

Plate 25



"REGENCY POINT" LACE (1810—1820). See p. 219.

Made near Brackley, Northants, where it was known by the above name.

The grounds in the pattern are Honeycomb with plaits and Cord Ground. The net is, of course, Point.

(Lent by Mrs. Taylor, Huntsbill Court, Bridgwater.)



1. REAL VALENCIENNES. Made by a Northampton Lace-maker.
2. BLONDE LACE. Made in Bucks. See pp. 20 & 227.
3. BUCKS POINT WITH HONEYCOMB FILLINGS.

strangely enough, "Huguenots." These "Huguenot" bobbins are only $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. The *Huguenot Trollies*, which are the same size, have loose pewter rings round them like the North Bucks trollies.

To return to the North Bucks bobbins. You pick up one of these delicate little works of art and recognise that it is a perfect poem. To describe it adequately is impossible. One rarely finds two alike. The most ingenious is the *Mother-in-Babe*, now often called the *Church Window Bobbin*. The shank is hollowed into compartments, similar to those in the wooden variety, but, thanks to the good humour of the material, with an infinitely better result, and in each compartment is a miniature bobbin. The wooden bobbin could rarely boast of more than four windows but twelve windows are not unusual in the bone variety. Instead of miniature bobbins one sometimes sees beads, shot or balls of bone. Then there are *Wire Beaded Bobbins* twined about with wire on which had been threaded tiny green and red beads, and *Birdcage Bobbins* with compartments containing coloured beads surrounded with fine wire netting. I have also seen a bone bobbin ornamented with gold and set with rubies and turquoises. There are bobbins which challenged the green of the emerald or the blue of old Limoges. There are scarlet bobbins, mole brown bobbins, jade green bobbins, dull blue bobbins,

and white bobbins with green, red or blue rings. Those made by Jesse Compton and his son James of Deanshanger were stained with logwood chips and cudbear. Jesse used for inscriptions chrome yellow and green, James principally vermilion and dark blue. Toll was taken of the rainbow, the goldfinch, the butterfly. Metal and glass have been brought to bear upon them in almost every conceivable way. What a riot of colour! They baffle description.

Bobbins are also found made entirely of brass, silver, iron and pewter. The lower part of an Olney brass bobbin unscrews, releasing a baby bobbin, and the lower part of the baby unscrews, releasing a still smaller "baby." Some buffalo-horn, ivory and wire bobbins made at Mysore, India, have also drifted to England.

But with all the ingenuity and taste bestowed upon these various inventions, there is one other kind of bobbin which in human interest surpasses them all. That is the bone *Mottoed* or *Inscribed Bobbin*. Of these there are two varieties. In the one the inscription is punched in straight lines, in the other it is punched spirally, the latter being by far the more attractive. Not all inscribed bobbins are beautiful. In many of the straight lined variety the lettering is most carelessly done, for there were ignoramuses and blunderers in the bobbin making, as in every other craft. The best of the spiral bobbins, however, are worthy of the

highest praise. As a rule the inscription begins at the bottom, and the letters, always in capitals, are alternately of red or blue dots. Many of these inscriptions are memorials of births, marriages and deaths. Love inscriptions are numerous. Sometimes one meets with texts of Scripture, lines from a song or a moral sentence. Hangings, suicides, transportations, elections, and historical events are also commemorated. Sets of two, three, four and even twelve bobbins are met with.

The bobbins were almost all made locally. Mr. Abbot of Bedford was a well known manufacturer, and his name may often be seen stamped on the shank. His speciality was the wooden *Butterfly Bobbin*, and other kinds inlaid with pewter. The bobbin having been prepared in the lathe was placed in a stone mould, and another mould was placed over it. A mixture of lead and pewter was let in by means of the runners, and when the bobbin was released, a pair of scissors removed the projections. He also made bone bobbins. The shaping was done in a lathe, and the open work was cut with a fine circular saw. Names and mottoes were dotted in with a little drill. The colouring of the bands, dots, etc., was effected by dropping the bobbin into dye (generally red, blue or green) and then submitting it once more to the lathe in order to remove the colour where it was not wanted. Sometimes in bobbins that were not inscribed the

46. The
Bobbin
Maker.

whole would be left coloured except the rings and the neck which were made to resume their original state. This was the Bedford method.

The Northants method must have been rather different, for the Rev. A. J. Roberts, after referring "to the marvellous longevity of colour in the bobbins," observes: "The colours used were vermilion, ultramarine, and occasionally chrome yellow. They were bought in the powder form and mixed to the consistency required with the best gum arabic. The composition was applied with a crow quill and worked into the little indentations (made by the drill) with a kind of twirling motion. Enough was left in the little drilled spots to fill the hole but not sufficient to allow running. The bobbins were then inserted in a board in which they were left standing in a vertical position until the colours were quite dry and hard." Mr. Roberts also points out that many of the inscriptions on the bobbins are coincident with the cult of the valentine (1860—1880) as the wordings even when unaccompanied by dates sufficiently show.

People have often wondered how baby bobbins were got through the windows. Bone, however, is more flexible when it is fresh, but if the manufacturer found that his bobbin was not sufficiently pliable he used to place it in hot water, after which the baby would squeeze through without demur. Bobbins were also made by George Lumbis of

Reynold, David Haskins of Leighton Buzzard, William Pridmore of Elstow, Nat Woods of Olney, Richard Adams of Stoke Goldington, and Paul Neal of Hanslope. At Cranfield were two bobbin makers, William Brown (Bobbin Brown, as he was called) and Arthur Wright, whose father ("Master Wright") made pillow-horses, winders, &c., and went from cottage to cottage to "new-middle" the pillows. Brown's lettering is unmistakable, being spiral, bold and very neat. There were two famous bobbin makers at Deanshanger, Jesse Compton and his son James—already alluded to—(born 1824, died 1889), and four brothers named Saunders made bobbins at Waddesdon. Sir William Long of Kempston Grange had a number of beautiful bobbins made for his daughters.

Orders for bobbins, usually to commemorate christenings, marriages and deaths, were taken at shops in the Market Place, Aylesbury. At Elstow a man named Riseley went round with a stock in a little cart drawn by a dog. Many were bought at Fairs and "Village Feastes,"¹ especially at Northampton Mop (Saturday following October 11th), Bedford Fair (October 11th), Cherry Fair at Olney (June 29th), North Crawley Feast (October 11th or first Monday after that date), and Cranfield Feast (first Monday in July)—

¹ Old folks give this word two syllables.

the cost being anything "from a penny to fipence."¹

At Renhold, Beds, in days gone by, when persons got married they would take a bone from the ham or other joint provided at the wedding feast, and get the bobbin maker to fashion from it a bobbin with a suitable inscription.

It is only now and then that one comes across a lace pillow sumptuously accoutred, that is, with its original fine bobbins. This is due to two causes. First, to the Northants custom of giving, when an old lace-maker died, a bobbin to each of her friends as a memento; and secondly, to the weakness of the lace-maker when assailed by the blandishments of the antique dealer and the collector. Most bobbins made during the last twenty years are ugly.

The spangles attached to the end of a bobbin consisted when perfect of nine beads, namely, two *Top Beads*, one on each side, which were ornamental; six beads (three on each side²) called *Square Cuts*, though they are not cut glass, and a large round *Bottom Bead*, sometimes called the *Paisley*, *Venetian*, *Indian* or *China Bead*, from the towns or countries whence many of them were procured. There were also *Pompadour Beads*³ (flowered and figured), named

¹ Fivepence.

² Usually a red "cut" between two whites on each side.

³ Used at Buckingham.

after the mistress of Louis XV. The square cuts were made in England by a "lapidary," the process being quite simple. Having been melted off one at a time from a stick of glass, they were twisted on a copper wire in order to form the hole, and lastly pressed on the sides with a file which produced at once the square shape and the peculiar markings on the surface. The colours were usually red or white, but pale blue, dark blue, pale green, dark green, and amber coloured beads are sometimes seen. These old square cuts are not only far more beautiful than the modern beads, they are also much more convenient, because, not being smooth, they hold better in the spool of the bobbin-winder.

The Bottom Bead was also made on a wire. Some, which are opaque and look like enamelled pot ware, are adorned with a coloured scroll; others are transparent, and decorated with an infiltration of colour in a quaint little design. The best of the English bottom beads had special names. Thus one, the largest made, was called *Kitty Fisher's Eyes*, a reference to the beautiful 18th century actress.¹ Could any name be more charming! It is of a gray colour with circular dents which are filled with white. In the middle of each little patch of white, is a dot of red or blue. These colours were added while the

¹ She became the second wife of John Norris of Hempsted Manor, Benenden, Kent, sometime M.P. for Rye. She died in 1767. I have seen the bead at Olney.

glass was soft. Other beads were of greenstone, jade, firestone, coral, amber or cornelian; others had a number of diamond facets on each of which was stamped a pattern. Many of them were made at Bedford.

Shells and coins were sometimes added to the spangles. I have seen one displaying a spade guinea with the name and portrait of George III., and *Bird-cage Spangles* are sometimes met with, the cage being composed of small beads threaded on wire.

What with its forest of pins, many of them brightly beaded; what with its bobbins of red, emerald green, orange and bistre, all differing in design, beauty and sheen; what with the play and vagaries of light on the spangled and glittering Venetians, cuts and pompadours, a proud pillow furnished with a broad, delicate and beautiful piece of Bucks Point was a sight to electrify. Only one globe known to the lace-makers was more gorgeous—the sun himself when his solid golden disk sank amid streamers of crimson, amber and malachite green, and doubled in the flooded Ouse.

Most workers had a Bobbin Box made of oak or mahogany, measuring some seven inches by four, and two deep. It had wire hinges and fastening hook, and was often the work of one of the men folk on a winter's evening. It had two compartments, a

48. The
Bobbin Box.

small one for the small bobbins with long necks—the *Quills*, as they were called—on which the whole of the gimp from a skein was first wound ; and a large one for the *Trollies*, to which part of the gimp at a time was transferred from the quills. A bobbin box at North Crawley has the date 1743 carved on the front, and one at Emberton, which was in use about 1750, the initials “M. R.” (Mary Rogers).

Mrs. W. W. Carlile has a bobbin box measuring 14 inches by $6\frac{1}{2}$ by $6\frac{1}{2}$, with a sliding lid and two holes at the back, which enabled it to be suspended from the wall. In it was a book of patterns inscribed “Sarah Hull, Wooton,¹ Jan., 1820.” At Moulsoe I saw a very large bobbin box with the carving on the bottom, “M. C. 1700.”

Many bobbins, as we said, have names or inscriptions. Occasionally the same ^{49. Inscript-} inscription is found on a number of ^{tion Bobbins.} bobbins, though the spelling often differs. In the following lists I have in such cases put what seemed the most popular version. Often, by mistake of the bobbin maker, a letter is repeated or omitted or put in error for some other letter. However, everything is here set down just as it occurs, mistake or no mistake. It is not for us to tamper with the county records.

If the name of the village is on the bobbin it is put in Roman characters ; if it is not on the

¹ Near Northampton.

bobbin, the name of the village where it was seen or procured is put in italics.

In the case of the wooden bobbin one rarely meets with anything beyond a name or a date. On bone bobbins are hundreds of different inscriptions. A bobbin of this kind was a book in little, and the best inscriptions—those consisting of apophthegms and texts of Scripture—were intended to cheer, revive and warm the soul.

The simplest form of lettering consists of *Biblical names*, as Adam and Eve, Lot, King David, Esther, Daniel, Joel; and *English names* as Henry, Alfred, Emma. Often the names are misspelt—Feby (Phebe), Amealy (Amelia), Caravina (Caroline), Saran (Sarah Ann), Saly (Sally) Murcy (Mercy), the last named being a favourite at Cranfield, Beds. “Comfort,” which has a Puritan sound, is also met with. Sometimes an adjective accompanies the name, as “Lovely Thomas,” “Sweet William,” “Dear Jacob,” and sometimes we have both Christian and Surname :

Mary Bless. *Cranfield, Beds.*
 Henery Cox. *Cranfield, Beds.*
 Nanny Lydown. *Newport Pagnell, Bucks.*
 Sarah Best. *Waddesdon, Bucks.*
 Susanna Spencer. *Edgecott, Bucks.*
 Tome Dood. *Wilstead, Beds.*

Nicknames occasionally appear :

Quirk Nickles. *Olney, Bucks.*

The people mentioned in these lists have long been dead.

DATED BOBBINS.

Many bobbins have dates on them :

Lydia dear, 1798. *Gayhurst, Bucks.*
 M. M., 1816. *Olney, Bucks.*
 1819.
 Ann Woolaston,¹ 1821. *Emberton, Bucks.*
 Mary, 1822. *Stony Stratford, Bucks.*
 Elizar Jufcut, 1833. *Stoke Goldington, Bucks.*
 Timbrose² Fells, 1858. *Hanslope.*
 Keblib³ Ranbow, February 5, 1883.

PLACE BOBBINS.

Many bobbins have in addition to the name of a person, the name of a town or village :

BUCKS.

John Darby, North Crawley.
 William Bennett, Waddesdon, Bucks.
 Julie Wickens, Hanslope, Bucks.
 Thomas West, Emberton.

BEDS.

Job Warriën, Millbank.
 A present from Thomas Neal, Todonton.

NORTHANTS.

William Maples, Northampton.
 Eli and Joseph Barrett, Norton.⁴
 Thomas Robins, Hartwell.
 Sarah Berrell, Bozet, haged 8.
 Enoch Gardner, Bugbrook.

¹ She lived at Castle Ashby. ² Apparently a mistake of the bobbin maker's for Ambrose. ³ Caleb, evidently. ⁴ Near Daventry. Many of the families mentioned on these pages are extinct.

Paul Gardner, Bugbrook.
Sarah Spencer, Whittlebury, died Sept. 11, 18—.
Thomas Garren, Whittlebury.
Ellen Kent, Silverstone, age 20.
Henery Eight, Roughton.¹



HERTS.

Joseph Mason, Radwell.

NAME, PLACE AND DATE BOBBINS.

The following are examples of bobbins that give all three particulars, name, place and date.

BUCKS.

Thomas Lear, Maids Morton, 1843.²
John Osuald, Maids Morton, 1843.³
Jane Tarry, Olney, Bucks, 1844.
Allen Mills, Haversham Mill, 1844.
My cusan Samuel, Wickham,⁴ 1840.
Mary Lane, Broughton  1860 
Jemima King, Quainton, 1829.
Martha Bucknell, Hadwick [Hardwick], 1838.

BEDS.

William Knot, age 20, Toddington, 1854.
Isabel Jackman, Oakley, 1833.

NORTHANTS.

Elizabeth Lovesay, Syresham, 1850.
William Berrill, Bozeat, 1862.
Samuel Shirley, Pauler's Pury, 1846.

¹ Probably a mistake for Boughton, the great fair of which village begins on June 24.

² ³ Miss K. Dickinson, St. Albans, has two bobbins thus inscribed, and she also has one "Martha Burnell, Hadwick, 1838," evidently the same as Martha Bucknell. This shows that it was the custom to have a number of bobbins inscribed with the same name, no doubt for presentation.

⁴ High Wycombe.

Elizabeth Earl, Weson¹ by Wedon, 1841.
 Sarah Prestige, Moreton² Pinkney, 1840.
 John Varneu,³ Silverstone, 1846.
 Faby⁴ Tarry, Yardley Hasting [s], 1859.

OXON.

Rebecca Harris, Bodicote, 1840. [2 miles S. of Banbury.]
 Mary Ann Lines, Bicester, 1843.
 Harriot Bunce, Stratton, 1840. [Stratton Audley.]
 Hannah Hearlwell, Horton,⁵ 1832. [6 miles N.E. of Oxford.]
 Joseph Bayliss, Souldern, 1842.
 John Kirrby, Fritwell, 1832.

OCCUPATION BOBBINS.

Occasionally one comes across a bobbin that records a person's occupation. Thus at Bozeat I found one with the inscription :

Thomas Barker, Brafield Green, Sweep ;

and I learnt that this was made for a chimney sweep, who odd to say was also a lace-maker, and lived at Brayfield on the Green, near Northampton. Now and again one comes across inscriptions like the following :

Edward Markham made me this 1842. *Oxford.*

MEMORIAL BOBBINS.

Many bobbins were made to commemorate births, marriages and deaths :

¹ Weston, near Weedon Lois.
² Often spelt Morton.
³ Evidently an error for Varney.
⁴ Phoebe.
⁵ Horton-with-Studley.

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BUCKS.

Thomas Turnham, born 1760, died April 22, 1836, aged 76 yrs. *Waddesdon.*

William Simons,¹ born December 15, 1852. *Hanslope.*

Tryfena Mary Ann Elizabeth Claydon, 1864. *North Crawley.*

BEDS.

Samuel Cox,² my dear Father, di. Nov. 18, 1863, age 53. *Stevington.*

Mary Cotton, Dear Grandmother, died Dec. 21, 1865.³

James Bellington,⁴ my father, a. 52, died Nov. 25, 1855. *Cranfield.*

Grandmother Ingram. *Haynes.*

Joseph Lathall, died Feb. 7, 1875. *North Crawley.*

Mary Lancaster, my dear granemother, 1871. *Cranfield.*

Joseph Morris,⁵ my dear father. *Elstow.*

OXON.

Samuel Judkins, died 1866. *Fritwell.*

Sarah Aldridge, died July 9, 1838.

HUNTS.

Ann Maria Lovell, died Sept. 27, 1858, age 75. *Eynesbury.*

GRAVE-RAIL BOBBINS.

Now and again one comes across a bobbin that reads more like a grave-rail or a tombstone:

Charles Brouncil, died May 12, 1843, aged 22 years, at Ashwood in Kent. Lost from sight but still in mind.

This bobbin is at Hanslope where the Brownsell family resided.

¹ He was of Huguenot descent.

² ³ These belong to Miss Sophia Cowley. Samuel Cox was her great-grandfather, Mary Cotton her great-great-grandmother.

⁴ Father of Mrs. Caroline Cox, Cranfield.

⁵ Father of Miss Morris and Mrs. Carroll of Elstow.

Occasionally we come across a bobbin commemorating a 21st birthday, as:

John Blakes, aged 21, Janry 19, 1837.

GIFT BOBBINS.

Of bobbins of this kind I have met with :

A Christmas Box.

A present for one I love.

A gift from Oliver Benson, 1871.

A present from Mary Eliza Betel, Ipscombe.¹

ALPHABET BOBBINS.

These have all the letters of the Alphabet. The lettering is spiral and the characters are alternately blue and red.

FIRST DAWN OF LOVE.

Bobbins with inscriptions relative to the subject of love are, however, the most numerous of all; and, as we shall see, the authors sometimes break out into verse ! It was, however, a very clownish Catullus that sang. The following are indicative of only the First Dawn of Affection :

John Rodd is a friend of mine. *Olney*.

Thomas Shakeshaft² a friend of mine.

Love give me thy ♡.

A trifle showe respect.

¹ There is no village in England with this name. The bobbin maker must have spelt the word incorrectly.

² Shakeshaft is a Weston Underwood name.

Love for Ginette. [Jeannette.]
Those who love me I will love. *Turweston, Northants.*
Give me a kiss for a token. *Thornborough, Bucks.*
I will keep this for my love's sake. *Oxford.*

ASPIRATION BOBBINS.

Occasionally the wording is that of an aspiration rather than of a well-founded hope.

May I have those in my arms that I love in my heart.
Deanshanger, Northants.
A loving husband I long to find. *North Crawley, Bucks.*
I wish to wed the lad I love, 1842. *Olney.*
I wish to wed and love. *Oxford.*
I long to wed the lad I love. *Cranfield, Beds.*
I long to be a loving man's wife.
If you love me squeeze my hand and tell me. *Deanshanger.*
To love and live happy that is my desire. *Kempston, Beds.*
May I be happy and my love no it. *Oxford.*

"Love," says Dorothy Osborne¹ (afterwards Lady Temple), "is a terrible word, and I should blush to death if anything but a letter accused me on't."² The lace-makers of her county, however, were less bashful, as the following inscriptions on what I call Invitation Bobbins incontestably prove.

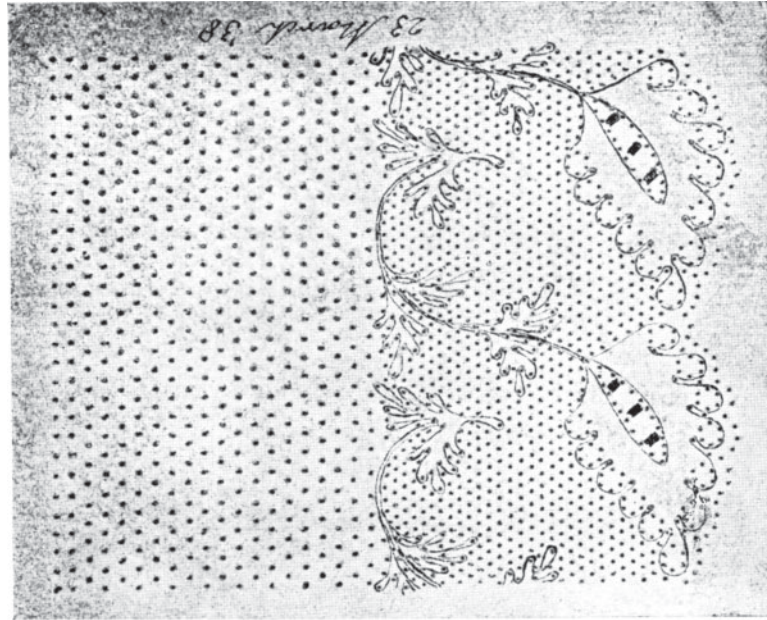
INVITATION BOBBINS.

Elizabethe wed me my love. *Winslow.*
Love come again.
Love cross my lips.

¹ Of Chicksands, Beds.

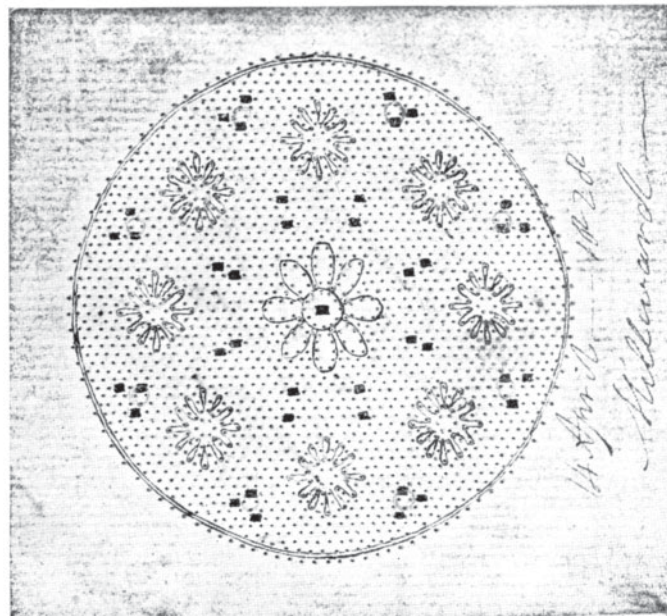
² *Letters*, p. 151.

Plate 26



DRAUGHT

Designed by Millward of Olney, and dated 23 March, 1838.
The headside is Bucks Point. The footside, Wire Ground
(French Ground).



DRAUGHT OF ROUND (CROWN) FOR BABY'S CAP.

Date on Draught, 14 April, 1828.
Below is the autograph of the Designer, Millward of Olney.
See p. 217.

Plate 27



BUCKS POINT. See p. 221.

Draught of the Lace that won the Gold Medal at
the Exhibition of 1851.

Designed by Mr. John Millward of Olney.

It was made in three widths. Mr. George Smith of Olney has the
widest, which is dated 12 Dec., 1850, and the narrowest, dated
22 Jan., 1851.

(Lent by Mr. George Smith, Olney.)

Love me, my dear.
 Sit down, my love. *Kempston, Beds.*
 Kiss me.
 Kiss me, my love and be true. *Newport Pagnell, Bucks.*
 Come and wed wed¹ with me my love.
 Come love and live happy with me. *Milton Keynes, Bucks.*
 Sweet love be mine and make me thine.
 Love the giver.
 Buy me a ring. *North Crawley, Bucks.*
 Love me truley. *Cranfield.*
 Marry me my own true love.
 Marry me and love me dear. *Oxford.*

“Come home to me if you love me,” was probably said some February evening when Venus hung like a silver lamp in the twilight. Who at such a moment could resist!

CONSTANCY BOBBINS.

Many of the bobbins indicate that the lovers of Lace-land were for the most part constant to one another. Wherever their affection was set, it was fixed like eternity. Thus we have :

Be constant and true to me, my dear, and I will be your
 loving wife.
 I love the still.
 Absent maks the hart grow fonder. *Olney.*
 A true lover's hart will never change. *Wolverton.*
 Constant prove to me, my love. *Waddesdon, Bucks.*
 I love my choice too well to change.
 Prov my love constant.

¹ The words repeated by mistake of the bobbin maker. Many other mistakes of this careless personage will be noticed.

