the thoughts of law-makers, and in 1698 was the subject of a legislative duel between England and Flanders. There was already in England an act prohibiting the importation of bone-lace (*i.e.* bobbin-lace), loom-

lace, cut-work, and needle-work point; but this proving ineffectual, since everybody smuggled, another act was passed setting a penalty of twenty shillings a yard and forfeiture. We regret to learn that forfeiture meant, in some cases at least, burning, and that large quantities of the finest Flanders lace were seized and actually burned. It reminds one of the burning of Don Quixote's library of chivalric records.

Flanders, however, with its nunneries full of lace-makers, and its thousands of people depending on the trade, had no mind to be thus crippled without retaliation. An act was immediately passed prohibiting the importation of English wool; whereupon the wool-staplers echoed with addition the groans of the lace-makers, and England was forced to repeal the act so far as the Low Countries were concerned.

As we have said, everybody in England smuggled lace in those days. Smuggling seems indeed to be everywhere looked on as the least shameful of law-breaking. But never, perhaps, were officers of the customs as incorruptible as these. Suspicious persons were searched, no matter what their rank, and no person living within miles of a seaport dared to wear a bit of foreign lace unless they could prove that it had been honestly obtained. Many were the devices by which men and women sought to elude the customs. When a deceased clergyman of the English Church was conveyed home from the Low Countries for burial, it was found that only his head, hands, and feet were in the coffin—the body had been replaced by Flanders lace of immense value. Years after, when the body of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, who had died in France, was brought over, the custom-house officers not only searched the coffin, but poked

the corpse with a stick to make sure that it was a body. The High Sheriff of Westminster was more fortunate, for he succeeded in smuggling £6,000 worth of lace in the coffin that brought over from Calais the body of Bishop Atterbury.

In the present century, Lady Ellenborough, wife of the lord chief-justice, was stopped near Dover, and a large quantity of valuable lace found secreted in the lining of her carriage.

At one period, much lace was smuggled into France from Belgium by means of dogs trained for the purpose. A dog was caressed and petted at home, then, after a while, sent across the frontier, where he was tied up, starved, and ill-treated. The skin of a larger dog was then fitted to his body, the intervening space filled with lace, and the poor animal was released. Of course he made haste to scamper back to his former home.

A propos of the customs, there is a story in which George III. had an active part, and displayed his determination to protect home manufactures.

On the marriage of his sister, Princess Augusta, to the Duke of Brunswick, the king ordered that all stuffs and laces worn should be of English manufacture. The nobility, intent on outshining each other on this grand occasion, took but little notice of the command. We may well believe that the rooms of the court milliner were gorgeous with these preparations; that there was unusual hurry and flurry lest everything should not be done in time; and that high-born and beautiful ladies were constantly besieging the doors, bringing additions to the stock. Fancy, then, the consternation of the expectant and excited dames, when, only three days before the wedding, the customs made a descent on this costly finery,

and carried off in one fell swoop the silver, the gold, and the laces! There was not only the loss of these dear gewgaws to mourn, but a new toilet to be prepared in three days!

The camp, too, as well as the church and the court, has cherished lace, and the warriors of those days did not fight less gallantly because they went into battle elegantly arrayed. Lace ruffles at the wrist did not weaken the sword or sabre stroke, nor laces on the neck and bosom make faint the heart beneath. Possibly they helped to a nobler courtesy and a braver death; for slovenly dress tends to make slovenly manners, and slovenly manners often lead to careless morals.

A graceful fashion called the Steinkerker had a martial origin, and was named from the battle so-called, wherein Marshal Luxembourg won the day against William of Orange. On that day, the young princes of the blood were suddenly and unexpectedly called into battle. Hastily knotting about their necks the laced cravats then in fashion, and usually tied with great nicety, they rushed into action, and won the fight.

