

Mrs. Oldfield, the celebrated actress, who died in 1730, caused herself to be thus interred. The lines of Pope have long since immortalised the story :—

“Odius! in woollen! ’twould a saint provoke!  
 (Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.)  
 No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace  
 Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face;  
 One would not, sure, be frightful when one’s dead—  
 And—Betty—give this cheek a little red.”

“She was laid in her coffin,” says her maid, “in a very fine Brussels lace head, a Holland shift with a tucker of double ruffles, and a pair of new kid gloves.” Previous to her interment in Westminster Abbey she lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber.<sup>20</sup> For Mrs. Oldfield in her lifetime was a great judge of lace, and treasured a statuette of the Earl of Strafford, finely carved in ivory by Grinling Gibbons, more, it is supposed, for the beauty of its lace Vandyke collar<sup>21</sup> than any other sentiment.

In 1763 another instance is recorded in the *London Magazine* of a young lady buried in her wedding clothes, point lace tucker, handkerchief, ruffles and apron; also a fine point lappet head. From this period we happily hear no more of such extravagances.

Passing from interments and shrouds to more lively matters, we must quote the opinion of that Colossus of the eighteenth century, Dr. Johnson, who was too apt to talk on matters of taste and art, of which he was no competent judge. “A Brussels trimming,” he declaims to Mrs. Piozzi, “is like bread sauce; it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing instead of it: but sauce was invented to heighten the flavour of our food, and trimming is an ornament to the manteau or it is nothing.”<sup>22</sup> A man whose culinary ideas did not soar higher than bread sauce could scarcely pronounce on the relative effect and beauty of point lace.

If England had leant towards the products of France, in

laces for the decent burial of the dead or otherwise, for fourteen years, being the first inventor thereof.”

<sup>20</sup> Betterton’s *History of the English Stage*. Her kindness to the poet Savage is well known.

<sup>21</sup> This seems to have been a speci-

ality of Gibbons; for we find among the treasures of Strawberry Hill: “A beautiful cravat, in imitation of lace, carved by Gibbons, very masterly.”—*Hist. and Antiquities of Twickenham*. London, 1797.

<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Piozzi’s *Memoirs*.

1788, an Anglomania ran riot at Paris. Ladies wore a cap of mixed lace, English and French, which they styled the "Union of France and England." On the appearance of the French Revolution, the classic style of dress—its India muslins and transparent gauzes—caused the ancient points to fall into neglect. From this time dates the decline of the lace fabric throughout Europe.

Point still appeared at court and on state occasions, such as on the marriage of the Princess Caroline of Wales, 1795, but as an article of daily use it gradually disappeared from the wardrobes of all classes. A scrupulous feeling also arose in ladies' minds as to the propriety of wearing articles of so costly a nature, forgetting how many thousands of women gained a livelihood by its manufacture. Mrs. Hannah More, among the first, in her *Cælebs in Search of a Wife*, alludes to the frivolity of the taste, when the little child exclaiming "at the beautiful lace with which the frock of another was trimmed, and which she was sure her mamma had given her for being good," remarks, "A profitable and, doubtless, lasting and inseparable association was thus formed in the child's mind between lace and goodness."

Whether in consequence of the French Revolution, or from the caprice of fashion, "real" lace—worse off than the passements and points of 1634, when in revolt—now underwent the most degrading vicissitudes. Indeed, so thoroughly was the taste for lace at this epoch gone by, that in many families collections of great value were, at the death of their respective owners, handed over as rubbish to the waiting maid.<sup>23</sup> Many ladies recollect in their youth to have tricked out their dolls in the finest Alençon point, which would now sell at a price far beyond their purses. Among the few who, in England, unseduced by frippery blonde, never neglected to preserve their collections entire, was the Duchess of

<sup>23</sup> A lady, who had very fine old lace, bequeathed her "wardrobe and lace" to some young friends, who, going after her death to take possession of their legacy, were surprised to find nothing but new lace. On inquiring of the old faithful Scotch servant what had become of the old needle points, she said: "Deed it's aw there, 'cept a when auld Dudds, black and ragged, I flinged on the fire."

Another collection of old lace met with an equally melancholy fate. The maid, not liking to give it over to the legatees in its coffee-coloured hue, sewed it carefully together, and put it in a strong soap lye on the fire, to simmer all night. When she took it out in the morning, it was reduced to a jelly! Medea's caldron had not been more effectual!

Gloucester, whose lace was esteemed among the most magnificent in Europe.

When the taste of the age again turned towards the rich fabrics of the preceding centuries, much lace, both black and white, was found in the country farm-houses, preserved as remembrances of deceased patrons by old family dependants. Sometimes the hoard had been forgotten, and was again routed out from old wardrobes and chests, where it had lain unheeded for years. Much was recovered from theatrical wardrobes and the masquerade shops, and the Church, no longer in its temporal glory, both in Italy, Spain and Germany, gladly parted with what, to them, was of small value compared with the high price given for it by amateurs. In Italy perhaps the finest fabrics of Milan, Genoa, and Venice had fared best, from the custom which prevailed of sewing up family lace in rolls of linen to ensure its preservation.

After years of neglect lace became a "mania." In England the literary ladies were the first to take it up. Sydney Lady Morgan and Lady Stepney quarrelled weekly on the respective value and richness of their points. The former at one time commenced a history of the lace fabric, though what was the ultimate fate of the MS. the author is unable to state. The Countess of Blessington, at her death, left several chests filled with the finest antique lace of all descriptions.

The "dames du grand monde," both in England and France, now began to wear lace. But, strange as it may seem, never at any period did they appear to so little advantage as during the counter-revolution of the lace period. Lace was the fashion, and wear it somehow they would, though that somehow often gave them an appearance, as the French say, *du dernier ridicule*, simply from an ignorance displayed in the manner of arranging it. That lace was old seemed sufficient to satisfy all parties. They covered their dresses with odds and ends of all fabrics, without attention either to date or texture. One English lady appeared at a ball given by the French Embassy at Rome, boasting that she wore on the tablier of her dress every description of lace, from point coupé of the fifteenth to Alençon of the eighteenth century. The Count of Syracuse was accustomed to say: "The English ladies buy a scrap

of lace as a souvenir of every town they pass through, till they reach Naples, then sew it on their dresses, and make one grande toilette of the whole to honour our first ball at the *Academia Nobile*."

The taste for lace has again become universal, and the quality now produced renders it within the reach of all classes of society ; and though by some the taste may be condemned, it gives employment to thousands and ten thousands of women, who find it more profitable and better adapted to their strength than the field labour which forms the occupation of the women in agricultural districts. To these last, in a general point of view, the lace-maker of our southern counties, who works at home in her own cottage, is superior, both in education, refinement, and morality :—

"Here the needle plies its busy task;  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,  
And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,  
Follow the nimble fingers of the fair—  
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow  
With most success when all besides decay."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Cowper. "The Winter Evening."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE LACE MANUFACTURERS OF ENGLAND.

“Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,  
Pillow and bobbins all her little store;  
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,  
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day:  
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light.”—Cowper.

THE bone lace manufactures of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appear to have extended over a much wider area than they occupy in the present day. From Cambridge to the adjacent counties of Northampton and Hertfordshire, by Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, and Oxfordshire, the trade spread over the southern counties<sup>1</sup> of Wiltshire, Somersetshire,<sup>2</sup> Hampshire, and Dorset, to the more secluded valleys of Devon—the county which still sustains the ancient reputation of “English point”—terminating at Launceston, on the Cornish coast.

Various offsets from these fabrics were established in Wales.<sup>3</sup> Ripon,<sup>4</sup> an isolated manufactory, represented the

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Berkeley, in *A Word to the Wise*, writes of the English labourers in the South of England on a summer's evening “sitting along the streets of the town or village, each at his own door, with a cushion before him, making bone lace, and earning more in an evening's pastime than an Irish family would in a whole day.”

<sup>2</sup> “Wells, bone lace and knitting stockings.”—Anderson.

<sup>3</sup> “Launceston, where are two schools for forty-eight children of both sexes. The girls are taught to read, sew, and make bone lace, and they are to have their earnings for encouragement.”—*Magna Britannia*. 1720.

Welsh lace was made at Swansea,

Pont-Ardawe, Llanwrtyd, Dufynock, and Brecon, but never of any beauty, some not unlike a coarse Valenciennes. “It was much made and worn,” said an aged Wesleyan lady, “by our ‘connexion,’ and as a child I had all my frocks and pinafores trimmed with it. It was made in the cottages; each lace-maker had her own pattern, and carried it out for sale in the country.”

<sup>4</sup> At what period, and by whom the lace manufactory of Ripon was founded, we have been unable to ascertain. It was probably a relic of conventual days, which, after having followed the fashion of each time, has now gradually died out. In 1842 broad Trolley laces of French design and fair work-

lace industry of York ; while the dependent islands of Man,<sup>5</sup> Wight<sup>6</sup> and Jersey,<sup>7</sup> may be supposed to have derived their learning from the smugglers who frequented their coast, rather than from the teaching of the Protestant refugees<sup>8</sup> who sought an asylum on the shores of Britain.

Many of these fabrics now belong to the past, consigned to oblivion even in the very counties where they once flourished. In describing, therefore, the lace manufactures of the United Kingdom, we shall confine ourselves to those which still remain, alluding only slightly to such as were

manship were fabricated in the old cathedral city ; where, in the poorer localities near the Bond and Blossom-gate, young women might be seen working their intricate patterns, with pillows, bobbins, and pins. In 1862 one old woman alone, says our informant, sustains the memory of the craft, her produce a lace of a small lozenge-shaped pattern (Fig. 132), that earliest of all designs, and a narrow edging known in local parlance by the name of "fourpenny spot."

<sup>5</sup> Till its annexation to the Crown, the Isle of Man was the great smuggling depôt for French laces. The traders then removed *en masse* to the Channel Isles, there to carry on their traffic. An idiot called "Peg the Fly" in Castletown (in 1842) was seen working at her pillow on a summer's evening, the last lace-maker of the island. Isle of Man lace was a simple Valenciennes edging.

<sup>6</sup> Isle of Wight lace was honoured by the patronage of Queen Victoria. The Princess Royal, reports the *Illustrated News* of May, 1856, at the drawing-room, on her first presentation, wore a dress of Newport lace, her train trimmed with the same.

The weariness of incarceration, when at Carisbrook, did not bring on Charles I. any distaste for rich apparel. Among the charges of 1648, Sept. and Nov., we find a sum of nigh £800 for suits and cloaks of black brocade tabby, black unshorn velvet, and black satin, all lined with plush and trimmed with rich bone lace.

Some bobbin lace was made in the island, but what is known as "Isle of

Wight" resembles "Nottingham" lace. It is made in frames on machine net, the pattern outlined with a run thread and filled in with needle-point stitches. Queen Victoria had several lace tippets made of Isle of Wight lace for the Royal children, and always chose the Mechlin style of rose pattern. Now (1901) there are only two or three old women workers left.

<sup>7</sup> Lace-making was never the staple manufacture of the Channel Islands ; stockings and garments of knitted wool afforded a livelihood to the natives. We have early mention of these articles in the inventories of James V. of Scotland and of Mary Stuart. Also in those of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, in which last we find (Gt. Ward. Acc., 28 & 29) the charge of 20s. for a pair of "Caligarum nexat' de factura Garneseie," the upper part and "lez clocks" worked in silk. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the island was inundated with French refugees, lace-making was introduced with much success into the Poor-House of St. Heliers. It formed the favourite occupation of the ladies of the island, some of whom (1863) retain the patterns and pillows of their mothers, just as they left them. Of late years many of the old raised Venetian points have been admirably imitated in "Jersey crochet work."

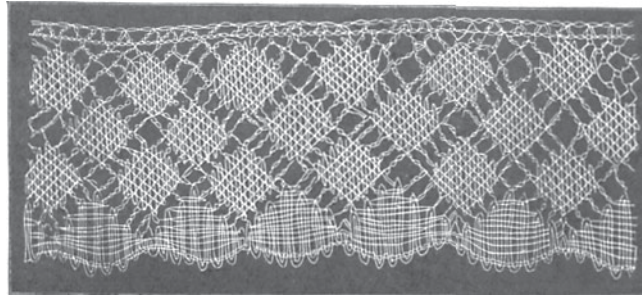
<sup>8</sup> The Puritans again, on their part, transferred the fabric to the other side of the Atlantic, where, says a writer of the eighteenth century, "very much fine lace was made in Long Island by the Protestant settlers."

once of note, and of which the existence is confirmed by the testimony of contemporary writers.

The "women of the mystery of thread-working" would appear to have made lace in London,<sup>9</sup> and of their complaints and grievances our public records bear goodly evidence. Of the products of their needle we know little or nothing.

Various Flemings and Burgundians established themselves in the City; and though the emigrants, for the most part, betook themselves to the adjoining counties, the craft, till

Fig. 132.



RIPON.

the end of the eighteenth century, may be said to have held fair commerce in the capital.

The London fabric can scarcely be looked upon as a staple trade in itself, mixed up as it was with lace-cleaning and lace-washing—an occupation first established by the ejected nuns.<sup>10</sup> Much point, too, was made by poor gentlewomen, as the records of the Anti-Gallican Society testify. "A strange infatuation," says a writer of the eighteenth century, "prevailed in the capital for many years among the class called demi-fashionables of sending their daughters to convents in France for education, if that could be so termed which amounted to a learning to work in lace. The Revolution, however, put

<sup>9</sup> See Chap. XXII.

<sup>10</sup> The richly-laced corporax cloths and church linen are sent to be washed by the "Lady Ancess," an ecclesiastical washerwoman, who is paid by the churchwardens of St. Margaret's, West-

minster, the sum of 8d.; this Lady Ancess, or Anchoress, being some worn-out nun, who, since the dissolution of the religious houses, eked out an existence by the art she had once practised within the convent.

an end to this practice." It is owing to this French education that the fine needle points were so extensively made in England; though this occupation, however, did not seem to belong to any one county in particular; for the reader who runs his eye over the proceedings of the Anti-Gallican Society will find prizes to have been awarded to gentlewomen from all parts—from the town of Leominster in Herefordshire to Broughton in Leicestershire, or Stourton in Gloucester.<sup>11</sup> Needle point, in contradistinction to bone lace, was an occupation confined to no special locality.

In 1764 the attention of the nobility seems to have been first directed towards the employment of the indigent poor, and, indeed, the better classes in the metropolis, in the making of bone lace and point;<sup>12</sup> and in 1775, sanctioned by the patronage of Queen Charlotte, the Princesses, the Princess Amelia, and various members of the aristocracy, an institution was formed in Marylebone Lane, and also in James Street, Westminster, "for employing the female infants of the poor in the blond and black silk lace-making and thread laces." More than 300 girls attended the school. "They gave," says the *Annual Register*, such a proof of their capacity that many who had not been there more than six months carried home to their parents from 5s. to 7s. a month, with expectation of getting more as they improve."

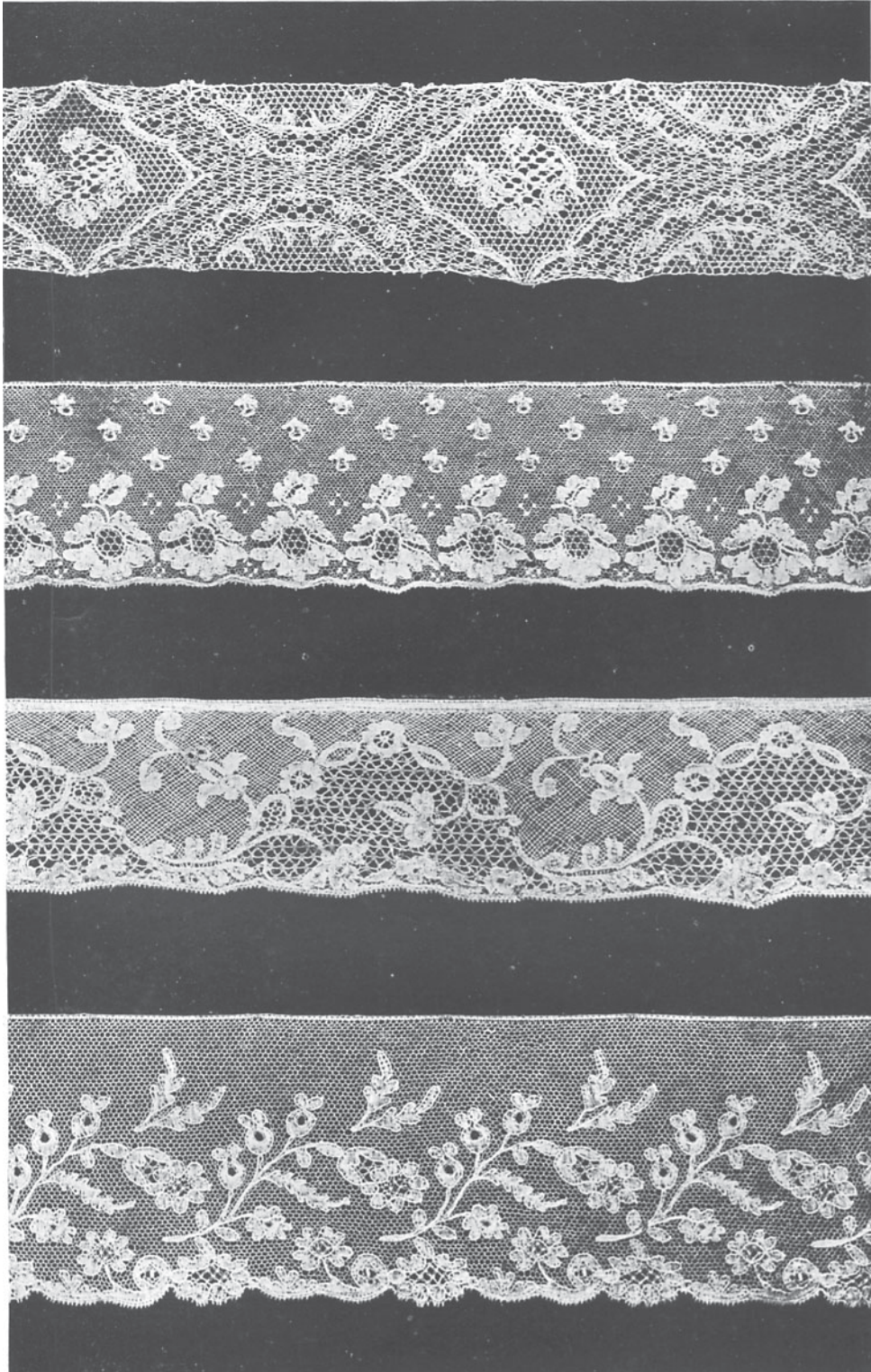
From this time we hear no more of the making of lace, either point or bone, in the metropolis.

<sup>11</sup> In 1753 prizes were awarded for 14 pairs of curious needlework point ruffles.

<sup>12</sup> One society confers a prize of ten

guineas upon a "gentlewoman for an improvement in manufacture by finishing a piece of lace in a very elegant manner with knitting-needles."





ENGLISH, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE. BOBBIN LACE.—First half of nineteenth century.  
Widths: 3, 3, 3, 4 in. The property of Mrs. Ellis, The Vicarage, Much Wenlock.

*To face page 374.*

## CHAPTER XXX.

BEDFORDSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, AND  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.<sup>1</sup>

## BEDFORDSHIRE.

“He wears a stuff whose thread is coarse and round  
But trimmed with curious lace.”—Herbert.

It would be a difficult matter now to determine when and by whom lace-making was first introduced into the counties of Bedfordshire and Buckingham. Authors, for the most part, have been glad to assign its introduction to the Flemings,<sup>2</sup> a nation to whose successive emigrations England owes much of her manufacturing greatness. Originally the laces were of old, wavy, graceful Flemish designs.

On the other hand, certain traditions handed down in the county villages of a good Queen who protected their craft, the annual festival of the workers—in the palmy days of the trade a matter of great moment—combined with the residence of that unhappy Queen, for the space of two years<sup>3</sup> at her jointure manor of Ampthill,<sup>4</sup> lead us rather to infer

<sup>1</sup> The lace of the three counties is practically equal—that is, it is all made in a similar fashion, and the same patterns are met with in each county. The “point” or “net” ground is met with in all, and worked level with the pattern in the same way with bobbins.

<sup>2</sup> Who fled from the Alva persecutions, and settled, first at Cranfield in Bedfordshire, then at Buckingham,

Stoney Stratford, and Newport-Pagnel, whence the manufacture extended gradually over Oxford, Northampton, and Cambridge. Many Flemish names are still to be found in the villages of Bedfordshire.

<sup>3</sup> Queen Katherine died 1536.

<sup>4</sup> She retired to Ampthill early in 1531 while her appeal to Rome was pending, and remained there till the summer of 1533.

that the art of lace-making, as it then existed, was first imparted to the peasantry of Bedfordshire, as a means of subsistence, through the charity of Queen Katherine of Aragon. In the chapter devoted to needlework we have already alluded to the proficiency of this Queen in all arts connected with the needle, to the "trials of needlework" established by her mother, Queen Isabella, at which she, as a girl, had assisted. It is related, also, that during her<sup>5</sup> sojourn at Ampthill, "she passed her time, when not at her devotions, with her gentlewomen, working with her own hands something wrought in needlework, costly and artificially, which she intended for the honour of God to bestow on some of the churches."<sup>6</sup>

"The country people," continues her contemporary, "began to love her exceedingly. They visited her out of pure respect, and she received the tokens of regard they daily showed her most sweetly and graciously." The love borne by the peasantry to the Queen, the sympathy shown to her in her days of trouble and disgrace, most likely met with its reward; and we believe Katherine to have taught them an art which, aided no doubt by the later introduction of the pillow and the improvements of the refugees, has now, for the space of nigh three centuries, been the staple employment of the female population of Bedfordshire and the adjoining counties. Until the latter half of the nineteenth century—though, like all such festivals in the present age, gradually dying out—the lace-makers still held "Cattern's day,"<sup>7</sup> November 25th, as the holiday of their craft, kept, they say, "in memory of good Queen Katherine, who, when the trade was dull, burnt all her lace and ordered new to be made. The ladies of the court

<sup>5</sup> Lace of the heavy Venetian point was already used for ecclesiastical purposes, though scarcely in general use. The earliest known pattern-books date from fifteen years previous to the death of Katherine (1536).

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Nicolas Harpsfield. Douay, 1622. (In Latin.)