If you prove true I will love you. *Olney.*
 To my dear I will prove true. *Oxford.*
 I'll forever love the giver. *Weston Underwood, Bucks.*
 I will wed with him who loves me dearly.
 A true love is sweeter than honey.

Except a trifel from a friend
 Whose love from you wil nevr end.

Love me for ever, my dear.
 Love me constant. *Stevington, Beds.*
 Love me and forsake all other.¹ *Fritwell, Oxon.*
 Love me now and forsake me never. *Sherington.*
 My boys if I am raged² my heart is true.
 I'll vow to be true.
 My dear love me or leave me alone. *Oxford.*
 I love thee as the glad bird loves the freedom of its
 wings. *Deanshanger, Northants.*
 My ♡ above the world, love. *Ravenstone, Bucks.*
 Ofttimes my love I think on thee.
 Let love abide till death divide.
 Lads cannot love two lasses at once.
 Lads never court to lasees at once.

My mind is fixt I cannot rainge
 I love my choice too well to change.

My mind is fixt, my heart doth beat,
 I love my love, He kisses sweet. *Eynesbury, Hunts.*

My fortune is with my love and me. *Weston Underwood.*

U love me as I love U.
 Nothing but death shall part us too.

We will love each other while we have breath
 Nothing shall part us save only death.

Great Linford, Bucks.

¹ Also with word "others," same village.

² Ragged.

The following is on a Gimp Bobbin, which is an inch and a half in circumference :

I will be constant true and just
Unto the one that I love best.

I. W.; W. T. 1838. *Ravenstone, Bucks.*

The initials stand for Isabel Warren and William Tebbey—Mrs. Course's mother and father.

A RIFT IN THE LUTE.

Alas! sometimes there was a rift in the lute. Now and again the heart of the village lad did not respond to eyes that sparkled when he approached; now and again a giddy village maiden was given to flirtation; sometimes eager ears listened for footsteps at an appointed time and listened in vain; often bitter tears were shed; and so we have :

Be kinb and true harted.

It is hard to be slited by one as I love.¹ *Emberton, Bucks.*

Love don't be cruel. *Stevington, Beds.*

Don't vex me.

Love is sharr to feel the smart.

Lovs a sharp thorn. *Emberton, Bucks.*

Keep your temper, my dear. *Milton Keynes, Bucks.*

Forsake me not my lovely dear. *Oxford.*

Tis hard to love and not be loved again.

Often it is to be feared the cry went out from

¹ This inscription, with variations in the way of spelling, is met with in almost every village.

some gentle maiden who did not deserve to suffer, "Oh my love, my love, you are breaking my heart." Even when proof was wanting that anything had gone wrong, the maiden as she shuffled her bobbins sometimes had misgivings, and black thoughts came and sat in a circle round her, otherwise she would not have expressed herself as follows :

Love me or leave me alone. *North Crawley and Olney.*

Love me or leave me.


Forsake me not but love me as I love you.

Weston Underwood.

Forget me not, 1874. *Cranfield, Beds.*

Keep your promise.

Love dont be false. *Eynesbury, Hunts.*

Let not malice reach my true love's . *Emberton, Bucks.*

Love me and no one else.

If George or Joseph suffered in any way, the sympathetic Mary Ann or Susan would have a bobbin inscribed :

My hart hakes for you. *North Crawley, Bucks.*

Mr. J. S. Elliott has a bobbin which came from Bedfordshire, with the curious inscription :

Da her. I love her but I'll never go nigh her no.

A girl may be almost everything that is engaging, but one unpleasant characteristic may mar the picture. We can sympathise with the love-lorn youth who had this inscription stamped on the bobbin, though we may regret that he in this way

stereotyped his feelings, for I do not think we should be wronging him by the assumption that "Da" is an abbreviation for an expletive which, it is to be hoped, he was not in the habit of using.

ANNABEL LEE BOBBINS.

Sometimes, as in the case of Annabel Lee of Poe's beautiful poem, a kinsman interfered between the lovers. Hence we have :

No father or mother shall part me and my love.

DECLARATION BOBBINS.

Often on the bobbin the maiden boldly inscribed the direction in which her passion lay :

Tis you my dear I wish to wed.
Richard Brooks is the lad I love. *Cranfield, Beds.*
My dear George it is you that I love.
I love U.
I love you, my dear, that is true. *Fritwell, Oxon.*

And George or Richard would offer to Mary Ann or Jane a bobbin worded :

The gift is small but love is all. *North Crawley.*
Fenny Stratford, Bucks.

QUESTION BOBBINS.

Who is your lover my darling?
Mother when shall I marry?
Do you ever think of me love? *Oxford.*

BLIGHTED LOVE BOBBINS.

Sometimes a lover was false beyond hope, and instances of this kind had for outcome :

My love's been false to me and she has been my ruin.
I wonce loved them that ner loved me. *Stoke Goldington,*
Bucks.

Let no false lover gaine my hart.
My love as broken my poor heart.
Place no confidence in young men.
Young men are deceitfl.

When Lesbia was false Catullus suggested that a woman's promise might very well be engraved on wind or water, but in Bedfordshire faithlessness revealed itself chiefly in the sterner sex. Kempston in particular was prolific in cross-wounded¹ hearts.

My love is lost for ever. *Kempston, Beds.*
Sweet is the love that meets return but
bitter when it meats a frown. *Kempston.*

The following, to use a Bucks expression, is "sour as vargis."²

X U R and X U B and
XX U R to me. *Kempston, Beds.*

On one bobbin that I have seen the initials of the culprit are given—and it is a lady!

Richard Cobb slited by one A. S.

Fortunately for the memory of "A. S." the name of the village is unknown.

Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether the allusion is to falseness on the part of a lover or to a temporary separation, as for example:

Tis hard to part from my sweetheart. *Turweston.*

¹ One wound on the top of another crossways as it were.

² Verjuice.

SATISFIED LOVE.

Many of the bobbins, however, indicate that in the quiet tree-surrounded villages of Beds and Bucks the course of love ran as smoothly as the rivers in their level valleys. In the following, for example, there is an unruffled satisfaction :

I love my love, he his true to me.

I love my love, because my love loves me.

Siting on a stile, Mary, happy as the day.¹ *Hanslope, Bucks.*

The sight of my love fills my ♡ with joy. *Turweston.*

Dont I love my Nance. *Kempston, Beds.*

Hearts united must live contented.

The satisfaction and astonishment of Suky, a little, timid, mouse-like thing, glancing furtively at you from under her eyes—a girl who had never expected to have a lover—is embodied in the two words,

Fancy me! *Fritwell, Oxon.*

WEDDED BLISS BOBBINS.

On hundreds of bobbins George promised to be true to Susan, and Susan to love George for ever. But was he? and did she? I regret to say that bobbins commemorative of wedded bliss are very scarce. It has been said that if courting could be continued after the wedding, the marriage state would be elysian. Of bobbins on which appear

¹ "I'm sittin' on the stile, Mary," is the first line of Lady Dufferin's song, "Lament of the Irish Emigrant," written in 1850.

both the husband's name and the wife's I have heard of the following :

John Jones. Elizabeth Jones. 1836.
Levi Meakens and Sarah Meakens.
Newman Brier. Sophia Brier.

Who these good people were I do not know, but Meakins is an Olney name.

The next inscription leads us to picture the bobbin maker standing at the door of Nancy's thatched cottage and asking what she will have put on the new bobbin. Nancy, after being long lost in thought, biting all the while the hem of her pinafore, at last suggests, "Love is . . .," and hesitates. At last, with a flash of inspiration, she bursts out with, "Love." No better definition is possible, and a week later the bobbin maker duly delivers the pretty treasure, and on it in bright red and blue dots twining round the shining white is the inscription,

Love is Love.

Perhaps it was the one brilliant remark she made in her life; but the most torpid are, in God-given moments, capable of great sayings.

LOVE IN A HURRY.

Sometimes Mary Ann was in a desperate hurry, with the result of

Marry me quick. *Eynesbury, Hunts.*

Marry ma quick. *Moulsoe, Bucks.*

Marry me quick and love me for ever. *Newport Pagnell.*

Sometimes it was William who was in a hurry,
as in :

Marry me quick and love me for ever.

To love and live happy is my desier, William Tebbey.¹

Ravenstone.

“I wants a husband” (*Olney*) is very plain speaking, and seems to tell of one who was weary of waiting for “love’s chemick gold.”

THE SAILOR.

Pretty girls received more bobbins than their share. “An old woman,” says Miss Isemonger, “who died not long ago and had been a beauty in her youth, had a wonderful collection of such offerings, from a wooden one, rudely carved with two names and a heart between them, to one most ingeniously wrought after the fashion of Japanese ivory work, in a series of three, one inside another,” but she most prized a bobbin which was inscribed :

When this you see, remember me, and bear me in your
mind

For all the world is naught to me as long as you are kind.

This is tattooed in red and blue. A tiny silver anchor and a bit of coral threaded among the beads of the spangle, suggest that the bobbin was

¹ Mrs. Course's father.

the gift of a sailor lad to his Buckinghamshire sweetheart. Was he faithful? Did they marry? Were they happy? The bobbin is silent.

Another bobbin, presumably made to commemorate the return of a sailor who had been given up for lost, is stamped:

Jack alive. *Lavendon, Bucks,*

the bottom bead being a foreign nut; and other bobbins whose spangles are adorned with Indian berries also bring us a whiff of the sea, and present us with pictures of this same Jack with his head in his hammock and his heart in some cosy Buckinghamshire or Bedfordshire cottage; and of Jane busy over her pillow, while an occasional sigh escapes her when she reflects on "what a sailor suffers." So it is not surprising that one of her bobbins is inscribed:

My love is at a distance but ever in my mind,
and another,

I long to see my love once more.

THE SOLDIER.

The request on another bobbin, "Dont list love" (*Lavendon*), is not without pathos. John Clare, the Northants poet, has told¹ how, when the recruiting sergeant entered a village, strutting in lace and ribbons down the street before his men,

¹ *Village Minstrel*, LXVI. Published in 1821.

“the tuteling fife” and the “hoarse rap-tapping drum” accompanying them, the lads went almost mad with excitement and the girls were tempted to slight their old sweethearts. But one sturdy Lavendon lad hesitated, and one little Lavendon maiden, unmoved by the blandishments of the “dinkin”¹ soldiermen, or the rat-tat-tat of the drum, whispered, with a break in her voice and a tear in her eye, “Don’t list, love!”² Of course he yielded to the entreaty, and of course a kiss from a red little mouth, and two loving arms thrown round his neck were his delightful recompense. And what does this mean, “If you love me, come away”? Here again we seem to see Lavinia balancing her charms against the recruiting sergeant’s cockade. Or is she trying to lead Caleb out of bad company?

PATHOS.

There is pathos, however, in not a few of the inscriptions. The following seems to have been uttered by way of reproof to some “cockered” child who had been behaving badly:

I had a mother once like you. *Kempston, Beds.*

After that, it is refreshing to read,

I love my mother;

while

Dont cry for me

was probably a death-bed utterance.

¹ From dink, to dress out.

² Also occurs as “Love don’t you list.” *Stoke Goldington.*

NAUGHTY INSCRIPTIONS.

Then there are inscriptions which can only be described as naughty, as for example :

Kis me quck my mome is comin. *Weston Underwood.*

Kiss me quick my mother is coming. *Stoke Goldington.*

One would like to know more about the girl who unblushingly made this request, but perhaps she did blush when the bobbin maker, having executed her order, put the pretty bauble with its bright dots and gay spangles into her hands. What was her name? Was the spelling her own or the bobbin maker's? One would rather get a reply than learn the identity of the Man with the Iron Mask.

But if the preceding inscription is naughty, the following is worse still :

Dont tell my mother. *North Crawley; Newport Pagnell;
Cranfield, Beds.*

"I love the boys" (*Hanslope, Bucks*) is decidedly brazen, while "I do so love the lads" is even worse; and one can only shake the head sadly at the frontless girl who wrote :

If I love the boys that is nothing to nobody.

We can excuse, however, the Ravenstone maiden who gave the order for

If I love a lad in Eavenstone¹ that's nothing to nobody,

¹ The E for R, the first letter of the word, is a mistake no doubt of the bobbin maker.

for it is clear that her affections were set on only one lad; and as all Ravenstone lads are good her choice must have been a happy one.

REFUSAL BOBBINS.

Sometimes Mary Ann would not have George at any price, and her refusal takes the following form :

Too wise you are too wise you be
I see you are too wise for me. *Kempston.*

An Oxfordshire maiden repels an admirer with the chilling information,

No lodge here.

THE BOISTEROUS LOVER.

Sometimes in his excess of fondness the gentleman disarranged the lady's toilette, leading her to admonish him as follows :

Kis me, court me hug me tite, dont crump my colr
tonight. *Kempston, Beds.*

As she had made that collar of beautiful Bucks Point on the pillow with her own fingers, Joseph ought to have been more careful. It may have been this same Joseph who said,

Well, my beauty, how I love the :

but "Huddle me, cuddle me" (*North Crawley*), seems to have come from a lady.

Sometimes when in the presence of his sweet-

heart George in his excitement was more apt to bellow than to coo, whereupon Mary Ann, who was not at all deaf, and who, moreover, did not want all Cranfield to hear what was going on, made the observation :

Marry me quick and lowley speak. *Cranfield, Beds.*

But in other villages also the undertone was preferred, as for example :

Whisper soft to me my lovely dear. *Stoke Goldington, Bucks.*

Fervent indeed must have been the emotions which inspired :

Squze me if I do Jene Johnson ;

or,

My lovely, my beauty, my sweetest honey,
No tounge can expres how I do love thee.

My love is like a blooming rose. *Moulsoe.*

“Spelling,” says Stendhal, “is not genius.”
Neither is it devotion.

Sometimes this bovine method of courting not only crumpled Sare-Ann’s collar, but set at defiance the most elementary rules of grammar ; but when George’s arm is round Sare-Ann’s waist how can he be thinking of the regulations laid down by the excellent Lindley Murray and other equally approved precisians, especially as he never heard of them ; and he exclaims, while the lady’s cheeks are suffused with blushes :

My love you am the pride of my ♥ ;

and in order to accentuate the declaration he has the same inscribed on a bobbin.

THE BASHFUL LOVER.

But if the attentions of some of the young gentlemen were as eager and ungainly as those of the hippopotamus or the mastodon, now and then a lover was either obtuse or bashful—so difficult is it, in a crooked world, to encounter the happy mean. In the latter case the young lady had to encourage him with such pointed admonitions as :

Love dont be shy. *Oakley, Beds.*

Kiss me quick, don't be shy.

William kiss me quick and dont be shy

For you love kissing, dear, as well as I.¹

All of a sudden the timorous William becomes bold as a lion. A sounding salute follows the unequivocal invitation, and Eliza, hardly prepared for so vigorous a response, has gently to reprove him for sending her hat all North Crawley.² Doubtless, however, Eliza was wise to offer the invitation, and William sensible to accept it, for does not the poet sing :

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may !”

Kissing, whether performed “quick” or more

¹ Mrs. Ward, Manchester, has this bobbin.

² A saying in North Bucks. It refers to North Crawley brook, which rises near Wharley Farm, Cranfield, runs north to Hardmead, west to Chicheley, and south-west to Newport Pagnell, where it joins the still crooked Ouse. Another saying is, “Your parting is like Crawley Brook”—that is, the parting of your hair.

deliberately, is now out of all question, for Eliza is under the turf and William, with bent back, "rheumatiz," and other troubles, hobbles, and only just hobbles, through the village street.

The following were also addressed to lovers who had shown themselves provokingly shy :

Buy the ring. *North Crawley, Bucks.*

Love buy the ring. *Olney; Stevington, Beds.*

Love bye the ring. *Milton Keynes.*

Kiss me quick and dont be shy. Love me till the day
I die. *North Crawley.*

Sometimes "Dear William," too shy even to place his gift of a bobbin in the hands of "Sweet Kitty," would steal into her mother's cottage in the twilight, seizing an opportunity when nobody was at home, and attach surreptitiously on her pillow his pretty love token, inscribed :

Take this small gift I freely give
May God protect you while you live.¹

Kitty, however, would be no shrewd Buckinghamshire girl if she did not guess who put it there. Her slon-black² eyes would sparkle with delight when she read the dotted epistle, and the chances are that she would order another bobbin to be made of the same pattern, with the wording :

I will keep this for my love's sake;

or she would send one to William lettered, "A

¹ Miss Saunders of Worcester has one with "And the Lord" instead of "May God." It came from Olney.

² "Slon," Bucks for "sloe."

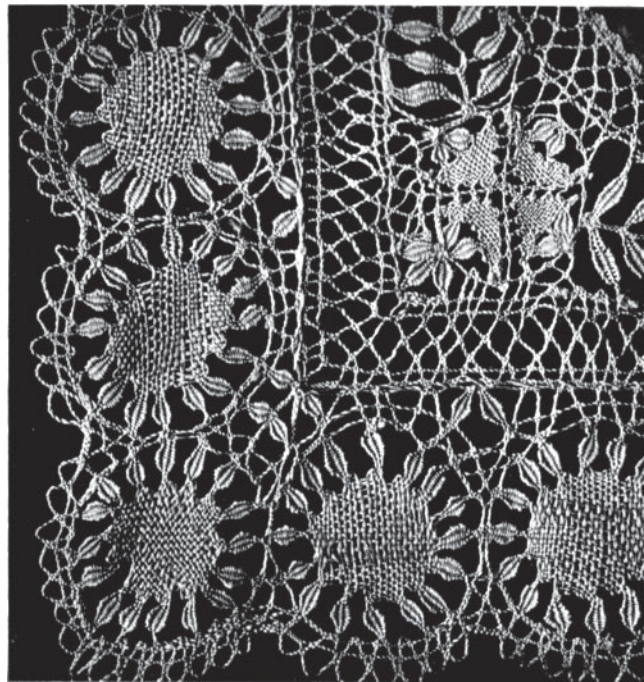
Plate 28



MALTESE HANDKERCHIEF BORDER.

Made by Mrs. W. Crowsley.

On the headside is the *Turnpin* or *Purl Edge* (consisting of tiny loops, called *Purls* or *Turnpins*). A series of *Legs* joins this edge to a strip of *Clothwork* (called the *Trait*). Next in the corner scallop occurs the *Wheat-ear ornament*, each ear (Bedfordshire fashion) having square ends. Then comes a filling of Honeycomb, each filling being separated from the next by a patch of *Half-stitch*. In the middle of the Honeycomb Work in the scallop is a patch of *Clothwork*. A feature of the work is the *Raised Plait*.



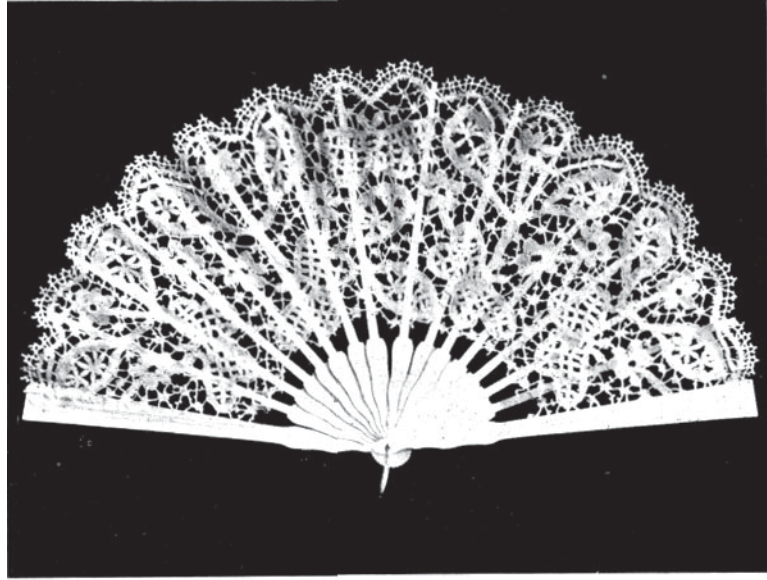
SILK MALTESE HANDKERCHIEF.

Made at Malta, 1917.

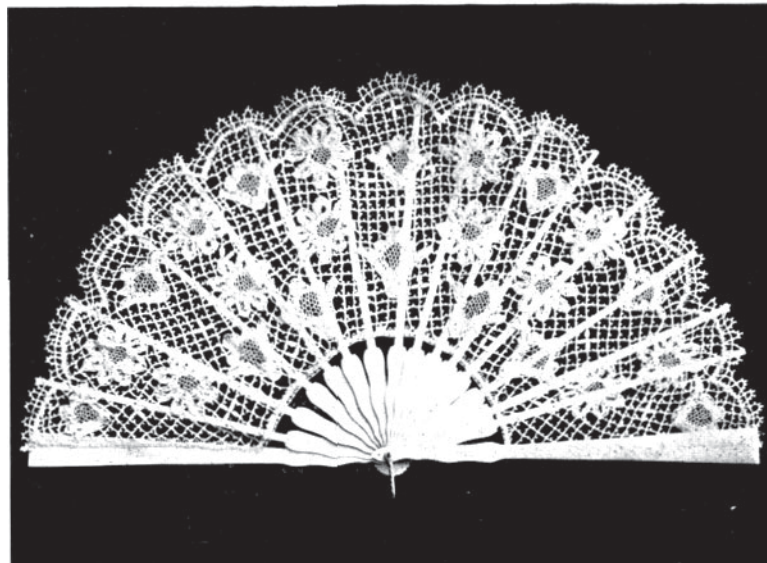
Maltese made at Malta differs from that made in Bucks and Beds in that it has (1) Maltese Cross; (2) "Wheat ears" with pointed ends; (3) No purl edge. It will also be noticed that it reveals in plaits.

(Lent by Miss W. Field, Olney.)

Plate 29



BUCKS-MALTESE FAN. MADE AT OLNEY.



BUCKS-MALTESE FAN. MADE AT OLNEY.

small present for W. Robbins."¹ *Olney*. Another inscription of a similar nature is, "Keep this for my sake, my darling."

THE MEN PROPOSE.

We should, however, be wronging the girls of the Newport and Wymersley Hundreds² were we to assume that most of the courting was done by them. The following inscriptions indicate the voice of the stronger sex :

Let me fix the wedding day my dear.
When will you fix the wedding day?
Come love and be happy with me my dear. *Olney*
and Whitchurch, Bucks.
Sweet love be mine. *Weston Underwood, Bucks.*
Meet me by moonlight alone;

and meet they would in front of the Shiel Hall,³
at Walker's birge,⁴ or by the spinney.

This ring is round. So is a shilling
I am ready when you are willing.
Love when will you marry me. *North Crawley.*
Love will you marry?

Lavinia listens with reddened cheeks and lowered eyes; but there is only one word to suit the occasion, a very small one—and, of course, she says it.

¹ Robbins is an old Olney name. It occurs 33 times in the Parish Register, the last entry being in 1762.

² Formerly the counties were divided into Hundreds only. Newport Hundred is part of N. Bucks, Wymersley of E. Northants.

³ A quaint Early Georgian building, formerly on Olney Market-place.

⁴ A birge is a bridge over a brook. "Walker's" is on the Lavendon Road.

CRYPTIC INSCRIPTIONS.

PUZZLE BOBBINS.

It is convenient to a lover who has a window in his breast to be able to draw the curtains sometimes, hence there were puzzle bobbins on which the letters of each word were purposely arranged in wrong order, either from caprice or with the object of preventing a stranger from arriving at the meaning. Some may be in cypher and therefore unreadable without a key, but when the name of the village is known research sometimes furnishes the meaning. Of these I have met with twelve. Mr. J. S. Elliott of Bewdley has the following:

(1) YM RDAE I LEOV OUY SAS SRIBD OLVE SHEREIE¹;

which is to be read :

My dear I love you as birds love cherries.

Miss Agnes E. Ellis of Leicester has a bobbin inscribed :

(2) YM ∴ DREA ∴ FI ∴ UYO ∴ EVOL ∴ EM ∴ EMKA ∴
EM ∴ ROYU ∴ ERIBD ∴

My dear, if you love me, make me your bride.

Mrs. Taylor of Huntspill Court, Bridgewater, has a bobbin which reads :

(3) WBIELTLIOAYMDWUONOKLLOENY. 1844.

the letters being alternately red and black. This

¹ It will be noticed that in "sas" the bobbin maker has (probably by mistake) put a letter too much, and that in "sherie" he has left out a letter and put an "e" for a "c."

too, puzzling as it may seem at first view, really presents very little difficulty. It is evident that the bobbin maker intended the red letters to read "William Dunkley," and the black to read "Betsy, Wooton;" but in endeavouring to mystify others he fell into error himself; for in one place he lost the sequence of the letters—making part of "William" go from red to black. He also put an o instead of an s in Betsy. However it is clear that the inscription is "William" (and) "Betsy Dunkley, Wooton." The bobbin came from Paulerspury (Northants), from which the village of Wooton is six miles distant. Dunkley was a common name at Wooton and the adjoining village of Collingtree. There was in 1894 a William Dunkley at Paulerspury.