In honor of that event, both ladies and gentlemen wore their cravats and scarfs loosely twisted and knotted, the ends sometimes tucked through the button-hole, sometimes confined by a large oval-shaped brooch; and Steinkerks became the rage.

But evidence enough, perhaps, has been brought to prove that lace is not an entirely trivial subject of discourse. We may, however, add that Dr. Johnson condescended to define net lace in his most Johnsonian manner. It is, he says, "anything reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections." After that, ladies may wear their ruffles not only with pleasure, but with respect; for if he was so learned in defining

plain net, what unimaginable erudition would have entered his definition of Honiton guipure, or the points of Alençon, Brussels, or Venice!

Spiders were probably the first creatures that made lace, though the trees held a delicate white network under the green of their leaves. After the spiders came the human race, following closely. Old Egyptian pictures and sculptures show us women engaged in twisting threads; and the Scriptures are full of allusions to "fine twined linen" and needle-work. Almost as soon as garments were worn they began to be adorned at the edges; and among savages, to whom garments were of slight consequence, tattooing was practised, which is the same idea in a different form.

The Israelites probably learned from the Egyptians, and from them the art travelled westward. One theory is that Europe learned it from the Saracens. It matters but little to us which is the real version. It is most likely that all the children of Adam and Eve had some fancy of this sort which reached greater perfection in the more cultivated tribes and nations, and was by them taught to the others. The waved or serrated edges of leaves would suggest such adornments to them, or the fur hanging over the edge of the rude skins they wore. The very waves of the sea, that curled over in snowy spray at their tips, had a suggestion of lace and ornamental bordering; and the clouds of sunrise and sunset were fringed with crimson and gold by the sun. Flower petals were finished with a variegated edge, and it was not enough that birds had wings, but they must be ornamented.

When embroidery at length became an art, the Phrygian women excelled all others. Presently close embroidery became open-worked or

cut-worked, and out of cut-work grew lace.

This cut-work was made in various ways. In one kind, a network of thread was made on a frame, and under this was gummed a piece of fine cloth. Then those parts which were to remain thick were sewed round on to the cloth; and afterward the superfluous cloth was cut away.

Another kind was made entirely of thread, which was arranged on a frame in lines diverging from the centre like a spider's web, and worked across and over with other threads, forming geometrical patterns. Later, a fabric still more like our modern lace was made. A groundwork was netted by making one stitch at the beginning, and increasing a stitch on each side till the requisite size was obtained. On this ground was worked the pattern, sometimes darned in with counted stitches, sometimes cut out of linen, and *appliqué*. Still another kind was drawn-work, threads being drawn from linen or muslin, and the thinned cloth worked into lace. Specimens still exist of a six-sided lace net made in this way, with sprigs worked over it.

The earlier rich laces were not made of white thread. Gold, silver, and silk were used. The Italians, who claim to have invented point lace, were the great makers of gold lace. Cyprus stretched gold into a wire, and wove it. From Cyprus the art reached Genoa, Venice, and Milan; and gradually all Europe learned to make gold lace. In England, the complaint was raised that the gold of the realm was sensibly diminishing in this way, and in 1635 an act was passed prohibiting the melting down of bullion to make gold or silver "purl." And not only in Western and Southern Europe was

this luxury fashionable. A piece of gold lace was found in a Scandinavian barrow opened in the XVIIIth century. Perhaps the lace was made by some captive woman stolen by the vikings, a later Proserpine ravished from the South, who wove the web with her pale fingers as she sat in that frozen Hades, while her piratical blue-eyed Pluto looked on marvelling, and waiting to catch a smile from her relenting eyes. Gold lace was sold by weight.

Some of the most magnificent old points of Venice were made of silk, the natural cream-color. The rose Venice point—*Gros point de Venice*, *Punto a rilievo*—was the richest and most complicated of all points. It was worked of silk, on a parchment pattern, the flowers connected by *brides*. The outlines of these flowers were in relief, cotton being placed inside to raise them, and countless beautiful stitches were introduced. Sometimes they were in double, sometimes in triple, relief, and each flower and leaf was edged with fine regular pearls. This point was highly prized for albs, *collerettes*, *berthes*, and costly decorations.

