

THE
ROMANCE
OF THE
LACE PILLOW
THOMAS WRIGHT

The Romance of the Lace Pillow



A BUCKS LACE-MAKER.

Photo by Dr. Habberton Lulham.

THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW

BEING

The History of Lace-making

IN BUCKS, BEDS, NORTHANTS AND NEIGHBOURING
COUNTIES, TOGETHER WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE
LACE INDUSTRIES OF DEVON AND IRELAND.

THOMAS WRIGHT

*(Author of "The Life of William Cowper," "The Life of
Edward FitzGerald," "The Life of John Payne," &c., &c.)*

WITH FIFTY PLATES.

OLNEY, BUCKS: H. H. ARMSTRONG.

1919.

THIS WORK IS

DEDICATED, BY KIND PERMISSION, TO

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ALEXANDRA,

who accepts the dedication, to use her own words, "in consideration of the great importance of the Pillow Lace Industry in this country,

AND, BY KIND PERMISSION, ALSO TO

MRS W. W. CARLILE,

OF GAYHURST HOUSE, NEWPORT PAGNELL.

Some thirty years ago Mr. James William Carlile, father of Mr. W. W. Carlile, accepted the dedication of my first work, *The Town of Cowper*. It is with great pleasure that I am able, after so many years, to inscribe another volume with the name of a member of the same family—a lady who has laboured so unweariedly in the interest of the beautiful art which is the subject of its pages.—THOMAS WRIGHT.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

LACE-MAKING AS AN ART

	<i>Page</i>
1 Introduction	1
2 The Blue Lace of the Bible	4
3 Mummy Lace	5
4 Martin de Vos's Picture	7

CHAPTER II

THE NEEDLE-POINT AND BOBBIN LACES OF THE CONTINENT

5 Rival Claims	10
6 The Laces of Italy	11
7 The Laces of Flanders	14
8 The Laces of France	16
9 The Laces of Germany and other Countries	20

CHAPTER III

OUR GARDEN OF DELIGHT

10 Embroidery	23
11 Katharine of Arragon	25

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST EXODUS

12 The Mechlin Workers flock to Cranfield	28
13 The Brussels Workers flock to Honiton	35

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND EXODUS

14 The Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Aug. 24th, 1572. Flemish and French Names	37
15 Lace at the Court of Queen Elizabeth. Mary, Queen of Scots. 1558—1603	39
16 Tawdry Lace. 1590	42

vi. THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES I. TO THE DEATH OF
CROMWELL

17	Newport Pagnell, Olney and Great Marlow	44
18	The Puritans and Lace.	47

CHAPTER VII

THE REIGN OF CHARLES II

19	Point d' Angleterre, 1660	49
20	Samuel Pepys, 1662	52
21	The Persecutions of the Reign of Charles II. (1660—1672) .	53
22	Lace Tokens, 1648—1679	55
23	At the Sign of the Laced Shoe, 1679. Green Lace	57

CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD EXODUS. (REIGN OF JAMES II., 1685—1689)

24	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1685	63
25	The Lace Cravat and the Fontange	66

CHAPTER IX

BUCKS POINT

26	Bucks Point firmly established, 1685	69
27	The Grounds and Fillings	76
28	Names of Bucks Point Laces	78
29	Wilts, Dorset, Suffolk and Ripon Laces	84

CHAPTER X

REIGNS OF WILLIAM III. AND ANNE, 1688—1714

30	Steinkirk and Ruffles	85
31	Samplers	89

CHAPTER XI

SMUGGLING

32	The Bucks Lace Trade under George I. and George II. The Lace Fan	91
33	Lace-making in the Workhouses, 1720—1820	92
34	Moll Flanders. The Coffin Trick	93
35	Marrying, Hanging and Burying in Lace	96
36	The Amersham Veil and the Olney Flounce, 1790—1870 .	99

CONTENTS.

vii.

CHAPTER XII

THE LACE SCHOOLS

37	"The Pea" and "The Ninepin"	102
38	The Fire Pot	107
39	All round the Candle Stool	110
40	The Parchments	112
41	The Pillow, the Lady, and the Lace Chest	118
42	Pins	122
43	Thread	123

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOBBINS. CATULLUS IN A SMOCK-FROCK

44	Wooden Bobbins	125
45	Bone Bobbins	128
46	The Bobbin-maker	131
47	The Spangles	134
48	The Bobbin Box	136
49	Inscription Bobbins	137
50	Devonshire and Wiltshire Bobbins	176

CHAPTER XIV

THE LACE TELLS AND THE LACE-MAKERS' HOLIDAYS

51	The Bucks Tells	179
52	The Beds Tells	187
53	The Northants Tells	190
54	Catters	194
55	Tanders	197
56	The Minor Holidays	201
57	18th Century Tokens	204

CHAPTER XV

"COWPER'S YON COTTAGER." BABY LACE.

58	"Nothing dandled but the Lace Pillow"	206
59	The Fourth Exodus, 1794. Revolution Lace	211
60	Devonshire Trolly	212
61	Heathcoat's Machine, 1814	213
62	M. Seguin on Lace	217
63	The Olney Crowns	217
64	Regency Point	219

viii. THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MALTESE AND TORCHON PERIODS

65	Lace-land in 1851	221
66	Name, Monogram and Aglet Lace	222
67	Maltese, 1851	224
68	Cluny and Auvergne	227
69	The Floral Designs of 1860—1864	228
70	Yak and Gold Thread, 1840—1890	228
71	Torchon	230
72	Berthes, Medallions, Fichus	232
73	The Closing of the Lace Schools, 1871—1880	232

CHAPTER XVII

LACE-MAKING TO-DAY

74	The Lace Associations	235
75	The Bucks Cottage Workers' Agency	239
76	Skilled Lace-makers	240
77	East Anglia and Sussex	241
78	Wilts	242
79	Devon	243
80	Carrickmacross, 1820	247
81	Limerick, 1829	248
82	Irish Point, 1846	249
83	Irish Crochet, 1846	250
84	Conclusion	253

APPENDICES

1	Inscriptions on Bobbins	256
2	Glossary	256
3	Song : The Bobbin	262
4	Bibliography	263
	Index	267

LIST OF PLATES

1	A Bucks Lace-maker	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2	Mummy Lace; Miss Maidment's Imitation	<i>facing page 16</i>
3	Valenciennes; Kat Stitch; Point Ground; Honey-comb	" 17
4	Whole Stitch; Half Stitch; Mechlin; Brussels	" 32
5	Katharine of Arragon Lace; Peacock's Tail	" 33
6	The Maids of Maids Morton; Laced Shoe	" 36
7	Queen Elizabeth Lace; Stocking Fronts	" 37
8	Point d' Angleterre Lappet	" 44
9	Colbert; Buckingham Lace Token	" 45
10	Old Bucks Point; Bucks Point	" 48
11	Map	" 49
12	Mechlin Lace; Mechlin made at Chesham	" 64
13	Northamptonshire Point Laces; Part of a Cope	" 65
14	Carnation Lace; Wide Tulip	" 80
15	Bucks Point made at Akeley	" 81
16	Bucks Point made at Gt. Horwood; Rose and Tulip (Draught)	" 96
17	Acorn Flounce (parchment); Black Silk Lace	" 97
18	Flounce (Victoria and Albert Museum)	" 100
19	Scarf	" 101
20	Scarf	" 108
21	Bucks Bobbins	" 109
22	Devon and Wilts Bobbins	" 112
23	Lace-makers' Candlestick; Mrs. Unwin's Bobbin-winder, &c.	" 113
24	Jane Morris; Lace made by her	" 128
25	Regency Point; Valenciennes; Blonde; Bucks Point	" 129
26	Draught of Crown for Baby's Cap; Draught	" 144
27	Bucks Point (Gold Medal in 1851)	" 145
28	Maltese made at Malta; Maltese made at Bedford	" 160
29	Two Bucks-Maltese Fans	" 161
30	Maltese Collar	" 164
31	Bird and Butterfly Lace	" 165
32	Four Medallions	" 172
33	Cluny Lace (two specimens)	" 173
34	Lille Flounce (Victoria and Albert Museum)	" 176
35	An Olney Lace Class	" 177
36	Lace School at Cranfield	" 192
37	Old Torchon; Four Northants Laces	" 193
38	Bucks Point made in Northants (two specimens)	" 208
39	Four Winslow Laces	" 209
40	Three Winslow Laces	" 224
41	Four Northants Laces	" 225
42	Bucks Point made at Northampton; Beehive; Wedding Bell	" 228
43	Bucks Point (two specimens)	" 229
44	Bucks Point Handkerchief with various fillings	" 236
45	Miss Maidment's Sampler	" 237
46	Key to Miss Maidment's Sampler	" 244
47	Miss Warren	" 245
48	An Old Olney Lace-manufacturer (John Millward) and his friends; Yak	" 252
49	Wheat-ear and Cornflower; The Crown; The Zig-zag	" 253

PREFACE

THERE have been many works on Lace and Lace-making, but this is the first attempt to deal exhaustively with Lace-making in Bucks, Beds, Northants, and the adjoining counties. In Mrs. Palliser's volume, *A History of Lace*, only a few pages are devoted to this industry; and the little book by Miss Channer and Miss Roberts is wanting by reason of its brevity. Beyond the works of these ladies, scarcely anything on the subject has been issued, with the exception of thin brochures and scattered articles in magazines.

It was felt that the time had come for a detailed History of the Industry. It was felt, too, that the work must be done at once or never. A few more years and all the old workers, who have supplied the greater part of the information conveyed in these pages, will have passed away. It is owing to their appreciation of humour and their ready collaboration that I am able to present the reader with those lively chapters on the Bobbins and the Lace Tells. Certainly no other book gives a tithe of the information which I have been able to offer on these subjects.

Many collectors of bobbins have been good enough to send me inscriptions. May I to all future collectors give one word of advice? Always be careful to make a note of the village whence any bobbin is procured. The interest of inscription bobbins would be trebled if this were done; and in some cases the "Puzzle Inscriptions" would reveal their secrets.

On the subject of the Lace itself I have been helped by a number of ladies and gentlemen, who have devoted many years to its study. I would especially thank Mr. H. H. Armstrong, Mrs. G. M. Roberts, Mrs. J. B. Harrison, Miss M. Maidment, Mrs. W. W. Carlile, Mr. A. A. Carnes, Lady Inglefield, Miss M. Burrowes, Major and Mrs. C. A. Markham, Mr. Geo. Smith, Mr. E. J. Elliott, Miss G. M. Peet, Miss C. C. Channer, Miss MacAuslin, Mr. P. G. Trendell, the Hon. Rose Hubbard, Dr. Habberton Lulham, and the Rev. A. J. Roberts, all of whom have rendered invaluable services.

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xii. THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

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xiv. THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

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xvi. THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

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In conclusion, I wish to say that I shall be pleased to receive from any of my readers information respecting the history of lace-making and the progress of lace-making in any district. This information will be incorporated in the second edition of the book, which will appear at an early date; for, owing to the large number of orders already received, it is expected that the first edition will be exhausted within a few days of publication.

THOMAS WRIGHT.

COWPER SCHOOL,
OLNEY, BUCKS.

19th September, 1919.

THE
ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW

CHAPTER I

LACE-MAKING AS AN ART

“The history of Lace-making,” it has been appositely said,¹ “is the history of an art. A piece of lace is an artistic composition expressed in twisted thread, just as a piece of wood-carving is the expression of the artist’s idea in chiselled wood. Lace is not, like embroidery, an ornamented fabric; it is itself ornament. It is not the application of art to a craft; the whole pattern is the fabric, and the fabric is the pattern. It is this peculiarity that distinguishes lace from needlework and woven work.” Now it is only by the persistent determination to regard Lace-making as a beautiful and elevating art that progress in the industry can be effected; and this fact has happily been fully recognised by those ardent enthusiasts in the Midlands and elsewhere who of late years have devoted themselves so pertinaciously to the advancement of Lace-making, and to the furtherance of the best interests of the workers.