Mrs. Taylor has another which runs:

(4) MAHER SHALAL HASH BAZ WYHES,

which came from Olney.

By turning to Isaiah viii. 1—4 we seem to get a clue. Possibly the inscription should be read, "My father and my mother"—the letters in WYHES being the initials of their names. Such inscriptions as "John and Ann Lovel my father and my mother" are common. But the H in the middle of the word WYHES may be a mistake of the bobbin maker's for K. The name WYKES occurs 44 times in the Olney parish registers. If so the inscription may commemorate some sudden stroke of fortune, and may mean, "Haste to the

spoil, Wykes!" It may be remarked that most of the Olney lace-makers were deeply read in the Scriptures, and fully acquainted with the meaning of Scripture terms. The latter interpretation is more likely to be the correct one than the former.

A worker at Hanslope, Bucks, has a bobbin inscribed :

(5) IL ON AT DS EE MY LOVER.

As another bobbin on the same pillow is inscribed "Henry Deaton," I am inclined to think that Deaton is the hidden surname. If so, the inscription would read :

LE DEATON IS MY LOVER,

the L being a mistake of the bobbin maker's for H.

Mrs. Lambert of North Crawley has the following :

(6) M. DILY. M. BI. P. YO. F.A.T.R. LOVE ME.
OR. NOT. OR. LET. ME. ALONE. 1839.

The bobbin once belonged to Ann Wickens of Hanslope, and Dily was a Hanslope name.

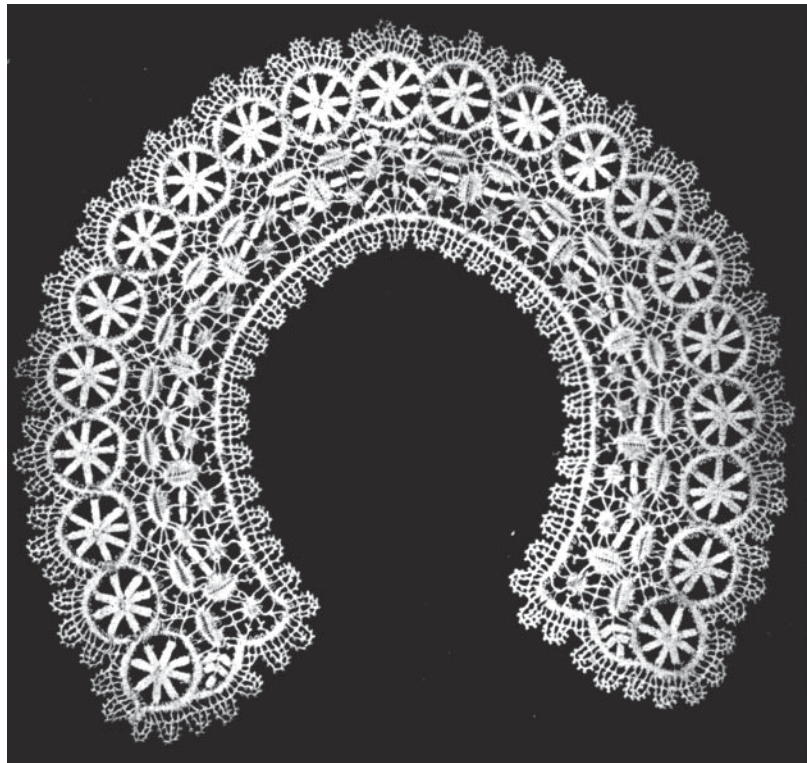
The six preceding mysteries we have either entirely or partially unravelled, but the next six defy all attempts at interpretation.

One of them (on a Paulerspury bobbin which belongs to Mrs. Taylor of Bridgewater) runs :

(7) TOB : TL : JS : EH : YB : KI : SLG : WL : DEARS : YEAR.

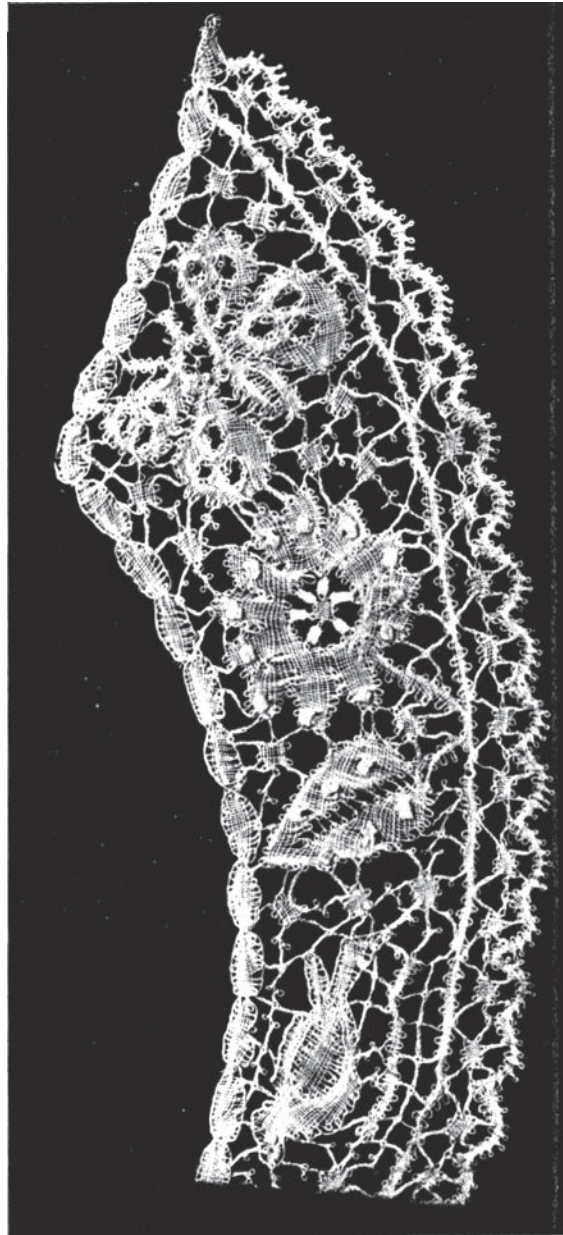
Another was sent me by Miss Turnham, of

Plate 30



MALTESE COLLAR. MADE AT OLNEY.

Plate 31



BIRD AND BUTTERFLY LACE. MADE NEAR OLNEY. See p. 225.

Waddesdon, Bucks. It is on a Waddesdon bobbin that belongs to a friend, and runs :

(8) MANUEL HINGFOR ABOBZIN IL SIN.

It is as terrifying as anything heard in a nightmare, and I doubt whether Daniel himself could have furnished us with the interpretation. Certainly he who reads it deserves to be clothed in scarlet.

The following is from Turvey, Beds :

(9) WT. MS. IV. AH. MR.

From Whittlebury, Northants, come three puzzle bobbins. The inscriptions are :

(10) ∴ N : S : E : H : C : N : Q : A : R : F : F : P ∴ ∴
 T : N : O : L ; O L ∴ ∴ S ∴ ∴ E : I : H : I ∴ ∴ N ∴ ∴ P ∴ ∴ ♡ ∴ ∴ ∴ ∴
 (11) H . F . T . Y . L . M . A . I . L . Y . N . D . P . J . U . T . A .
 F . Y . D . N . H . T . R . H . E . S . T . H . R . F . H .
 (12) N . E : K : D : W : A : D : F : N : R : C : S : E : N : R : I : F :
 R : O : A : R : R : D : L : O : L : W : W : P : O .

A worker at Stony Stratford, through whose hands these bobbins passed, had a fourth puzzle bobbin, from Whittlebury, but it is lost. For none of these is there any clue. They are probably miniature soul-histories, but the persons concerned in them are dead, and the keys lost.¹

HISTORICAL BOBBINS.

Some bobbins are memorials of famous events, as :

¹ If any reader of this book can furnish other cryptic inscriptions on bobbins, he would oblige by communicating with the author.

Jubilee of George III. 1810.
Waterloo. 1815.
Queen Victoria Crowned. 1838.
Alma. 1854.
War in Egypt, Tel el Kebir. 1882.

Others of famous persons :

John Bunyan. *Elstow; Oakley.*
Nelson. (Died in 1805.)
Queen Caroline. (Died in 1821.)
Queen Victoria.
John Wesley.

MURDER, SUICIDE AND TRANSPORTATION
BOBBINS.

An old dame who kept a lace school at Laven-
don, Bucks—Mary Freeman, or Polly Granny, as
she was usually called—was in her way a sort of
author. She composed mottoes for bobbins. But
if Lace-land had its authors, it had also in the
bobbin makers its journalists, whose one great aim
naturally was to be topical, comprehending as they
did that a bobbin referring to any event that was
engaging public attention, was certain of a large
circulation. Hence there were Murder, Suicide
and Transportation Bobbins.

Of bobbins to commemorate hangings, suicides
and transportations, I have met with or heard of
seven, which are inscribed as follows :

HANGINGS.

(On Biddenham Gallows, Bromham Road, just outside Bedford.)
Matthias and William Lilley. 1829. *Elstow, Beds.*

(At Bedford Jail.)

Sarah Dazeley, hung 1843. *Lavendon, Bucks.*

Joseph Castle, hung 1860. *Ravenstone, Bucks; North
Crawley, Bucks.*

William Worsley, hung 1868. *Weston Underwood; Oakley.*

William Bull, hung 1871. *Amptill, Beds.*

SUICIDE.

Joseph West. *Cranfield.*

TRANSPORTATION.

Rannson Dillingum, Botany Bay. *Amptill.*

It is not surprising that young people should have been so deeply interested in these events. A girl—a mere baby—would be told that if she worked well at her pillow she should go to see the hanging.

The trial and execution of Sarah Dazeley, who murdered her husband at Wrestlingworth, Beds, by administering arsenic, created at the time a tremendous sensation, owing partly to her youth (she was only 22), and partly to her personal attractions. From the fact that she was also suspected of having poisoned her first husband, and the rumour that she had expressed the intention of having seven husbands in seven years, people called her the Female Bluebeard. An old lace-maker,¹ who in her childhood had lived at Riseley (Beds), told me that she was only four when her father held her up in the crowd which had

¹ Mary Ann Cowley of Clapham. Two other persons now living witnessed this execution, Widow Dennis, Dame Alice Street, Bedford, and Ann Harding of Elstow.

assembled at noon in front of Bedford Jail on August 5th, 1843, to see Sarah Dazeley hanged. Immediately the prison bell began to toll, and the wretched woman, who was dressed in pink, appeared on the scaffold, "a terrific shriek" arose from the crowd. When the fatal moment came and the murderess disappeared, the child said to her father, "Why, dad, they've kicked the well lid up!"

Joseph Castle, who had murdered his wife at Luton, was brought to justice by the help of a bloodhound kept at the Luton police station. This event also created an extraordinary sensation, and the satisfaction that retribution had overtaken the murderer was so lively that "on the night of Castle's public execution (March 31st, 1860) the friends of his deceased wife held a ball," and every guest on departing was presented with a bobbin as a memento of the occasion.

William Worsley, who murdered William Bradbury at Luton, was executed at Bedford on March 31st, 1868. The fact that Worsley's was the last public execution in Bedford accounts for the popularity of the Worsley bobbin. In the words of an owner, "Everybody wanted them."¹

William Bull, who murdered at Little Staughton an old woman named Sarah Marshall, was executed at Bedford, April 3rd, 1871. A bobbin

¹ I found one at Oakley (Beds), one at Bedford, one at Olney, and two at Weston Underwood.

inscribed with the name of his victim was also on sale.¹

Bobbins were also made out of sympathy for the fate of two brothers, Matthias and William Lilley, who were executed on April 4th, 1829, for shooting at a gamekeeper named King in one of the Bromham Woods. According to the story, the Lilleys on meeting the gamekeeper told him that if he moved they would shoot. As he moved, they fired. At the trial the judge, who was inclined to leniency, suggested that the occurrence was an accident, but the gamekeeper stoutly persisted that it was a wilful attempt at murder. The Lilleys were taken in a cart from Bedford Jail and hanged on Biddenham Gallows, Bromham Road, just beyond the Bedford boundary. It is said that King never again enjoyed peace of mind, and that he could be seen for hours walking moodily backwards and forwards in his house. The outburst of popular indignation at these executions did much towards abolishing the death penalty for offences of the kind. King, who lived to be an old man, is buried at Bromham. When the mother of the Lilleys died in 1833 a stone was placed at her grave in Kempston Old Churchyard, and under her name appeared :

Matthias Lilley departed the 4th of April, 1829, aged 29 years.

William Lilley died at the age of 21.

Sons of the above.

¹ Dr. Lulham, Stonehouse, Glos., has one.

Matthias left a widow and one son, whose descendants are still numerous in Kempston and neighbourhood.

Some sixty years ago one Joseph West was for some misdemeanour put for the night in the Lock-up which stood near the Cross Keys at Cranfield. Next morning he was found to have hanged himself "with a bootlace." Bobbins commemorative of the event were made, but I have never met with one.

As regards Rannson Dillingum, perhaps like "Thomas Brown, Jack Williams and Poor Joe" of one of the Lace Tells, he got "fourteen years" for poaching. It could scarcely have been sheep stealing, for that was a hanging affair.¹ In any case we seem to hear his mother crying to him as the "aged mother" in the old Bedfordshire song, "The Roving Blade,"² cried, while she tore "her old grey locks":

"Oh son, oh son, what have you done!
You're going to Botany Bay."

Let us hope that he returned home in due course, shunned thenceforth "all evil company," and married, also in the words of the song, "a girl in Bedford town."

¹ The writer watched the funeral some thirty years ago at Elstow of a man who, in his youth, had been sentenced to death for sheep stealing, and reprieved.

² *Old Songs sung in Bedfordshire*, p. 16.

ELECTION BOBBINS.

Of Election Bobbins I have met with :

Vote for Osborne. *Lavendon, Bucks.*
 Crawley for ever.
 Althorpe for ever.
 Vote for Althorpe. *Paulerspury, Northants.*
 Gunning and Reform.
 Chandos for ever.
 Success to the Lace Pillow.

The first doubtless refers to John Osborn, M.P. for the County of Beds 1806—7 and 1818—20; the second probably to S. Crawley, who was returned for the same county with J. S. Whitbread in 1832; the third, fourth and fifth Northants bobbins refer to Lord Spencer and one of the Gunnings; the sixth, a Bucks bobbin, commemorates the Marquis of Chandos. The last seems also to have originated at an election time.

TEXT BOBBINS.

(Texts or adaptations of texts.)

Many bobbins were inscribed with passages of Scripture.

OLD TESTAMENT.

Remember thy Creatr¹ in the days of thy youth. Eccles.
 xii. 1.
 Joy for ever. Psa. xvi. 11 (an adaptation of).
 The Lord is my Shepherd. Psa. xxiii. 1.
 God is good to you all. Psa. cxlv. 9² (an adaptation of).
Oakley, Beds.

¹ Dr. Street of Cranfield has one with this word spelt "creator."

² "The Lord is good to all."

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Those that seek Me arly shal find Me. Prov. viii. 17.
Prepare to meet thy God. Amos iv. 12. *Eynesbury, Hunts.*
Seek ye the Lord. Isaiah lv. 6.
Buy the truth and sell it not. M. A. G.¹ 1860. Prov.
xxiii. 23. *Weston Underwood.*
Love mercy. Micah vi. 8.
Love truth. Zech. viii. 19 ("Love the truth").

NEW TESTAMENT.

Do not steel. Mark x. 19; Luke xviii. 20. *Stoke Goldington.*
Repent and believe the gospel. Mark i. 15. *Emberton.*
Repent that you may be saved. Luke xiii. 3 (an adaptation
of). *Deanshanger, Northants.*
Ye must be born again. John iii. 7. *Stevington, Beds.*
Jesus weept. John xi. 35. *Olney.*
Thou knowest that I love Thee. John xxi. 16.
God is love. 1 John iv. 8. *North Crawley.*
Christ Crucifie. 1 Cor. i. 23.
Fear God. 1 Peter ii. 17.

POETRY AND POPULAR SONG BOBBINS.

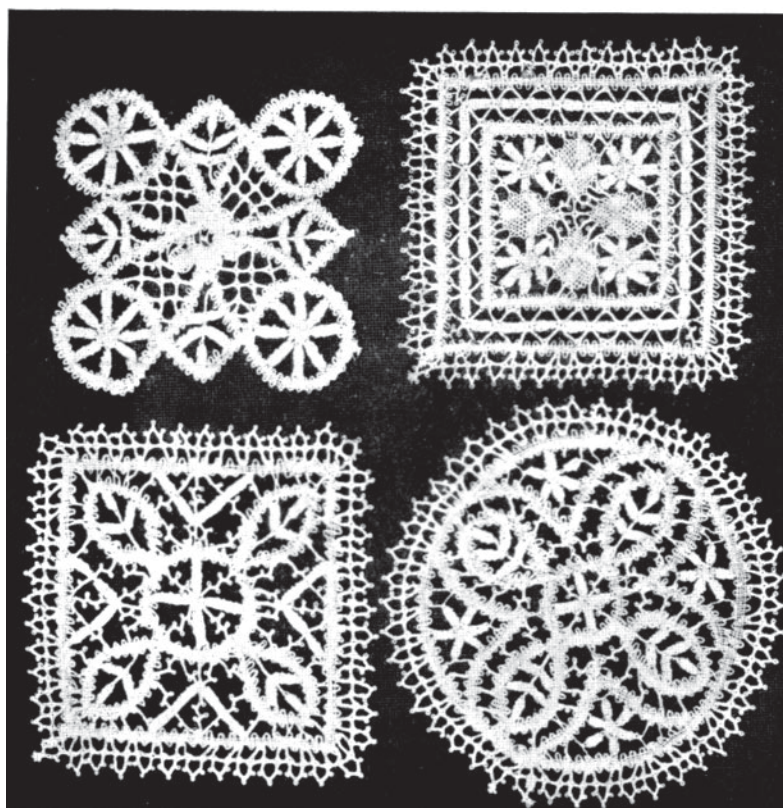
Some of the inscriptions are citations from
poems, hymns or popular songs.

Jesus died for me. (Part of chorus of several hymns.)
O God of Jacob.² (Gimp bobbin.) *Olney.*
With all thy faults I love thee still. (Taken from Cowper's
Task, Bk. i. : "England, with all thy faults, I love
thee still.") *Milton Keynes, Bucks.*
O that will be joyful, when we meet to part no more.
(Taken from T. Bibly's hymn, "Here we suffer grief
and pain.")

¹ Mary Ann Gorman.

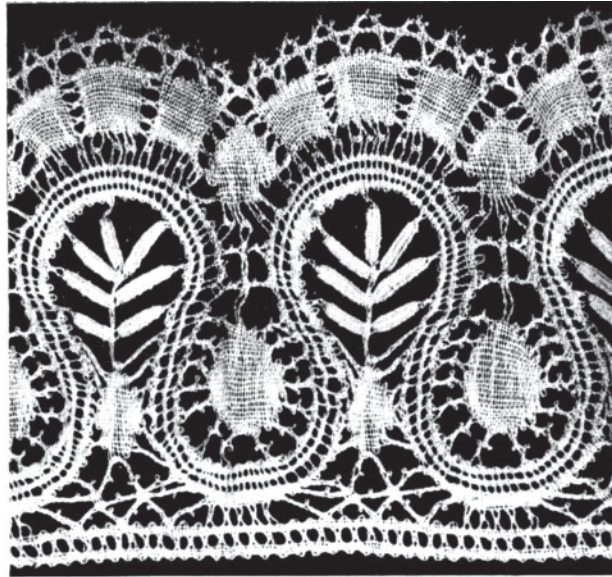
² A variation of the first words of Doddridge's hymn, "O God of Bethel, by whose hand," &c. This variation appears in several hymnals.

Plate 32

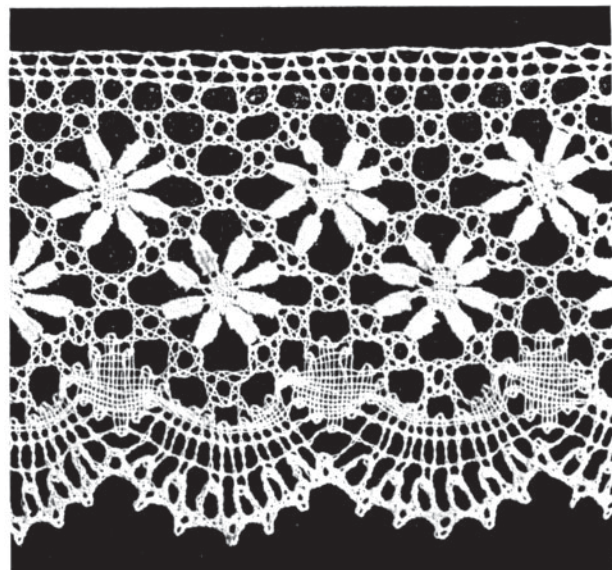


MEDALLIONS, OR MOTIFS. See p. 232.
MALTESE MADE AT OLNEY.

Plate 33



CLUNY LACE. Made at Northampton.
See p. 227.



CLUNY LACE. Made at Northampton. See p. 227.
Star made of plaits with Rose Ground, sometimes called Double Rose.

Not for Joseth. [On some bobbins spelt correctly.]
 Wait for the waggon. *Hanslope, Bucks.*
 Nix me dolle [dolly]. (From a song in one of Ainsworth's novels.)
 Pop goes the wesel.
 Slap bang hear we are again.

APOPHTHEGM BOBBINS.

Then, too, one meets with bobbins containing apophthegms or moral sayings, as :

Time his short.¹ *Cranfield, Beds.*
 Death's shore. [= Death is sure.]
 Nothing venture nothing have.
 Whear true love is planted it grows.
 Never faint. *Kimbolton.*

PRAYER AND ADMONITION BOBBINS.

Bobbins with admonitory inscriptions are not uncommon, as :

Do love the Lord. *Hanslope, Bucks.*
 Bless my John.
 Love Jesus whilst you are young. *Deanshanger, Northants.*
 Remember Jesus Christ.
 Marry not till 26.
 God save the Queen. *Fritwell, Oxon.*
 Honour the Queen.
 I · M · P · R · O · V · E.
 Seek salvation. *Deanshanger, Northants.*
 Repentance is nedeful.
 As long as I live in this world
 Lord keep me from evil.

¹Also met with in correct spelling. "The time is short" occurs in 1 Cor. vii. 29.

PIOUS UTTERANCES.

Jesus his a friend of mine.
Jesus is love. *Kempston.*
I do love dear Jesus. *Hanslope.*

THE VILLAGE WAG.

Every village had its wag, and his ponderous wit sometimes expressed itself in bone.

Peep fool peep. Peep at your brother
Did you ever see one fool peep at another. *Cranfield, Beds.*
Peep foole peep, din't you never see a bobin afor?
Sherington, Bucks.

SETS OF BOBBINS.

It was a frequent custom to make sets of bobbins—twos, threes, fours and even twelves. At North Crawley on the wedding morning the young man used to give his betrothed a pair of mottoed bone bobbins. A worker of that village has a pair inscribed:

- (1) I'll buy the ring.
- (2) A Present for Mistress Bride.

They were made by Samuel Wright of Cranfield, and given by her father, Joseph Lathall,¹ to his wife Isabella.

A pair of bobbins, made at Bedford, were in the possession of another worker of North Crawley. They read:

¹ He died Feb. 7th, 1875.

- (1) When this you see remember me and bear me in
your mind.
- (2) Let all the world say what they will speak of me as
U find.¹

As an interesting set of three the following may be noted :

- (1) Faith Setchill, born June 10, 1831.
- (2) Hope Setchill, born June 10, 1831.
- (3) Charity Setchill, born June 10, 1831.

These were made for a Mrs. Setchill of Dean (Beds) to commemorate the birth of triplets.

A Hanslope lace-maker once possessed a set of four bobbins which were thus inscribed

- (1) 'Tis sweet to love but sweeter to be loved
- (2) Again, but oh how bitter is that thought to love yet
love in vain.
- (3) There's none on earth that can conceive how bitter is
that pain
- (4) To be in love with those who don't love us again.

She showed me bobbin No. 1, and repeated from memory the inscriptions on the others, which had drifted elsewhere.

A set greatly sought after consists of Twelve Bobbins, each of which is inscribed with a clause of the Lord's Prayer. One of the bobbins from a set of this kind was seen at Wilshamstead, Beds.²

¹ A similar pair is inscribed :

Bobbin No. 1 : Let all the world say what they
,, No. 2 : Will speak of me as you find.

² There are good collections of inscribed bobbins in the Cowper and Newton Museum at Olney, and in the museums at Aylesbury and Northampton. Mr. H. H. Armstrong of Olney also has a fine collection.

The bobbins of Devonshire are of two kinds :

“ Honiton Lace Sticks ” and “ Trol-
 lies. ” (1) Honiton Lace Sticks, which
 are mostly of spindle or olive wood,¹

have pointed ends, which are necessary to the worker in manipulating the threads. Those used at Beer are highly decorative, exhibiting crosses, fishes, sea-weeds, anchors, ships with sails, and various other ornaments in red and black. The Branscombe bobbins have bolder designs, the more ancient sorts being dark owing to their having been burnt with aquafortis. (See Plate 22).