Another kind of Venice lace—knotted point—had a charmingly romantic origin. A young girl in one of the islands of the Lagune, a lace-worker, was betrothed to a young sailor, who brought her home from the Southern seas a bunch of pretty coralline called mermaid's lace. Moved partly by love for the giver, and partly by admiration for the graceful nature of the seaweed, with its small white knots united by a *bride*, the girl tried to imitate it with her needle, and, after several unsuccessful efforts, produced a delicate guipure, which soon was admired all over Europe.

We must not, in this connection, forget that handkerchief given by

Othello to Desdemona, the loss of which cost her so dear. It was wrought, he tells her, by an Egyptian sibyl, who

“In her prophetic fury sewed the work.”

And he declares that

“The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk.”

The flat points of Venice were no less exquisite than the raised, the patterns sometimes being human figures, animals, cupids, and flowers.

In the XVIth century, Barbara Uttmann invented pillow-net, a great advance in the making of lace. This lady's father had moved from Nuremberg to the Hartz Mountains, to superintend mines there, and there the daughter married a rich master-miner, Christopher Uttmann, and lived with him in his castle of Annaberg. Seeing the mountain girls weave nets for the miners to wear over their hair, her inventive mind suggested a new and easier way of making fine netting. Her repeated failures we know not of, but we know of her success. In 1561 she set up a workshop in her own name, and this branch of industry spread so that soon 30,000 persons were employed, with a revenue of 1,000,000 thalers. In 1575, the inventress died and was laid to rest in the churchyard of Annaberg, where her tombstone records that she was the “benefactress of the Hartz Mountains.”

Honor to Barbara Uttmann!

Pillow-lace, as most people know, is made on a round or oval board stuffed so as to form a cushion. On this is fixed a stiff piece of parchment with the pattern pricked on it. The threads are wound on bobbins about the size of a pencil, with a groove at the neck. As many of the threads as will start well together are tied at the ends in a knot, and the knot fastened with a pin at the edge of the pattern;

then another bunch, and so on, till the number required by the lace is completed. The lace is formed by crossing or intertwining these bobbins.

Hand-made lace is of two kinds, point and pillow. Point means a needle-work lace made on a parchment pattern, also a particular kind of stitch. The word is sometimes incorrectly applied; as, *point de Malines*, *point de Valenciennes*, both these laces being made on a pillow.

Lace consists of two parts, the ground and the flower pattern or gimp.

The plain ground is called in French *entoilage*, on account of its containing the ornament, which is called *toile*, from the texture resembling linen, or being made of that material or of muslin.

The honeycomb network or ground—in French, *fond*, *champ*, *réseau*—is of various kinds: wire ground, Brussels ground, *trolly* ground, etc. Double ground is so called because twice the number of threads are required to make it.

Some laces, points and guipures, are not worked upon a ground, the flowers being connected by irregular threads worked over with *point noué* (button-hole stitch), sometimes with pearl loops (*picot*). Such are the points of Venice and Spain and most of the guipures. To these uniting-threads lace-makers in Italy give the name of "legs," in England "pearl ties," in France "brides."

The flower is made either together with the ground, as in Valenciennes and Mechlin, or separately, and then either worked in or sewn on (*applique*).

The open-work stitches in the patterns are called "modes," "jours," or "fillings."

The early name of lace in England and France was *passement*, so called

because the threads were passed by each other in the making. The learned derive lace from *lacina*, a Latin word signifying the hem or fringe of a garment. *Dentelle* comes from the little toothed edge with which lace was finished after awhile. At first, it was *passement dentelé*, finally *dentelle*.

