



CAP-CROWN, MECHLIN BOBBIN LACE, 18TH CENTURY  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MRS. MCDUGALL HAWKES

### LACE CAPS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

**I**N the Lace Gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a special exhibition of lace cap-crowns and lappets dating from the end of the seventeenth through the eighteenth century, accompanied by a series of engravings covering the same period and showing ladies wearing caps of the different types fashionable during those years.

The work of the French and Flemish lace makers never came nearer to the miraculous than in the making of these exquisite accessories for women's dress. Though the style of the caps changed from time to time

the lace trimmings (the lappets, crown, etc.), seem to have kept their original form. Just what devices the ladies of the sixteen-eighties and nineties used to keep their tall starched and wired frills straight and up-standing we do not know, but among the articles on Arts and Trades published in 1771 by M. de Garsault is one on "*L'Art de la Lingère.*"

The author observes that the *Lingères* "form a most important group in the community, as they not only sell linen, hemp and cotton cloth and lace, but they also make up these materials into garments that are made both for necessity and cleanliness as well as for luxury, which clothe us from the cradle to the grave—and even after! It is the *Lingère* who decorates tables, beds, and altars. . . . "We owe our knowledge of this art to Mademoiselle Merlu, formerly forewoman of Madame du Liège, one of the most famous *Lingères* of Paris, and who is now a *Maîtresse Lingère* in the rue Taranne."

Lists are given for a trousseau, for a layette, for a church, with directions as to how the various articles should be made.

The trousseau would seem to us to consist mainly of caps, and although at the time these directions were being published, it was almost a hundred years since the furore for the lace head-dresses with the tall wired *Fon-tanges* in front, and lappets behind, still the cap with its crown and lappets flourished prodigiously.

The following list is given under the words:

"ÉTAT D'UN TROUSSEAU,  
POUR LA TÊTE"

- "One dressing-table cover for town, in muslin or lace.
- One dressing-table cover for the country, in muslin.
- Six comb cases of fine dimity of Troyes.
- Six pin-cushion covers of the same.
- Forty-eight towels
- Twenty-four aprons for the toilette.
- Six peignoirs of which four should be trimmed with fine muslin and two with lace.
- Thirty-six face cloths of rough material to remove rouge.
- Thirty-six face cloths of doubled muslin to remove powder.
- One head-dress with tucker and pleated fichu trimmed with *point d'Alençon*.

A similar set of *point d'Angleterre* and one of *vraie Valenciennes*.

One head-dress of the kind called *Battant l'œil* of embroidered malines net for *négligé*.

Six simple fichus in sprigged muslin trimmed with lace for *négligé*.

Twelve fichus of muslin.

Twelve large stitched caps trimmed with narrow lace for the night.

Twelve stitched caps with two rows of ruffling in muslin and lace for the night.

Twelve handsomer ones for day time in case of indisposition.

Twelve bands of linen for wrapping the hair under a night cap.

Twelve large muslin night caps.

Six large caps of plain net for daytime.

Twelve pillow cases of which six are trimmed with muslin and six with lace.

