

whose favourite ornaments once consisted of Flemish laces⁶³ and fringes. These laces were mostly manufactured in the charitable institutions for poor girls, and by old women whose eyes did not permit them to execute a finer work. As for the young girls, the quality of these Spanish laces, and the facility of their execution, permitted the least skilful to work them with success, and proved a means of rendering them afterwards excellent workwomen. At present, the best market for our laces is in France; a few also are sent to England." He continues to state that, since the interruption of the commerce with Spain, to which Ghent formerly belonged, the art has been replaced by a trade in cotton; but that cotton-weaving spoils the hand of the lace-makers, and, if continued, would end by annihilating the lace manufacture.⁶⁴

Grammont and Enghien formerly manufactured a cheap white thread lace, now replaced by the making of laces of black silk. This industry was introduced towards 1840 by M. Lepage, and black silk and cotton-thread lace is now made at Grammont, Enghien, and Oudenarde in the southern part of Eastern Flanders. The lace of Grammont is remarkable for its regularity, the good quality of its silk, and its low price, but its grounds are coarse, and the patterns want relief and solidity, and the bobbins are more often twisted in making the ground, which deprives it of its elasticity. Grammont makes no small pieces, but shawls, dresses, etc., principally for the American market.

The "industrie dentellière" of East Flanders is now most flourishing. In 1869 it boasted 200 fabrics directed by the laity, and 450 schools under the superintendence of the nuns. Even in the poor-houses (hospices) every woman capable of using a bobbin passes her day in lace-making.

HAINAULT.

The laces of Mons and those once known as "les figures de Chimay" both in the early part of the eighteenth century enjoyed a considerable reputation. Mrs. Palliser, on visiting

⁶³ Robinson Crusoe, when at Lisbon, sends "some Flanders lace of a good value" as a present to the wife and daughter of his partner in the Brazils.

⁶⁴ *Answer to Sir John Sinclair*, by Mr. H. Schoulthem, concerning the manufactures of Ghent. 1815.



FLEMISH. GUPURE DE FLANDRE, BOBBIN-MADE.—Seventeenth century.
In the Musée Cinqcentenaire, Brussels.

Chimay in 1874, could find no traces of the manufacture beyond an aged lace-maker, an inmate of the hospice, who made black lace—"point de Paris"—and who said that until lately Brussels lace had also been made at Chimay. The first Binche lace has the character of Flanders lace, so it has been supposed that the women who travelled from Ghent in the train of Mary of Burgundy, the daughter of Charles le Téméraire, created the taste for lace at Binche, and that the stay of the great ladies, on their visits to the royal lady of the manor, made the fortune of the lace-makers. Afterwards there was much traffic between the lace-workers of Brussels and Binche, and there is a great resemblance between the laces of the two towns. Sometimes the latter is less light, richer, and more complex in effect, and the design is closely sprinkled with open-work, the ground varied and contrasted.

Binche was, as early as 1686, the subject of a royal edict, leading one to infer that the laces it produced were of some importance. In the said edict, the roads of Verviers, Gueuse, and Le Catelet, to those persons coming from Binche, are pronounced "faux passages."⁶⁵ Savary esteems the products of this little village. The same laces, he adds, are made in all the *monastères* of the province, that are partly maintained by the gains. The lace is good, equal to that of Brabant and Flanders. The characteristic peculiarities of Binche are, that there is either no cordonnet at all outlining the pattern, or that the cordonnet is scarcely a thicker thread than that which makes the *toile*.⁶⁶ The design itself is very indefinite, and is practically the same as the early Valenciennes laces. Varieties of the *fond de neige* ground were used instead of the regular *réseau* ground. Dentelle de Binche appears to have been much in vogue in the last century. It is mentioned in the inventory of the Duchesse de Modène,⁶⁷ daughter of the Regent, 1761; and in that of Mademoiselle de Charollais, 1758, who has a "couvrepied, mantelet, garniture de robe, jupon," etc., all of the same lace. In the *Misérables* of Victor Hugo, the old grandfather routs out

⁶⁵ Arch. de Nat., Coll. Rondonneau.

⁶⁶ *Point and Pillow Lace*, A. M. S. London, 1899.

⁶⁷ "Une paire de manchettes de cour de dentelle de Binche ;

"Trois paires de manchettes à trois rangs de dentelle de Binche ;

"Deux fichus de mousseline bordées de dentelle de Binche ;

"Deux devants de corps de dentelle de Binche."—Arch. de Nat. X., 10,082.

from a cupboard "une ancienne garniture de guipure de Binche" for Cosette's wedding-dress.⁶⁸ The Binche application flowers have already been noticed.

The lace industry of Binche will soon be only a memory. But before 1830 it "was a hive of lace-makers, and the bees of this hive earned so much money by making lace that their husbands could go and take a walk without a care for the morrow," as it is curiously phrased in an account of Binche and its lace. (Plate XLIII.)

We have now named the great localities for lace-making throughout the Low Countries. Some few yet remain unmentioned.

The needle-point of Liège should be mentioned among the Flanders laces. At the Cathedral of Liège there is still to be seen a flounce of an alb unequalled for the richness and variety of its design and its perfection. Liège in her days of ecclesiastical grandeur carried on the lace trade like the rest.⁶⁹ We read, in 1620, of "English Jesuitesses at Liège, who seem to care as much for politics as for lace-making."⁷⁰

An early pattern-book, that of Jean de Glen, a transcript of Vinciolo, was published in that city in 1597. It bears the mark of his printing-press—three acorns with the motto, "Cuique sua præmia," and is dedicated to Madame Loyse de Perez. He concludes a complimentary dedication to the lady with the lines:—

"Madame, dont l'esprit modestement subtil,
Vigoureux, se délecte en toutes choses belles,
Prenez de bonne part ces nouvelles modelles
Que vous offre la main de ce maistre gentil."

He states that he has travelled and brought back from Italy some patterns, without alluding to Vinciolo. At the end, in a chapter of good advice to young ladies, after exhorting them to "salutairement passer la journée, tant pour l'âme

⁶⁸ "M. Victor Hugo told the Author he had, in his younger days, seen Binch guipure of great beauty."—Mrs. Palliser, 1869.

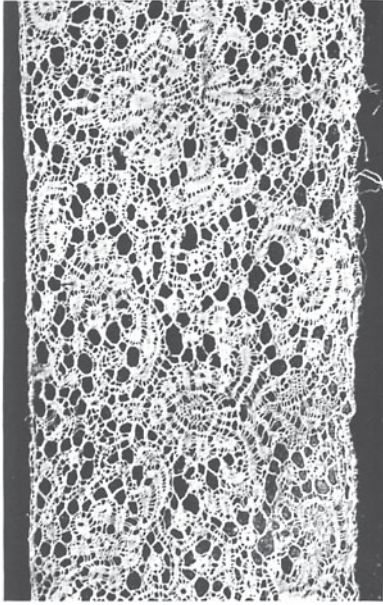
⁶⁹ Letter of Sir Henry Wotton to Lord Zouch.—State Papers, Domestic, Jas. I., P. R. O.

⁷⁰ In the *Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique*, Liègeois XVIII., 1885, is a copy of a contract dated January

23rd, 1634, whereby a lace-maker of Liège, Barbe Bonneville, undertakes for 25 florins, current money, to teach a young girl lace-making.

Again, in the copy of a Namur Act of November, 1701, a merchant of Namur orders from a Liègeois "3 pieces of needle-made lace called Venice point," to sell at the rate of 5½ florins, 4½ florins, and one écu respectively.

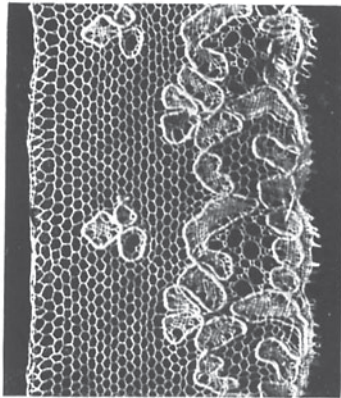
PLATE XLIII.



BINCHE.—Width, $2\frac{3}{4}$ in.

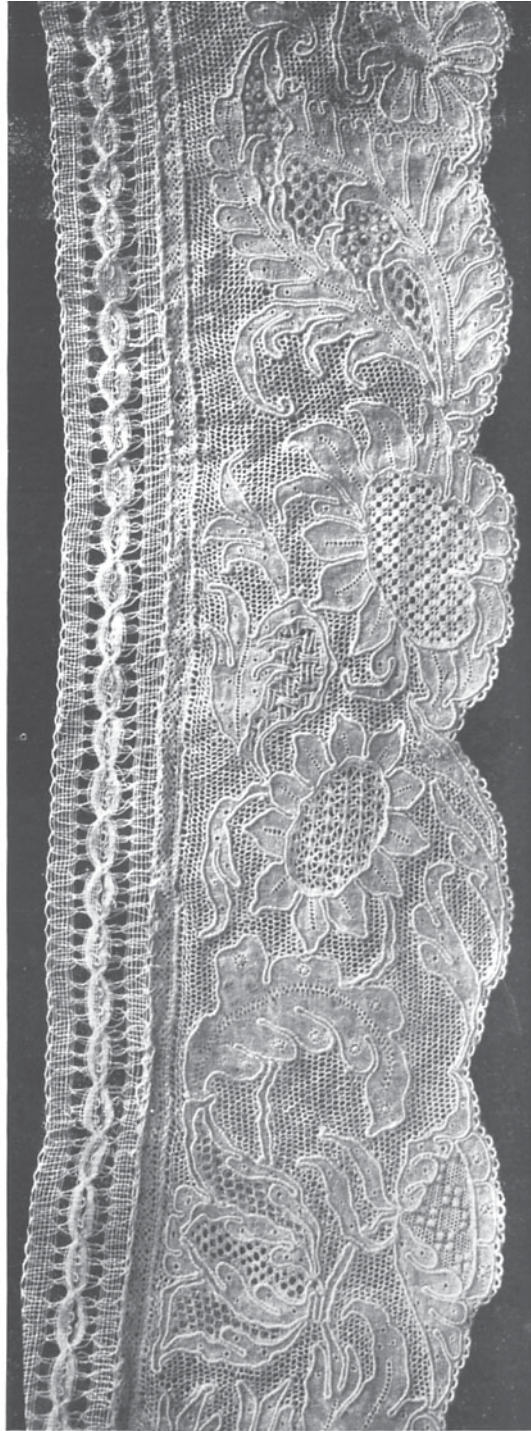
BELGIAN, BOBBIN-MADE.

PLATE XLIV.



MARCHE.—End of eighteenth century.
In the Musée Cinquantenaire, Brussels.

PLATE XLV.



DRAWN AND EMBROIDERED MUSLIN, resembling fine lace.—Flemish work. End of eighteenth century.
Width, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., not including the modern heading.
Photos by A. Dryden from private collections.

que pour le corps," he winds up that he is aware that other exercises, such as stretching the hands and feet, "se frotter un peu les points des bras," and combing the hair, are good for the health; that to wash the hands occasionally in cold water is both "civil et honnête," etc.

"Dentelles de Liège, fines et grosses de toutes sortes," are mentioned with those of Lorraine and Du Comté (Franche-Comté) in the tariff fixed by a French edict of September 18th, 1664.⁷¹ Mrs. Calderwood, who visited Liège in 1756, admires the point-edging to the surplices of the canons, which, she remarks, "have a very genteel appearance." The manufacture had declined at Liège, in 1802, when it is classed by the French Commissioners among the "fabriques moins considérables," and the lace-makers of the Rue Pierreuse, who made a "garniture étroite"—the "caïeteresses"⁷²—had died out in 1881. The same work is now carried on at Laroche.⁷³

The lace products of St. Trond, in the province of Limburgh, appear by the report of the French Commission of 1803 to have been of some importance. Lace, they say, is made at St. Trond, where from 800 to 900 are so employed, either at their own homes or in the workshops of the lace-manufacturers. The laces resemble those of Brussels and Mechlin, and although they have a lesser reputation in commerce, several descriptions are made, and about 8,000 metres are produced of laces of first quality, fetching from twelve to fourteen francs the metre. These laces are chiefly made for exportation, and are sold mostly in Holland and at the Frankfort fairs. The report concludes by stating that the vicissitudes of war, in diminishing the demand for objects of luxury, has much injured the trade; and also suggests that some provisions should be made to stop the abuses arising from the bad faith of the lace-makers, who often sell the materials given them to work with.^{74,75}

⁷¹ Arch. de Nat., Coll. Rondonneau,
⁷² "Caïeteresses," from *caïets*,
bobbins.

⁷³ *Exposition de Liège*, par Chanoine
Dubois, 1881.

⁷⁴ *Statistique du dép. de la Meuse-
Inf.*, par le Citoyen Cavenne. An. X.

⁷⁵ Liège in the seventeenth century
numbered 1600 workers, and produced

black and white laces which it exported
to England, Germany and France.
The rich clergy of the country also
bought a large quantity. At the time
of the Exhibition held there in 1881
the fabric had so declined that it
was impossible to find a single piece
of lace that had been made in the
town.

Many of the Belgian churches have lace among the *trésors d'église*. A great number of the convents also possess beautiful lace, for girls who have been educated in them often give their bridal lace, after their marriage, to the chapel of the convent.

At Bruges, an ancient turreted house of the fifteenth century, the Gruuthus mansion, now restored, contains one of the finest collections of lace in the world—a collection of Flemish laces presented to the town by the Baroness Liedts. Bruges itself, and the country round, is full of lace-workers, some working in factories or *ateliers* at the guipure de Flandres, others working at the coarse cheap torchon, sitting in the sun by the quiet canal-sides, or in the stone-cobbled lanes of the old city, where their house-door opens into a room as dark and narrow as a fox-earth, and leading a life so poor that English competition in the cheaper forms of lace is impossible.

Within the last few years the immense development of the Belgian lace trade has overthrown the characteristic lace of each city. Lace, white and black, point and pillow, may at the present time be met with in every province of the now flourishing kingdom of Belgium.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *Fil tiré*, drawn and embroidered muslin-work so fine as to be classed with lace, was made in Dinant in the religious communities of the city and the "pays" of Dinant before the French Revolution. At Marche lace with flowers worked directly on the réseau is made, and the lace of Yorck is also imitated—a lace characterised by additions worked on to the lace, giving relief to the flowers.—*Exposition*

de Liège, par Chanoine Dubois, 1881. The list of Belgian laces also includes "Les points de Brabant, plus mats, et plus remplis que les points de Flandres; les différentes dentelles de fantaisie, non classées, puis les grosses dentelles de Couvin, en soie noire, qui servaient jadis à garnir les pelisses des femmes de l'Entre Sambre-et-Meuse." —*La Dentelle de Belgique*, par Mme. Daimerries, 1893.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRANCE TO LOUIS XIV.

“Il est une déesse inconstante, incommode,
Bizarre dans ses goûts, folle en ses ornements,
Qui paraît, fuit, revient, et renaît, en tout temps:
Protée était son père, et son nom est la mode.”—Voltaire.

“To-day the French
All clinquant, all in gold.”—Shakespeare.

To the Italian influences of the sixteenth century France owes the fashion for points coupés and lace.¹ It was under the Valois and the Médicis that the luxury of embroidery, laces of gold, silver, and thread, attained its greatest height, and point coupé was as much worn at that epoch, as were subsequently the points of Italy and Flanders.

Ruffs and cuffs, according to Quicherat, first appeared in France in 1540. The ruff or fraise, as it was termed from its fancied resemblance to the caul² or frill of the calf, first

¹ Italian fashions appeared early in France. Isabeau de Bavière, wearer of the oriental *hennin*, and Valentine de Milan, first introduced the rich tissues of Italy. Louis XI. sent for workmen from Milan, Venice, and Pistoja, to whom he granted various privileges, which Charles VIII. confirmed.

Lace, according to Séguin, first appears in a portrait of Henri II. at Versailles, a portrait painted in the latter years of his reign.

“Les deux portraits de François I^{er} qui sont au Louvre n’en laissent pas soupçonner l’usage de son temps. Aucun des autres portraits historiques qui y sont, non plus que ceux des galeries de Versailles de la même époque, n’en attestent l’existence, et le premier où on la découvre est un portrait de Henri

II à Versailles, qui a dû être peint vers les dernières années de son règne. Le col, brodé d’entrelacs de couleur, est bordé d’une petite dentelle bien simple et bien modeste. Nous possédons des portraits authentiques antérieurs au milieu du XVI^e siècle, des spécimens incontestés des costumes qui ont précédé cette époque, aucun de ces nombreux témoins n’atteste son existence.

“Il faut reconnaître que l’origine de la dentelle n’est pas antérieure au milieu du XVI^e siècle.”—Séguin, *La Dentelle*. Paris, 1875.

² In Ulpian Fulwell’s *Interlude*, 1568, Nichol Newfangle says—

“I learn to make gowns with long sleeves and wings,
I learn to make ruffs like calves’ chitterlings.”

adopted by Henry II. to conceal a scar, continued in favour with his sons. The Queen-mother herself wore mourning from the day of the King's death; no decoration therefore appears upon her wire-mounted ruff,³ but the fraises of her family and the *escadron volante* are profusely trimmed with the geometric work of the period, and the making of laces and point coupé was the favourite employment of her court. It is recorded that the girls and servants of her household consumed much time in making squares of *réseuil*, and Catherine de Médicis had a bed draped with these squares of *réseuil* or *lacis*. Catherine encouraged dress and extravagance, and sought by brilliant fêtes to turn people's minds from politics. In this she was little seconded either by her husband or gloomy son, King Charles; but Henry III. and his "mignons frisés et fraisés" were tricked out in garments of the brightest colours—toques and toquets, pearl necklaces and earrings. The ruff was the especial object of royal interest. With his own hand he used the poking-sticks and adjusted the plaits. "Gaudronneur des collets de sa femme" was the soubriquet bestowed on him by the satirists of the day."⁴

By 1579 the ruffs of the French court had attained such an outrageous size, "un tiers d'aulne,"⁵ in depth that the wearers could scarcely turn their heads.⁶ "Both men and women wore them intolerably large, being a quarter of a yard deep and twelve lengths in a ruff," writes Stone. In London the fashion was termed the "French ruff"; in France, on the other hand, it was the "English monster." Blaise de Viginière describes them as "gadroned like organ-pipes, contorted or crinkled like cabbages, and as big as the sails of a windmill." So absurd was the effect, the

³ The Queen was accused by her enemies of having, by the aid of Maître René, "empoisonneur en titre," terminated the life of Queen Jeanne de Navarre, in 1571, by a perfumed ruff (not gloves—*Description de la Vie de Catherine de Médicis*); and her favourite son, the Duke d'Alençon, was said, cir. 1575, to have tried to suborn a valet to take away the life of his brother Henry by scratching him in the back of his neck with

a poisoned pin when fastening his fraise.

⁴ *Satyre Menippée*. Paris, 1593.

⁵ *Chronologie Novenaire*, Vict. P. Cayet.

⁶ "S'ils se tournoient, chacun se reculoit, crainte de gater leurs fraises." —*Satyre Menippée*.

"Le col ne se tourne à leur aise

Dans le long reply de leur fraise."

—*Vertus et Propriétés des Mignons*, 1576.

journalist of Henry III.⁷ declares "they looked like the head of John the Baptist in a charger."

Nor could they eat so encumbered. It is told how Reine Margot one day, when seated at dinner, was compelled to send for a spoon with a handle two feet in length wherewith to eat her soup.⁸ These monstrosities, "so stiffened that they cracked like paper,"⁹ found little favour beyond the precincts of the Louvre. They were caricatured by the writers of the day; and when, in 1579, Henry III. appeared thus attired at the fair of St. Germain, he was met by a band of students decked out in large paper cuffs, shouting, "À la fraise on connoit le veau"—for which impertinence the King sent them to prison.¹⁰ Suddenly, at the Court of Henry, the fraise gave way to the rabat, or turn-down collar.¹¹ In vain were sumptuary edicts issued against luxury.¹² The court set a bad example; and in 1577, at the meeting of the States of Blois, Henry wore on his own dress four thousand yards of pure gold lace. His successor, Henry IV., issued several fresh ordinances¹³ against "clinquants"¹⁴ et dorures." Touching the last, Regnier, the satirist, writes:—

"A propos, on m'a dit
Que contre les clinquants le roy faict un edict."¹⁵

Better still, the King tried the effect of example: he wore a coat of grey cloth with a doublet of taffety, without either

⁷ "Ces beaux mignons portoient . . . leur fraises de chemise de toute d'atour empesez et longues d'un demi-pied, de façon qu'à voir leurs testes dessus leurs fraises, il sembloit que ce fut le chef de Saint Jean dans un plat."—*Journal de Henri III.*, Pierre de l'Estoille.

⁸ *Perroniana*. Cologne, 1691.

⁹ Goudronnées en tuyaux d'orgue, fraisées en choux crépus, et grandes comme des meules de moulin."—*Blaise de Vignière*.

"La fraise veandelisée à six étages."—*La Mode qui Court*. Paris, n.d.

¹⁰ "Appelez par les Espagnols 'lechuguillas' ou petites laitues, à cause du rapport de ces gaudrons repliés avec les fraises de la laitue."—*Histoire de la Ville de Paris*, D. Mich. Félibien.

¹¹ 1575. Le roy alloit tous les jours faire ses aumônes et ses prières en grande devotion, laissant ses chemises à grands goderons, dont il estoit auparavant si curieux, pour en prendre à collet renversé à l'Italienne."—*Journal de Henri III.*, Pierre de l'Estoille.

¹² No less than ten were sent forth by the Valois kings, from 1549 to 1588.

¹³ These were dated 1594, 1600, 1601, and 1606.

¹⁴ Copper used instead of gold thread for embroidery or lace. The term was equally applied to false silver thread.

"1582. Dix escus pour dix aulnes de gaze blanche rayée d'argent clinquant pour faire un voile à la Boullonnoise."—*Comptes de la Reine de Navarre*. Arch. Nat. K. K. 170.

¹⁵ Regnier, Math., *Ses Satyres*. 1642.

trimming or lace—a piece of economy little appreciated by the public. His dress, says an author, “sentait des misères de la Ligue.” Sully, anxious to emulate the simplicity of the King, laughed at those “qui portoient leurs moulins et leurs bois de haute futaie sur leurs dos.”¹⁶ “It is necessary,” said he, “to rid ourselves of our neighbours’ goods, which deluge the country.” So he prohibited, under pain of corporal punishment, any more dealings with the Flemish merchants.

But edicts failed to put down point coupé; Reine Margot, Madame Gabrielle, and Bassompierre were too strong for him.

The Wardrobe Accounts of Henry’s first queen are filled with entries of point coupé and “passements à l’aiguille”;¹⁷ and though Henry usually wore the silk-wrought shirts of the day,¹⁸ we find in the inventory of his wife one entered as trimmed with cut-work.¹⁹ Wraxall declares to have seen exhibited at a booth on the Boulevard de Bondy, the shirt worn by Henry when assassinated. “It is ornamented,” he writes, “with a broad lace round the collar and breast.

¹⁶ The observation was not new. A Remonstrance to Catherine de Médicis, 1586, complains that “leurs moulins, leurs terres, leurs prez, leurs bois et leurs revenuz, se coulent en broderies, pourfilures, passemens, franges, tortis, canettes, recameurs, chenettes, picqueurs, arrièrepoin, etc., qu’on invente de jour à autre.”—*Discours sur l’extrême cherté, etc., présenté à la Mère du Roi, par un sien fidelle Serviteur (Du Haillan)*. Bordeaux, 1586.

¹⁷ “1579. Pour avoir remonsté trois fraises à poinct coupé, 15 sols.

“Pour avoir monté cinq fraises à poinct coupé sur linomple, les avoir ourillés et couzeus à la petite cordelière et au poinct noué à raison de 30 sols pour chacune.

“Pour la façon de sept rabatz ourillés à double arrièrepoinct et couzu le passement au dessus.

“1580. Pour avoir fait d’ung mouchoir ouvré deux rabatz, 20 sols.

“Pour deux pieces de poinct coupé pour servir à ladicte dame, vi livres.

“Pour dix huit aulnes de passement

blanc pour mestre à des fraizes à trois escus l’aulne.”