Again we read that at Kimbolton "she plied her needle, drank her potions, and told her beads."—*Duke of Manchester. Kimbolton Papers.*

<sup>7</sup> A lady from Ampthill writes (1863) :

"The feast of St. Katherine is no longer kept. In the palmy days of the trade both old and young used to subscribe a sum of money and enjoy a good cup of Bohea and cake, which they called 'Cattern' cake. After tea they danced and made merry, and finished the evening with a supper of boiled stuffed rabbits smothered with onion sauce." The custom of sending about Cattern cakes was also observed at Kettering, in Northamptonshire.

followed her example, and the fabric once more revived." "Ainsi s'écrit l'histoire"; and this garbled version may rest on as much foundation as most of the folk-lore current throughout the provinces.

Speaking of Bedfordshire, Defoe writes: "Thro' the whole south part of this country, as far as the borders of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, the people are taken up with the manufacture of bone lace, in which they are wonderfully exercised and improved within these few years past"<sup>8</sup>—probably since the arrival of the French settlers after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. At the same period the author of the *Magna Britannia*<sup>9</sup> states that at Woburn, "lace of a high price is made in considerable quantities." Savary and Peuchet both declare the town of Bedford alone to have contained 500 lace-workers.

In 1863, as Mrs. Palliser wrote: "The lace schools of Bedfordshire are far more considerable than those in Devonshire. Four or five may frequently be found in the same village, numbering from twenty to thirty children each, and they are considered sufficiently important to be visited by Government inspectors. Their work is mostly purchased by large dealers, who make their arrangements with the instructress: the children are not bound for a term, as in the southern counties. Boys formerly attended the lace schools, but now they go at an early age to the fields."

These lace-schools are now things of the past. In some cases, however, in the lace counties, the County Council Technical Education Committee have supplemented private efforts with grants for classes to teach the lace industry.

The wages of a lace-worker average a shilling a day; under press of business, caused by the demand for some fashionable article, they sometimes rise to one shilling and sixpence.

---

<sup>8</sup> *Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain*, by a Gentleman. 3 vols. 1724-27. Several subsequent editions of Defoe were published, with additions, by Richardson the novelist in 1732, 1742, 1762, 1769, and 1778. The last is "brought down to the present time

by a gentleman of eminence in the literary world."

<sup>9</sup> *Magna Britannia et Hibernia, or a New Survey of Great Britain, collected and composed by an impartial hand*, by the Rev. Thos. Owen. Lond. 1720-31.

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Though the first establishment of the fabric may have been in the sister county, the workers of Buckingham appear early to have gained the lion's share of public estimation for the produce of their pillows, and the manufacture flourished, till, suffering from the monopolies of James I., we read how—In the year 1623, April 8th, a petition was addressed from Great Marlow to the High Sheriff of Bucks, representing the distress of the people from “the bone-lace making being much decayed.”<sup>10</sup>

Three years later, 1626, Sir Henry Borlase founds and endows the free school of Great Marlow for twenty-four boys to read, write, and cast accounts; and for twenty-four girls “to knit, spin, and make bone lace”; and here at Great Marlow the trade flourished, all English, and even French authors<sup>11</sup> citing its “manufactures de dentelles au fuseau” as the staple produce of the town, and its surrounding villages, which sold lace, however, they pronounce as “inférieure à celle de Flandres.”

During the seventeenth century the trade continued to advance, and Fuller testifies to its once more prosperous condition in Bucks, towards the year 1640. “No handicrafts of note,” he writes, “(save what are common to other countries) are used therein, except any will instance in bone lace, much thereof being made about Ouldney, in this county, though more, I believe, in Devonshire, where we shall meet more properly therewith.”<sup>12</sup> Olney, as it is now written, a small market town, for many years the residence of Cowper, known by its twenty-four-arched bridge, now no more, “of wearisome but needful length” spanning the Ouse—Olney, together with the fellow towns of Newport-Pagnel and Aylesbury, are much quoted by the authorities of the last century, though, as is too often the case in books of travels and statistics, one writer copies from another the information derived from a preceding author. Defoe, however, who visited each county in detail, quotes “Ouldney as possessing a considerable manufacture of bone lace”;

<sup>10</sup> State Papers Dom. Jac. I. Vol. 142. P. R. O.

<sup>11</sup> Savary and Peuchet.

<sup>12</sup> *Worthies*. Vol. i., p. 134.

while a letter from the poet Cowper to the Rev. John Newton, in 1780, enclosing a petition to Lord Dartmouth in favour of the lace-makers, declares that "hundreds in this little town are upon the point of starving, and that the most unremitting industry is barely sufficient to keep them from it." A distress caused, we may infer, by some caprice of fashion.

"The lace manufacture is still carried on," says Lysons,<sup>13</sup> "to a great extent in and about Olney, where veils and other lace of the finer sorts are made, and great fortunes are said to be acquired by the factors. Lace-making is in no part of the country so general as at Hanslape and in its immediate vicinity; but it prevails from fifteen to twenty miles round in every direction. At Hanslape not fewer than 800 out of a population of 1275 were employed in it in the year 1801. Children are put to the lace-schools at, or soon after, five years of age. At eleven or twelve years of age they are all able to maintain themselves without any assistance; both girls and boys are taught to make it, and some men when grown up follow no other employment; others, when out of work, find it a good resource, and can earn as much as the generality of day labourers. The lace made in Hanslape is from sixpence to two guineas a yard in value. It is calculated that from £8000 to £9000 net profit is annually brought into the parish by the lace manufacture."

The bone lace of Stoney Stratford<sup>14</sup> and Aylesbury are both quoted by Defoe, and the produce of the latter city is mentioned with praise. He writes: "Many of the poor here are employed in making lace for edgings, not much inferior to those from Flanders; but it is some pleasure to us to observe that the English are not the only nation in the world which admires foreign manufactures above its own, since the French, who gave fashions to most nations, buy and sell the finest laces at Paris under the name of 'dentelles d'Angleterre' or 'English laces.'" <sup>15</sup>

In the southern part of Buckinghamshire the hundreds of Burnham and Desborough were especially noted for the

<sup>13</sup> *Magna Britannia*, Daniel and Samuel Lysons. 1808-22.

<sup>14</sup> Describing the "lace and edgings" of the tradesman's wife, she has "from

'Stoney Stratford the first, and Great Marlow the last.'"—*The Complete English Tradesman*. Dan. Defoe. 1726.

<sup>15</sup> Edition 1762.

art, the lace-workers producing handsome lace of the finest quality, and about the year 1680 lace-making was one of the principal employments in High Wycombe.<sup>16</sup>

But Newport-Pagnel, whether from its more central position, or being of greater commercial importance, is the town which receives most praise from all contemporary authors. "This town," says the *Magna Britannia* in 1720, "is a sort of staple for bone lace, of which more is thought to be made here than any town in England; that commodity is brought to as great perfection almost as in Flanders." "Newport-Pagnel," writes Defoe, "carries on a great trade in bone lace, and the same manufacture employs all the neighbouring villages"; while Don Manuel Gonzales,<sup>17</sup> in 1730, speaks of its lace as little inferior to that of Flanders, which assertion he may have probably copied from previous writers.

At one of the earliest meetings of the Anti-Gallican Society, 1752, Admiral Vernon in the chair, the first prize to the maker of the best piece of English bone lace was awarded to Mr. William Marriott, of Newport-Pagnel, Bucks. The principal lace-dealers in London were invited to give their opinion, and they allowed it to be the best ever made in England. Emboldened by this success, we read how, in 1761, Earl Temple, Lord Lieutenant of Bucks, having been requested by Richard Lowndes, Esq., one of the Knights of the Shire, on behalf of the lace-makers, to present to the King a pair of fine lace ruffles, made by Messrs. Milward and Company, at Newport-Pagnel, in the same county, his Majesty, after looking at them and asking many questions respecting this branch of trade, was most graciously pleased to express himself that the inclination of his own

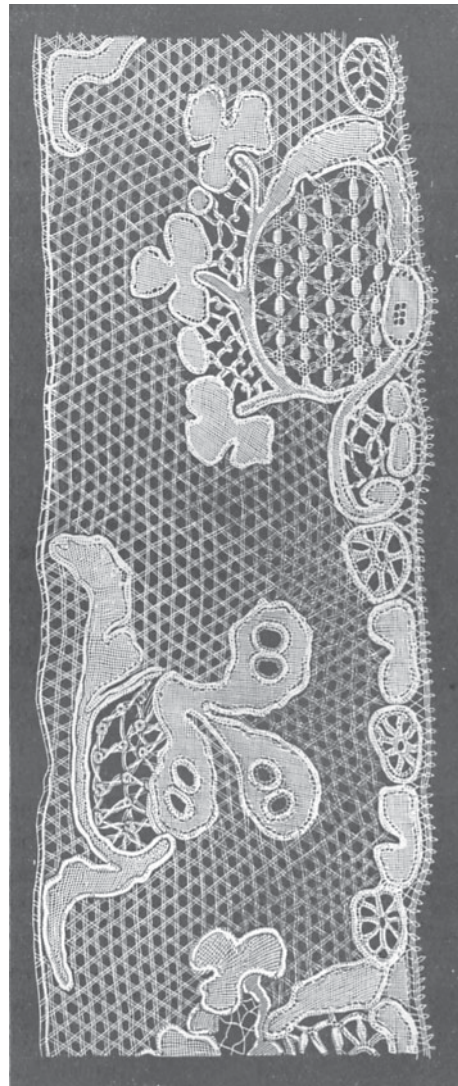
<sup>16</sup> In *Sheahan's History of Bucks*, published in 1862, the following places are mentioned as being engaged in the industry:—"Bierton (black and white lace), Cuddington, Haddenham, Great Hampden, Wendover, Gawcott (black), Beachampton, Marsh Gibbon, Preston Bisset, Claydon, Grendon, Dorton, Grandborough, Oving (black and white), Waddesdon, Newport-Pagnell, Bletchley, Hopton, Great Horwood, Bon Buckhill, Fenny Stratford, Hanslope (where 500 women and children are employed—about one-third of the population), Levendon, Great Sand-

ford, Loughton, Melton Keynes, Moulsoe, Newton Blossomville, Olney, Sherrington, and the adjoining villages, Stoke Hammond, Wavendon, Great and Little Kimble, Wooleston, Aston Abbots, Swanbourne, Winslow, Rodnage."

<sup>17</sup> *The Voyage to Great Britain of Don Manuel Gonzales, late Merchant of the City of Lisbon*.—"Some say Defoe wrote this book himself; it is evidently from the pen of an Englishman."—*Lowndes' Bibliographers' Manual*. Bohn's Edition.

heart naturally led him to set a high value on every endeavour to further English manufactures, and whatever had such recommendation would be preferred by him to

Fig. 133.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE TROLLY.

works of possibly higher perfection made in any other country.<sup>18</sup> From this period Newport-Pagnel is cited as

<sup>18</sup> *Annual Register*.

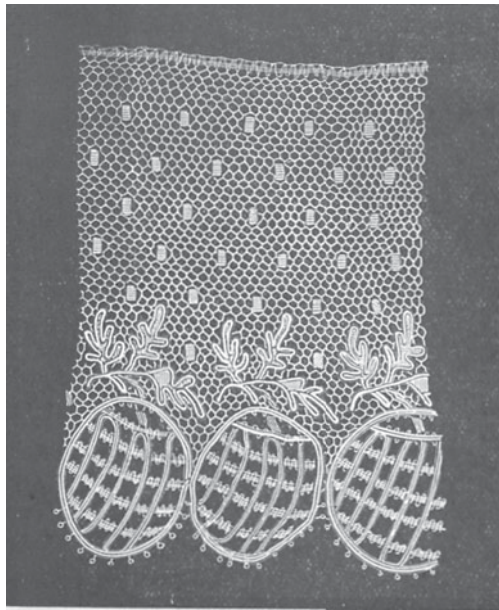


one of the most noted towns in the kingdom for making bone lace.<sup>19</sup>

As in other places, much complaint was made of the unhealthy state of the lace-working population, and of the injury sustained by long sitting in the vitiated air of the cottages.<sup>20</sup>

In Pennant's *Journey from Chester to London* (in 1782),

Fig. 134.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE "POINT."

he notices in Towcester that, "this town is supported by the great concourse of passengers, and by a manufacture of lace, and a small one of silk stockings. The first was im-

<sup>19</sup> See *Britannia Depicta*, by John Owen, Gent. Lond. 1764, and others.

<sup>20</sup> In 1785 there appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* \* "An essay on the cause and prevention of defor-

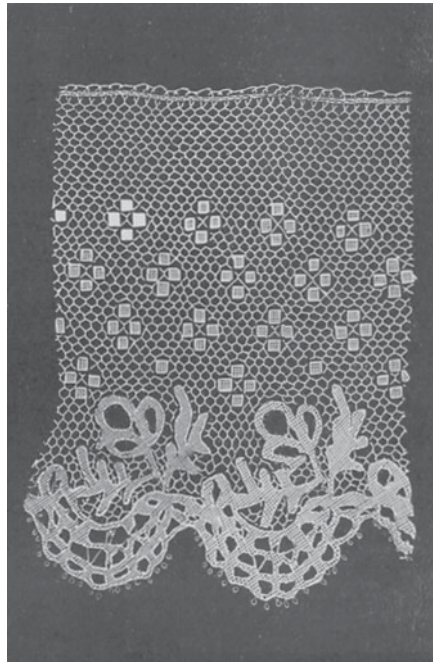
mity among the lace-makers of Bucks and North Hants," suggesting improved ventilation and various other remedies long since adopted by the lace-working population in all countries.

\* In 1761 appeared a previous paper, "to prevent the effects of stooping and vitiated air," etc.

ported from Flanders, and carried on with much success in this place, and still more in the neighbouring county" (Buckinghamshire).

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Revolution again drove many of the poorer French to seek refuge on our shores, as they had done a century before; and we find stated in the *Annual Register* of 1794: "A number

Fig. 135.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE "POINT."

of ingenious French emigrants have found employment in Bucks, Bedfordshire, and the adjacent counties, in the manufacturing of lace, and it is expected, through the means of these artificers, considerable improvements will be introduced into the method of making English lace."

Figs. 134 and 135 represent the "point" ground, which won the laces of the midland counties their reputation. (See NORTHAMPTONSHIRE for additional matter.)

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

The laces of Northampton do not appear to have attracted the notice of the writers of the eighteenth century so much as those of the sister counties.

Anderson mentions that Kettering has "a considerable trade in lace"; and Lysons, later, observes that lace is made at Cheney. Certainly, the productions of this county a century back were of exquisite beauty, as we can bear testimony from the specimens in a pattern-book inherited by Mr. Cardwell, the well-known lace merchant of Northampton, from his predecessor in the trade, which we have had an opportunity of examining. We have also received examples from various localities in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and as there is much similarity in the products of the three counties, we shall, perhaps, better describe them by treating of them all collectively.

The earliest English lace was naturally the old Flemish, the pattern wavy and graceful, the ground well executed. Fig. 136, which we select as an example, is a specimen we received, with many others, of old Newport-Pagnel lace, given by Mrs. Bell, of that town, where her family has been established from time immemorial. Mrs. Bell could carry these laces back to the year 1780, when they were bequeathed to her father by an aged relative who had long been in the lace trade. The packets remain for the most part entire. The custom of "storing" lace was common among the country-people.

Next in antiquity is Fig. 137, a lace of Flemish design, with the fine Brussels ground. This is among the Northamptonshire laces already alluded to.

Many of the early patterns appear to have been run or worked in with the needle on the net ground (Fig. 138).

In 1778, according to M'Culloch,<sup>21</sup> was introduced the "point" ground, as it is locally termed, from which period dates the staple pillow lace trade of these counties. This ground is beautifully clear, the patterns well executed: we doubt if Fig. 139 could be surpassed in beauty by lace of

---

<sup>21</sup> *Dict. of Commerce.*



ENGLISH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. BOBBIN LACE.—End of nineteenth century.  
Widths:  $1\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  and 2 in.

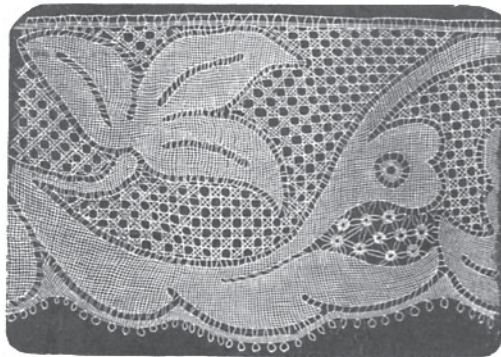
Photo by A. Dryden from a private collection.

*To face page 384.*

any foreign manufacture. Much of this point ground was made by men.

The principal branch of the lace trade was the making of "baby lace," as those narrow laces were called, most specially employed for the adorning of infants' caps (Figs.

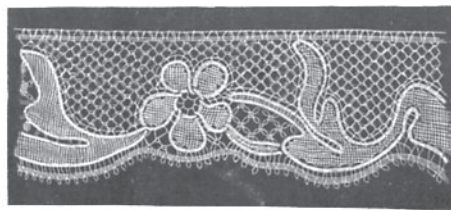
Fig. 136.



OLD FLEMISH.—(Newport-Pagnel.)

140, 141, 142). The "point" ground was used, the patterns taken from those of Lille and Mechlin—hence the laces of Buckingham and Bedfordshire have often been styled "English Lille." Though the fashion in the mother-

Fig. 137.



OLD BRUSSELS.—(Northampton.)

country passed away, the American ladies held to the trimmed infant's cap until the breaking out of the Civil War; and up to that date large quantities of "baby lace" were exported to America, the finer sorts varying from five shillings to seven shillings and sixpence a yard, still retaining their ancient name of "points."

Many other descriptions of grounds were made—wire (Fig. 143), double, and trolly, in every kind of quality and

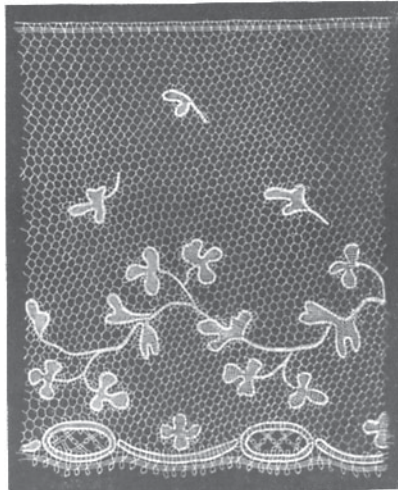
Fig. 138.



"RUN" LACE.—(Newport-Paguel.)

width. In the making of the finer sorts of edging as many as 200 threads would be employed.

Fig. 139.

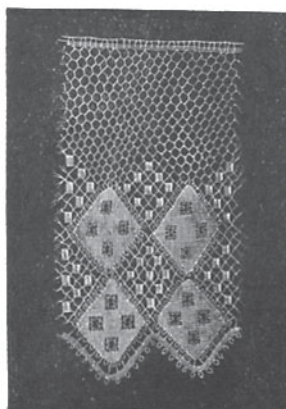


ENGLISH "POINT."—(Northampton.)

On the breaking out of the war with France, the closing of our ports to French goods gave an impetus to the trade, and the manufacturers undertook to supply the English

market with lace similar to that of Normandy and the sea-coast villages of France; hence a sort of "fausse" Valenciennes, called the "French ground." But true

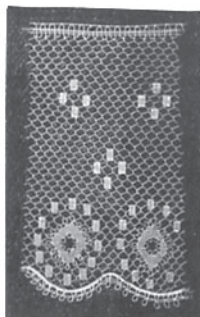
Fig. 140.



"BABY" LACE.—(Northampton.)

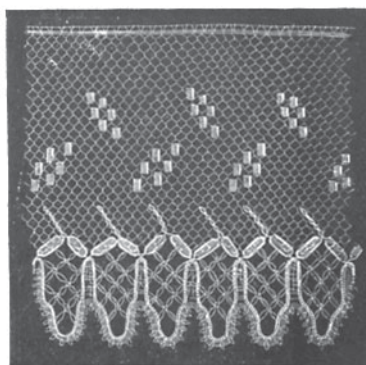
Valenciennes was also fabricated so fine (Fig. 144) as to rival the products of French Hainault. It was made in

Fig. 141.



"BABY" LACE.—(Beds.)

Fig. 142.



"BABY" LACE.—(Bucks.)

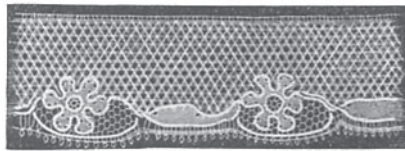
considerable quantities, until the expertness of the smuggler and the cessation of the war caused it to be laid aside.

One-third of the lace-workers of Northampton were

employed, previous to the introduction of machine-made net, in making quillings on the pillow.

During the Regency, a "point" lace, with the "cloth" or "toilé" on the edge, for many years was in fashion, and, in compliment to the Prince, was named by the loyal manufacturers "Regency Point." It was a durable and handsome lace (Fig. 145).

Fig. 143.

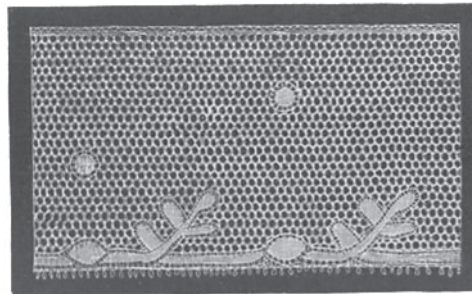


WIRE GROUND.—(Northampton.)

Towards the year 1830, insertions found their way to the public taste (Fig. 146).

Till the middle of the nineteenth century, in lace-making districts, almost the only schools were the lace schools—and there were several in most villages—where lace-making was

Fig. 144.



VALENCIENNES.—(Northampton.)

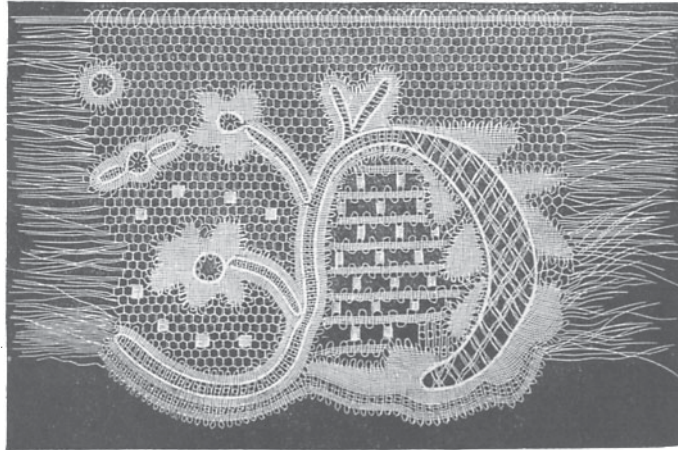
the principal thing taught and a little reading added. I am indebted to Mrs. Roberts, formerly of Spratton, near Northampton, for the following description, which she kindly allows me to reprint.