1. Introduction.

¹ By Miss C. C. Channer in *Lace-making in the Midlands*.

2 THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

Their object, which has been proclaimed in season and out of season, is to give the lace-makers every facility for producing a work of art, and to lead them to take in it that laudable pride which fired their predecessors in the Golden Age of Lace-making.

A border of Buckinghamshire Point of beautiful design and gossamer texture is the product, not of an elderly woman—seated at the door of a thatched cottage—and a pillow gleaming with bobbins and pins, but of centuries of vision, intuition, and skill. The artists who conceived the designs were men who saw with the eyes of the soul beauties that were invisible to the corporeal eyes of their contemporaries—and who, seeing these beauties, had the sagacity to perpetuate them. And yet this is not the full explanation, for an exquisite piece of lace is an Iliad. It cannot be said to have sprung from a single genius; it is the expression of the most rapturous moments of whole dynasties of men of genius. Nor is this all, for to the output of brain—poetic, impressionable or supple—of queen, ecclesiastic, statesman and burgher, whether in Italy, Flanders, France or our own England, there required to be added the ingenuity and dexterity of multitudes of workers in five centuries. All these and other powers and activities were antecedent or ancillary to the presentation of the chaste and unique beauty of real Buckingham-

shire Point. Certainly, if the designer of the pattern is an artist so also is the gifted lace-maker, who never fails to impress her personality upon her labours. "Every worker," says Mrs. W. W. Carlile¹, "has an individual way of handling the bobbins that enables her work to be recognised, not only by herself, but also by connoisseurs, from among that of a dozen others made on identical parchments, and fixes its relative value." And if the designer is an artist, and the worker is an artist, an artist also, in a sense, is the wearer of beautiful lace. This fact was recognised as early as Queen Elizabeth's day, for Thomas Wright, the psychologist, writing in 1601, says and truly, "Extraordinary apparell of the bodie declareth well the apparell of the mind."²

In short, Lace-making is an art, and the minds of those who are brought into touch with it partake, to an extent, of the joy of the artist: their minds, like his, are lifted by ennobling thoughts and lapped in delightful emotions. They take their pleasure in old-time paradises. For the moment, the poetical past is to them reality, the utilitarian present only an unsubstantial dream. The study of lace is one of the means of overcoming the soul's greatest malady—coldness; for when we speak of lace we pre-suppose

¹ *The Empire Review*, Jan., 1903.

² *The Passions of the Mind*, Ed. 1630, p. 26.

4 THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

beauty; and beauty, like contemplation, work and contact with culture, has the effect of evoking the flaming lights of the mind.

The object now before us is to outline the history of the industry from its commencement; to tell of its introduction into England; and to present in detail its subsequent history in this country. Although our concern is mainly with the romance of Lace-making in so far as it relates to the quaint, sequestered, old-world villages of Bucks, Beds, Northants, and the surrounding counties, some attention will also be devoted to the Lace Industries of Devon and Ireland.

“Enchantments to Egypt!” says an old proverb—implying that Egypt was the natural home of magic. Certainly, if anything has the appearance of having been executed by supernatural powers, it is that filmy web-like impossibility, of whatever variety, which we call lace; and it was in Egypt, the land of the necromancer, the diviner, and the magician, that the earliest fabric that really deserves the name of lace was probably made. Most of the “lace” incident to the early Bible ages was really a sort of embroidery, and not lace in the common acceptance of the word. At the time the Authorised Version appeared (1611) almost anything used in the way of cord, braid, or fillet was called a lace. Thus William Browne

2. The Blue
Lace of the
Bible.

in his *Britannia Pastorals* (1613), after speaking of a lady's "flaxen hair," goes on to say :

"Whereat she sweetly angry, with her laces
Binds up the wanton locks in curious traces."

In Exodus xxviii. 28 and xxxix. 31 a blue cord seems intended, and in Exodus xxviii. 37 a blue fillet—*vitta hyacinthina*, as it is rendered in all three places in the Vulgate of 1583. Such was part of the adornment of the high priest Aaron when he stood gorgeous before the Lord.

Very charming is the derivation of the word "lace," coming as it does through the Old French *las* from the Latin *laqueus*, a snare, allied to *lacere*, to entice—a fact which would alone prove that what we call lace is a comparatively modern production. Hence "lace" really means something that allures or entices, a derivation that is singularly appropriate seeing that so many persons are ensnared by its irresistible graces. It is pleasant to notice that the word "delectable" is of the same family—being from *delicere*, to allure. Ladies are difficult to resist, even without lace; but with it who shall withstand them! They cannot be withstood. The only safety is in flight.

To return to our starting-point—it is in the Egyptian "lace," then, that we shall find the origin of bobbin work. 3. Mummy
Lace.

The *First Step*. A specimen taken from a mummy case is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, and labelled,

6 THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

“Found at Ehnasya (Herakleopolis Magna) during the excavations of 1903-4” (See Plate 2).¹

Miss M. Maidment, an authority on lace both ancient and modern, observes that this primitive work was made on a frame consisting of two vertical rods which were kept rigid by two horizontal bars. Two foundation cords were fastened across from one vertical bar to the other, one being near the top and the other near the bottom. The thread to be plaited was wound upon these cords. After one end had been tied to the top foundation cord the thread was wound over and under both cords, and in a manner that would allow the fingers of the worker's left hand to be slipped in between the thread coming from the front of the top cord and the thread coming from the back. By this means, and by using the fingers only, the threads were twisted or plaited, the front threads dropping back and the back threads being pulled forward. This plaiting was performed in the middle of the work—the top and bottom necessarily being done simultaneously. Upon the completion of each row a stick was inserted, and the work pushed up and down into position. The plaiting being finished, the work could either be secured firmly in the middle or cut across and the ends tied, when there would, of course, be two articles.

¹ Museum Number, 1197—1904. Another specimen in the Museum (50—1891)—part of a bag—shows the use to which this kind of work was sometimes put.

The *Second Step* towards modern methods (suggested doubtless by the severing of the threads in the middle) was to use several shorter lengths of thread instead of the continuous one; and to fasten to the ends of these cut lengths small handles (now called bobbins) with which to plait the threads.

The *Third Step* was to discard the frame and place the work on a cushion or pillow.

The *Fourth and Final Step* was to keep the threads in position by means of pins.

In order to make perfectly clear to our readers this early method adopted by the Egyptians, Miss Maidment has kindly imitated it with modern threads, and we have given photographs both of the Egyptian work and Miss Maidment's exposition of it.¹ The Countess Brazzia tells us that bobbins as well as specimens of lace have been found in mummy cases, but bobbins did not come into general use until the sixteenth century.

The art of making lace in the Egyptian way was probably lost for hundreds of years. In any case it made no progress till the 14th century, for an illustration after an engraving by Martin de Vos (1585) which appears in Mrs. Bury Palliser's *History of Lace*² shows a Flemish woman fingering a tall upright frame which could scarcely have been an advance on the frame used

4. Martin
de Vos's
Picture.

¹ See Plate 2.

² Ed. of 1910, p. 110.

8 THE ROMANCE OF THE LACE PILLOW.

by her Egyptian sister. Lace then was still made "in the air" in the 16th century; and wearisome work it must have been, for it was most difficult to twist the threads correctly. This weird, this uncanny occupation, though out of place in mediæval Flanders¹, seems quite suitable to the sepulchral, chocolate-coloured ladies who walk one way and look another in the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

In Martin de Vos's picture, by the side of the woman at the frame, is a girl making lace on a flat pillow with pear-shaped bobbins. Evidently the old method was dying out and the new just coming in.

As to the meaning of the term "bone lace," we had better quote Thomas Fuller who, writing about 1660,² says: "Some will have it called lace, a *Lacinia*,³ used as a fringe on the borders of cloaths; bone-lace it is named, because first made with bone (since wooden) bobbins."

In the wardrobe accounts of Queen Elizabeth's day the terms "bone lace" (which was made with a fine thread) and "bobbin lace" (which was made with a coarser thread) often occur—"bone," however, more frequently than "bobbin."

There are many references to bone lace in

¹ At that time Flanders included not only East and West Flanders, which are now part of Belgium, but also French Flanders and Artois, which did not become French till the reign of Louis XIV.

² In the *Worthies*, which was published in 1662, the year after his death.

³ Latin for a lappet or fringe of a garment.

the works of the 17th Century Dramatists. Thus the pert sempstress in Robert Green's *Tu Quoque* (1614) cries as she enters with her basket of wares: "Buy some quoifs, handkerchiefs, or very good bone lace, mistress;" and Loveless in Beaumont and Fletcher's play, *The Scornful Lady* (1616), says: "She cuts cambric to a thread, weaves bone lace, and quilts admirably."

In time, however, the distinction between the terms was lost; and Defoe, as early as 1720, calls everything made with bobbins "bone lace."

CHAPTER II

THE NEEDLE-POINT AND BOBBIN LACES OF THE CONTINENT

The fact that in the picture by Martin Van Vos two women are seen, one working at a
5. Rival frame, and the other on a pillow,
Claims. does not, of course prove that Lace-making, as we understand it, originated in Flanders. The State of Venice also claimed to have been the cradle of the Industry.

The Venetians, in support of their theory, have produced documents dated 1476 in which occur passages referring to fabrics made with bobbins; but the Flemings can point to nothing earlier than an altar piece of 1495, at St. Peter's, Louvain, the work of Quentin Matsys, in which a girl was represented making lace, with bobbins similar to those now in use.

The statement, so widely accepted, that the originator of bobbin lace was the gifted and persistent Barbara Uttmann, wife of a mining overseer in Saxony, is a pure invention, for this lady was not born till 1514, that is, nearly twenty years after the date of the lace-pillow picture by Quentin Matsys. What this flaming soul really

did was to carry Lace-making as if she were carrying gold into her own country. How good it is to be an enthusiast! It is only the enthusiast who can enter into the joy of his Lord. Despite, however, the fact that she did not invent lace, there can be seen on her tombstone, in the Churchyard of Annaberg the words, written by some ignoramus, "Here lies Barbara Uttmann, died 14th January 1575, whose invention of lace in the year 1561 made her the benefactress of the Hartz Mountains."

The probability then is that Lace made its way from Egypt to Venice, and from Venice to Flanders.

In the previous pages we gave our attention to the inception of Bobbin Lace. Concerning the genesis of Needle-made Lace history is silent. The earliest needle lace of which we have any definite knowledge is **Reticella**, sometimes called Greek Lace, which was made from 1480 to 1620 at Venice and many other towns. Its designs were geometrical and very beautiful. And, as we shall see, they commended themselves to persons of fashion not only on the Continent but also in England. At the end of the 16th century pattern books for laces were issued both at Venice¹ and also in Flanders, and they were identical in general character.

6. The
Laces of
Italy.

¹ *Le Pompe*, the first, was published at Venice in 2 vols. in 1557 and 1560. *Corona* was issued in 1591 by Cesare Vecellio.

The earliest Italian Bobbin Laces were also geometrical in design. Imitations of them are now produced by the workers of the Winslow¹ Lace Industry, who have also made a speciality of other early Italian laces. (See Plate 39.) The principal later laces of Italy were **Venetian Raised Point**, **Venetian Flat Point** and **Venetian Grounded Point**, all of which were made with the needle ; and **Genoa**, which was a mixed lace, the design being bobbin-work, and the ground and fillings needle-work. To these must be added that offspring of Genoa Lace, **Maltese**, which was made entirely on the pillow with bobbins. Lace was made chiefly, then, in Venice, Genoa and Malta.

i. VENICE.