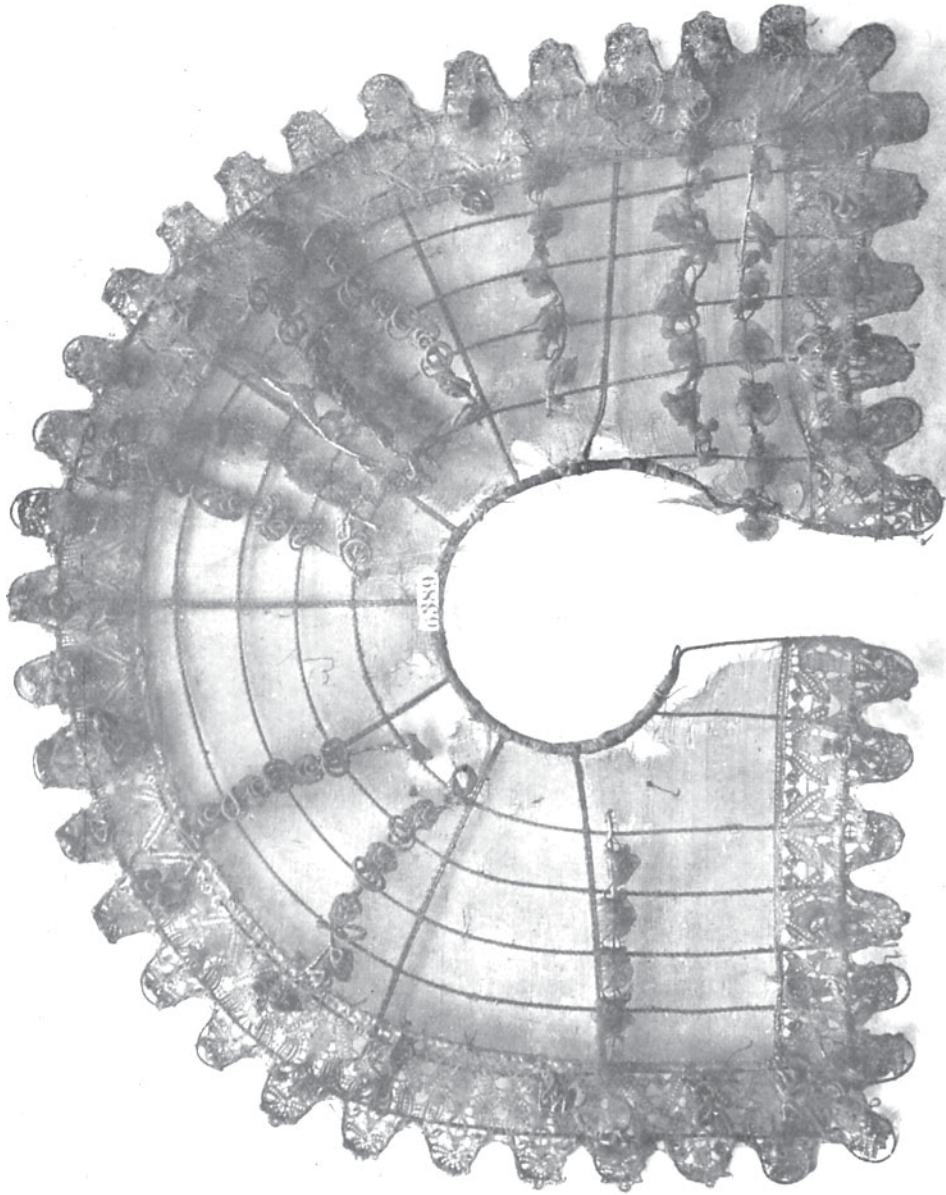
1582. The account for this year contains entries for “passement fait à lesguille,” “grand passement,” “passement fait au mestier,” etc.—*Comptes de la Reine de Navarre*. Arch. Nat.

¹⁸ “Vingt trois chemizes de toile fine à ouvrage de fil d’or et soye de plusieurs coulleurs, aux manchettes coulet et coutures.

“Ung chemize à ouvrage de soye noire.

“Quatre chemizes les trois à ouvrage d’or et d’argent et soye bleu.”—*Inv. des meubles qui ont esté portés à Paris*. 1602. Arch. Nat.

¹⁹ “1577. A Jehan Dupré, linger, demeurant à Paris, la somme de soixante douze livres tournois à luy or donnée pour son payement de quatre layz d’ouvrage à poinct coupé pour faire une garniture de chemise pour servir à mon dict seigneur, à raison de 18 liv. chacune.”—*Comptes de la Reine de Navarre*. Arch. Nat. K. K. 162, fol. 655.



RUFF, EDGED WITH LACE.—In the Musée de Cluny, Paris.

To face page 142.

The two wounds inflicted by the assassin's knife are plainly visible."²⁰

In the inventory²¹ made at the death of Madame Gabrielle, the fair Duchesse de Beaufort, we find entered sleeves and towels of point coupé, with fine handkerchiefs, gifts of the King to be worn at court, of such an extraordinary value that Henry requires them to be straightway restored to him. In the same list appears the duchess's bed of ivory,²² with hangings for the room of rézeuil.²³

The Chancellor Herault,²⁴ who died at the same period, was equally extravagant in his habits; while the shirts of the combatants in the duel between M. de Crequy and Don Philippe de Savoie are specially vaunted as "toutes garnies du plus fin et du plus riche point coupé qu'on eust pu trouver dans ce temps là, auquel le point de Gennes et de Flandres n'estoient pas en usage."²⁵

The enormous collarette, rising behind her head like a

²⁰ "This shirt," he adds, "is well attested. It became the perquisite of the king's first valet de chambre. At the extinction of his descendants, it was exposed to sale."—*Memoirs*.

A rival shirt turned up (c. 1860) at Madame Tussaud's with "the real blood" still visible. Monsieur Curtius, uncle of Madame Tussaud, purchased it at an auction of effects once the property of Cardinal Mazarin. Charles X. offered 200 guineas for it.

²¹ "Item, cinq mouchoirs d'ouvrages d'or, d'argent et soye, prisez ensemble cent escuz.

"Item, deux tauayelles aussi ouvrage d'or, d'argent et soye, prisées cent escuz.

"Item, trois tauayelles blanches de rezeuil, prisées ensemble trente escuz."

"Item, une paire de manches de point coupé et enrichies d'argent, prisez vingt escuz.

"Item, deux mouchoirs blancz de point coupé, prisez ensemble vingt escuz.

"Toutes lesquelles tauayelles et mouchoirs cy dessus trouvez dans un coffre de bahu que la dicte defunte dame faisoit ordinairement porter avec elle a la court sont demeurez entre les mains du S^r de Beringhen, suivant le commandement qu'il en avoit de sa

majesté pour les représenter à icelle, ce qu'il a promis de faire."—*Inventaire apres le décès de Gabrielle d'Estrees*. 1599. Arch. Nat. K. K. 157, fol. 17.

²² "Item, un lit d'yvoire à filletz noirs de Padoue, garny de son estuy de cuir rouge."—*Ibid*.

²³ "Item, une autre tenture de cabinet de carré de rezeau brodurée et montans recouvert de feuillages de fil avec des carrez de thoile plaine, prisé et estimé la somme de cent escus Soleil.

"Item, dix sept carrez de thoile de Hollande en broderie d'or et d'argent fait a deux endroietz, prisez et estimez à 85 escus.

"Item, un autre pavillon tout de rezeil avec le chapiteau de fleurs et feuillages. . . .

"Item, un autre en neuf fait par carrez de point coupé."—*Ibid*. fols. 46 and 47.

²⁴ "Manchettes et collets enrichys de point coupé."—*Inventaire apres le décès de Messire Philippe Herault, Comte de Cheverny, Chancelier de France*. 1599. Bib. Nat. MSS. F. 11,424.

²⁵ In 1598. Vulson de la Colombière, *Vray Théâtre d'Honneur et de Chevalerie*. 1647.

fan, of Mary de Médicis, with its edgings of fine lace, are well known to the admirers of Rubens :—

“ Cinq colets de dentelle haute de demy-piè
L'un sur l'autre montez, qui ne vont qu'à moitié
De celuy de dessus, car elle n'est pas leste,
Si le premier ne passe une paulme la teste.”²⁶

On the accession of Louis XIII. luxury knew no bounds. The Queen Regent was magnificent by nature, while Richelieu, anxious to hasten the ruin of the nobles, artfully encouraged their prodigality. But Mary was compelled to repress this taste for dress. The courtiers importuned her to increase their pensions, no longer sufficient for the exigencies of the day. The Queen, at her wits' end, published in 1613 a “*Règlement pour les superfluités des habits*,” prohibiting all lace and embroidery.²⁷

France had early sent out books of patterns for cut-work and lace. That of Francisque Pelegrin was published at Paris in the reign of Francis I. Six were printed at Lyons alone. The four earlier have no date,²⁸ the two others bear those of 1549²⁹ and 1585.³⁰ It was to these first that Vinciolo so contemptuously alludes in his dedication, “*Aux Benevolles Lecteurs*,” saying, “*Si les premiers ouvrages que vous avez vus ont engendré quelque fruit et utilité je m'assure que les miens en produiront davantage*.” Various editions of Vinciolo were printed at Paris from 1587 to 1623; the earlier dedicated to Queen Louise de Lorraine; a second to Catherine de Bourbon, sister of Henry IV.; the last to Anne of Austria. The *Pratique de Leguille de Milour M. Mignerak* was published by the same printer, 1605; and we have another work, termed *Bèle Prerie*, also printed at Paris, bearing date 1601.³¹

The points of Italy and Flanders now first appear at

²⁶ *Satyrique de la Court*. 1613.

²⁷ *Histoire de la Mère et du Fils*, from 1616 to 19. Amsterdam, 1729.

²⁸ *Livre nouveau dict Patrons de Lingerie*, etc.

Patrons de diverses Manières, etc. (Title in rhyme.)

S'ensuyvent les Patrons de Mesire Antoine Belin.

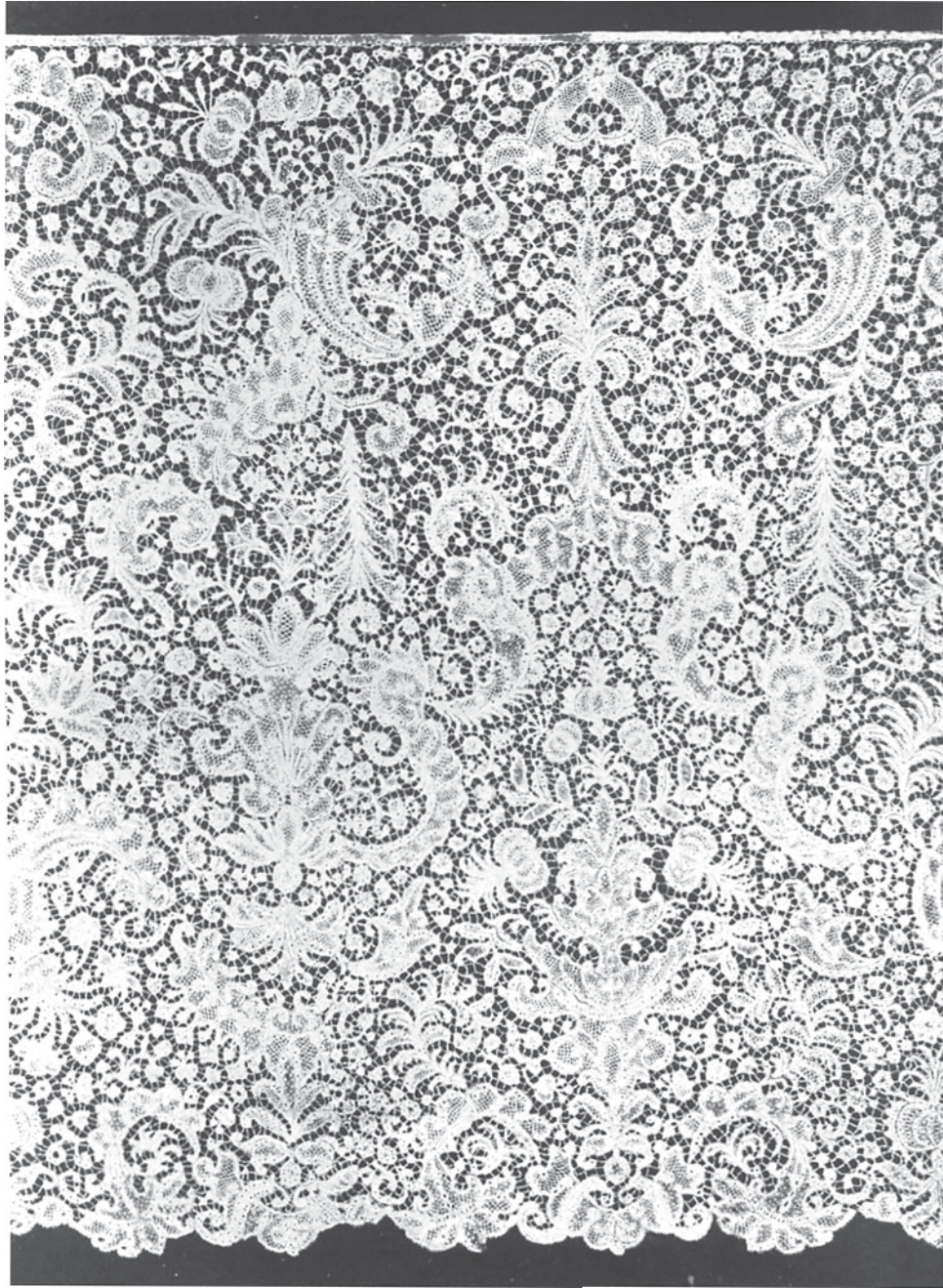
Ce Livre est plaisant et utile. (Title in rhyme.)

²⁹ *La Fleur des Patrons de Lingerie*.

³⁰ *Tresor des Patrons*. J. Ostans.

³¹ *Le Livre de Moresques* (1546), *Livre de Lingerie*, Dom. de Sera (1584), and *Patrons pour Brodeurs* (no date), were also printed at Paris.

The last book on this kind of work printed at Paris is styled, *Méthode pour faire des Dessesins avec des Carreaux*, etc., by Père Dominique Donat, religieux carme. 1722.



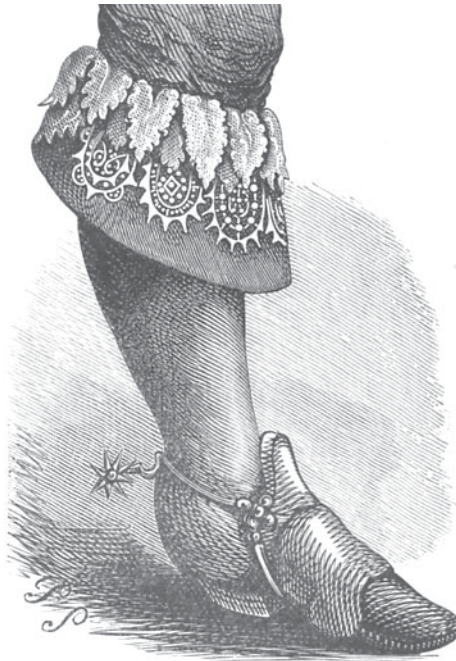
BRUSSELS. FLOUNCE, BOBBIN-MADE.—Late seventeenth century. Given by Madame de Maintenon to Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai. Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.
Height, 2 ft. 2 in.

To face page 146.

court, and the Church soon adopted the prevailing taste for the decoration of her altars and her prelates.³²

The ruff is finally discarded and replaced by the "col rabattu," with its deep-scalloped border of point. The "manchettes à revers" are trimmed in the same manner, and the fashion even extends to the tops of the boots. Of these lace-trimmed boots the favourite, Cinq-Mars, left three hundred pairs at his death, 1642. From his portrait, after

Fig. 66.



CINQ-MARS.—(M. de Versailles.)

Lenain, which hangs in the Gallery of Versailles, we give one of these boots (Fig. 66), and his rich collerette of Point de Gênes (Fig. 67).

The garters, now worn like a scarf round the knee, have the ends adorned with point. A large rosette of lace completes the costume of the epoch (Fig. 68).

³² A point de Venise alb, of rose point, said to be of this period, is in the Musée de Cluny.

Gold lace shared the favour of the thread fabric on gloves,³³ garters and shoes.³⁴

“ De large taftas la jartière parée
Aux bouts de demy-pied de dentelle dorée.”³⁵

The cuffs, collars of the ladies either falling back or rising behind their shoulders in double tier, caps, aprons

Fig. 67.



CINQ-MARS.—(After his portrait by Le Nain. M. de Versailles.)

descending to their feet (Fig. 69), are also richly decorated with lace.

The contemporary engravings of Abraham Bosse and Callot faithfully portray the fashions of this reign. In the *Prodigal Son*, of Abraham Bosse, the mother, waiting his

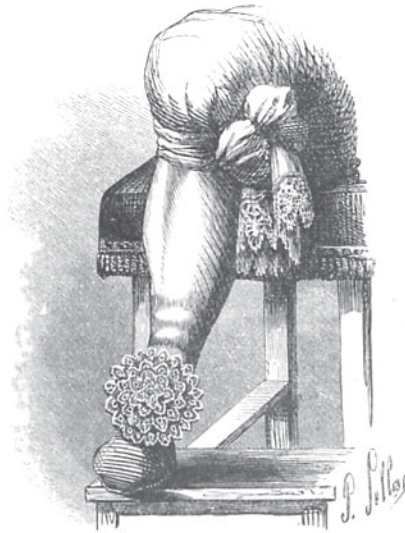
³³ “ Quelques autres de frangez
Bordent leur riche cuir, qui vient des
lieux estranges.”
—*Le Gan*,
de Jean Godard, Parisien. 1588.

³⁴ “ 1619. Deux paires de rozes à
souliers garnies de dentelle d’or.”—
Inv. de Madame Sœur du Roi. (Hen-
rietta Maria.) Arch. Nat.
³⁵ *Satyrique de la Court*.

return, holds out to her repentant boy a collar trimmed with the richest point. The Foolish Virgins weep in lace-trimmed handkerchiefs, and the table-cloth of the rich man, as well as his dinner-napkins, are similarly adorned. Again, the Accouchée recovers in a cap of Italian point under a coverlet of the same. At the Retour de Baptême, point adorns the christening-dress of the child and the surplice of the priest.

When, in 1615, Louis XIII. married Anne of Austria, the collerettes of the Queen-Mother were discarded—the

Fig. 68.



LACE ROSE AND GARTER.—(After Abraham Bosse.)

reign of Italy was at an end—all was now à l'espagnole and the court of Castile.

The prodigality of the nobles³⁶ having called down royal ordinances on their heads,³⁷ these new edicts bring forth

³⁶ The inventory of the unfortunate Maréchal de Marillac, beheaded 1632, has "broderie et poinctz d'Espagnes d'or, argent et soye; rabats et collets de point couppé; taffetas nacarat garnye de dantelle d'argent; pour-poinct passémenté de dantelle de canetille de Flandre," etc.—Bib. Nat. MSS. F. Fr. 11,426.

³⁷ 1620, Feb. 8th. "Déclaration portant deffenses de porter des clinquants, passements, broderies," etc.—Arch. Nat. G. G. G.

1623, March 20th. "Déclaration qui defend l'usage des étoffes d'or," etc.—*Recueil des anciennes Loix Françaises*. T. 16, 107.

1625, Sept. 30th. Déclaration pro-

fresh satires, in which the author deplores the prohibition of cut-work and lace :—

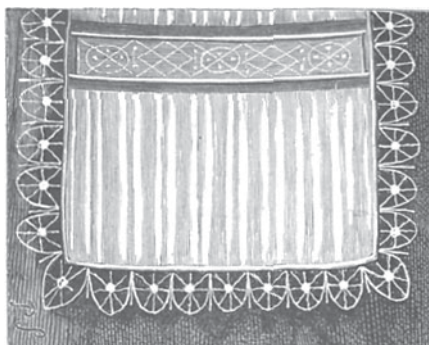
“ Ces points coupez, passemens et dentelles,
Las! que venaient de l'Isle et de Bruxelles,
Sont maintenant descriez, avilis,
Et sans faveur gisent ensevelis ;”³⁸

but

“ Pour vivre heureux et à la mode
Il faut que chacun accomode
Ses habits aux editz du roi.”

Edict now follows on edict.³⁹ One known as the Code Michaud, entering into the most minute regulations for the toilet, especially excited the risibility of the people. It was

Fig. 69.



YOUNG LADY'S APRON, TIME OF HENRY III.—(After Gaignières. Bib. Nat. Grav.)

never carried out. The caricatures of this period are admirable: one represents a young courtier fresh rigged in his

habits the wearing of “ collets, fraizes, manchettes, et autres linges des passements, Point coupez et Dentelles, comme aussi des Broderies et Decoupures sur quentin ou autre toile.”—Bib. Nat. L. i. 8.

³⁸ *Consolation des Dames sur la Reformation des passemens.* 1620.

³⁹ Again, 1633, Nov. 18th. Déclaration restricts the prohibition; permits “ passements manufacturés dans le royaume qui n'excederont 9 ll. l'aune.”—Arch. Nat. G. G. G.

1634, May 30th. “ Lettres patentes pour la reformation du luxe des habits,” prohibits “ dentelles, passements et

broderies” on boots, carriages, etc. (British Museum).

1636, April 3rd. “ Déclaration contre le Luxe.” Again prohibits both foreign and home-made points coupés, etc., under pain of banishment for five years, confiscation, and a fine of 6000 francs.—De la Mare, *Traité de la Police.*

1639, Nov. 24th. Fresh prohibition, points de Gènes specially mentioned. Not to wear on the collar, cuffs, or boots, “ autres choses que de la toile simple sans aucune façon.”—Arch. Nat. G. G. G.

plain-bordered linen, according to the ordinance. His *valet de chambre* is about to lock up his laced suit :—

“C'est avec regret que mon maître
Quitte ses beaux habillemens
Semés de riches passemens.”⁴⁰

Another engraving of Abraham Bosse shows a lady of fashion with her lace discarded and dressed in plain linen cuffs and collar :—

“Quoique l'âge assez de beauté
Pour assurer sans vanité
Qu'il n'est point de femme plus belle
Il semble pourtant, à mes yeux,
Qu'avec de l'or et la dantelle
Je m'ajuste encore bien mieux.”

Alluding to the plain-bordered collars now ordered by the prohibition of 1639, the “*Satyrique de la Court*” sings :—

“Naguères l'on n'osoit hanter les damoiselles
Que l'on n'eust le colet bien garni de dentelles;
Maintenant on se rit et se moque de ceux là
Qui desirent encore paroistre avec cela.
Les fraises et colets à bord sont en usage,
Sans faire mention de tous en dentillage.”

France at this time paying large sums to Italy and Flanders for lace, the wearing of it is altogether prohibited, under pain of confiscation and a fine of 6,000 livres.⁴¹ The Queen-Mother, regardless of edicts, has over *passemens d'or* and all sorts of forbidden articles, “pour servir à la layette que sa majesté à envoyé en Angleterre.”⁴² Within scarce one year of each other passed away Marie de Médicis, Richelieu, and Louis XIII. The King's effigy was exposed on its “lit de parade vêtue d'une chemise de toile de Hollande avec de tres belles dantelles de point de Gennes au collet et aux manches.”⁴³—So say the chroniclers.

⁴⁰ *Le Courtisan Reformé, suivant l'Édit. de l'année 1633*; and again, *Le Jardin de la Noblesse Française dans lequel ce peut cueillir leur manière de Vettement.* 1629.

⁴¹ April, 1636.

⁴² 1631. *Trésorerie de la Reine Marie de Médicis.*—Arch. Nat. K. K. 191.

⁴³ Vulson de la Colombière, *Pompes qu'on pratique aux obsèques des Rois de France.*

CHAPTER IX.

LOUIS XIV.

THE courtiers of the Regency under Anne of Austria vied with the Frondeurs in extravagance. The latter, however, had the best of it. "La Fronde," writes Joly, "devint tellement à la mode qu'il n'y avoit rien de bien fait qu'on ne dist être de la Fronde. Les étoffes, les dentelles, etc., jusqu'au pain,—rien n'estoit ni bon, ni bien si n'estoit à la Fronde."¹

Nor was the Queen Regent herself less profuse in her indulgence in lace. She is represented in her portraits with a berthe of rich point, her beautiful hand encircled by a double-scalloped cuff (Fig. 70). The boot-tops had now reached an extravagant size. One writer compares them to the farthingales of the ladies, another to an inverted torch. The lords of the Regent's court filled up the apertures with two or three rows of Genoa point (Fig. 71).

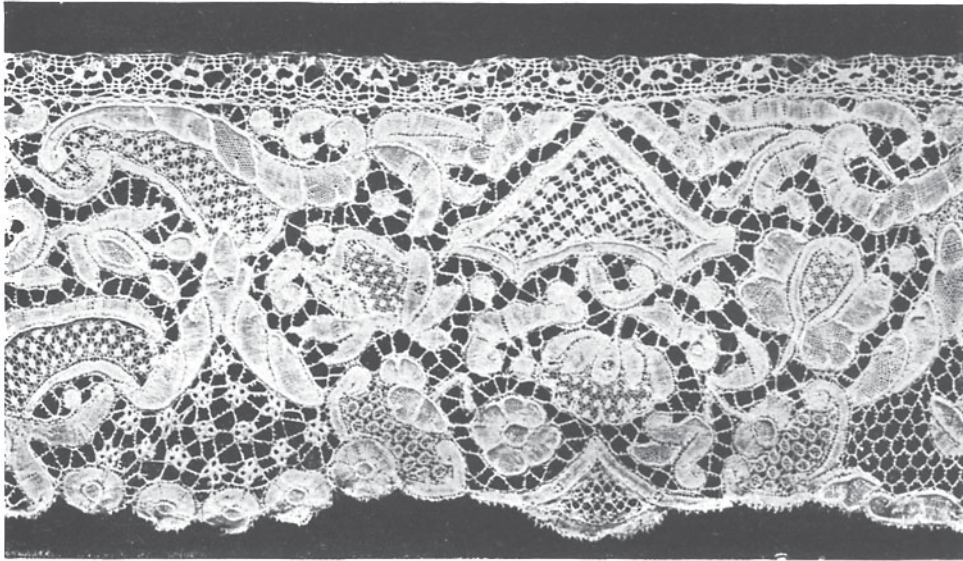
In 1653,² we find Mazarin, while engaged in the siege of a city, holding a grave correspondence with his secretary Colbert concerning the purchase of some points from Flanders, Venice, and Genoa. He considers it advisable to

¹ *Mémoires de Guy Joly*, from 1648 to 1665.