(2) Trollies. In Bucks a trolly is a bobbin used for gimp, but in Devonshire it means a bobbin used in the making of a special kind of lace, “ Devonshire Trolly,” which we shall speak of in Chapter 15, Section 60. As this is what we may call a “ Finish as you go ” lace, the bobbins have blunt ends, there being no necessity for a point. None of the Devon bobbins have spangles.

The bobbins of Downton (Wiltshire) resemble the Devon bobbins in being pointed and without spangles, and differ from them in being shorter and fatter. (See Plate 22.)

As regards the inscriptions on the Devonshire bobbins, some savour of the sea and others are religious, as might be expected of persons saturated, as were so many of the Devonshire people,

¹ A few are of mahogany.

Plate 34



LILLE PILLOW LACE FROUNCE. Made in 1875.

Victoria and Albert Museum (18454).

(By permission of the Authorities.)

Plate 35



AN OLNEY LACE CLASS AND TWO OLD OLNEY LACE-MAKERS, 1918.

with the Bible and John Flavel.¹ Several of the inscriptions have a small heart at the beginning and at the end. One has a large heart with the words, "Forget me not," within it. Most have fishes, ships or seaweed painted on them. On St. Valentine's Day a boy would go to his sweetheart's door and throw in a packet of lace sticks of his own carving. If he did not throw in the whole set of 24 (the number ordinarily used on a Devonshire pillow) he was considered a laggard in love.

Mrs. Roberts of Spratton has a Devonshire bobbin (from Brent) with a double twisted inscription which begins from the top and runs :

S. B. Wair two hearts in unian meet
Sweet O sweet is that sensation.

Other Brent bobbins in her possession are inscribed :

1803. A present from Thomas Darke. Susana Cox.
S. P. 1826.

Miss M. Maidment of Ilford has a Devon bobbin with a very long inscription :

E. N. You have a true love on the main, for love he has
venturd his life, but soon will return home again,
and make you his own happy wive. P. G.

Others belonging to Miss Maidment are inscribed :

¹ The great Devonshire preacher and author of many works, who died in 1691.

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Love and live. 1843.

Forget me not. Remember Lot's wife. (Spiral.)

Prepar to met God. (Spiral.)

For ever thine The girl I love. Forget me not. (Spiral.)

E. J. A. was married May 12, 1878.

I have also heard of :

The ring is round and hath no end

So is my love for you my friend ;

and,

May God protect the sailor still

From rocks and sands and every ill.

As will have been judged by the foregoing,
most of the Devon bobbins smack of the ocean.
In handling them we feel that we are continually
in touch with "those that go down to the sea in
ships, that do business in great waters."

CHAPTER XIV

THE LACE TELLS AND THE LACE-MAKERS' HOLIDAYS

The proficiency of the children at the **Lace School** was, as we have already
51. The Bucks Tells. noticed, estimated by the number of pins placed in an hour, and to assist themselves in the counting they used to chant in a sing-song voice the amount of work to be got over :

20 miles have I to go,
19 miles have I to go,
18 miles have I to go.

These and the more elaborate countings were called **Lace Tells**.

That the practice of singing songs at the pillow was common even in Shakspeare's day is evident from the remark of the Duke in *Twelfth Night* :¹

“ O fellow, come, the song we had last night
Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain.
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free² maids that weave their threads with bones
Do use to sing it.”

¹ Act II., Scene 4.

² Some persons have been puzzled by this word. If they had studied the Bucks and Beds Lace Tells they would have understood it. Of course it means “without care”; as in the Beds Tell, “Come, all you bold bachelors, jovial and free.”

And then the clown breaks out into that pathetic and exquisite dirge beginning :

“ Come away, come away, Death ! ”

Doubtless Shakspeare, who knew Buckinghamshire so well, founded these jewelled lines upon some uncouth ditty which he had actually heard sung at some Stony Stratford or Grendon Underwood pillow.

As might be expected the Buckinghamshire tells are similar in character to those with which Shakspeare¹ was evidently acquainted. Of artistry they are innocent, but coming from an impressionable people they abound in allusions to coffins, shrouds, corpses, bones, lightning flashes, sardonic laughter, hyena-like cries, and other lurid, gruesome, clammy or grizzly terrors :

The ravens hoarse, the mandrake's hollow groan ;
The shrieking owls which fly in the night alone.

The simplest of the tells took the bald Dialogue form :

Knock, knock at your door. Who's there? It's me.
Come in. Does your little dog bite? Yes. How many teeth has it? Six; seven next time; eight when I call again.

Silence was then kept while eight pins were stuck

¹ He is said to have stayed at the Ship Inn, Grendon Underwood, and there to have picked up some of the humour of his *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Two Grendon men are immortalised in Dogberry and Vergis in *Much Ado about Nothing*. “Vergis” is a Bucks word meaning “verjuice.” It is often pronounced “vargis.”

into the pillow, this space of time being called a "glum."¹ In the following bit of doggerel we are hurried unceremoniously into another glum :

Dingle, dangle, farthing candle,
Put you in the stinking dog's hole.
For thirty-one speak or look off for sixty-two.

Anyone who happened to look off her work or to speak during the glum from thirty-one to sixty-two received the imposition of another glum of thirty-one pins. The cry of relief when the work was done sometimes took the form of

Tip and stitch turn over,
Let it be hay or clover,
My glum's done!

The great question ever in the mind of the worker was, Would she get her work done before dark? for to be obliged to work by candle-light except between Tanders² and Candlemas was the bitterest of punishments; hence the tell—one girl singing the first couplet :

19 miles to the Isle of Wight,
Shall I get there by candle light?

and another in sing-song replying,

Yes, if your fingers go lissom and light,
You'll get there by candle light.

A scrap of village history sometimes wove itself

¹ That is, "A period of gloom."

² St. Andrew's Day, November 30th.

into these lace tells. One is the lurid story of a girl and a worthless lover. After playing with her affections he turned from her, and resolved to murder her. In order to get her into his power he requested her to meet him on a dark night under a certain tree. He and an accomplice arrived there before the appointed time, and at once set to work to dig the grave, being lighted by a lantern, which they tied to the tree, and the ghastly streaks of blue summer lightning. The girl approached the spot earlier than she was expected, and seeing from a point of vantage two men instead of one, her suspicions were aroused. The murkiness of the night added to her terrors. At the same moment "the Fox," as she called her faithless lover, while looking about to see whether anyone was near, happened to catch sight of her, and imagining that she was not alone, he gave the alarm to his companion, and they made off. She arrived home in safety, and she tells her tale in a couple of stanzas that are gruesome enough, if only they had been poetry, to have been taken from one of the plays of John Webster.

THE FOX.

19 miles as I sat high
 Looking for one, and two passed by,
 I saw them that never saw me—
 I saw the lantern tied to a tree.

The boughs did bend and the leaves did shake
 I saw the hole the Fox did make.

The Fox did look, the Fox did see¹
I saw the hole to bury me.

This little song sung in the twilight, and mingling with the distant hoot of the owl or the monotonous "Crake, crake, crake," of the corncrake, would send a thrill through every heart. The following tell also reveals the leaning of the Bucks lace-makers towards the gruesome, the uncanny and the truculent.

Get to the field by one
Gather the rod² by two
Tie it up at three
Send it home by four
Make her work hard at five
Give her her supper at six
Send her to bed at seven
Cover her up at eight
Throw her down stairs at nine
Break her neck at ten
Get to the well-lid by eleven
Stamp her in at twelve.
How can I make the clock strike one,
Unless you tell me how many you've done?

In the last two lines allusion is made to the plan sometimes followed in the lace schools, and already in these pages alluded to, of counting the number of pins stuck and calling out at every fifty or a hundred ; each girl endeavouring, in order to show her dexterity, to be the first to call out.

Another tell (taken down at Weston Under-

¹ The word "that" is understood.

² To whip her with.

wood) is a variation of the venerable story of Hugh of Lincoln.

THE JEWESS MAIDEN.

There was a Jewess maiden, or so my story states,
 Who beckoned to a little boy who peeped between her gates.
 An apple so red, a plum so sweet, she gave him from her
 tree ;
 She dazzled his eyes with a garry¹ gold ring that was so
 fair to see.
 And when she got him in the gates she laughed, he knew
 not why,
 And uttered many wicked words and told him he must die.
 She laid him on the dresser board, no mercy then she
 showed,
 But stabbed him with a knife and stabbed until the life-
 blood flowed.

In the version of the story sung at Haddenham (Bucks) some fifty years ago, children playing near the Jew's garden toss their balls over the wall and break the windows. The Jew's daughter, dressed "all in beautiful green," comes out and, with a cherry as red as his blood and a gay gold ring, entices one of the little boys into the garden. She takes him into the cellar, lays him on a dresser with a Prayer Book at his head and a Bible at his feet, and stabs him to death with a penknife.

Several other versions of this old libel on the Jewess maiden were sung in other parts of Lace-land,² but in every instance the "garry" or "gay"

¹ Gay.

² See also *Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, Vol. IV., p. 8.

gold ring and the dresser board are among the properties, and the final thrill is managed with some sort of knife.

At the end of another gruesome ditty which simply revels in coffins, corpses, skulls and worms that creep in and worms that creep out, the listener is supposed to ask,

Shall I be so when I am dead ?

and the answer comes in sepulchral tones :

Yes, you'll be so when you are dead ;

whereupon everyone would pretend great fear, and jerk out suddenly "Oh!"

Along with the shudder, indeed, occasioned by the singing of these songs, was a certain amount of real enjoyment. If, however, the pressure became too great and the younger workers got "afeared," some twinkling eyed girl would strike up with, "Come lasses and lads." At once the tension would be relieved, and the ghosts, wizards, bones, corpses, worms and other properties, would be laid aside until next day, when they would be brought out once more to play their agreeable parts.

Another favourite way of counting was called "All round the Town,"—and in old times every village called itself, and was referred to in the Parish Register, as the Town. In this method every time you stuck in a pin you called out the name of some householder, until you had exhausted

the village. The penalty for those who could not keep up was a terrible one, as became a community that had so insatiable an appetite for horrors, for the conclusion of the tell was, "Them as aint come are stamped on and drowned."

That the Bucks lace-makers, however, could appreciate the pleasant as well as the morbid, is evidenced by the following, which was sung at Weston Underwood.

A lad down at Olney looked over a wall,
 And saw nineteen little golden girls playing at ball.
 Golden girls, golden girls, will you be mine?
 You shall neither wash dishes nor wait on the swine.
 But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,
 Eat white bread and butter and strawberries and cream.

The "golden girls" were, of course, the gold-headed pins that marked the footside of the lace. The word "nineteen" runs in many of the tells, that being the number at which counting often commenced.

The following, too, has in it nothing of the charnel-house.

Up the street and down the street
 With windows made of glass;
 Call at Mary Muskett's¹ door—
 There's a pretty lass!

With a posy in her bosom,
 And a dimple in her chin;
 Come, all you lads and lasses,
 And let this fair maid in.

¹ The name of any girl could be inserted.

Then there was "Round the Pot of Lavender, John," and "The Ravens," and a tell that recorded "The Woes of Arabella," who died of a broken heart; but of none of them have I been able to obtain the words. All these belong to North Bucks. Enquiry in the south of the county has elicited the reply that nothing was there sung at the pillow except the monotonous

Nineteen miles have I to go.

The Bedfordshire Tells are of an entirely different character from those of Buckinghamshire. They turned less on bones, gibbets, and other horrors customarily referred to under one's breath, than on the neatness of the village lace-maker's appearance, the wisdom of choosing one of these comely Bedfordshire girls "to be your sweet wife"¹; and the anticipated joys of the approaching wedding; moreover they are enlightened with an occasional gleam of pawky humour. The following evidently dates from the 18th century.

52. The
Bedfordshire
Tells.

THE BEDFORDSHIRE FARMER.

In Bedfordshire lived a rich farmer, we hear;
A Bedfordshire maiden had lived there a year.
She started for home on a short holiday,
When a highwayman stopped her upon the highway.

¹ This is the tell that begins, "Come, all you bold bachelors, jovial and free." It was sung at Wootton, Beds. I have heard a version of it at Newton Blossomville, Bucks, and one still different at Cranfield, Beds.

She screamed out with fright, she screamed out with fear,
 But help ('twas the Bedfordshire farmer) was near.
 The highwayman, hit by a blunderbuss, died ;
 And there soon was a wedding, and she was the bride.

No doubt more than one Bedfordshire maiden subsequently took a stroll on the highway on the off-chance of being stopped by a "gentleman of the road." But there is another version of the story, according to which, the girl not only screamed out, but stunned the highwayman with a serviceable stick, when another highwayman appeared, and it was this second gentleman who received the attentions of the Bedfordshire farmer. The denouement, however, was the same in both cases. Let us hope that the wedded pair lived harmoniously ; for that there was sad bickering in some Bedfordshire homes is from the following tell painfully evident.

THE OLD COUPLE.

There was an old couple and they were poor,
 They lived in a house with only one door,
 And poor old folks were they.
 And the poor old man said he wouldn't stay at home,
 And the poor old woman said she wouldn't sleep alone,
 And poor old folks were they.

And she said, "If you've got any love for me,
 You'd fetch me an apple from yonder tree."
 And poor old folks were they.
 He fetched her an apple and laid it on the shelf,
 And said, "If you want any more, you can fetch them
 yourself !"
 And poor old folks were they.

To judge by the next tell, it was the custom of Bedfordshire young women, when a man offended them to throw a turnip at him :

Nineteen miles to Charing Cross,
 To see a Black Man ride on a white horse.
 The rogue was so saucy he wouldn't come down,
 To show me the road to the nearest town.
 I picked up a 'turmut' and cracked his old crown,
 And made him cry 'turmut's' all over the town.

On the whole we are inclined to sympathise with the "Black Man," whose punishment seems to have been out of all proportion to his offence. Who was he? Evidently, Mr. E. Godfroy the lace-buyer, with whom the lace-makers sometimes had differences; and a lampoon in the shape of a lace tell was their little revenge. Another rhyme of the neighbourhood refers to the same person and to a lady buyer.

Behind in this meadow you'll find a dry land,
 Two beauties of Bedford, and there do they stand;
 He on the white horse and she on the gray,
 And so these two beauties go riding away.

The word "beauties" is evidently intended as sarcasm.

At Ickwell Green, near Northill, used to be sung an amusing song called "Hodge of the Mill and Buxom Nell," which describes how Hodge, who was given to flirtation, surrendered at discretion to the lady on learning that she was worth as much as "fifty shillings." "No Wife like a Lace-maker" comes from Wootton, "The Roving

Blade" from Bromham, "The Deserted Lover" from Ravensden, and "Amen, said the Fool," a sarcastic rhyme about various village characters, nobody from the parson to the blacksmith being perfect, was sung in many Bedfordshire lace schools some fifty or sixty years ago.¹

The following was used by the children in the lace schools of Renhold.

Needle pin, needle pin, stitch upon stitch,
Work the old lady out of the ditch.
If she is not out as soon as I,
A rap on the knuckles shall come by and by.
A horse to carry my lady about—
Must not look off till 20 are out.

They then counted twenty pins, and if anyone looked off before she had got through the twenty, the others would call out :

Hang her up for half an hour,
Cut her down just like a flower.

The girl referred to would then put in another pin and reply :

I won't be hung for half an hour,
I won't be cut down like a flower.

And who can blame her ?

The Northants Tells have none of the gruesome features that characterize those of Buckinghamshire, and they are less hoydenish and more sentimental than

53. The
Northants
Tells.

¹ Some of these are printed in *Old Songs Sung in Bedfordshire*, Beds Times Office.

those of Bedfordshire. The Northamptonshire maidens do not gloat over ghosts, corpses, black coffins and gibbets, nor do they throw turnips at the heads of inoffensive gentlemen who happen to be passing on horseback. They had no taste for dark parables. In the Northants tells, while admission is made of the hardships of existence, the future is looked forward to not without hope.

THE WEDDING DAY.

Nineteen long lines hanging over my door,
The faster I work it'll shorten my score.
But if I do play it'll stick to a stay ;
So ho! little fingers, and twink it away,
For after to-morrow comes my wedding day.

My shoes are to borrow, my husband to seek,
So I cannot get married till after next week.
And after next week it will be all my care
To prink and to curl and to do up my hair.

Six pretty maidens, so neat and so clean,
Shall dance at my wedding next Monday morning.
Down in the kitchen the cook she will run,
And tell Mr. Bellman to ring the ting-tang.

There are twenty-two more lines.

The Northants girls were indeed more optimistic than their sisters in High Bucks and West Beds. They seemed to grasp that life consists not of hours as indicated by the clock, but of the hours in which one is cheerful. They had dropped into the habit of hanging bright pictures in their minds.

Another tell runs on "the cherry trees in blos-

som," the brown nuts that "hang so ripe," (for in the lace world of Northants cherries blossom and nuts ripen in the same month); and the preparation for a plum pudding which would take less than half-an-hour. Then there is the "Song of the Nutting Tree," which begins :

I had a little nutting tree,
And nothing would it bear,
But little silver nutmegs¹
For Galligolden fair.

But who Galligolden was, and what she wanted the silver nutmegs for, is not clear.

At Yardley Hastings they sang :

Twenty pins have I to do,
Let ways be ever so dirty.
Never a penny in my purse,
But farthings five and thirty.

Betsy Bays and Polly Mays,
They are two bonny lasses ;
They built a bower upon the tower,
And covered it with rushes.

I give this jingle as it was told me. It evidently refers to the old custom of carrying rushes and garlands to church on Rush-bearing Day—a custom that is still observed in the North of England. "Upon the tower" should probably be "within the tower." Of course any names could be substituted for Betsy and Polly.

¹ *Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, Vol. II., p. 281. "Gilded Nutmegs" are referred to in the verses that preface *Sociable Letters*, by the Duchess of Newcastle, 1664; and in *Love's Labour Lost*, Act V., Scene 2, we hear of "A gilt nutmeg."

Plate 36



LACE SCHOOL AT CRANFIELD, BEDS, 1918.

Plate 37



OLD TORCHON.

Reduced from width of one inch and three-quarters. The zigzag is filled with spiders. Above and below it are triangles of whole stitch.

(Lent by Mrs. J. B. Harrison, formerly of Paulerspury.)

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LACES.

- No. 1. The Ear-ring (Mears Ashby).
- " 2. Sea Shell (Wollaston).
- " 3. Diamond and Chain (Olney).
- " 4. Point and Honeycomb (Brayfield-on-the-Green, nr, Denton).

The song of "Long Lanken," which, with its trimmings of corpse and gallows, might seem damaging to the theory of the sentimentality of the Northants tells, is really not a Northants song at all, having been imported from the Scottish border.

The tells of all three counties—Bucks, Beds and Northants—are influenced by the superstitions of the people; nor is this surprising, seeing that in every town and village there is some story of a supernatural character—of ghosts that stalk and gibber and wizards that peep and mutter. The Devil and Headless Horseman traditions of Olney, and the names "Great Goblin's Hole" and "Little Goblin's Hole,"¹ of Turvey, would alone bear witness to the insatiable appetite of the lace-makers for the uncommon and the uncanny.

We are told that the effect of thirty or forty children's voices uniting in the sing-song of these tells would never be forgotten by anyone listening to them for the first time, and that the children found the singing of the tells a real aid to them in their work. It was a very pretty sight in a lace school of some 30 girls, some of them little more than babies, to see, as an old lace-maker puts it, "all the fingers and all the bobbins going." Singing at the pillow, too, was particularly helpful both to adults and children in dull weather—which, as

¹ These are both shown on the copy of the Ward Map which hangs in the Reading Room at Turvey.

an old Newport Pagnell lace-maker said, used to "mommer"¹ her and make her feel as if she had no "docity"² in her.

The custom is not confined to the English Midlands. In Saxony where it also obtains, the favourite songs are those of the "The Cuckoo with thirty Wives and what each did," and "The twelve Geese who stole oats."

The great holiday of the lace-makers was Tanners (St. Andrew's Day, Nov. 30th),
 54. *Catterns.* but in some parts of Northants, Bucks and Beds, the leading festival was Catterns (St. Catharine's³ Day), Nov. 25th—St. Catharine being the patron saint of the spinners, to whom the lace-makers considered themselves related. As time went on, Catharine the Saint became confused with Katharine the Queen—that is to say, Katharine of Aragon (wife of Henry the Eighth) of Kat Stitch fame, who was born on Dec. 6th,—old St. Catharine's Day.

In some of the towns and villages the bellman used to go round before daybreak ringing his bell and calling out :

Rise, maids, rise!
 Bake your cattern pies.
 Bake enough, and bake no waste,
 And let the bellman have a taste.

¹ Make her feel stupid.

² Pronounced "dossity." The word really means "aptness to learn." To have no docity = to be lifeless.

³ St. Catharine of Alexandria, who was tortured on a wheel, and put to death in 307 A.D.

As early as 1672 it was the custom to give the inmates of the workhouse at Aylesbury sums of money to keep Catterns Day. At Peterborough a number of the girls, attired in white, decorated with scarlet ribbons, and headed by the prettiest of their number who wore a crown and carried a sceptre, went the round of the city singing a ballad commencing :

Here comes Queen Katharine, fine as any queen.

At Kettering, Ampthill and other places, Cattern cakes—made of dough and caraway seeds—were sent about, and the evening was given up to singing, dancing and feasting; the principal dish being stuffed boiled rabbit “smothered with onion sauce.” At Podington (N. W. Beds) they kept Cattern on old St. Catharine’s Day “by wetting the candle-block,” that is, taking tea together, and eating Cattern cakes. After dancing to the music of a fiddle they crowned their diversions by supping on a great apple pie.

The people of Wendover (Bucks) called Catterns “Candle Day,” it being the first day on which they commenced to make lace by candle-light, and they celebrated it by eating “wigs,”¹—round, spongy gingerbread-like cakes, flavoured with caraway seed, which obtained their name from their thick rim which resembled the curl of

¹ In Lower Saxony a four-tailed loaf worked with must is called a *wegge*. It was a loaf in the form of two clubs joined together. *Notes and Queries*, 1862, 3rd Series, 387.

a Georgian wig; and drank "hot-pot," a liquor compounded of warm beer spiced with rum and thickened with beaten eggs. At the lace schools the girls and boys danced in a ring round the great lace-maker's candlestick (see Plate 23), singing :

Wallflowers, wallflowers, growing up so high,
 All young maidens surely have to die;
 Excepting Emma Caudrey, she's the best of all.
 She can dance and she can skip,
 And she can jump the candlestick.
 Turn, turn, turn your face to the wall again.

The girl or boy mentioned turned so that he or she faced outward from the ring, and they continued to dance till all had turned, when the difficult feat of jumping the candlestick, lighted candle and all, was attempted. In other places, including West Suffolk, which was formerly a lace-making centre, the song was,

Jack, be nimble! Jack, be quick!
 Jack, jump over the candlestick.

The name of any boy or girl was inserted in both the rhymes. The object it seems was to clear both the candlestick and candle without extinguishing the light. If the light was extinguished¹ ill luck was supposed to follow during the subsequent twelve months. One of these candlesticks, two feet two inches high, is preserved in the Museum at Aylesbury. As the lighted candle

¹ In parts of Ireland the object in the game was, and I think still is, to extinguish the flame with the tip of the toe without breaking the candle or overturning the candlestick.

would give at least another three inches, the feat of leaping it was, at any rate for a girl, not an easy one. The festivities finished by letting off Catharine wheels, but all these customs died out about 1890.

From the preceding it will be noticed that Catterns was observed chiefly in north Northants and Beds; in the greater ^{55. Tanders.} part of lace-land, however, the principal holiday was Tanders (St. Andrew's Day), November 30th. On that day at Olney people congregated in "one another's housen."¹ No-candy was made, frumenty—or, as it was generally called, "thrumety"² eaten and rich metheglin³ (made hot), with toast floating at the top, was drunk.

The proprietors of the Honey House,⁴ now No. 24 High Street, were in the early 19th century John and Mary Cobb,⁵ who used to take out for

¹ The old plurals and preterites of Bucks are, I suppose, doomed. "Housen" (for houses) is still heard in our villages, but an old lace-maker, who explained to me how the children "sot" at work, corrected herself—to my dismay—and said "sat."

² Wheat boiled in milk. Plums, nutmeg, cinnamon or sugar can be added. If the wheat is boiled soft this is a splendid dish, and much cheaper than the packeted foods sold by the grocers and used for porridge. The reader should try it.

³ Metheglin is made by washing the honeycomb; mead, which resembles it, by dissolving honey in boiling water, flavouring it with spices, and adding ground malt and a piece of toast dipped in yeast, and suffering the whole to ferment.

⁴ The front of the house has been re-built and the cellar filled up, but the back of the house which included the Honey Room with its oak ledges for the "coolers," wax press, and wire gauze ventilators is unaltered. In the season, a tilted cart full of pails was sent out to the villages to collect the honey, and in a good year two tons, beside wax, would be brought in. The wax was run into moulds and sent to London, and the bee-bread (refuse) was burnt.