(1.) **Venetian Raised Point (Gros Point de Venise)** dates from 1520. Its characteristics are boldness, a prominent *cordonnet*,² and an abundance of *picots*.³ Later, tiny roses were worked into the various parts, and the lace became known as **Rose Point**. Sometimes above these roses are two other roses, giving the lace the appearance of snow, whence its name, **Point de Neige**.

(2.) **Venetian Flat Point (Point Plat de Venise)**. In this lace there is no raised work. A later style of it, **Coralline Point**, or **Mer-**

¹ Bucks.

² Thick thread, with which the pattern is outlined. In some laces horsehair is used instead of thread. A gimp is a cordonnet, but all cordonnets are not gimp.

³ Tiny loops.

maid's Lace, is said to have been first made by a Venetian girl who had received a present of coral from her sailor lover. She imitated it in her work, and thus contrived for herself the double joy of earning a livelihood by her industry and of being continually reminded of her absent friend.

(3.) **Venetian Grounded Point (Point de Venise à réseau)**—Venice Lace with a net ground—was evolved about 1650 in imitation and rivalry of the lace of Alençon, from which it differs chiefly in not possessing a *cordomet*. A zig-zag filling is its characteristic ornament, and lilies and other flowers form the pattern. The industry was destroyed about 1789 by the French Revolution.

ii. GENOA.

Genoa Lace was coarse and solid, hence it was used for boot tops, shoe roses, scarves, and other objects subject to rough usage. Vandyked and deeply rounded scalloped edges were a characteristic, and the "wheat grain" was a common ornament.

iii. MALTA.

Maltese Lace owes its origin to Lady Hamilton Chichester, who introduced Lace-making into Malta in 1833. Having evolved it from Genoese designs, appropriating among other features the "wheat grain" ornament, she introduced into

the pattern, out of compliment to the Island, the familiar Maltese Cross. This lace, as we shall see, began to be made about 1850 in England, where it underwent various alterations to suit the tastes of its Northern patrons. (See Chapter 16.)

The oldest Flemish laces seem to have had as foundation a braid or tape, whence the name **Pillow Guipure**, but a
 7. The Laces of Flanders. "Trolly," or heavy *cordonnet*, sometimes took the place of the tape. All laces made in Flanders previous to 1665 were known in France as **Malines (Mechlin)**, but the lace which we now call Mechlin is not heard of till about 1630.

The principal later laces of Flanders are Brussels (of which there were two leading kinds: **Point à Aiguille** or Needle-made Lace, and **Point Plat** or Bobbin-made, though the needle-work and the bobbin-work were often mingled), Mechlin and Antwerp, which were pillow laces.

i. BRUSSELS:

(Dating perhaps from 1520.)

In old **Brussels** the flowers were worked with the net, the meshes of which consisted of four twisted and two plaited sides. (See Plate 4.) In later years the flowers (made either with the needle or on a pillow with bobbins), which were produced first, were connected either with net

(which was also made either with a needle or on a pillow with bobbins) or with *brides* (pearl-ties¹). In the bobbin laces the flowers and leaves are outlined with a raised plaited *cordonet*. In the needle point laces the *cordonet* is not covered with button-holing. Later, the flowers were sewn into the ground. The lace in which the pattern was connected with net developed in the 17th Century into **Point d'Angleterre** (see Plate 8), and that in which it was connected by *brides* into **Point d'Angleterre à brides**.

ii. MECHLIN. (See Plate 12.)
(First mentioned about 1630.)

Mechlin which is fine and light as a spider's web is often called the Queen of Laces. Its mesh, like that of Brussels, consists of four twisted and two plaited sides (see Plate 4), but the plaited sides are shorter than those of Brussels. A distinguishing feature of Mechlin is the flat *cordonet* which forms the flower, giving it the appearance of embroidery. Early Mechlin has an irregular ground, and numbers of tiny holes. The net which we have come to regard as characteristic of Mechlin is to be looked for only in the later laces. The design is generally of a floral character, and scroll work enclosing quatrefoil² and other ornamental fillings, is a common feature. For Mechlin lace made in Bucks see Chapter 9, Section 26.

¹ Legs or straps (Bucks).

² Four-leaf.

iii. ANTWERP OR POT LACE.

The characteristic of this lace is the coarse Kat Stitch¹ ground. From the fact that a flower-pot or vase always appears in the pattern it is also called **Pot Lace**.

The principal Needle-point Laces of France are **Point de France**, (afterwards called **Point d' Alençon**), and **Point d' Argentan**.

8. The Laces of France.

(1) POINT DE FRANCE AND POINT D' ALENÇON.

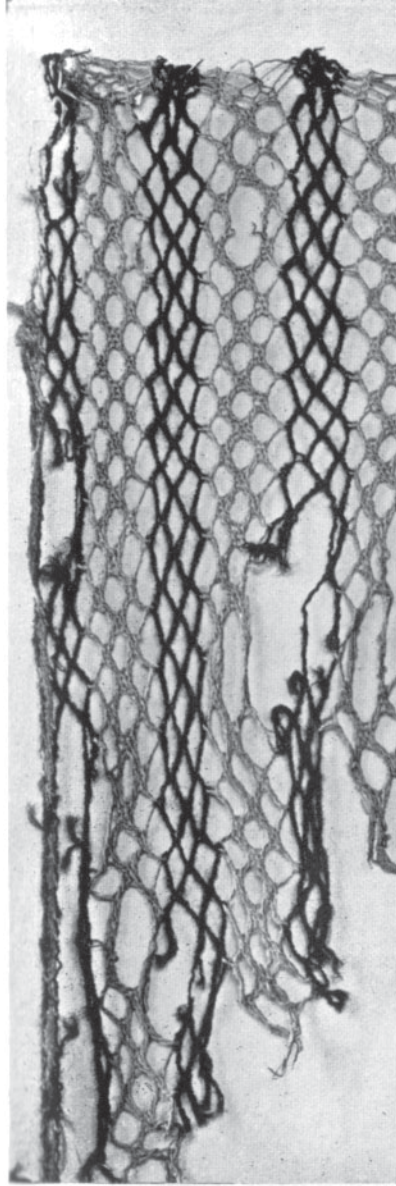
The **Point de France** industry was established by Colbert,² the minister of Louis XIV., who induced workers from Venice to settle at L'Ovray near Alençon. At first it was indistinguishable from Venice Lace, but after 1678 it became more delicate in appearance and the patterns became clearer and more defined. With the change in style came a change in name, and it was thenceforward known as **Point d' Alençon**.

The net of Point d' Alençon is made throughout with a double twisted thread, the looped stitches being twisted on to horizontal threads. The net-work has thus the appearance of lines or rows, and the mesh is square rather than hexagonal. Its *cordomet* is firmer and clearer than

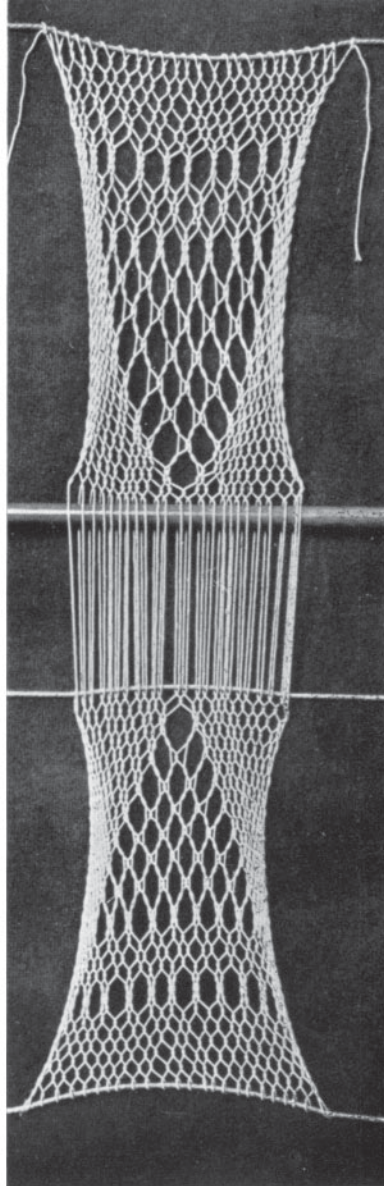
¹ See Chapter 3, Section 11.

² He died in 1683. See Plate 9 for his portrait.

Plate 2



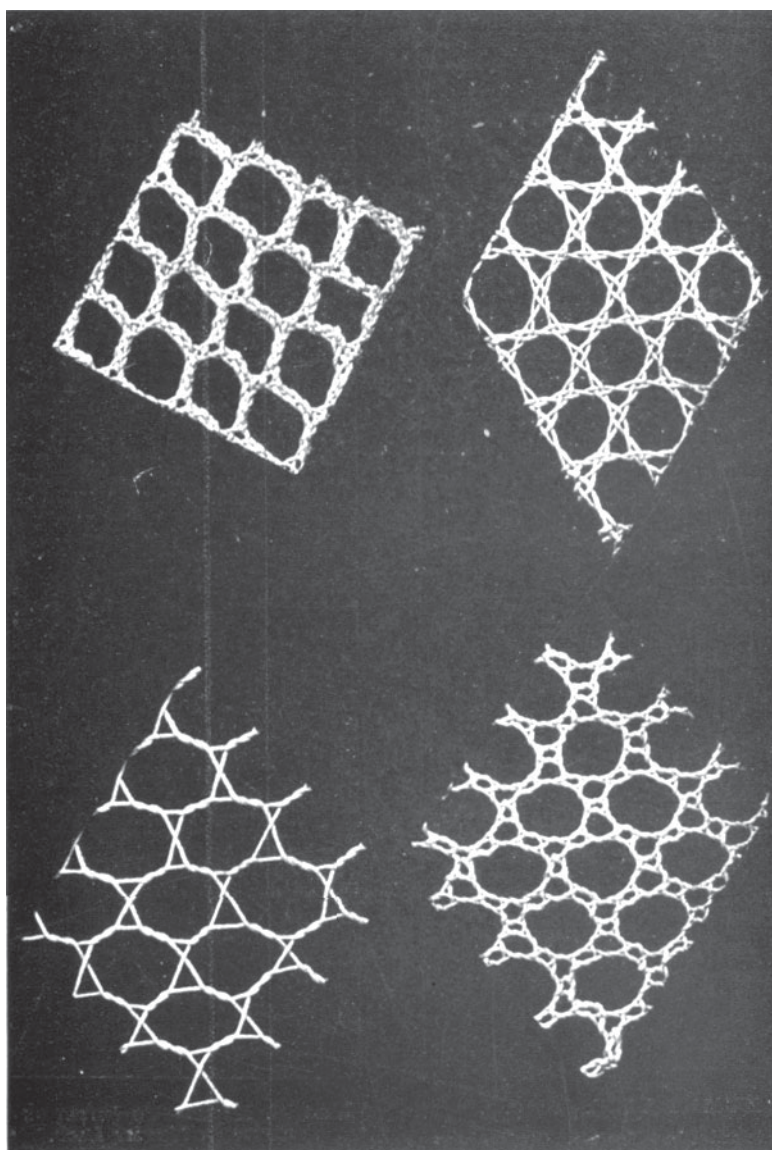
MUMMY LACE. See p. 5.
Victoria and Albert Museum. (*By permission
of the Authorities.*)



MISS M. MAIDMENT'S IMITATION OF
EGYPTIAN MUMMY LACE.

The foundation cords (one at the top and one at the bottom) are left in, but the wooden frame is not shown. A cord near the middle and the round ruler, used for pushing the work up or down into the required position, are also left in, so that the reader may more easily understand the method of working. The only use of the cord left in the middle is to prevent the work from *undoing should it be put aside for a short time.*

Plate 3



VALENCIENNES NET,
LILLE or POINT GROUND NET.

KAT STITCH NET,
HONEYCOMB NET.

that of any other lace, owing to the fact that it is worked over with horse-hair. Owing to this peculiarity Point d' Alençon can easily be recognized. This lace is also remarkable for the beauty of its fillings.