² About this period a special Act had confirmed the Statutes of the *Maitres Passementiers* of Paris. By Article 21, they are privileged to make every sort of *passement* or lace, "sur l'oreiller, aux fuzeaux, aux épingles, et à la main," on condition the material, gold, silver, thread, or silk, be "de toutes fines ou de toutes fausses." The sale of thread and lace was allowed to the *Lingères*, but by an *Arrêt* of the Parliament of Paris, 1665, no one could

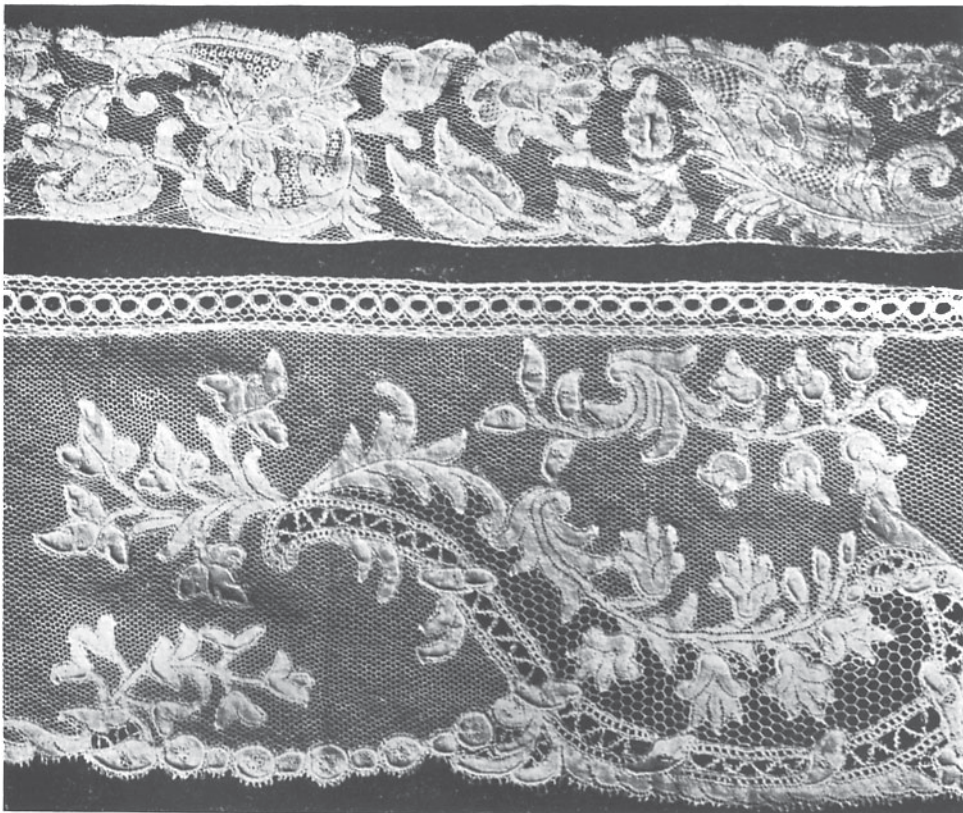
be a *marchande lingère* unless she had made profession of the "religion catholique, apostolique, et romaine," a condition worthy of the times. "Il n'y fut," writes Gilles de Felice, in his *Histoire des Protestants de France*, "pas jusqu'à la corporation des lingères qui ne s'en allât remontrer au conseil que leur communauté, ayant été instituée par saint Louis, no pouvait admettre d'hérétiques, et cette réclamation fut gravement confirmée par un arrêt du 21 août, 1665."

PLATE XLVIII.



BRUSSELS. BOBBIN-MADE.—Period Louis XIV., 1648-1715.
In the Musée Cinquantenaire, Brussels.

PLATE XLIX.



BRUSSELS. POINT D'ANGLETERRE À RÉSEAU.—Eighteenth century. Widths, 2 in. and 3½ in.
Photo by A. Dryden.

To face page 150.

advance thirty or forty thousand livres "à ces achats," adding, that by making the purchases in time he will derive great advantage in the price; but as he hopes the siege will soon be at an end, they may wait his arrival at Paris for his final decision.³ Colbert again writes, November 25th,

Fig. 70.



ANNE OF AUSTRIA.—(M. de Versailles.)

pressing his Eminence on account of the "quantité de mariages qui se feront l'hyver." A passage in Tallemant des Réaux would lead one to suppose these laces were destined as patterns for the improvement of French manufactures. "Per mostra di farne in Francia," as the Cardinal expressed himself. Certainly in the inventory of Mazarin⁴ there are no mention of Italian points, no lace coverlets to his "Lict d'ange moire tabizée, couleur de rose chamarrée de

³ Dated November 19th, 1653. The letter is given in full by the Marquis de Laborde in *Le Palais Mazarin*. Paris, 1845.

⁴ *Inv. fait apres la mort du Cardinal Mazarin*, 1661.—Bibl. Nat. MSS. Suite de Mortmart, 37.

dentelles d'or et d'argent." We may almost imagine that the minister and his secretary combined were already meditating the establishment of Points de France.

In this reign, fresh sumptuary ordinances are issued. That of November 27th, 1660, is the most important of all,⁵ and is highly commended by Sganarelle in the "Ecole des Maris" of Molière which appeared the following year :—

" Oh ! trois et quatre fois soit béni cet édit,
Par qui des vêtements le luxe est interdit ;
Les peines des maris ne seront pas si grandes,
Et les femmes auront un frein à leurs demandes.
Oh ! que je sais au roi bon gré de ses décrets ;
Et que, pour le repos de ces mêmes maris,
Je voudrais bien qu'on fit de la coquetterie
Comme de la guipure et de la broderie."

Fig. 71.



A COURTIER OF THE REGENCY.—(After Abraham Bosse.)

This ordinance, after prohibiting all foreign "passemens, points de Gênes, points coupés," etc., or any French laces or passements exceeding an inch in width, allows the use of the "collerettes and manchettes" persons already possess for the space of one year, after which period they are only to be trimmed with a lace made in the kingdom, not exceeding an

⁵ It is to be found at the Archives National, or in the Library of the Cour de Cassation. In the Archives National is a small collection of ordinances relative to lace collected by M. Rondonneau, extending from 1666 to 1773. It is very difficult to get at all the ordinances. Many are printed

in De la Mare (*Traité de la Police*) ; but the most complete work is the *Recueil général des anciennes Loix françaises, depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789*, par MM. Isambert, Ducrusy, et Taillandier. Paris, 1829. The ordinances bear two dates, that of their issue and of their registry.

inch in width. The ordinance then goes on to attack the "canons," which it states have been introduced into the kingdom, with "un excès de dépense insupportable, par la quantité de passemens, points de Venise et Gênes," with which they are loaded.⁶ Their use of them is now entirely prohibited, unless made of plain linen or of the same stuff as the coat, without lace or any ornament. The lace-trimmed "canons" of Louis XIV., as represented in the picture of his interview with Philip IV., in the Island of Pheasants, previous to his marriage, 1660 (Fig. 72), give a good idea of these extravagant appendages. These

"Canons à trois étages
A leurs jambes faisoient d'ombrages."⁷

And, what was worse, they would cost 7,000 livres a pair. "At the Court of France," writes Savinière, "people think nothing of buying rabats, manchettes, or canons to the value of 13,000 crowns."⁸ These canons, with their accompanying rheingraves, which after the prohibition of Venice point were adorned with the new productions of France, suddenly disappeared. In 1682, the *Mercur*e announces, "Les canons et les rheingraves deviennent tout à fait hors de mode."

At the marriage of the young King with the Infanta, 1660, black lace,⁹ probably in compliment to the Spanish¹⁰

⁶ This "canon," originally called "bas de bottes," was a circle of linen or other stuff fastened below the knee, widening at the bottom so as to fill the enlargement of the boot, and when trimmed with lace, having the appearance of a ruffle.

⁷ *Dictionnaire des Précieuses*. 1660. Molière likewise ridicules them:—

"Et de ces grands canons, où, comme des entraves,

On met tous les matins les deux
jambes esclaves."

—*L'École des Maris*.

And again, in *L'École des Femmes*:

"Ils ont de grands canons, force
rubans et plumes."

⁸ *Les Délices de la France*, par M. Savinière d'Alquié. 1670.

⁹ The fashion of wearing black lace was introduced into England in the reign of Charles II. "Anon the house

grew full, and the candles lit, and it was a glorious sight to see our Mistress Stewart in black and white lace, and her head and shoulders dressed with diamonds."—*Pepys's Diary*.

"The French have increased among us many considerable trades, such as black and white lace."—*England's Great Happiness*, etc. Dialogue between Content and Complaint. 1677.

"Item, un autre habit de grosse moire garny de dantelle d'Angleterre noire."—1691. *Inv. de Madame de Simiane*. Arch. Nat., M. M. 802.

¹⁰ "Of this custom, a relic may still be found at the Court of Turin, where ladies wear lappets of black lace. Not many years since, the wife of a Russian minister, persisting to appear in a suit of Brussels point, was courteously requested by the Grand Chamberlain to retire" (1869).

court, came into favour, the nobles of the King's suite wearing doublets of gold and silver brocade, "ornés," says the *Chronique*,¹¹ "de dentelles noires d'un point recherché."¹² The same writer, describing the noviciate of La Vallière at the Carmelites, writes, "Les dames portoient des robes de brocard d'or, d'argent, ou d'azur, par dessus lesquelles elles avoient jetées d'autres robes et dentelles noires transparentes."¹³ Under Louis XIV., the gold and silver points of Spain and Aurillac rivalled the thread fabrics of Flanders and Italy; but towards the close of the century,¹⁴ we are informed, they have fallen from fashion into the "domaine du vulgaire."

The ordinance of 1660 had but little effect, for various others are issued in the following years with the oft-repeated prohibitions of the points of Genoa and Venice.¹⁵ But edicts were of little avail. No royal command could compel people to substitute the coarse inferior laces of France¹⁶ for the fine artistic productions of her sister countries. Colbert therefore wisely adopted another expedient. He determined to develop the lace-manufacture of France, and to produce fabrics which should rival the coveted points of Italy and Flanders, so that if fortunes were lavished upon these luxuries, at all events the money should not be sent out of the kingdom to procure them.

He therefore applied to Monseigneur de Bonzy, Bishop of Béziers, then Ambassador at Venice, who replied that in Venice "all the convents and poor families make a living out of this lace-making." In another letter he writes to the minister, "Je vois que vous seriez bien aise d'établir dans le royaume la manufacture des points de Venise, ce qui se pourrait faire en envoyant d'icy quelques filles des meil-

¹¹ *Chroniques de l'Œil-de-Bœuf*.

¹² Madame de Motteville is not complimentary to the ladies of the Spanish Court: "Elles avoient peu de linge," she writes, "et leurs dentelles nous parurent laides."—*Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Anne d'Autriche*.

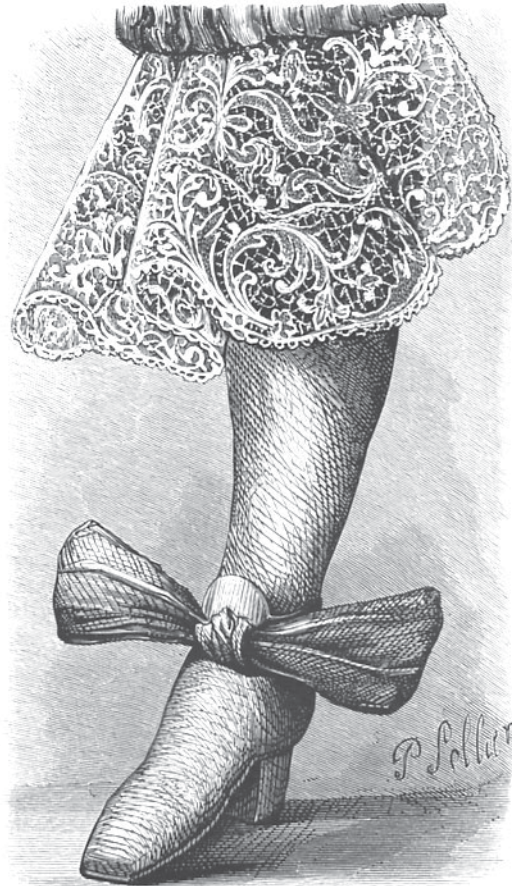
¹³ Madame de Sévigné mentions these dresses: "Avez-vous ouï parler des transparens? . . . de robes noires transparentes ou des belles dentelles d'Angleterre."—*Lettres*.

¹⁴ 1690. *Chroniques de l'Œil-de-Bœuf*.

¹⁵ 1661, May 27; 1662, Jan. 1; 1664, May 31, Sept. 18, and Dec. 12.

¹⁶ "On fabriquoit précédemment ces espèces de dentelles guipures, dont on ornoit les aubes des prêtres, les rochets des évêques et les jupons des femmes de qualité."—*Roland de la Platière*. The articles on lace by Roland and Savary have been copied by all succeeding writers on the subject.

Fig. 72.



CANONS OF LOUIS XIV.—(M. de Versailles. 1660.)

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leures ouvrières qui pussent instruire celles de France avec le temps.”¹⁷

Monseigneur de Bonzy's suggestion was accepted, and a few years later (1673) Colbert writes to M. le Comte d'Avaux, who succeeded M. de Bonzy as ambassador at Venice: "I have gladly received the collar of needlepoint lace worked in relief that you have sent me, and I find it very beautiful. I shall have it compared with those new laces being made by our own lace-makers, although I may tell you beforehand that as good specimens are now made in this kingdom."¹⁸ Alençon, an old lace-making centre, was chosen as the seat of the new manufacture.¹⁹ Favier-Duboulay writes to Colbert that, before the introduction of the new points de France, lace-making was to the peasants "une manne, et une vraie bénédiction du ciel, qui s'est espandue sur tout ce pays." The art had spread far and wide through the district about Alençon; children of seven years of age and aged men earned their daily bread by it, and the shepherdesses, worked at their lace while herding their flocks.

M. Odolent Desnos gives the following account of the invention and establishment of point d'Alençon:—²⁰

"In 1665, at the recommendation of the Sieur Ruel, he (Colbert) selected a Madame Gilbert, a native of Alençon, already acquainted with the manner of making Venice

¹⁷ Mgr. de Bonzy, Dec. 20, 1664. *Correspondance administrative sous Colbert*, vol. 3.

¹⁸ Lefébure.

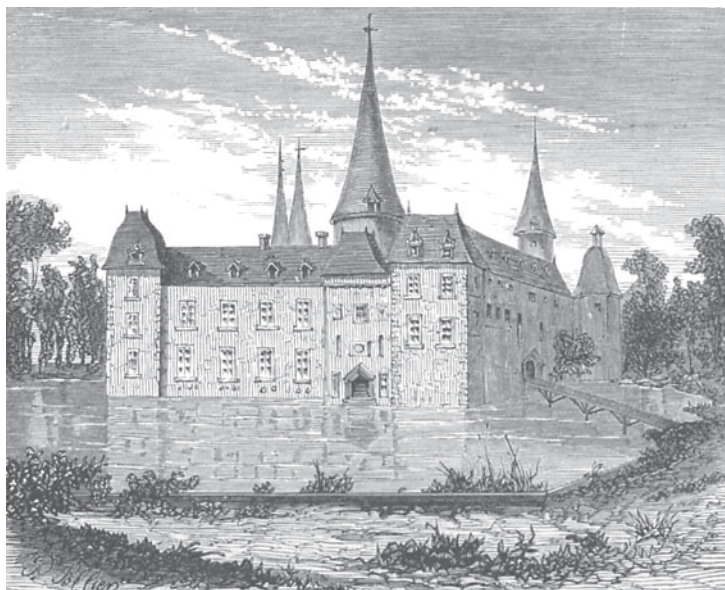
¹⁹ "Il y a très longtemps que le point coupé se faict icy, qui a son débit selon le temps; mais qu'une femme nommée La Perrière (*sic*), fort habile à ces ouvrages, trouva il y a quelques années le moyen d'imiter les points de Venise, en sorte qu'elle y vint à telle perfection que ceux qu'elle faisoit ne devoient rien aux estrangers. Pour faire ces ouvrages il luy falloit enseigner plusieurs petites filles auxquelles elle monstroit à faire ce point . . . à présent je vous puis assurer qu'il y a plus de 8,000 personnes qui y travaillent dans Alençon, dans Seèz, dans Argentan, Falaise

"Monseigneur, c'est une manne, et une vraie bénédiction du ciel qui s'est espandue sur tout ce pays, dans lequel les petitz enfans mesmes de sept ans trouvent moyen de gagner leur vie. Les vieillards y travaillent et les petites bergerettes des champs y travaillent mêmes."—*Letter from Favier-Duboulay, intendant d'Alençon since 1644. Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV* (quoted by Madame Despierres), vol. 3.

²⁰ In 1842 M. Joseph Odolant Desnos, grandson of this author, writes, "Ce fut une dame Gilberte, qui avait fait son apprentissage à Venise, et était native d'Alençon. Dès qu'elle fut à ses ordres, ce ministre (Colbert) la logea dans le magnifique château de Lonrai, qu'il possédait près d'Alençon."—*Annuaire de l'Orne*.

point, and making her an advance of 50,000 crowns, established her at his château of Lonrai (Fig. 73), near Alençon, with thirty forewomen, whom he had, at great expense, caused to be brought over from Venice. In a short time Madame Gilbert arrived at Paris with the first specimens of her fabric. The king, inspired by Colbert with a desire to see the work, during supper at Versailles announced to his courtiers he had just established a manufacture of point more beautiful than that of Venice, and appointed a day

Fig. 73.



CHÂTEAU DE LONRAI, DÉP. ORNE.

when he would inspect the specimens. The laces were artistically arranged over the walls of a room hung with crimson damask, and shown to the best advantage. The king expressed himself delighted. He ordered a large sum to be given to Madame Gilbert, and desired that no other lace should appear at court except the new fabric, upon which he bestowed the name of point de France.²¹ Scarcely

²¹ *Mémoires historiques sur la ville d'Alençon*, M. Odolant Desnos. Alençon, 1787.

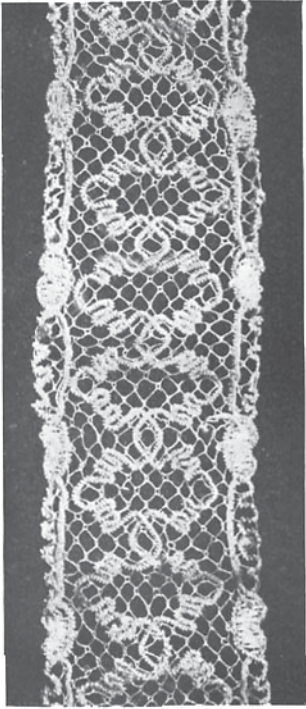


PLATE I.

CHENILLE RUN ON A BOBBIN GROUND.—Taken from an early eighteenth century Court dress, and typical of a French dress passementerie of that date. About half size.

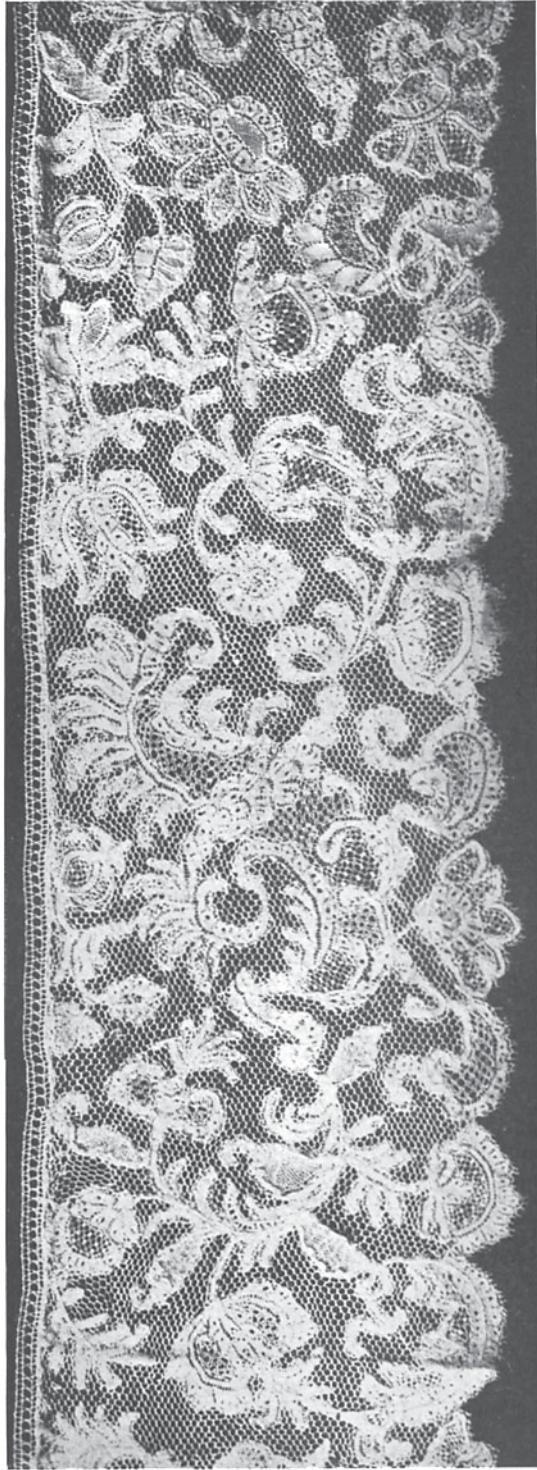


PLATE II.

BRUSSELS. BOBBIN-MADE.—Early eighteenth century. Width, 3 in. Photos. by A. Dryden from private collections.

had Louis retired than the courtiers eagerly stripped the room of its contents. The approval of the monarch was the fortune of Alençon: point de France adopted by court etiquette, the wearing of it became compulsory. All who had the privilege of the 'casaque bleue'—all who were received at Versailles or were attached to the royal household, could only appear, the ladies in trimmings and head-dresses, the gentlemen in ruffles and cravats of the royal manufacture.²²

Unfortunately for this story, the Château de Lonrai came into the family of Colbert fourteen years after the establishment of the lace-industry at Alençon,²² and the name of Gilbert is not found in any of the documents relating to the establishment of point de France, nor in the correspondence of Colbert.²³

An ordinance of August 5th, 1665, founded upon a large scale the manufacture of points de France,²⁴ with an exclusive privilege for ten years and a grant of 36,000

²² "Le château de Lonrai ne passa dans la maison de Colbert que par le mariage de Catherine Thérèse de Matignon, Marquise de Lonrai, avec Jean-Baptiste Colbert, fils aîné du grand Colbert, le 6 septembre 1678" (*i.e.*, fourteen years after the establishment of points de France at Alençon)—Madame Despierres, *Histoire de point d'Alençon*.

²³ Madame Despierres, after an exhaustive study of the mass of documentary evidence on this point, gives as her opinion that—

"(1) La première personne qui à Alençon imita le point de Venise, et par conséquent créa le point d'Alençon, fut Mme La Perrière, vers 1650, et non Mme Gilbert.

"(2) La préposée-directrice des manufactures de point de France des différentes villes du royaume qui a établi les bureaux à Alençon, fut Catherine de Marcq, et non pas une dame Gilbert.

"(3) Les préposées mises à la tête de l'établissement d'Alençon étaient Mme Raffy et Marie Fillesee, dont les noms ne répondent pas à celui d'une dame Gilbert."—Madame Despierres, *Histoire de point d'Alençon*.

²⁴ Mrs. Palliser sought in vain for this

ordinance in the Library of the Cour de Cassation, where it is stated to be, by the authors of the "Recueil général des anciennes Lois françaises, depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789"; but fortunately it is recited in a subsequent act, dated Oct. 12, 1666 (Arch. Nat., Coll. Rondonneau), by which it appears that the declaration ordered the establishment in "les villes de Quesnoy, Arras, Reims, Sedan, Château-Thierry, Loudun, Alençon, Aurillac, et autres du royaume, de la manufacture de toutes sortes d'ouvrages de fil, tant à l'éguille qu'au coussin, en la manière des points qui se font à Venise, Genes, Raguse, et autres pays estrangers, qui seroient appelés points de France," by which it would appear the term point de France did not exclusively belong to the productions of Alençon. After the company was dissolved in 1675 the name of point de France was applied to point d'Alençon alone. In a subsequent arrêt it is set forth that the entrepreneurs have caused to be brought in great numbers the best workers from Venice and other foreign cities, and have distributed them over Le Quesnoy and the above-mentioned towns, and that now are made in

francs. A company was formed,²⁵ its members rapidly increased, and in 1668 the capital amounted to 22,000 livres. Eight directors were appointed at salaries of 12,000 livres a year to conduct the manufacture, and the company held its sittings in the Hôtel de Beaufort at Paris. The first distribution of profits took place in October, 1669, amounting to fifty per cent. upon each share. In 1670 a fresh distribution took place, and 120,000 livres were divided among the shareholders. That of 1673 was still more considerable. In 1675 the ten years' privilege ceased, the money was returned, and the rest of the profits divided. Colbert likewise set up a fabric at the Château de Madrid, built by Francis I., on the Bois de Boulogne. Such was the origin of point lace in France.