The meaning of guipure is hard to connect with the present use of the word, which is very loose and undefined. It was originally made of silk twisted round a little strip of thin parchment or vellum; and silk twisted round a thick thread or cord was called guipure, hence the name.

The modern Honiton is called guipure, also Maltese lace and its Buckingham imitations. The Italians called the old raised points of Venice and Spain guipures. It is hard to know what claim any of these have to the name.

A fine silk guipure is made in the harems of Turkey, of which specimens were shown in the International Exhibition. This *point de Turquie* is but little known, and is costly. It mostly represents black, white, or mixed colors, fruit, flowers, or foliage.

The lace once made in Malta was a coarse kind of Mechlin or Valenciennes of one arabesque pattern; but since 1833, when an English lady induced a Maltese woman named Ciglia to copy in white an old Greek coverlet, the Ciglia family commenced the manufacture of black and white Maltese guipure, till then unknown in the island.

It is the fineness of the thread which renders the real Brussels ground, *vrai réseau*, so costly. The finest is spun in dark underground rooms; for contact with the dry air causes the thread to break. The spinner works by feeling rather than sight, though a dark paper is placed

to throw the thread out, and a single ray of light is admitted to fall on the work. She examines every inch drawn from her distaff, and, when any inequality occurs, stops her wheel to repair the mischief.

The *réseau* is made in three different ways: by hand, on the pillow, and more lately by machinery—the last a Brussels-net made of Scotch cotton. The needle ground costs three times as much as the pillow; but it is stronger and easier to repair, the pillow ground always showing the join.

There are two kinds of flowers: those made with the needle, *point à l'aiguille*, and those on the pillow, *point plat*. The best flowers are made in Brussels itself, where they excel in the relief (*point brodé*).

Each part of Brussels lace is made by a different hand. One makes the *vrai réseau*; another, the footing; a third, the point flowers; a fourth works the open *jours*; a fifth unites the different sections of the ground together; a sixth makes the *plat* flowers; a seventh sews the flowers upon the ground.

The pattern is designed by the head of the fabric, who, having cut the parchment into pieces, hands it out ready pricked. In the modern lace, the work of the needle and pillow are combined.

Mechlin lace, sometimes called *broderie de Malines* is a pillow lace made all in one piece, its distinguishing feature being a broad, flat thread which forms the flower. It is very light and transparent, and answers very well as a summer lace. It is said that Napoleon I. admired this lace, and that, when he first saw the light Gothic tracery of the cathedral spire at Antwerp, he exclaimed: "*C'est comme de la dentelle de Malines.*"

Valenciennes is also a pillow lace, but the ground and gimp, or flower, are all made of the same thread.

The *vrai Valenciennes*, as it was a first named, that made in the city itself, was made in the XVth century, of a three-thread twisted flax, and reached its climax about the middle of the XVIIIth century, when there were from 3,000 to 4,000 lace-makers in the city alone. Then fashion began to prefer the lighter and cheaper fabrics of Arras, Lille, and Brussels, till in 1790 the number of lace-workers had diminished to 250. Napoleon I. tried unsuccessfully to revive the manufacture, and in 1851 only two lace-makers remained, both over eighty years of age. This *vrai Valenciennes* which, from its durability, was called *les éternelles Valenciennes*, could not, it was asserted, be made outside the walls of the city. It was claimed that, if a piece of lace were begun at Valenciennes and finished outside of the walls, that part not made in the city would be visibly less beautiful than the other, though continued by the same hand, with the same thread, upon the same pillow. This was attributed to some peculiarity of the atmosphere. That lace, therefore, which was made in the neighborhood of the city was called *bâtarde* and *gausse*.

The makers of this lace worked in underground cellars from four in the morning till eight at night. Young girls were the chief workers, great delicacy of touch being required, any other kind of work spoiling the hand for this. Many of the women, we are told, became blind before reaching the age of thirty. So great was the labor of making this lace that, while the Lille workers could produce from three to five ells per day, those of Valenciennes could not finish more than an inch and a half in that time. Some took a year to make twenty-four inches, and it took ten months, working fifteen hours a day, to finish a pair of men's ruffles.