The principal characteristic of **Argentilla**, a variety of Point d' Alençon, is the ground called the Partridge's Eye (a solid hexagon within a skeleton hexagon).

(2) POINT D' ARGENTAN OR GIANT MESHED LACE.

This lace was made at Argentan near Alençon. Its peculiarity is its giant mesh the sides of which are worked over with button-hole stitch. The mesh is larger than that of any other needle-made lace, and portions of it are fringed with *picots*. Its *cordonnnet* is similar to that of Alençon, but the horse-hair is finer.

The principal Pillow Laces of France are Valenciennes, Lille, Chantilly and Blonde.

(1) VALENCIENNES.

This lace is made at Valenciennes, a town which has been French only since 1678. Its mesh is diamond shaped and looks it.¹ (See Plate 3.) There is no *cordonnnet*, consequently the fabric is perfectly flat. Other characteristics are its richness of design, the evenness of its tissue, and its

¹ This is the mesh so frequently imitated by machinery.

general solidity, resultant from the fact that its mesh is plaited throughout. There are two varieties: **Vraie Valenciennes**, which has only the diamond shaped mesh, and **Fausse Valenciennes**, in which other meshes are introduced.¹

(2) LILLE.

(Mentioned as early as 1582.)

This lace was made at Lille, which has been French since 1668. The mesh which is diamond shaped but looks hexagonal (owing to the usual treatment of the threads, which are left loose and long at crossing), is called *Fond Simple* or *Fond Clair*. Instead of the sides of the mesh being plaited as in Valenciennes, or partly plaited and partly twisted as in Brussels and Mechlin, they are formed by twisting two threads round each other. It is the finest, lightest and most transparent of grounds. Nobody can mistake it. (See Plate 3.) The pattern is outlined with a *cordonnnet*,² of flat untwisted coarse thread. The principal beauty of the lace is the fine and clear net which is frequently sprinkled over with *points d'esprit* (small square dots). Old Lille lace has a straight edge and a stiff pattern.

Arras Lace is similar to Lille, but is stronger and firmer to the touch. The laces of Lille and

¹ Among the other grounds that occur in Valenciennes lace are the circular mesh and the wire ground. Each centre of the industry had its own bias.

² In the case of Lille lace the terms *cordonnnet* and gimp are synonymous. Lille lace has more gimp than Mechlin.

Arras particularly interest us because from them in conjunction with Mechlin was evolved our own beautiful Bucks Point. A splendid example of Lille lace is shown in Plate 34.

(3) CHANTILLY.

(White Thread and Black Silk.)

This lace was made at Chantilly (in Oise) and in Normandy. The mesh is Fond Chant¹ (short for Chantilly). The Alençon ground was also used. The pattern is outlined with a *cordonnnet* of flat untwisted silk strand. This lace is remarkable for the fineness of its ground and the close workmanship of its flowers. Flax thread lace was made at Chantilly in 1740, and Black Silk lace a little later.

(4) BLONDE.

(Pale Lace.)

Blondeⁿ Lace was first made at Caen and other towns in Calvados in 1745. The mesh is that of Lille. In the 18th century it had a *cordonnnet* of chenille or of gold thread. The broad flat strand of the *toilé* (close-work) gives it a glistening effect. At first blondes were of the natural creamy colour of silk, but later white and black were made. Sometimes the *toilé* was of coloured silks. Workers in white silk used, in order to avoid the contamination of smoke, to work in winter in lofts over cow-houses—the heat

¹ The Point de Paris reseau is the same.

from the animals supplying the only warmth.¹ Blonde was introduced into Buckinghamshire about 1860. See Chapter 16, Section 70.

GERMANY.

To the story of Barbara Uttmann, who seems to have introduced Lace-making into Germany and who died in 1575, we have already alluded. In 1647 we hear of the Twelve Old Silver Bearded Lace-makers of Dorlmund (in Westphalia) who taught any applicants. Tennyson's old man with his beard a yard before him and his hair a yard behind, would have found himself quite at home with these delightful Westphalians whose beards were so long that while they worked they were forced to keep them in bags out of the way of the bobbins and pins. These old men, by invitation of a merchant named Steenbeck, subsequently settled at Tönder in Jutland, where they taught their art, which was subsequently practised all over Denmark.

As the result of Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), Lace-making made enormous headway in Germany, to which country the French Protestants chiefly emigrated. The laces made were naturally those of 17th Century France.

SPAIN.

Spain seems to have derived the art of Lace-

¹ Compare our notes on the Fire pot in Chapter 12, Section 38.

making from Italy and Flanders (which was formerly part of the Spanish dominions). Gold and silver **Point d'Espagne** of geometric design was made both in Spain and France; but of the early Spanish laces we are most interested in the white lace with gimp in the middle which was introduced into England by Katharine of Arragon, by whose name it has since been called. (See Plate 5.)

CRETE.

Old Crete could construct labyrinths for its minotaurs, and its acrobats were the first in Europe, but of the involutions of lace it knew nothing. The laces called **Old Crete** (see Plate 40) are really of comparatively modern origin, having been derived from those of Venice. They are chiefly of silk, and some, like the early Venetian laces, are geometrical in design. A *cordonet* of brightly coloured silken threads sometimes enhances their beauty. There is a collection of them in the Victoria and Albert Museum, S. Kensington.

RUSSIA.

Lace has been made in Russia only during the last hundred years. The Russian laces—some of which have a vermiculated pattern—are remarkable for the quaintness of their design and the brightness of their colours; in short,

they are semi-Oriental. A kind of Torchon with colours introduced is made at Vologda.

AMERICA.

As the result of the energy displayed by Director Flagg and others, lace is now made in Minnesota and other American States, most of the workers being women from various parts of Europe.

CHAPTER III

OUR GARDEN OF DELIGHT

1246

Lace-making was not introduced into England until many years after it had become established on the Continent. It is ^{10. Em-} true that the English had for cen-^{broidery.} turies made what they called "lace," but this was really embroidery—whether drawn linen or cut work; very attractive, certainly, but not lace as we now understand the term.

Gold "lace" of great beauty adorned the cope and maniple of St. Cuthbert, who died in 685 A.D. To the art of embroidery the Saxon ladies of the courts of Edgar, Edward "the Martyr," and Ethelred paid persistent attention, and Archbishop Dunstan (who died in 988) and other men of taste made artistic and charming designs for them. The richly embroidered orphreys of the English clergy in 1246 led Pope Innocent IV. to allude to England as "our garden of delight." The priests in Chaucer's latter period (1375—1400) peacocked it in marvellous gowns of scarlet and green cut work. The ladies of the day were fond of plaiting threads into a little looped edging which they

called purling or pearling. Purling is mentioned in *Canterbury Tales* (1390), and it is pleasing to note that from this time downwards the English have shown a persistent affection for these ingratiating purls, loops, or *picots*. Furthermore, when in this country what is now understood as lace came to be made—whether Bucks Point or the far later Maltese—they put in a plea for their favourite ornament, and the worker, delighted to humour so charming a taste, has ever since allowed to rise over the headside those pretty bubbles which to the poetical eye are not bubbles at all but actual pearls.

Anne of Bohemia (wife of Richard II.), the ladies of her court (1374—1394), and the nuns in the convents delighted to make wonderful embroidered altar cloths and winding sheets in which figured bizarre and fearsome monsters that ramp only in dreams, weird looking Post-Impressionist trees, and gorgeous armorial devices embracing swallows without legs, lions and horses with wings, and other improvements on nature. The designers were poets, though they never wrote a line, and all poets have been wayward from Pindar, who ascribed to the Muses violet hair, to Payne who made it rain silver lilies.¹ This work helped the nuns to beguile the monotony of their cloistered lives. The daring colour schemes and other rich effects contrasted

¹ "A Soul's Antiphon."

curiously with the pallor of the worker, and imparted glory to many an etiolated frame and many a morbid life.

But of all the ladies who in early times in this country made "lace," the most famous was Katharine of Arragon, ^{11. Katharine of Arragon, 1531.} wife of Henry VIII. She delighted "in working with the needle curiously," and when great folks called on her they found her, as often as not, "busy at work with her maids," and "with a skein of red silk about her neck." Her favourite occupation seems to have been cut work, the patterns used being probably those brought by her from Spain.

In 1531, when this aesthetic queen was living in retirement at Ampthill, while her appeal to Rome respecting her divorce was impending, she taught the people in some of the Bedfordshire villages her favourite art. Indeed, it is handed down that in a hard time, when the villagers were put to it to get bread, she burnt her "lace," with the object of affording herself an excuse for placing new orders among them, though one would have looked in so inventive a mind for a more sensible expedient.

In respect to Katharine of Arragon we are confronted with two theories :

(1) That the "lace" made under her direction was Spanish embroidery or cut work, and not lace as we now understand the term.

(2) That, though an adept at embroidery, she also made bobbin lace,¹ into the mysteries of which she may have been initiated by workers from Venice or Flanders who had drifted into Spain or England. In support of this theory it may be observed that there is still made in Northants a lace with an antique Italian look which is called Queen Katharine Pattern² (see Plate 5)—the chief characteristic of which is that the gimp runs through the middle of the design, instead of forming, as in most other laces, its outline and veining. Then, too, the people of Madeira, where Queen Katharine lace is also made, allege that the patterns came from Spain. And lastly, there is a stitch—the Kat Stitch (also called French ground, wire ground, six-pointed star ground, and—in Bucks—hair-pin stitch, and many other names, see Plate 3), which takes eight bobbins to a pin instead of four like other stitches; and for its invention Katharine has been given the credit.

Nevertheless, it was in embroidery that Katharine most excelled—her needle being chiefly employed in decorating copes, many of which, according to Peter Heylyn, were made of “cloth of tyssue, of cloth of gold and silver, or embroidered velvet;” but the poor lady’s ingenuity was put to purposes very different from what she

¹ The altar cloth at Paulerspury Church, Northants, is said to have been designed from Katharine of Arragon parchments.

² It is still made at Paulerspury, Northants.

had intended, for in a very few years came the Reformation, when all these gorgeous vestments were appropriated by the nobles and devoted to domestic uses. According to this same Peter Heylyn, "Many private men's parlours were hung with altar cloths, their tables and beds covered with copes, instead of carpets and coverlids. It was a sorry house which had not a fair large cushion made of a cope."¹

But whatever became of her work, whether in the way of embroidery or lace, lovers of the arts have come to regard this unhappy lady as one of the long line of artists whose enthusiasm and abandon have enlarged the human outlook and have given beauty for ashes.

¹ *History of the Reformation of the Church of England: Address to the Reader* and p. 134.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST EXODUS.

1563—1568. (See Plate 11.)

For many years the people of the Low Countries, most of whom were Protestants, had under the rule of Charles V. of Spain, enjoyed, in spite of steady persecution and oppression, unprecedented prosperity, and their principal cities, especially Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges, became both opulent and powerful. When, however, in 1556, and amid circumstances of histrionic pomp, his son Philip II.,¹ a dark, domineering, narrow-minded, icy anatomy ascended the throne, a period of gloom at once set in. He resolved straightway to impose upon those countries the maintenance of a Spanish Army and to re-establish in them the hated Inquisition. Hundreds of godly persons were flung into prison. Reading the Bible was forbidden. Men who attended religious meetings were beheaded, women burnt alive. The towns reeked with murder. The penalty to a Catholic for sheltering a Protestant was also death. As a result, and rather than

12. The
Mechlin
Workers
flock to
Cranfield.

¹ He married Mary I., Queen of England, in 1554, and he reigned from 1555 to 1598.

apostatize, thousands of the Flemings fled from the country, and very many found their way to England. The earliest—a number of whom were lace-makers—seem to have arrived at the coast towns of Kent in 1563, where they worked at their calling—making, in the term of the day, “parchment lace.” Among the arrivals at Dover were “twenty-five widows,” makers of “bone lace and spinners.” The husbands of these poor creatures had, doubtless, but a few days previous been foully murdered. Four hundred settled at Sandwich, and Archbishop Parker who visited that town in 1563 says that “the refugees were as godly on the Sabbath days as they were industrious on week days,” adding that such “profitable and gentle strangers ought to be welcome and not to be grudged at.”