The difficulties met by Colbert in establishing his manufactories can only be estimated by reading his correspondence, in which there are no less than fifty letters on the subject. The apathy of the town authorities and the constant rebellions of the lace-workers who preferred their old stitch were incessant sources of trouble to him, but eventually Colbert's plan was crowned with success. He established a lucrative manufacture which brought large sums of money into the kingdom²⁶ instead of sending it out. Well might he say that²⁷ "Fashion was to France what the mines of Peru were to Spain."²⁸

France "des ouvrages de fil si exquis, qu'ils esgallent, mesme surpassent en beauté les estrangiers."—*Bibl. de la Cour de Cassation*.

What became of these manufactories at Le Quesnoy and Château-Thierry, of which not a tradition remains?

²⁵ Talon, "secrétaire du cabinet," was one of the first members. We find by an arrêt, Feb. 15, 1667, that this patent had already been infringed. On the petition of Jean Plumiers, Paul, and Catherine de Marcq, "entrepreneurs" of the fabric of points de France, his Majesty confirms to them the sole privilege of making and selling the said points.—Arch. Nat., Coll. Rondonneau. Nov. 17 of the same year appears a fresh prohibition of wearing or selling the passements, lace, and other works in thread of Venice, Genoa, and other

foreign countries (British Museum), and March 17, 1668, "Itératives" prohibitions to wear these, either new or "commencé d'user," as injurious to a manufacture of point which gives subsistence to a number of persons in the kingdom.—*Ibid.* Again, Aug. 19, 1669, a fresh arrêt in consequence of complaints that the workers are suborned and work concealed in Paris, etc.—Arch. Nat., Coll. Rondonneau.

²⁶ Colbert said to Louis XIV.: "There will always be found fools enough to purchase the manufactures of France, though France should be prohibited from purchasing those of other countries." The King agreed with the minister, whom he made chief director of the trade and manufactures of the kingdom.

²⁷ A favourite saying of Colbert.

²⁸ The artists who furnished designs

Boileau alludes to the success of the minister in his "Epistle to Louis XIV" :—

"Et nos voisins frustrés de ces tributs serviles
Que payait à leur art le luxe de nos villes."²⁹

The point de France supplanted that of Venice,³⁰ but its price confined its use to the rich, and when the wearing of lace became general those who could not afford so costly a production replaced it by the more moderate pillow-lace. This explains the great extension of the pillow-lace manufacture at this period—the production did not suffice for the demand. Encouraged by the success of the royal manufactures, lace fabrics started up in various towns in the kingdom. The number of lace-workers increased rapidly. Those of the towns being insufficient, they were sought for in the surrounding country, and each town became the

for all works undertaken for the court of Louis XIV. must have supplied designs for the lace manufactures: "In the accounts of the King's buildings is the entry of a payment due to Bailly, the painter, for several days' work with other painters in making designs for embroideries and points d'Espagne" (Lefébure).

²⁹ The principal centres of lace-making were Aurillac, Sedan, Rheims, Le Quesnoy, Alençon, Arras, and Loudun, and the name "Points de France" was given without distinction to all laces made at these towns; preference was given in choosing these centres to those towns already engaged in lace-making. Alençon produced the most brilliant results, for from the beginning of the seventeenth century the town had been engaged in needle-point lace, and some of the lace-makers earned high wages, and showed great aptitude for the art. In her *Histoire du Point d'Alençon*, Madame Despierres has made some interesting extracts from various marriage contracts and wills:—

"A notable instance is that of a family named Barbot, the mother having amassed 500 livres. Her daughter, Marthe Barbot, married Michel Mercier, sieur de la Perrière,

and brought him a wedding-portion of 300 livres, the earnings of her industry; while her sister Suzanne Barbot's wedding-portion, upon her marriage with Paul Ternouillet, amounted to 6,000 livres, earned in making cut-works and works *en velin* (needle-point lace done on a parchment pattern), which command a high price" (Lefébure).

³⁰ The Venetian Senate, according to Charles Yriarte, regarded this emigration of workers to France as a crime against the State, and issued the following decree:—

"If any artist or handicraftsman practises his art in any foreign land to the detriment of the Republic, orders to return will be sent him; if he disobeys them, his nearest of kin will be put into prison, in order that through his interest in their welfare his obedience may be compelled. If he comes back, his past offence will be condoned, and employment for him will be found in Venice; but if, notwithstanding the imprisonment of his nearest of kin, he obstinately decides to continue living abroad, an emissary will be commissioned to kill him, and his next of kin will only be liberated upon his death."

centre of a trade extending round it in a radius of several miles, the work being given out from the manufactory to be executed by the cottagers in their own homes.³¹

³¹ To afford an idea of the importance of the lace trade in France at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and of the immense consumption of lace in France, we give the following statistics:—In 1707, the collection of the duties of lace was underfarmed to one Étienne Nicolas, for the annual sum of 201,000 livres. The duty then was of 50 livres per lb. weight of lace, so that there entered annually into France above 400,000 lbs. of lace, which, estimating at the lowest 1,000 lbs. of lace to be worth 1,000 livres, would represent 4 millions of that epoch. Taking into calculation that fraud was extensively practised,

that the points of Venice and Genoa, being prohibited, could not appear in the receipts; and that, on the other part, the under-farmer did not pay the farmer-general the 201,000 livres without the certainty of profit to himself, we must admit that the figure, though high, is far from representing the value of the foreign laces which entered France at that period. We think that 8 millions (£320,000) would be below the true figure.—*Rapport sur les Dentelles fait à la Commission française de l'Exposition Universelle de Londres, 1851.* Felix Aubry. The best history of lace published.

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS XIV.—*continued.*

“Tout change : la raison change aussi de méthode ;
Écrits, habillemens, systèmes : tout est mode.”

Racine fils, *Épître à Rousseau.*

POINT DE FRANCE continued to be worn in the greatest profusion during the reign of Louis XIV. The King affected his new-born fabric much as monarchs of the present day do their tapestries and their porcelains. It decorated the Church and her ministers. Ladies offered “tours de chaire à l’église de la paroisse.”¹ Albs, “garnies d’un grand point de France brodé antique”;² altar-cloths trimmed with Argentan³ appear in the church registers.⁴ In a painting at Versailles, by Rigaud, representing the presentation of the Grand Dauphin to his royal father, 1668, the infant is enveloped in a mantle of the richest point (Fig. 74); and point de France was selected by royal command to trim the sheets of holland used at the ceremony of his “nomination.”⁵ At the marriage of the Prince de Conti and of Mademoiselle de Blois the toilette⁶ presented

¹ “Deux tours de chaire de point de France donnez depuis quelques années par deux dames de la paroisse.”—*Inv. de l’église de Saint-Merry, à Paris.* Arch. Nat. L. L. 859.

² *Inv. de Madame Anne Palatine de Bavière, Princesse de Condé.*—*Ibid.* X. 10,065.

³ *Inv. de l’église de Saint-Gervais, à Paris.*—*Ibid.* L. L. 854.

⁴ The saints, too, came in for their share of the booty.

“There was St. Winifred,” writes a traveller of the day, “in a point comode with a large scarf on and a loup in hand, as tho’ she were going to mass. St. Denis, with a laced hat

and embroidered coat and sash, like a captain of the guards.”—*Six Weeks in France.* 1691.

⁵ “Toille de Hollande, avec des grands points de France.”—*Le Cérémonial de la Nomination de Monseigneur le Dauphin.* 1668. Arch. Nat. K. K. 1431.

⁶ *Le Mercure Galant.* Juillet, 1688. This periodical, which we shall have occasion so frequently to quote, was begun in 1672, and continued to July, 1716. It comprises, with the *Extraordinaires*, 571 vols. in 12mo.

Le Mercure de France, from 1717 to 1792, consists of 777 vols.—Brunet. Manuel de Libraire.

by the King was "garnie de point de France si haut qu'on ne voyait point de toile."⁷ The valance, too, and the coverlet of the bed were of the same material.⁸

In this luxury, however, England followed her sister kingdom, for we read in the *Royal Magazine* of 1763 that on the baptism of the young prince, afterwards Duke of York, the company went to the council chamber at St. James's, where a splendid bed was set up for the Queen to sit on, the counterpane of which is described as of inimitable workmanship, the lace alone costing £3,783 sterling.⁹ "What princes do themselves, they engage others to do," says Quintilian, and the words of the critic were, in this case, fully verified: jupes,¹⁰ corsets, mantles, aprons with their bibs,¹¹ shoes,¹² gloves,¹³ even the fans were now trimmed with point de France.¹⁴

At the audience given by the Dauphine to the Siamese ambassadors, "à ses relevailles," she received them in a bed "presque tout couvert d'un tres beau point de France, sur lesquels on avoit mis des riches carreaux."¹⁵ On the occasion of their visit to Versailles, Louis, proud of his fabric, pre-

⁷ *Le Mercure Galant*.

⁸ It was the custom, at the birth of a Dauphin, for the papal nuncio to go to the palace and present to the newborn child "les langes benites," or consecrated layette, on behalf of his Holiness the Pope. The shirts, handkerchiefs, and other linen, were by half-dozens, and trimmed with the richest point. This custom dates as early as the birth of Louis XIII. Mercier describes the ceremony of carrying the layette to Versailles in the time of Louis XV.—*Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis XVI.* Paris, 1858.

⁹ In the Lancaster state bedroom, at Fonthill, was sold in 1823: "A state bed quilt of Brussels point, for 100 guineas, and a Brussels toilet cover for 30 guineas."—Fonthill. Sale Catalogue.

¹⁰ 1694. Une toilette de satin violet picquée garny d'un point d'Espagne d'or à deux carreaux de mesme satin et aussi piqué.—*Inv. de Mgr. de la Vrillière, Patriarche, Archeveque de Bourges.* Bib. Nat.

¹¹ 1743. Une toilette et son bonhomme garnie d'une vieille dentelle

d'Angleterre.—*Inv. de la Duchesse de Bourbon.*

¹² 1758. Une toilette avec sa touaille de point fort vieux d'Alençon.—*Inv. de Mademoiselle de Charollois.*

¹³ 1770. Une tres belle toilette de point d'Argentan, en son surtout de 9,000 livres.

¹⁴ Une tres belle toilette d'Angleterre. et son surtout de 9,000.—*Cptes. de Madame du Barry.*

¹⁵ "On voit toujours des jupes de point de France."—*Mercur Galant.* 1686.

"Corsets chamarrés de point de France."—*Ibid.*

¹⁶ Madame de Sévigné describes Mademoiselle de Blois as "belle comme un ange," with "un tablier et une bavette de point de France."—*Lettres.* Paris, 27 Jan., 1674.

¹⁷ "Garnis de point de France formant une manière de rose antique."—*Mercur Galant.* 1677.

¹⁸ In the Extraordinaire du *Mercur* for 1678, we have, in "habit d'este," gloves of "point d'Angleterre."

¹⁹ *Mercur Galant.* 1672.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 1686.

Fig. 74.



LE GRAND BÉBÉ. (M. de Versailles.)

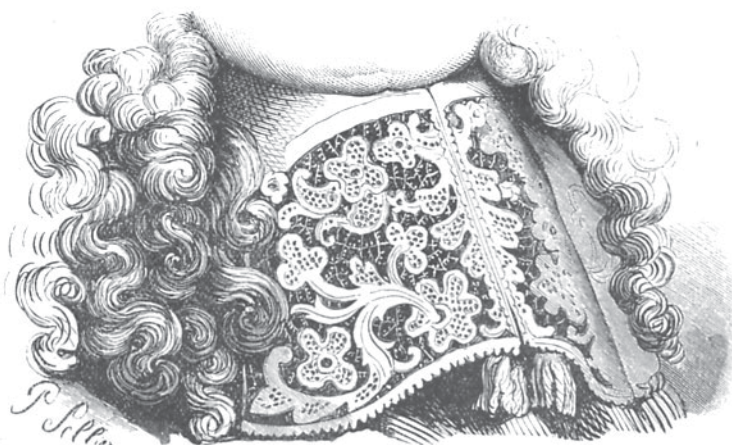
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sented the ambassadors with cravats and ruffles of the finest point.¹⁶ These cravats were either worn of point, in one piece, or partly of muslin tied, with falling lace ends.¹⁷ (Fig. 75.)

In 1679 the king gave a fête at Marly to the élite of his brilliant court. When, at sunset, the ladies retired to repair their toilettes, previous to the ball, each found in her dressing-room a robe fresh and elegant, trimmed with point of the most exquisite texture, a present from that gallant monarch not yet termed "l'inamusable."

Nor was the Veuve Scarron behind the rest. When, in

Fig. 75.



LOUVOIS. 1691.—(From his statue by Girardon. M. de Versailles.)

1674, she purchased the estate from which she afterwards derived her title of Maintenon, anxious to render it productive, she enticed Flemish workers from the frontier to establish a lace manufacture upon her newly-acquired marquisate. How the fabric succeeded history does not relate, but the costly laces depicted in her portraits (Fig. 76) have not the appearance of home manufacture.

Point lace-making became a favourite employment among ladies. We have many engravings of this reign; one, 1691, of a "fille de qualité" thus occupied, with the motto, "Après

¹⁶ *Mercur Galant*. Fév. 1685.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 1678.

dîner vous travaillez au point." Another,¹⁸ an engraving of Le Paultre, dated 1676, is entitled "Dame en Déshabille de Chambre" (Fig. 77).

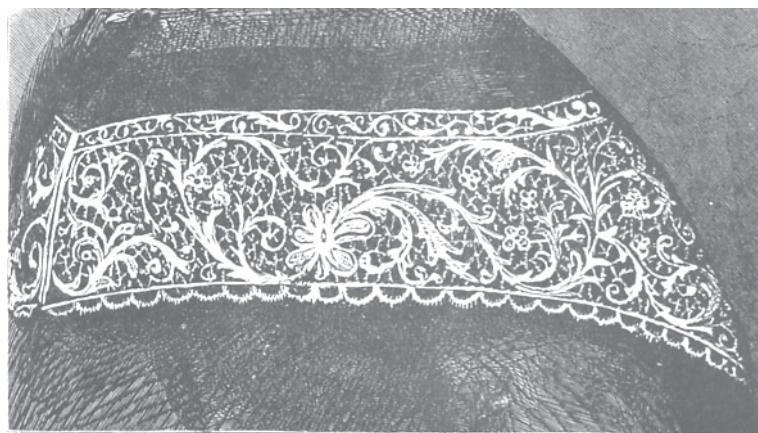
"La France est la tête du monde" (as regards fashion), says Victor Hugo, "cyclope dont Paris est l'œil"; and writers of all ages seem to have been of the same opinion. It was about the year 1680 that the

"Mode féconde en mille inventions,
Monstre, prodige étrange et difforme,"

was suddenly exemplified in France.

All readers of this great reign will recall to mind the

Fig. 76.



MADAME DE MAINTENON.—(From her portrait. M. de Versailles.)

story of the "Fontanges." How in the hurry of the chase the locks of the royal favourite burst from the ribbon that bound them—how the fair huntress, hurriedly tying the lace kerchief round her head, produced in one moment a coiffure so light, so artistic, that Louis XIV., enchanted, prayed her to retain it for that night at court. The lady obeyed the royal command. This mixture of lace and ribbon, now worn for the first time, caused a sensation, and the next day all

¹⁸ At the Mazarin Library there are four folio volumes of engravings, after Bonnard and others, of the costumes of the time of Louis XIV.; and at

the Archives Nat. is a large series preserved in cartons numbered M. 815 to 823, etc., labelled "Gravures de Modes."

the ladies of the court appeared "coiffées à la Fontange." (See Madame du Lude, Fig. 79.)

But this head-dress, with its tiers of point mounted on wires,¹⁹ soon ceased to be artistic; it grew higher and higher. Poets and satirists attacked the fashion much as

Fig. 77.



A LADY IN MORNING DÉSHABILLE.—(From an engraving by Le Paultre. 1676.)

they did the high head-dresses of the Roman matrons more than a thousand years ago.²⁰ Of the extinction of this mode

¹⁹ *La Fontange altière.*—Boileau.

²⁰ The wife of Trajan wore this coiffure, and her sister Marcina Faustina, wife of Antoninus, much regretted

the fashion when it went out. Speaking of this head-dress, says a writer in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* of 1693, "On regarde quelque fois des certaines

we have various accounts, some asserting it to have been preached down by the clergy, as were the *hennins* in the time of Charles VI.; but the most probable story is that which relates how, in October, 1699, Louis XIV. simply observed, "Cette coiffure lui paroissoit désagréable." The ladies worked all night, and next evening, at the Duchess of Burgundy's reception,²¹ appeared for the first time in a low head-dress. Fashion,²² which the author of the before-quoted *Consolation* would call *pompeux*, was "aujourd'hui en réforme." Louis XIV. never appreciated the sacrifice; to the day of his death he persisted in saying, "J'ai eu beau crier contre les coiffures trop hautes." No one showed the slightest desire to lower them till one day there arrived "une inconnue, une guenille d'Angleterre" (Lady Sandwich, the English Ambassadors'!), "avec une petite coiffure basse—tout d'un coup, toutes les princesses vont d'une extrémité à l'autre."²³ Be the accusation true or not, the *Mercur* of November, 1699, announces that "La hauteur des anciennes coiffures commence à paroître ridicule"; and St. Simon, in his *Memoirs*, satirises the fontange as a "structure of brass wire, ribbons, hair, and baubles of all sorts, about two feet high, which made a woman's face look as if it were in the middle of her body."

In these days lace was not confined to Versailles and the Court.²⁴

"Le gentilhomme," writes Capefigue, "allait au feu en manchettes poudré à la maréchale, les eaux se senteur sur son mouchoir en point d'Angleterre, l'élégance n'a jamais fait tort au courage, et la politesse s'allie noblement à la bravoure."

But war brings destruction to laces as well as finances,

choses comme tout à fait nouvelles, qui ne sont que des vieilles modes renouvelées. L'auteur en appelle un exemple dans les coiffures élevées que portent les femmes aujourd'hui, croyant ajouter par là quelque chose à leur taille. Les dames Romaines avaient la même ambition et mettaient des ajustemens de tête tout semblables aux Commodes et aux Fontanges de ce temps. Juvenal en parle expressément dans sa Satire VI."

²¹ *Galerie de l'ancienne Cour.*

²² "1699. Oct. Le Vendredi 25, il y eut grande toilette chez Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne où les dames parurent, pour la première fois, en coiffures d'une forme nouvelle, c'est à dire beaucoup plus basses."—*Mercur Galant.*

²³ "Corr. de la Duchesse d'Orléans, Princesse Palatine, mère du Régent."

²⁴ Speaking of the Iron Mask, Voltaire writes:—"His greatest passion was for linen of great fineness and for lace."—*Siècle de Louis XIV.*

and in 1690 the loyal and noble army was found in rags. Then writes Dangeau: "M. de Castanaga, à qui M. de Maine et M. de Luxembourg avoient demandé un passeport pour fair venir des dentelles à l'armée, a refusé le passeport, mais il a envoyé des marchands qui ont porté pour dix mille écus de dentelles, et après qu'on les eut achetées, les marchands s'en retournèrent sans vouloir prendre d'argent, disant qu'ils avoient cet ordre de M. de Castanaga."

"J'avois une Steinkerque de Malines," writes the Abbé de Choisy, who always dressed in female attire. We hear a great deal about these Steinkirks at the end of the seventeenth century. It was a twisted lace necktie, and owed its origin to the battle of that name in 1692,²⁵ when the young French Princes of the Blood were suddenly ordered into action. Hastily tying their lace cravats—in peaceful times a most elaborate proceeding—they rushed to the charge, and gained the day. In honour of this event, both ladies and cavaliers wore their handkerchiefs knotted or twisted in this careless fashion.

"Je trouve qu'en été le Steinkerque est commode,
J'aime le falbala,²⁶ quoiqu'il soit critiqué,"

says somebody. Steinkirks became the rage, and held good for many years, worn alike in England²⁷ and France by the women and the men. Fig. 78 represents the Grand Dauphin in his "longue Steinkerque à replis tortueux";²⁸ Fig. 79 the Duchesse du Lude²⁹ in similar costume and high Fontange, both copied from prints of the time.

We find constant mention now of the fashion of wearing a lace ruffle to the ladies' sleeves, concerning the wearing of which "à deux rangs," or "à trois rangs," there was much etiquette.

The falbalas were not given up until after the Regency; the use of them was frequently carried to such an excess

²⁵ Fought by Marshal Luxembourg—vieux tapissier de Notre-Dame—against William of Orange.

²⁶ Falbala—a deep single flounce of point or gold lace. The *Mercure Galant*, 1698, describing the Duchess of Burgundy "à la promenade," states: "Elle avoit un habit gris de lin en falbala, tout garny de dentelles d'ar-

gent."

"Femme de qualité en Steinkerke et Falbala."—Engraving of 1693.

²⁷ See ENGLAND.—WILLIAM III.

²⁸ Regnard.

²⁹ Dame du palais to Queen Marie Thérèse, and afterwards first lady of honour to the Duchess of Burgundy. She died 1726.

that a caricaturist of that period drew a lady so enveloped in them that she "looked like a turkey shaking its feathers and spreading its comb." This caricature gave rise to a popular song called "La Dinde aux Falbalas"; but in despite of song and caricature, the flounce continued in popularity.

"Les manches plates se font de deux tiers de tour, avec une dentelle de fil de point fort fin et fort haut. On nomme ces manches Engageantes."³⁰

This fashion, though introduced in 1688, continued in vogue till the French Revolution. We see them in the portrait of Madame Palatine, mother of the Regent (Fig. 80), and in that of Madame Sophie de France, daughter of Louis XV., taken in 1782 by Drouais.

Before finishing with point de France, we must allude to the *équipage de bain*, in which this fabric formed a great item. As early as 1688, Madame de Maintenon presents Madame de Chevreuse with an "*équipage de bain de point de France*" of great magnificence. It consisted not only of a peignoir, but a broad flounce, which formed a valance round the bath itself. You can see them in old engravings of the day. Then

³⁰ *Mercure Galant*. 1688.

Again, in 1688, he says: "Les points de Malines sont fort en regne pour les manches qu'on nomme engageantes. Ou y met des points très-hauts, fort plissés, avec des pieds."

"Ladies trimmed their *berthes* and sleeves with lace; when the sleeves were short they were called *engageantes*; when long, *pagodes*. Upon skirts laces were worn *volantes* or as flounces, whence the name *volant* or flounce, which has come into use for all wide laces; these flouncings were draped either in *tournantes* or *quilles*, the former laid horizontally, the latter vertically upon skirts; but in either case these were stitched down on each edge of the lace, whereas flounces were fastened to dresses by the *engrélure* or footing. Lace *barbes* and *fontanges* were used as head-dresses."

They appear to have been soon introduced into England, for Evelyn, in his *Mundus Muliebris*, 1690, says: "About her sleeves are engageants;" and the *Ladies' Dictionary* of nearly

the same date gives: "Engageants, double ruffles that fall over the wrist."

In the lace bills of Queen Mary II., we find—

1694. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ yd. Point for a broad pair of En- gageants, at £5 10s.	9 12 6
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ for a double pair of ditto, at £5 10s.	19 5 0
1 pair of Point En- gageants	30 0 0

—(B. M., Add. MSS. No. 5751.)

"1720. Six paires d'engageantes, dont quatre à un rang de dentelle, et les autres paires à double rang, l'une de dentelle d'Angleterre à raiseau et l'autre de dentelle à bride."—*Inv. de la Duchesse de Bourbon*. Arch. Nat.

"1723. Une paire d'engageantes à deux rangs de point plat à raiseau."—*Inv. d'Anne de Bavière, Princesse de Condé*.

"1770. Six rangs d'engageantes de point à l'aiguille," with the same of point d'Argentan and Angleterre, appear in the lace bills of Madame du Barry.

Fig. 79.



MADAME DU LUDE EN STEINKERQUE.

Fig. 78.



LE GRAND DAUPHIN EN STEINKERQUE.

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there were the towels and the *descente*, all equally costly,³¹ for the French ladies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries admitted their *habitués* not only to the *ruelle*,³²

Fig. 80.



MADAME PALATINE (ÉLIZ. CHARLOTTE DE BAVIÈRE), DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS.
(By Rigaud. M. de Versailles.)

but also to the bath-room.³³ In the latter case the bath

³¹ "1725. Deux manteaux de bain et deux chemises, aussi de bain, garnis aux manches de dentelle, l'une à bride, et l'autre à raiseau."—*Inv. d'Anne de Bavière, Princesse de Condé*.