It was considered a recommendation to have a piece of lace made all by one hand.

This old Valenciennes was far superior to any now made under that name. The *réseau* was fine and compact, the flowers resembling cambric in their texture. The fault of the lace was its color, never a pure white, but, being so long under the hand in a damp atmosphere, of a reddish cast. In 1840, an old lady, Mlle. Ursule, gathered the few old lace-makers left in the city, and made the last piece of *vrai Valenciennes* of any importance which has been made in the city. It was a head-dress, and was presented by the city to the Duchesse de Nemours.

In the palmy days of Valenciennes, mothers used to hand these laces down to their children as scarcely less valuable than jewels. Even peasant women would lay by their earnings for a year to purchase a piece of *vrai Valenciennes* for a head-dress.

One of the finest specimens of this old lace known is a lace-bordered alb belonging to the Convent of the Visitation, at Le Puy, in Auvergne. The lace is in three breadths, twenty-eight inches wide, entirely of thread, and very fine, though thick. The ground is a clear *réseau*, the pattern solid, of flowers and scrolls.

There is a story of Le Puy that in 1640 a sumptuary edict was issued by the seneschal, forbidding all persons, without regard to age, sex, or rank, to wear lace of any kind. Lace-making being the chief employment of the women of this province, great distress resulted from the edict. In this time of trial, the beggared people found a comforter in the Jesuit F. Régis. He not only consoled them, but he proved the sincerity of his sympathy by acts. He went to Toulouse, and obtained a revocation of the edict; and at his suggestion the

Jesuits opened to the Auvergne laces a market in the New World.

This good friend to the poor is now S. Francis Régis, and is venerated in Auvergne as the patron saint of the lace-makers.

The finest and most elaborate Valenciennes is now made at Ypres, in Flanders. Instead of the close *réseau* of the old lace, it has a clear wire ground, which throws the figure out well. On a piece of this Ypres lace not two inches wide, from 200 to 300 bobbins are employed, and for larger widths as many as 800 or more are used on the same pillow. There are now in Flanders 400 lace-schools, of which 157 are the property of religious communities.

We may say here that lace-makers now use Scotch cotton chiefly, instead of linen, finding it cheaper, more elastic, and brilliant. Only Alençon, some choice pieces of Brussels, and the finer qualities of Mechlin are now made of flax. The difference can scarcely be perceived by the eye, and both wash equally well, but the cotton grows yellow with age, while linen retains its whiteness.

Alençon, the only French lace now made on a pillow, was first made in France by an Italian worker, who, finding herself unable to teach the Alençon women the true Venetian stitch, struck out a new path, and, by assigning to each one a different part of the work, as Brussels did afterward, succeeded in producing the most elaborate point ever made. Early specimens show rich scroll-work connected by *brides*. One piece has portraits of Louis XVI. and Maria Theresa, with the crown and cipher, all entwined with flowers. The patterns were not at first beautiful, scarcely at all imitating nature; but their work was perfect.

Point Alençon is made entirely by the hand, on a parchment pattern, in

small pieces afterwards united by invisible thread. This art of "fine joining" was formerly a secret confined to France and Belgium, but is now known in England and Ireland.

Each part of this work is given to a different person, who is trained from childhood to that specialty. The number formerly required was eighteen, but is now twelve.

The design, engraved on copper, is printed off in divisions upon pieces of parchment ten inches long, each piece numbered in order. This parchment, which is green, is pricked with the pattern, and sewed to a piece of very coarse linen folded double. The outline of the pattern is then made by guiding two flat threads around the edge with the left thumb, and fixing them by minute stitches passed with another thread and needle through the holes in the parchment. The work is then handed over to another to make the ground, either *bride* or *réseau*. The *réseau* is worked back and forward from the footing, or sewing-on-edge, to the *picot*, or lower beaded edge. The flowers are worked with a fine needle and long thread, in button-hole stitch, from left to right, the thread turned back when the end of the flower is reached, and worked over in the next row, making thus a strong fabric. Then come the open-work fillings and other operations, after which the lace is taken from the parchment by passing a sharp razor between the two folds of linen. The head of the fabric then joins the parts together. When finished, a steel instrument is passed into each flower to polish it.