⁵ Their daughter Mary married James Hollingshead, whose son, George Cobb Hollingshead, at the age of 93 gave me the above particulars.

the occasion a three days' licence; people from all the country round brought their pitchers and panshons¹ for the indispensable liquor; and as much as two and a half hogsheads would be sold in a day. If on that occasion metheglin was not forthcoming the lace-makers considered that they had been bilked out of their due.

In the evening the old folks were bidden to go bed—for Tanders and Methuselah in his dotage did not mix well—and then the young folks indulged in bob-apple and other riotous games. For bob-apple the “blades” (which form a cross) were removed from the bobbin winder and suspended by a cord from the oak beam of the ceiling. On the pins of the blades were stuck alternately pieces of apple and short lengths of tallow candle. If, when blindfolded, you chanced to get a bite of the apple it was very amusing to you; if, however, you happened on the candle, it was amusing chiefly to the spectators.

At Turvey (Beds) figs were eaten on that day, the fruit for many years having been a present from the late Mr. Charles Longuet Higgins, whose birthday happened to be on “Tanders.”

At North Crawley and Cranfield was, and is still occasionally, made a Tanders Cake, the Cranfield recipe for which is: “Half pottle² dough,

¹ Vessels wider at the top than at the bottom.

² $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.—Brewer's yeast should be used. I hope every reader of this book will make a Tanders cake.

6 ozs. lard, 6 ozs. sugar, 1 oz. caraway seed." At North Crawley they are more liberal with the accessories, and insist on : " Half-quartern dough, half-pound lard, half-pound sugar, and 2 ozs. caraway seed." Bake for an hour and a half. In those days (may they return !) people made their own bread, using " brewer's yeast, flour, mashed potatoes and a pinch of salt," and a portion of the dough would be set aside for the Tanders cake. It will be noticed that in these cakes, as well as in the Cattern cakes and the wigs, the great indispensable was the caraway seeds. There was a reason. The practice arose with the farmers, who had the cakes made for their men, and the caraway seeds, whether used on Catterns Day or Tanders, were a reminder that the time for sowing all autumn seed (wheat, oats, &c.) had passed by. The custom of eating " thrumety " had the same origin. As early as 1557 Thomas Tusser, the Suffolk poet, had written :

" Remember thou, therefore, though I do it not,
The seed-cakes, the pasties and furmenty pot."

At Stoke Goldington on Tanders the people made sweets called "Black Buttons." At Stevington they ate Tanders cake and drank hot elderberry wine. At Elstow the mistress of the Lace School allowed the girls to invite their sweethearts to spend the evening with them, and she used to open the festivities by entering the room, carrying in each hand, raised high, a fire pot filled with

metheglin, and crying, "Tan, my boys, Tan!" At Kimbolton on old St. Andrew's Day (December 11th) was held Tandrew Fair. At Spratton (Northants) the children of the lace school used to seize the opportunity, when the mistress left the room, to lock her out. On her return they would sing :

Pardon, mistress, pardon, master,
Pardon for a pin ;
If you won't give us a holiday,
We won't let you in.

After a brief display of counterfeited anger the mistress yielded to their demands. At Bozeat (Northants) the church bells used to be rung at noon. Everywhere fiddles struck up and ballads were sung, and as, according to an old writer, "music and songs stir up the passions," a good deal of boisterous love-making took place.

At Hanslope the frolics on Tanders Day often exceeded the bounds of prudence. The lace-makers, in order to lose nothing by their festivities, used "to work the whole of the previous night," and the girls and their sweethearts observed the great Day itself with all the abandon of young and giddy spirits. On one occasion the lads, with painted faces and wearing outrageous wigs, broke unexpectedly into the midst of the tea drinkings. Screams of terror ensued, chairs were overturned, teacups upset, and, worst of all, amid the racket and confusion, the candlesticks were toppled over

and their precious flasks smashed into a hundred pieces.

At Yardley Hastings the merry-making commenced at noon. At midnight the church bells were rung, and when the first sound was heard the company ceased from their games and sat down to tea and Tanders cake.

In some of the villages of Northants and Bucks "Thomas's" (St. Thomas's Day, Dec. 21), was also kept as a half holiday. In Warwickshire and the parts of Northants adjoining, the old women, wearing red cloaks, used to go "Thomassen," that is, begging from house to house, the gifts bestowed being called "Thomasers." At Stoke Goldington (Bucks) and Ecton (Northants) the children in the lace schools used to lock out the mistress and demand a holiday in the fashion that elsewhere was observed on Tanders Day.

56. The
Minor
Holidays.

At North Crawley (Bucks), Riseley (Beds) and other villages, Shrove Tuesday was also a half holiday. At North Crawley the Parish clerk always rang the Pancake Bell at eleven, and as soon as the sound, "Pan, pan," filtered down from the church tower the women, who had been waiting for it, ran, helter-skelter, out of their cottages to the belfry, each carrying a pancake and endeavouring to be the first to offer it to the clerk. But the first pancake was not necessarily the best, as owing to the hurry it was likely enough to be

“boltery.”¹ At Riseley the favourite game on this holiday was “Long Eche.”² Two girls stretched out a shawl and attempted to catch the others, who tried to run under it. To the parchment called the Long Eche we have already referred.

Candlemas Day (Feb. 2) was a holiday at Hanslope (Bucks). The scholars put the candlestools away at half-past four, “and they’d be lissom to do it.” At North Marston (Beds) the mistress of the household when evening drew near used to call out, “Candlemas, candleless.”

At Cranfield the people kept in addition to Tanders, Nov. 5th and Feb. 14th, which they called *Candle-light Holidays*, because on the former they began to work by candle-light, and on the latter they ceased to use the candle.

Another custom which is apparently peculiar to Lace-land is that of eating figs on Palm or, as it is here more usually called, Fig Sunday. Tons of figs are sold at Olney and the surrounding villages on the preceding Saturday.

May Day was kept as a holiday by the lace-makers in some villages. At Fenstanton (Hunts) sweets and frumenty were made and eaten, and garlands taken from house to house while the children sang part of what is generally known as the Hitchin version³ of the May Day song which

¹ A bolter is a lump of flour in a pancake not made properly.

² Pronounced “each.” See page 116.

³ See *Book of Days*, Vol. 1, p. 578.

contains the verse :

A branch of may we have brought you,
And at your door it stands ;
It is but a sprout, but it's well budded out,
By the work of our Lord's hands.

At Mears Ashby (Northants) also May Day was the great holiday. The children carried a branch of may, on which were dolls dressed, with lace, round the village, while they sang the version of the May song which commences :

This morning is the first of May,
The prime time of the year.

In all the lace-making villages there was every five weeks *Cut-off Day*, when the lace was removed from the pillow and carried to the lace-buyer or his agent, who generally met the workers at the village inn.

The people round Bedford usually took it direct to the shop of Mr. Thomas Lester—the girls not without trepidation, for he was a terrible autocrat. In his shop was a drawer which was usually left open an inch or two, and if the lace was not done well, he would take a girl's hand and deliberately pinch her fingers in the drawer. If Sare-Ann was seen shortly after walking down Bedford High Street sucking her fingers, and anybody asked what was the matter, she usually had the discretion to say, "Oh, nothing!" On the other hand, if her lace was done well she would be praised, and rewarded with the present of a bobbin dotted with the words, THOMAS LESTER.

At Buckingham Mr. Godfroy used to collect lace at the White Hart. A bell rang and the workers, 300 or 400 in number, were admitted one at a time, and paid partly in money and partly in tokens.

Of the Tokens used in the 17th century I have already spoken. At the close of the 18th century there was again a most inconvenient shortage of small change, and tradesmen once more began to issue tokens. Unlike the old tokens which were small and thin, the later tokens were the size and thickness of a present day florin. A well known example has on one side "Lace manufactory" with a representation of a woman seated under a tree making lace; on the other, PAY AT LEIGHTON BERKHAMSTED OR LONDON. 1794—and the figure of a sheep; on the edge, CHAMBERS LANGSTON HALL & CO.¹ Most of these are of copper, but Mr. Arthur Brown, of Stamford Hill, London, N., has one of silver.

Other tokens with the same Obverse have for Reverse, "PAYABLE AT JOHN ROOKS NORWICH X X X" or, "PAYABLE AT W. GOLDSMITHS BRAINTREE ESSEX." Another token is figured and lettered as follows:

Obverse. Woman seated under a tree making lace.

Legend: LACE MANUFACTORY. 1795.

Reverse. On a scroll in indented letters: MUSLINS IRIS CLOTH HOSE & C.

Legend: MOORE NO 116 GREAT PORTLAND STREET.

Edge diagonally milled, in some instances coarsely and in others finely.

¹ They were wholesale haberdashers at 46 Gutter Lane, London.

Of Chambers's tokens one ton were struck and of Moore's half a ton. Mr. S. H. Hamer, who supplied this information, says, "There were also a few struck which had an edge-reading not connected with the general design of the token, viz.: PAYABLE AT I. JORDANS DRAPER, GOSPORT."

CHAPTER XV

COWPER'S YON COTTAGER. BABY LACE

William Cowper is pre-eminently the Poet of the Lace Pillow ; and his works and those of his friend, the Rev. John Newton, teem with references to the lace industry. Newton came to Olney in 1764, Cowper three years later. Newton removed to London in 1780. Cowper removed to Weston Underwood, a mile and a half from Olney, in 1786, and left the neighbourhood ten years later. From 1767 to 1772 Cowper and Newton held prayer meetings, which were attended chiefly by the lace-makers, on Sunday mornings at the Great House, an old mansion that stood close to the church, the service commencing at the early hour of seven.

Referring to these meetings in a letter written long after (November 30th, 1793), Cowper says : " Time was when on Sabbath mornings in winter I rose before day, and by the light of a lanthorn trudged with Mrs. Unwin, often through snow and rain, to a prayer meeting at the Great House. There I always found assembled forty or fifty poor folks who preferred a glimpse of the light of

58. " Nothing
Dandled but
the Lace
Pillow."

God's countenance and favour to the comforts of a warm bed, or to any comforts that the world could afford them; and there I have often myself partaken that blessing with them."

The story is told of a little maiden who, knowing that she would have to do so many heads of lace on the Monday morning, and wishing to take time by the fore-lock, waited till her mother had left the cottage for the prayer meeting, and then whipped out her pillow and managed to get two "heads" finished. The mother, however, discovered what had been done, and next morning she meted out punishment by saying to the mistress of the lace school, "You'll please make my gal do two heads extry to-day."

Both Cowper and Newton looked after the temporal as well as the spiritual needs of the workers, whose condition in 1780 became so hard that they and others sent a petition to the Lord of the Manor, praying him to approach Parliament in their behalf. But comedy always mingles with tragedy. One prominent person would not sign the petition because he did not think it grammatical; and Cowper, who was one of the signatories, commented, "Yet I think Priscian himself would have pardoned the manner for the sake of the matter."¹ It was stated that "one thousand two hundred lace-makers" in Olney alone had reason

¹ Wright's edition of the *Correspondence*, I., p. 207. Letter of June 23rd, 1780.

enough while a certain bill that affected them was in agitation, "to look upon every loaf they bought as the last they should ever be able to earn."¹ Mr. Robert Smith² (created in 1797 Lord Carrington), who made Cowper his almoner, sent for four years in succession (1782—1785) large sums to be distributed in the town. Cowper, who calls him "our beneficent friend, Mr. Smith,"³ adds, "How I love and honour that man. . . My bosom burns to immortalize him!"⁴ And immortalize him he did in *Task*, IV., 428 :

"I mean the man who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name."

When Samuel Rose in 1793 wrote to Cowper, who then resided at Weston Underwood, to ask whether there was any possibility of finding in Weston a nurse for his baby, Cowper replied, "Girls fit to be nurses, and worthy to be trusted with little William, are scarce, and especially scarce in this country where the lace pillow is the only thing they dandle."⁵

The originals of Cowper's poem, "The Flattening Mill" (1780) and the fragment commencing, "Methinks I see thee decently arrayed," are written on the Bill of a "Lace Manufacturer" named James Nicholls.⁶

¹ Wright's edition of the *Correspondence*, I., p. 210; II., 415.

² 1752—1838.

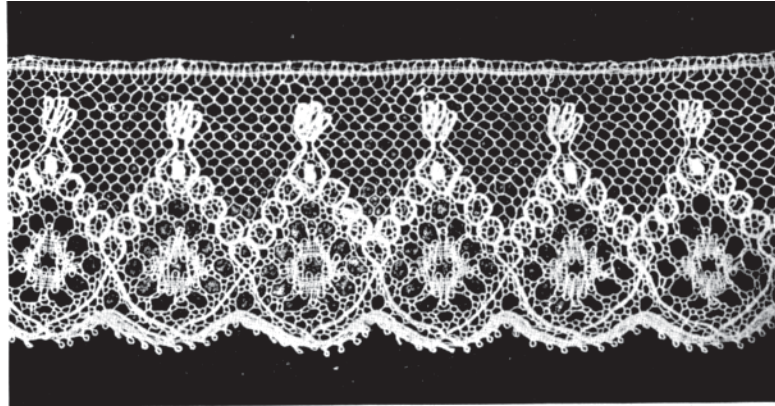
³ *Correspondence*, II., 25.

⁴ *Correspondence*, II., 151.

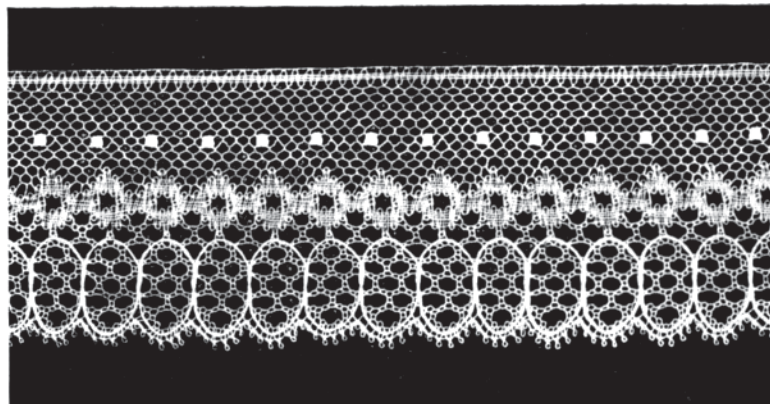
⁵ *Correspondence*, IV., 355.

⁶ Several members of this family were lace-buyers, the last being Susannah Nichols who died in 1860. She was the widow of William Nichols, who died in 1840. They lived in High Street South, in a large house on which are sculptured cross keys and the date 1717.

Plate 38

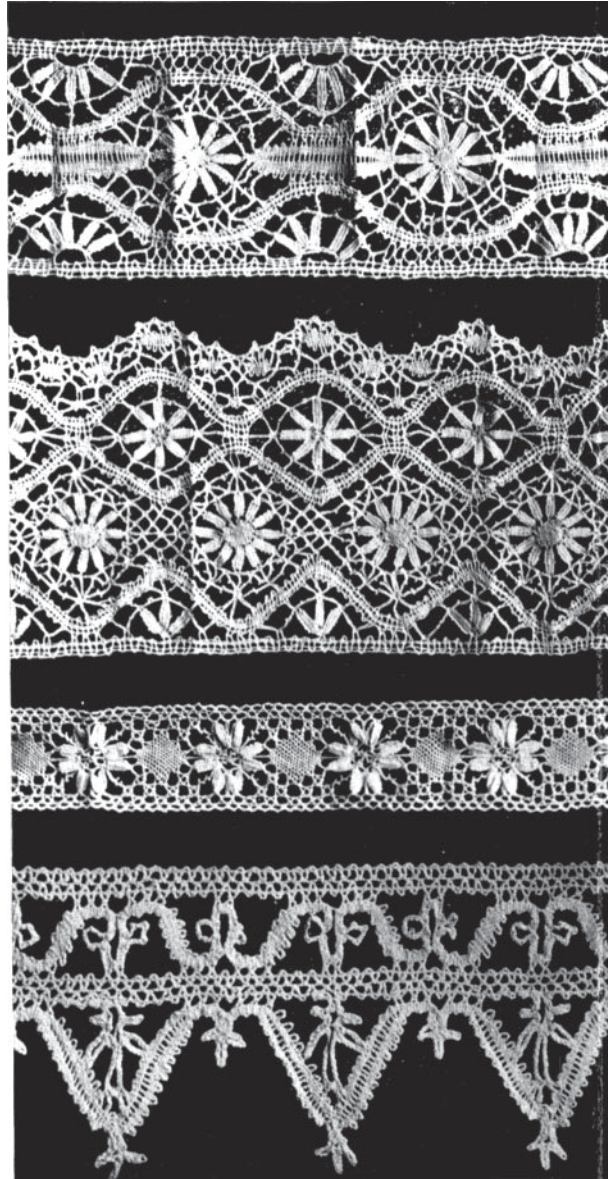


BUCKS POINT. Made at Spratton (Northants).



BUCKS POINT. Made at Northampton.

Plate 39



WINSLOW LACE INDUSTRY. See p. 12.

1. Lee Insertion for Furniture.
2. Lee Border.
3. Daisy Russian Insertion. It can be had with coloured daisies.
4. Old Greek Pointed Lace. For use on linen.

Few passages of poetry have been more frequently quoted than Cowper's lines on the lace-maker and Voltaire. (*Truth*, lines 317—336.)

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

Then follows the beautiful tribute to her, who

“Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.”

Among the well-known characters at Olney in Cowper's time was one Elizabeth Robinson, a “serving-maid” and lace-maker, whose sad story is immortalized in the lines on “Crazy Kate” (*Task*, lines 534—556):

“There often wanders one whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
With lace, and hat in splendid ribband bound.”

Her lover was a sailor, and when she heard “the doleful tidings of his death” she “never smiled again.” Her reason left her, and she used to roam all day long and sometimes all night in tattered clothes on the roads by the water-courses and in the fields and spinneys around Olney. Even in this distressing state she could not forget her pillow, for

"She begs an idle pin from all she meets
And hoards them in her sleeve."¹

One of the romances of the lace trade is referred to by Cowper in his letters of March 29th and April 10th, 1786, which tell of a common sailor who, after fighting under Wolfe at Quebec (1759), came to Olney penniless, entered the lace business, amassed money, built a big house and, although he had so often swung in a hammock, afforded the whole town occasion for mirth by giving £20 for a bed. After a period of prosperity he put the bulk of his substance to hazard by sending a cargo of lace to America, and the venture failing, he was reduced almost to his former indigence.

Cowper's protégée, pretty Hannah Willson, was a lace-maker. Writing on April 14th, 1789, the poet says: "Her chief occupation at present in the daytime is to make black lace for a cloak, which she does, by the account of the judicious in those matters, exceedingly well." Later—on June 6th—he tells Lady Hesketh: "Mrs. Unwin will be obliged to thee also for a black summer cloak, *untrimmed*, because Hannah is making a trimming for it."

Among Cowper's acquaintances at this time was Thompson Pater, a lace-buyer at Weston Underwood, and great-grandfather of Walter Pater,

¹As time went on she partially regained her reason. She died April 5th, 1821, aged 63, and there is a tombstone to her memory in the Baptist Graveyard at Olney.

author of *Marius the Epicurean*, and other works. The old home of the Paters is still standing, and there are several tombstones to members of the family in the churchyard.¹ In 1840 Cowper's old house at Olney, now the Cowper and Newton Museum, was used as a lace school.²

What Cowper was to the lace-makers of North Bucks another great poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, became twenty years later to the workers in the south of the county. When Shelley in 1825 resided at Albion House, Marlow, and while the fever in his soul was expressing itself in the *Revolt of Islam*, he continually interested himself in the condition of the workers, many of whom were his pensioners. At this period Black Silk Lace was largely made.

As a result of the French Revolution occurred a Fourth Exodus of lace-makers into England. (See Map, Plate 11.) As in the case of the First Exodus, the workers from one district flocked to Cranfield and other Bedfordshire vil-
59. The Fourth Exodus, 1794. Revolution Lace.
lages, and those of another to Devonshire. It was chiefly the refugees from Valenciennes who found their way to Cranfield. They brought with them numbers of new patterns, and as a result Cranfield became a centre of the parchment making industry

¹ See Wright's *Life of Walter Pater*, Vol. I., p. 9.

² It is referred to by Hugh Miller (who visited Olney, September 9th, 1845), in his *First Impressions of England*, pp. 274—303.

which flourished for over forty years, and the neighbourhood became famous for "English Valenciennes," which was "quite equal to the French variety."

Among the laces introduced by the refugees from Valenciennes was one called *Revolution Lace* (see Plate 13), which was in demand from 1789 to 1838. The pattern on the head-side was filled in with Point Ground, while there was Kat Stitch (Wire Ground, Six-pointed Star Ground or Hair-pin Stitch) on the foot-side. It is still made in Northamptonshire. At this period Hanslope and Stony Stratford in Bucks and Towcester in Northants were great lace centres. At Hanslope 800 out of a population of 1275 were employed at the pillow, and £9,000 net profit was annually brought into the village.

While, however, the Valenciennes workers drifted to Cranfield, those from Normandy made their way to Devonshire, where they introduced the Trolly Lace industry. (See Map, Plate 11.) In Buckinghamshire, as we have seen, the word "Trolly" means gimp, and a lace of the most delicate texture could be correctly called Trolly Lace (though the term is not much used) if the pattern has a gimp outline. In Devonshire, on the other hand, the word Trolly, whatever its original signification, came to mean a lace made of coarse British thread, with heavy bobbins, and

60. Devon-
shire Trolly.
1789.

worked straight on—round and round the pillow. This lace, which is unlike any other Devonshire fabric, was made by old women at East Budleigh (Devon) as late as 1896, and a few years ago Thirteen-hole Trolly was obtainable in the villages round Exmouth, but the industry is now practically extinct.

For many years attempts had been made to produce lace by machinery, and towards the end of the 18th century an inven-^{61.} tion called the "Warp Machine" gave Heathcoat's Machine. 1814. an impetus to the idea. Little progress, however, was made until 1809, when John Heathcoat patented his Second Bobbin Machine, which became the foundation of an enormous industry. The low prices at which machine lace could be sold caused great consternation among the Bucks workers. "Nottingham Net" was followed by "Urling's Figured Imitations." It was in "Urling's Patent Lace" that Miss Stephens sang, "And they're a' Noddin," and that Mademoiselle Noblet danced. Belgravia and May Fair wore it on their "Cleopatra backs," and fashioned it as a mob under their sea-green Leghorn bonnets. A "colerette standing up and finished by two rows of Urling's Patent Lace" was considered irresistible, particularly if the young lady carried a twisted gold chain from which was suspended a circular eye-glass and wore lemon coloured gloves. In the park, in the

church, at Belzoni's Exhibition—everywhere in 1822—there was Urling's Patent Lace. Urling! Urling! Urling! The people of Buckinghamshire were goaded to madness.

The one question they asked of any candidate for Parliament was whether he would fight tooth and nail in behalf of Bobbin Work. At the Aylesbury elections anti-machine processions paraded the town. In front was a lace pillow, mounted on a high pole; then came a band of music, followed by a car in which was seated a Lace Queen¹ "plying her vocation," the procession being closed by her court, who carried banners trimmed with lace and placards worded, "Support Bobbin lace!" "Down with the Machine Stuff!" and similar mottoes. The popular candidate, who could hardly be seen for lace, was cheered to the echo, and the other man was pelted (served him right!) "like a Shrove-tide cock."

Among the Bucks patterns imitated recently by machinery was *Fremantle*. One of the mills turned out thousands of yards which were sent to Russia, where curiously enough it was used for lining coffins.

Certainly the Bucks industry suffered terribly for years, but in time people began to recognise that machine lace has its limits, and that though much of it is effective at a distance, it is not to be spoken of in the same breath with lace made by

¹ Mrs. Whitley, who was thus honoured in 1820, died in 1884.

the hand. It is also far less durable. Cultured taste has come to admit that there is no comparison between the perfect thing made on a pillow and the make-shift imitation, however ingeniously produced.

Early in the century a licence was necessary in order "to deal in Thread Lace of British manufacture," and a copy of the Licence granted to John Morgan of Olney in 1807 is preserved in the Cowper Museum at Olney. The stamp was five shillings.

As if the blows from machinery were insufficient, resolutions were read in the House of Commons on November 17th, 1814 (that is, soon after the retirement of Napoleon to Elba), that the duties "payable on the Importation of Thread and Silk Lace into Great Britain do cease and determine."¹ The new proposals were (1) that the low *ad valorem* duty of 20 per cent. should be placed on Foreign Laces; (2) that a stamp duty of three guineas be charged upon every Licence to be taken out by Dealers in Foreign Lace.