"The following are the few particulars of the old lace school for which this village was at one time famous. Indeed, it may be borne in mind that, owing to the great



interest taken in education by a former squire and a former vicar, Spratton fifty years ago was far ahead of its neighbours in the matter of education; and the Spratton school

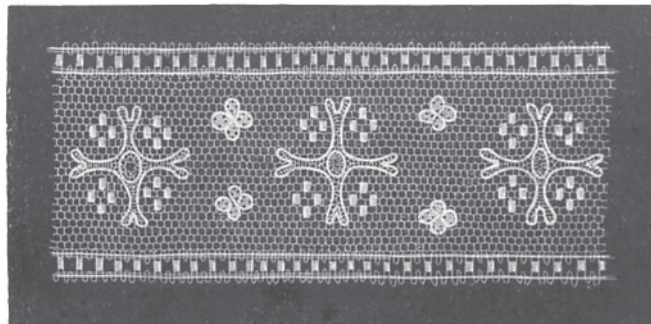
Fig. 145.



REGENCY POINT.—(Bedford.)

and Mr. Pridmore, the Spratton schoolmaster, with his somewhat strict discipline, were well known, not only to the children of Spratton, but to the boys and girls of most of

Fig. 146.



INSERTION.—(Bedford.)

the adjacent villages. But the lace school was, no doubt, a commercial institution, and I think it will be admitted that the hours were long and the work severe. The girls left the

day school at the age of eight years, and joined the lace-school, and here the hours were from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. in the summer, and from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. in the winter. Half an hour was allowed for breakfast and for tea, and one hour for dinner, so that there were ten hours for actual work. The girls had to stick ten pins a minute, or six hundred an hour; and if at the end of the day they were five pins behind, they had to work for another hour. On Saturdays, however, they had a half-holiday, working only to the dinner-hour. They counted to themselves every pin they stuck, and at every fiftieth pin they called out the time, and the girls used to race each other as to who should call out first.

“They paid twopence a week (or threepence in winter) for lights, and in return they received the money realised from the sale of the lace they made, and they could earn about sixpence a day. Pay-day was a great event; it came once a month.

“In the evenings eighteen girls worked by one tallow candle, value one penny; the ‘candle-stool’ stood about as high as an ordinary table with four legs. In the middle of this was what was known as the ‘pole-board,’ with six holes in a circle and one in the centre. In the centre hole was a long stick with a socket for the candle at one end and peg-holes through the sides, so that it could be raised or lowered at will. In the other six holes were placed pieces of wood hollowed out like a cup, and into each of these was placed a bottle made of very thin glass and filled with water.<sup>22</sup> These bottles acted as strong condensers or lenses, and the eighteen girls sat round the table, three to each bottle, their stools being upon different levels, the highest nearest the bottle, which threw the light down upon the work like a burning-glass. In the day-time as many as thirty girls, and sometimes boys, would work in a room about twelve feet square, with two windows, and in the winter they could have no fire for lack of room.” The makers of the best laces would sit nearest the light, and so on in order of merit.

A “down” in Northamptonshire is the parchment

<sup>22</sup> In Flanders also these glasses were made and used. The “medieval ‘ourinals’ are alike the retorts of the alchemist and the water-globes of the

poor Flemish flax-thread spinners and lace makers.” *Old English Glasses*. A. Hartshorne.

pattern, generally about twelve inches long. In Buckinghamshire they have two "eachs" ten inches long, and putting one in front of the other, so work round the pillow, which to many commends itself as a better plan than having one "down" and moving the lace back on reaching the end of the "down." The pillow is a hard round cushion, stuffed with straw and well hammered to make it hard for the bobbins to rattle on. It is then covered with the butcher-blue "pillow-cloth" all over; a "lace cloth" of the same, for the lace to lie on, goes over the top; then follows the lace-paper to pin it in as made, covered with the "lacing," which is a strip of bright print. The "hinder" of blue linen covers up all behind, the "worker" keeping the parchment clean in front where the hands rest. A bobbin bag and scissors are then tied on one side and a pin-cushion on the top; a cloth "heller" is thrown over the whole when not used.

The pins are fine brass ones made on purpose;<sup>23</sup> the bobbins are of various sizes and makes—very fine for fine lace, heavier and twisted round with strips of brass for coarser laces and gimp for the threads, which are the tracing ones, dividing the different characters of patterns; some are of bone with words tattooed round in columns. The usual bobbin is plain turned wood, with coloured beads at the end for the necessary weight. The number varies from twenty to five hundred, according to the width of the pattern.<sup>24</sup>

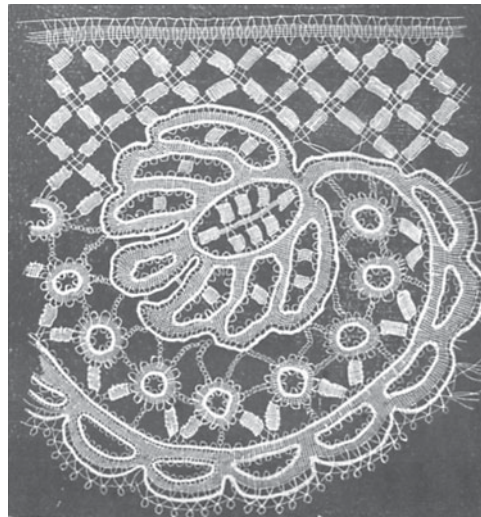
<sup>23</sup> The larger pins had heads put to them with seeds of *galium* locally called Hariffe or goose-grass; the seeds when fingered became hard and polished.

<sup>24</sup> Bobbins are usually made of bone, wood or ivory. English bobbins are of bone or wood, and especially in the counties of Bedford, Bucks, and Huntingdon, the set on a lace pillow formed a homely record of their owner's life. The names of her family, dates and records, births and marriages and mottoes, were carved, burnt, or stained on the bobbin, while events of general interest were often commemorated by the addition of a new bobbin. The *spangles*, *jingles* (or *gingles*) fastened to the end of the bobbin have a certain interest; a waist-

coat button and a few coral beads brought from overseas, a family relic in the shape of an old copper seal, or an ancient and battered coin—such things as these were often attached to the ring of brass wire passed through a hole in the bobbin. The inscriptions on the bobbins are sometimes burned and afterwards stained, and sometimes "pegged" or traced in tiny leaden studs, and consist of such mottoes as "Love me Truley" (*sic*), "Buy the Ring," "Osborne for Ever," "Queen Caroline," "Let no false Lover win my heart," "To me, my dear, you may come near," "Lovely Betty," "Dear Mother," and so forth.—R. E. Head. "Some notes on Lace-Bobbins." *The Reliquary*, July, 1900.

The Exhibition of 1851 gave a sudden impulse to the traders, and from that period the lace industry rapidly developed. At this time was introduced the Maltese guipures and the "plaited" laces, a variety grafted on the old Maltese (Fig. 147). Five years later appears the first specimen of the raised plait, now so thoroughly established in the market. At the time Queen Victoria's trousseau was made, in which only English lace was used, the prices paid were so enormous that men made lace in the fields. In those days the parchments on which the patterns were

Fig. 147.



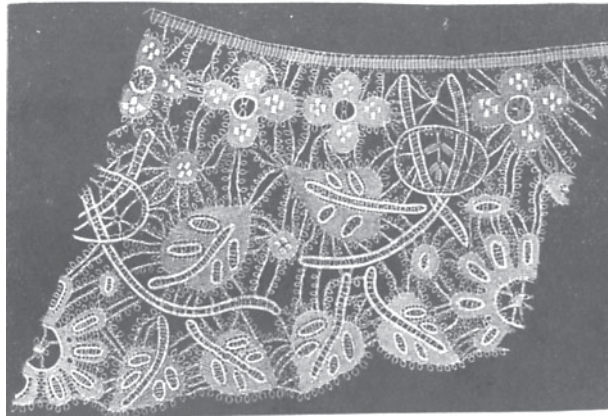
PLAITED LACE.—(Bedford.)

pricked were worth their weight in gold; many were extremely old and their owners were very jealous of others copying their patterns. But, of late years, we hear of so little store being set by these parchments that they were actually boiled down to make glue.

The decay which threatened almost total extinction of the industry belongs to the last twenty years. The contributory causes were several, chiefly the rapid development of machinery, which enabled large quantities to be sold at lower rates than the hand-workers could starve on, while the quality of the manufactured goods was good enough for the

large public that required lace to last but a short time. Foreign competition, the higher wages required by all, and the many new employments opening to women took away the young people from the villages. In 1874 more than thirty young lace-women left a village of four hundred inhabitants to seek work elsewhere. The old workers gave up making good laces and supplied the popular demand with Maltese, which grew more and more inferior both in design and quality of thread, and gradually the old workers died out and no new ones took their places. The Lace Association has been started with the object of stimulating and

Fig. 148.



RAISED PLAIT.—Bedford.

improving the local manufacture of pillow lace, of providing lace-workers with greater facilities for the sale of their work at more remunerative prices. Its aim is also to save the old designs of the "point" lace and discourage the coarse Maltese, to get new designs copied from old laces, and insist on only the best thread being used,<sup>25</sup> and good workmanship, and finally, to bring the lace before the public, and send it direct from worker to the purchaser, thus enabling the former to get the full value, saving the large profits which the dealers, buying for the shopkeepers, intercept for their own advantage, Pillow lace was also made to some extent in Derbyshire.

<sup>25</sup> Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of using fine linen thread. Many well-meant efforts are entirely ruined by the coarse woolly

## SUFFOLK.

Suffolk has produced bobbin-made laces of little artistic value. The patterns in most of the specimens in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection are derived from simple Mechlin, Lille, and Valenciennes patterns. "The make of the lace resembles that of Buckinghamshire laces, and that of the Norman laces of the present time. The entire collection displays varied combinations of six ways of twisting and plaiting thread."<sup>26</sup>

---

cotton thread used for what ought to be a fine make of lace. That good thread can be got in Great Britain is evident from the fact that the Brussels dealers employ English thread, and sell it to Venice for the exquisite work of

Burano. Needless to say, no Englishman has attempted to make a bid for the direct custom of the 8,000 lace-workers there employed.

<sup>26</sup> Catalogue of lace (Victoria and Albert Museum).



ENGLISH, SUFFOLK. BOBBIN LACE.—Nineteenth century. Resembling inferior Buckinghamshire, also Normandy and Saxony laces. Victoria and Albert Museum.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## WILTSHIRE AND DORSETSHIRE.

FROM Wiltshire and Dorset, counties in the eighteenth century renowned for their lace, the trade has now passed away ; a few workers may yet be found in the retired sea-side village of Charmouth, and these are diminishing fast.

Of the Wiltshire manufactures we know but little, even from tradition, save that the art did once prevail. Peuchet alludes to it. When Sir Edward Hungerford attacked Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, Lady Arundel, describing the destruction of the leaden pipes by the soldiers, says, "They cut up the pipe and sold it, as these men's wives in North Wiltshire do bone lace, at sixpence a yard."

One Mary Hurdle, of Marlborough, in the time of Charles II., tells us in her "Memoirs"<sup>1</sup> that, being left an orphan, she was apprenticed by the chief magistrate to a maker of bone lace for eight years, and after that period of servitude she apprenticed herself for five years more.

Again, at the time of the Great Plague, cautions are issued by the Mayor of Marlborough to all parents and masters how they send their children and servants to school or abroad in making bone lace or otherwise, in any public house, place, or school used for that purpose.<sup>2</sup>

In the proceedings of the Anti-Gallican Society it is recorded that the second prize for needle point ruffles was, in 1751, awarded to Mrs. Elizabeth Waterman, of the episcopal city of Salisbury. Such are the scanty notices we have been able to glean of the once flourishing lace trade in Wiltshire.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Conversion and Experience of Mary Hurl, or Hurdle, of Marlborough, a maker of bone lace in this town*, by the Rev. — Hughes, of that town.

<sup>2</sup> Waylem's *History of Marlborough*.



Dorset, on the other hand, holds a high place in the annals of lace-making, three separate towns, in their day—Blandford, Sherborne, and Lyme Regis—disputing the palm of excellence for their productions.

Of Blandford the earliest mention we find is in Owen's *Magna Britannica* of 1720, where he states: "The manufacture of this town was heretofore 'band-strings,' which were once risen to a good price, but now times hath brought both bands themselves and their strings out of use, and so the inhabitants have turned their hands to making straw works and bone lace, which perhaps may come to nothing, if the fickle humour of fashionmongers take to wearing Flanders lace."

Only four years later Defoe writes of Blandford:—"This city is chiefly famous for making the finest bone lace in England, and where they showed us some so exquisitely fine as I think I never saw better in Flanders, France, or Italy, and which, they said, they rated above £30 sterling a yard; but it is most certain that they make exceeding rich lace in this county, such as no part of England can equal." In the edition of 1762, Defoe adds, "This was the state and trade of the town when I was there in my first journey; but on June 4, 1731, the whole town, except twenty-six houses, was consumed by fire, together with the church."

Postlethwayt,<sup>3</sup> Hutchins,<sup>4</sup> Lysons, and Knight (*Imperial Cyclopædia*) all tell the same story. Peuchet cites the Blandford laces as "comparables à celles qu'on fait en Flandres (excepté Bruxelles), en France, et même dans les Etats de Venise"; and Anderson mentions Blandford as "a well-built town, surpassing all England in fine lace." More reliance is to be placed on the two last-named authorities than the former, who have evidently copied Defoe without troubling themselves to inquire more deeply into the matter.

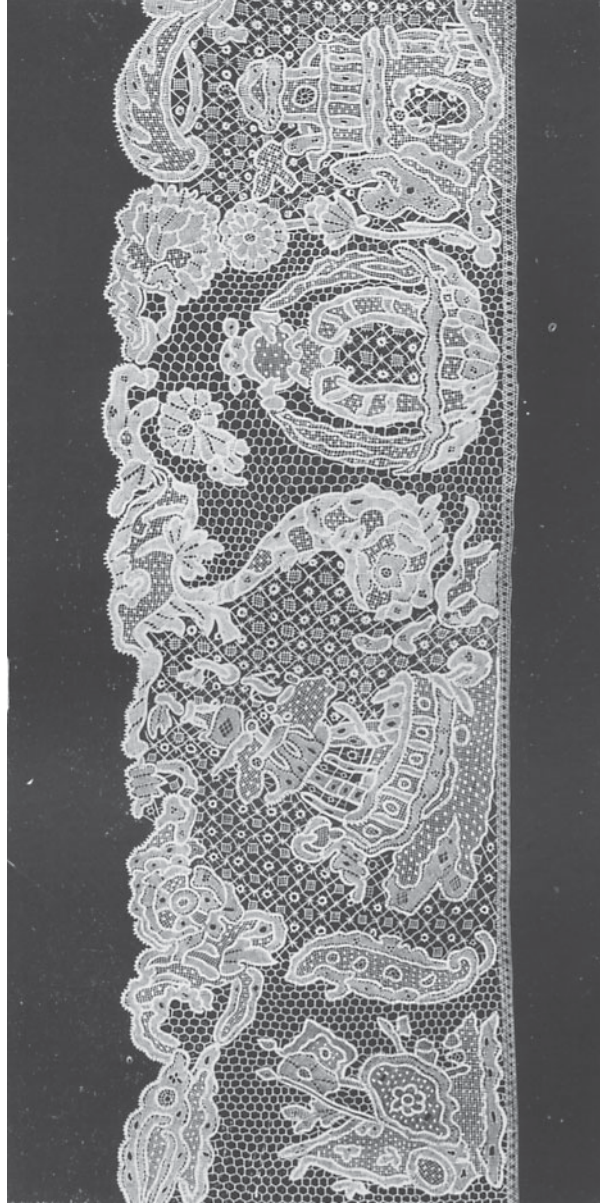
It is generally supposed that the trade gradually declined after the great fire of 1731, when it was replaced by the

<sup>3</sup> "At Bland, on the Stour, between Salisbury and Dorchester, they made the finest lace in England, valued at £30 per yard."—*Universal Dict. of Trade and Commerce*. 1774.

<sup>4</sup> "Much bone lace was made here,

and the finest point in England, equal, if not superior, to that of Flanders, and valued at £30 per yard till the beginning of this century."—*Hutchins' Hist. of the County of Dorset*. 2nd Edition, 1796.

Fig. 149.



ENGLISH NEEDLE-MADE LACE, REPRESENTING THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA.

*To face page 396.*

manufacture of buttons, and no record of its former existence can be found among the present inhabitants of the place.<sup>5</sup>

Fig. 149 represents a curious piece of lace, preserved as an heirloom in a family in Dorsetshire. It formerly belonged to Queen Charlotte, and, when purchased by the present owner, had a label attached to it, "Queen Elizabeth's lace," with the tradition that it was made in commemoration of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, as the ships, dolphins, and national emblems testify. At this we beg to demur, as no similar lace was made at that period; but we do not doubt its having been made in honour of that victory, for the building is decidedly old Tilbury Fort, familiar to all by the pencil of Stanfield. But the lace is point d'Argentan, as we see by the hexagonal "bride" ground and the workmanship of the pattern. None but the best lace-workers could have made it; it was probably the handiwork of some English lady, or the pattern, designed in England, may have been sent to Argentan to execute, perhaps as a present to Queen Charlotte.

"Since the Reformation the clothing trade declined," writes Defoe, of Sherborne. "Before 1700, making buttons, haberdashery wares, and bone laces employed a great many hands"; which said piece of information is repeated word for word in the *Imperial Cyclopædia*. Other authors, such as Anderson, declare, at a far later date, Sherborne to carry on a good trade in lace, and how, up to 1780, much blonde, both white and black, and of various colours, was made there, of which a supply was sent to all markets. From the latter end of the eighteenth century, the lace trade of Sherborne declined, and gradually died out.

The points of Lyme Regis rivalled, in the eighteenth century, those of Honiton and Blandford, and when the trade of the last-named town passed away, Lyme and Honiton laces held their own, side by side, in the London market. The fabric of Lyme Regis, for a period, came more before the public eye, for that old, deserted, and half-forgotten mercantile city, in the eighteenth century, once more raised its head as a fashionable watering-place. Prizes were awarded by the

---

<sup>5</sup> What this celebrated point was we cannot ascertain. Two samplers sent to us as Blandford point were of geometric pattern resembling the sampler, Fig. 5.

Anti-Gallican Society<sup>6</sup> to Miss Mary Channon, of Lyme Regis, and her fellow-townswoman, Miss Mary Ben, for ruffles of needle point and bone lace. The reputation of the fabric, too, of Lyme Regis reached even the court; and when Queen Charlotte first set foot on English ground, she wore a head and lappets of Dorset manufacture. Some years later a splendid lace dress was made for her Majesty by the workers of Lyme, which, says the annalist of our southern coast,<sup>7</sup> gave great satisfaction at court. The makers of this costly product, however, received but fourpence a day for their work.

The laces of Lyme, like all good articles, were expensive. A narrow piece set quite plain round an old woman's cap would cost four guineas, nor was five guineas a yard considered an exorbitant price.

It was a favourite custom at Lyme for lovers to have their initials entwined and worked together on a piece of ornamental lace.

The making of such expensive lace being scarcely found remunerative, the trade gradually expired; and when the order for the marriage lace of Queen Victoria reached the southern counties, not one lace-maker was to be found to aid in the work in the once flourishing town of Lyme Regis.

---

<sup>6</sup> In 1752.

<sup>7</sup> Roberts' *Hist. of Lyme Regis*.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## DEVONSHIRE.

“ Bone lace and Cyder.”—*Anderson*.

“ At Axminster, you may be furnished with fyne flax thread there spunne. At Honyton and Bradninch with bone lace much in request.”—*Westcote*.

## HONITON.

THE lace industry found its way to Devonshire, if the generally-accepted theory be correct, by the Flemish refugees flying from the persecutions of the Duke of Alva. There is much probability to support the theory, and some names,<sup>1</sup> of undoubted Flemish origin, appear among the entries of the church registers still preserved at Honiton, towards the latter end of the sixteenth century—names all handed down to their descendants in the present generation, and in these families the fabric has continued for a long lapse of years. On the other hand, if there had been any considerable number of Flemings in Devonshire, they would surely have founded a company of their Reformed Church, and no reference is found in the published books of the archives of the London Dutch Church of any such company in Devonshire, whereas references abound to places in the Eastern Counties and Midlands where Flemings were settled. Lace was made on the pillow in the Low Countries by the middle of the sixteenth century, so by the date of the Alva persecution (1568–77) the people might have learned it in sufficient numbers to start it wherever they set up their new home. Up to that date in England lace was made with the needle,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burd, Genest, Raymunds, Brock, Couch, Gerard, Murck, Stocker, Maynard, Trump, Groot, etc.

silk and coarse thread were already fabricated in Devonshire, as elsewhere; and that the Flemings, on their arrival, having introduced the fine thread,

<sup>2</sup> “ We may rather infer that laces of

and it was not till we read of "bone-lace" that it may be taken to mean pillow-lace. The term "bone," according to Fuller, was applied from the custom of using sheep's trotters as bobbins. In Devonshire, however, the tradition is that, owing to the high price of pins, the lace-makers, being within reach of the sea, made use of fish-bones, and thus pillow-lace became "bone-lace." The term "bobbin" came into use soon afterwards, but was not so universal as "bone"; it occurs in the Wardrobe Accounts and Royal inventories (where one entry runs, "In ye shoppe, 4 oz. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Bobbing lace, 6s. 4d.").

Although the earliest known MS.<sup>3</sup> giving an account of the different towns in Devon makes no mention of lace, we find from it that Mrs. Minifie,<sup>4</sup> one of the earliest-named lace-makers, was an Englishwoman.

Queen Elizabeth was much addicted to the collecting and wearing of beautiful clothes; but no mention of English lace by name seems to occur in the inventories and accounts, and the earliest mention of Honiton lace is by Westcote, who, writing about 1620, speaks of "bone lace much in request" being made at Honiton and Bradninch; and again referring to Honiton. "Here," says he, "is made abundance of bone lace, a pretty toy now greatly in request; and therefore the town may say with merry Martial—

"In praise for toyes such as this  
Honiton second to none is."

The oft-cited inscription let into a raised tombstone, near the wall of old Honiton church, together with Westcote,

then spun almost exclusively in their own country, from that period the trade of bone-lace-making flourished in the southern as well as in the midland counties of England" (Mrs. Palliser, 1869).

<sup>3</sup> Ker's *Synopsis*, written about the year 1561. Two copies of this MS. exist, one in the library of Lord Haldon at Haldon House (Co. Devon), the other in the British Museum. This MS. was never printed, but served as an authority for Westcote and others.