The manufacture of Alençon was nearly extinct when Napoleon I. restored its prosperity. Among the orders executed for the emperor on his marriage with Marie Louise was a bed furniture of great richness. Tester, coverlet, curtains, and pillow-

cases were all of the finest *Alençon à bride*. Again the manufacture languished, though efforts were made to revive it, and, in 1840, two hundred aged women—all who were left of the workers—were gathered. But the old point had been made by an hereditary set of workers, and the lace-makers they were obliged to call to their help from other districts could not learn their stitches, consequently changes crept in. But the manufacture was revived, and some fine specimens were shown in the Exhibition of 1851, among them a flounce valued at 22,000 francs, which had taken thirty-six women eighteen months to complete. This appeared afterwards in the Empress Eugenie's *corbeille de mariage*.

Alençon was chiefly used in the magnificent *layette* prepared for the prince imperial. The cradle-curtains were Mechlin, the coverlet of Alençon lined with satin. The christening robe, mantle, and head-dress were also of Alençon, and Alençon covered the three *corbeille* bearing the imperial arms and cipher, and trimmed the twelve dozen embroidered frocks and the aprons of the imperial nurses.

Remembering all the magnificence which clustered around the birth of this infant, who had

"Queens at his cradle, proud and ministrant,"

one thinks with sadness of that exiled boy who now, weeping bitterly the loss of a tender father, beholds receding from his gaze, like a splendid dream, that throne he once seemed born to fill. Nowhere on the face of the earth is one who has possessed so much and lost so much as that boy; and nowhere are a mother and son around whom cling such a romantic interest and sympathy.

The specimens of Alençon in the Exhibition of 1862 maintained the

reputation of the ancient fabric. *Bride* is but little made now, and is merely twisted threads, far inferior to the clear hexagon of the last century. This hexagon was a *bride* worked around with *point noué*.

Of late, the reapplication of Alençon flowers has been successfully practised by the peasant lace-workers in the neighborhood of Ostend, who sew them to a fine Valenciennes ground.

The Chantilly lace, which owed its foundation to Catherine de Rohan, Duchesse de Longueville, has always been rather an object of luxury than of commercial value. Being considered a royal fabric, and its production for the nobility alone, the lace-workers became the victims of revolutionary fury in '93, and all perished on the scaffold with their patrons. The manufacture was, however, revived, and prospered greatly during the First Empire. The white blonde was the rage in Paris in 1805. The black was especially admired in Spain and her American colonies. No other manufactories produced such beautiful scarfs, mantillas, and other large pieces. Calvados and Bayeux make a similar lace, but not so well. The real Chantilly has a very fine *réseau*, and the workmanship of the flowers is close, giving the lace great firmness. The so-called Chantilly shawls in the Exhibition of 1862 were made at Bayeux. Chantilly produces only the extra fine shawls, dresses, and scarfs.

Honiton owes its reputation to its sprigs. Like the Brussels, they are made separately. At first they were worked in with the pillow, afterwards *appliqué*, or sewed on a ground of plain pillow-net. This net was very beautiful, but very expensive. It was made of the finest thread procured from Antwerp, the market price of

which, in 1790, was £70 per pound. Ninety-five guineas have been paid a pound for this thread, and, in time of war, one hundred guineas. The price of the lace was costly in proportion, the manner of fixing it peculiar. The lace ground was spread out on the counter, and the worker herself desired to cover it with shillings. The number of shillings that found a place on her work was the price of it. A Honiton veil often cost a hundred guineas. But the invention of machine-net changed all that, and destroyed not only the occupation of the makers of hand-net, but was the cause of the lace falling into disrepute.