Galled by the opposition to his commands, Philip in order to enforce them sent hot-foot into the Low Countries in 1567 an army under the Duke of Alva, a bigot who was more fanatical and truculent even than Philip himself. A period of terror then ensued, and over a hundred thousand Protestants abandoned their native country and emigrated to England, where they were received with every kindness, and in many towns subscriptions were raised for them. The lace they brought with them was regarded by our countrymen with wonder and admiration. At first like their predecessors they settled in the

coast towns of Kent, and Sussex, but many drifted to Southwark and Bermondsey. The lace-makers among them, however, who came from the Mechlin country made their way (in 1568) to Cranfield in Bedfordshire—the earliest fixing their abode at the part of the village called Bourne End where at the time was a Tudor mansion, the owner of which seems to have stood their friend. A little later others found their way into Buckinghamshire, settling especially at Newport Pagnell, Olney and Buckingham.

It is said when Linnæus saw for the first time the gold of the gorse plant, he fell on his knees and thanked God for making anything so beautiful. Some such feeling must have stirred the ladies of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire when with astonished eyes they saw the marvellous webs shape and repeat themselves on the Flemish pillows.

Persons who are fond of noting coincidences may like to be reminded that the patron saint of Buckingham, “the county of beautiful lace,” and of Mechlin, “the city of costly lace,” are one and the same, namely, the wonderful baby, Saint Rumbald, who during his excessively short life of only three days did innumerable pious acts and performed astounding miracles. His sumptuous shrine at Buckingham, which drew pilgrims from all parts, was demolished at the Reformation, but his remains somehow found their way to the

cathedral at Mechlin, where they were until recently, and probably still are, most gorgeously enshrined. So Buckingham gave to Mechlin a saint for whom she had ceased to have any particular use, and Mechlin in return presented Buckingham with a lace which she was delighted to possess. Each was more than satisfied with the bargain. If only all business could be conducted in so pleasant a fashion!

The industry established itself almost everywhere in Bucks, Beds, and Northants. Men, women, and children all made point lace—the sleepy giants of Wilstead,¹ the Johns and Joans of Clapham,² the gokes³ of Yardley Gobion, the black-eyed girls of Fritwell, the skegs⁴ of Brackley, the moon-rakers of Grendon,⁵ the thatchers' wives of Haddenham,⁶ the ripe beauties of King's Sutton,⁷ the wearisome musicians of Lavendon,⁸ the girls whose hair was all North Crawley⁹ and the girls whose hair was tidy—in

¹ Wilshamstead near Bedford, once noted for its fine men. The various characteristics of the people of the villages mentioned are taken from local proverbs.

² Favourite names at Clapham, near Bedford.

³ I.e., simpletons. Cf., "Half sharp and hardly, like the folk of Yardley." See *Proverbs of Northamptonshire*, by Major C. A. Markham.

⁴ "Brackley skegs"—rustics.

⁵ The men of Grendon tried to rake the moon (thinking it was a cheese) out of the village pond.

⁶ "At Haddenham they thatch the ponds to keep the ducks dry."—Old saying.

⁷ "King's Sutton for beauty."—Old saying.

⁸ "It's like Lavendon play—all alike."—Old saying.

⁹ All awry. An allusion to the crookedness of Crawley Brook.

short, to use a Northamptonshire saying, all the world and Little Billing¹ made lace.

Subsequently the workers spread over all that belt of country that stretches from Cambridge to Dorset and Somerset, but, as time went on, Lace-land gradually shrank until it corresponded only with Bucks, Beds and Northants, and narrow fringes of Hunts, Herts and Oxon—the centre being the fortified town of Olney, most of the point lace being made within a radius of thirty miles of it. The Northampton portion of the district “is placed,” to use the words of an old writer, “upon the middle and top of the nation.”²

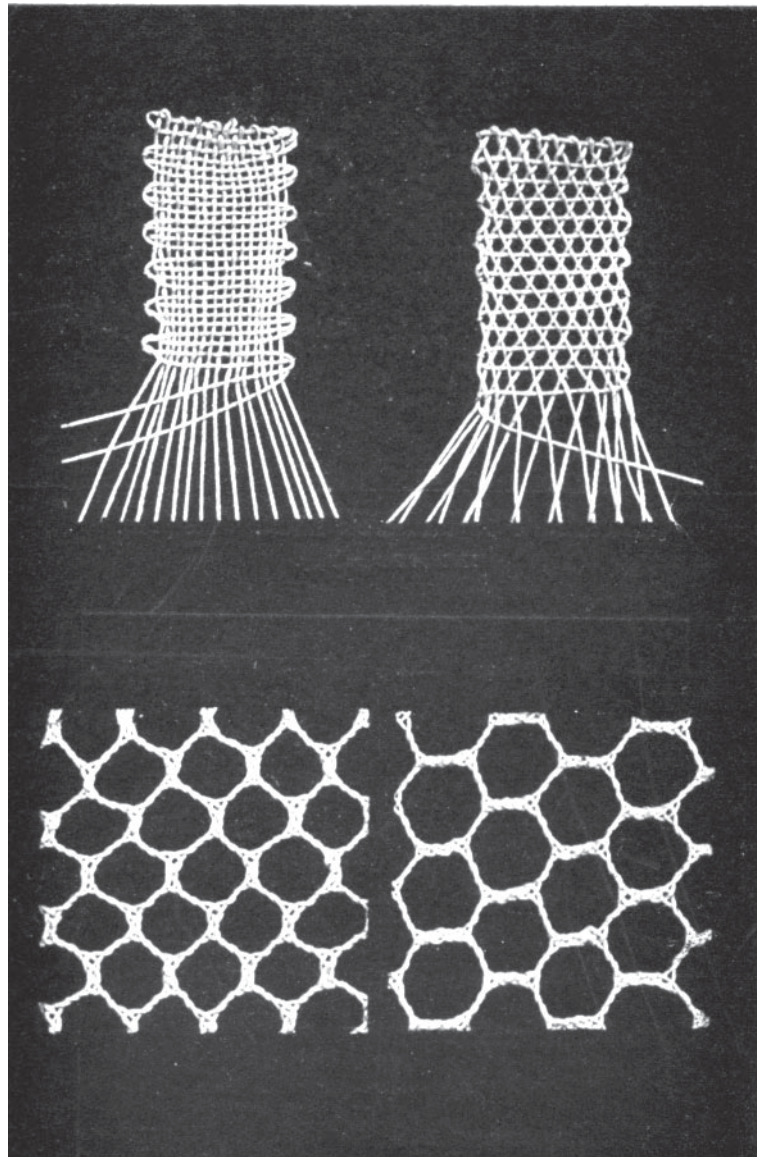
Curiously enough, we owe to these Flemings not only the Lace industry, but also our more important vegetables. Cabbages, carrots and celery came in with Flanders lace. They had previously been almost as scarce as diamonds. Owing to the lack of them cutaneous diseases were common. The leper with his head hidden save at the two eye-holes, rang as he walked through the streets his melancholy bell to warn intruders from approaching. Every church had its leper or low window through which the wretched sufferer could receive the host by the instrumentality of a cleft stick.³ Nobody could

¹ Village near Northampton.

² *Another Outcry of the Innocent and Oppressed*. A tract written in the time of Charles II.

³ For other theories respecting these windows see Major C. A. Markham's valuable brochure, *The Low Side Windows of Northamptonshire*, 1908.

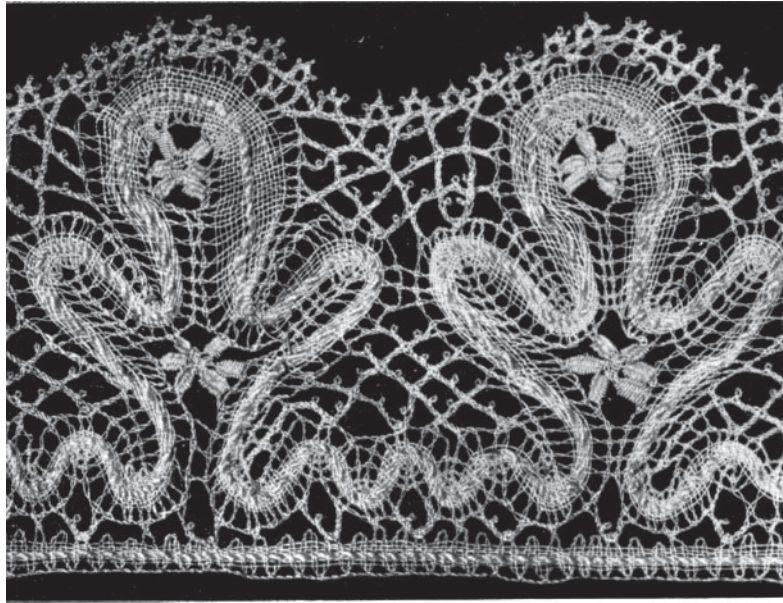
Plate 4



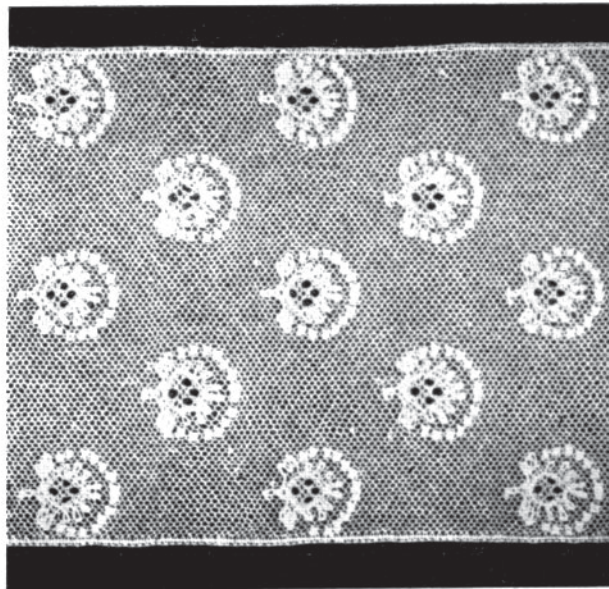
WHOLE STITCH,
MECHLIN NET.

HALF STITCH,
BRUSSELS NET.

Plate 5



KATHARINE OF ARRAGON LACE. See p. 26.
Made at Potters Pury.



PEACOCK'S TAIL (INSERTION). See p. 81.
Made at Turweston.

give his sweetheart, or his sovereign for the matter of that, a more acceptable present than a cabbage or a bunch of carrots. The Flemings at once set about sowing, with the result of crops of turnips, parsnips, carrots and other vegetables, "all of which," says an old writer, "were great wonders, we having few or none in England but what came from Holland or Flanders."¹

These settlers, as well as the Huguenots who, as we shall see, flocked a little later to Bedfordshire, used to gather together for worship in one another's houses, but gradually most of them became absorbed in the Baptist and Independent bodies. This fact explains the position, otherwise incomprehensible, of a number of the early Non-conformist chapels. The Baptist chapel at Cranfield, for instance (the cause was founded in 1660)² is far out of the village proper, but at a convenient distance from the Flemish settlement at Bourne End where at the time there must have been a considerable number of cottages. A windmill at the north end of the village (the nearest point to Bourne End), and not far from the chapel, gives a Flemish touch to the scenery even to-day.

The magnet that drew to Cranfield the Flemish Protestants of 1568 and their successors, the Huguenots of 1688, was probably the influence of

¹ Hartlib, writing in 1650, quoted by Smiles in *The Huguenots*, p. 107.