<sup>4</sup> "She was a daughter of John Flay, Vicar of Buckrell, near Honiton, who by will in 1614 bequeaths certain lands to Jerom Minify (*sic*), son of

Jerom Minify, of Burwash, Sussex, who married his only daughter."—Prince's *Worthies of Devon*. 1701.

Up to a recent date the Honiton lace-makers were mostly of Flemish origin. Mrs. Stocker, *ob.* 1769; Mr. J. Stocker, + 1783, and four daughters; Mrs. Mary Stocker, + 179—; Mr. Gerard, + 1799, and daughter; Mrs. Lydia Maynard (of Anti-Gallican celebrity), + 1786; Mrs. Ann Brock, + 1815; Mrs. Elizabeth Humphrey, + 1790, whose family had been in the lace manufacture 150 years and more. The above list has been furnished to the author by Mrs. Frank Aberdein, whose grandfather was for many years

prove the industry to have been well established in the reign of James I. The inscription runs—

“Here lyeth y<sup>e</sup> body of James Rodge, of Honinton, in y<sup>e</sup> County of Devonshire (Bonelace Siller, hath given unto the poore of Honinton P<sup>r</sup>ishe, the benyfit of £100 for ever), who deceased y<sup>e</sup> 27 of July A<sup>o</sup> D<sup>i</sup> 1617 AETATAE SVÆE 50. Remember the Poore.”

There have been traditions that Rodge was a valet who accompanied his master abroad, and there learning the fine Flemish stitches, taught some Devonshire women on his return home, and was enabled to make a comfortable competence by their work, bequeathing a sum of money to the poor of Honiton; but it is more probable that he was an ordinary dealer.

Westcote,<sup>5</sup> who wrote about the year 1620, when noticing bone lace, does not speak of it as a new manufacture; the trade had already taken root and flourished, for, including the above-mentioned Rodge, the three earliest bone lace makers of the seventeenth century on record all at their decease bequeathed sums of money for the benefit of their indigent townspeople, viz., Mrs. Minifie,<sup>6</sup> before mentioned, who died in 1617, and Thomas Humphrey, of Honiton, lace-man, who willed in the year 1658 £20 towards the purchase of certain tenements, a notice of which benefaction is recorded on a painted board above the gallery of the old parish church.

By this time English lace had advanced in public estimation. In the year 1660 a royal ordinance of France provided that a mark should be affixed to thread lace imported from England as well as on that of Flanders; and we have already told elsewhere how the Earl of Essex procures, through his countess, bone lace to a considerable amount as a present to Queen Anne of Austria.

Speaking of bone lace, writes Fuller in his *Worthies*: “Much of this is made in and about Honyton, and weekly returned to London. . . . Modern is the use thereof in England, and that not exceeding the middle of the reign of

in the trade. Mrs. Treadwin, of Exeter, found an old lace-worker using a lace “Turn” for winding sticks, having the date 1678 rudely carved on the foot, showing how the trade was continued

in the same family from generation to generation.

<sup>5</sup> *View of Devon.* T. Westcote.

<sup>6</sup> Her bequest is called “Minifie’s Gift.”

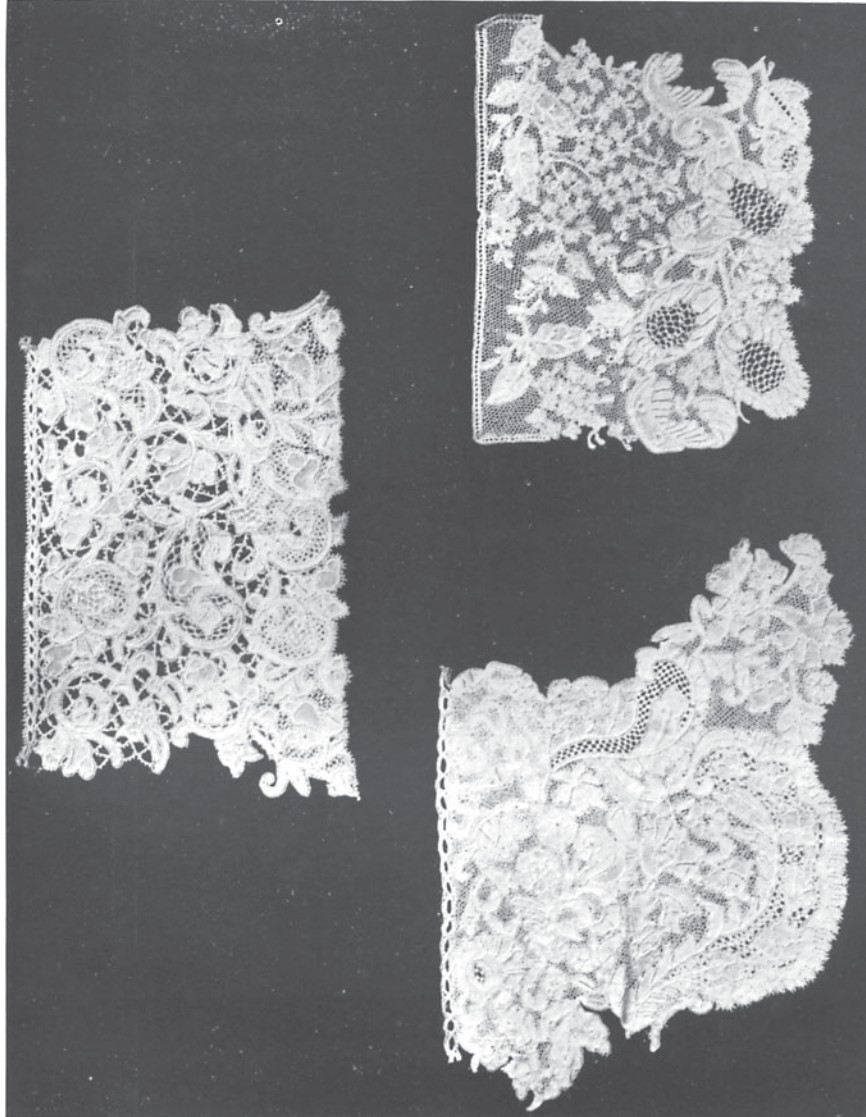
Queen Elizabeth. Let it not be condemned for a superfluous wearing because it doth neither hide, nor heat, seeing it doth adorn. Besides, though private persons pay for it, it stands the State in nothing ; not expensive of bullion like other lace, costing nothing save a little thread descanted on by art and industry. Hereby many children, who otherwise would be burthensome to the parish, prove beneficial to their parents. Yea, many lame in their limbs and impotent in their arms, if able in their fingers, gain a livelihood thereby ; not to say that it saveth some thousands of pounds yearly, formerly sent over seas to fetch lace from Flanders."

The English were always ready to protect their own trades and manufactures, and various were the Acts passed to prohibit the importation of foreign lace, for the encouragement of home workers. In 1698 it was proposed to repeal the last preceding prohibition ; and, from the text of a petition sent to the House of Commons, some interesting light is thrown on the extent of the trade at that time.

"The making of Bone-lace has been an ancient Manufacture of England, and the Wisdom of our Parliaments all along thought it the Interest of this Kingdom to prohibit its Importation from Foreign Parts. . . . This has revived the said Languishing Manufacture, and there are now above one hundred thousand in England who get their living by it, and earn by mere Labour £500,000 a year, according to the lowest computation that can be made ; and the Persons employed on it are, for the most part, Women and children who have no other means of Subsistence. The English are now arrived to make as good lace in Fineness and all other respects as any that is wrought in Flanders, and particularly since the last Act, so great an improvement is made that way that in Buckinghamshire, the highest prized lace they used to make was about eight shillings per yard, and now they make lace there of above thirty shillings per yard, and in Dorsetshire and Devonshire they now make lace worth six pound per yard. . . .

". . . . The Lace Manufacture in England is the greatest, next to the woollen, and maintains a multitude of People, which otherwise the Parishes must, and that would soon prove a heavy burthen, even to those concerned in the Woollen Manufacture. On the Resolution, which





ENGLISH, DEVONSHIRE. REPRODUCTIONS OF OLD HONITON WITH THE VRAI RÉSEAU. — Made under Mrs. Fowler's direction. Widths about 4 inches.

Photo by A. Dryden.

shall be taken in this affair depends the Well-being, or ruin of numerous families in their Country. Many laws have been made to set our Poor on Work, and it is to be hoped none will be made to take away work from Multitudes who are already employed.”<sup>7</sup>

Even in 1655, when the variety of points furnished matter for a letter from the members of the Baptist Church assembled at Bridgewater, the “Beleeven men,” unwilling to injure so flourishing a commerce, merely censure “points and more laces than are required on garments,” and these they desired might be proceeded against “with all sweetness and tenderness and long-suffering.”<sup>8</sup> The conciliatory measures of the Puritans, maybe, affected the trade less than the doing of Lord Cambury and Lord Churchill’s dragoons in the suppression of Monmouth’s rebellion in 1680, by which time the lace-making art was carried on in many small country places in Devon. They pillaged the lace-makers right and left, and, when quartered at Colyton,<sup>9</sup> these unruly soldiers broke into the house of one William Bard, a dealer in bone lace, and there stole merchandise to the amount of £325 17s. 9d.<sup>10</sup>

“The valuable manufactures of lace, for which the inhabitants of Devon have long been conspicuous, are extending now from Exmouth to Torbay,”<sup>11</sup> writes Defoe in 1724.

<sup>7</sup> Here follows the numbers of the people in a few places who get their living by making lace. Among those quoted in Devonshire as interesting to compare with the present day are:—

“Coubraligh 65, Sidmont 302, Axmouth 73, Sidbury 321, Buckerall 90, Farway 70, Utpotery 118, Branscombe Beare and Seaton 326, Honyton 1341, Axminster 60, Otery St. Mary, 314.”

<sup>8</sup> Church Book of the Baptist Chapel of Lyme Regis.

<sup>9</sup> Colyton and Ottery St. Mary were among the first. Wherever the say or serge decayed, the lace trade planted itself.

In the church of Colyton, under a fine canopied tomb, repose back to back in most unsociable fashion the recumbent figures of Sir John and Lady Pole. “Dame Elizabeth,

daughter of Roger How, merchant of London, ob. 1623,” wears a splendid cape of three rows of bone lace descending to the waist. Her cap is trimmed with the same material. As this lace may be of Devonshire fabric, we give a wood-cut of the pattern (Fig. 150).

Sundry Flemish names may still be seen above the shop-windows of Colyton similar to those of Honiton—Stocker, Murch, Spiller, Rochett, Boatch, Kettel, Woram, and others.

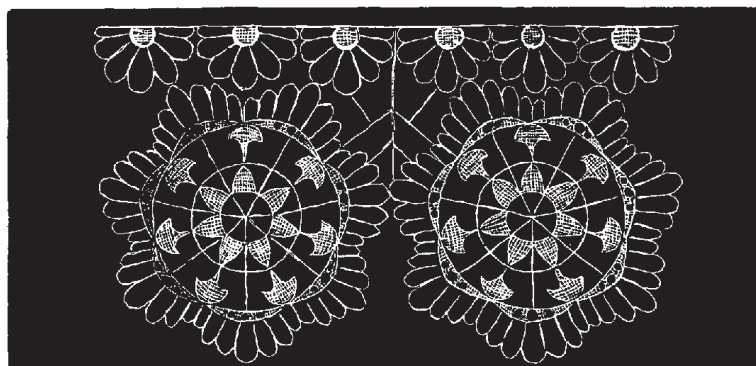
<sup>10</sup> Don Manuel Gonzales mentions “bone lace” among the commodities of Devon.

<sup>11</sup> The lace manufacture now extends along the coast from the small watering-place of Seaton, by Beer, Branscombe, Salcombe, Sidmouth, and Ollerton, to Exmouth, including the Vale of Honiton and the towns above mentioned.

These must, however, have received a check as regards the export trade, for, says Savary, who wrote about the same date, "Depuis qu'on imite les dentelles nommées point d'Angleterre en Flandres, Picardie et Champagne, on n'en tire plus de Londres pour la France."

Great distress, too, is said to have existed among the Honiton lace-makers after the two great fires of 1756 and 1767. The second was of so devastating a character that the town had to be rebuilt. Shawe declares, writing at the end of the eighteenth century: "For its present condition Honiton is indebted to that dreadful fire which reduced three parts of it to ashes. The houses now wear a pleasing

Fig. 150.



aspect, and the principal street, extending from east to west, is paved in a remarkable manner, forming a canal, well shouldered up on each side with pebbles and green turf, which holds a stream of clear water with a square dipping place opposite each door, a mark of cleanliness and convenience I never saw before."

Three years previous to the Great Fire,<sup>12</sup> among a number of premiums awarded by the Anti-Gallican Society for the encouragement of our lace trade, the first prize of fifteen guineas is bestowed upon Mrs. Lydia Maynard, of Honiton, "in token of six pairs of ladies' lappets of unprecedented beauty, exhibited by her." About this time we read

<sup>12</sup> 1753.

in Bowen's *Geography*<sup>13</sup> that at Honiton "the people are chiefly employed in the manufactory of lace, the broadest sort that is made in England, of which great quantities are sent to London." "It acquired," says Lysons, "some years since, the name of Bath Brussels lace."

To give a precise description of the earliest Devonshire lace would now be impossible. The bone or bobbin lace at first consisted of a small and simple imitation of the beautiful Venetian geometrical cut-works and points, mere narrow strips made by coarse threads plaited and interlaced. They became wider and more elaborate as the workers gained experience. Specimens may be seen on two Devonshire monuments, though whether the lace of the district is imitated on the effigies is another matter; in any case similar patterns were probably made there at the time. One is on the monument of Lady Pole, in Colyton Church, where the lady's cape is edged with three rows of bone lace. The other, which is in excellent preservation, is on the recumbent effigy of Lady Doddridge (a member of the Bampfylde family) in Exeter Cathedral, her cuffs and tucker being adorned with geometric lace of a good pattern. Both belong to the first part of the seventeenth century.

In the same Cathedral is the monument of Bishop Stafford.<sup>14</sup> His collar appears to be of a net-work, embroidered in patterns of graceful design (Fig. 151).

Belgium was noted for her linens and delicately spun flax. In consequence the Flemings soon departed from the style of their Italian masters, and made laces of their own fine threads. They worked out their own designs also, and being great gardeners and fond of flowers, it naturally came about that they composed devices of blossoms and foliage.

These alterations in course of time found their way to England, there being much intercourse between their brethren here established and those remaining in Flanders. The lace continued to get finer and closer in texture, the flax thread being required so fine that it became necessary to spin it in damp underground cellars. That the workers in England could not compete successfully against the

<sup>13</sup> *Complete System of Geography*. in *England's Gazetteer*, by Philip Emanuel Bowen. 1747. Luckombe. London, 1790.

This extract is repeated verbatim

<sup>14</sup> Died 1398.

foreigner with their home-made threads we find over and over again. They also altered the Brussels designs, and instead of the beautiful "fillings" and open-work stitches, substituted heavy guipure bars. By this period "cordonnet" or "gimp" had come into use in Brussels lace. The "*vrai réseau*," or pillow-net ground, succeeded the "bride" about the end of the seventeenth century. This fashion enabled the flowers to be made separately and worked in with the net afterwards, or rather the net was worked into the flowers

Fig. 151.



MONUMENT OF BISHOP STAFFORD, EXETER CATHEDRAL.

on the pillow. It was from the introduction of these separate sprigs that Honiton lace was able to compete with Brussels. The pattern in Fig. 153 is sewn on the plain pillow ground,<sup>15</sup> which was very beautiful and regular, but very expensive. It was made of the finest thread procured from Antwerp, the market price of which, in 1790, was £70 per pound,<sup>16</sup> and an old lace-maker told the author her father

<sup>15</sup> The best *réseau* was made by hand with the needle, and was much more expensive.

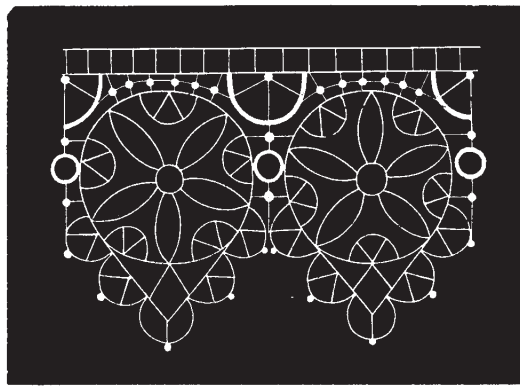
<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Aberdein, of Honiton, in-

formed Mrs. Palliser that her father often paid ninety-five guineas per lb. for the thread from Antwerp (1869).

had, during the war, paid a hundred guineas a pound to the smugglers for this highly-prized and then almost unattainable commodity.

Nor were the lace-worker's gains less remunerative. She would receive as much as eighteen shillings a yard for the workmanship alone of a piece of this elaborate net, measuring scarce two inches in width;<sup>17</sup> and one of the old lace-dealers showed Mrs. Treadwin a piece of ground eighteen inches square, for the making of which she was paid fifteen pounds

Fig. 152.



MONUMENT OF LADY DODDRIDGE. + 1614. (Exeter Cathedral.)

shortly before the establishment of the machine net manufacture.<sup>18</sup> The price of lace was proportionately high. A Honiton veil would often cost a hundred guineas.

The Flemish character of Fig. 158 is unmistakable. The

<sup>17</sup> The manner of payment was somewhat Phœnician, reminding one of Queen Dido and her bargain. The lace ground was spread out on the counter, and the worker herself desired to cover it with shillings; and as many coins as found place on her work she carried away as the fruit of her labour. The author once calculated the cost, after this fashion, of a small lace veil on real ground, said to be one of the first ever fabricated. It was 12 inches wide and 30 inches long, and, making allowance for the shrinking caused by washing, the value amounted to £20,

which proved to be exactly the sum originally paid for the veil. The ground of this veil, though perfect in its workmanship, is of a much wider mesh than was made in the last days of the fabric. It was the property of Mrs. Chick.

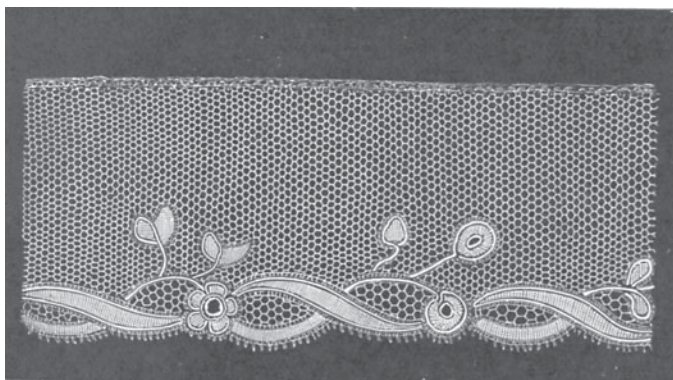
<sup>18</sup> "The last specimen of 'real' ground made in Devon was the marriage veil of Mrs. Marwood Tucker. It was with the greatest difficulty workers could be procured to make it. The price paid for the ground alone was 30 guineas" (1869).

design of the flower vase resembles those of the old Angleterre à bride, and in execution this specimen may fairly warrant a comparison with the productions of Brabant. If really of English make, we should place its fabrication at the beginning of the eighteenth century, for it was long before the Devonshire lace-makers could rival in beauty the "cordonnet" of the Flemish workers.

Fig. 154 is an example of the pattern worked in, the favourite design of the butterfly and the acorn, already familiar to us in the old point d'Angleterre and in the smock of Queen Elizabeth.

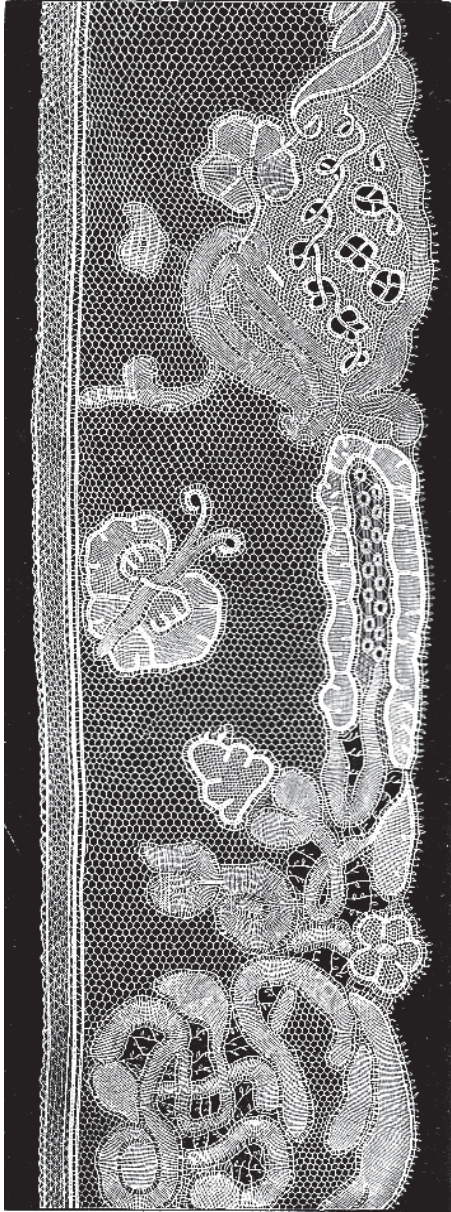
The American War had an evil effect upon the lace trade, and still worse was the French Revolution, which was followed

Fig. 153.



by the fashion of classical dress. Lace became no longer necessary to a lady's wardrobe, and the demand for it declined to a serious extent for the workers. Worse than these, however, was the introduction of the machine net, the first factory being set up at Tiverton in 1815. Lysons writes shortly afterwards in 1822:—"The manufactory of lace has much declined, although the lace still retains its superiority. Some years ago, at which time it was much patronised by the Royal family, the manufacturers of Honiton employed 2,400 hands in the town and in the neighbouring villages, but they do not now employ above 300." For twenty years the lace trade suffered the greatest depression, and the Honiton lace-workers, forsaking the designs of their forefathers, introduced a most hideous set of patterns, designed,

Fig. 154.



OLD DEVONSHIRE!

*To face page 408.*



as they said, "out of their own heads." "Turkey tails," "frying pans," "bullocks' hearts," and the most senseless sprigs and borderings took the place of the graceful compositions of the old school. Not a leaf, not a flower was copied from nature. Anxious to introduce a purer taste, Queen Adelaide, to whom a petition had been sent on behalf of the distressed lace-makers, gave the order for a dress to be made of Honiton sprigs,<sup>19</sup> and commanded that the flowers should all be copied from nature. The order was executed by Mrs. Davey, of Honiton. The skirt was encircled with a wreath of elegantly designed sprigs, the initial of each flower forming the name of her Majesty.<sup>20</sup>

The example of the Queen found new followers, and when, in the progress of time, the wedding lace was required for Queen Victoria, it was with difficulty the necessary number of workers could be obtained to make it. It was undertaken by Miss Jane Bidney, who caused the work to be executed in the small fishing hamlet of Beer<sup>21</sup> and its environs. The dress cost £1,000. It was composed entirely of Honiton sprigs, connected on the pillow by a variety of open-work stitches; but the patterns were immediately destroyed, so it cannot be described.