The lace manufacturers were now thoroughly roused. They met on December 21st, 1814, at the Swan Inn, Newport Pagnell, and resolved unanimously "That any duty imposed by the legislature on Foreign Thread Lace, except by the system of law now existing," would "entirely

¹ This would nullify the Act passed in the forty-sixth year of George III., by which heavy duties were placed on foreign laces.

ruin the Manufactory of this country." A committee¹ was formed, subscriptions were raised to defray expenses; deputations were appointed to wait on the Members of Parliament for Bucks, Beds and Northants, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and others; and a petition to Parliament (dated February 15th, 1815) was drawn up, in which it was prayed that the House "would not suffer to pass into a law a Bill which must endanger the security of this interesting and Staple Manufactory which has given employment for a period of one hundred and fifty years to above 150,000 persons."

Very little good, however, came of the efforts, for after the battle of Waterloo (June 18th, 1815) large consignments of foreign lace were admitted into this country.

The unhappy Bucks workers, in their endeavour to compete with machinery, then made the fatal mistake of using inferior and cheaper thread which was obtained from Holland, as were all other threads at the time. Consequently the Valenciennes laces were soon pronounced to be more durable than the home-made fabrics, with the result that even those manufacturers who continued to use the best threads found themselves severely mauled.

¹ The folio volume, bound in brown calf, containing the minutes of this Committee has been preserved. On the cover are the words, "Lace Manufactory Committee Proceedings." It is in the possession of Mr. F. W. Bartlett, Port Vale, Hertford.

It may be asked whether lace made by machine will ever equal that made by hand.

62. M. Seguin on Lace. The answer is, It is an absolute impossibility. M. Seguin lucidly explains the reason. "In machine work," he says, "the operating force is absolutely uniform, and consequently a perfectly regular and perfectly flat tissue is produced. Hand work, however, is bound to be irregular." He then points out the advantage of this irregularity. "It presents," he observes, "an infinite succession of waves and little imperceptible unevennesses which catch the light and cast shadows." He illustrates his remarks by comparing the inside of a limpet shell with the inside of a sea-ear (*haliotis*). The one is a flat, dead white, while the other by its irregularities breaks the light into the prismatic colours we call mother o' pearl. Machine-made lace is the vapid, colourless, character-lacking limpet shell; hand-made lace the iridescent, light-scattering and character-presenting sea-ear. In short, machine lace is wanting in nacre.

One result of the competition brought about by machinery was to lead the Bucks workers to devote special attention to the production of Baby Lace—that is to say, a narrow lace for ornamenting infants' caps.

63. The Olney Crowns.

The county of Buckingham and the most famous of English babies were (as we mentioned

on page 30 when referring to St. Rumbald) in quite early times very closely connected; but owing to the baby cap, the terms Buckingham and Baby were destined to become even more intimately associated.

The inventor of the Buckinghamshire "rounds" (see Plate 26), "horsehoes," and other shaped "crowns" of babies' caps was John Millward of Olney, who expended great skill upon them. On an earlier page we called him the Byron of the Lace World. The "crown" was his first great idea. He awoke and found himself famous. Those made by him from 1820 to 1828—and many of them are dated—are particularly beautiful and delicate in design.¹

A baby's cap which must have fluttered the hearts of many ladies is in the possession of Mrs. W. W. Carlile. It is the work of Sarah Hall of Wooton,² and was made in 1820. The crown is hexagonal, the body is made up of point insertions and Jacob's ladder plaits, and the rim consists of point, the plaits in which form the words, "Long live the Babe."³

Great numbers of the Millward caps were exported to America until 1860, when the outbreak of the Civil War closed the Western market.

Another lace-designer of the period was Wil-

¹ The crown was surrounded by lawn, and that in its turn by edgings. The strings were of lawn.

² Northants.

³ Compare the notes on Name Lace in Chapter 16, page 222.

liam Soul, a bosom friend of Millward. Soul, who affected a little straw hat and a very long coat, was in the habit as he walked of swinging his arms backwards and forwards with a regular motion; consequently, he¹ and Millward,² who, as already stated, had a club foot and generally wore a blue cut-away, made a curious couple as they passed through the street together, and they were usually alluded to by the profane as "Pendulum Bill" and "Dabfoot." We have reproduced a photograph (Plate 48) showing Millward, Soul, and three of their friends.

During the Regency (1810—1820) there was made in Northamptonshire a striking lace, with fillings of a bold character, ^{64. Regency Point.} which was called Regency Point. (See Plate 25.) One peculiarity was that the plaits or leadworks, instead of being in the net ground as in the case of other Bucks Point laces, were dotted about the ornamental fillings, giving them a bizarre and very pleasing appearance. A similar pattern was being used at Padbury (Bucks) in 1891. (See Chapter 16.)

At this period the Northants workers were mostly employed in making "*Quillings*;" and about 1830 *Insertions* found their way into popular

¹ Soul, who was also an astronomer and something of an author, died at Olney March 3rd, 1865. He left a biography in manuscript of Samuel Teedon, who figures so conspicuously in Cowper's letters.

² Millward, whose name is preserved in "Millard's Entry," a passage in the town that ran past his house, died about 1860, and was buried in the graveyard of the Independent meeting.

favour. The Bucks Point lace used by Queen Victoria at her accession was designed by Millward, and made at Olney—the pattern being the rose, the shamrock and the thistle; and a similar but narrower lace adorned the Christening Robe of the Princess Royal. The Queen's interest in Bucks Lace was further stimulated in 1845 during a visit to Stowe House, when she inspected the specimens submitted to her by the Duchess of Buckingham.¹

¹ In the Victoria and Albert Museum are preserved some very elaborate and beautiful specimens of Bucks Point Lace made in the earlier half of the 19th century. See Plates 18, 19, 20.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MALTESE AND TORCHON PERIODS

The lace from the Midlands shown in the Exhibition of 1851 was all of the Bucks Point variety, the Gold Medal ^{65. Laceland} being won by an exhibit made at _{in 1851.} Olney from a parchment by Mr. John Millward, who had designed it for Messrs. Copestake and Co. (See Plate 27.)

When Queen Victoria visited the Exhibition Miss Elizabeth Clayson (afterwards Mrs. George Smith) of Olney had the honour of making this lace in her presence. The pillow was covered for the occasion with blue velvet edged with rose colour, and provided with rose-coloured bobbin bags. The Queen asked various questions about the work, one being, "Are the different coloured bobbins a guide to which thread you turn over?" the answer being, of course, in the negative; but, as we have already observed, the *shapes* of some of the bobbins *are* a guide—the trollies or gimps (which are larger than the others) being usually surrounded by loose rings, and the tallies (for making the tiny plaits) by tin bands.

There was also shown a Flounce made for the Queen from a copy¹ of the parchment described on page 71, the work of three sisters who lived at Stoke Goldington (Charlotte, Mary and Anne Warren).² It was of 14 slip thread, and it took 10 papers of pins, 26 score bobbins and 10 score trollies (gimps), that is, 750 bobbins in all.

A veil exhibited was the joint work of the mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of of a Stevington lace-maker; and the late Mr. George Hurst of Bedford contributed a piece of lace, the peculiarity of which consisted in the introduction of spun glass into the pattern.³

About this time there came into vogue a curiosity in the way of Bucks Point which was called *Name Lace*. Instead of a pattern some Christian name—George, John, Mary or Jane—was repeated among the net. As might be supposed, the fashion soon went out, for however fond a person might be of a sweetheart or husband named John, one wearied of seeing John, John, John⁴ perpetually repeated. Six inches of him might please, but half a dozen yards led to the wish that “he was at Hanover!”

66. Name,
Monogram
and Aglet
Lace.

¹ Both the original parchment and the copy are at Olney, the former being in the possession of Mr. G. Smith, the latter of Mrs. Joseph Peters.

² Charlotte, afterwards Mrs. Adams of Stoke Goldington; Mary, afterwards Mrs. Webb of Hartwell; Ann, afterwards Mrs. Garner of Hackleton.

³ *Illustrated London News*, July 19th. 1851.

⁴ A lace with this name was made at Olney about 1850 by the mother of Miss Hannah Kitchener.

At Calverton and Whaddon near Stony Stratford long bookmarkers, about an inch and a half wide, were made with mottoes such as, "Remember me," the spaces among the letters being filled with Bucks Point.¹ There was a turnpin edging in red silk.

A Bozeat lady tells me that about 1896 she saw on a pillow at Piddington (near Yardley Chase) a point lace in which an oak tree (probably Cowper's Oak) was repeated as the pattern. She remembered that it was about five inches wide, and that 16s. a yard was received for it, adding, "There was the stem of the tree as though you might take hold of it like that (suiting the action to the words); it had acorns, and it was the wonder of the village."

In the same period Bucks Point was occasionally made with two headsides, which were sometimes alike and sometimes different, though both as a rule were serpentine. This lace was used chiefly for insertions.

Monogram Lace, in the form of medallions—the sacred monogram I. H. S. from an antique pattern being most in demand—has been made for Mr. George Smith at Olney during the last thirty years, and sent to the Continent for ecclesiastical purposes. Outside the monogram are usually the dog tooth edgings, trails and plaits. The ornaments in the corner have raised plaits. *Bird*

¹ Mrs. Bull of Calverton has one.

Medallions—usually the Dove as emblem of the Holy Spirit—were made for the same purpose.

Aglet Lace, which had on the footside a row of aglets or eyelet-holes for the reception of a cord or a narrow ribbon, also had its little day. This lace is still occasionally made, both as an edging and as an insertion (in which case the eyelets are of course down the middle), and used for under-clothing.

In 1851 the number of lace-makers in the principal lace-making counties was: Bucks, 7112; Northants, 5800; Beds, 3779; Oxford, 1197; Hunts, 442.¹

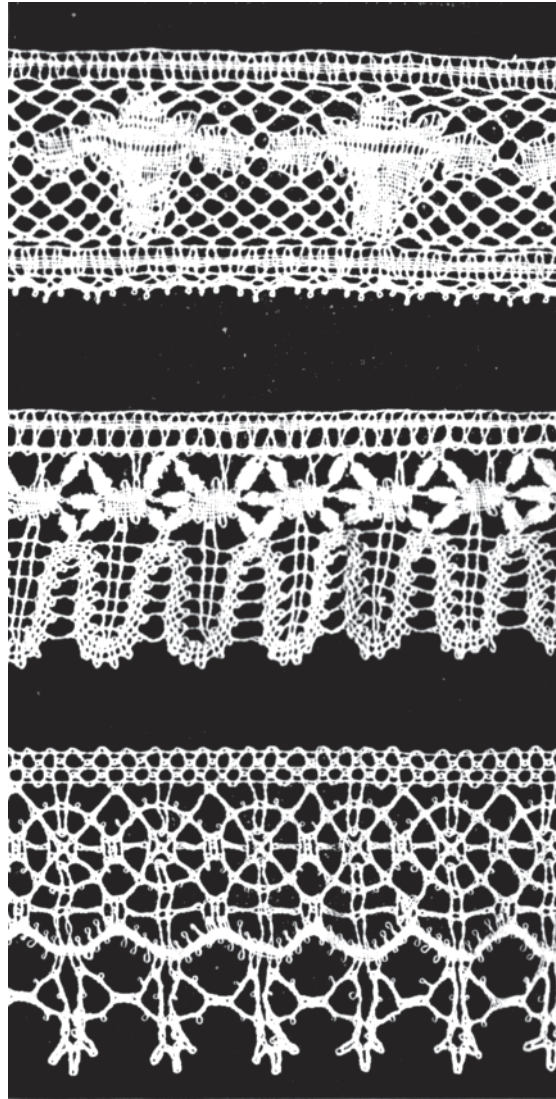
About 1851 there was introduced from Malta ^{67. Maltese.} the variety of lace called Maltese ^{1851.} (see page 13), which made its special home in West Bedfordshire, whence it is sometimes called Bedfordshire Lace. It differs from the Maltese now made at Malta in several particulars. (1) The Maltese cross is absent.² The reason is not far to seek, for West Bedfordshire was a strong Evangelical centre, and consequently the use of the cross in the lace was discouraged. (2) The Wheat-ear (which the Maltese had borrowed from the Genoese) exchanged its pointed ends³ for square ends, and its name for the Barley-

¹ These figures seem to apply to adults only. The census figures show that in 1861 there were in Beds making lace 6728 persons; in 1881, 4792; in 1901, 1148.

² Now and again one sees it in very recent patterns made to order.

³ In Bucks they are never made with pointed ends except to order. It is easier to make the square ends.

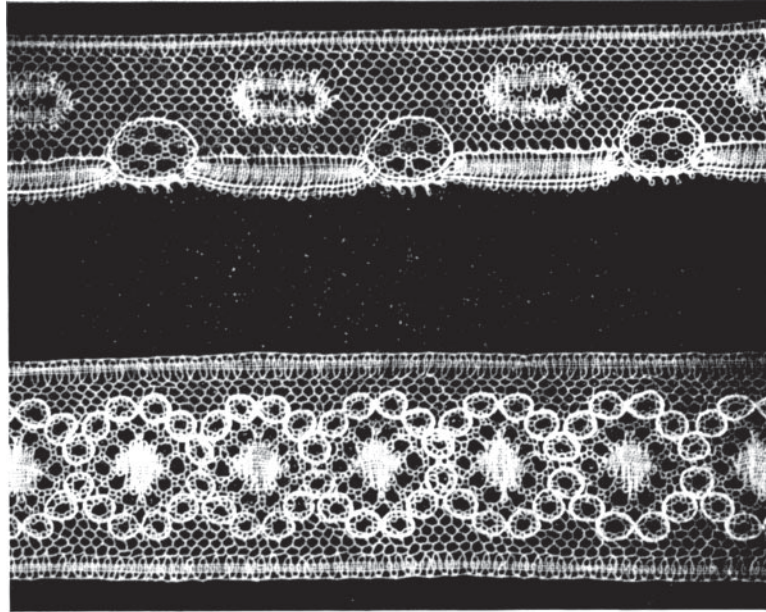
Plate 40



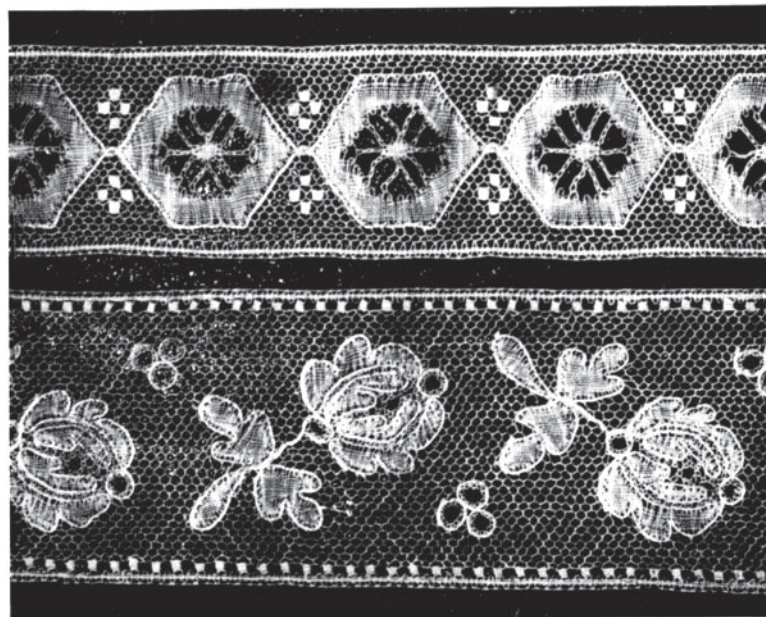
WINSLOW LACE INDUSTRY. See p. 12.

1. OLD CRETE. Width 2 inches.
2. Tray or toilet. "The Feather."
3. Light-make Piombini.

Plate 41



1. POINT. Made at Northampton.
2. THE RING. (Insertion.) Made at Denton.



1. HEXAGON INSERTION.
2. THE ROSE PATTERN.

corn. (3) The purl edge appeared. (4) It contains fewer plaits. The Maltese made in Bedfordshire and the Maltese made at Malta both differ from the original Maltese (or Genoese) in that the edges generally consist of gentle undulations, instead of vandykes and deep scallops. (See Plates 28 to 32.)

Owing to its cheapness Maltese gradually drove Bucks Point from the market, and at the present day, where two or three persons make Bucks Point, fifty or a hundred make Maltese. When first introduced into England Maltese was less open than it subsequently became, and birds, butterflies, etc., formed of cloth-work, were introduced into the pattern (see Plate 31), giving it some resemblance to Honiton. Coiffures, black silk veils, parasol covers and lappets, all in Maltese, were for many years in great demand.

The principal Maltese laces are the following :

1. Legs and Turnpin Lace. This is the lace with what is called the Maltese ground, which consists of legs forming diamond shaped openings. The legs are ornamented with turnpins (purls or *picots*).
2. The Spider.
3. The Spider's Sister (Calverton names).
4. The Lady's Fancy (a Bozeat name).
5. The Tree of Plaits.
6. The Flower Pot.
7. The Beehive.
8. The Old Wheel.
9. The Plait.
10. The Rose and Leaf.
11. The Watch.
12. Little Dick, or the Turnpin Edge (a Bozeat name).
13. Little Dick's Mother (a Bozeat name), a narrow edging of plaits, which is also made as an insertion. The Yardley Hastings name is Jacob's Ladder.
14. Little Dick and his Mother (a Bozeat name).

Thousands of yards of *Jacob's Ladder* have been

made at Yardley Hastings. Maltese sometimes has bold honeycomb fillings, and it has borrowed other features from Bucks Point. A mixture of Maltese and Bucks Point is made in many villages, and frequently *Raised Plaits*, sometimes called *Florentine Knots*, are introduced.

As Bucks Point had its enthusiasts so had Maltese, and one of them, who lived at Maidford near Towcester, went so far as to cause his garden gate to represent a Maltese insertion. Among the wonders of Maltese work was a shawl ($2\frac{1}{2}$ yds. square), made at Turweston, Northants, and exhibited some years ago in London. The parchment is still in the possession of a Turweston lace-maker.

For the Maltese Laces 3 and 4 slip gassed thread is generally used, or 6 or 8 slip for the finer patterns. In Bedfordshire the silk substitute D.M.C. No. 20 (the initials being those of Dollfus, Mieg & Co., an Alsace firm) has found favour with many workers, though for wearing qualities it cannot be compared with the specially manufactured gassed thread. Still it is the best of the sylkos, being more mellow than the others.

The Bucks Cottage Workers' Agency never use cotton in any of their productions, as laces made with it have no durability. When any new thread is offered to them, Mr. H. H. Armstrong always puts its claims to the test of soap and water. If a lace can win past and through this homely Scylla

and Charybdis—the rock and whirlpool of the washtub—it has little else to fear.

Bucks Cluny (an offshoot of Maltese) which next came into fashion obtained its name on account of its having been copied from certain old Italian laces preserved in the Cluny Museum of Antiquities in Paris. It is made of linen thread either white or ecru, and its principal characteristic is the Divided Trail. In Maltese Laces the trail is always filled. In some of the Cluny laces made at Paulerspury wire ground of a very large mesh has been introduced; and in others, made at High Wycombe, point ground of gigantic mesh has been similarly used. Cluny, the material of which is linen, being a heavy and substantial lace, is used for curtain and table-cloth edgings—indeed as furniture lace generally, and almost anything liable to much friction. Favourite patterns are the Wheel and the Greek Pattern. (See Plate 33.) Auvergne Lace, another offshoot of Maltese, was also for a time popular.

Blonde Lace made of both white and black silk was introduced from Caen into Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire about 1860 by Mr. E. Godfroy. The *cordonet*, which is of thicker silk, was called in these counties the trolly.¹ (See Plate 25.)

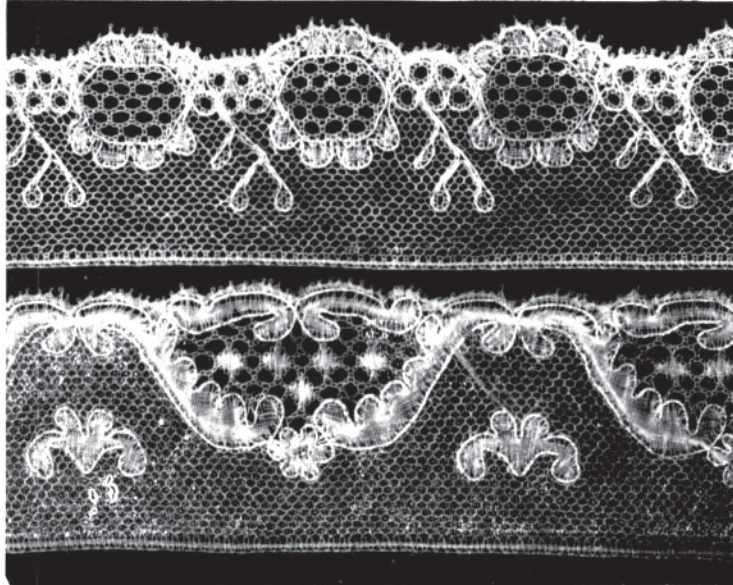
¹ Thus the trolly takes the place of gimp in Blonde laces. Gimp is linen thread.

Between 1860 and 1864, and perhaps earlier, Mr. Sargent of Sandy, and other manufacturers, introduced from Paris an immense number of Floral Designs of a striking character. In some of them Point Ground occurred, and in others the various parts of the pattern were connected by legs. Further progress in lace designing was brought about by the Exhibition of 1862, when leaves in imitation of Nature were mingled with the Oriental arabesque of the old Maltese lace. The lace exhibits in this Exhibition, which were almost entirely Maltese, included a black silk shawl and a black silk flounce, designed by Mr. E. Godfroy, and made by the two Misses French of Buckingham. In 1864, according to *Olney and the Lace-makers*,¹ which appeared that year, the specialities of North Bucks were, in addition to black and white laces made by the yard, collars and cuffs, coiffures, lappets and parasol covers.

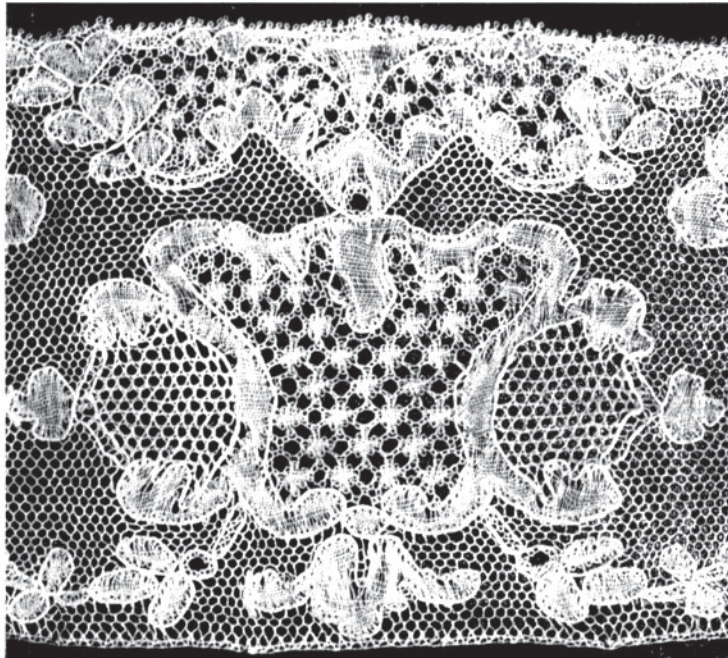
About 1870 there began to be made throughout Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, especially at Newport Pagnell, High Wycombe and Stagsden, a coarse, strong bobbin lace, the material of which seems at first to have been obtained from the Yak animal. Most of it, however, was made of Yorkshire wool. The designs of Yak, as it was

¹ By Miss Elizabeth Wilson.

Plate 42



1. Point made at Northampton.
2. THE BEEHIVE, filled with Mayflower Ground. Point Ground on the footside. Made at Paulerspury.

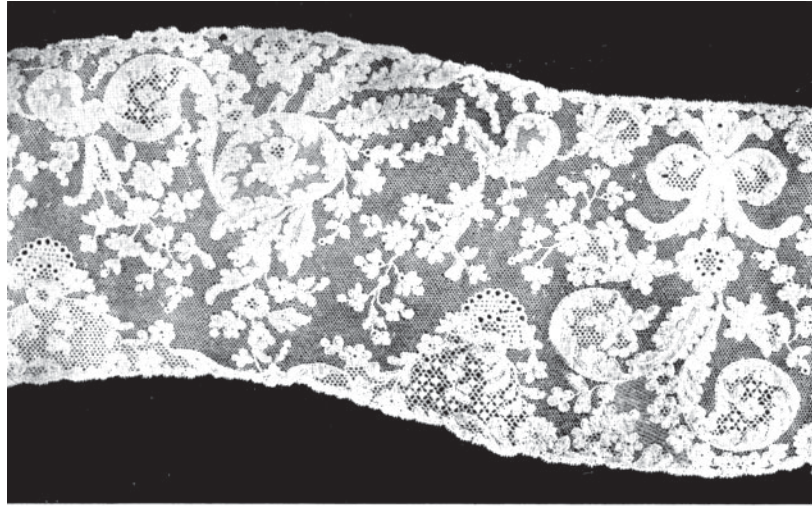


THE WEDDING BELL PATTERN. (BUCKS POINT.)

