

LACES AND EMBROIDERIES.

In no one article, perhaps, is female extravagance in dress carried to a greater length than in the use of elegant and costly laces and embroideries. Almost fabulous prices are sometimes paid for them. The rich laces in this country are imported principally from France and Belgium. The costliest specimens of lace are easily disposed of. Lace at twenty shillings (\$5) a yard—and that but one-tenth of a yard wide—finds ready purchasers. The demand for rich laces is constantly increasing,

and the first idea connected with it by unsophisticated minds is that it wants washing. Fashion, however, corrects this notion. Point de glaze is as fine as a spider's web, and as light as thistle down. Brussels point d'applique ranks very high. It is formed by sewing sprigs of the real point upon illusion or any other kind of plain lace. It is very much used for flounces, and costs from six to eight pounds per yard, five-eighths wide. It is very pure in color, which is owing to a white powder with which it is saturated, and which it continues to retain, and obviates the necessity of washing.

Honiton lace came into fashion in 1842, and owes its present position to Queen Victoria. Commiserating the miserable condition of the lace-workers of Devon, she determined to assist them by bringing their manufacture into fashion, and in furtherance of this laudable purpose had her wedding dress made of it. Honiton at once became the rage, and has continued popular and expensive ever since, although, previously, purchasers could hardly be found for it. Chantilly lace is always black, is exceedingly fine, and is much used for veils and flounces.

Our supply of the more elaborate specimens of embroideries is derived from France and Switzerland. Although the Swiss are really superior to the French, yet so despotically do French fabrics rule the fashionable world, that the former are obliged to be sold as French.—*Sharpe's London Magazine.*

outrunning the supply, thus appreciating the prices; and consequently the genuine article can only be worn by the wealthy.

Belgium supplies us with more laces than all the countries of Europe together, and laces of the rarest kind, finest quality and most artistic design. In fact, lace is indigenous to Belgium, and has been so for generations. In some parts of Belgium the flowers are made separately, and then worked into the ground, while others carry on the pattern and the design together. The division of labor is very great.

The labor of washing lace is almost an art, and only the most skillful in that line are engaged in it. After washing, lace is spread out to dry on a cushioned table, and pins of a peculiar shape are run through each hole to prevent it from shrinking. When very fine, or the pattern intricate, an entire day will be spent upon one yard of lace. "Mechlin" was formerly the "queen of lace," but Point de Venise antique now occupies the first place. It is a rare old lace, light and open, raised in some parts like embossed work, and has an air of antiquity that is highly prized. The manufacture of it is said to be entirely abandoned, and it is only found now as heirlooms in families, except when a stray specimen finds its way into market, in which case there is a great competition for its possession. The Point de Venise antique is more frequently seen in Italy than in any other country, for the high dignitaries of the Catholic Church have their official robes trimmed with flounces of this costly material. It finds its way into England chiefly through the medium of travelers, who seize upon every opportunity to obtain these relics of ancient fashion.

Next in value is Point d'Alençon. It has a dingy hue,