"1743. Ung Tour de baignoir de bazin garny de vieille dentelle.

"Trois linges de baignoire garnis de dentelle."—*Inv. de la Duchesse de Bourbon*.

³² Describing the duties of the "critic of each bright ruelle," Tickell says:—

"Oft with varied art, his thoughts digress
On deeper themes—the documents of dress;
With nice discernment, to each style of face

Adapt a ribbon, or suggest a lace;
O'er Granby's cap bid lottier feathers float,

And add new bows to Devon's petticoat."—*Wreath of Fashion*.

³³ In the spring of 1802, Mr. Holcroft, when in Paris, received a polite note from a lady at whose house he visited, requesting to see him. He went, and was informed by her maid the lady was in her warm bath, but she would announce his arrival. She returned, and led him to a kind of closet, where her mistress was up to her chin in water. He knew the manners of the place, and was not surprised.—*Travels*.

was *au lait*, i.e., clouded by the mixture of some essence. "Aux autres temps, autres mœurs."

The "fameuse poupée" of the reign of Louis XIV. must not be forgotten. The custom of dressing up these great dolls originated in the salons of the Hôtel Rambouillet, where one, termed "la grande Pandore," at each change of fashion was exhibited "en grand tenue"; a second, the little Pandore, in morning *déshabille*. These dolls were sent to Vienna and Italy, charged with the finest laces France could produce. As late as 1764 we read in the *Espion Chinois*, "Il a débarqué à Douvres un grand nombre de poupées de hauteur naturelle habillées à la mode de Paris, afin que les dames de qualité puissent régler leurs goûts sur ces modèles."³⁴ Even when English ports were closed in wartime, a special permission was given for the entry of a large alabaster doll four feet high, the Grand Courier de la Mode.³⁵ In the war of the First Empire this privilege was refused to our countrywomen; and from that time Englishwomen, deprived of all French aid for a whole generation, began to dress badly. Pitt has much to answer for. With this notice finishes our account of the reign of Louis XIV.

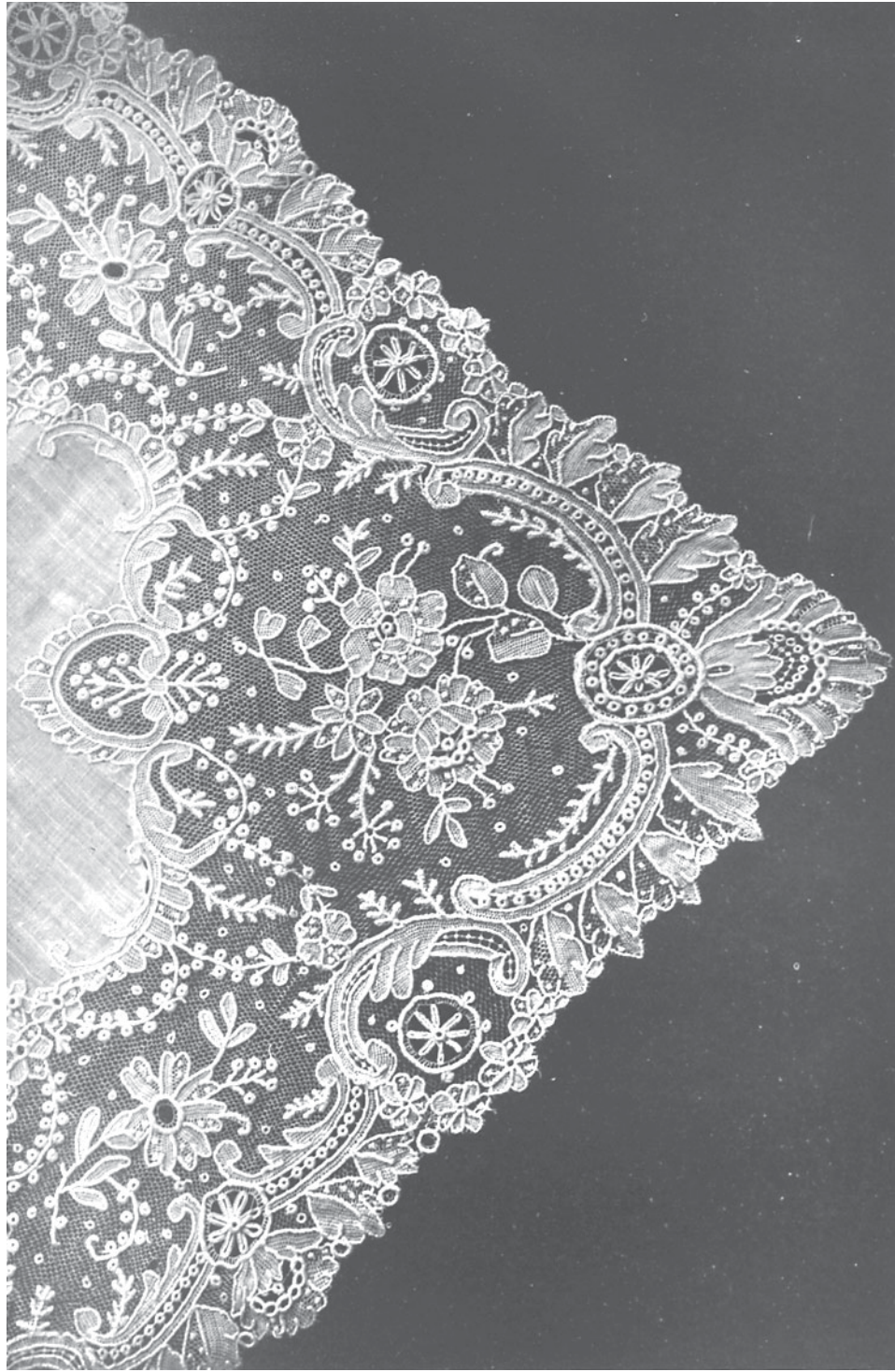
³⁴ Mercier also mentions, in his *Tableau de Paris*, la poupée de la rue Saint-Honoré: "C'est de Paris que les profondes inventions en modes donnent des loix à l'univers. La fameuse poupée, le mannequin précieux, affublé des modes les plus nouvelles . . . passe de Paris à Londres tous les mois, et va de là répandre ses grâces dans toute l'Europe. Il va au Nord et du Midi, il pénètre à Constantinople et à Petersbourg, et le pli qu'a donné une main française se répète chez toute les nations, humbles observatrices du goût de la rue Saint-Honoré."

³⁵ The practice was much more ancient. M. Ladonie asserts that in the Royal expenses for 1391, figure so many livres for a doll sent to the

Queen of England; in 1496 another, sent to the Queen of Spain; and in 1571 a third, to the Duchess of Bavaria.

Henry IV. writes in 1600, before his marriage to Marie de Médicis: "Frontenac tells me that you desire patterns of our fashion in dress. I send you, therefore, some model dolls."—Miss Freer's *Henry IV.*

It was also the custom of Venice, at the annual fair held in the Piazza of St. Mark, on the day of the Ascension (a fair which dates from 1180), to expose in the most conspicuous place of the fair a rag doll, which served as a model for the fashions for the year.—Michiel, *Origine delle Feste Veneziani.*



BRUSSELS. MODERN POINT DE GAZE.—Actual size.
Photo by A. Dryden.

CHAPTER XI.

LOUIS XV.

“Le luxe corrompt tout, et le riche qui en jouit, et le pauvre qui le convoite.”
—J. J. Rousseau.

LOUIS XIV. is now dead, to the delight of a wearied nation: we enter on the Regency and times of Louis XV.—that age of “fourchettes,” manchettes, and jabots—in which the butterfly abbés, “les porte-dentelles par excellence,” played so conspicuous a part.

The origin of the weeping ruffles, if Mercier¹ is to be credited, may be assigned to other causes than royal decree or the edicts of fashion. “Les grandes manchettes furent introduites par des fripons qui voulaient filouter au jeu et escamoter des cartes.” It never answers to investigate too deeply the origin of a new invented mode,—sufficient to say, ruffles became a necessary adjunct to the toilet of every gentleman. So indispensable were they, the Parisians are accused of adopting the custom of wearing ruffles and no shirts.

“Les Parisiens,” writes Mercier, “achètent quatre ajustemens contre une chemise. Un beau Monsieur se met une chemise blanche tous les quinze jours. Il coud ses manchettes de dentelle sur une chemise sale,” and powders over his point collar till it looks white.² This habit passed into a proverb. The Maréchal de Richelieu, who, though versed in astronomy, could not spell, said of himself, “Qu’on ne lui avoit pas fourni des chemises, mais qu’il avoit acheté des

¹ *Tableau de Paris*. 1782.

² “The French nation are eminent for making a fine outside, when perhaps they want necessaries, and indeed a gay shop and a mean stock is like the Frenchman with his laced ruffles

without a shirt.”—*The Complete English Tradesman*. Dan. Defoe. Lond., 1726. Foote, in his Prologue to the *Trip to Paris*, says, “They sold me some ruffles, and I found the shirts.”

manchettes." ³ This account tallies well with former accounts ⁴ and with a letter of Madame de Maintenon to the Princess des Ursins, 1710. ⁵

At this period it was the custom for grisettes to besiege the Paris hotels, bearing on their arms baskets decked out with ruffles and jabots of Malines, Angleterre, and point. What reader of Sterne will not recollect the lace-seller in his *Sentimental Journey*?

The jabot and manchettes of points were the customary "cadeau de nocés" of the bride to her intended for his wedding dress—a relic of which practice may be found in the embroidered wedding shirt furnished by the lady, in the North of Europe. ⁶ The sums expended in these articles would now appear fabulous. The Archbishop of Cambray ⁷ alone possessed four dozen pairs of ruffles, Malines, point, and Valenciennes. The Wardrobe Bills of the Duke de Penthièvre of 1738 make mention of little else. An ell and a quarter of lace was required for one pair of ruffles. A yard, minus $\frac{1}{16}$, sufficed for the jabot. ⁸ There were manchettes de jour, manchettes tournantes, ⁹ and manchettes de nuit: these last-named were mostly of Valenciennes. ¹⁰ The

³ *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy*. 1710–1802.

⁴ Clement X. was in the habit of making presents of Italian lace, at that time much prized in France, to M. de Sabière. "He sends ruffles," said the irritated Frenchman who looked for something more tangible, "to a man who never has a shirt."

⁵ "M. de Vendôme, at his marriage, was quite astonished at putting on his clean shirt a-day, and fearfully embarrassed at having some point lace on the one given him to put on at night. Indeed," continues she, "you would hardly recognise the taste of the French. The men are worse than the women. They wish their wives to take snuff, play, and pay no more attention to their dress." The exquisite cleanliness of Anne of Austria's court was at an end.

⁶ In the old Scotch song of Gilderoy, the famous highwayman, we have an instance:—

"For Gilderoy, that luvè of mine,
Gude faith, I freely bought

A wedding sark of Holland fine,
Wi' silken flowers wrought."

And in an account quoted in the *Reliquary*, July, 1865, is the charge on Feb. 16, of "six shillings for a cravat for hur Vallentine."

⁷ *Inv. après le décès de Mgr. C. de Saint-Albin, Archevesque de Cambray*. (Son of the Regent.) 1764. Arch. Nat. M. M. 718.

Louis XVI. had 59 pairs the year before his death: 28 of point, 21 of Valenciennes, and 10 of Angleterre.—*Etat des Effets subsistant et formant le fond de la garde-robe du Roi au 1^{er} Janvier, 1792*. Arch. Nat. K. 506, No. 30.

⁸ *Etat d'un Trousseau*. Description des Arts et Métiers. Paris, 1777.

⁹ "Deux aunes trois quarts d'Angleterre à bride pour deux paires de manchettes tournantes, à 45 livres l'aune."—*Garderobe de S. A. S. Mgr. le Duc de Penthièvre*. 1738. Arch. Nat. K. K. 390.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* The laces for ruffles were of various kinds: point brodé, point à bride, point à raiseau, point à bride à

point d'Alençon ruffles of Buffon, which he always wore, even when writing, were exhibited in 1864 at Falaise, being carefully preserved in the family to whom they have descended.

Even, if a contemporary writer may be credited, "Monsieur de Paris," the executioner, mounted the scaffold in a velvet suit, powdered, with point lace jabot and ruffles.

"Les rubans, les miroirs, les dentelles sont trois choses sans lesquelles les François ne peuvent vivre. Le luxe démesuré a confondu le maître avec le valet,"¹¹ says an unknown writer, quoted by Dulaure.¹² The servants of the last century had on their state liveries lace equal in richness to that worn by their masters.¹³ Of a Prussian gentleman, we read, "His valets, who according to the reigning tastes were the prettiest in the world, wore nothing but the most costly lace."¹⁴ This custom was not confined, however, to France or the Continent. "Our very footmen," writes the angry *World*, "are adorned with gold and

écaille, point superfin, point brillant, Angleterre à bride à raiseau, and one pair of point d'Argentan; Valenciennes pour manchettes de nuit à 42 livres l'aune.

The Duke's wardrobe accounts afford a good specimen of the extravagance in the decoration of night attire at this period:—

4 au. de point pour collet et manchettes de la chemise de nuit et garnir la coëffe, à 130 ll. . . . 520 ll.
 3 au. $\frac{3}{4}$ dito pour jabot et fourchettes de nuit et garnir le devant de la camisole, à 66 ll. . . . 247 ll. 10s.
 Sept douze de point pour plaquer sur les manches de camisolle, à 55 ll. 32 ll. 1s.
 Then for his nightcaps:—
 3 au. Toile fine pour Coëffes de Nuit 27 ll.
 4 au. Dentelles de Malines pour les tours de Coëffes, à 20 ll. . . . 80 ll.
 5 au. $\frac{1}{2}$ Valenciennes, à 46 ll. 253 ll.
 52 au. dito petit point, pour garnir les Tours, à 5 ll. 5s. 273 ll.

Pour avoir monté un bonnet de nuit de point . . . 1 l. 5s.
 7 au. de campanne de point pour chamarrer la camisolle et le bonnet de nuit, à 10 ll. 10s. 73 ll. 10s.

The Marquise de Créquy speaks of a night-cap, "à grandes dentelles," offered, with la robe de chambre, to the Dauphin, son of Louis XV., by the people of the Duke de Grammont, on his having lost his way hunting, and wandered to the Duke's château.

¹¹ "Le Parisien qui n'a pas dix mille livres de rente n'a ordinairement ni draps, ni lit, ni serviettes, ni chemises; mais il a une montre à répétition, des glaces, des bas de soie, des dentelles."—*Tableau de Paris*.

¹² *Histoire de Paris*.

¹³ "Ordinairement un laquais de bon ton prend le nom de son maître, quand il est avec d'autres laquais, il prend aussi ses mœurs, ses gestes, ses manières. . . . Le laquais d'un seigneur porte la montre d'or ciselée, des dentelles, des boucles à brillants," etc.—*Tableau de Paris*.

¹⁴ *Amusemens des Eaux de Spa*. Amsterdam, 1751.

"Les manches qu'à table on voit tâter la sauce."—*École des maris*.

silver bags and lace ruffles. The valet is only distinguished from his master by being better dressed;” while the *Connoisseur* complains of “roast beef being banished from even ‘down stairs,’ because the powdered footmen will not touch it for fear of daubing their lace ruffles.”¹⁵

But the time, of all others, for a grand display of lace was at a visit to a Parisian lady on her “relevailles,” or “uprising,” as it was called, in the days of our third Edward. Reclining on a chaise longue, she is described as awaiting her visitors. Nothing is to be seen but the finest laces, arranged in artistic folds, and long bows of ribbon. An attendant stationed at the door asks of each new arrival, “Have you any perfumes?” She replies not, and passes on—an atmosphere of fragrance. The lady must not be spoken to, but, the usual compliments over, the visitors proceed to admire her lace. “Beautiful, exquisite!”—but, “Hist! speak low,” and she who gave the caution is the first, in true French style, to speak the loudest.¹⁶

Lace “garnitures de lit” were general among great people as early as 1696. The *Mercur*e speaks of “draps garnis d’une grande dentelle de point d’Angleterre.” In 1738 writes the Duc de Luynes,¹⁷ “Aujourd’hui Madame de Luynes s’est fait apporter les fournitures qu’elle avoit choisies pour la Reine, et qui regardent les dames d’honneur. Elles consistent en couvrepieds¹⁸ garnis de dentelle pour le grand lit et pour les petits, en taies d’oreiller¹⁹ garnies du

¹⁵ The state liveries of Queen Victoria were most richly embroidered in gold. They were made in the early part of George II.’s reign, since which time they have been in use. In the year 1848, the servants appeared at the royal balls in gold and ruffles of the richest gros point de France, of the same epoch as their dresses. In 1849, the lace no longer appeared—probably suppressed by order. Queen Anne, who was a great martinet in trifles, had her servants marshalled before her every day, that she might see if their ruffles were clean and their periwigs dressed.

¹⁶ *Tableau de Paris*.

¹⁷ *Mémoires*.

¹⁸ “1723. Un couvrepied de toile blanche, picque de Marseille, garni autour d’un point en campane de

demie aune de hauteur.”—*Inv. d’A. de Bavière, Princesse de Condé*.

“1748. Un couvrepied de toile picquée, brodée or et soye, bordé de trois côtés d’une grande dentelle d’Angleterre et du quatrième d’un moyen dentelle d’Angleterre à bords.

“Un autre, garni d’une grande et moyenne dentelle de point d’Alençon.

“Un autre, garni d’un grand point de demie aune de hauteur, brodé, garni d’une campane en bas.

“Un autre, ‘point à bride,’” and many others.—*Inv. de la Duchesse de Bourbon*.

¹⁹ “1704. Deux taies d’oreiller garnies de dentelle, l’une à raiseau, et l’autre à bride.”—*Inv. de F. P. Loisel*. Bib. Nat. MSS. F. Fr. 11,459.

“1723. Quatre taies d’oreiller, dont trois garnies de différentes dentelles,

même point d'Angleterre, etc. Cette fourniture coûte environ 30,000 livres, quoique Madame de Luynes n'ait pas fait renouveler les beaux couvre-pieds de la Reine." These garnitures were renewed every year, and Madame de Luynes inherited the old ones.

Madame de Créquy, describing her visit to the Duchesse

Fig. 81.



MADAME SOPHIE DE FRANCE, 1782, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV. By Drouais. M. de Versailles. (In this picture the hexagonal brides and heavy relief of Point d'Argentan are clearly to be seen.)

Douairière de La Ferté, says, when that lady received her, she was lying in a state bed, under a coverlet made of point de Venise in one piece. "I am persuaded," she adds, "that

et l'autre de Point."—*Inv. d'Anne de Bavière, Princesse de Condé.*

"1755. Deux taies d'oreiller garnies de point d'Alençon."—*Inv. de Mademoiselle de Charollais.*

"1761. Trois taies d'oreiller de dentelle de point à brides."—*Inv. de la Duchesse de Modène.*

"1770. 7 au. 1/8 vraie Valenciennes pour garnir une taie d'oreiller, à 60 ll. . . . 427 10."—*Comptes de Madame du Barry.*

"1707. 7 au. tournante d'Angleterre pour garnir des plottes (pincushions) à 50 . . . 350 00."

—*Comptes de Madame du Barry.*

"1788. 12 Pelottes garnies de dentelle."—*Ibid.*

"6 troussees à peigne garnies de dentelle."—*Fourni pour Mgr. le Dauphin.* Arch. Nat.

"1792. 6 Pelottes garnies de dentelle."—*Linge du ci-devant Roi.* *Ibid.*

the trimming of her sheets, which were of point d'Argentan, were worth at least 40,000 écus."²⁰ To such a pitch had the taste for lace-trimmed linen attained, that when, in 1739, Madame, eldest daughter of Louis XV., espoused the Prince of Spain, the bill for these articles alone amounted to £25,000; and when Cardinal Fleury, a most economical prelate, saw the trousseau, he observed, "Qu'il croyait que

Fig. 82.



MADAME ADÉLAÏDE DE FRANCE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV.—(M. de Versailles.)

c'était pour marier toutes les sept Mesdames."²¹ (Figs. 81, 82). Again, Swinburne writes from Paris:²² "The trousseau of Mademoiselle de Matignon will cost 100,000 crowns (£25,000). The expense here of rigging²³ out a bride is equal to a handsome portion in England. Five

²⁰ Souvenirs.

²¹ *Mémoires du Duc de Luynes*.

²² 1786. *Courts of Europe*.

²³ It may be amusing to the reader to learn the laces necessary for l'État d'un Trousseau, in 1777, as given in the *Description des Arts de Métiers*: "Une toilette de ville en dentelle; 2 jupons garnis du même. Une coif-

fure avec tour de gorge, et le fichu plissé de point d'Alençon. Un idem de point d'Angleterre. 1 id. de vraie Valenciennes. Une coiffure dite 'Battant d'œil' de Malines brodée, pour le negligé. 6 fichus simples en mousseline à mille fleurs garnis de dentelle pour le negligé. 12 grands bonnets garnis d'une petite dentelle pour la

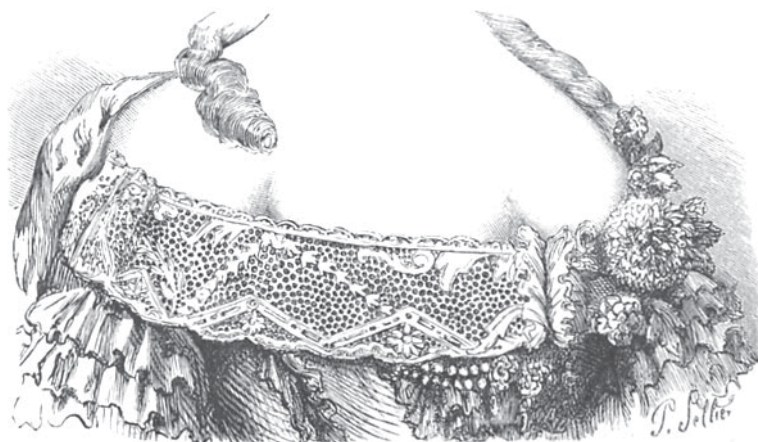


MADAME LOUISE DE FRANCE. Trimmings and tablier of Point d'Argentan.
Painted by Nattier at the age of eleven, 1748. M. de Versailles.

To face page 176.

thousand pounds' worth of lace, linen, etc., is a common thing among them."

The masks worn by the ladies at this period were of black blonde lace²⁴ of the most exquisite fineness and



MARIE THÉRÈSE ANT. RAPH., INFANTA OF SPAIN, FIRST WIFE OF LOUIS DAUPHIN, SON OF LOUIS XV.
—By Tocqué. Dated 1748. M. de Versailles.

design.²⁵ They were trimmed round the eyes, like those described by Scarron:—

“Dirai-je comme ces fantasques
Qui portent dentelle à leurs masques,
En chararrent les trous des yeux,
Croyant que le masque en est mieux.”

In the reign of Louis XV., point de France was rivalled

nuit. 12 à deux rangs, plus beaux, pour le jour, en cas d'indisposition. 12 serres-tête garnis d'une petite dentelle pour la nuit. 2 taies d'oreiller garnies en dentelle. 12 pièces d'estomach garnies d'une petite dentelle. 6 garnitures de corset. 12 tours de gorge. 12 paires ce manchettes en dentelle. Une toilette; les volants, au nombre de deux, sont en dentelle; ils ont 5 aunes de tour. Dessus de pelotte, en toile garnie de dentelle, etc. La Layette: 6 paires de manches pour la mère, garnies de dentelle. 24 bonnets ronds de 3 ages en dentelle. 12 bavoirs de deux ages, garnis en dentelle.” The layette was furnished to-

gether with the trousseau, because, says a fabricant, “les enfans se font plus vite que les points.”

²⁴ “1787. Pour achat de 11 au. blonde noire, à 6 10 . . . 71 livres 10 sous.”

—*Comptes de Monsieur Hergosse.*

Bib. Nat. MSS., F. Fr. 11,447.

²⁵ When the Empress Joséphine was at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, a masked ball was given on the occasion. The ladies, says Mademoiselle Avrillion, wore short dominoes with their faces covered with a mask, “le tour des yeux garni d'une petite dentelle noire.”—*Mém. de Mademoiselle Avrillion, première femme de chambre de l'Impératrice.* Paris, 1833.

by the productions of Angleterre²⁶ and Malines. Argentan and Alençon (Fig. 83) were declared by fashion to be "dentelles d'hiver:" each lace now had its appointed season.²⁷ "On porte le point en hiver," says the Dictionary of the Academy.

There was much etiquette, too, in the court of France, as regards lace, which was never worn in mourning. Dangeau chronicles, on the death of the Princess of Baden, "Le roi qui avoit repris les dentelles et les rubans d'or et d'argent, reprend demain le linge uni et les rubans unis aussi."²⁸

"Madame" thus describes the "petit deuil" of the Margrave of Anspach: "Avec des dentelles blanches sur le noir, du beau ruban bleu, à dentelles blanches et noires. C'étoit une parure magnifique."²⁹

²⁶ A few extracts from Madame du Barry's lace accounts will furnish an idea of her consumption of point d'Angleterre:—

Une toilette d'Angleterre complete de . 8823 livres.
 Une parure composée de deux barbes, rayon et fond, 6 rangs de manchettes, 1 1/2 au. de ruban fait exprès, 1/3 jabot pour le devant de tour. Le tout d'Angleterre superfin de . 7000 —
 Un ajustement d'Angleterre complet de . . 3216 —
 Une garniture de peig-

noir d'Angleterre de . 2342 livres.
 Une garniture de fichu d'Angleterre . . . 388 —
 8 au. d'Angleterre pour taves d'oreiller 240
 9 1/2 au. dito pour la tête 76
 14 au. pied dito pour la tête 140
 — 456 livres.