² Its first pastor, William Wheeler, published in 1670 *A Spiritual Portion of Heavenly Treasure*.

the powerful Russell family, whose seat was at Woburn close by. The head of the House at this time was Francis, 2nd Earl of Bedford, whose son William distinguished himself at Zutphen, 22nd Sept., 1586 (the battle at which Sir Philip Sidney died fighting with William of Orange against Philip II. of Spain, the persecutor of the Flemish Protestants); and it is worthy of note that Lord William Russell, the patriot (who was son of the 5th Earl and 1st Duke) married Rachel, daughter of the Huguenot Marquis de Rivigny.

Another great Bedfordshire family that was all on fire to help the Flemish Protestants was the House of Gascoigne, whose seat was Cardington Manor. George Gascoigne the poet,¹ a member of this family, who wrote his *Fruites of Warre* "piecemeale at sundrye tymes" while he was fighting under the standard of William of Orange, had the advantage of being able to converse freely with the refugees in their own tongue.

Nevertheless, the name of the prime mover in this affair is unknown. As a rule God performs a work in (or through) us, and we get, or give ourselves, the credit for it. In this instance the human instrument is concealed and we can see only the First Cause.

¹ Born perhaps in 1525, died 1577. A good account of George Gascoigne was given in the *Beds Times*, Sept. 8th, 1916.

Whereas the Mechlin workers flocked to Bedfordshire, those from Brussels made their way to Honiton and other places in Devonshire, and the lace (altered to suit the requirements of their adopted country) became known as "Honiton," but the term "Devonshire Lace" is preferable. From the first the Devonshire fabric, unlike that of Brussels, had an outlining of gimp. Its two earliest stages were :

13. The Brussels Workers flock to Honiton.

1. *The Artistic Pattern and Net Stage.* The patterns or sprigs which were of artistic design were worked on a pillow with bobbins and then arranged artistically on another pillow. Net was worked among them with bobbins; or the patterns were stitched on hand-made net, forming Appliqué Work.

2. *The Artistic Pattern and Guipure Stage.* A little later, instead of the net being made, the patterns were artistically united by purl-pin-bars, the work being done with bobbins. This operation was called purling. In some districts the sprigs were first tacked to a blue paper foundation and then joined with a needle-made net.¹

Flemish names, such as Murch, Groot, Speller, Kettel, Boatch and Woram, are found in the district, and memorials to lace-workers abound, the most interesting being an altar tomb in the

¹ The two subsequent stages in Devonshire Lace will be noted in Chapter 17.

old church of St. Michael, Honiton, which is inscribed: "Here lyeth ye body of James Rodge of Honiton in ye county of Devonshire (bone lace siller, hath given unto the poore of Honiton Pisse the Benyfit of £100 for ever) who deceased ye 27th of July A.D. 1617, aetatae svae 50 Remember the poore."

Soon after the Flemish Exodus brass wire pins came into general use in this country. Pins of a sort had been made here as early as 1347, but our brass wire pins date only from about 1530. By the statute of 1543 entitled "An act for the True making of Pynnes" the price was not to exceed 6/8 per 1000. Nevertheless until 1626, when John Tilsby established a manufactory in Gloucestershire, most of the pins used by English workers were imported from France. The Pinmakers' Corporation of London was not established till 1636.

Plate 6



THE MAIDS OF MAIDS MORTON. See p. 40.
The original belongs to J. M. Knapp, Esq., of Little Linford, Bucks. This picture was lent by Miss Burrowes of Maids Morton.



LACED SHOE

that belonged to a Miss Langley, time of Charles II. See p. 58.

It is made of pale yellow silk, tastefully embroidered and trimmed with lace. The ribbon at the top is green, the sole is brown. In the possession of Mr. T. Watson Greig, of Glencaise. From the *Book of Illustrations of Collections of Ladies' Old-Fashioned Shoes*, by T. Watson Greig. For permission to use it we have to thank the Committee of the Northampton Free Library.

Plate 7



QUEEN ELIZABETH LACE. See p. 70.
*Lent by Mrs. J. B. Harrison,
formerly of Pautersbury.*

PERIWINKLE PATTERN.

TWO STOCKING FRONTS. Lent to the Exhibition of Paris, 1914. At the time the Germans came near Paris these fronts and other specimens of lace were bricked up in the cellars of the Louvre for safety. Stocking fronts were used in Queen Elizabeth's day. See p. 40.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND EXODUS

1572. (See Map, Plate 11.)

On 24th August, 1572, occurred that terrible slaughter of the Huguenots in Paris and other towns of France, which has ever since been known as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. It was ordered by the young Charles IX. of France, who had been instigated by his mother, the cruel Catherine de Medicis. The king himself, armed with an arquebus, fired at his subjects from one of the windows of the Louvre. Over 100,000 were murdered—men, women and children. A thrill of indignation and anger went through England when the awful news arrived; but when Philip II. of Spain heard it, his marble face relaxed, and he laughed for the first and only time in his life.

Many of the survivors escaped to England; and the lace-makers among them, who came chiefly from Lille and the neighbourhood, found their way into Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, where they joined the Mechlin workers from Flanders who had for several years been settled

14. The
Massacre of
St. Bartholo-
mew, Aug.
24, 1572.
Flemish and
French
Names.

there. As a natural result we find that many of the old designs of these parts are a combination of the two laces, Mechlin and Lille. Frequently the Mechlin design is worked with the Lille net, which is easier to make than the Mechlin ground. Then, too, and as might be supposed, very many Flemish and Huguenot names are still to be found in the Lace-making districts of Bucks, Beds and Northants. Thus we find Minard, Cattell, Rubythorn and Raban at Olney; De Ath and Rennels at Buckingham; Perrin at Moulsoe; Lathall at North Crawley; Simons at Hanslope; Bitchiner, Sawell, Glass, De Ath, Vaux, Waples, Francly and Cayles at Cranfield;¹ Le Fevre at Harrold; Dudeney (Dieu donné) at Bedford; Nurseaw at Sherington; Mulliner and Conant at Northampton; and Laycock (Le Coq) at Wellingborough. There were Independent ministers named Hillyard both at Olney and Bedford. The Rev. John Newton used to hold prayer meetings in the cottage of Molly Mole (Mohl). But many hundreds of other instances could be given. Almost every town and village within thirty miles of Olney has persons with Flemish or French names, and practically the whole population must be partially of Flemish or French descent.

¹ Mrs. A. Glass, of Iddesleigh Road, Bedford, says that her grandmother, who was born in 1795, was a parchment maker, and a descendant of the Flemings who first settled at Cranfield. Her designs were sometimes traced from the touches of frost on the window panes.

The wretched king who had ordered the massacre lived only two years, which were tortured with remorse. "Sleeping or waking," he said to his physician, "the murdered Huguenots present themselves to my eyes, with ghastly faces and weltering in blood." In his last moments he was attended by a Huguenot nurse. He died "howling" on 30th May, 1574. The punishment of the infamy of Philip II. of Spain was longer delayed. He died unrepentant, of a lingering, loathsome disease on 13th September, 1598—his hands red with murder and, amazing to say, the name of "Jesus" on his lips. The obsequies were necessarily hurried.

The Huguenot exodus continued until 1598 when it was arrested by the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, the act of the great and sagacious Henry IV. of France. Allowed, after sixty years of persecution, to worship God in their own way, the Huguenots no longer turned their eyes to England.

When Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, the Lace industry in this country advanced by leaps and bounds, the great feature in the way of finery at her spectacular court being the enormous ruff supported by a wire frame and stiffened with starch. The ruff, as contemporary records show, was often edged with lace, which, however, was not necessarily made in

15. Lace at
the Court of
Elizabeth.
Mary, Queen
of Scots.
1558—1603.

England. Elizabeth herself favoured a ruff trimmed with the most elaborate thread guipure and linen cuffs turned over and edged with similar lace. One of the most interesting pictures of ladies wearing the laced ruff and cuffs is that of the Maids of Maids Morton, near Buckingham, who are supposed to have been joined together like the Siamese twins. The original was painted by Zuchero, the court painter to Queen Elizabeth, but the portraits are for the most part imaginary, the only authority for them having been a brass which formerly existed in Maids Morton Church. Zuchero painted the ladies not in the dress shown on the brass, that is to say of the time when they actually lived, but in the dress of his own day.¹ (See Plate 6.)

Another fashion of the period was the use of Stocking Fronts made of lace. A pair of these with the Periwinkle pattern is shown in Plate 7.

The poets and poetical prose writers of Elizabeth's court, although admiring lace for its own sake, took their chief pleasure in it from the fact that, in the elegant phrasing of Sir Philip Sidney, it was after all "but a fair ambassador of a most fair mind." Kit Marlowe, Robert Greene, and the other fierce intellectual spirits of the time, loved lace as they loved everything else that was

¹ The original picture was left as an heirloom long ago to the family of J. M. Knapp, Esq., of Linford Hall, Bucks. My friend, the Rev. J. Tarver, of Tyringham, who married into the Knapp family, wrote a poem on the subject, with the title of *The Maids of Maids Morton*.

“passing brave.” Edmund Spenser, author of the *Faerie Queen*, appears in his best known portrait in a collar trimmed with reticella of beautiful design; but most of Elizabeth’s courtiers wore lace of geometric patterns which may have been made in Devonshire.¹ Nobody was happy unless his head looked like John the Baptist’s on a charger.

Lace, indeed, had come to stay, but the trouble was that the ladies could not properly see themselves in it, for they had on their toilette tables nothing better than a sheet of polished metal. But science, ever sympathetic to the sigh of beauty, came promptly to the rescue, and presented the sex with what the poet George Gascoigne called a “mirror of glas,” that “glistred bright” and showed “a seemly shewe,”² which was well, for without a looking-glass what even is lace!

Elizabeth’s famous rival, Mary Queen of Scots, was not only a wearer but also a designer of lace. Moreover, she is said to have made lace during the tedious years of her captivity; and on the fatal morning of 8th February, 1587, when she appeared before the block, and so closed a life made up of wild fits of delight and seasons of unspeakable agony, she wore on her head “a

¹ See Chapter 6, Section 17.

² *The Steele Glas*, 1576.

dressing of lawn edged with bone lace," and a "veil of lawn fastened to her cowl, bowed out with wire and edged round about with bone lace." Her resting-place is a cinque-cento tomb in Westminster Abbey, and on her effigy is a laced ruff. She too, scarlet as were her sins, is one of the saints in the Lace-lover's Calendar.

The same year that Mary was executed Vinciolo, the Venetian artist, published his Book of Designs for Bone Lace, and doubtless its influence extended to England.

If the gallants and court beauties of Whitehall decked themselves with reticella, Venice
16. Tawdry
Lace. 1590. Point, or the newly introduced laces of Mechlin and Lille, the village beauties of Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire had recourse to the cheap but showy lace, made locally no doubt, which was offered for sale at the fairs held in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere on St. Etheldreda's¹ day (October 17th). What St. Etheldreda's Lace (or Tawdry, as they called it for short) was like we do not know—and we do not even know whether it was a lace in the modern acceptance of the term—but there are many references to it in our old writers.

Mopsa, the shepherdess, in Shakespeare's *Winter Tale* (Act IV., Scene 4) says: "You promised me a tawdry lace and a pair of sweet

¹ St. Etheldreda died in 679, abbess of the convent at Ely.

gloves ;” and Amaryllis in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Faithful Shepherdess* (Act IV., Scene 1) speaks of “The primrose chaplet, tawdry lace and ring.”

CHAPTER VI

FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES I. TO THE DEATH OF CROMWELL.

1603—1659.

