

Notes

THE illustration we give is of an original empire dress made entirely of Lille lace. The straight, stiff edges of the design, so seldom seen now except in insertion laces, are characteristic of the old Lille laces. These straight

A Lace Dress

edges are rarely met with now, because the more flowing Mechlin designs replaced them. The *semé*, or powdering of dots, which in this case are ring dots, was introduced at the end of the eighteenth century. This hand-made net is as valuable as the more ornate sections, and it is for its special beauty and clearness that the Lille workers were famous. The *fond simple*, as it was called, is made by twisting two threads round each other on four sides, and the remaining two sides of the hexagon were formed by the simple crossing of the threads over each other.

The bobbin lace of Lille was described as early as the sixteenth century, when lace making was already an important industry in the Netherlands,

of which Lille then formed a part. It would be interesting to know the history of this fine piece; possibly it was smuggled into England at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was computed that one-third of

the productions of the Lille bobbin-workers were run into the British Isles. Possibly some beauty at the court of Napoleon wore the graceful little gown.

The bodice measures barely five inches in depth; the skirt, which is slightly gored, from waist to foot, 44 inches. The whole dress is in the most perfect state of preservation, not a thread being worn nor broken. The fastening is at the back, which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches longer than the front breadth. The dress was sold to the owner as a baby's robe, the dealer having doubtless been misled by the shortness of the waist. A glance at the size of the

arm-holes and waist measurement, however, convinces one that it is a far more interesting relic.



AN EMPIRE DRESS MADE OF LILLE LACE