²⁷ "Les dentelles les plus précieuses pour chaque saison." — (Duchesse d'Abrantès.)

²⁸ *Mémoires.*

²⁹ *Mém. de la Princesse Palatine, veuve de Monsieur.*

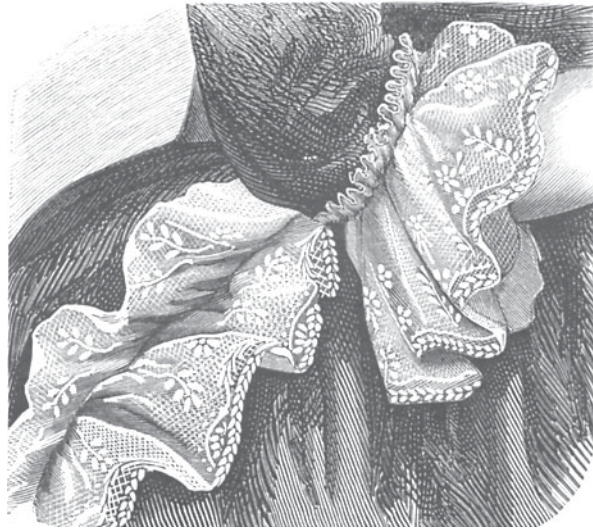
CHAPTER XII.

LOUIS XVI. TO THE EMPIRE.

“Proud Versailles! thy glory falls.”—Pope.

IN the reign of Louis XVI. society, tired out with ceremony and the stately manners of the old court, at last began to emancipate itself. Marie-Antoinette (Fig. 84) first gave the

Fig. 84.



MARIE-ANTOINETTE.—From a picture by Madame Le Brun. M. de Versailles.

signal. Rid herself of the preaching of “Madame Etiquette” she could not on state occasions, so she did her best to amuse herself in private. The finest Indian muslin now supplanted the heavy points of the old court. Madame du Barry, in her *Memoirs*, mentions the purchase of Indian muslin so fine

that the piece did not weigh fifteen ounces, although sufficient to make four dresses. "The ladies looked," indignantly observed the Maréchale de Luxembourg, "in their muslin aprons and handkerchiefs like cooks and convent porters."¹ To signify her disapproval of this new-fangled custom, the Maréchale sent her grand-daughter, the Duchesse de Lauzun, an apron of sailcloth trimmed with fine point and six fichus of the same material similarly decorated. Tulle and marli² were much worn during the latter years of the Queen's life, and entries of tulle, marli, blondes, and embroidered linens occur over and over again in Madame Eloffe's accounts with the Queen. The richer ornamental laces were not worn, and one reads of items such as "a gauze fichu trimmed with white *prétention*."

On leaving Versailles for the last time (October 6th, 1789), Marie Antoinette distributed among her suite all that remained of her fans and laces.

The arrangement of the lace lappets was still preserved by rule. "Lappets to be pinned up"—lappets to be let down on grand occasions.³ Later Madame de Staël, like a true *bas-bleu*—without speaking of her curtesy to Marie Antoinette, which was all wrong—on her first visit of ceremony to Madame de Polignac, in defiance of all etiquette, left her lace lappets in the carriage.

The democratic spirit of the age now first creeps out in

¹ "Cuisinières et Tourières." The joke formed the subject of some clever verses from the Chevalier de Boufflers.

² *Marli*, which takes its name from the village between Versailles and St. Germain, is tulle dotted with small square spots. See page 225.

³ The *barbe*, or lappet, of whatever form it be, has always, in all ages and all countries, been a subject of etiquette. At the interment of Queen Mary Tudor, December 14th, 1558, it is told how the ladies in the first and second chariots were clad in mourning apparel, according to their estates, "their barbes above their chynes." "The 4 ladies on horseback in like manner had their barbes on their chynes." In the third chariot, "the ladies had their barbes under their chynes."—State Papers, Domestic,

Eliz., vol. 32.

See also the curious extract from Madame de Campan's *Mémoires* :—

"Madame de Noailles était remplie de vertus ; mais l'étiquette était pour elle une sorte d'atmosphère. Un jour je mis, sans le vouloir, cette pauvre dame dans une angoisse terrible ; la reine recevait je ne sais plus qui. Tout était bien, au moins je le croyais. Je vois tout-à-coup les yeux de Madame de Noailles attachés sur les miens, et puis ses deux sourcils se levent jusqu'au haut de son front, redescendent, remontent. L'agitation de la Comtesse croissait toujours. La reine s'aperçut de tout ceci . . . et me dit alors à mi-voix : 'Detachez vos barbes, où la comtesse en mourra.' L'étiquette du costume disait : 'Barbes pendentes.'"

the fashions. Among the rich *parures* of Du Barry⁴ we find "barbes à la paysanne"—everything now becomes "à coquille," "à papillon."

Even the Queen's hairdresser, Léonard, "qui

"Portait jusques au ceil l'audace de ses coiffures,"

did not venture to introduce much lace.

The affected phraseology of the day is very "precious" in its absurdity. We read of the toilette of Mademoiselle Duthé in which she appeared at the opera. She wore a robe "soupirs étouffés," trimmed with "regrets superflus"; a point of "candeur parfaite, garnie en plaintes indiscretes"; ribbons en "attentions marquées"; shoes "cheveux de la reine,"⁵ embroidered with diamonds, "en coups perfides" and "venez-y-voir" in emeralds. Her hair "en sentiments soutenus," with a cap of "conquête assurée," trimmed with ribbons of "œil abattu"; a "chat⁶ sur le col," the colour of "gueux nouvellement arrivé," and upon her shoulders a Médicis "en bienséance," and her muff of "agitation momentanée."

In the accounts of Mademoiselle Bertin, the Queen's milliner, known for her saying, "Il n'y a rien de nouveau dans ce monde que ce qui est oublié," we have little mention of lace.⁷

⁴ Only in her last lace bill, 1773:

"Une paire de barbes plates longues de 3/4 en blonde fine à fleurs fond d'Alençon, 36.

"Une blonde grande hauteur à bouquets détachés et à bordure riche.

"6 au. de blonde de grande hauteur façon d'Alençon à coquilles à mille poix, à 18.

"Une paire de sabots de comtesse de deux rangs de tulle blonde à festons, fond d'Alençon."—*Comptes de la Comtesse du Barry*. Bib. Nat. F. Fr. 8157.

Madame du Barry went to the greatest extravagance in lace ajustements, barbes, collerettes, volants, quilles, coëffes, etc., of Argentan, Angleterre, and point à l'aiguille.

⁵ The great fashion. The shoes were embroidered in diamonds, which were scarcely worn on other parts of the

dress. The back seam, trimmed with emeralds, was called "venez-y-voir."

⁶ *Souvenirs du Marquis de Valfons*, 1710-1786. A "chat," tippet or Palatine, so named after the mother of the Regent.

⁷ In the National Archives, formerly preserved with the *Livre Rouge* in the Armorie de Fer, is the *Gazette pour l'année*, 1782, of Marie Antoinette, consisting of a list of the dresses furnished for the Queen during the year, drawn up by the Comtesse d'Ossune, her dame des atours. We find—grands habits, robes sur le grand panier, robes sur le petit panier, with a pattern of the material affixed to each entry, and the name of the couturière who made the dress. One "Lévite" alone appears trimmed with blonde. There is also the *Gazette* of Madame Elizabeth, for 1792.

“Blond à fond d’Alençon semé à poix, à mouches,” now usurps the place of the old points. Even one of the “grandes dames de la vieille cour,” Madame Adélaïde de France herself, is represented in her picture by Madame Guiard with a spotted handkerchief, probably of blonde (Fig. 85).

The Church alone protects the ancient fabrics. The lace of the Rohan family, almost hereditary Princes Archbishops of Strasburg, was of inestimable value. “We met,” writes

Fig. 85.



MADAME ADÉLAÏDE DE FRANCE.—After a picture by Madame Guiard, dated 1787. M. de Versailles.

the Baroness de Oberkirch, “the cardinal coming out of his chapel dressed in a soutane of scarlet moire and rochet of English lace of inestimable value. When on great occasions he officiates at Versailles, he wears an alb of old lace ‘en point à l’aiguille’ of such beauty that his assistants were almost afraid to touch it. His arms and device are worked in a medallion above the large flowers. This alb is estimated at 100,000 livres. On the day of which I speak he wore the rochet of English lace, one of his least beautiful, as his

secretary, the Abbé Georget, told me.”⁸ On his elevation to the see of Bourges (1859), Monseigneur de La Tour d’Auvergne celebrated mass at Rome arrayed with all the sacerdotal ornaments of point d’Alençon of the finest workmanship. This lace descended to him from his uncle, Cardinal de La Tour d’Auvergne, who had inherited it from his mother, Madame d’Aumale, so well known as the friend of Madame de Maintenon. Under the first Empire, a complete suit of lace was offered to the prelate for sale, which had belonged to Marie-Antoinette. This lace is described as formed of squares of old point d’Angleterre or de Flandre, each representing a different subject. The beauty of the lace and its historic interest decided his Eminence to speak of it to his colleague, Cardinal de Bonald, and these two prelates united their resources, bought the lace, and divided it.

But this extravagance and luxury were now soon to end. The years of '92 and '93 were approaching. The great nobility of France, who patronised the rich manufactures of the kingdom at the expense of a peasantry starving on estates they seldom if ever visited, were ere long outcasts in foreign countries. The French Revolution was fatal to the lace trade. For twelve years the manufacture almost ceased, and more than thirty different fabrics entirely disappeared.⁹ Its merits were, however, recognised by the Etats Généraux in 1789, who, when previous to meeting they settled the costume of the three estates, decreed to the *noblesse* a lace cravat. It was not until 1801, when Napoleon wished to “faire revenir le luxe,” that we again find it chronicled in the annals of the day: “How charming Caroline Murat looked in her white mantelet of point de Bruxelles et sa robe garnie des mêmes dentelles,” etc. The old laces were the work of years, and transmitted as heirlooms¹⁰ from generation to generation.

⁸ *Mémoires sur la Cour de Louis XVI.*

⁹ Among these were Sedan, Charleville, Mézières, Dieppe, Havre, Pont-l’Évêque, Honfleur, Eu, and more than ten neighbouring villages. The points of Aurillac, Bourgogne, and Murat disappeared; and worst of all was the loss of the manufacture of Valenciennes.

Laces were also made in Champagne, at Troyes and Domchéry, etc.

¹⁰ 1649. Anne Gohory leaves all her personals to Madame de Sévigné except her “plus beau mouchoir, le col de point fin de Flandres, et une juppe de satin à fleurs fond vert, garnie de point fin d’or et de soie.”

1764. Geneviève Laval bequeaths to

They were often heavy and overloaded with ornament. The ancient style was now discarded and a lighter description introduced. By an improvement in the point de raccroc several sections of lace were joined together so as to form one large piece; thus ten workers could now produce in a month what had formerly been the work of years.

Napoleon especially patronised the fabrics of Alençon, Brussels, and Chantilly. He endeavoured, too, without success, to raise that of Valenciennes. After the example of Louis XIV., he made the wearing of his two favourite points obligatory at the Court of the Tuileries, and it is to his protection these towns owe the preservation of their manufactures. The lace-makers spoke of the rich orders received from the imperial court as the most remarkable epoch in their industrial career. Never was the beauty and costliness of the laces made for the marriage of Marie-Louise yet surpassed. To reproduce them now would, estimates M. Aubry, cost above a million of francs. Napoleon was a great lover of lace: he admired it as a work of art, and was proud of the proficiency of his subjects. Mademoiselle d'Avrillon relates the following anecdote:—The Princess Pauline had given orders to the Empress Joséphine's lace-maker for a dress and various objects to the value of 30,000 francs. When the order was completed and the lace brought home, the Princess changed her mind and refused to take them. Madame Lesœur, in despair, appealed to the Empress. She, thinking the price not unreasonable, considering the beauty of the points, showed them to Napoleon, and told him the circumstance. "I was in the room at the time," writes the authoress of the *Mémoires*. The Emperor examined minutely each carton, exclaiming at intervals, "Comme on travaille bien en France, je dois encourager un pareil commerce. Pauline a grand tort." He ended by paying the bill and distributing the laces among the ladies of the court.¹¹ Indeed, it may be said that never

her sister "une garniture de dentelle de raiseau à grandes dents, valant au moins quinze livres l'aune."—Arch. de Nat. Y. 58.

1764. Anne Challus leaves her "belle garniture de dentelle en plein, manchettes, tour de gorge, palatine et fond."—*Ibid.*

1764. Madame de Pompadour, in her will, says, "Je donne à mes deux femmes de chambre tout ce qui concerne ma garde-robe . . . y compris les dentelles."

¹¹ *Mém. de Mademoiselle d'Avrillon.*

was lace more in vogue than during the early days of the Empire.

The morning costume of a French duchesse of that court is described in the following terms:—"Elle portait un peignoir brodé en mousseline garni d'une Angleterre très-belle, une fraise en point d'Angleterre. Sur sa tête la duchesse avait jeté en se levant une sorte de 'baigneuse,' comme nos mères l'auraient appelée, en point d'Angleterre, garnie de rubans de satin rose pâle."¹² The fair sister of Napoleon, the Princess Pauline Borghese, "s'est passionnée," as the term ran, "pour les dentelles."¹³

That Napoleon's example was quickly followed by the *élégantes* of the Directory, the following account, given to the brother of the author by an elderly lady who visited Paris during that very short period¹⁴ when the English flocked to the Continent, of a ball at Madame Récamier's, to which she had an invitation, will testify.

The First Consul was expected, and the *élite* of Paris early thronged the *salons* of the charming hostess, but where was Madame Récamier? "*Souffrante*," the murmur ran, retained to her bed by a sudden indisposition. She would, however, receive her guests *couchée*.

The company passed to the bedroom of the lady, which, as still the custom in France, opened on one of the principal *salons*. There, in a gilded bed, lay Madame Récamier, the most beautiful woman in France. The bed-curtains were of the finest Brussels lace, bordered with garlands of honeysuckle, and lined with satin of the palest rose. The *couvrepied* was of the same material; from the pillow embroidered cambric fell "des flots de Valenciennes."

The lady herself wore a *peignoir* trimmed with the most exquisite English point. Never had she looked more lovely—never had she done the honours of her hotel more gracefully. And so she received Napoleon—so she received the heroes of that great empire. All admired her "fortitude," her *dévouement*, in thus sacrificing herself to society, and on the following day "tout Paris s'est fait inscrire chez elle." Never had such anxiety been expressed—never had woman gained such a triumph.

¹² *Mémoires sur la Restauration*, par Madame la Duchesse d'Abrantès.

¹³ *Ibid.* T. v., p. 48.

¹⁴ After the Peace of Amiens, 1801.

The Duchesse d'Abrantès, who married in the year 1800, describing her trousseau,¹⁵ says she had "des mouchoirs, des jupons, des canezous du matin, des peignoirs de mousseline de l'Inde, des camisoles de nuit, des bonnets de nuit, des bonnets de matin, de toutes les couleurs, de toutes les formes, et tout cela brodé, garni de Valenciennes ou de Malines, ou de point d'Angleterre." In the corbeille de mariage, with the cachemires were "les voiles de point d'Angleterre, les garnitures de robes en point à l'aiguille, et en point de Bruxelles, ainsi qu'en blonde pour l'été. Il y avait aussi des robes de blonde blanche et de dentelle noire," etc. When they go to the Mairie, she describes her costume: "J'avais une robe de mousseline de l'Inde brodée au plumetis et en points à jour, comme c'était alors la mode. Cette robe était à queue, montante et avec de longues manches, le lé de devant entièrement brodé ainsi que le tour du corsage, le bout des manches, qu'on appelait alors amadis. La fraise était en magnifique point à l'aiguille, sur ma tête j'avais un bonnet en point de Bruxelles. . . . Au sommet du bonnet était attachée une petite couronne de fleurs d'oranger, d'où partait un long voile en point d'Angleterre qui tombait à mes pieds et dont je pouvais presque m'envelopper." Madame Junot winds up by saying that "Cette profusion de riches dentelles, si fines, si déliées ne semblaient être qu'un réseau nuageux autour de mon visage, où elles se jouaient dans les boucles de mes cheveux."

Hamlet always used to appear on the stage in lace cravat and ruffles, and Talma, the French tragedian, was very proud of his wardrobe of lace. Dr. Doran relates of him that on one occasion, when stopped by the Belgian custom-house officers at the frontier, an official, turning over his wardrobe, his stage costumes, etc., contemptuously styled them "habits de Polichinelle." Talma, in a rage exclaimed, "Habits de Polichinelle! Why, the lace of my jabot and ruffles alone is worth fifty louis a yard, and I wear it on my private costume." "And must pay for it accordingly," added the official. "Punch's clothes might pass untaxed, but Monsieur Talma's lace owes duty to our king." Talma was forced to submit.

The French lace manufacture felt the political events of

¹⁵ *Mémoires de Madame la Duchesse d'Abrantès.*

1813 to 1817, but experienced a more severe crisis in 1818, when bobbin net was first made in France. Fashion at once adopted the new material, and pillow lace was for a time discarded. For fifteen years lace encountered a fearful competition. The manufacturers were forced to lower their prices and diminish the produce. The marts of Europe were inundated with tulle; but happily a new channel for exportation was opened in the United States of North America. In time a reaction took place, and in 1834, with the exception of Alençon, all the other fabrics were once more in full activity.¹⁶ But a cheaper class of lace had been introduced. In 1832-33 cotton thread first began to be substituted for flax.¹⁷ The lace-makers readily adopted the change; they found cotton more elastic and less expensive. It gives, too, a brilliant appearance, and breaks less easily in the working. All manufacturers now use the Scotch cotton, with the exception of Alençon, some choice pieces of Brussels, and the finer qualities of Mechlin and Valenciennes. The difference is not to be detected by the eye; both materials wash equally well.

We now turn to the various lace manufactures of France, taking each in its order.

¹⁶ The revival first appeared in the Caen, Bayeux, Mirecourt, Le Puy, towns which made the cheaper laces: Arras, etc. ¹⁷ "Fil de mulquinerie."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LACE MANUFACTURES OF FRANCE.

FRANCE is a lace-making, as well as a lace-wearing, country.

Of the half a million of lace-makers in Europe, nearly a quarter of a million are estimated as belonging to France.

Under the impulse of fashion and luxury, lace receives the stamp of the special style of each country. Italy furnished its points of Venice and Genoa. The Netherlands, its Brussels, Mechlin, and Valenciennes. Spain, its silk blondes. England, its Honiton. France, its sumptuous point d'Alençon, and its black lace of Bayeux and Chantilly. Now, each style is copied by every nation; and though France cannot compete with Belgium in the points of Brussels, or the Valenciennes of Ypres, she has no rival in her points of Alençon and her white blondes, or her black silk laces. To begin with Alençon, the only French lace not made on the pillow.

ALENÇON (DÉP. ORNE), NORMANDY.

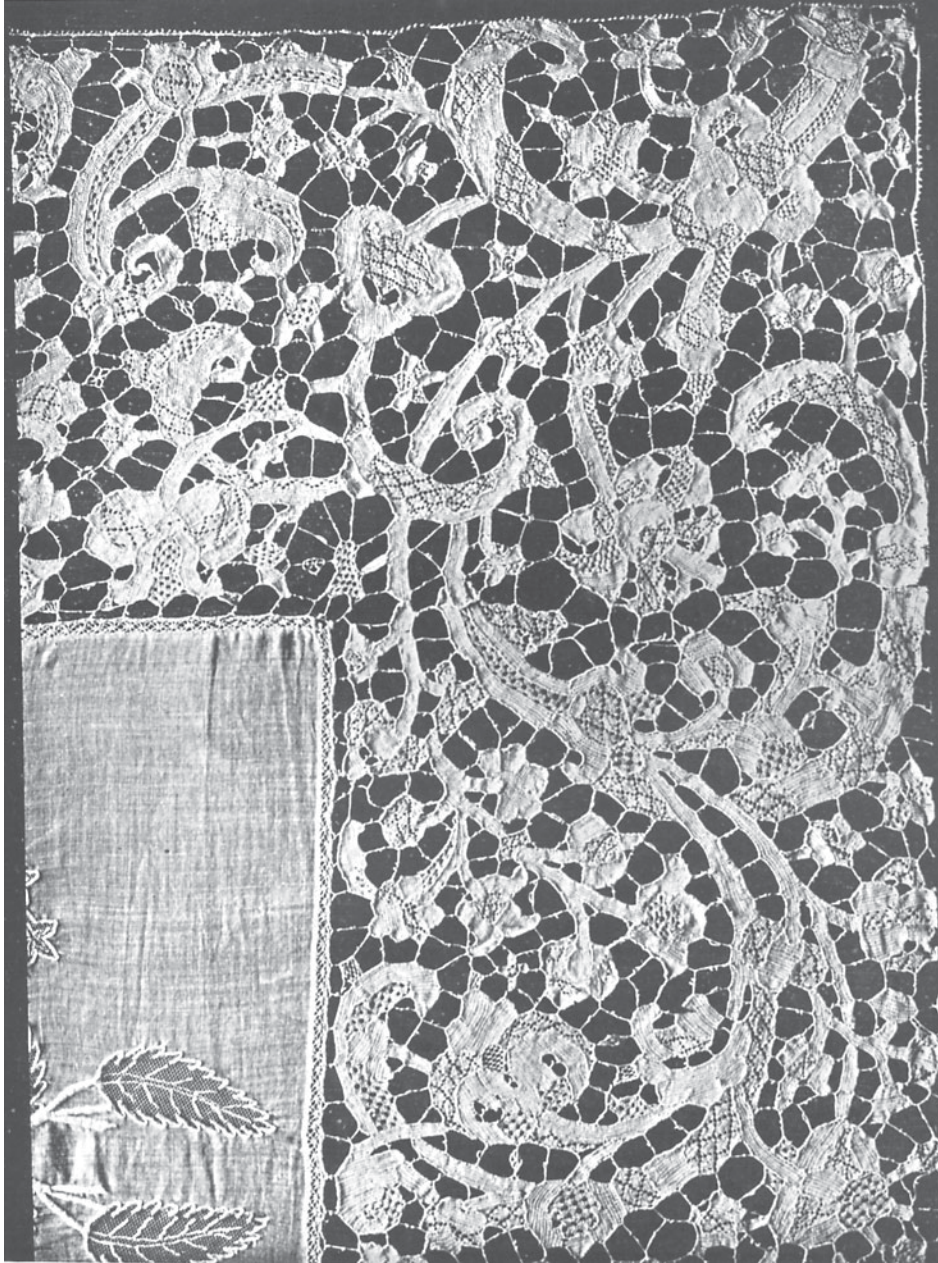
“Alençon est sous Sarthe assis,
Il lui divise le pays.”—*Romant de Rou.*

We have already related how the manufacture of point lace was established by Colbert. The *entrepreneurs* had found the lace industry flourishing at the time of the point de France. (Page 155.)

Point d'Alençon is mentioned in the *Révolte des Passe-mens*, 1661, evidently as an advanced manufacture; but the monopoly of the privileged workmen—the new-comers—displeased the old workwomen, and Colbert¹ was too despotic

¹ The name *point Colbert*, adopted in memory of the great Minister, is applied to point laces in high relief.

“La brode a toujours existé dans le point d'Alençon, aussi que dans le point de Venise, seulement dans le

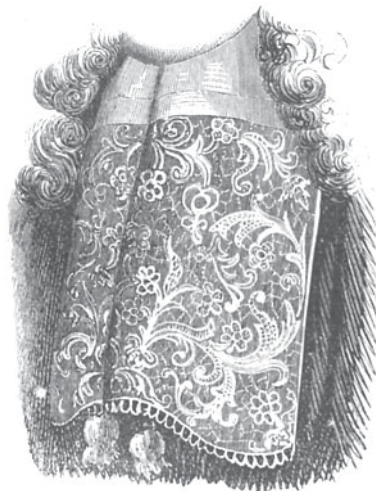


FRENCH. Border of POINT PLAT DE FRANCE to a baptismal veil of embroidered muslin.—The orderly arrangement of the “brides” differs from the Venetian, and foreshadows the “grande maille picotée.”

In the Musée Cinquantenaire, Brussels.

in his orders prohibiting to make any kind of point except that of the royal manufactory, and made the people so indignant that they revolted. The intendant, Favier-Duboulay, writes to Colbert, August 1665, that one named Le Prevost, of this town, having given suspicion to the people that he was about to form an establishment of "ouvrages de fil," the women to the number of above a thousand assembled, and pursued him so that, if he had not managed to escape their fury, he would assuredly have suffered from their violence. "He took refuge with me," he

Fig. 86.