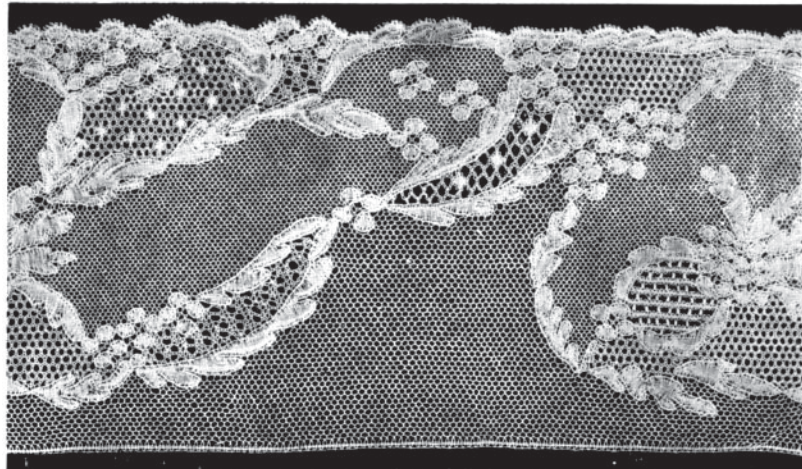
The Bell itself and other parts of pattern are filled with Mayflower Ground. On each side of it and elsewhere are spaces filled with Wire Ground (Kat Stitch).

(Lent by Mrs. Markham, Dallington.)

Plate 43



BUCKS POINT. Made near Olney.



BUCKS POINT. Made near Olney.

called, were geometrical, being copied from Reticella and silk Maltese Guipure.

One of the results of its introduction was the gradual extinction of the Black Silk Lace industry, the centre of which at that time was Haddenham near Aylesbury. High Wycombe obtained a name for its wheel-like Yak design, the Town Trot, which was made in enormous quantities.¹

A brown lace with blue plaits made in widths of two, three and four inches, which was used for dresses, valances, and for decorating furniture, occupied many pillows at Newton Blossomville and other villages in North Bucks. At Carlton (Beds) a very heavy worsted lace of every imaginable colour was made in widths from half an inch to a foot, but the black variety of Yak was most in demand. (See Plate 48.) The fashion, however, for all kinds of Yak soon declined, and eventually became almost extinct, except in respect to the cream variety which is still sold for children's clothes.²

A little later *Norman Lace*, made of worsted of various colours, was produced in the Newport Pagnell district, the principal market for it being the United States.³

Gold Thread Lace was made at Newport Pagnell, Cranfield, Bolnhurst and other towns and

¹ In North Bucks Mr. E. Godfroy alone used three hundred pounds weight of wool per month.

² Gibbs's *History of Aylesbury*, p. 622; Bull's *History of Newport Pagnell*, p. 196.

³ Bull's *History of Newport Pagnell*, p. 196.

villages about 1880, but the workers disliked making it because it “used to twipper” (curl up) on the pillow, and they were not sorry when the demand ceased. In 1895 the workers of Lacey Green made some Gold Lace for the Duchess of York.

Torchon Lace had for many years been made on the Continent, but the English people did not take kindly to it until the end of the 19th century. “Torchon,” a French word, means a dishcloth or any other fabric of coarse material, this name and that of Beggars’ Lace having been given to it in derision by the makers of the finer fabrics. Certainly, Torchon has a coarse appearance, but when well made it has, to use the words of an admirer, “a beauty and dignity all its own.” Then, too, it can be devoted to uses that would be quite unsuitable to the delicate Bucks Point and the more open Maltese. Moreover, it has in its favour one very important virtue, namely, its cheapness. The principal stitches¹ in this lace are :

1. Half-stitch (in some districts also called No-stitch).
2. Whole-stitch (Cloth-stitch).
3. Torchon, with 1, 2 or 3 twists between the pins.
4. Twisted Half-stitch, with 1, 2 or 3 twists between the pins.
5. Rose, with half-stitch within each set of four pins.
6. „ whole-stitch „ „ „
7. „ twisted half-stitch „ „

¹ Additional information respecting the stitches can be found in *Dentelles aux fuseaux*, published by the D. M. C. people ; and in *English Pillow Laces* by Miss M. Maidment.

No. 5 is by some writers called Double Rose. All the Rose stitches are at Olney called "Fours." Among the devices introduced are the Spider,¹ which often occurs in a ground of Torchon Stitch and Plaits, which, as in Maltese, are sometimes worked into the ground and sometimes laid upon a closer foundation, when they are known as *Leaves, Tufts* or *Shells*. In most Torchons the Fan and the Diamond designs are seen, and the edges are vandyked or scalloped. The pattern is often in parts outlined with stouter cord or coarse coloured thread, and sometimes the raised leaves and other parts of the pattern are also in colours. A collection of specimens of these partially coloured laces,—and they are very pretty,²—the colours used being red, green, blue and amber, may be seen in the Museum at Northampton. They formed part of a pattern book that belonged to the Northampton lace-buyer, Mr. Joseph Foddy.³ At Weston Underwood some of the workers add a purl-edge to the torchon, in order that it may not be mistaken for machine lace. The purl-edge, it seems, cannot be made by machinery.

Some of the old European Torchons, including "Old Naples," are made by the workers of the Winslow (Bucks) Lace Industry. The variety of Torchon made by Jewish workers in Syria exhibits

¹ Sometimes called the wheel, though it is very unwheel-like.

² Some were the work of Emily Clark, Ashton, near Roade.

³ There are in the Museum 1400 specimens altogether from Mr. Foddy's Pattern Book. One is of lace made with human hair.

as a peculiarity "the knotting stitch." Torchon is usually made of Irish linen, Nos. 28, 35, 60, 80, 100 and 120 finding most favour. The Bedfordshire workers are partial to D. M. C. No. 20. For illustration of an early Torchon see Plate 37.

Lace Pelevines and *Berthes*¹ (ornamental capes worn over the shoulders with evening dress) came into vogue about 1870, ousting the *berthes* in muslin appliqué² which during the previous twenty years had dominated the market. *Fichus* made of Point or Maltese—the one called the Marie Antoinette taking the lead—were introduced about 1885; and *Medallions* or *Motifs*, which were used for the making up of blouses and fichus (being either let in or appliquéd), made their appearance a little later. These medallions, which are often Point Ground, French Ground, or Honeycomb, are made almost any shape, but rounds, squares and oblongs find most favour.

Owing to the influence of the various Factory Acts and the legislation for Elementary Education, the many lace-making schools in the three counties were obliged to terminate their existence.

In 1871, for example, there were three at Kislingbury near Northampton. In 1879 all

¹ In Bucks called *Berthas*.

² They were usually appliquéd on Brussels net. See *Illustrated Exhibitor*, 1852, p. 112.

were closed, and the same tale could be told of other villages.

Light on the condition of the Lace industry in the Midlands in 1891 is afforded by Mr. Alan S. Cole's "Report" of that date "on Northamptonshire, Bucks and Bedfordshire Lace-making." Mr. Cole found that in most of the villages which he visited the laces principally made were Bucks Point, Maltese and Torchon; that in many instances the designs were poor, and that in consequence "the average earning of the pillow lace-maker" was "very low." The lace was for the most part made by elderly women. At *Spratton*, *Paulerspury* and *Wicken* he found several "pillows at work upon Auvergne and Cluny styles," for which many lace-buyers just then showed a preference.

At *Padbury* (Bucks) he found fine thread Bucks Point being made, and the illustration which he gives of it shows it to have been the same as that which at Brackley (Northants) was called Regency Point (see Plate 25), with the exception that it had plaits (small crosses) in the net ground. At *Lacey Green* the workers were making in addition to narrow edgings of Bucks Point various coloured coarse thread laces suitable for curtains. At *Ridgmont* (Beds) patterns were in use that were brought over by the French refugees in 1798. Some had the point ground with the Mechlin style of pattern, and others were Point and Maltese combined.

Among the English authors who have written charmingly on lace is John Ruskin. "If you think of it," he says, "you will find the whole value of lace as a possession depends on the fact of its having a beauty which has been the reward of industry and attention. . . . The real good of a piece of lace is that it should show first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy; next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common sense enough not to wear it on all occasions."

CHAPTER XVII

LACE-MAKING TO-DAY

From the remarks made in the immediately preceding chapters it will have been judged, and correctly, that the Lace industry in the Midlands had fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf. There were still good workers who obtained fair remuneration for their pains, but almost everywhere there was discouragement and a falling-off, and poor pay became the rule. The people, however, clung pathetically to their pillows, but then came the unkindest cut of all. The quality, it seems, were unable at this time to obtain maid-servants, and the word was sent round that the difficulty could best be met by ceasing to purchase lace.

The darkest hour, however, is always that before the dawn, and so the Midland workers found it. The pioneers in the attempt to revive the industry in Bucks were Mrs. Forrest of Grymsdyke, Princes Risborough, and the Countess of Buckinghamshire, whose labours extended from about 1880 to 1896.

Others who laboured indefatigably in Buckinghamshire were Mrs. W. W. Carlile (wife of

Mr. W. W. Carlile, M.P. for North Bucks), Miss Burrowes (author of *Buckingham Lace*, by T. E. D. S.), Lucy Marian (second daughter of the late Lord Addington), who was the means of leading the workers of Mid-Bucks to produce the heavy old Italian and Greek Guipures and other laces; the Hon. Rose Hubbard, Mrs. (now Lady) Inglefield, whose efforts on behalf of the Belgian lace-workers are so well known; Mr. J. Raftery, the successor of Mr. E. Godfroy; and Mr. George Smith, the successor of Mr. John Millward.

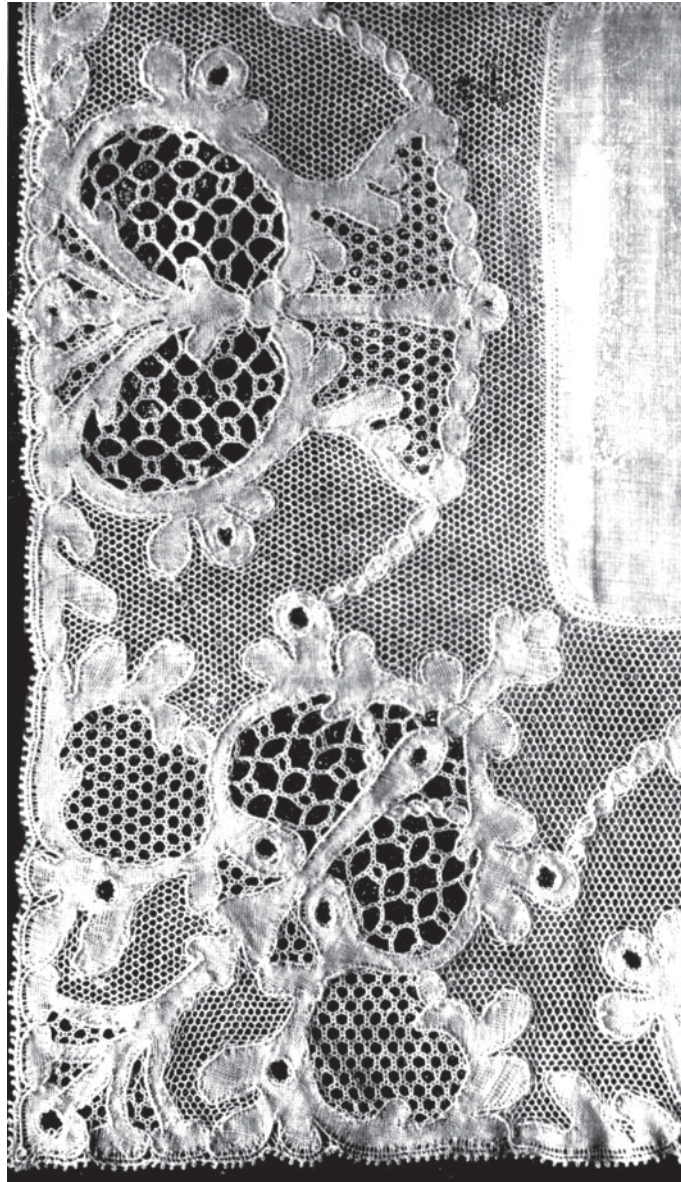
In Bedfordshire Lady Amphill, Lady Mackenzie, Mrs. Prothero, Mrs. Fitzpatrick, Miss Haines, Mr. C. Lester, Mr. T. Lester, Mr. Thomas Coombs and others have done excellent work.

In Northamptonshire the prominent names are Mrs. J. B. Harrison (wife of the Rev. J. B. Harrison), Mrs. Chettle, Miss Sams, Mrs. Roberts, who collected patterns from all over Europe, Miss M. E. Roberts, Miss C. C. Channer, Mrs. Bostock, Miss Alice Dryden (now Mrs. Marcon), Mr. Leopold Stanton, Lady Sarah Spencer, Miss Bouverie and Mrs. Markham (wife of Major C. A. Markham).

In Huntingdonshire the most indefatigable workers have been Mrs. Fydell Rowley, Mrs. Janet Garrod and Mrs. J. E. Whitehead. Oxfordshire can boast of Mrs. Nind, Miss Sivewright, Miss C. M. Pope and Mrs. A. J. Comber.

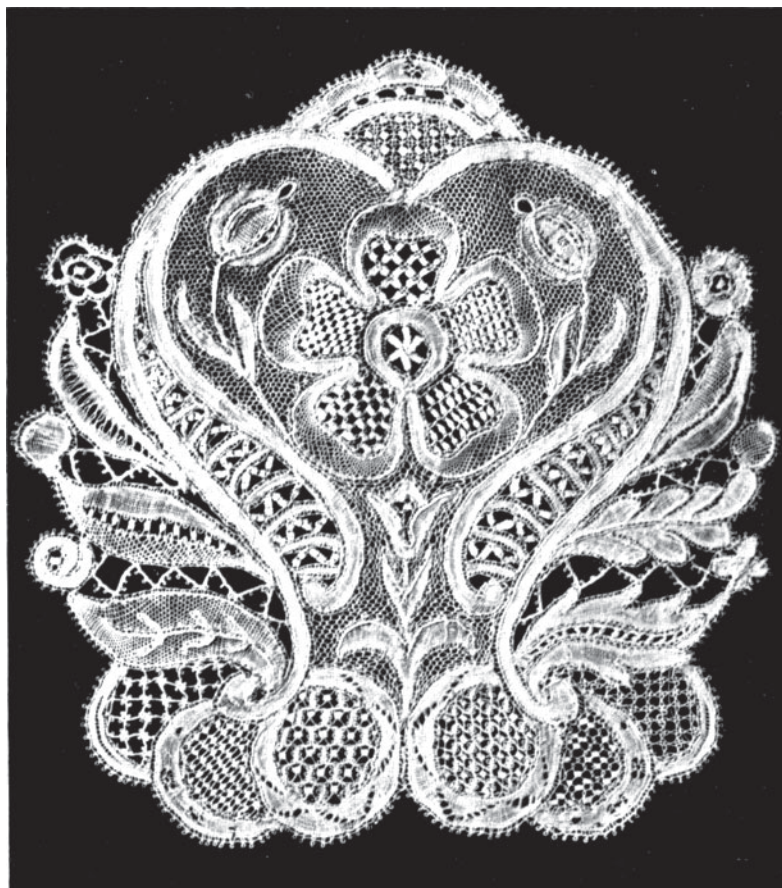
The difficulties which had to be faced by these

Plate 44



BUCKS POINT HANDKERCHIEF, WITH VARIOUS FILLINGS.

Plate 45



SAMPLER. BY MISS M. MAIDMENT. See p. 244.
Showing nearly all the stitches in Honiton Lace.

pioneers will be understood from the remarks made by Mrs. W. W. Carlile, in the *Empire Review* (Jan., 1903): "Such lace-makers," she says, "as still plied their trade, had for the most part given up the fine Half-stitch [Bucks Point] as it is locally called, for coarse Maltese and Torchon edgings; and those who still clung to the Bucks Point worked it in cotton with clumsy thick pins and cardboard for parchment. In the same way the old graceful flowing patterns had been abandoned for stiff and clumsy patterns devised by the workers themselves,—monotonous repetitions of one conventional flower or leaf utterly devoid of artistic merit, that showed more plainly than all else to what a low ebb the fortunes of lace-making had fallen."

I myself have seen lace-makers using cardboard patterns so worn that in places you could put your thumb through. These holes they used to "flubber"¹ over. So, whether the pattern was correct or incorrect, the work was bad.

Many of the fine old parchments had been burnt as rubbish, or melted down for glue. Inquiry, however, led to the production of a large number which, by a miracle as it were, had been preserved by some of the older workers.

Mrs. Harrison principally directed her efforts towards preserving and renewing the best old

¹ A variant of "fludder," to muddle over, used at North Marston and other villages.

designs and to ensure the use of proper materials, and she arranged for the sale of the lace direct from the worker to the purchaser. To her is also due the credit of having persuaded the manufacturers of thread and pins to produce, once more, linen thread fine enough for Pillow Point, and pins to correspond. Under her direction a very beautiful fan was made by Miss Gibbins of Paulerspury for Queen Alexandra, the ornaments being Her Majesty's favourite flower, the lily of the valley, her initials—A. R., and an Imperial Crown.

Mrs. Harrison was continuously helped and encouraged by her sister, Miss Sams of Paulerspury, Mrs. Moffatt of Goodrich Court, Ross on Wye, and Mrs. Wentworth Vernon of Stoke Bruern. The very beautiful lace on the frontal and pulpit-fall used at Paulerspury Church was also made under her direction.

Thanks to the efforts of the various ladies we have mentioned Associations were formed in Bucks, Beds, Northants (the Midland Lace Association) and Hunts, businesses built up, exhibitions held, and gold medals and other awards gained, and thousands of workers have been given employment. In their efforts to establish lace-making classes in the Elementary Schools of the various counties the Associations have received the support of the County Councils.

For photographs of two of these classes held at Cranfield and Olney see Plates 35 and 36.

The year 1906 was marked by the establishment at Stoke Goldington by Mr. H. H. Armstrong of what is known as *The Bucks Cottage Workers' Agency*. Mr. Armstrong's object was to set up a sound business organization, to visit personally the cottagers in the neighbouring towns and villages, to distribute parchments and other materials, and to arrange for local buyers in the various districts. Every specimen sent in was closely examined, defects were pointed out, and suggestions for improvement made. By following this course he was able to bring the lace to a higher standard of workmanship. Lace-makers who had long previously given up their lace work, again brought out their pillows, and being assured of immediate sales and remuneration, put their energies once more into the delicate and artistic occupation of their youth. Persistent advertising followed, ladies' magazines and other publications perused by ladies being chiefly used; and gradually through careful and individual attention to every inquiry, a connection sprang up which included many good county families. Ladies recommended the lace to friends, and a sound foundation was in this manner laid.

75. The
Bucks
Cottage
Workers'
Agency.

In 1909, owing to the growth of the business, the Agency removed to Olney, being impelled thereto not only on account of postal and railway advantages, but also because of the town's associ-

ation with the poet Cowper, whose name is so intimately associated with the lace industry. A large building was purchased, and experience soon proved the wisdom of the choice. The industry being carried on under more favourable conditions went forward by leaps and bounds, orders arriving by every mail, not only from homes in the British Isles, but from all parts of the civilized world. In 1911 the Agency was awarded a gold medal at the Festival of Empire and Imperial Exhibition held in that year at the Crystal Palace.

We have already spoken in praise of the designer, the bobbin-maker, the ladies
 76. Skilled
 Lace-makers. who have taken upon themselves to revive the Lace Industry, and others to whom lovers of lace are indebted. But after all, the highest praise is due to the workers—those who, with an indefatigability that is even wonderful, produce the lace. In every town and village some names are held in special reverence—those of the producers of marvellous pieces of lace intended for royalty or some other distinguished patron. All who knew these workers speak of them with pride. Praise, too, must be bestowed on those who are teaching the younger generation to make lace. Every teacher, whether in the home or the public school, who is instructing the children in this delightful art is a benefactress of her country. We may also mention that the mother of the late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon was a skilled lace-maker.

It is sincerely hoped that one of the results of the publication of this work will be to benefit the lace-makers by increasing their earnings. Dr. Lulham of Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, has written eloquently and feelingly on this subject, and it is trusted that his efforts, and the efforts of others, will, to utilize his expression, make "more satisfactory the economic position of the workers." Lace-making has never been a well paid industry. The worker fared best in the Yak period, when she could make ten shillings a week. At the present time few lace-makers, it is to be feared, can earn more than five shillings a week.

There are good collections of inscribed bobbins, of specimens of lace and other objects relative to the industry, in the Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney, the Bucks County Museum at Aylesbury, and the Museum at Northampton.

The Pillow Lace industry has almost disappeared from East Anglia, but Honington Lace is made in parts of Norfolk, where it is encouraged by the Diss Lace Association (founded by Mrs. Thomas Slack) the object of which is "to supply work, in their own homes, to married women and girls unable to go into service either through delicate health or deformity." The lace is made in "small sprigs" which are afterwards joined together or mounted on net, with the result of many beautiful

flounces, scarves, fichus, veils, fans and other articles.¹

At Great Waltham, Essex, is a Pillow Lace School which owes its origin to the efforts of Miss Tufnell of Langleys; but the best known lace centre in Essex is that of Coggeshall, the town of the Tambour Lace industry which originated with a French refugee named Draggo, who settled there in 1812. The stitches of this lace are made with a kind of small crochet hook on machine net stretched on an oblong frame, and very beautiful designs have been shown at various exhibitions. For long the industry languished, but recently owing to the introduction of improved patterns a new era of prosperity has set in.²

Winchelsea, Sussex, was once a lace centre, and in 1894 an attempt was made to revive the industry.

Good work has been done in Wilts by the President (the Countess of Radnor) and the patronesses of "Ye Olde Downton Lace Industry." The lace is similar to Bucks Point (indeed the same prickings are used), but the net (*bar-work*, as they call it) is worked from the head to the foot without a pin in each mesh. It is only at the head and the foot that it is pinned. Another characteristic of Downton Lace is its straight edge.

¹ An illustrated account of the Diss industry appeared in *Hearth and Home*, February 6th, 1908.

² Coggeshall Lace is practically the same as the Tambour variety of Limerick, q.v.

A similar lace, made at Malmsbury, was for long used chiefly for babies' and old ladies' caps. "My grandmother," writes Miss G. M. Peat, of Fenstanton Manor, "used to put over six yards in the box pleats round the front alone." The revival of the Malmsbury industry is owing to the efforts of the Countess of Suffolk, in whose classes are made "The Turkey's Tail," "The Spectacles," "The Button," and other laces.

On page 35 we spoke of the two earlier stages of Devonshire Lace, namely, 1. *The Artistic Pattern and Net*, in which the 79. Devon. sprigs or patterns were united by net, and 2. *The Artistic Pattern and Guipure Stage*, in which they were united by purl-pin-bars. The work in both of these stages was beautiful. To them succeeded :

3. *The Ugly Guipure and Ugly Appliqué Stage*. The invention of Heathcote's machine-made net in 1809 caused great depression in the Devonshire Lace industry ; and in order to compete with the machine work the lace-makers produced what may be called a truly hideous fabric, which consisted merely of a medley of badly drawn and made sprigs joined by purl-pin-bars. The sprigs indeed were put in anywhere, and all rules of design were disregarded. In some districts the sprigs were sewn on to machine net and called Honiton Appliqué, which rivalled the Guipures in ugliness.

4. *The Present Stage*. Recently a return has

been made to the first two stages. The sprigs are sewn on blue paper and connected with a coarse net made with a needle instead of with purl-pin-bars; but Guipure and Appliqué work is also done in some of the villages. It must be borne in mind that all Honiton Lace is worked face to the pillow. In order to protect it, and also to prevent the pins in the finished work from catching in the threads from which the bobbins hang, *sliders* of horn are used.

The honour of being the first to introduce a more artistic taste in respect to this lace belongs to Queen Adelaide, whose good work was continued by Queen Victoria, who gave the order for her wedding lace to the workers of Beer and neighbourhood. The same villages are now, we understand, occupied with an order for our present Queen, the laces being of the best quality and design.