Among those who revealed an enthusiasm for the beautiful Bucks lace was Anne of Denmark (wife of James I.), upon whom it dawned that enthusiasm for anything that is beautiful, elevating, or provocative of thought, is the elixir of life—the new wine of the kingdom. This queen in 1603 purchased at Winchester and Basing both “Great Bone Lace” and “Little Bone Lace”—that is to say, wide and narrow point. A love for Art was beginning to spread through the country. In every great house there was a “Frippery”—a room set apart for the preservation of beautiful articles, including lace.

From the first all seems to have gone well in North Bucks; and the dealers of Newport Pagnell, not content with making a profit all the week, must needs do business on a Sunday; for we learn that in 1611 certain of them, “who continuallie travelled to sell bone lace on the Sabbath day,” were presented at an ecclesiastical

17. Newport
Pagnell,
Olney, and
Great
Marlow.

Plate 8



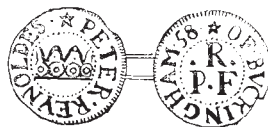
POINT D'ANGLETERRE LAPPET.
Victoria and Albert Museum. See p. 49. (*By permission of the Authorities.*)

Plate 9



COLBERT

From the original by V. Mignard in the Collection of the Institute at Paris. See p. 16.



BUCKINGHAM LACE TOKEN,
showing strip of lace on the obverse. See p. 57.

Lent by the Bucks Archaeological Association.

visitation.¹ The prosperity of Newport Pagnell was shared by Olney (Ouldney, as Fuller and other writers spell it), Little Brickhill (then an assize town²) and Stony Stratford. As might be supposed, the Parish Registers of this part of Bucks contain many references to lace-makers, lace-men, lace-dealers and lace-buyers. The earliest in this category is the entry in the Ravenstone Register of the marriage of Roger Gadsden (24th January, 1636), who is later described as a "lace-maker;"³ and there is an entry in the Bletchley Register under 1638 relative to William Stopp, "lace-buyer," but almost every parish could furnish instances.

In the south of Bucks things went not well, for on April 8th, 1623, a petition was addressed from Great Marlow to the High Sheriff of Bucks, representing the distress of the people from the "bone lace-making being much decayed." Then Sir Henry Borlase came forward and (in 1626) endowed the Free School at Great Marlow, where he provided for 24 boys to be taught reading and to "cast accounts," and for 24 girls "to knit, spin and make bone lace," but his efforts met with only partial success.

If Great Marlow suffered, it was not because lace was less worn, but because so many persons

¹ F. W. Bull: *History of Newport Pagnell*.

² Between 1561 and 1620 as many as 42 criminals were executed and buried here.

³ At this period many men made lace.

imported from the Continent instead of supporting the home industry. The ruff was still patronised, but the Laced Collar, as might be judged from the portraits of Henry, Prince of Wales (James the First's son), Ralph Verney of Claydon,¹ George Digby, Earl of Bristol, and many other notabilities, was gradually supplanting it. High boots lined with rich lace were also worn in this reign, the tops being turned down in order to display it.

The monumental effigies of the period, on many of which lace is sculptured, show that the taste for reticella and similar fabrics which prevailed in Elizabeth's day continued far into the reign of James I. The geometric lace represented on the effigy of Lady Doddridge (1614) in Exeter Cathedral, and on that to Lady Pole in Colyton Church (1623) may have been made in Devonshire.

The unbridled extravagance of the time under the head of lace led the divines again and again to thunder against it. The Rev. Henry Smith, the pithiest preacher of the day, says in his sermon, "The Triall of Vanitie,"² "And yet there are more vanities in our apparrell, ruff vpon³ ruffe, lace vpon lace . . . as though our apparrell were apparrelled vntil the woman

¹ *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, 1892. Vol. 1, p. 112.

² *Sermons*, 1618, pp. 158, 362.

³ In the books of those days v's were often used for u's and u's for v's.

be not worth so much as her attire." He was no Puritan, he tells us, and therefore had nothing to say against lace in reason, but it grieved him to see gentlemen forced to "sell their lands" in order to "decke their wiues." Even the obtrusion of death did not stay the extravagance, and it was considered quite wonderful that the brilliant and versatile Sir Kenelm Digby, of Gayhurst,¹ whose dress was customarily as various as a rainbow, and who delighted in broad, rich and exotic laced collars and cuffs, attired himself, after the death in 1633 of his lady, in the dress of a "hermite," and never again wore either colour or lace.

Charles I., with the object of encouraging the English industry, brought in a law (1635) which strictly prohibited the importation of foreign "purles, cut works, and bone laces." An improvement at once took place in the local manufactures, and our goods were not only used at home but also to a considerable extent exported. The smuggling of lace from Flanders naturally followed, and, as we shall presently see, persons of all walks in life were again and again found to be engaging in it.

Under Cromwell the use of lace was discontinued among the middle and lower classes. The "quality," however, still used it, though sparingly. We hear

18. The
Puritans
and Lace.

¹ Bucks.

of a wonderful handkerchief consisting chiefly of broad point lace which had belonged to Cromwell's mother, and if many of the ladies were more given, as their enemies worded it, to "gossiping Scripture," than to decking their persons, nevertheless there were others who did not deny themselves "whisks" (lace gorgets), while their husbands thought it no sin to wear cuffs and bands. At the same time among the Puritans, absorbed as so many of them were in the study of "the History and the Mystery," that is to say of God's Word and God's dealings with themselves personally, the use of lace was as a rule discouraged, and it is worthy of note that the word "lace" does not once occur in the poems of Milton. If it be urged that the lady whom he chiefly celebrated could have had for the fabric no particular use, it must be pointed out that he also sang various modern ladies; moreover, the industries of Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire were as familiar to him as those of Eden.

Some of the Puritan beauties satisfied their consciences and at the same time gratified their taste for lace and embroidery by making these fabrics the medium for representing subjects connected with Scripture. As the satirists said, they wore "religious petticoats" and "holy embroidery."

Plate 10



OLD BUCKS POINT LACE.

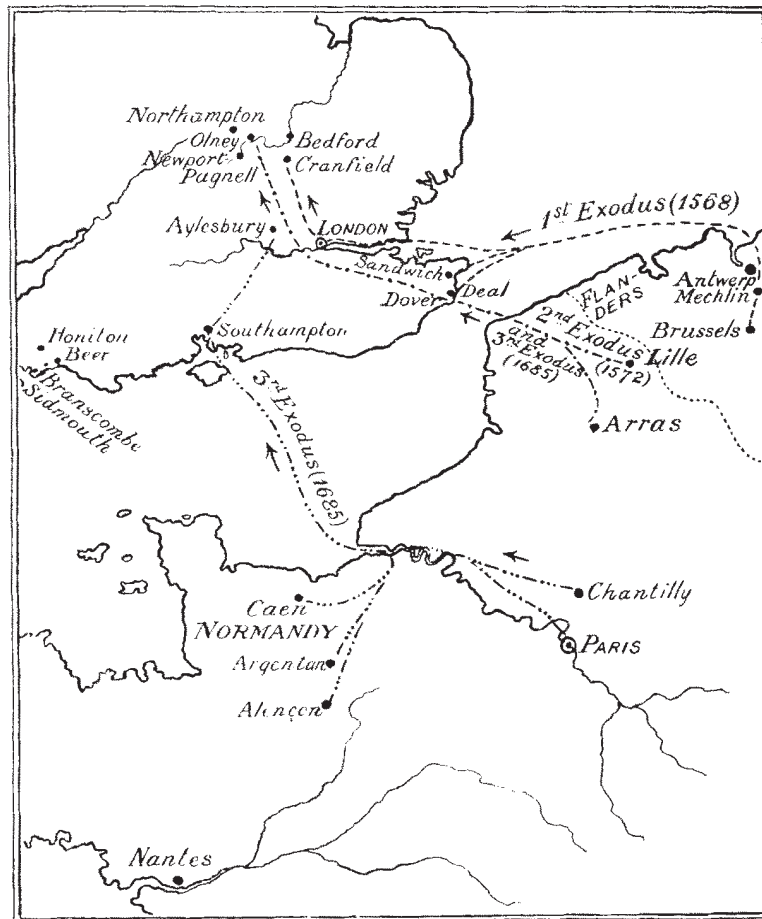
(Lent by Mrs. W. W. Carile.)



BUCKS POINT LACE.

(Lent by Miss Pope.)

Plate 11



Map showing the principal routes taken by the Flemish and Huguenot Emigrants in 1568, 1572, and 1685. In the last period a number of the refugees went from Nantes and Bordeaux to Portsmouth.

CHAPTER VII

THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

1660—1685

By the time of Charles II. Brussels Lace had undergone a remarkable alteration. The pattern became far more elaborate; the outline of the design and the veins of the leaves became raised—an effect achieved by twisting and plaiting, not by using a thicker thread; and a number of grounds were used, with the result of one of the most beautiful laces ever invented. It obtained the name of **Point d' Angleterre**¹ (English Point). In some varieties of this lace the openings left in the pattern were filled with *brides* (legs), whence this kind was called **Point d' Angleterre à Brides**. In both varieties fine needle-point fillings were often added.

Two theories have been put forth respecting the origin of this lace, and with a view to explaining its name.

1. That of Mrs. Palliser, Miss Alice Dryden, Miss M. Jourdain and others, who hold that it originated at Brussels—that it is, as a matter of

¹ See Plate 8.

fact, Brussels lace of the best period. They point out that in 1661 Charles II. issued a proclamation enforcing his father's Act which prohibited the entry of Continental lace; and allege not only that the merchants, finding themselves unable to bring their Brussels Lace to England openly, had recourse to smuggling; but also that, in order to protect themselves, they both sold it in this country and exported it into France as *Point d' Angleterre*.¹ Consequently, notwithstanding its name, none of it was ever made in England. In support of this theory, Mrs. Palliser quotes a memorandum by the Venetian Ambassador to the English Court in 1695, who states that the lace then in fashion in England was "that called English point, which you know is not made here but in Flanders, and only bears the name of English to distinguish it from the others."

2. The second theory, which is held by M. Seguin, Mrs. Neville Jackson and Mr. H. H. Armstrong of Olney, is that this lace originated in Devonshire where large quantities were made, and that the Brussels workers who made still larger quantities were only the copiers. They are of opinion that the name alone sufficiently proves that the lace was made in England. They argue further, that you might just as well contend that because the best Valenciennes lace was for long

¹ Ed. 1902, p. 117.

made at Ypres it was never made at Valenciennes, and they point out that it was the invariable custom in early times for a fabric to retain the name where it was first produced in quantity.

“It is quite time,” says Mrs. Neville Jackson, “English people realised that one of the finest results of the lace industry which the world has ever seen, was an original English product, and that it owed only an occasional improvement in fine stitching to foreign influence.¹ . . . Rodge of Devonshire obtained the Flemish secret of making the fine fillings and joins which give the finishing touch in rendering *Point d’Angleterre* one of the most perfect types of lace which have ever been invented. The chief portion of the finest *Point d’Angleterre* was made in England. The Honiton lace of to-day is but the exquisite *Point d’Angleterre* of the Restoration period in a debased condition.”² Mr. Armstrong, who supports this view, considers that the ladder work alone which appears so frequently both in the Honiton fabrics and in *Point d’Angleterre* is sufficient evidence that *Point d’Angleterre* was made in Devonshire.

Furthermore, it is held by those who accept the second theory that the statement of the Venetian Ambassador carries very little weight, since his knowledge was derived only from hearsay—there

¹ *A History of Hand-made Lace*, p. 154, pub. in 1900.

² This was written in 1900. Since that date great improvements have been made in Honiton Lace.

being no evidence that he ever set foot in Devonshire.