The bridal dresses of their Royal Highnesses the Princess Royal, the Princess Alice, and the Princess of Wales were all of Honiton point, the patterns consisting of the national flowers, the latter with prince's feathers intermixed with ferns, and introduced with the most happy effect.

The application of Honiton sprigs upon bobbin net has been of late years almost entirely superseded by the modern guipure (Fig. 155). The sprigs, when made, are sewn upon a piece of blue paper, and then united either on the pillow by "cut-works" or "purlings," or else joined with the needle by various stitches—lacet point, réseau, cut-work, and button-hole stitch (the most effective of all). Purling is made by the yard. The Honiton guipure has an original character almost unique. The large pieces surpass in richness and

<sup>19</sup> With the desire of combining the two interests, her Majesty ordered it to be made on the Brussels (machine-made) ground.

<sup>20</sup> AMARANTH; DAPHNE, EGLANTINE,

LILAC, AURICULA, IVY, DAHLIA, EGLANTINE.

<sup>21</sup> The workers of Beer, Axmouth, and Branscombe, have always been considered the best in the trade.

perfection any lace of the same kind made in Belgium. The reliefs are embroidered with the greatest delicacy, and the beauty of the workmanship is exquisite; and whereas the guipure applications of Belgium require to be whitened with lead, the Honiton workers give up their lace in all its original brilliancy and whiteness.<sup>22</sup> The fault in the Honiton lace has been its crowded and spiritless designs, but in these great improvement was manifested in the Exhibition of 1867.

Captain Marryat took much pains during a residence at Sidmouth to procure for the lace-makers new patterns of flowers, insects, and other natural objects. The younger members of the community accepted with gratitude these new patterns, and one even reproduced a piece of braidwork in imitation of Spanish point, and also a collar from Vecellio's book, in a manner most creditable to her ingenuity. In consequence of this movement, some gentlemen connected with the Bath and West of England Society<sup>23</sup> proposed that an exhibition should take place at the Annual Agricultural Show, held at Clifton, of Honiton lace, "designs strictly after nature." Prizes to the amount of £100 were given. The exhibition was most successful. Queen Victoria expressed a desire that the articles exhibited should be sent to Windsor for her inspection, and graciously commanded that two frouces with a corresponding length of trimming lace should be made for her. A design executed by Miss Cecilia Marryat having been approved of by her Majesty, the order for the lace was given to Mrs. Hayman, of Sidmouth. (Fig. 156 is from one of the honeysuckle sprigs selected.)

The Honiton lace-makers show great aptitude in imitating the Brussels designs, and<sup>24</sup> through the efforts of Mrs. Treadwin have succeeded in reproducing the ancient lace in

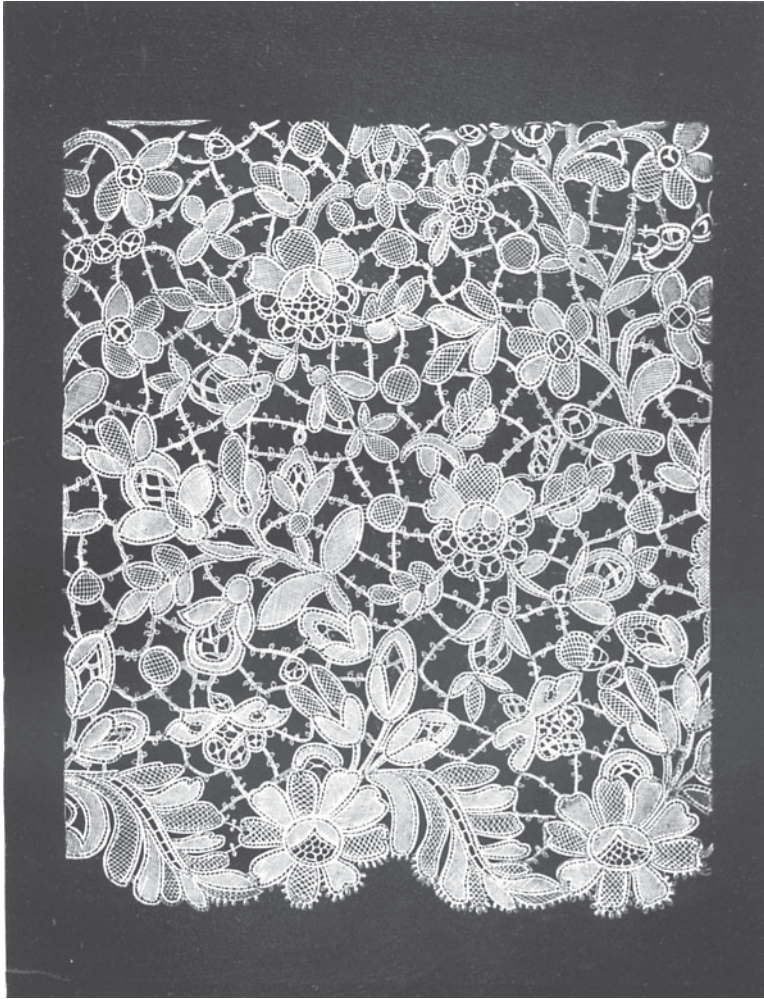
<sup>22</sup> Exposition Universelle de 1867. Rapport du Jury International, "Dentelles," par Felix Aubry.

<sup>23</sup> For the encouragement of Agriculture, Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. The prizes were offered for the best Sprigs, Nosegays, Borders for shawls, veils, or collars, Lappets, collars and cuffs, Pocket-handkerchiefs, etc., "of good workmanship and design, worked either in Flowers,

Fruits, Leaves, or Insects, strictly designed from nature." Three prizes were awarded for each description of article. The Society also offered prizes for small application sprigged veils, and for the best specimens of braidwork, in imitation of Spanish point.

<sup>24</sup> *Honiton Lace*, by Mrs. Treadwin. London, 1874. *Honiton Lace-making*, by Devonia, London, 1874.

Fig. 155.



HONITON-GUIPURE.

*To face page 410.*

the most wonderful manner. Fig. 158 is a lappet in the Brussels style shown in the International Exhibition of 1874. Mrs. Treadwin produced admirable specimens after the pillow-made lace of Genoa and Flanders, and also a reproduction of the Venetian point in relief.

A new branch of industry has lately opened to the

Fig. 156.

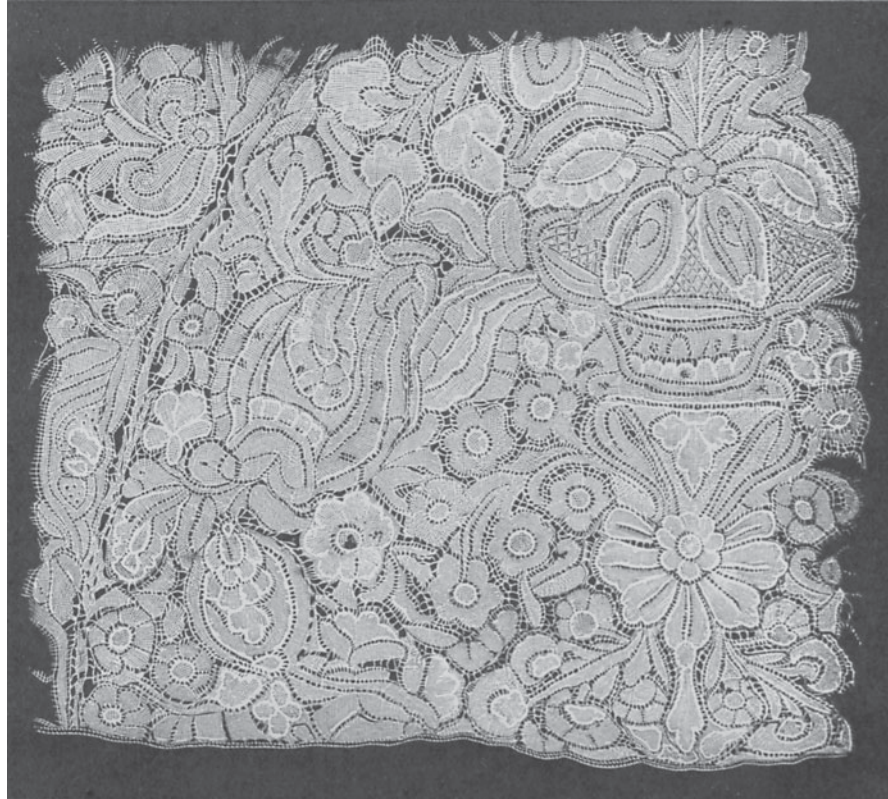


HONEYSUCKLE SPRIG OF MODERN HONITON.

Devonshire lace-maker—that of restoring or re-making old lace. The splendid mantles, tunics, and flounces which enrich the shop-windows of the great lace-dealers of London are mostly concocted from old fragments by the Devonshire lace-workers. It is curious to see the ingenuity they display in re-arranging the “old rags”—and such they are—sent from London for restoration. Carefully cutting out the

designs of the old work, they sew them upon a paper pattern of the shape required. The "modes," or fancy stitches, are

Fig. 157.



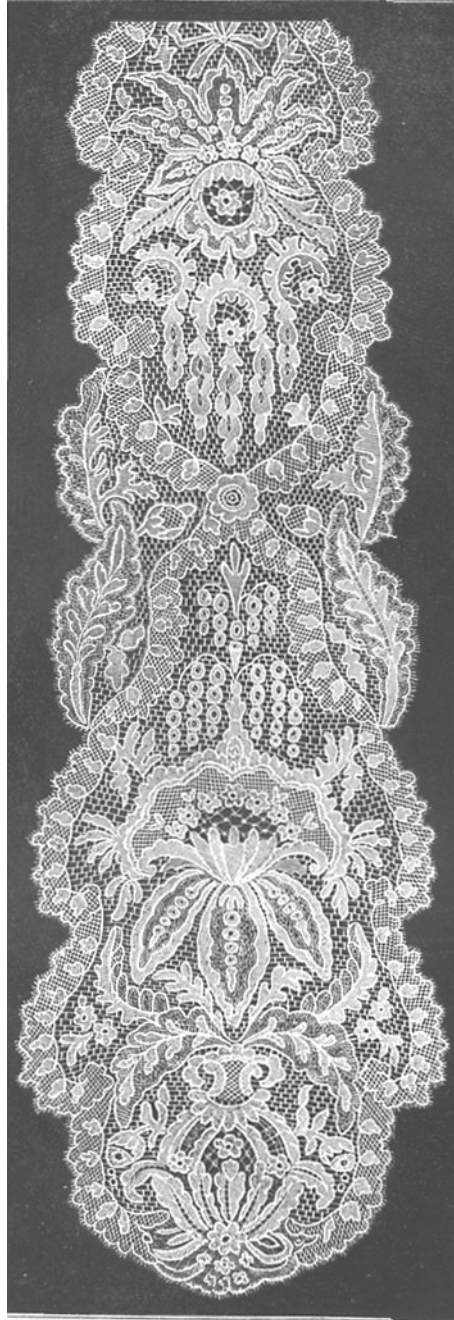
OLD DEVONSHIRE POINT.

dexterously restored, any deficient flower supplied, and the whole joined together on the pillow.

#### TROLLY LACE.

Trolly lace comes next in order. It was quite different from anything else made in Devonshire, and resembled many of the laces made in the midlands at the present time. It was made of coarse British thread, and with heavier and larger bobbins, and worked straight on round and round the

Fig. 158.



LAPPET MADE BY THE LATE MRS. TREADWIN, OF EXETER, 1804.

*To face page 412.*

pillow. The origin of "Trolly" was undoubtedly Flemish, but it is said to have reached Devonshire at the time of the French Revolution, through the Normandy peasants, driven by want of employment from their own country, where lace was a great industry during the eighteenth century. The origin of "trolley" is from the Flemish "Trolle Kant," where the design was outlined with a thick thread, or, possibly, it may be derived from a corruption of the French *toilé*, applied to distinguish a flat linen pattern from the ground or *treille*, a general term for a net ground. It is now almost extinct in Devonshire, remaining in the hands of the midland counties,<sup>25</sup> where it more properly belongs.<sup>26</sup>

Trolley lace was not the work of women alone. In the flourishing days of its manufacture, every boy, until he had attained the age of fifteen, and was competent to work in the fields, attended the lace schools daily.<sup>27</sup> A lace-maker of Sidmouth, in 1869, had learned her craft at the village dame school,<sup>28</sup> in company with many boys. The men, especially the sailor returned from sea, would again resume the employment of their boyhood, in their hours of leisure, and the labourer, seated at his pillow on a summer's evening, would add to his weekly gains.

Mrs. Treadwin, in her younger days, saw some twenty-four men lace-makers in her native village of Woodbury, two of whom, Palmer by name, were still surviving in 1869, and one of these worked at his pillow so late as 1820.

Captain Marryat also succeeded in finding out a man of sixty, one James Gooding, dweller in Salcombe parish, near Sidmouth, who had in his day been a lace-maker of some reputation. "I have made hundreds of yards in my time," he said, "both wide and narrow, but never worked regularly at my pillow after sixteen years of age." Delighted to exhibit the craft of his boyhood, he hunted out his patterns,

<sup>25</sup> Lappets and scarfs were made of trolley lace from an early date. Mrs. Delarey, in one of her letters, dated 1756, speaks of a "trolley head." Trolley lace, before its downfall, has been sold at the extravagant price of five guineas a yard.

<sup>26</sup> "Fifty years since Devonshire workers still make a 'Greek' lace, as they termed it, similar to the 'dentelles torchons' so common through

the Continent. The author has seen specimens of this fabric in a lace-maker's old pattern-book, once the property of her mother" (Mrs. Palliser, 1869).

<sup>27</sup> Though no longer employed at lace-making, the boys in the schools at Exmouth are instructed in crochet work (1869).

<sup>28</sup> Of Otterton.

and, setting to work, produced a piece of trolly edging, which soon found a place in the albums of sundry lace-collecting ladies, the last specimen of man-worked lace likely to be fabricated in the county of Devon.<sup>29</sup>

The lace schools of this time were a great feature, there being many in every village, and as few other schools existed, boys in addition to the girls of the place attended and learnt the industry. The usual mode of procedure was this. The children commenced attending at the age of five to seven, and were apprenticed to the mistress for an average of two years, who sold all their work for her trouble: they then paid sixpence a week for a time and had their own lace, then threepence, and so on, according to the amount of teaching they still required. The young children went first from ten to twelve in the morning, to accustom them to work by degrees. At Honiton the full hours were from eight to eight in the summer and in the depth of winter, but in the spring and autumn less, on account of the light, as candles were begun only on September 3rd—Nutting day—till Shrovetide. The old rhyme runs:—

“Be the Shrovetide high or low,  
Out the candle we will blow.”

At Sidbury it was *de rigueur* that directly a young girl married, however young, she wore a cap, but till then the lace-makers were famous for the beautiful dressing of their hair. When school began they stood up in a circle to read the “verses.” If any of them read “jokily,” they were given a penalty, and likewise for idleness—so much extra work. In nearly all schools they were taught reading from the Bible, and in some they learnt writing; but all these are now things of the past.

Speaking of the occupation of lace-making, Cooke, in his *Topography of Devon*, observes: “It has been humanely remarked as a melancholy consideration that so much health

<sup>29</sup> In Woodbury will be found a small colony of lace-makers who are employed in making imitation Maltese or Greek lace, a fabric introduced into Devon by order of her late Majesty the Queen Dowager on her return from Malta. The workers copy these coarse geometric laces with great

facility and precision. Among the various cheap articles to which the Devonshire workers have of late directed their labours is the tape or braid lace, and the shops of the country are now inundated with their productions in the form of collars and cuffs (1869.)



Fig. 159.



VENETIAN RELIEF IN POINT.—Reproduced, by the late Mrs. Treadwin.

*To face page 414.*

and comfort are sacrificed to the production of this beautiful though not necessary article of decoration. The sallow complexion, the weakly frame and the general appearance of languor and debility of the operatives, are sad and decisive proofs of the pernicious nature of the employment. The small unwholesome rooms in which numbers of these females, especially during their apprenticeship, are crowded together are great aggravations of the evil." He continues at some length, as indeed do many writers of the eighteenth century, to descant on this evil, but times are changed, sanitary laws and the love of fresh air have done much to remedy the mischief.<sup>30</sup> The pillows, too, are raised higher than formerly, by which means the stooping, so injurious to health, is avoided. Old lace-makers will tell stories of the cruel severities practised on the children in the dame schools of their day—of the length of time they sat without daring to move from the pillow, of prolonged punishments imposed on idle apprentices, and other barbarities, but these are now tales of the past.<sup>31</sup>

Ever since the Great Exhibition of 1851 drew attention to the industry, different persons have been trying to encourage both better design and better manufacture, but

<sup>30</sup> The Honiton pillows are rather smaller than those for Buckinghamshire lace, and do not have the multiplicity of starched coverings—only three "pill cloths," one over the top, and another on each side of the lace in progress; two pieces of horn called "sliders" go between to take the weight of the bobbins from dragging the stitches in progress; a small square pin-cushion is on one side, and stuck into the pillow is the "needle-pin"—a large sewing needle in a wooden handle, and for picking up loops through which the bobbins are placed. The pillow has to be frequently turned round in the course of the work, so that no stand is used, and it is rested against a table or doorway; and formerly, in the golden days, in fine weather there would be rows of workers sitting outside their cottages resting their "pills" against the back of the chair in front.

The bobbins used in Honiton lace-making are delicately-fashioned slender

things of smooth, close-grained wood, their length averaging about three and a half inches. They have no "gingles," and none of the carving and relief inlayings of the Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire bobbins; but some of them are curiously stained with a brown pigment in an irregular pattern resembling the mottlings of clouded bamboo or those of tortoise-shell.

<sup>31</sup> "The author has visited many lace-schools in Devon, and though it might be desired that some philanthropist would introduce the infant school system of allowing the pupils to march and stretch their limbs at the expiration of every hour, the children, notwithstanding, looked ruddy as the apples in their native orchards; and though the lace-worker may be less robust in appearance than the farm-servant or the Cheshire milkmaid, her life is more healthy far than the female operative in our northern manufactories" (1875).

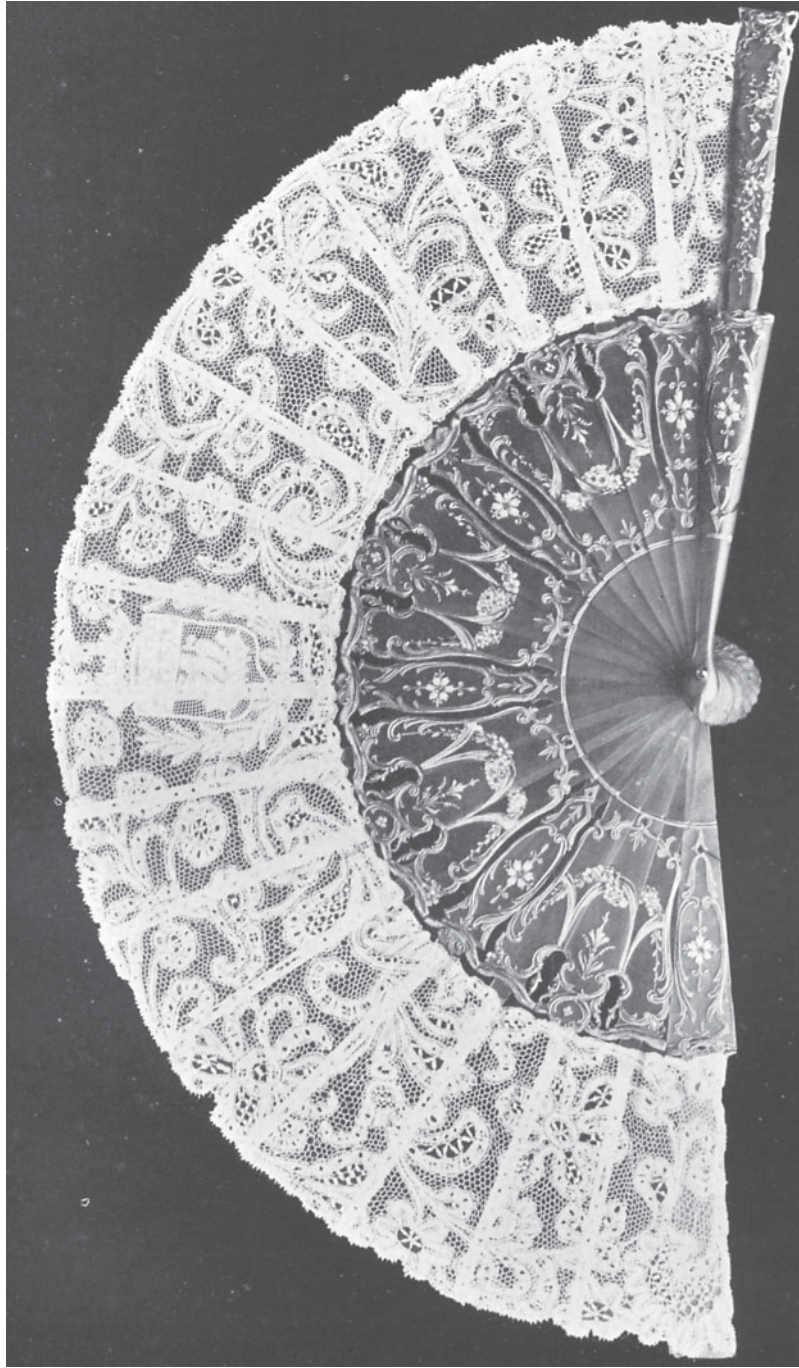
the majority of the people have sought a livelihood by meeting the extensive demand for cheap laces. Good patterns, good thread, and good work have been thrown aside, the workers and small dealers recking little of the fact that they themselves were ruining the trade as much as the competition of machinery and machine-made lace, and tarnishing the fair name of Honiton throughout the world, among those able to love and appreciate a beautiful art. Fortunately there are some to lead and direct in the right path, and all honour must be given to Mrs. Treadwin, who started reproducing old laces. She and her clever workers turned out the most exquisite copies of old Venetian rose point, Valenciennes, or Flemish. Her successor, Miss Herbert, carries it on; and while we have Msr. Fowler and her school at Honiton, and Miss Radford at Sidmouth, it would be easier to say what the heads and hands of the Devon lace-workers could not do than to enumerate the many beautiful stitches and patterns they achieve; needle-point or pillow, tape guipure or *vrai réseau*—there are able fingers to suit all tastes.<sup>32</sup>

Mrs. Fowler, of Honiton, has made a spirited attempt to teach some young people.<sup>33</sup> She employs women and girls all the year round, who work under the Factory Acts. The girls are taught needlework in addition, and to put together the sprigs made by the out-workers, the arrangement of which requires great taste and careful superintendence. The County Council grants courses of lessons in various places, some for all ages, others for children.<sup>34</sup> The

<sup>32</sup> "A good lace-maker easily earns her shilling a day, but in most parts of Devonshire the work is paid by the truck system, many of the more respectable shops giving one-half in money, the remaining sixpence to be taken out in tea or clothing, sold often considerably above their value. Other manufacturers—to their shame, be it told—pay their workers altogether in grocery, and should the lace-maker, from illness or any other cause, require an advance in cash, she is compelled to give work to the value of fourteen-pence for every shilling she receives. Some few houses pay their workers in money" (1875).