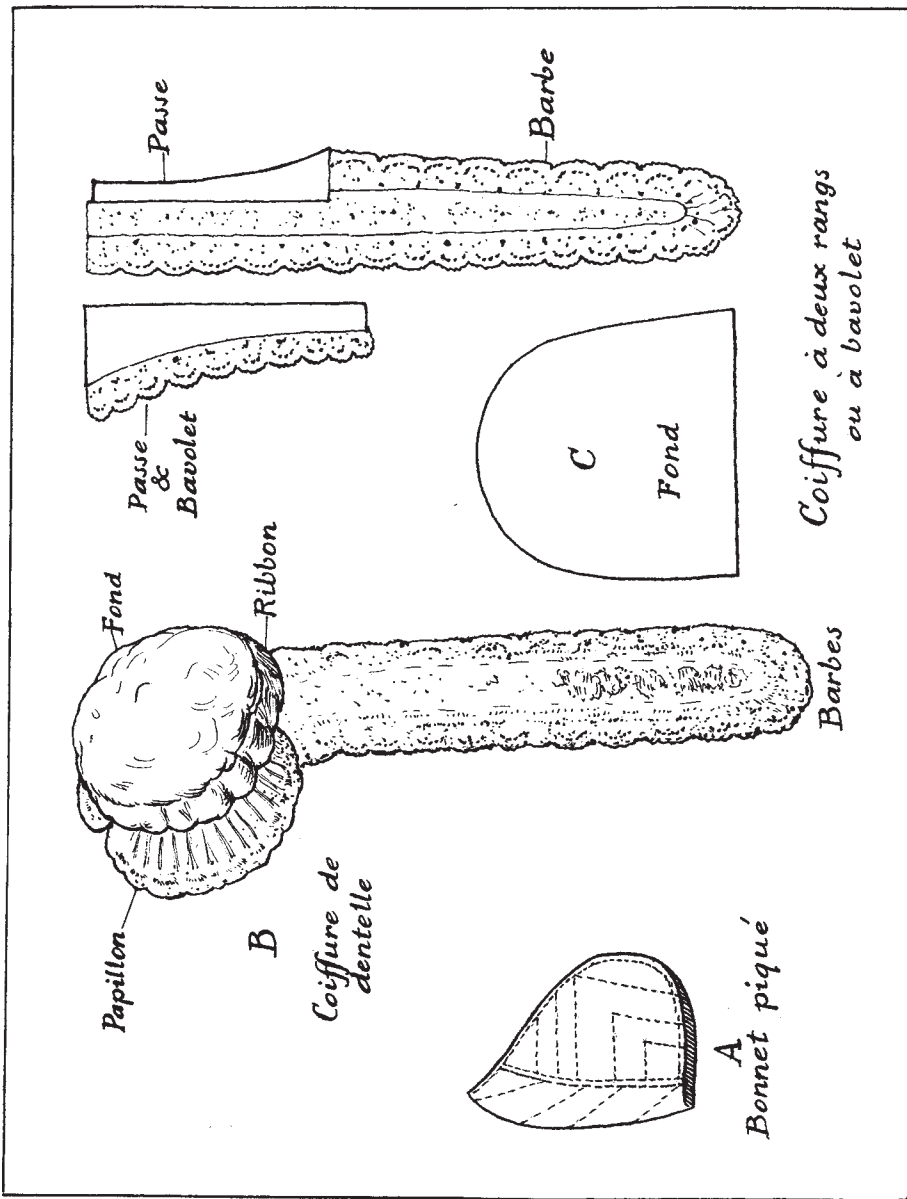
Six caps of stitched piqué of medium size."

Then follow descriptions of how these caps should be made. The directions are meant to be complete but are confusing to us because they take for granted the knowledge of the very definite customs and traditions which everyone knew at the time the article was written.

We are told that the little close-fitting stitched cap should be made with linen outside, a fustian lining and cotton wadding between the two, carefully stitched and quilted, and that this cap is the foundation to which all other head-dresses are attached. Fig. A.

The "*Coëffure de dentelle*" (fig. B) has its ruffle or *papillon* (probably called that because it was made a little like two wings, wider on the sides, and narrowing to a point on top of the head) its crown surrounded by a puffing of ribbon, and its hanging lappets behind. It was to be attached to the stitched cap mentioned above, and each pleat was to be carefully laid and pinned with tiny pins, called *camions*, and wired with fine silk-covered wire. When this carefully pleated *papillon* or ruffle was all mounted, then the crown was fastened on to the *bonnet piqué*, in such a way as to cover the inside edge of the ruffles, and so as to leave none of the *bonnet piqué* exposed. A ribbon was puffed around the edge of the crown.

The name *Battant l'œil* is rather intriguing—we wonder if it means the eyes of the wearer or the beholder that were to be struck by it. But







CAP-CROWN, ALENÇON NEEDLE POINT 18TH CENTURY  
FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

the only explanation given is that it is made in two parts, and that, for the under part with the lappet, an ell and a quarter will be needed, and for the upper piece, three quarters of an ell making altogether two and a half ells. At the back of the lappets one should add an ell of footing, and they should end squarely at the bottom and be three inches wide. The crown should be of net.

The article does not say whether this supply of caps was supposed to last a bride for the rest of her life, but it would seem so to us of the twentieth century when our crowded life takes us so constantly away from home.