COLBERT + 1683.—M. de Versailles.

writes, "and I with difficulty appeased the multitude by assuring them that they would not be deprived of the liberty of working. It is a fact that for many years the town of Alençon subsists only by means of these small works of lace : that the same people make and sell, and in years of scarcity they subsist only by this little industry, and that wishing to

point d'Alençon les reliefs étaient moins élevés. On ne mettait pas seulement un fil, mais trois, cinq, huit ou dix fils, suivant l'épaisseur du relief que l'on voulait obtenir puis, sur ce bourrage, se faisaient des points

bouclés très serrés de façon, que la boucle fut presque sous les fils formant le relief. C'est ce point que certains fabricants nomment point Colbert."—Madame Despierres, *Histoire du Point d'Alençon*.—Page 228, *post*.

take away their liberty, they were so incensed I had great difficulty in pacifying them."

The Act, it appears, had come from the Parliament of Paris, but as Alençon is in Normandy, it was necessary to have the assent of the Parliament of Rouen.

The remonstrance of the intendant (see his letter in Chap. IX., page 155) met with the attention it deserved.

On September 14th following, after a meeting headed by Prevost and the Marquis de Pasax, intendant of the city, it was settled that after the king had found 200 girls, the rest were at liberty to work as they pleased; none had permission to make the fine point of the royal pattern, except those who worked for the manufactory; and all girls must show to the authorities the patterns they intended working, "so that the King shall be satisfied, and the people gain a livelihood."

The "maîtresse dentellière," Catherine Marcq, writes to Colbert, November 30th, 1665, complaining of the obstinacy of the people, who prefer the old work. "Out of 8,000 women, we have got but 700, and I can only count on 250 who at least will have learnt to perfection the Venetian point, the remainder merely working a month and then leaving the establishment."

The new points are duly chronicled.² In 1677 the *Mercure* announces, "They make now many points de France without grounds, and 'picots en campannes' to all the five handkerchiefs. We have seen some with little flowers over the large, which might be styled 'flying flowers,' being only attached in the centre."

In 1678 it says: "The last points de France have no brides, the fleurons are closer together. The flowers, which are in higher relief in the centre, and lower at the edges, are united by small stalks and flowers, which keep them in their places, instead of brides. The manner of disposing the branches, called 'ordonnances,' is of two kinds: the one is a twirling stalk, which throws out flowers; the other is regular—a centre flower, throwing out regular branches on each side." In October of the same year, the *Mercure* says:

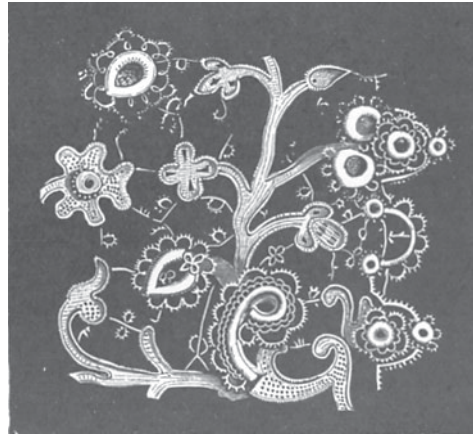
² In 1673, July, we read in the *Mercure*:—"On fait aussi des dentelles à grandes brides, comme aux points de fil sans raiseau, et des dentelles

d'Espagne avec des brides claires sans picots; et l'on fait aux nouveaux points de France des brides qui en sont remplies d'un nombre infini."

“There has been no change in the patterns,” and it does not allude to them again. What can these be but Venice patterns? The flower upon flower—like “fleurs volantes”—exactly answers to the point in high relief (Fig. 87).

A memoir drawn up in 1698 by M. de Pommereu³ is the next mention we find of the fabric of Alençon. “The manufacture of the points de France is also,” he says, “one of the most considerable in the country. This fabric began at Alençon, where most of the women and girls work at it, to the number of more than eight to nine hundred, without counting those in the country, which are in considerable

Fig. 87.



VENICE POINT.—“Dentelle Volante.”

numbers. It is a commerce of about 500,000 livres per annum. This point is called ‘vilain’⁴ in the country; the principal sale was in Paris during the war, but the demand increases very much since the peace, in consequence of its exportation to foreign countries.” The number of lace-workers given by M. Pommereu appears small, but Alençon

³ *Mémoire concernant le Généralité d’Alençon*, dressé par M. de Pommereu. 1698. Bib. Nat. MSS. Fonds Mortemart, No. 89.

⁴ Vilain, velin, vellum, from the parchement or vellum upon which it is made.

“La manufacture des points de

France, appelés dans le pays velin.”—Savary, Vol. I., p. 108.

“The expression is still used. When the author inquired at Alençon the way to the house of Mr. R., a lace manufacturer, she was asked in return if it was ‘Celui qui fait le velin?’”—Mrs. Palliser.

manufacture was then on the decline. The death of its protector, Colbert (1683), and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which reduced the population one-third, the industrial families (qui faisaient le principal commerce) retiring to England and Scotland, the long wars of Louis XIV., and, finally, his death in 1715, all contributed to diminish its prosperity.⁵

Savary, writing in 1726, mentions the manufacture of Alençon as not being so flourishing, but attributes it to the long wars of Louis XIV. He adds, "It still, however, maintains itself with some reputation at Alençon; the magnificence, or, if you like, the luxury of France, sufficing to keep it up even in war-time; but it flourishes principally in peace, in consequence of the large exports to foreign countries." Russia and Poland were its great marts: and before the Revolution, Poland estimates the annual value of the manufacture at 11,000,000 to 12,000,000 livres.⁶ The workwomen earned from three sous to three livres per day.

In 1680, in *Britannia Languens*, a discourse upon trade, it states that "the laces commonly called points de Venise now come mostly from France, and amount to a vast sum yearly."

Point d'Alençon is made entirely by hand, with a fine needle, upon a parchment pattern, in small pieces, afterwards united by invisible seams. There are twelve processes, including the design, each of which is executed by a special workwoman. These can again be subdivided, until the total number of processes is twenty or twenty-two.⁷ The design,

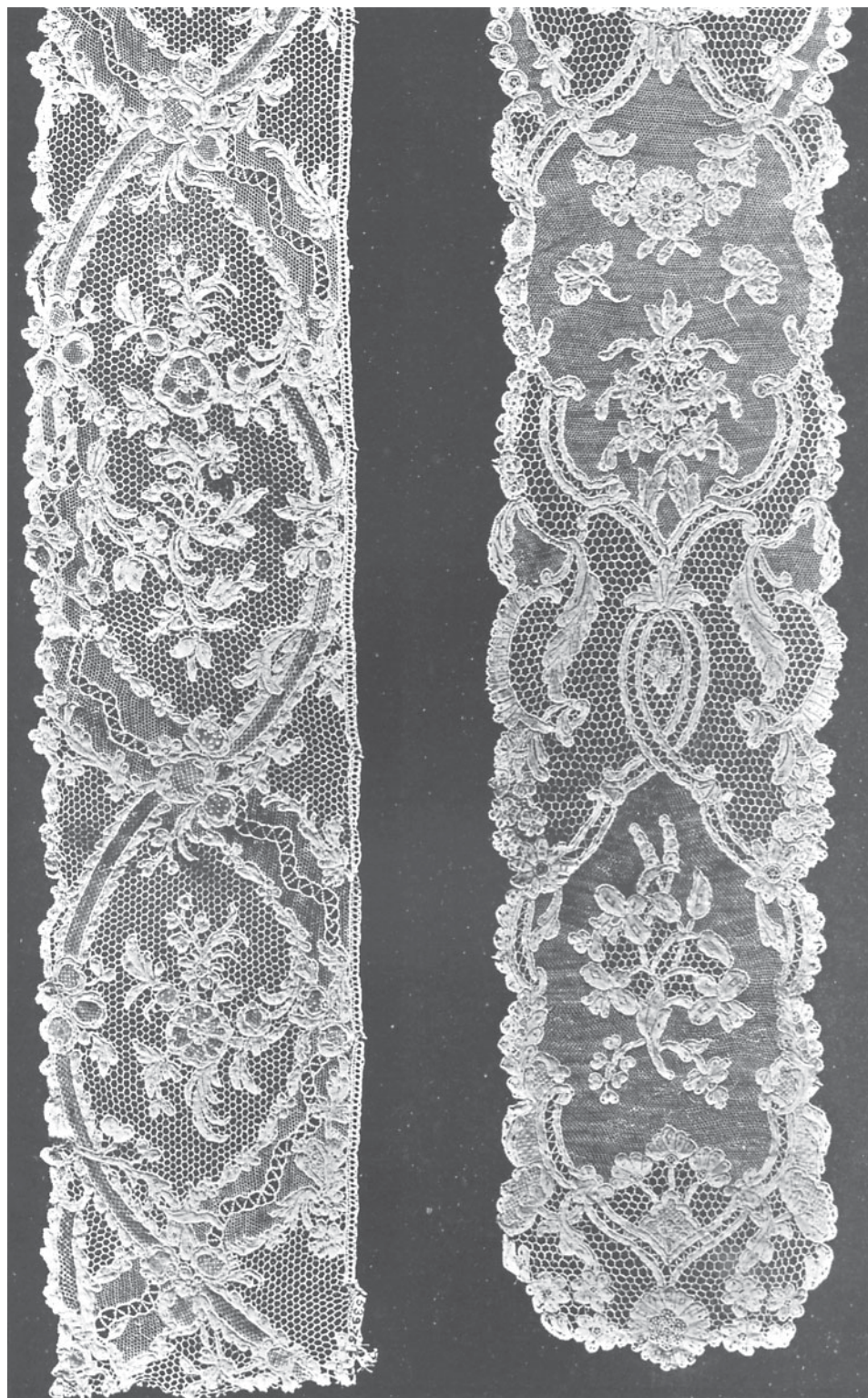
⁵ In 1788 Arthur Young states the number of lace-makers at and about Alençon to be from 8,000 to 9,000.—*Travels in France*.

Madame Despierres, however, states that only 500 or 600 lace-workers left Alençon on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, as there were not 4,000 lace-workers then in the town.

⁶ He deducts 150,000 livres for the raw material, the Lille thread, which was used at prices ranging from 60 to 1,600 livres per pound; from 800 to 900 livres for good fine point; but Lille at that time fabricated thread as high as 1,800 livres per pound.

⁷ In 1705 there were ten processes:—(1) Le dessin; (2) le picage; (3) la trace; (4) les fonds; (5) la dentelure ou bride à picots; (6) la brode; (7) l'enlevage; (8) l'éboulage; (9) le régilage; (10) l'assemblage.

Mrs. Palliser gives eighteen processes, and states that this number is now reduced to twelve. The workwomen were:—(1) The piqueuse; (2) traceuse; (3) réseuse; (4) remplisseuse; (5) fondeuse; (6) modeuse; (7) brodeuse; (8) ébouleuse; (9) régaleuse; (10) assembleuse; (11) toucheuse; (12) brideuse; (13) boucleuse; (14) gazeuse; (15) mignonneuse; (16) picoteuse; (17) affineuse; (18) affiqueuse.



FRENCH. POINT D'ALENÇON.—Eighteenth century. Period Louis XV. Needle-point lappet end and border. These show in combination the "Alençon," "réseau," and the "Argentan" hexagonal "brides." The ribands in the border show varieties of diaper pattern stitches similar to those in the "modes" of heavy Venetian points. Widths: lappet $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., border $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

engraved upon a copper plate, is printed off in divisions upon pieces of parchment ten inches long, each numbered according to its order. Green parchment is now used, and has been in vogue since 1769, at which date it is noted in an inventory of Simon Geslin (April 13th, 1769). The worker is better able to detect any faults in her work than on white. The pattern is next pricked upon the parchment, which is stitched to a piece of very coarse linen folded double. The outline of the pattern is then formed by two flat threads, which are guided along the edge by the thumb of the left hand, and fixed by minute stitches passed, with another thread and needle, through the holes of the parchment. When the outline is finished, the work is given over to the "réseuse" to make the ground, which is of two kinds, *bride* and *réseau*. The delicate *réseau* is worked backwards and forwards from the footing to the picot—of the *bride*, more hereafter. Besides the hexagonal *bride* ground, and the ground of meshes, there was another variety of grounding used in Alençon lace. "This ground consists of buttonhole-stitched skeleton hexagons, within each of which was worked a small solid hexagon connected with the surrounding figure by means of six little ties or brides." Lace with this particular ground has been called *Argentella*.⁸ In making the flowers of Alençon point, the worker supplies herself with a long needle and a fine thread; with these she works the "point noué" (buttonhole stitch) from left to right, and when arrived at the end of the flower, the thread is thrown back from the point of departure, and she works again from left to right over the thread. This gives a closeness and evenness to the work unequalled in any other point. Then follow the "modes," and other different operations, which completed, the threads which unite lace,

⁸ "The origin of this name *Argentella* is obscure, but it was presumed to imply that the lace was worked in Genoa or Venice. There is, however, no evidence of this type of lace being made there. Another theory is that *Argentella* is an Italianised title for the more delicate examples of point d'Argentan. The character of the lace and the style of the floral patterns worked upon mesh grounds are those of Alençon laces." In Specimen

1,373-74 in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection the cordonet is done in buttonhole stitches closely cast over a thread which outlines various forms in the design—a distinctive mark of point d'Alençon. And the hexagonal wheel device in this example is often to be seen introduced into flounces of point d'Alençon, of which other portions are composed of the ordinary Alençon ground or *réseau*. —A. S. Cole. Fig. 88 and Plate LVII.

parchment and linen together, are cut with a sharp razor passed between the two folds of linen, any little defects repaired, and then remains the great work of uniting all these segments imperceptibly together. This task devolves upon the head of the fabric, and is one requiring the greatest nicety. An ordinary pair of men's ruffles would be divided into ten pieces; but when the order must be executed quickly, the subdivisions are even greater. The stitch by which these sections are worked is termed "assemblage," and differs from the "point de raccroc," where the segments are united by a fresh row of stitches. At Alençon they are joined by a seam, following as much as possible the outlines of the pattern. When finished, a steel instrument, called a picot, is passed into each flower, to polish it and remove any inequalities in its surface. The more primitive lobster-claw or a wolf's tooth was formerly used for the same purpose.

Point d'Alençon is of a solidity which defies time and washing, and has been justly called the Queen of Lace. It is the only lace in which horsehair is introduced along the edge to give firmness and consistency to the cordonnet, rendered perhaps necessary to make the point stand up when exposed to wind, mounted on the towering fabrics then worn by the ladies. The objection to horsehair is that it shrinks in washing and draws up the flower from the ground. It is related of a collar made at Venice for Louis XIII. that the lace-workers, being unsuccessful in finding sufficiently fine horsehair, employed some of their own hair instead, in order to secure that marvellous delicacy of work which they aimed at producing. The specimen, says Lefébure, cost 250 golden écus (about sixty pounds). In 1761, a writer, describing the point de France, says that it does not arrive at the taste and delicacy of Brussels, its chief defect consisting in the thickness of the cordonnet, which thickens when put into water. The horsehair edge also draws up the ground, and makes the lace rigid and heavy. He likewise finds fault with the "modes" or fancy stitches of the Alençon, and states that much point is sent from there to Brussels to have the modes added, thereby giving it a borrowed beauty; but connoisseurs, he adds, easily detect the difference.⁹

When the points of Alençon and Argentan dropped their

⁹ *Dictionnaire du Citoyen*, Paris, 1761.

Fig. 88.



ARGENTELLA, OR POINT D'ALENÇON À RÉSEAU ROSACÉ.— Period Louis XV.

To face page 194.

general designations of "points de France"¹⁰ it is difficult to say. An eminent writer states the name was continued till the Revolution, but this is a mistake. The last inventory in which we have found mention of point de France is one of 1723,¹¹ while point d'Argentan is noted in 1738,¹² and point d'Alençon in 1741, where it is specified to be "à réseau."¹³

In the accounts of Madame du Barry, no point d'Alençon is mentioned—always point à l'aiguille—and "needle point" is the name by which point d'Alençon was alone known in England during the last century. The purchases of needle point of Madame du Barry were most extensive. Sleeves (engageantes) and lappets for 8,400 livres; court ruffles at 1,100; a mantelet at 2,400; a veste at 6,500; a grande coëffe, 1,400; a garniture, 6,010, etc.¹⁴

In the description of the Department of the Orne drawn up in 1801, it is stated, "Fifteen years back there were from 7,000 to 8,000 lace-workers at Alençon and its environs: the fabric of Argentan, whose productions are finer and more costly, had about 2,000." Almost all these lace-makers, some of whom made réseau, others the bride ground, passed into England, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the courts of the north, especially to Russia. These united fabrics produced to the annual value of at least 1,800,000 fr., and when they had extraordinary orders, such as "parures" for beds and other large works, it increased to 2,000,000 fr. (£80,000). But this commerce, subject to the variable empire of fashion, had declined one-half even before the Revolution. Now it is almost nothing, and cannot be estimated at more than 150,000 to 200,000 fr. per annum. "It supported three

¹⁰ Madame Despierres writes on this head that entries of point d'Alençon occur as early as 1663:—

"1663, 9 juin—contrat entre Georges Rouillon, Greffier, et Marie Leroy. . .

"1900 liv. gagnées par son industrie à faire des ouvrages de point d'Alençon."

¹¹ *Inv. de Madame Anne Palatine, Princesse de Condé*. See chap. x. note 2.

¹² In the Inventory of the Duc de Penhièvre, 1738. See chap. xi.

¹³ "Une coiffure de point d'Alençon

à réseau."—*Inv. de décès de Mademoiselle de Clermont*, 1741. Again, 1743, *Inv. de la Duchesse de Bourbon*. Bib. Nat.

¹⁴ Among the objects of religious art exhibited in 1864 at the General Assembly of the Catholics of Belgium at Malines was a "voile de bénédiction," the handkerchief used to cover the ciborium, of point d'Alençon, with figures of the Virgin, St. Catherine, St. Ursula, and St. Barbara. It belonged to the Church of St. Christopher at Charleroi.

cities and their territory, for that of Séez¹⁵ bore its part. Some black laces are still made at Séez, but they are of little importance.—P.S. These laces have obtained a little favour at the last Leipsic fair.”¹⁶

The manufacture of Alençon was nearly extinct when the patronage of Napoleon caused it to return almost to its former prosperity. Among the orders executed for the Emperor on his marriage with the Empress Marie Louise, was a bed furniture of great richness. Tester, curtains, coverlet, pillow-cases. The principal subject represented the arms of the empire surrounded by bees. From its elaborate construction, point d'Alençon is seldom met with in pieces of large size; the amount of labour therefore expended on this bed must have been marvellous. Mrs. Palliser, when at Alençon, was so fortunate as to meet with a piece of the ground powdered with bees, bought from the ancient fabric of Mercier, at Lonray, when the stock many years back was sold off and dispersed (Fig. 89). The point d'Alençon bees are appliqué upon a pillow ground, “vrai réseau,” executed probably at Brussels. Part of the “équipage” of the King of Rome excited the universal admiration of all beholders at the Paris Exhibition of 1855.

Alençon again fell with the empire. No new workers were trained, the old ones died off, and as it requires so many hands to execute even the most simple lace, the manufacture again nearly died out. In vain the Duchesse d'Angoulême endeavoured to revive the fabric, and gave large orders herself; but point lace had been replaced by blonde, and the consumption was so small, it was resumed on a very confined scale. So low had it fallen in 1830, that there were only between 200 and 300 lace-workers, whose products did not exceed the value of 1,200 francs (£48). Again, in 1836, Baron Mercier, thinking by producing it a lower price to procure a more favourable sale, set up a lace school, and caused the girls to work the patterns on bobbin net, as bearing some resemblance to the old “point de bride,” but fashion did not favour “point de bride,” so the plan failed.

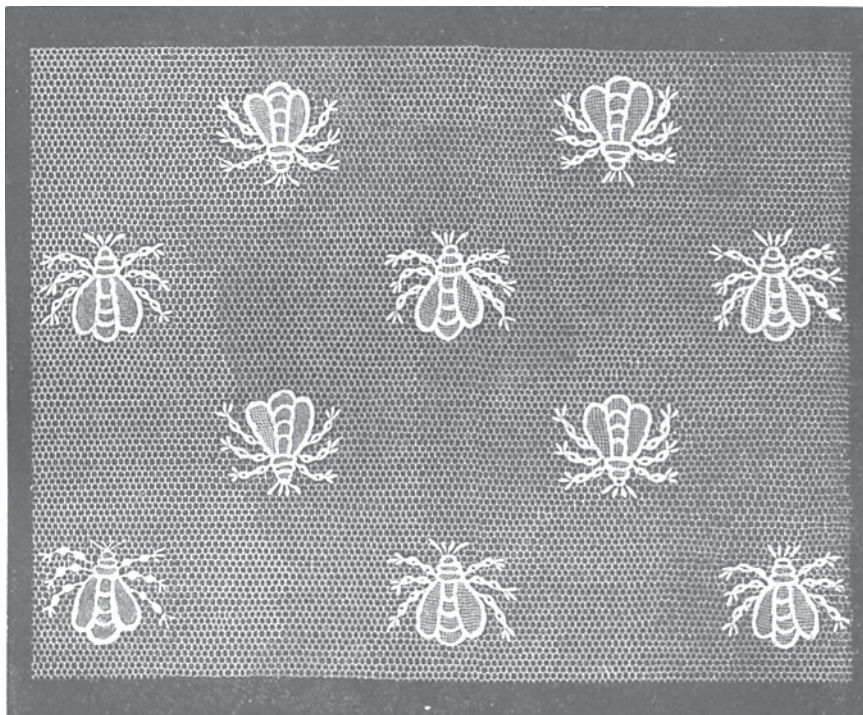
In 1840 fresh attempts were made to revive the manu-

¹⁵ Séez has now no records of its manufacture. IX. Publiée par ordre du ministre de l'intérieur.

¹⁶ *Descr. du Dép. de l'Orne.* An

facture. Two hundred aged women—all the lace-makers remaining of this once flourishing fabric—were collected and again set to work. A new class of patterns was introduced, and the manufacture once more returned to favour and prosperity. But the difficulties were great. The old point was made by an hereditary set of workers, trained from their earliest infancy to the one special work they were to follow

Fig. 89.



BED MADE FOR NAPOLEON I.

for life. Now new workers had to be procured from other lace districts, already taught the ground peculiar to their fabrics. The consequence was, their fingers never could acquire the art of making the pure Alençon réseau. They made a good ground, certainly, but it was mixed with their own early traditions: as the Alençon workers say, “Elles bâtardisent les fonds.”

In the Exhibition of 1851 were many fine specimens of

the revived manufacture. One flounce, which was valued at 22,000 francs, and had taken thirty-six women eighteen months to complete, afterwards appeared in the "corbeille de mariage" of the Empress Eugénie.

In 1856 most magnificent orders were given for the imperial layette, a description of which is duly chronicled.¹⁷ The young Prince was "voué au blanc"; white, therefore, was the prevailing colour in the layette. The curtains of the Imperial infant's cradle were of Mechlin, with Alençon coverlet lined with satin. The christening robe, mantle, and head-dress were all of Alençon; and the three *corbeilles*, bearing the imperial arms and cipher, were also covered with the same point. Twelve dozen embroidered frocks, each in itself a work of art, were all profusely trimmed with Alençon, as were also the aprons of the Imperial nurses.

A costly work of Alençon point appeared in the Exhibition of 1855—a dress, purchased by the Emperor for 70,000 francs (£2,800), and presented by him to the Empress.

A few observations remain to be made respecting the dates of the patterns of Alençon point, which, like those of other laces, will be found to correspond with the architectural style of decoration of the period. The "corbeilles de mariage" preserved in old families and contemporary portraits are our surest guides.

In the eighteenth century the réseau ground was introduced, and soon became universally adopted. After carefully examining the engravings of the time, the collection of historical portraits at Versailles and other galleries, we find no traces of Point d'Alençon with the réseau or network ground in the time of Louis XIV. The laces are all of the Venetian character, à bride, and Colbert himself is depicted in a cravat of Italian design; while, on the other hand, the daughters of Louis XV. (*Mesdames de France*) and the "Filles du Régent" all wear rich points of Alençon and Argentan.¹⁸ The earlier patterns of the eighteenth century are flowery and undulating¹⁹ (Fig. 91), scarcely

¹⁷ *Illustrated News*, March 22, 1856.

¹⁸ It only requires to compare Figs. 74, 75, 76, and 80, with Figs. 82 and 83 to see the marked difference in the character of the lace.

¹⁹ "Sous Louis XIV. il y avaient de magnifiques rinceaux, guirlandes, et cornes d'abondance d'où s'échappent de superbes fleurs. Sous Louis XV. les fabricants changèrent encore

begun, never ending, into which haphazard are introduced patterns of a finer ground, much as the medallions of Boucher or Vanloo were inserted in the gilded panellings of a room. Twined around them appear a variety of *jours*, filled up with patterns of endless variety, the whole wreathed and garlanded like the decoration of a theatre. Such was the taste of the day. "Après moi le déluge"; and the precept of the favourite was carried out in the style of design: an *insouciance* and *laisser-aller* typical of a people regardless of the morrow.