<sup>33</sup> Medals were won at the Chicago World's Fair for Devonshire lace by Mrs. Fowler and Miss Radford, of Sidmouth. The latter has also received the freedom of the City of London for a beautiful lace fan, her sprigs being the finest and most exquisite models of flowers and birds it is possible to produce in lace. A third medal was won by the Italian laces at Beer.

<sup>34</sup> Those held at Sidbury and Sidford are very successful, and the children, ranging in age from nine to fifteen, come regularly for their "lace." It is interesting to watch the improvement in the work of the "fys," the first



ENGLISH, DEVONSHIRE. MADE AT BEER FOR THE PARIS EXHIBITION OF 1900.—Miss A. Trevelyan adapted an Italian design to the old Honiton stitches.

Italian laces made at Beer is a new branch, established by Miss Bowdon, and ably carried on by Miss Audrey Trevelyan of Seaton. This Italian lace is made entirely on the pillow, and the way in which the women of Beer have picked up the stitches and mode of making speaks volumes for their skilfulness and adaptability. There are still a good number of workers left in this most picturesque village.<sup>35</sup>

A beautiful county and a beautiful art have come down to us hand in hand. Let us do our best to prevent the one being marred and the other lost, and keep them both together to be a joy and a pleasure for all time.

#### JAPAN.

The versatile Japanese have copied the Honiton method of making bobbin lace. The Government have encouraged a school at Yokohama for pillow lace making, under the supervision of an English lady, where they turn out lace of a distinctive Japanese character.

lesson, and as a rule each child makes forty to fifty before going on to anything further.

<sup>35</sup> At Beer, where fishing is the staple industry, in bad fish seasons the women can earn more than the men;

and at Honiton in the hard winter of 1895 the lace-makers kept themselves and their families, and were spared applying for relief—all honour to their skill and self-helpfulness.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## SCOTLAND.

“With the pearlin above her brow.”—Old Scotch Song.

“Pearlin-lace as fine as spiders’ webs.”—*Heart of Midlothian*.

FROM her constant intercourse with France, lace must have been early known in Scotland.

Of its use for ecclesiastical purposes, at a period when it was still unknown to the laity, we have evidence in the mutilated effigy of a crosiered ecclesiastic which once stood in a niche of the now ruined abbey church of Arbroath. The lace which adorns the robes of this figure is very elaborately and sharply chiselled, and when first discovered; still preserved some remains of the gold leaf with which it had been ornamented.

In the Inventories of King James V. we find constant mention of “pasment” of gold and silver,<sup>1</sup> as well as an entry of—“Ane gown of fresit clayth of gold, with pasment of perle of gold smyth wark lynit with cramasy sating.”<sup>2</sup> And we have other proofs,<sup>3</sup> in addition to the testimony of Sir Walter Scott, as given in the *Monastery*,<sup>4</sup> that pasments of gold and silver as well as “purle,” were already in daily use during King James’s reign.

<sup>1</sup> “1539. Ane uther gowne of purpour satyne with ane braid pasment of gold and silver,” etc.

“Twa Spanye cloikis of black freis with ane braid pasment of gold and silver.”

“1542. Three peces of braid pasmentes of gold and silver.”—*Inventories of the Royal Wardrobe and Jewel House*. 1488-1606. Edinb. 1815.

<sup>2</sup> 1542. Same Inv.

<sup>3</sup> In the Inv. of the Earl of Hunt-

ley, 1511-12, there is mention of dresses “passamenté d’or.”

<sup>4</sup> Chap. X., note.

1537. James V. and Lord Somerville at Holyrood:—“Where are all your men and attendants, my Lord?”

“Please, your Majesty, they are here”—pointing to the lace which was on his son and two pages’ dress. The King laughed heartily and surveyed the finery, and bade him “Away with it all, and let him have his stout band of spears again.”

Indeed, as early as 1575 the General Assembly of Scotland found necessary, as did the bishops in Denmark, to express its mind as to the style of dress befitting the clergy, and prohibit "all begares (gardes) of velvet on gown, hose, or coat, all superfluous cut-out work, all sewing on of pasments and laces."

A parchment, too, found in the cabinet of the Countess of Mar,<sup>5</sup> entitled "The Passement Bond," signed by the Duke of Lennox and other nobles, by which they engaged themselves to leave off wearing "passement," as a matter of expense and superfluity, shows that luxury in dress had early found its way into Scotland.

Notwithstanding these entries, it was not until the arrival of Mary Stuart in her northern dominions that lace in all its varieties appears. The inventory of the Queen's effects in 1567, printed by the Bannatyne Club, gives entries of passements, guimpeure d'or, and guimpeure d'argent,<sup>6</sup> with which her "robes de satin blanc et jaune" were "bordées" and "chamarées." Each style of embroidery and lace is designated by its special name. There is the "natte d'argent faite par entrelatz, passement d'or et d'argent fait à jour, chamarré de bisette,"<sup>7</sup> etc.

The word dentelle, as told elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> occurs but once.

We have also alluded to the will made by the Queen previous to the birth of James VI., and her bequest of her "ouvrages maschés."<sup>9</sup> A relic of this expression is yet found in the word "mawsch," or "masch," as the pinking of silk and muslin is termed in Scotland, an advertisement of which

<sup>5</sup> Croft's *Excerpta Antiqua*.

The Countess of Mar, daughter of the first Duke of Lennox and granddaughter by her mother's side to Marie Touchet. She was daughter-in-law to the preceptress of James VI., and in 1593 had the honour, at the baptism of Prince Henry, of lifting the child from his bed and delivering him to the Duke of Lennox. A portrait of this lady, in the high Elizabethan ruff, and with a "forepart" and tucker of exquisite raised Venice point, hung (circ. 1870) in the drawing-room of the late Miss Katherine Sinclair.

<sup>6</sup> "Une robe de velours vert couverte de Broderies, gimpeures, et

cordons d'or et d'argent, et bordée d'un passement de même.

"Une robe veluat cramoisi bandée de broderie de guimpeure d'argent.

"Une robe de satin blanc chamarrée de broderie faite de guimpeure d'or.

"Id. de satin jaune toute couverte de broderie gumpeure, etc.

"Robe de weloux noyr semée de geynpeurs d'or."—*Inv. of Lillebourg*. 1561.

<sup>7</sup> "Chamarrée de bisette."—*Inv. of Lillebourg*. 1561.

"Ane rabbat of wolvin thread with passmentet with silver."

<sup>8</sup> Chap. III.

<sup>9</sup> See LACTS, Chap. II.

accomplishment "done here" was seen a few years ago in the shop-windows of the old town of Edinburgh.

In the Palace of Holyrood is still exhibited a small basket lined with blue silk, and trimmed with a bone lace of rudely-spun flax, run on with a ribbon of the same colour, recorded to be an offering sent by Queen Elizabeth to her cousin previous to the birth of her godchild. Antiquaries assert the story to be a fable. Whether the lace be of the time or not, as a work of art it is of no credit to any country.

How Queen Mary, in her youth, was instructed in the arts of point coupé and lacis, according to the works of Vinciolo, has been already related.<sup>10</sup> Of her talents as a needlewoman there is ample proof in the numerous beds, screens, etc., treasured as relics in the houses of the nobles where she was held captive. She knitted head-dresses of gold "réseille," with cuffs and collars<sup>11</sup> en suite,<sup>12</sup> to say nothing of nightcaps, and sent them as presents to Elizabeth,<sup>13</sup> all of which, we are told, the Queen received most graciously. Mary, in her early portraits as Dauphine of France, wears no thread lace. Much fine gold embroidered with passament enriches her dresses; her sleeves are of gold rézeuil. In those of a later date, like that taken when in Lochleven Castle, her veil is bordered with a narrow bone lace—as yet a rarity—may be one of the same noted in the Inventory of 1578, as "Fyve litell vails of wovin rasour (réseau) of threde, ane meekle twa of thame, passmentit with perle and black silk."<sup>14</sup>

When the Queen of Scots ascended the scaffold "she wore

<sup>10</sup> See NEEDLEWORK, Chap. I.

<sup>11</sup> Her lace ruffs Mary appears to have had from France, as we may infer from a letter written by Walsingham, at Paris, to Burleigh, when the Queen was captive at Sheffield Castle, 1578: "I have of late granted a passport to one that conveyeth a box of linen to the Queen of Scots, who leaveth not this town for three or four days. I think your Lordship shall see somewhat written on some of the linen contained in the same, that shall be worth the reading. Her Majesty, under colour of seeing the fashion of the *ruffles*, may cause the several parcels of the linen to be held to the fire, whereby the writing may appear;

for I judge there will be some such matter discovered, which was the cause why I did the more willingly grant the passport."

<sup>12</sup> In 1575.

<sup>13</sup> There was some demur about receiving the nightcaps, for Elizabeth declared "that great commotions had taken place in the Privy Council because she had accepted the gifts of the Queen of Scots. They therefore remained for some time in the hands of La Mothe, the ambassador, but were finally accepted."—Miss Strickland.

<sup>14</sup> "Inventaire of our Sovereign Lord and his dearest moder. 1578."—Record Office, Edinburgh.



on her head," writes Burleigh's reporter, "a dressing of lawn edged with bone lace," and "a vest of lawn fastened to her caul," edged with the same material. This lace-edged veil was long preserved as a relic in the exiled Stuart family, until Cardinal York bequeathed it to Sir John Cox Hippisley. Miss Pigott<sup>15</sup> describes it of "transparent zephyr gauze, with a light check or plaid pattern interwoven with gold; the form as that of a long scarf."<sup>16</sup> Sir John, when exhibiting the veil at Baden, had the indiscretion to throw it over the Queen of Bavaria's head. The Queen shuddered at the omen, threw off the veil, and retired precipitately from the apartment, evidently in great alarm.

"Cuttit out werk," collars of "hollie crisp," quaiffs of woven thread,<sup>17</sup> cornettes of layn (linen) sewit with cuttit out werk of gold, wovin collars of threde, follow in quick succession. The cuttit out werk is mostly wrought in gold, silver, cramoisi, or black silk.<sup>18</sup> The Queen's "towell claiiths" are adorned in similar manner.<sup>19</sup>

The Chartley Inventory of 1568<sup>20</sup> is rich in works of point coupé and rézeuil, in which are portrayed with the needle figures of birds, fishes, beasts, and flowers, "couppés chascune en son carré." The Queen exercised much ingenuity in her labours, varying the pattern according to her taste. In the list are noted fifty-two specimens of flowers designed after nature, "tirés au naturel;" 124 birds; as well as sixteen sorts of four-footed beasts, "entre lesquelles y ha un lyon assailant un sanglier;" with fifty-two fishes, all of

<sup>15</sup> *Records of Life*, by Miss H. Pigott. 1839.

<sup>16</sup> Similar to the New Year's Gift of the Baroness Aletti to Queen Elizabeth:—

"A veil of lawn cutwork flourished with silver and divers colours."—*Nichols' Royal Progresses*.

<sup>17</sup> "Twa quaiffs ane of layn and uther of woving thread.

"Ane quaiff of layn with twa cornettes sewitt with cuttit out werk of gold and silver.

"Twa pair of cornettes of layn sewitt with cuttit out werk of gold.

"Ane wovin collar of thread passementit with incarnit and blew silk and silver."—*Inv. of 1578*.

<sup>18</sup> "Ane rabbat of cuttit out werk and gold and cramoisie silk with the handis (cuffs) thereof.

"Ane rabbat of cuttit out werk of gold and black silk.

"Ane rabbat of cuttit out werk with purple silk with the handis of the same."—*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> "Twa towell claiiths of holane claiith sewitt with cuttit out werk and gold.

"Four napkinnes of holane claiith and cammaraye sewitt with cuttit out werk of gold and silver and divers cullours of silk."—*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Published by Prince Labanoff. "Recueil de Lettres de Marie Stuart." T. vii., p. 247.

divers sorts—giving good proofs of the poor prisoner's industry. As to the designs after nature, with all respect to the memory of Queen Mary, the lions, cocks, and fishes of the sixteenth century which have come under our notice, require a student of mediæval needlework rather than a naturalist, to pronounce upon their identity.

James VI. of Scotland, reared in a hotbed of Calvinism, had not the means, even if he had the inclination, to indulge in much luxury in dress. Certain necessary entries of braid pasmentis of gold, gold clinquant, braid pasmentis, cramoisi, for the ornamenting of clokkis, coittis, breikis, and roobes of the King, with "Twa unce and ane half pasmentis of gold and silver to werk the headis of the fokkis," made up the amount of expense sanctioned for the royal wedding; <sup>21</sup> while 34 ells braid pasmentis of gold to trim a robe for "his Majesties darrest bedfellow the Quene for her coronation," <sup>22</sup> gives but a poor idea of the luxury of the Scottish court.

Various enactments <sup>23</sup> were passed during the reign of James VI. against "unnecessary sumptuousness in men's apparel," by which no one except noblemen, lords of session, prelates, etc., were allowed to wear silver or gold lace. Provosts were permitted to wear silk, but no lace pearlin or pasmenterie, only a "watling silk lace" on the seams. <sup>24</sup> No one but the above same privileged persons were to have pearlin on their ruffles, sarkis, napkins, and sokkis, and that pearlin to be made in the kingdom of Scotland. This Act, dated 1621, is the first mention we have found of Scottish-made lace.

James VI. having granted to one James Bannatyne of Leith a patent for the "importing of foraine pearlin" into the country, in consequence of the great complaint of the embroiderers in 1639, this patent is rescinded, and the King forbids the entry of all "foraine pearlin."

The word lace does not exist in the Scotch language. "Pearlin" is the term used in old documents, defined in the

<sup>21</sup> *Marriage Expenses of James VI.*, 1589. Published by the Bannatyne Club.

<sup>22</sup> *Accounts of the Great Chamberlain of Scotland.* 1590.—Bannatyne Club.

<sup>23</sup> In 1581, 1597, and 1621.

<sup>24</sup> The same privilege was extended to their wives, their eldest sons with their wives, and their eldest daughters, but not to the younger children.

dictionaries to be "a species of lace made with thread." In the old Scotch songs it frequently occurs :—<sup>25</sup>

"Then round the ring she dealt them aye by aye,  
Clean in her pearlin keck, and gown alane."

—*Ross Helenora.*

Again—

"We maun hae pearlins and mabbies and cocks,  
And some other things that ladies call smocks."

As the latter articles may appear more familiar to the world in general than "kecks," and "mabbies," and "cocks," we may as well explain a "pearlin keck" to signify a linen cap with a lace border; a "mabbie," a mob; a "cock," or cock-up, no more eccentric head-dress than the lofty fontanges or commode of the eighteenth century.

Again, in *Rob Roy* we have the term "pearlin:" when Bailie Nicol Jarvie piteously pleads to his kinswoman, Helen Macgregor, he says—

"I hae been serviceable to Rob before now, forbye a set of pearlins I sent yoursell when you were gaun to be married."

The recollection of these delicate attentions, however, has little effect on the Highland chieftainess, who threatens to have him chopped up, if ill befalls her lord, into as many square pieces as compose the Macgregor tartan, or throw him neck and heels into the Highland loch.

Montrose, we read, sent his lace ruffles to be starched and dressed before they were sewn on the embroidered sark he had made only to wear at his execution. "Pearlin" was provided for him which cost £10 an ell.

The close-fitting velvet cap, enriched with lace, appears in the seventeenth century to have been adopted by the lawyers of the Scotch courts. An example may be seen in the portrait of Sir Thomas Hope, Lord Advocate of Scotland, who died in 1646, which hangs in the Hall of the Advocates of Edinburgh. Another (Fig. 160) appears in the engraving of Sir Alexander Gibson, Bart., Lord Durie, one of the Lords of Session, who died two years previously.

In 1672, when lace—"point lace made of thread"—

<sup>25</sup> 1633. In the *Account of Expenses for the young Lord of Lorne*, we find :—

"2 ells Cambridg' at 8s. the ell for ruffles, 16s.

"2 ells of Perling at 30s., the uther at 33s. 4d., £3 3s. 4d."—*Innes' Sketches of Early Scotch History.*

came under the ban of the Covenanters, with a penalty of "500 merks toties quoties," the wearing such vanities on liveries is strictly forbidden; servants, however, are allowed to wear out their masters' and mistresses' old clothes.

In 1674, his Majesty, understanding that the manufacture of "pearlin and whyt lace made of thread (whereby many people gain their livelihood) was thereby much prejudiced and impaired, declares that from henceforth it shall be free to all and every person within this kingdom to wear 'whyt

Fig. 160.



SIR ALEXANDER GIBSON, BART. (Lord Durie, Lord of Session. + 1644.)

lace,' as well as the privileged persons above mentioned." Finding these exclusions of little or no avail, in January, 1685, the Act remits the wearing of lace, both native and foreign, to all folks living.

The dead now came under the scrutiny of the Scotch Parliament, who order all lace or poynt, gold or silver, to be disused at interments, under the penalty of 300 pounds Scots.<sup>26</sup>

From the united effects of poverty, Covenanters and

<sup>26</sup> January, 1686.

legislation, after the departure of the court for England, luxury, small though it was, declined in Edinburgh.

It was not till 1680, when James II., as Duke of York, accompanied by Mary of Modena and his "duteous" daughter Anne, visited the Scotch capital, that anything like gaiety or dress can be said to have surprised the strait-laced population.

Dryden, sneering at the barbarism of the Scotch capital, writes, in the prologue to a play delivered at Oxford, referring to a portion of the troop that accompanied the court to Scotland—

"Laced linen there would be a dangerous thing;  
It might perhaps a new rebellion bring—  
The Scot who wore it would be chosen king."

The Highlander, however, when in full dress, did not disdain to adopt the falling band and ruffles of guipure or Flanders lace.

The advertisements and inventories of the first years of the eighteenth century give us little reason to imagine any change had been effected in the homely habits of the people.

At the marriage of a daughter of Thomas Smythe, of Methuen, in 1701, to Sir Thomas Moncrieffe, the bride had a head-suit and ruffles of cut-work which cost nearly six pounds ten shillings.<sup>27</sup> Few and scanty advertisements of roups of "white thread lace" appear in the journals of the day.<sup>28</sup>

And in such a state matters continued till the Jacobites,

<sup>27</sup> "In 1701, when Mistress Margaret, daughter of the Baron of Kilravock, married, 'flounced muslin and lace for combing cloths,' appear in her outfit."—Innes' *Sketches*.

<sup>28</sup> In a pamphlet published 1702, entitled, *An Accompt carried between England and Scotland*, alluding to the encouragement of the yarn trade, the author says: "This great improvement can be attested by the industry of many young gentlewomen that have little or no portion, by spinning one pound of fine lint, and then breaking it into fine flax and whitening it. One gentlewoman told me herself that, by making an ounce or two of it into fine bone lace, it was worth, or she got, twenty pounds Scots for that part of

it; and might, after same manner, five or eight pounds sterling out of a pound of lint, that cost her not one shilling sterling. Now if a law were made not to import any muslin (her Grace the Duchess of Hamilton still wears our finest Scots muslin as a pattern to others—she who may wear the finest apparel) and Holland lace, it would induce and stir up many of all ranks to wear more fine 'Scots lace,' which would encourage and give bread to many young gentlewomen and help their fortunes." Then, among the products of Scotland by which "we may balance any nation," the same writer mentions "our white thread, and making laces."

"On Tuesday, the 16th inst., will

going and coming from St. Germain, introduced French fashions and luxuries as yet unheard of in the then aristocratic Canongate.

It sounds strange to a traveller, as he wanders among these now deserted closes of Edinburgh, to read of the gay doings and of the grand people who, in the last century, dwelt within these poor-looking abodes. A difficult matter it must have been to the Jacobite beauties, whose hoop (from 1725-8) measured nine yards in circumference, to mount the narrow winding staircases of their dwellings; and this very difficulty gave rise to a luxury of underclothing almost unknown in England or elsewhere. Every lady wore a petticoat trimmed with the richest point lace. Nor was it only the jupe that was lace-trimmed. Besides

“Twa lappets at her head, that flaunted gallantlie,”

ladies extended the luxury to finely-laced garters.

In 1720 the bubble Company “for the trading in Flanders laces” appears advertised in the Scotch papers in large and attractive letters. We strongly doubt, however, it having gained any shareholders among the prudent population of Edinburgh.

The prohibition of lace made in the dominions of the French king<sup>29</sup> was a boon to the Jacobites, and many a lady, and gentleman too, became wondrous loyal to the exiled family, bribed by a packet from St. Germain. In the first year of George II., says the *Gazette*,<sup>30</sup> a parcel of rich lace was secretly brought to the Duke of Devonshire, by a mistake in the similarity of the title. On being opened, hidden among the folds, was found a miniature portrait of the Pretender, set round with large diamonds. The packet was addressed to a noble lord high in office, one of the most zealous converts to loyalty.<sup>31</sup>

begin the roup of several sorts of merchants' goods, in the first story of the Turnpyke, above the head of Bells Wynd, from 9 to 12 and 2 till 5. ‘White thread lace.’—*Edinburgh Courant*. 1706.

<sup>29</sup> See Chap. XXV., Queen Anne.

<sup>30</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser*. 1764.

<sup>31</sup> 1745. The following description of Lady Lovat, wife of the rebel

Simon, is a charming picture of a Scotch gentlewoman of the last century:—

“When at home her dress was a red silk gown with ruffled cuffs and sleeves puckered like a man's shirt, a fly cap of lace encircling her head, with a mob cap laid across it, falling down on the cheeks; her hair dressed and powdered; a lace handkerchief round the neck

Smuggling was universal in Scotland in the reigns of George I. and George II., for the people, unaccustomed to imposts, and regarding them as an unjust aggression upon their ancient liberties, made no scruple to elude the customs whenever it was possible so to do.