Desirous to revive the work, Queen Adelaide ordered a dress of Honiton sprigs, on a ground of Brussels-net, the flowers to be copied from nature. The skirt of this dress was encircled with a wreath of elegantly designed sprigs, the initials of the flowers forming her majesty's name: Amaranth, Daphne, Eglantine, Lilac, Auricula, Ivy, Dahlia, Eglantine.

Queen Victoria's wedding lace was made at Honiton, difficulty being found in obtaining workers enough, the manufacture had been so little patronized. The dress, which cost 1,000 pounds, was entirely of Honiton sprigs connected on a pillow. The patterns were destroyed as soon as the lace was made. Several of the princesses have had their bridal dresses of Honiton.

The application of Honiton sprigs upon bobbin-net has of late almost entirely given place to guipure. The sprigs are sewed on a piece of blue paper, and then united by the pillow, by cut-works, or purlings, or else joined with the needle, button-hole stitch being the best of all, or by purling which is made by the yard. But Honiton has fallen in public esteem by neglecting the pattern of

its lace, which does not well imitate nature.

A new branch of industry has lately risen there—that of restoring or remaking old lace.

When old lace revived, it became a mania. The literary ladies were the first to take this fever in England. Sidney, Lady Morgan, and Lady Stepney made collections, and the Countess of Blessington left at her death several large chests full of fine antique lace.

In Paris, the celebrated dressmaker, Madame Camille, was the first one to bring old laces into fashion.

Much lace is taken from old tombs, cleansed, and sold, usually after having been made over. All over Europe it was the custom to bury the dead in lace-trimmed garments, and in some cases these burial toiles were of immense value. In Bretagne, the bride, after her marriage, laid aside her veil and dress, and never wore it again till it was put on after she was dead. Many of these old tombs have been rifled, and the contents sold to dealers.

In Ireland, lace-making was at one time quite successful. Swift, in the last century, urged the protection of home manufactures of all kinds, and the Dublin Society, composed of a band of patriots organized in 1749, encouraged the making of lace, and passed strong resolutions against the wearing of foreign lace. Lady Arabella Demy, who died in 1792, a daughter of the Earl of Kerry, was especially active in the work, and good imitations of Brussels and Ypres lace were made. In 1829, the manufacture of Limerick lace was established. This is tambour work on Nottingham-net. But the emigration of girls to America, and the effort of the manufacturers to produce a cheap article, thus bringing it into disrepute,

have prevented this lace from attaining success.

For half a century, machine-lace has been striving to imitate hand-made lace, and in some instances with such success that the difference can scarcely be perceived. In 1760 a kind of looped lace was made in England on the stocking-frame, and the fabric has been constantly improving. But hand-made lace still maintains its supremacy, and is growing in favor, and old laces are more highly prized even than old jewels, since the former cannot be imitated, or can scarcely be imitated; the latter may be. There is a delicacy and finish in needle and pillow laces which the machine can never give; besides that, the constant tendency of machine-work, when once it has attained excellence, is to deteriorate.

We are glad of this revival of lace-making; for in no other way can the luxury of the rich in dress so well benefit women and children among the poor. Most working-women have to work too hard, and they have to leave their homes to earn money. But lace-making accords admirably with feminine taste and feminine delicacy of organization, and it can be done at any time, and at home, and of every quality. It is refining, too. One can scarcely imagine a very coarse person making a very beautiful lace. It teaches the worker to observe nature and art, in the selection and working of patterns, and it stimulates inventiveness, if there be any. And more than that, by the multitudinous ticking of these little bobbins, and the myriad points of these shining needles, thousands of that tortured and terrible class called "the poor" might be able to keep at bay not only the wolf of hunger, but the lion of crime.