



CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA, BY DIRK STIRP, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON. SHE IS WEARING THE GOWN IN WHICH SHE ARRIVED IN ENGLAND, 1662. THE LACE COLLAR IS THE SAME TYPE AS THAT DESCRIBED IN THE ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE

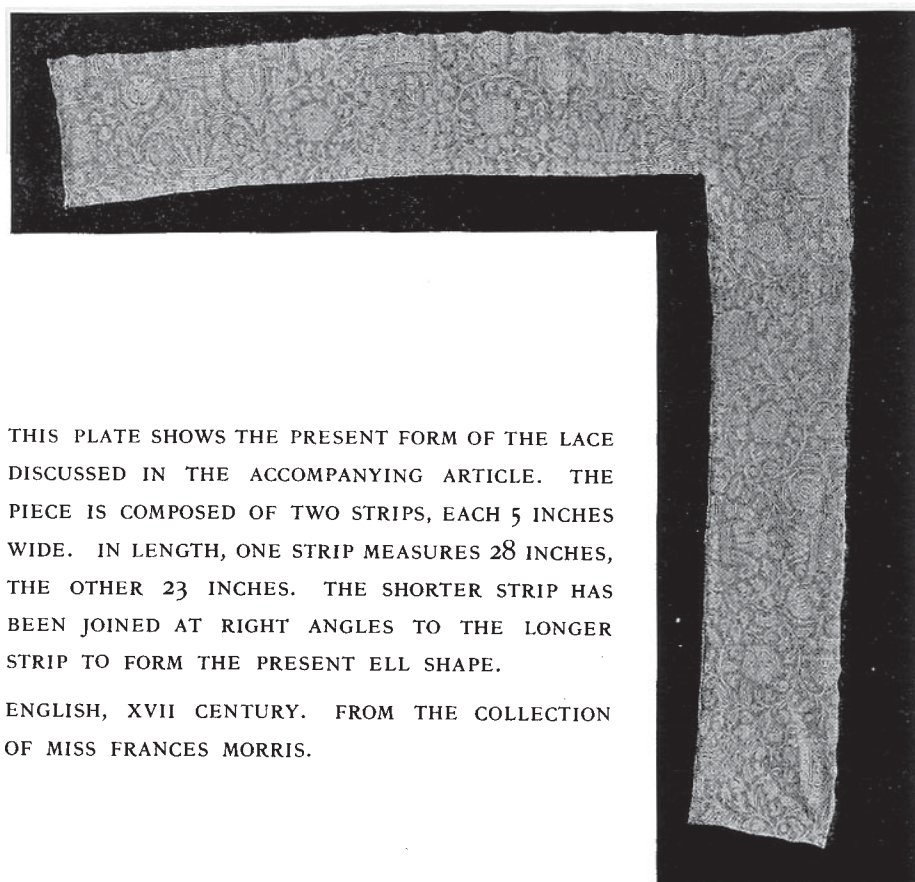
## THE LACE OF KING CHARLES II

**I**N THE year 1661 the English fleet sailed away to Portugal to fetch their king a royal bride. The Earl of Sandwich, admiral of the fleet, on the flagship the "Royal Charles" was as ambassador-extraordinary entrusted with precious gifts for Catherine of Braganza from King Charles II. He saw to it that the cabin of the lady who was to be his queen should be indeed a "State Room".

"Her royal cabin and her stateroom too  
Adorned with gold and lined with velvet through;  
The cushions, stools and chairs and clothes of state  
All of the same material and rate:  
Egypt nor Isles of Chittim have not seen  
Such rich embroideries, nor such a queen.  
The royal Charles by sea and land she'll take  
Both for her zenith and her zodiack".

The rare and interesting lace illustrated in this article may well have been sent to Portugal as part of all this magnificence.

The fleet was delayed by contrary winds and had first to take possession of Tangier, which with Bombay was part of the rich dowry of the bride, and did not set sail for England until the Spring of the following year. For this reason the actual marriage of King Charles and Catherine did not take place until May 21, 1662, though she was called Queen of England many months earlier. The wedding was celebrated with great simplicity at Portsmouth soon after her landing and is registered in the parish church of St. Thomas à Becket. According to the description given



THIS PLATE SHOWS THE PRESENT FORM OF THE LACE  
DISCUSSED IN THE ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE. THE  
PIECE IS COMPOSED OF TWO STRIPS, EACH 5 INCHES  
WIDE. IN LENGTH, ONE STRIP MEASURES 28 INCHES,  
THE OTHER 23 INCHES. THE SHORTER STRIP HAS  
BEEN JOINED AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THE LONGER  
STRIP TO FORM THE PRESENT ELL SHAPE.

ENGLISH, XVII CENTURY. FROM THE COLLECTION  
OF MISS FRANCES MORRIS.

PL. I.

by Sir Richard Fanshawe, minister to Portugal, who was groomsman to the king, the royal bride wore an English dress, rose colour, trimmed with knots of blue ribbon which were afterwards cut to pieces and everyone present had a fragment. This gentleman received for his fees all the velvets, covers and laces used at the altar, and travelled straight back to Portugal to report to the Queen-Mother.

For a girl who had led so cloistered a life in her own country it must have been a strange experience to have been married to this most sophisticated, whimsical and inconstant king.

Of the lace itself, <sup>1</sup>(Pl. I) it was probably worn as a low collar like the one illustrated by Mrs. Bury Palliser which has the same pointed corner. The corner seems to have been made rather by the maker of the gown than by the lacemaker as it is easy to see the join and there is no corner design in the pattern.