It was smuggling that originated the Porteous riots of 1736 ; and in his description of the excited mob, Sir Walter Scott makes Miss Grizel Dalmahoy exclaim—"They have ta'en awa' our Parliament. They hae oppressed our trade. Our gentles will hardly allow that a Scots needle can sew ruffles on a sark or lace on an owerlay."<sup>32</sup>

and bosom (termed by the Scotch a *Befong*)—a white apron edged with lace . . . . Any one who saw her sitting on her chair, so neat, fresh, and clean, would have taken her for a queen in wax-work placed in a glass case."—*Heart of Midlothian*.

Sir Walter Scott, whose descriptions

are invariably drawn from memory, in his *Chronicles of the Canongate*, describes the dressing-room of Mrs. Bethune Balliol as exhibiting a superb mirror framed in silver filigree-work, a beautiful toilet, the cover of which was of Flanders lace.

<sup>32</sup> *Heart of Midlothian*.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## LACE MANUFACTURES OF SCOTLAND.

“Sae put on your pearlins, Marion,  
And kirtle o’ the cramasie.”—Scottish Song.

DURING the treasonable year of 1745 Scotland was far too occupied with her risings and executions to give much attention to her national industry. Up to that time considerable pains had been taken to improve the spinning of fine thread, prizes had been awarded, and the art taught in schools and other charitable institutions.

It was not till the middle of the eighteenth century that Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, known to Society by tradition as “one of the beautiful Miss Gunnings,” seeing lace-makers at work when travelling on the Continent, thought employment might be given to the women of her own country by introducing the art into Scotland. The Duchess therefore brought over women from France, and caused them to teach the girls in her schools how to make “bunt lace,” as it was termed.

Sir John Sinclair thus notices the fabric:—“A small manufacture of thread lace has long been carried on here. At an early period it was the occupation of a good many women, but, from the fluctuation of fashion, it has fallen greatly into disuse. Fashion again revived the demand, and the late Duchess of Hamilton, afterwards of Argyle, found still some lace-workers remaining, to whom her own demand, and that of those who followed her example, gave employment. To these her Grace added twelve orphan girls, who were clothed, maintained, and taught at her expense. Others learned the art, and while the demand lasted, the manufacture employed a good many hands. Though the number is again diminished, there are still above forty at the business, who



make handsome laces of different patterns, besides those who work occasionally for themselves or their friends. Perhaps, under the patronage of the present respectable duchess, the manufacture of Hamilton lace may again become as flourishing as ever.”<sup>1</sup>

“The Duchess of Hamilton,” says the *Edinburgh Amusement* of 1752, “has ordered a home to be set up in Hamilton for the reception of twelve poor girls and a mistress. The girls are to be taken in at the age of seven, clothed, fed, taught to spin, make lace, etc., and dismissed at fourteen.”

The work of the fair Duchess throve, for, in 1754, we read how—“The Duchess of Hamilton has now the pleasure to see the good effects of her charity. Her Grace’s small orphan family have, by spinning, gained a sum of money, and lately presented the Duke and Duchess with a double piece of Holland, and some suits of exceeding fine lace ruffles, of their own manufacture, which their Graces did them the honour to wear on the Duke’s birthday, July 14, and which vied with anything worn on the occasion, though there was a splendid company present. The yarn of which the ruffles were made weighed only ten drops each hank.”<sup>2</sup>

It was probably owing to the influence of this impulsive Irishwoman that, in the year 1754, was founded The Select Society of Edinburgh for encouraging the arts and manufactures of Scotland, headed by the Duke of Hamilton. This society was contemporary with the Anti-Gallican in England and the Dublin Society, though we believe, in this case, Dublin can claim precedence over the capital of North Britain.

At a meeting of the society it was moved that “The annual importation of worked ruffles and of bone lace and edging into this country is considerable. By proper encouragement we might be supplied at home with these ornaments. It was therefore resolved—

“That a premium be assigned to all superior merit in such work; such a one as may be a mark of respect to women of fashion, and may also be of some solid advantage to those whose laudable industry contributes to their own support.

<sup>1</sup> *Statistical Account of Scotland*. Vol. ii., 198.  
Sir John Sinclair. Edinburgh, 1792.      <sup>2</sup> *Edinburgh Amusement*.

“For the best imitation of Dresden work, or a pair of men’s ruffles, a prize of £5 5s.

“For the best bone lace, not under twenty yards, £5 5s. The gainers of these two best articles may have the money or a gold medal, at their option.”

As may be supposed, the newly-founded fabric of the Duchess was not passed over by a society of which the Duke himself was the patron. In the year 1757 we have among the prizes adjudged one of two guineas to Anne Henderson, of Hamilton, “for the whitest and best and finest lace, commonly called Hamilton lace, not under two yards” A prize had already been offered in 1755,<sup>3</sup> but, as stated the following year, “no lace was given in.” Prizes continued in 1758 and 1759 to be given for the produce of Hamilton; in the last year to the value of four guineas.<sup>4</sup>

The early death of the Duke of Hamilton; and the second marriage of the Duchess, did not in any way impede the progress of Hamilton lace, for, as late as 1778, we read in Locke’s *Essays on the Scotch Commerce*—“The lace manufactory, under the patronage of the amiable Duchess of Hamilton (now Argyle), goes on with success and spirit.”

With respect to the quality of this Hamilton lace, laudable as were the efforts of the Duchess, she succeeded in producing but a very coarse fabric. The specimens which have come under our notice are edgings of the commonest description, of a coarse thread, always of the lozenge pattern (Fig. 161); being strong and firm, it was used for nightcaps, never for dresses, and justified the description of a lady who described it as of little account, and spoke of it as “only Hamilton.”

It appears that the Edinburgh Society died a natural death about 1764, but, notwithstanding the untimely demise of this patriotic club, a strong impetus had been given to the

<sup>3</sup> 1755. Premium £2 offered. “For the whitest, best, and finest lace, commonly called Hamilton lace, and of the best pattern, not under two yards in length and not under three inches in breadth.”

<sup>4</sup> The Edinburgh Society did not confine their rewards to Hamilton lace; imitation of Dresden, catgut lace,

gold, silver, and even livery lace, each met with its due reward.

1758. For imitation of lace done on catgut, for ruffles, a gold medal to Miss Anne Cant, Edinburgh.

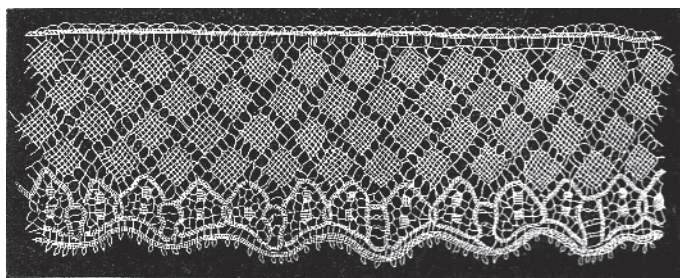
For a piece of livery lace done to perfection to J. Bowie, 2 guineas.

To W. Bowie for a piece of gold and silver lace, 2 guineas.

lace-makers of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Lace-making was introduced into the schools, and, what was better far, many daughters of the smaller gentry and scions of noble Jacobite houses, ruined by the catastrophe of 1745, either added to their incomes or supported themselves wholly by the making of the finer points. This custom seems to have been general, and, in alluding to it, Mrs. Calderwood speaks of the "helplessness" of the English women in comparison to the Scotch.

In the journals of the day we have constant advertisements, informing the public of the advantages to be gained by the useful arts imparted to their offspring in their

Fig. 161.



HAMILTON.

establishments, inserted by ladies of gentle blood—for the Scotchwomen of the last century no more disdained to employ themselves in the training of youth than does now a French dame de qualité to place herself at the head of the Sacré-Cœur, or some other convent devoted to educational purposes.<sup>6</sup>

The entry of all foreign laces was excluded by law. The

<sup>5</sup> 1769. Pennant, in his *Tour*, mentions among the manufactures of Scotland thread laces at Leith, Hamilton and Dalkeith.

<sup>6</sup> In 1762, Dec. 9, a schoolmistress in Dundee, among thirty-one accomplishments in which she professes to instruct her pupils, such as "waxwork, boning fowls without cutting the back," etc., enumerates, No. 21, "True point or tape lace," as well as "washing Flanders lace and point."

Again, in 1764, Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell

advertise in their boarding-school "lacework and the washing of blonde laces; the pupils' own laces washed and got up at home. Terms £24."

At Miss Glen's boarding-school in the Trunk Close, 1768, young ladies are taught "white and coloured seam and washing of lace"—gratis.

These lady-teachers were not appointed in Scotland without giving due proofs of their capacity. In 1758 the magistrates and council of Aberdeen, being unanimous as to the "strict

Scotch nation of the Hanoverian persuasion were wrath at the frivolity of the Jacobite party. "£400,000 have been sent out of the country during the last year," writes the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of 1764, "to support our exiled countrymen in France, where they learn nothing but folly and extravagance." English laces were not included in the prohibition. In 1763, that "neat shop near the Stinking Style, in the Lukenbooths," held by Mr. James Baillie, advertises "Trollies, English laces, and pearl edgings." Four year later, black silk lace and guipure are added to the stock, "mennuet," and very cheap bone lace.<sup>7</sup>

Great efforts, and with success, were made for the improvement of the thread manufacture, for the purchase of which article at Lille £200,000 were annually sent from Scotland to France. Badly-spun yarn was seized and burned by the stamp master; of this we have frequent mention.<sup>8</sup>

Peuchet, speaking of Scotland, says:—"Il s'est formé près d'Edinbourg une manufacture de fil de dentelle. On prétend que le fil de cette manufacture sert à faire des dentelles qui non-seulement égalent en beauté celles qui sont fabriquées avec le fil de l'étranger, mais encore les surpassent en durée. Cet avantage serait d'autant plus grand que l'importation de ce fil de l'étranger occasionne aux habitans de ce royaume une perte annuelle de £100,000."<sup>9</sup>

Whether about the year 1775 any change had taken place in the legislation of the customs of Scotland, and they had become regulated by English law, we cannot say, but suddenly constant advertisements of Brussels lace and fine point appear in the *Gazette*, and this at the very time Loch

---

morality, Dresden work, modesty, and catgut lace-making," etc., of Miss Betsey Forbes, elected her to the office of schoolmistress of the city.

In *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* a lady, Mrs. Mason, tells a long story of the young laird having torn a suit of lace she was busied in getting up.

<sup>7</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser*.

<sup>8</sup> 1774. "Several pounds of badly-spun yarn was burnt by the stamp master in Montrose." This announcement constantly occurs.

<sup>9</sup> About this period a Mr. Brother-

ton, of Leith, seems to have made a discovery which was but a prelude to the bobbin net. It is thus described in the *Weekly Magazine* of 1772:—

"A new invention has lately been discovered by Mr. Brotherton, in Leith, for working black silk lace or white thread lace on a loom, to imitate any pattern whatever, and the lace done in this way looks fully as well as if sewed, and comes much cheaper. It is done any breadth, from three inches to three-quarters of a yard wide."

was doing his best to stir up once more Scotch patriotism with regard to manufactures.<sup>10</sup>

The Scotch Foresters set the example at their meeting in 1766, and then—we hear nothing more on the matter.

The *Weekly Magazine* of 1776 strongly recommends the art of lace-making as one calculated to flourish in Scotland, young girls beginning to learn at eight years of age, adding: “The directors of the hospital of Glasgow have already sent twenty-three girls to be taught by Madame Puteau,<sup>11</sup> a native of Lisle, now residing at Renfrew; you will find the lace of Renfrew cheaper, as good and as neat as those imported from Brussels, Lisle, and Antwerp.” David Loch also mentions the success of the young Glasgow lace-makers, who made lace, he says, from 10*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* per yard. He adds: “It is a pleasure to see them at work. I saw them ten days ago.” He recommends the managers of the Workhouse of the Canongate to adopt the same plan: adding, they need not send to Glasgow for teachers, as there are plenty at the Orphan Hospital at Edinburgh capable of undertaking the office. Of the lace fabricated at Glasgow we know nothing, save from an advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury* of 1778, where one William Smith, “Lace-maker,” at the Greenhead, Glasgow, informs the public he has for some years “made and bleached candlewicks.” Anderson and Loch did not agree on the subject of lace-making, the former considering it an unstable fabric, too easily affected by the caprices of fashion.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> In 1775 Dallas, Barclay & Co., advertise a selling off of fine point, Brussels thread, blond, and black laces of all kinds, silver double edged lace, etc.—*Edinburgh Advertiser*.

1775. “Black blonde and thread laces, catguts of all sorts, just arrived from the India House in London in the Canongate.”—*Caledonian Mercury*.

“Fashions for January; dresses trimmed with Brussels point or Mignonette.”—*Ibid.* Same year.

<sup>11</sup> “Madame Puteau carries on a lace manufacture after the manner of Mechlin and Brussels. She had lately twenty-two apprentices from the Glasgow Hospital. . . . Mrs. Puteau has as much merit in this branch as

has her husband in the making of fine thread. This he manufactures of such a fineness as to be valued at £10 the pound weight.”—*Essays on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures, Fisheries, etc., of Scotland.* David Loch. 1778.

<sup>12</sup> “If you look at the wardrobes of your grandmother, you will perceive what revolutions have happened in taste of mankind for laces and other fineries of that sort. How many suits of this kind do you meet with that cost amazing sums, which are now, and have long since been, entirely useless. In our own day did we not see that in one year Brussels laces are most in fashion and purchased at any price, while the next perhaps they are entirely laid aside, and French

Be that as it may, the manufacture of thread for lace alone employed five hundred machines, each machine occupying thirty-six persons: the value of the thread produced annually £175,000. Loch adds, that in consequence of the cheapness of provisions, Scotland, as a country, is better adapted to lace-making than England. In consequence of Loch's remarks, his Majesty's Board of Trustees for the Fisheries and Manufactures, after asking a number of questions, determined to give proper encouragement and have mistresses for teaching the different kinds of lace made in England and France, and oblige them to take girls of the poorer class, some from the hospitals, and the mistress for five years to have the benefit of their work. A girl might earn from 10*d.* to 1*s.* per day. They gave a salary to an experienced person from Lisle for the purpose of teaching the making of thread; his wife to instruct in lace-making. With the records of 1788 end all mention of lace-making in Scotland.<sup>13</sup>

---

or other thread laces, or fine sewings, the names of which I know not, highly prized."—*Observations on the National Industry of Scotland*. Anderson. 1778.

<sup>13</sup> Lace-making at Hamilton is now a thing of the past, replaced in the nineteenth century by a tambour network for veils, scarfs and flounces.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## IRELAND.

“The undoubted aptitude for lace-making of the women of Ireland.”  
—*Juror's Report, International Exhibition.* 1862.

“It is peculiarly interesting to note the various foreign influences which have done their part in the creation of Irish lace. Italian and Flemish, Greek, French and English, all have lent their aid.”  
—A. Loyd. *The Queen*, Feb. 6th, 1897.

LITTLE is known of the early state of manufactures in Ireland, save that the art of needlework was held in high estimation.

By the sumptuary laws of King Mogha Nuadhad, killed at the Battle of Maylean, A.D. 192, we learn that the value of a queen's raiment, should she bring a suitable dowry, ought to amount to the cost of six cows; but of what the said raiment consisted history is dark.

The same record, however, informs us that the price of a mantle, wrought with the needle, should be “a young bullock or steer.”<sup>1</sup> This hooded mantle is described by Giraldus Cambrensis as composed of various pieces of cloth, striped, and worked in squares by the needle; maybe a species of cut-work.

Morgan, who wrote in 1588, declares the saffron-tinted shirts of the Irish to contain from twenty to thirty ells of linen. No wonder they are described—

“With pleates on pleates they pleated are,  
As thick as pleates may lie.”<sup>2</sup>

It was in such guise the Irish appeared at court before Queen Elizabeth,<sup>3</sup> and from them the yellow starch of Mrs. Turner may have derived its origin. The Irish, however,

*Essay on the Dress of the Early Irish.* J. C. Walker. 1788. Derricke. 1578.  
<sup>3</sup> In 1562. See Camden. *Hist. Eliz.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Image of Irelande*, by Jhon

produced the dye not from saffron, but from a lichen gathered on the rocks. Be that as it may, the Government prohibited its use, and the shirts were reduced in quantity to six ells,<sup>4</sup> for the making of which "new-fangled pair of Gally-cushes," *i.e.*, English shirts, as we find by the Corporation Book of Kilkenny (1537), eighteenpence was charged if done with silk or cut-work. Ninepence extra was charged for every ounce of silk worked in.

An Irish smock wrought with silk and gold was considered an object worthy of a king's wardrobe, as the inventory of King Edward IV.<sup>5</sup> attests:—"Item, one Irishe smocke wrought with gold and silke."

The Rebellion at an end, a friendly intercourse, as regards fashion, was kept up between the English and the Irish. The ruff of geometric design, falling band, and cravat of Flanders lace, all appeared in due succession. The Irish, always lovers of pomp and show, early used lace at the interments of the great, as appears from an anecdote related in a letter of Mr. O'Halloran:—"The late Lord Glandore told me," he writes, "that when a boy, under a spacious tomb in the ruined monastery at his seat, Ardfert Abbey (Co. Kerry), he perceived something white. He drew it forth, and it proved to be a shroud of Flanders lace, the covering of some person long deceased."

In the beginning of the eighteenth century a patriotic feeling arose among the Irish, who joined hand in hand to encourage the productions of their own country. Swift was among the first to support the movement, and in a prologue he composed, in 1721, to a play acted for the benefit of the Irish weavers, he says:—

"Since waiting-women, like exacting jades,  
Hold up the prices of their old brocades,  
We'll dress in manufactures made at home."

Shortly afterwards, at a meeting, he proposed the following resolution:—

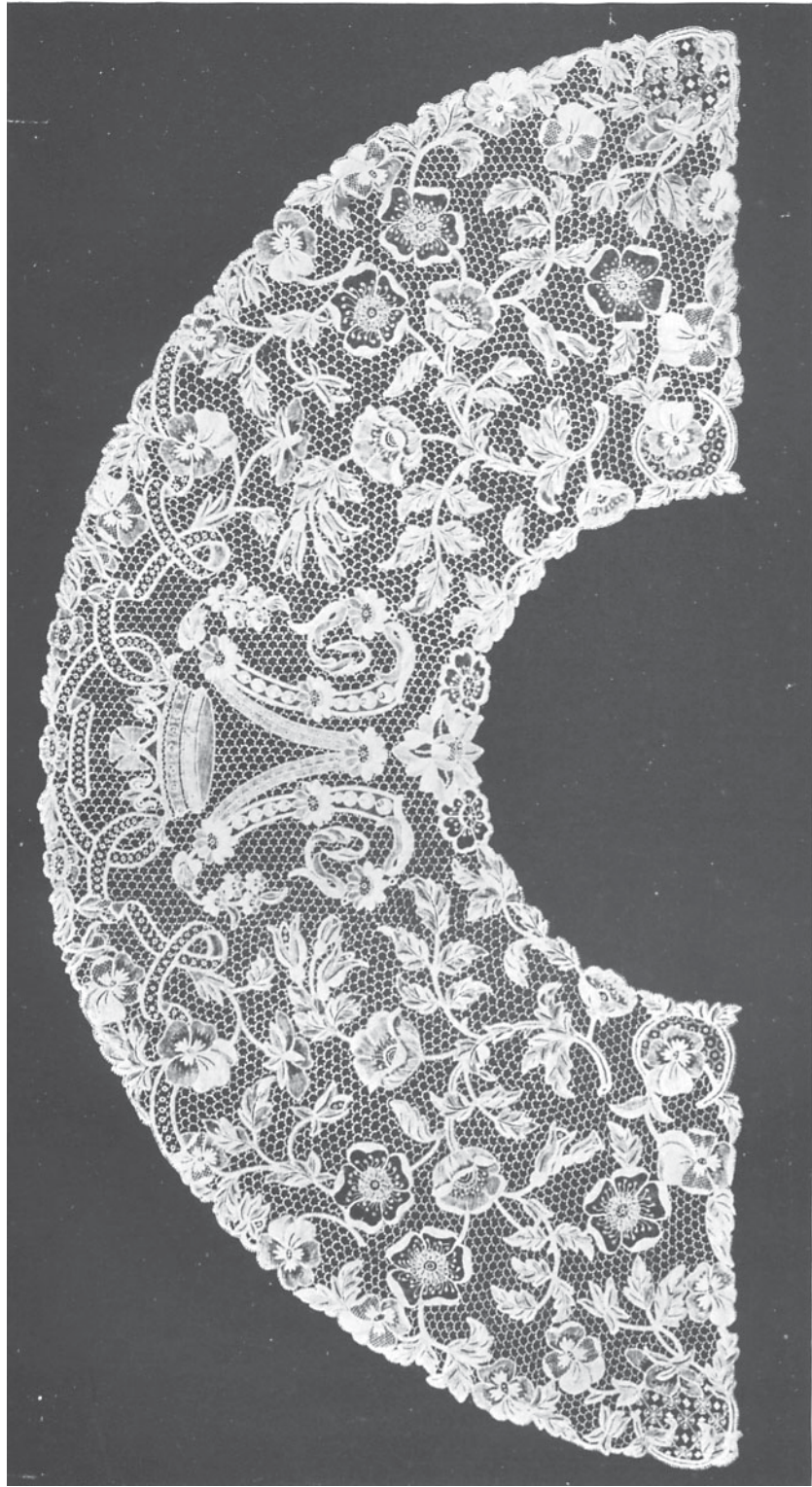
"That the ladies wear Irish manufactures. There is

---

<sup>4</sup> Henry VIII. 1537. Against Irish fashions. Not "to weare any shirt, smock, kerchor, bendel, neckerchour, mocket, or linen cappe colored or dyed with saffron," and not to use more than seven yards of linen in their shirts or smocks.

<sup>5</sup> 4 Edw. IV., Harl MSS. No. 1419. *b.-g.* 494.





IRISH, YONGUAL.—Needle-point fan mount, made at the Presentation Convent, Yonghal, for H.R.H. Princess Maud of Wales on her marriage, 1896.  
Width in centre  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in.

Photo in Victoria and Albert Museum.

brought annually into this kingdom near £90,000 worth of silk, whereof the greater part is manufactured; £30,000 more is expended in muslin, holland, cambric, and calico. What the price of lace amounts to is not easy to be collected from the Custom-house book, being a kind of goods that, taking up little room, is easily run; but, considering the prodigious price of a woman's head-dress at ten, twelve, twenty pounds a yard, it must be very great."