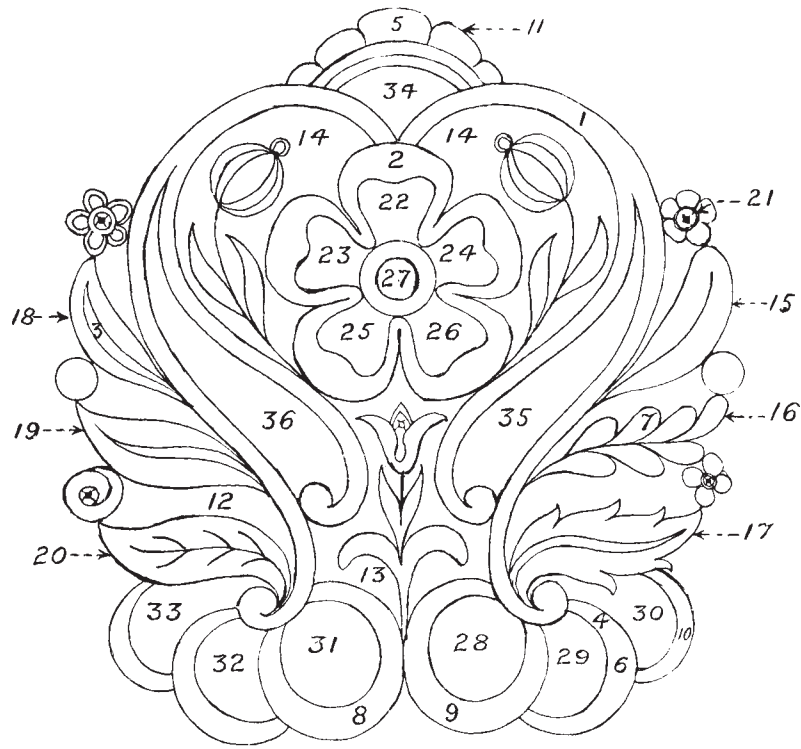
In the sampler¹ by Miss Maidment which forms one of our illustrations (see Plate 45), nearly all the stitches in Honiton lace are shown, and their names are indicated in the accompanying "key." (Plate 46.) The following is the list of the stitches:—

BRAID STITCHES.

1. Whole stitch "clothing."
2. Half-stitch.

¹ Miss Maidment has kindly allowed us to take the photograph of this sampler from a *Book of Instructions for the Working of English Pillow Laces* which she is preparing for publication.

Plate 46



KEY TO HONITON SAMPLER. See p. 241

Outline Guide to stitches

Plate 47



MISS WARREN, A STOKE GOLDINGTON WORKER.

3. Mittens (vein of leaf No. 18).
4. Plain hole.
5. Four pin bud.
6. Six pin hole.
7. Ten stick raised (leaf 16).
8. Another six pin hole.
9. Zig-zag holes.
10. Line formed of twisted leaders.
11. Half and whole stitches outlined with, and divided by, gimp thread; purl pins on outer edge.

GROUNDING STITCHES.

12. Purl pin bars.
13. Point d' Angleterre net.
14. Trolley net.

LEAF TREATMENTS.

15. Half and whole stitches with centre vein of sewings.
16. Leaf worked in sections (called taps) in raised work.
17. Serrated leaf of whole stitch with vein of ten stick and cutworks.
18. Whole stitch leaf with vein of mittens.
19. Whole and half-stitch leaf with vein of cutworks and winkie pins.
20. Half-stitch leaf with raised veins.

FILLINGS.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 21. Cutworks or Leadworks (centre of small flowers). | |
| 22. Diamond. | 23. No pin. |
| 24. Brick. | 25. Pin. |
| 26. Cushion. | 27. Cart-wheel. |
| 28. Blossom. | 29. Point d' Esprit. |
| 30. Double ground. | 31. Toad in the hole. |
| 32. Swing. | 33. Purl. |

34. Double ground and cutworks.
35. Bars and cutworks.
36. Bars and cutworks with holes.

Roughly speaking, the Honiton country consists of that strip of Devonshire coast stretching from Seaton to Exmouth, and including the town of Honiton and the villages of Beer, Branscombe, Sidbury and East Budleigh.

Among those who have applied themselves of recent years to the extension of the Devonshire industry are :—Mrs. Collier,¹ Miss Audrey Trevelyan, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Freeman Roper, the Misses Tebbs, Mrs. Fowler and Mrs. Bernard.

In various parts of England that are not in the great lace-making centres, lace-making is taught in schools; as for example in the School for Special Instruction, Normanton Road, Derby, where the pupils make Russian Lace and Cluny, and in the Plymouth Municipal Art School.

A *Filet Lace*² (Guipure d' Art) Industry has been started at Odiham, Hants, by Lady Palmer, with the assistance of Miss Alice M. Healey.

Useful work has been done by the "National Association for the Organisation of the Hand-made Lace Industry in England," which was founded by Miss Isemonger, Mr. Alan Cole, C.B., and Mr. Charles Lee, J.P., of the well known firm

¹ An article on the Beer industry appeared in *The Lady of Fashion*, March 15th, 1906.

² Also called *lacis* or darned netting.

of Charles Lee & Son, 100 Wigmore Street. Arrangements were made in 1911 for an "All-British Shopping Week," and Mr. Lee placed a large salon at the disposal of the various Associations. The Exhibition was held from March 23rd to March 30th, and all the leading Lace Associations of England were represented.

The principal Irish "laces" are Carrickmacross, Limerick, Irish Point and Irish Crochet.

It will be best to take them in the order of their inception.

80. Carrick-
macross.
1820.

Of Carrickmacross, which is not, strictly speaking, lace, but an embroidery made in the hand, there are two kinds:—

(1) *Appliqué*, in which the design is made in Indian ink on stiff smooth paper. Over the design is placed machine-made net, and over the net fine muslin. The three are firmly tacked together. The pattern is then traced with close sewing stitches taken through both net and muslin and also over a thicker outlining cord, after which the work is released from the design, the muslin is cut away outside the outline, and fancy stitches are worked on the net ground. Great care is needed in order to avoid cutting the net.

(2) *Guipure*, which is made with muslin upon which a design has been traced. It has no net foundation, and the muslin is of closer texture than that used in *appliqué*. The design having been "corded," the centres are cut away and filled with

open stitches and wheels, and other parts that are cut away are united with buttonhole bars.

The two varieties of Carrickmacross are sometimes happily combined in one piece of work.¹ Carrickmacross is made chiefly in the south of the County of Monaghan.

Limerick Lace was first made at Nottingham in the early 19th century, the designs of ^{81. Limerick.} Lille and other Continental towns _{1829.} being copied, and the industry was transferred to Ireland in 1829. It is of two varieties :

(1) *Run*, in which the pattern is embroidered with a running or darning stitch on machine-made net stretched on a frame—the result being a very light looking and dainty fabric.

(2) *Tambour*, for which the machine-made net is also first stretched on a frame. The pattern is embroidered with a chain stitch done with a short crochet hook, and the effect, though very pretty, is much heavier than that of run work. Sometimes the two varieties of Limerick are mixed—the outline being Tambour and the other parts Run.

Thus neither Carrickmacross nor Limerick is lace in the strict sense of the term. Each is an

¹ In Carrickmacross there are no turnings taken to the applied muslin, consequently it is not a durable lace. It may drop to pieces after once or twice washing, and it has so decided a reverse side that its use is limited. The Guipure variety is even less durable than the Appliqué, consequently there are very few so-called "old" pieces in existence other than specimens under glass.—*Miss Maidment*.

embroidery, that is to say, an enrichment of an existing material. The stitches used for the fillings¹ in Carrickmacross and Limerick are the same.

Limerick lace is now made chiefly in the neighbourhood of the city of Limerick.

Irish Point, which is founded upon Italian models, was first introduced into Ireland by the Sisters of the Presentation Convent, 82. Irish Point [Youghal.] 1846. Youghal, County Cork, as a means of alleviating the distress caused by the Great Famine of 1846—50. Produced entirely by the needle, it is at once the most difficult to make and by far the most beautiful of all the Irish laces. The richness of its designs and the remarkable variety of its stitches, “by which contrast and, as it were, a play of light and shade are obtained,” have extorted admiration from all quarters. Irish Point is now made throughout the whole of that part of Ireland which extends from Wexford to Kerry, but that produced at Youghal is considered the best.

In the district in the south of Donegal and north of Fermanagh, of which Innishmacsaint is the centre, is made a Rose Point lace which resembles the Venetian lace of that name, and a similar fabric is made at Cappoquin, County Waterford.

¹ Fancy stitches on the net.

Irish Crochet also owes its origin to the Great Famine. It seems to have been first made at the Adelaide Crochet School at Cork, founded by the philanthropic Mrs. Susanna Meredith¹ (1823—1901), and the work was subsequently carried on in convents and by private enterprise. The city of Cork became the great centre of the industry. It is now made throughout the county of Cork and in parts of the adjoining counties.

83. Irish
Crochet.
[Cork and
Clones.]
1846.

What Mrs. Meredith did for the South of Ireland, Mrs. W. C. Roberts attempted to do for the Centre. At her home at Thornton, County Kildare, she adapted a number of the beautiful designs of old Venetian Needle-point and other laces to the simplicities of crochet. She did not meet with the success anticipated, but one of her workers drifted to Clones, in Monaghan, where she came into touch with Mrs. Hand, wife of the Rector, and the seed that produced only a thin crop at Thornton led to a plentiful harvest at Clones. Having gathered together the young girls of the neighbourhood, Mrs. Hand gave them their first lessons in the art, and owing to her insistence on good work Clones crochet came to be unsurpassed for excellence. The principal crochets made at Clones are Spanish, Jesuit, Greek and Venetian.

¹ See Mrs. Meredith's work, *The Lace-makers, and Susanna Meredith* by M. A. Lloyd, 1903.

Few prettier pictures could be imagined than that of the dark, merry-eyed colleens busy at their crochet, their only implements being the fine little needle projecting from the home-made cane or boxwood haft and the reel of Irish made cotton. Such pictures may be seen, for the industry has spread to almost every part of Ireland, in odorous old gardens, in front of cottage doors, by the crumbling ruins of old abbeys and wicked looking 16th century castles, in the neighbourhood of those mysterious raths,¹ and under the shadow of those equally mysterious round towers which have baffled all attempts of antiquary and historian to arrive at their origin, and in the valleys of that wild and weird region of legend and song which embraces the mountain gorges, the woods and the Lakes of Killarney. This Irish work, whether in the way of "bishops," "motifs," theatre bags or what you will, goes all over the world. Thousands of these articles have been purchased to meet actual needs, but many thousands also have been acquired, especially by Americans, merely out of love for the Island of the shamrock and all that to them the shamrock means.

At Ardee in Louth the industry of Pearl Tatting gives employment to a number of persons, and at Birr (Parsonstown), Kings County, a lace of the same character as Honiton occupies a few workers.

An important Exhibition of Irish Lace was

¹ Ancient "Mound Houses."

held at the Mansion House, London, in 1883, and in connection with it was issued *A History of the Industry, with Illustrations and a Map showing the Districts where the Lace is produced.*

Perhaps the most successful Exhibition of recent years was that held under the auspices of the *Daily Mail* at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Vincent Square, Westminster, March 9th—14th, 1908, when a charming catalogue was issued under the editorship of Mr. J. T. Herbert Baily, editor of the *Connoisseur*, to which Mr. Alan S. Cole, C.B., supplied an article on "Hand-made Laces of To-day."

Messrs. Robinson & Cleaver in their booklet, *Irish Hand-made Lace*, have the following note on the care of Lace: "Needle-point and bobbin lace should be kept in a warm, dry atmosphere, as much damage is caused by cold and damp. When not in use, lace should be taken out of the drawer, shaken, and frequently exposed to air, and the receptacle should be kept dust proof if possible."

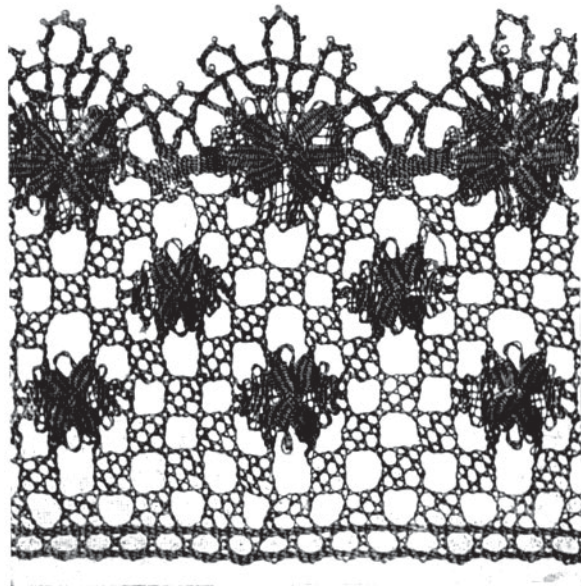
From the same pamphlet we take the following useful remarks on "How to distinguish between Hand-made and Machine-made Lace." The threads in the latter "have a twisted and compressed look which is never seen in hand or pillow lace. If there are raised ornaments in machine-made lace the padding is worked over and over straight. In hand-made the stitches always slope.

Plate 48



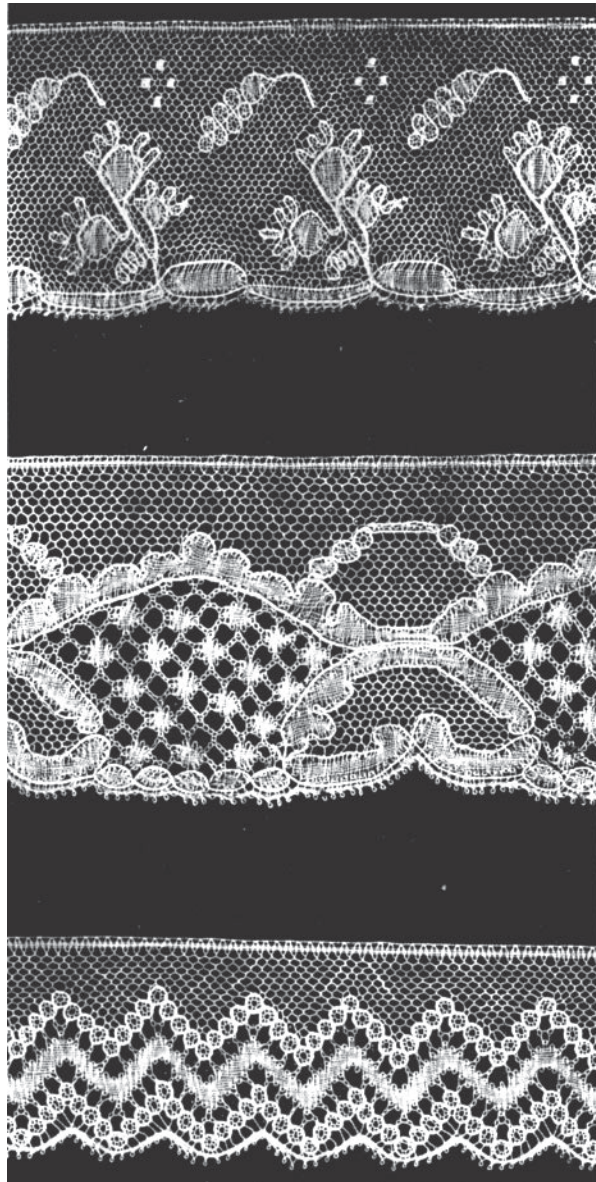
AN OLD OLNEY LACE-MANUFACTURER
AND HIS FRIENDS.

Standing (left to right): John Millward, Lace Manufacturer; William Soul,
Lace Designer; Rev. James Simmons, Baptist Minister. Sitting:
Wm. Killingworth, Watch Maker; Thos. Aspray, Doctor (London).
Date about 1850. See pp. 113 & 213.



YAK LACE. The colour is chocolate. See p. 228.

Plate 49



1. THE WHEAT-EAR AND CORNFLOWER. Point made at Winslow.
2. THE CROWN. Point made at Northampton.
3. THE ZIG-ZAG. Point made at Northampton.

If a thread in machine-made lace is unravelled it comes out easily; in needle-point on the contrary, frequent knots impede the unravelling of the thread; and in bobbin lace the unravelling is a tedious process." It is well also to examine lace with a magnifying glass, and the gimp in particular should be scrutinized. Needle-point gimp will be found to be made of loop threads; in the case of pillow lace the gimp is plaited.

Our task is done, and these words are being written just after the conclusion of the terrible War of 1914—1918. This war ^{84.} Conclusion. will probably bring about one of the great historical changes in lace-making—perhaps the greatest since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The refugees from Belgium brought great quantities of lace with them. Their stitches and methods are likely to become mixed with ours, and our designing will probably be largely influenced. Strangely enough, the immediate result of this terrible event, which it was supposed would kill the lace industry outright, was in reality to give it an impetus. Certainly in our own great cities, and also in the great cities of America, lace has been more prominent than ever in the windows of the leading business houses. So unusual was the demand for it that indignant articles appeared in the Press denouncing so much extravagance at a time when many nations were engaged in a life and death struggle. We heard of "corsets

formed of priceless old rose point ; of chemises 'encrusted' (the American term) with the choicest laces of Buckinghamshire, of camisoles entirely made of the rarest Alençon." Crêpe de chine and other cobwebby materials, well-nigh lost in seas of lace so delicate that it rose or fell with a breath, seemed to be sought after as they never were. There was an orgy of diaphanous garments, the finest lace, silks, ribbons, anything, everything that beauty unbalanced has in all ages coveted. The lamentation was wanting in novelty. The prophets, from Isaiah with his classic third chapter down to George Fox, Henry Smith and many a later, have denounced all this vanity; and yet it is possible to protest too much. A few persons may occasionally, by putting costly fabrics to purposes for which they were never intended, show themselves lamentably deficient in taste, but the commonsense of the vast majority of English and American women will scarcely be affected by such preposterous conduct. Ruskin's golden dictum, "Moderation is the girdle of beauty," is still the creed of the ladies of both England and America; and we may safely assume that they will use lace with the discretion that is never wanting in a cultured mind. That in expressing their admiration for the choicer specimens of it they will be moderate in their language is more than can be expected or wished. We conclude, as we commenced, by asserting that "Lace-making is an art," and the

votaries of art never yet loved in moderation. In all matters artistic, indeed, whatever may be said of other pursuits, the Road of Excess leads, as William Blake says, to the Palace of Wisdom.

THE END.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

INSCRIPTIONS ON BOBBINS.

Subsequent to the printing of this book the following notes have reached us:—

Miss Margaret Dickson of Reading writes: “I have one bobbin which was sent as a round robin present from the lads of a village to a flirt. The inscription is: ‘If you don’t love me leave me alone.’ I also have a trolly bobbin with the pathetic inscription written in straight lines: ‘You are the sweetest girl this village does afford and you don’t love me—Aaron Lord.’”

Miss C. M. Tyson of Summertown, Oxford, sends the following inscriptions:

It’s all very fine but no lodge here for you my lad.
Repent and believe the gospel.
Betsy Brown—Henry Allen, 1842.

APPENDIX II.

GLOSSARY.

Applique. Lace having sprigs or leaves sewn on net.

Bars. Same as legs, q.v.

Bedfordshire Trailers. The Trolly Bobbins. A Huntingdonshire name.

Bud. Bucks name for almost any ornament in the pattern.

Brides. Same as legs, q.v.

Berthe. Neckwear. Many *berthes* are made from the Rose and Leaf design. Some people call them *Berthas*.

Close-work. Same as *whole stitch*, q.v.

Clothwork. Same as *whole stitch*, q.v.

Cordonnet, or Raised Work. The thick thread or cord with which the pattern is sometimes outlined, as in Brussels and Honiton Laces. It is used to give boldness and relief. It must not be confused with *gimp*, which is "an essential part of a point ground pattern 'worked all across' the parchment."¹ Gimp is a cordonnet, but all cordonnets are not gimp.

Cluny. An offshoot of Maltese. (See Plate 33.)

Dykeside. See *Head-side*.

Filet Lace, also known as Filet Brodé, Filet Guipure, Guipure d' Art, is a revival of the Laces or Darned Netting of the Middle Ages. Its patterns are found in Vinciola's book, published in 1588.

French Ground. Same as *Kat Stitch*, q.v.

¹ Miss Channer's definition.

Foot-side. The inner edge of a piece of lace, as opposed to the Head-side. The Foot-side is generally straight, as it is used to sew the lace on to the material it is to decorate.

Gingles. The loose pewter rings which surround the Trolly bobbin (Bucks). It is a mistake to give this name to the *spangles*, q.v.

Guipure. (1) Old meaning of the term: A lace of which the pattern consisted of a strip of thin parchment or a "gross black thread covered or whipped about with silk." Also called *Parchment Lace*. When tape took the place of the covered thread the lace was called *Tape Guipure*. The patterns were united by net or legs.

(2) Modern meaning of the term: A lace without any net ground, the pattern being held together by legs as English-made Maltese.

Hair-pin Stitch. A Bucks name. Same as *Kat Stitch*.

Head-side. The outer edge of a piece of lace. It is generally scalloped or vandyked (when it is called the *Dykeside*). Another name is *Turnside*.

Half-Stitch. The loose work that occurs more frequently in Maltese and Torchon. (See Plate 4.)

Kat Stitch. Also called *Wire Ground*, *French Ground*, *Six-Pointed Star Ground*, and in Bucks *Hair-pin Stitch*. It takes eight bobbins to a pin instead of four like other stitches. (See Plate 3.)

Legs. The connections between the various parts of a lace design. Also called *straps*, *bars*, and *brides* (literally, bridges).

Leadworks (*dots*, *plaits*, *points d'esprit*). The dots with which the Lille Ground is sometimes sprinkled. The French term is *mouche* (a fly). (See Plate 25.)

Purls, or *Pearls*. Tiny loops on the head-side of lace. Also called *picots*.

Point de Paris. A narrow bobbin lace (made in Normandy and near Paris) which was much worn in the 17th century. It was also called *Point des champs*, because it was made in the country, and *Point double*.

Pelerine. (French, *pélerin*, a pilgrim.) Originally the cape (which had the addition of a hood) worn by pilgrims to the Holy Land. Pelerines worn by English ladies were often ornamented with lace.

Pelisse. (Latin, *pellis*, a skin.) An overdress for outdoor wear. The nobles of the court of Edward the Confessor wore pelisses. In the 19th century children's pelisses were often laced.

Plain-work. Same as *whole stitch*, q.v.

Pricker. The short instrument used for making in the parchment the holes that are to receive the pins.

Points d'esprit. See *Leadworks*.

Pillow Lace. Lace made on the pillow by twisting and plaiting threads. The French term is *dentelle au fuseau*.

Picots. A French name for *purls* or *turnpins*, q.v.

Point Ground. Also called *Point de Lille*, *Lille Ground*, *Point Simple*, *Fond Clair*, *Fond Simple* (as opposed to *Point de Paris*, which is *Point Double* or *Fond Double*). The word *Fond* (Fr.) means ground.

Point Lace. Literally, lace made with the point of a needle. *Point d'Angleterre* and *Bucks Point* are misnomers, as they are made with bobbins. Fixed, however, as they are by time, these names cannot be altered. To distinguish *Point* from *Bobbin Lace* use a magnifying glass. If the solid part of the pattern—that is, the *clothwork*—is made up of looped threads the lace is *needle-point*; if it is plaited it is *bobbin lace*.

Plastron. (French, a breast-plate.) A trimming for the front of a dress of a different material from the dress itself.

Quills. Bobbins with long necks on which the gimp is first wound.

Reseau. Net work.

- Straps.** Same as *legs*, q.v.
- Spangles.** Bunches of coloured beads hung to bobbins by means of brass wire in order to increase their weight.
- Toile.** Same as *whole stitch*.
- Tatting.** A reproduction of the Ragusa Gimp Laces and Knotted Laces of the 16th century, made with threads and a shuttle. It is sometimes, on account of its lace-like appearance, called Tatted Lace, but, of course, it is not lace in the true sense of the word.
- Turnside.** Same as *Head-side*, q.v.
- Tape Guipure.** See *Guipure*.
- Turnpins.** Tiny loops on the legs of Maltese and other laces.
- Torchon.** (French, a dish-cloth.) Lace of loose texture and geometrical design.
- Tallies.** Bucks name for *plaits*.
- Trolly.** Bucks name for bobbin to which the gimp is transferred from the *quill*.
- Trolly Lace.** (1) Bucks: Lace in which the pattern is outlined with gimp.
(2) Devon: A Lace made of coarse thread, and worked straight on—round and round the pillow. (See page 212.)
- Whole Stitch.** The *close-work*, *cloth-work*, or *plain-work*. The meshes are square. The French name is *toilé*. (See Plate 4.)
- Wire Ground.** Same as *Kat Stitch*, q.v.

APPENDIX III.

SONG: THE BOBBIN.

From Mr. Thomas Wright's Story, *The Lace-maker*.
(In the Press).

What shall I do with the money I earn?
Up in the air it shall certainly turn¹
Soon as I hear the first cuckoo's "cuck-oo";
Robin will hear it the same moment too.

Come, pleasant thoughts, and sit round in a ring;
Love is a cage in which happy birds sing;
So I will buy a new bobbin, I may
See one to suit me on Cherry Fair day.²

What shall I do with the bobbin I buy?
Give it to Robin for Robin is shy.
Then that I love him he plainly will see,
And he may buy a new bobbin for me.

What shall the motto be? "Dear one, be true"?
"Love me or leave me"? No, neither will do!
This is the motto I think I will take:
"Look at me sometimes for somebody's sake."

Then in his arms he will clasp me and I
For him will live—though for him I could die.
What a sweet world is this! Now I have found
What it is—love it is—makes it go round.³

¹ In Lace-land it is the custom to turn one's money over when the cuckoo is first heard.

² June 29th.

³ For the music to this song apply to Mr. H. H. Armstrong, Olney, Bucks. Price, 2s.

APPENDIX IV.

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