Towards the latter end of the reign a change came over the national taste. . It appears in the architecture and domestic decoration. As the cabriole legs of the chairs are replaced by the "pieds de daim," so the running patterns of the lace give place to compact and more stiff designs. The flowers are rigid and angular, of the style called *bizarre*, of almost conventional form. With Louis XVI. began the ground *semé* with compact little bouquets, all intermixed with small patterns, spots (*pois*), fleurons, rosettes, and tears (*larmes*) (Fig. 90), which towards the end of the century entirely expel the bouquets from the ground. The *semés* continued during the Empire.

This point came into the highest favour again during the Second Empire. Costly orders for trousseaux were given not only in France, but from Russia and other countries. One amounted to 150,000 francs (£6,000)—flounce, lappets and trimmings for the body, pocket-handkerchief, fan, parasol, all *en suite*, and, moreover, there were a certain number of metres of *aunage*, or border lace, for the layette. The making of point d'Alençon being so slow, it was impossible ever to execute it "to order" for this purpose.

Great as is the beauty of the workmanship of Alençon, it was never able to compete with Brussels in one respect: its designs were seldom copied from nature, while the fabric of Brabant sent forth roses and honeysuckles of a correctness worthy of a Dutch painter.

leurs dessins pour prendre les fleurs qui s'épanouent et s'ensoulent capricieusement les unes aux autres.

"Le style de Louis XVI. n'a rien de l'ampleur ni de l'élégance des styles précédents. Les formes sont arrondies ;

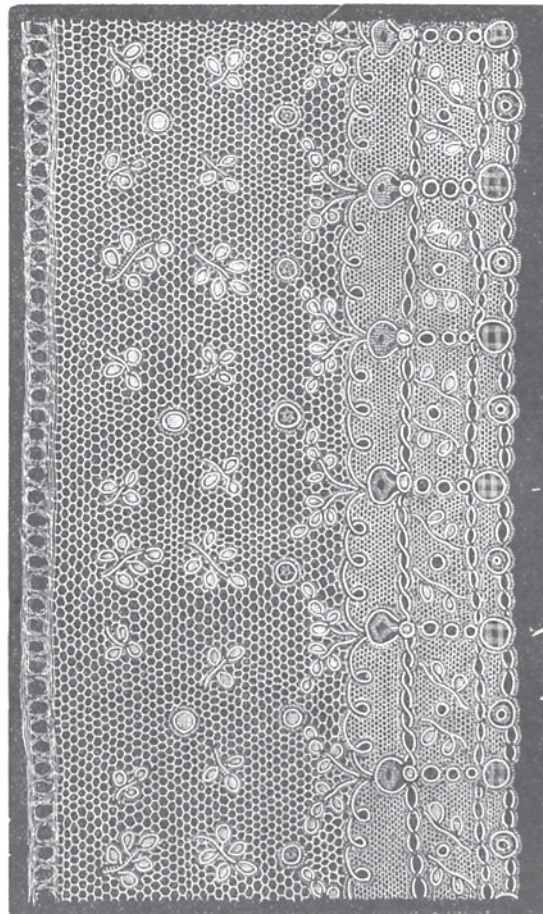
des guirlandes et des fleurettes sont la base des dessins de cette époque.

"Sous la république et le premier empire, les dessins deviennent raides" (Madame Despierres.)

This defect is now altered. The designs of the lace are admirable copies of natural flowers, intermixed with grasses and ferns, which give a variety to the form of the leaves.

Alençon point is now successfully made at Burano near Venice, in Brussels, at Alençon itself, and at Bayeux, where

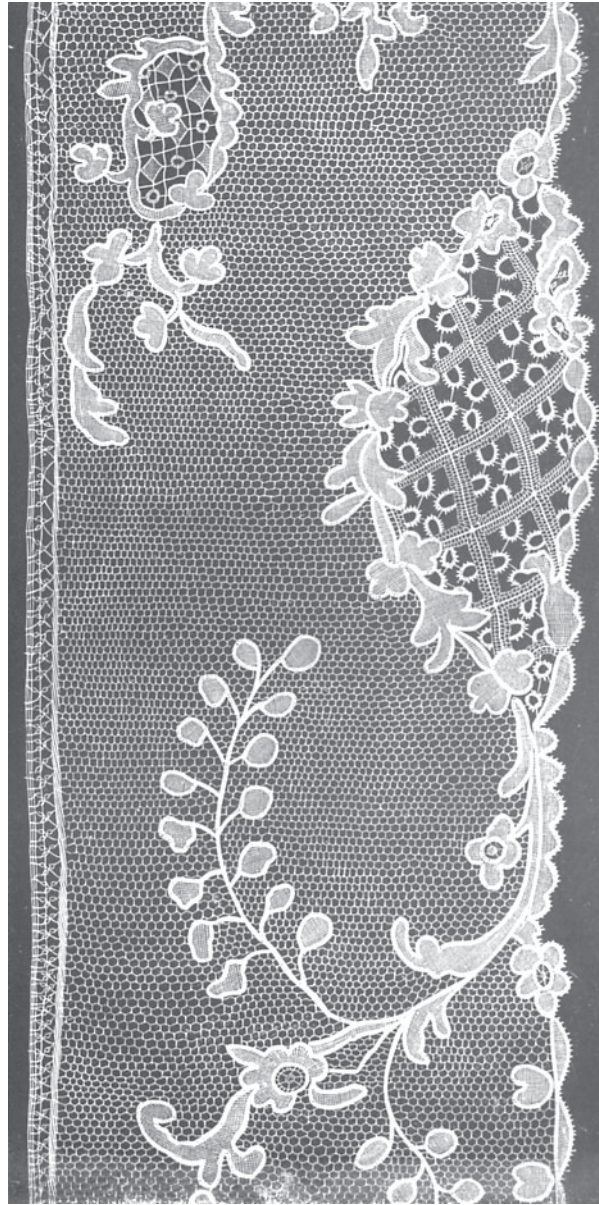
Fig. 90.



ALENÇON POINT, À PETITES BRIDES.—Louis XVI.

the fabric was introduced, in 1855, by M. Auguste Lefébure, a manufacturer of that town. Departing from the old custom of assigning to each lace-maker a special branch of the work, the lace is here executed through all its stages by the same worker. Perhaps the finest example of point d'Alençon exhibited in 1867 was the produce of the

Fig. 91.



POINT D'ALENÇON.—Louis XV. period.

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Bayeux fabric; a dress consisting of two flounces, the pattern, flowers, and foliage of most artistic and harmonious design, relieved by the new introduction of shaded tints, giving to the lace the relief of a picture.²⁰ The ground (point à l'aiguille) was worked with the greatest smoothness and regularity, one of the great technical difficulties when such small pieces have to be joined together. The price of the dress was 85,000 francs (£3,400). It took forty women seven years to complete.

In the Exhibition of 1889 in Paris, Alençon itself showed the best piece of lace that had taken 16,500 working days to make.

²⁰ This effect is produced by varying the application of the two stitches used in making the flowers, the *toilé*, which forms the close tissue, and the *grillé*, the more open part of the pattern. The system has been adopted in France, Belgium, and England, but with most success in France.



POINT D'ARGENTAN.—Modern reproduction at Burano of the flounce now belonging to the Crown of Italy, said formerly to have belonged to Paul de Gondy, Cardinal de Retz 1614-79. This is evidently wrong, as the design and execution is of fifty years later date, but it is a fine specimen of an ecclesiastical flounce. Height, 24 in.

Photo by Burano School.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARGENTAN (DÉP. ORNE).

“ Vous qui voulez d'Argentan faire conte,
 A sa grandeur arrêter ne faut ;
 Petite elle est, mais en beauté surmonte
 Maintes cités, car rien ne lui défaut ;
 Elle est assise en lieu plaisant et haut,
 De tout côté à prairie, à campagne,
 Un fleuve aussi, où maint poisson se baigne,
 Des bois épais, suffisans pour nourrir
 Biches et cerfs qui sont prompts à courir ;
 Plus y trouvez, tant elle est bien garnie,
 Plus au besoin nature secourir
 Bon air, bon vin, et bonne compagnie ! ”
 — *Des Maisons.* 1517.

THE name of the little town of Argentan, whose points long rivalled those of Alençon, is familiar to English ears as connected with our Norman kings. Argentan is mentioned by old Robert Wace as sending its sons to the conquest of England.¹ It was here the mother of Henry II. retired in 1130 ; and the imperial eagle borne as the arms of the town is said to be a memorial of her long sojourn. Here the first Plantagenet held the “ cour plénière,” in which the invasion of Ireland was arranged ; and it was here he uttered those rash words which prompted his adherents to leave Argentan to assassinate Thomas à Becket.²

But, apart from historic recollections, Argentan is celebrated for its point lace. A “ bureau ” for points de France was established at Argentan at the same time as the bureau at Alençon (1665), and was also under the direction of Madame Raffy. In a letter dated November 23rd, 1665, she writes to Colbert : “ Je suis très satisfaite de la publication à son de trompe d'un arrêt qui ordonne aux ouvrières

¹ “ Li boen citean de Roem,
 E la Jovante de Caem,
 E de Falaise e d'Argentoen.”
 — *Roman de Rou.*

² Henry founded a chapel at Argentan to St. Thomas of Canterbury.

d'Argentan de travailler uniquement pour la bureau de la manufacture royale."

Point d'Argentan has been thought to be especially distinguished by its hexagonally-arranged brides; but this has also been noticed as a peculiarity of certain Venetian point laces. The bride ground, to which we have before alluded in the notice of Alençon, was of very elaborate construction, and consists of a large six-sided mesh, worked over with the buttonhole stitch. It was always printed on the parchment pattern, and the upper angle of the hexagon is pricked. After the hexagon is formed, by passing the needle and thread round the pins in a way too complicated to be worth explaining, the six sides are worked over with seven or eight buttonhole stitches in each side. The bride ground was consequently very strong. It was much affected in France; the réseau was more preferred abroad.³ At the present time, it is usual to consider the point d'Alençon as a lace with a fine réseau, the mesh of which is more square than hexagonal in form, worked by looped stitches across horizontal lines of thread, with the flower or ornament worked in fine point stitches, closely resembling the gimp or ornament in the point de Venise à réseau, and outlined by a cordonnet of the finest buttonhole stitches worked over a horsehair or threads, while point d'Argentan is a lace with similar work as regards flower, ornament, and cordonnet, but with a hexagonal bride ground, each side of the hexagon being of the finest buttonhole stitchings. Regarding the date of the introduction of the réseau, the large hexagonal "grande bride" would appear to follow from the points de Venise, Argentan being named before Alençon à réseau. Madame Despierres, however, is of opinion that Argentan simplified the usual réseau by adopting the bride tortillé (*i.e.*, twisting the threads round each mesh instead of the more arduous buttonhole stitching). Alençon would then

³ "The average size of a diagonal, taken from angle to angle, in an Alençon or so-called Argentan hexagon was about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch, and each side of the hexagon was about $\frac{1}{10}$ of an inch. An idea of the minuteness of the work can be formed from the fact that a side of a hexagon would be overcast with some nine or ten buttonhole

stitches" (A. S. Cole). "So little is the beautiful workmanship of this ground known or understood, that the author has seen priceless flowers of Argentan relentlessly cut out and transferred to bobbin net, 'to get rid of the ugly, old, coarse ground'" (Mrs. Palliser, 1869).

have copied back the petites brides of small hexagonal twisted or buttonholed meshes in Louis XVI.'s reign. To this again succeeded the looped réseau of very thick thread.

With the view of showing that Alençon and Argentan were intimately connected the one with the other in the manufacture of lace, M. Dupont says that, whereas considerable mention has been made in various records of the establishment at Alençon of a lace factory, trace of such records with regard to Alençon cannot be found. A family of thread and linen dealers, by name Monthulay, are credited with the establishment of a branch manufactory or *succursale* for lace at Argentan.

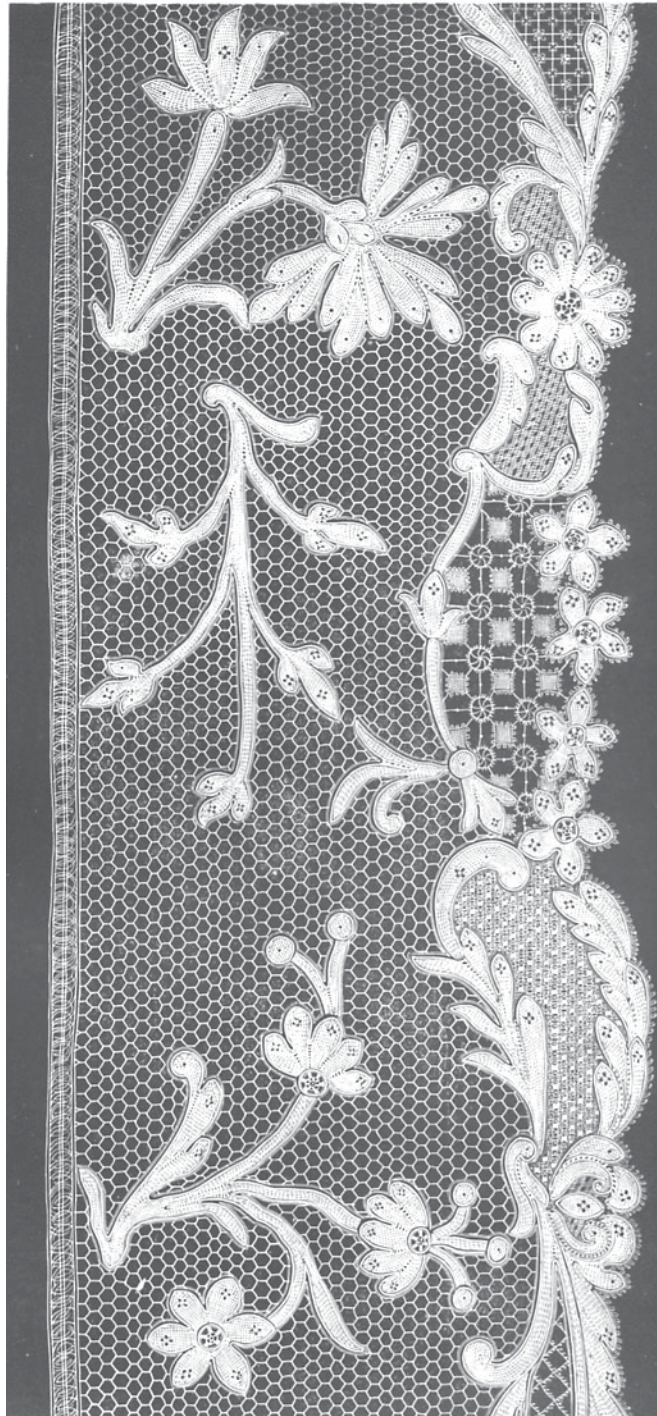
The Monthulays, then, sowed Alençon seeds at Argentan, which developed into the so-called Argentan lace. In almost all respects it is the same as Alençon work.⁴ The two towns, separated by some ten miles, had communications as frequent as those which passed between Alençon and the little village of Vimoutier, eighteen miles distant, where one workman in particular produced what is known as the true Alençon lace. If a work were made at Argentan, it was called Argentan, if at Alençon, Alençon, though both might have been produced from the same designs.

In 1708, the manufacture had almost fallen to decay, when it was raised by one Sicur Mathieu Guyard, a merchant mercer at Paris, who states that "his ancestors and himself had for more than 120 years been occupied in fabricating black silk and white thread lace in the environs of Paris." He applies to the council of the king for permission to re-establish the fabric of Argentan and to employ workwomen to the number of 600. He asks for exemption from lodging

⁴ "Les trois sortes de brides comme champ sont exécutées dans ces deux fabriques, et les points ont été et sont encore faits par les mêmes procédés de fabrication, et avec les mêmes matières textiles," writes Madame Despierres. Mrs. Palliser, on the other hand, was of opinion that the two manufactures were distinct, "though some lace-makers near Lignéres-la-Doucelle worked for both establishments. Alençon made the finest réseau; Argentan specially excelled in the bride. The flowers of Argentan were bolder and larger in pattern, in higher relief,

heavier and coarser than those of Alençon. The toilé was flatter and more compact. The workmanship differed in character. On the clear bride ground this lace was more effective than the minuter workmanship of Alençon; it more resembled the Venetian. Indeed, so close is its resemblance that many of the fine garnitures de robe, aprons, and tunics that have survived the revolutionary storm would be assigned to Venice, did not their pedigree prove them to be of the Argentan fabric" (Mrs. Palliser, 1869).

Fig. 92.



POINT D'ARGENTAN.

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soldiers, begs to have the royal arms placed over his door, and stipulates that Monthulay, his draughtsman and engraver, shall be exempted from all taxes except the capitation. The Arrêt obtained by Guyard is dated July 24th, 1708.

Guyard's children continued the fabric. Monthulay went over to another manufacturer, and was replaced in 1715 by Jacques James, who, in his turn, was succeeded by his daughter, and she took as her partner one Sieur De La Leu. Other manufactures set up in competition with Guyard's; among others that of Madame Wyriot, whose factor, Du Ponchel, was in open warfare with the rival house.

The marriage of the Dauphin, in 1744, was a signal for open hostilities. Du Ponchel asserted that Mademoiselle James enticed away his workmen, and claimed protection, on the ground that he worked for the king and the court. But on the other side, "It is I," writes De La Leu to the intendant, on behalf of Mademoiselle James, "that supply the 'Chambre du Roi' for this year, by order of the Duke de Richelieu. I too have the honour of furnishing the 'Garderobe du Roi,' by order of the grand master, the Duke de La Rochefoucault. Besides which, I furnish the King and Queen of Spain, and at this present moment am supplying lace for the marriage of the Dauphin."⁵ Du Ponchel rejoins, "that he had to execute two 'toilettes et leurs suites, nombre de bourgognes⁶ et leurs suites' for the Queen, and also a cravat, all to be worn on the same occasion." Du Ponchel appears to have had the better interest with the controller-general; for the quarrel ended in a prohibition to the other manufacturers to molest the women working for Du Ponchel, though the Maison Guyard asked for reciprocity, and maintained that their opponents had suborned and carried off more than a hundred of their hands.⁷

The number of lace-makers in the town of Argentan and its environs at this period amounted to nearly 1,200. In a list of 111 who worked for the Maison Guyard appear the

⁵ Letter of September 19th, 1744.

⁶ "Bourgoigne, the first part of the dress for the head next the hair."—*Mundus Muliebris*. 1609. "Bourgoignin, the part of the head-dress that covers up the head."—*Ladies' Dictionary*. 1694. In Farquhar's comedy of "Sir Harry Wildair," 1700, Parley, when

asked what he had been about, answers, "Sir, I was coming to Mademoiselle Furbelow, the French milliner, for a new Burgundy for my lady's head."

⁷ The offenders, manufacturers and workwomen, incurred considerable fines.

names of many of the good bourgeois families of the county of Alençon, and even some of noble birth, leading one to infer that making point lace was an occupation not disdained by ladies of poor but noble houses.

De La Leu, who, by virtue of an ordinance, had set up a manufacture on his own account, applies, in 1745, to have 200 workwomen at Argentan, and 200 at Carrouges, delivered over to his factor, in order that he may execute works ordered for the King and the Dauphin for the approaching fêtes of Christmas. This time the magistrate resists. "I have been forced to admit," he writes to the intendant, "that the workmen cannot be transferred by force. We had an example when the layette of the Dauphin was being made. You then gave me the order to furnish a certain number of women who worked at these points to the late *Sieur de Monthulay*. A detachment of women and girls came to my house, with a female captain (*capitaine femelle*) at their head, and all with one accord declared that if forced to work they would make nothing but cobbling (*bousillage*). Partly by threats, and partly by entreaty, I succeeded in compelling about a dozen to go, but the *Sieur de Monthulay* was obliged to discharge them the next day.⁸ I am therefore of opinion that the only way is for M. De La Leu to endeavour to get some of the workwomen to suborn others to work for him under the promise of higher wages than they can earn elsewhere. M. De La Leu agrees with me there is no other course to pursue; and I have promised him that, in case any appeal is made to me, I shall answer that things must be so, as the work is doing for the king." From this period we have scarcely any notices concerning the fabric of Argentan.

In 1763 the widow Louvain endeavoured to establish at Mortagne (Orne) a manufacture of lace like that of Alençon and Argentan, and proposed to send workers from these two towns to teach the art gratuitously to the girls of Mortagne. We do not know what became of her project; but at the same period the *Epoux Malbiche de Boislaunay* applied for permission to establish an office at Argentan, with the ordinary exemptions, under the title of Royal Manufacture. The title and exemptions were refused. There were then

⁸ Nov. 12th, 1745.

Fig. 93.



POINT D'ARGENTAN.—Grande bride ground. Eighteenth century.

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(1763) at Argentan three manufactures of point de France, without counting the general hospital of St. Louis, in which it was made for the profit of the institution, and evidently with success; for in 1764, a widow Roger was in treaty with the hospital to teach her two daughters the fabrication of point d'Argentan. They were to be boarded, and give six years of their time. The fine on non-performance was 80 livres. In 1781, the Sieur Gravelle Desvallées made a fruitless application to establish a manufacture at Argentan; nor could even the children of the widow Wyriot obtain a renewal of the privilege granted to their mother.⁹ Gravelle was ruined by the Revolution, and died in 1830.

Arthur Young, in 1788, estimates the annual value of Argentan point at 500,000 livres.

Taking these data, we may fix the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. as the period when point d'Argentan was at its highest prosperity. It appears in the inventories of the personages of that time; most largely in the accounts of Madame du Barry (from 1769 to 1773), who patronized Argentan equally with point d'Angleterre and point à l'aiguille. In 1772, she pays 5,740 francs for a complete garniture. Lappets, flounces, engageantes, collerettes, aunages, fichus, are all supplied to her of this costly fabric.¹⁰

One spécialité in the Argentan point is the "bride picotée," a remnant, perhaps, of the early Venetian teaching. It consists of the six-sided button-hole bride, fringed with a little row of three or four picots or pearls round each side. It was also called "bride épinglée," because pins were pricked in the parchment pattern, to form these picots or boucles (loops) on; hence it was sometimes styled "bride bouclée."¹¹

⁹ In 1765, under the name of Duponchel.

¹⁰ 1772. Un ajustement de point d'Argentan—

Les 6 rangs manchettes.	
1/3 pour devant de gorge.	
4 au. 1/3 festonné des deux costés, le fichu et une garniture de fichu de nuit	2,500 livres.
1 au 3/4 ruban de point d'Argentan, à 100 . .	175 —
Une collerette de point d'Argentan	360 —
—(Comptes de Madame du Barry.)	

1781. "Une nappe d'autel garnie d'une tres belle dentelle de point d'Argentan."—*Inv. de l'Eglise de St. Gervais*. Arch. Nat. L. 654.

1789. "Item, un parement de robe consistant en garniture, deux paires de manchettes, et fichu, le tout de point d'Argentan." (Dans la garde-robe de Madame.)—*Inv. de décès de Mgr. de Duc de Duras*. Bib. Nat. MSS. F. Fr. 11,440.

¹¹ "Une coiffure bride à picot complete."—*Inv. de décès de Mademoiselle de Clermont*, 1741.

The "écaïlle de poisson" réseau was also much used at Alençon and Argentan.

The manner of making "bride picotée" is entirely lost. Attempts were made to recover the art some years since (1869), and an old workwoman was found who had made it in her girlhood, but she proved incapable of bringing the stitch back to her memory, and the project was given up.¹²

Point d'Argentan disappeared, and was re-established in 1708; but though a few specimens were produced at the Exhibition of Industry in 1808, the industry died out in 1810.¹³ It was again revived with some success by M. M. Lefébure in 1874. In January 1874, with the assistance of the mayor, he made a search in the greniers of the Hôtel Dieu, and discovered three specimens of point d'Argentan in progress on the parchment patterns. One was of bold pattern with the "grande bride" ground, evidently a man's ruffle; the other had the barette or bride ground of point de France; the third picotée, showing that the three descriptions of lace were made contemporaneously at Argentan.

The author of a little pamphlet on Argentan, M. Eugène¹⁴ de Lonlay, remembers having seen in his youth in the Holy week, in the churches of St. Martin and St. Germain, the statues of the apostles covered from head to foot with this priceless point.

Argentan is now much made at Burano. Plate LVI. illustrates one of their fine reproductions.

¹² These details on the manufacture of Argentan have been furnished from the archives of Alençon through the kindness of M. Léon de la Sicotière, the learned archæologist of the Department of the Orne (Mrs. Palliser, 1869).

¹³ Embroidery has replaced this industry among the workers of the town and the hand-spinning of hemp among those of the country.

¹⁴ *Légende du point d'Argentan*, M. Eugène de Lonlay.



FRENCH. POINT D'ARGENTAN.—Eighteenth century. Period Louis XV. Needle-point borders. Both these have the hexagonal ground of the genre "Argentan." The upper one is chiefly filled in with the "oeil de perdrix" or "réseau rosacé." Width, 3½ in. The lower one has been pieced together. Width, 7 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

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