The design has the royal crown of England, with the Fleur de Lys alternating with Crosses, repeated seven times (Plates I, II, III, IV, V). In the first crown are the words "CAROLUS REX," in the second "VIVE LE ROY," in the third "VIVE LE ROY" again and in the fourth "C. B. BARONET," in the fifth a simple lozenge pattern, in the sixth "CAROLUS REX," and in the seventh "C. 1661 B.," the initials of the Queen Catherine Braganza and the date proposed for her marriage with King Charles. These are all perfectly clear. The only one at all difficult to interpret is the fourth, (Pl. IV). It is remembered that King Henry VIII created Anne Boleyn Marquis of Pembroke before his marriage to her, but it is not known that King Charles made Catharine a baronet; besides he had no reason to ennoble her as she was the daughter of a Queen.

Surrounding these crowns is a scroll pattern with the rose for England introduced, drawn in the manner of the Tudor rose, and the twisting boughs of an oak tree with very natural leaves and acorns no doubt in reference to the narrow escape of Charles Stuart when he hid in an oak from the soldiers of Oliver Cromwell, one of the incredible adventures of his youth (Pl. III).

Below four of the crowns we find the Prince of Wales Feathers which

<sup>1</sup>History of Lace. By Mrs. Bury Palliser, p. 164, fig. 76.





PLATE II

DETAIL SHOWING ROYAL CROWN WITH INSCRIPTION, CAROLUS REX. BENEATH THE CROWN THE BADGE OF  
THE PRINCE OF WALES

are held in abeyance by the King until he bestows this badge upon his eldest son.<sup>2</sup> (Pl. II, IV).

The technique of this lace is exactly the same as the Devon Pillow lace called Honiton now and at that time Bath Brussels or Point d'Angleterre. It was probably made in the west country by the ancestors of the lacemakers of our own day.

Cosimo de' Medici the Third, Grand Duke of Tuscany 1670-1723, travelling in Devonshire in the year 1669, says of the lace industry at that time: "There is not a cottage in all the county nor in that of Somerset where white lace is not made in great quantities; so that not only the whole kingdom is supplied with it, but it is exported in great abundance."

The tombstone of James Rodge in Honiton parish churchyard would show that much lace was made there in the days of Queen Elizabeth and King James:—

"Here lyeth ye body of James Rodge of Honiton in the county of Devonshire, bone lace seller, have given unto the poore of Houniton Pische the Benefyt of a hundred pounds forever. Who deceased ye 27th of July A. D. 1617. Remember ye poore".

The personality of Queen Victoria seems to have so overshadowed and dominated the lace industry of the west country that many people do not realize how much lace was made there before and since her reign. Unless there are actually English names and dates worked into the lace as in the old Samplers it is generally taken for Flemish, though the name Point d'Angleterre is given to the finest Brussels lace of the kind.

Anyone who knows the Victorian Honiton at all well, will recognize the familiar lines in King Charles lace; the whole thing made with a set of thirty bobbins following the pattern around, twisting three times to make the letters and putting in the ground after the toilé is finished. This ground or réseau is of that rather vague and confused type which belongs to this century, before all the different kinds of mesh were developed. It is interesting to have a net ground at all as early as this date, 1661, as they are generally associated with the 18th century.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Robert Nichol of the Metropolitan Museum staff says that although the Prince of Wales does not use his badge after he becomes King, still no one else has any right to it until created Prince of Wales by the King.





PLATE III

DETAIL SHOWING ROYAL CROWN WITH INSCRIPTION, VIVE LE ROY. ON EACH SIDE THE SCROLLING OAK PATTERN  
AND THE TUDOR ROSE

It is a very unusual thing to find a specimen of lace which is so interesting a document both from the technical and the historic point of view.

This rare masterpiece which forms part of the private collection of Miss Frances Morris has all the qualities which the more discriminating collectors most dearly prize. In collecting lace, the first thing to be considered is the intrinsic beauty of the thing as a work of art, the grace and character of the lines of the drawing, sometimes in bold curving sculptured lines, and sometimes with the peculiar charm of quaint originality. King Charles' lace seems to have both characteristics, as the design is built up on bold conventional lines while the detail is treated with a very original freedom of touch.

Secondly, the collector seeks for fineness and beauty in the execution of the work. The designs for lace are sometimes made by real artists, more often, unfortunately, by the mistress of the lace school or the one who receives the orders for the lace, so that the lacemaker with a creative mind can only express herself in the fine details of the work. Many a time has that obscure lace worker in some far country had the power to move the imagination and stir the aesthetic emotions by the exquisite beauty of her devoted work. The true connoisseur should be able to recognize this quality and treasure it when found. We seem conscious of this power in the beautiful specimen illustrated.

The third thing to be considered by the collector is the historic or romantic associations of the lace, its sentimental value. In the rush and chaos of life as it is in our day, how lovely to come suddenly upon an object which recalls a time so long passed by and which is to belong to an age yet untouched. When you hold a piece of lace like this, vague figures pass across your mind, ghosts of the past; the kings and courtiers who wore it so close to their persons that their emanations may well still cling to the threads, the spirits of those gentle ladies who cherished and loved it, keeping this delicate thing for our present delight—not only for our delight, but for the generations to come, those strong young people who are to follow us with larger and more open minds, trained to know and love the beautiful in every form.





PLATE IV  
DETAIL SHOWING ROYAL CROWN WITH INSCRIPTION, C. B. BARONET





PLATE V

DETAIL SHOWING ROYAL CROWN WITH INSCRIPTION, C 1661 B