Though a club of patriots had been formed in Ireland since the beginning of the eighteenth century, called the Dublin Society, they were not incorporated by charter until the year 1749; hence many of their records are lost, and we are unable to ascertain the precise period at which they took upon themselves the encouragement of the bone lace trade in Ireland. From their *Transactions* we learn that, so early as the year 1743, the annual value of the bone lace manufactured by the children of the workhouses of the city of Dublin amounted to £164 14s. 10½d.<sup>6</sup> In consequence of this success, the society ordain that £34 2s. 6d. be given to the Lady Arabella Denny to distribute among the children, for their encouragement in making bone lace. Indeed, to such a pitch were the productions of the needle already brought in Ireland, that in the same year, 1743, the Dublin Society gave Robert Baker, of Rollin Street, Dublin, a prize of £10 for his imitation of Brussels lace ruffles, which are described as being most exquisite both in design and workmanship. This Brussels lace of Irish growth was much prized by the patriots.<sup>7</sup> From this time the Dublin Society acted under their good genius, the Lady Arabella Denny. The prizes they awarded were liberal, and success attended their efforts.

In 1755 we find a prize of £2 15s. 6d. awarded to

<sup>6</sup> That lace ruffs soon appeared in Ireland may be proved by the effigy on a tomb still extant in the Abbey of Clonard, in which the Dillon arms are conspicuous, and also by paintings of the St. Lawrence family, *circa* 1511, preserved at Howth Castle.

In the portrait at Muckruss of the Countess of Desmond she is represented with a lace collar. It was taken, as stated at the back of the portrait, "as she appeared at the

court of King James, 1614, and in y<sup>e</sup> 140th year of her age." Thither she went to endeavour to reverse the attainer of her house.

<sup>7</sup> At the end of the last century there lived at Creaden, near Waterford, a lady of the name of Power, lineal descendant of the kings of Munster, and called the Queen of Creaden. She affected the dress of the ancient Irish. The border of her coif was of the finest Irish-made Brussels lace; her jacket

Susanna Hunt, of Fishamble Street, aged eleven, for a piece of lace most extraordinarily well wrought. Miss Elinor Brereton, of Raheenduff, Queen's County, for the best imitation of Brussels lace with the needle, £7. On the same occasion Miss Martha M'Culloch, of Cork Bridge, gains the prize of £5 for "Dresden point." Miss Mary Gibson has £2 for "Cheyne Lace,"<sup>8</sup> of which we have scarcely heard mention since the days of Queen Elizabeth.

Bone lace had never in any quantity been imported from England. In 1703 but 2,333 yards, valuing only £116 13s., or 1s. per yard, passed through the Irish Custom House. Ireland, like the rest of the United Kingdom, received her points either from France or Flanders.

The thread used in the Irish fabric was derived from Hamburg, of which, in 1765, 2,573 lbs. were imported.

It was in this same year the Irish club of young gentlemen refused, by unanimous consent, to toast or consider beautiful any lady who should wear French lace or indulge in foreign fopperies.

During the two succeeding years the lace of various kinds exhibited by the workhouse children was greatly approved of, and the thanks of the Society offered to the Lady Arabella Denny.<sup>9</sup>

Prizes given to the children to the amount of £34 2s. 6d.; the same for bone lace made by other manufacturers; and one half the sum is also to be applied to "thread lace made with knitting needles."

A certain Mrs. Rachel Armstrong, of Inistioge (Co. Kilkenny), is also awarded a prize of £11 7s. 6d. "for having caused a considerable quantity of bone lace to be made by girls whom she has instructed and employed in the work." Among the premiums granted to "poor gentlewomen" we find: To Miss Jane Knox, for an apron of elegant pattern and curiously wrought, £6 16s. 6d., and silver medals to two ladies who, we suppose, are above

---

of the finest brown cloth trimmed with gold lace; her petticoat of the finest scarlet cloth bordered with a row of broad gold lace; all her dress was of Irish manufacture.

<sup>8</sup> *Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanack*, by G. Watson. Dublin, 1757.

<sup>9</sup> "The freedom of the city of Dublin was also conferred upon her, presented in due form in a silver box as a mark of esteem for her great charities and constant care of the Foundling children in the city workhouse."—*Dublin Freeman's Journal*, July 30th, 1765.

receiving money as a reward. The Society recommend that the bone lace made be exposed for sale in the warehouses of the Irish Silk Company. In consequence of the emulation excited among all classes, advertisements appear in the *Dublin News* of ladies "very capable of instructing young misses in fine lace-making, needlework point, broderie en tambour, all in the genteelest taste."

Lady Arabella stood not alone as a patroness of the art. In 1770 we read how "a considerable quantity of bone lace of extraordinary fineness and elegance of pattern, made at Castlebar in the Co. of Mayo, being produced to the Society, and it appearing that the manufacture of bone lace was founded, and is at present supported there by Lady Bingham, it was ordered that the sum of £25 be paid into the hands of her ladyship, to be disposed of in such encouragements as she shall judge will most effectually conduce to the carrying on and improvement of the said manufacture at Castlebar." The thanks of the Society are at the same time voted to her ladyship. In consequence of the large quantity fabricated, after the lapse of a few years the Society, in 1773, found themselves compelled to put some bounds to their liberality. No prizes are given for any lace exhibited at less than 11s. 4½d. the yard, and that only to those not resident in the city of Dublin or within five miles of it. Twenty per cent. will be given on the value of the lace, provided it shall not exceed £500 in value. The Society do not, however, withdraw the annual premium of £30 for the products of the "famishing children" of the city of Dublin workhouse,<sup>10</sup> always directed by the indefatigable Lady Arabella Denny.<sup>11</sup> From that period we hear no more of the Dublin Society and its prizes awarded for point, Dresden, Brussels, or bone lace.

The manufacture of gold and silver lace having met with considerable success, the Irish Parliament, in 1778, gave it their protection by passing an Act prohibiting the entry of all such commodities either from England or foreign parts.

<sup>10</sup> *Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanack*, by Samuel Watson. 1773.

<sup>11</sup> "The Lady Arabella Denny died 1792, aged 85; she was second daughter of Thomas Fitzmaurice, Earl of Kerry. The Irish Academy, in acknowledg-

ment of her patriotic exertions, offered a prize of 100 guineas for the best monody on her death. It was gained by John Macaulay, Esq."—*Dublin Freeman's Journal*, July 20th, 1766.

And now for forty years and more history is silent on the subject of lace-making by the "famishing children" of the Emerald Isle.<sup>12</sup>

No existing Irish lace industry is as old as the appliqué lace which has been made in the neighbourhood of Carrickmacross since the year 1820. The process of its manufacture is simple enough, for the pattern is cut from cambric and applied to net with point stitches. Many accounts have been given of its origin. Some assign its genesis to India or to Persia, while the Florentine historian, Vasari, claims the artist Botticelli as its inventor. In any case, there can be no doubt that vast quantities were produced in Italy from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Such a specimen it was that Mrs. Grey Porter, wife of the then rector of Dunnamoyne, taught her servant, Anne Steadman, to copy, and also spread the art amongst the peasant women in the neighbourhood with such success that Miss Reid, of Rahans, gathered together the young women round Culloville and taught them to make lace on the same model. The girls flocked in from the surrounding districts to learn the work. It was, however, only dependent on private orders, and gradually suffered from over-production, and threatened to die out, until it was revived after the great famine of 1846. By Mr. Tristram Kennedy, the manager of the Bath estate, and Captain Morant, the agent of the Shirley estate, a vacant house was turned into a school, and this gave rise to the Bath and Shirley School, which has done so much to hand down this industry to the present day. Some samples of Brussels and guipure lace were brought to the school, where the teacher had them remodelled and placed in the hands of the best workers: and Carrickmacross became identified with some of the finest "guipure" that Ireland has produced.<sup>13</sup>

In the year 1829 the manufacture of Limerick tambour lace was first established in Ireland. Tambour work is of Eastern origin, and was known in China, Persia, India and

<sup>12</sup> Wakefield writes in 1812: "Lace is not manufactured to a large extent in Ireland. I saw some poor children who were taught weaving by the daughters of a clergyman, and Mr. Tighe mentions a school in Kilkenny where twelve girls were instructed in

the art. At Abbey-leix there is a lace manufacture, but the quantity made is not of any importance."—*Account of Ireland. Statistical and Political.* Edw. Wakefield. 1812.

<sup>13</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 8th, 1897.

Turkey long before it spread to the United Kingdom. This work is still extensively carried on in the East, where it is much appreciated for its varied colours, as well as the labour expended upon it. Until the middle of the last century, tambour lace was unknown in Europe, with the exception of Turkey. It was about that time it was introduced into Saxony and Switzerland, but the knowledge of the art of making the lace did not reach England until 1820. Lace, in the strictest sense of the word, it cannot be termed. It is called tambour from the fact that the frame on which it is worked bears some resemblance to a drum-head or tambourine. On this is stretched a piece of Brussels or Nottingham net. A floss thread or cotton is then drawn by a hooked or tambour needle through the meshes of the net, and the design formed from a paper drawing which is placed before the worker. *Run* lace is of a finer and lighter character. The pattern is formed on the net with finer thread, which is not drawn in with the tambour, but run in with the point needle. (This description of lace was made in Nottinghamshire during the eighteenth century, and appears to have been copied from foreign designs, chiefly from those of Lille.) It came into fashion after Nottingham machine net had made the work possible, and is still called by old people Nottingham lace. This fabric was first introduced into Ireland by one Charles Walker,<sup>14</sup> a native of Oxfordshire, who brought over twenty-four girls as teachers, and commenced manufacturing at a place in Limerick called Mount Kennet. His goods were made entirely for one house in St. Paul's Churchyard, until that house became bankrupt in 1834, after which a traveller was sent through England, Scotland and Ireland to take orders. Her Excellency Lady Normanby, wife of the Lord Lieutenant, gave great encouragement to the fabric, causing dresses to be made, not only for herself, but also for Her Majesty the Queen of the

<sup>14</sup> Walker was a man of literary and artistic tastes, and educated for the Church, but, marrying the daughter of a lace-manufacturer, he set up in that business in Essex, working for the London wholesale trade. He removed next to Limerick, where he continued till 1841, when he sold the business, but his successor becoming

bankrupt, he never received the purchase money, and died 1842, his ingenuity and industry ill-rewarded. In some work (we have lost the reference) it is stated that "Coggeshall, in Essex, made a tambour lace, a sort of medium between lace and embroidery." Could this be Walker's manufacture?

Belgians, and the Grand Duchess of Baden. The subsequent history of Limerick laces bears a close resemblance to that of the other Irish lace industries. Mr. Charles Walker died in 1842. Many of his workers returned to England; <sup>15</sup> the stimulus of constant supervision was gone; old designs deteriorated from inferior copying, and new designs were not forthcoming. It was mainly due to the Convent of the Good Shepherd that this lace industry was saved from absolute extinction. Mrs. R. V. O'Brien has, however, done valuable service in its revival by her energy in establishing and maintaining the Limerick lace training school, which may be said to owe its origin to a lecture delivered by Mr. Alan S. Cole at the Limerick Chamber of Commerce in September, 1888, where photographs of ancient and modern lace and a loan collection of Limerick lace was shown. In this collection the work of the early days of Limerick, when the design was of the highest order, was contrasted with the more modern specimens. <sup>16</sup>

The first attempt to adapt the point de Venise to the necessities of the Irish people was made at Tynan, in Co. Armagh, on the borders of Tyrone. Mrs. Maclean, the wife of the Rev. William Maclean, then rector of the parish, was the owner of some old point de Venise, and she resolved to turn her collection to some practical use. "The lace was examined and re-examined, until the secret workings underlying every stitch, every picot, every filling, and every relief, had been grasped and understood. Steps were taken in 1849 to teach the people this industry, and by 1851 a

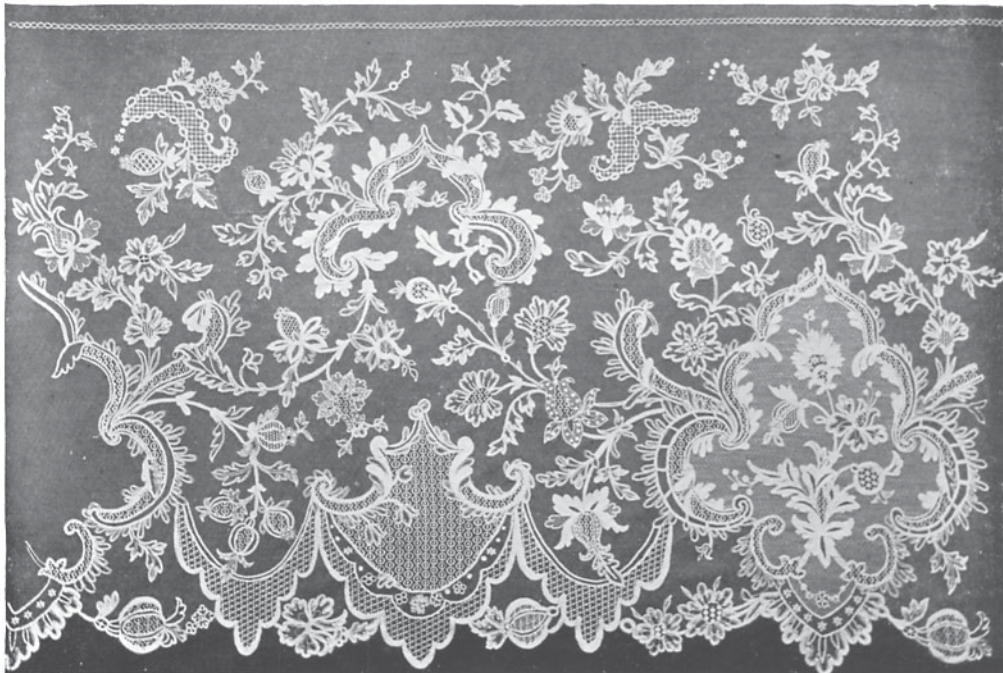
<sup>15</sup> In 1855 the number of workers employed numbered 1,500. In 1869 there were less than 500. In 1869 Mrs. Palliser writes of the tambour lace industry: "The existing depression of the trade has been partly caused by the emigration of girls to America and the colonies, while glove-making and army clothing employ the rest; and indeed the manufacture aiming only at cheapness had produced a lace of inferior quality, without either novelty or beauty of design, from which cause Limerick lace has fallen into disrepute."

<sup>16</sup> No account of Limerick lace would be complete which does not make

some reference to the work of the Sisters of Mercy at Kinsale, Co. Cork, where so much is now being done to revive those industries which were originally started with the object of coping with the famine of 1846. This revival is largely due to Mr. A. S. Cole, who originally suggested the establishment of an art class in connection with South Kensington, with Mr. Brennar, of the Cork School of Art, as its master. The studio is in connection with the workroom, which secures constant touch between the designing, alteration, and adaptation of patterns and their execution. (*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 8th, 1897.)



IRISH, CARRICKMACROSS. INSERTION AND BORDER OF APPLIQUÉ LACE, made at the Bath and Shirley Schools. End of nineteenth century. Width of insertion, 6 in. ; border, 9¼ in. Victoria and Albert Museum.



IRISH. LIMERICK LACE. TAMBOUR EMBROIDERY ON NET, made at Kinsale. End of nineteenth century. Width, 17 in. Victoria and Albert Museum.



handsome flounce was ready, which was purchased by Lord John George Beresford, then Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. It was exhibited at the great exhibition of that year in London, and attracted a large amount of attention, and brought many orders in its train. The business was thus considerably extended and enlarged, and the Primate and his nieces, Mrs. Eden and Mrs. Dunbar, did all they could to promote the sale of the work. The good fortune and prosperity of Tynan was, however, but of a temporary character. The Rev. William Maclean died in 1865, and, with his death, the local industry died out from want of supervision and organisation.

Irish point<sup>17</sup> also owes its genesis to the failure of the potato crop in 1846, and its original inspiration was given by a piece of point de Milan which fell into the hands of Mother Mary Ann Smith, of the Presentation Convent at Youghal, Co. Cork. She there conceived the idea of setting up an industry for the children attending the convent school. She studied the lace which had come into her possession, examined the process by which it had been made, unravelled the threads one by one, and at last succeeded in mastering its many details. She then selected some of the convent children who had shown a taste for fine needlework, and taught them separately what she herself learned. The convent school was opened in 1852. The main characteristic of this lace is that it is worked entirely with the needle.

Though Irish point lace owes its origin to Youghal Convent, its workers have done much to spread their art in other parts of Ireland, and in few districts more effectually than in the neighbourhood of Kenmare, Co. Kerry, where the late Mother Abbess O'Hagan introduced the industry into the Convent of the Poor Clares in 1861. The work is

<sup>17</sup> Various schools have been established throughout Ireland. Lady de Vere taught the mistress of a school on her own demesne at Curragh, Co. Limerick, the art of making application flowers, giving her own Brussels lace as patterns. The work was so good as soon to command a high price, and the late Queen of the Belgians actually purchased a dress of it at Harding's, and took it back with her

to Brussels. The fabric is known by the name of "Irish" or "Curragh point."

The school set up at Belfast by the late Jane Clarke exhibited in 1851 beautiful imitations of the old Spanish and Italian points; amongst others a specimen of the fine raised Venetian point, which can scarcely be distinguished from the original. It is now in the Viet. and Albert Museum (1869).

based upon the same lines, though the Kenmare work claims as its speciality that it is entirely worked in linen thread, while at Youghal cotton is occasionally used. The Convent of the Poor Clares devote themselves chiefly to the production of flat point, appliqué, and guipure laces. Many other convents and lace centres in Ireland have had their teachers from Youghal and Kenmare. Flat point has been made for fifty years under the supervision of the Carmelite convent at New Ross, Co. Wexford, though the workers are now better known for their adaptation of Venetian rose point and the perfection to which they have brought their crochet than for their plain Irish point. For the first ten years the Carmelite nuns confined their attention to cut-work, flat point, and net lace. As the workers grew more expert, a heavy rose point was introduced. This style proved too heavy for the fashion; hence it was that, in 1865, the nuns turned their attention to finer work.

It was about that time that a travelling Jewish pedlar called at the convent with a miscellaneous assortment of antique vestments, old books, and other curiosities, among which were some broken pieces of old rose point lace. The then Prioress, the late Mother Augustine Dalton, purchased the specimens from the Jew, as she realised that they would give her the opportunity she wanted of varying the quality of the lace, and making the design finer and lighter in the future than it had been in the past. For weeks and for months she devoted herself to the task of ripping up portions, stitch by stitch, until she had mastered every detail. From this time dates the production of that fine rose point for which the convent at New Ross has deservedly earned so high a reputation. This rose point has gone on increasing in fineness of quality and in beauty of design. The defects in the earlier specimens were mainly due to the want of artistic culture in the girls, who could neither appreciate nor render the graceful sweeps and curves, nor the branching stems.

Irish crochet is another widespread national industry. Its main centres have been Cork in the South and Monaghan in the North of Ireland. The industry can be traced as far back as 1845, when the sisters of the Ursuline convent at Blackrock, Co. Cork, received £90 for the work done by the poor children in their schools. It may indeed be said that

the growth of this great industry spread from this centre ; so much so, that within the space of a few years it formed part of the educational system of almost every convent in the land, and spread from the southern shores of Co. Cork to Wexford, to Monaghan and to Sligo.

Cork City was itself the natural centre of the industry, which extended so far and wide through the country that some thirty years ago there were no less than 12,000 women in the neighbourhood of Cork engaged in making crochet, lace collars, and edgings after Spanish and Venetian patterns. On the outbreak of the Franco-German war a further impetus was given to the industry, when the supply of Continental laces was cut off. Several years of unique prosperity followed, until the competition of the machine-made work of Nottingham and Switzerland ousted the Irish crochet from the market. At the present there has been a reaction against the usurpation by machinery of the place that art ought to occupy, and the Cork work is now once more coming to the fore.

As Cork has been the centre on the South, so is Clones in the North, and yet the industry which has for so many years done so much for the people of Monaghan owes its origin to the philanthropic efforts of Mrs. W. C. Roberts, of Thornton, Co. Kildare, who helped the poor to ward off the worst attacks of the famine of 1847 by the production of guipure and point de Venise crochet. After a few years of prosperity, the industry languished and disappeared from the neighbourhood, but twenty-four of the best-trained and most efficient of Mrs. Roberts's workers were sent out to other centres. One of these came to Mrs. Hand, the wife of the then Rector of Clones. This parish is the biggest in the county, and the poor from the surrounding mountains flocked down to learn the crochet ; and knotted and lifted as well as ordinary guipure, Greek and Spanish, and also Jesuit lace<sup>18</sup> has been produced with the crochet-needle in Clones, which still continues to be the most important centre of the industry.

At the Killarney Presentation Convent at Newton Barry,<sup>19</sup> and Cappoquin, drawn linen work in the style of

---

<sup>18</sup> From the tradition that a Jesuit used in Ireland.  
procured the first Venetian lace pattern <sup>19</sup> It was in the famine period that

the Italian reticella, and at Parsonstown pillow laces of the same character as Honiton are made. In Ardee, a novel lace is made with braid and cord.<sup>20</sup>

The rose point lace is often called "Innishmacsaint" from the village in the county of Fermanagh where the industry was transplanted on the death of the Rev. W. Maclean, of Tynan, by his daughter, who went to live with her sister, Mrs. George Tottenham, the wife of the rector. What was Tynan's misfortune proved a boon to Innishmacsaint, and it became the chief centre of the Irish rose point industry. Both the heavier and finer kinds are made there. As at Tynan, the art of making the lace has been learnt by the unravelling and close examination of Venetian point.

As in English work, some of the Irish is spoilt by the woolly cotton thread. Foreign lace likewise in these days suffers from the same fault. The workmanship at the present time can be so good that every effort ought to be made to use only fine silky linen thread. In Ireland, where flax can be grown, there should be no excuse for employing any other.

---

the Rector of Headford, Co. Galway, brought about a revival of the pillow lace, which was known to a few women in the county—taught, according to the tradition, by a soldier from foreign parts at some unknown date. This work is now reviving, thanks to the energetic care of Mrs. Dawson.

<sup>20</sup> Mr. A. S. Cole gives the following classification of Irish laces:—

There are seven sorts of Irish lace.

1. Flat needle-point lace.
2. Raised needle-point lace.
3. Embroidery on net, either darning or chain-stitch.
4. Cut cambric or linen work in the style of guipure or appliqué lace.
5. Drawn thread-work in the style of Reticella and Italian cut points.
6. Pillow lace in imitation of Devon lace.
7. Crochet.