In the courts of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., in the period, that is to say, of hoops and powder, *Point d' Angleterre* was in high favour, but it is mentioned in almost every book that touches upon the fashions of that time. That salacious gentleman, M. Jacques Casanova, writing of the year 1760 and describing his adventures in the inn of the Sword at Zurich, where he pretended to be a butler in order to get into conversation with a pretty lady, says: "I had tucked my ruffles, which were of superb English Point (*Point d' Angleterre à l' aiguille*) inside my sleeves, but a bit of my cravat, which was of the same lace, peeped through my button-hole. When I handed her her plate she noticed it. 'Wait, wait, a minute!' she said, 'What beautiful lace you wear!'"

Of the dressy persons in Charles the Second's time none has obtained more notice than Samuel Pepys. As his famous "Diary" shows, he regarded lace as a necessity. So pleased is he on 8th October, 1662, with his "scallop" (lace collar or band¹ with scalloped edges) that cost £3, that he straightway went and ordered another at the same price. On "Lord's Day," October 19th, he writes: "Put on my first new lace band; and so neat

¹ A band-box was originally a box to hold bands (lace collars).

it is that I am resolved my great expense shall be lace bands."

But although Pepys was never the man to deny himself in lace, he was apt (alas!) to fall into an economical mood when his wife was concerned. "My wife and I," he says on one occasion, "fell out about my not being willing to have her gowne laced. . . . At this she flounced away in a manner I never saw her, nor which I could ever endure." She even went so far as to say that she "would go and buy a new one and lace it and make me pay for it." Indeed, poor man! her tantrums "vexed" him "cruelly."

Mrs. Pepys, however, was outdone by Mrs. Loveit, in Etheridge's *Sir Fopling Flutter*, who, in a fit of love and jealousy, broke "a dozen or two of fans," tore "half a score points¹ in pieces," and destroyed "hoods and knots without number."

The Huguenot lace-makers, even though they were out of reach of their French enemies, were by no means exempt from persecution. The nation had warmly welcomed Charles II. and was on the way to enshrining him in her large heart, but she soon discovered that the temple was too big for the god. As we have already noticed, most of the immigrants had joined themselves to the English Nonconformists, whose manner of

¹ Pieces of lace.

21. The Persecutions of the reign of Charles II. 1670-1672.

worship their own closely resembled. In the reign of Charles II., however, Act after Act of Parliament bore upon the Nonconformists and their Huguenot friends with cruel severity; and the jails were filled with men against whom nothing could be alleged except that they were resolved to worship God in their own fashion. In the Lambeth MSS. (Tenison), "An Account of the Conventicles in Lincoln Diocese, 1669," we find the following notice of Olney and neighbourhood: "Parishes and Conventicles in them: Olney 2, at the house of Widow Tears;¹ Newton Blossomville in private houses." As regards sect, &c., those at Olney are called Anabaptists, and their number was "about 200." Their quality is not described, but among their "Heads or Teachers" were "Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Breeden, and James Rogers, Lace-buyers"—this Mr. Gibbs being the Rev. John Gibbs who, after his ejection, in 1660, from the benefice of Newport Pagnell, founded the Dissenting causes at both Newport and Olney, where he lived by dealing in lace, as a greater than he had lived by tent-making.

The number at Newton Blossomville is put at fifty or sixty, who are described as "meane people, but such as say they value not His Majesty's clemency one pin"—which is just what

¹ Evidently the "Joan Teare widow" whose burial is recorded in Olney Church Register as having taken place 8th July, 1672.

a lace-maker, having so much to do with pins, was very likely to say. It was a glorious age for the bigot, the sycophant and the informer. Pretty nearly every man with a conscience was either in momentary expectation of arrest, in hiding or in prison.

John Bunyan at this time was spinning out of his holy soul, and in the very heart of the lace country, his *Pilgrim's Progress*, but the iron Puritan prejudice against lace still prevailed. Neither Christiana, nor Mercy, nor the "young woman whose name was Dull," nor anybody else, male or female, in the book either made lace, bought lace, or even mentioned lace. Yet there must have been plenty of "tawdry" on the stalls of Vanity Fair, and we may fairly assume that my Lord Fair-speech wore a lace collar round his oily throat, and Lady Feigning's daughter a laced petticoat about her mincing feet.

But the threat constantly impending of fine or imprisonment for religion's sake was not the only hardship the lace-makers had to endure. They were daily hampered in their business transactions owing to the shortage of small change. Half-pence and farthings were nowhere to be had in any convenient number. This hardship, however, was not confined to the lace-makers. The whole kingdom suffered, and then some enterpriser hit on the expedient of

22. Lace
Tokens.
1648—1679.

making his own small change. The idea was copied, and in a few years every prominent tradesman had his private mint. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1757 is a description of the coining apparatus with which, though it was quite a simple affair, in a very short time many hundreds of half-pence or farthings could be coined. Among the tradesmen who issued these tokens were not only the lace-buyers, but also the grocers, mercers, bakers, rope-makers and others. The token of James Brierly, of Olney, who, as a deed¹ bearing his name shows, was a lace-buyer, has on the obverse, "James Brierly, B. I. M.;" and on the reverse, "Of Olney, 1658," and a pair of scales. As regards the "B. I. M.," B stands for Brierly, I for his own Christian name, James, and M for his wife's Christian name, it being the invariable custom for the token to bear the wife's initials as well as the husband's. The scales show that he joined to lace-buying some other occupation. Apparently he was a baker as well. He died in 1670.² The James Brierly referred to under date 1677 in the Journal of George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, was his son.

A still more interesting token, however, is that

¹ Preserved in the Cowper Museum, Olney: Conveyance of property on 24 Feb., 1650, by Richard Babbington of Turvey to James Brierly, lace-buyer, of Olney.

² The date of his burial as shown in the Olney Church Register was 28 July, 1670.

of Peter Reynoldes, of Buckingham, as it is adorned with a representation of the emblem of his trade—a piece of lace. Moreover, as his name proves, he was of Huguenot descent. On the obverse is, “Peter Reynoldes” and a strip of lace; on the reverse, “Of Bvckingham, 58, P. F. R.” (See Plate 9.)

Another Buckingham token of a similar character has on the obverse, “Iohn Rennals, 1668,” with a strip of lace, and the initials, “I. E. R.,” on the reverse, “Of Bvckingham, his halfe-penny.”

Two lace tokens hail from St. Neots, Huntingdonshire, their peculiarity being a representation of a pillow used by two women, one on each side of it.

O. The overseers of. Their halfe peny.

R. The Towne of St. Eeds.¹ Two women, seated, making lace.

O. The overseers of. Their halfe peny.

R. The Towne of St. Neots. Two women, seated, making lace.²

The ladies of Charles's court wore laced caps, laced aprons, laced gloves, and petticoats “laced with rich lace at the bottom.”³ Colbertine⁴ and other coarser kinds of lace they spoke of

23. At the Sign of the Laced Shoe, 1679. Green Lace.

¹ Old name of St. Neots.

² See *Trade Tokens, 17th Century*, by Wm. Boyne, revised by G. C. Williamson, 1889.

³ Pepys.

⁴ An open lace with a square ground. It took its name from its manufacturer, M. Colbert, Superintendent of the French Royal Lace Manufacturers. See Chapter 2, Section 8.

only with disdain and a toss of the head. In the *London Gazette*, 1677, Jan. 28—31, appears the advertisement: "Stolen from the Vicarage house of Amersham in Buckinghamshire an apron of needlework lace, the middle being net work." The lax court beauties wheedled laced gloves out of their royal lover; similar fripperies were the perquisite of the judge at the maiden assize; while the fop gave himself airs in the park or the public garden in gloves "well fringed, which reached to his elbow." John Verney, of Claydon, on the occasion of his wedding, 9th June, 1680, sent "a payre of Green fringed Gloves" for his brother, and "white and collour'd Lace Gloves" for his sister.¹

As we have seen, the courtiers of the reign of James I. and Charles I. wore high top boots lined with rich lace. The ladies were not slow to imitate them, and by the time of Charles II. every kind of foot-gear with pretensions had lace somewhere about it. In the possession of Mr. T. Watson Greig of Glencarse is a beautiful laced shoe that belonged to a Miss Langley, who lived at this period. Made of natural silk (and therefore of a pale yellow colour) it is most tastefully embroidered, and it is trimmed with lace "of an intricate pattern and delicate as a spider's web."²

¹ *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, 1892, Vol. IV., p. 250.

² There is a large coloured photograph of it in the book of *Illustrations of Collections of Ladies' Old-Fashioned Shoes*, by T. Watson Greig of Glencarse. For our illustration we are indebted to the kindness of the Committee of the Northampton Public Library.

(See Plate 6.) Shoe ties that went under the name of "roses" and "riband roses" edged with lace were also coquetries of the period.

In the 17th and 18th Centuries nearly all the tradesmen had wooden shop signs projecting in front of their places of business, or signs carved in stone let into the front of their houses, and the lace-dealers probably, both in the Midlands and in London, displayed sign-boards or carvings indicative of their calling. Among milliners' signs in London in the early 17th Century were "The Fan," "The Crowned Fan," "The Hood and Scarf Shope, Cornhill," and the "The Blue Boddice, in the Long Walk near Christ Church Hospital." The lady of that period wore laced trimmed tabs on her bodice and a laced scarf, and she carried a lace trimmed folding fan.

A shop in Chancery Lane, "The Laced Shoe," is mentioned in an advertisement in the *London Gazette*, July 31 to August 4, 1679. The Marchioness of Newcastle, in *Sociable Letters* (1664) speaks (nose in the air) of a "Mrs. P. I.," previously a lady of fashion, who, having become "a sanctified soul," left off curling her hair, and regarded "laced shoes and galoshoes" as "steps to pride," and fans and ribbons and the like as "Temptations of Satan."¹

The peculiarity of these shoes which were supposed to work so much havoc in the male heart, is

¹ *Sociable Letters*, 1st edit., p. 103.

that so many of them were green or edged with green lace. In James the First's time red was supposed to be the provocative colour. Thomas Wright, the psychologist,¹ indeed, had it from physicians, that "red colours moved and influenced the blood." Opinion, however, changed; and the passion for green in the shoe continued to the time of the *Tatler*. Steele, in No. 143 of that periodical, reads quite a sermon on the perils of looking at green lace, and goes so far as to declare, in his arch way, that even the sight of it in a shoemaker's window created "irregular Thoughts and Desires in the youth of this nation," and he considered that "slippers with green lace and blue heels" were equally inflammatory. These slippers were also called pantofles. Burton (in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621) says oddly, "It was Judith's pantofles that ravished the eyes of Holofernes."² Sappho's sandals of "rich Lydian work" played havoc with many a Greek heart. Evidently the only safe course, when a pretty lady comes along with embroidered or laced shoe-gear, is to look another way.

Nell Gwyn, as the unpaid bills found after her death³ reveal, affected "scarlet satin shoes with silver lace." In all this extravagance the servant wenches, as Defoe tells us, imitated their mis-

¹ Writing in 1601.

² See *Judith* x. 4, where the original is rendered, correctly, of course, "sandals."

³ In 1687.

tresses. When Joan comes up from the country she has simple tastes and is satisfied with "neats leathern shoes," but she has been scarcely a week in town before this honest foot-gear is exchanged "for laced ones with high heels,"¹ and she indulges in other extravagances to match; and, if expostulated with, "whip she is off" to some situation where she can "prink up" without fear of censure. It was hard indeed to distinguish the servant from the mistress. "I remember," adds Defoe, "I was once put very much to the blush, being at a friend's house, and by him required to salute the ladies, I kissed the chamber-jade into the bargain, for she was as well dressed as the best. But I was soon undeceived by a general titter, which gave me the utmost concern; nor can I believe myself the only person who has made such a mistake." What a predicament for a punctilious gentleman to find himself in!

In the reign of Charles II., too, lace handkerchiefs were the fashion. "Lost," reads an advertisement of 1672, "a lawn pocket handkercher with a broad hem, laced round with a fine Point lace about four fingers broad."² When the emotional heroine of an old novel, *The Garden of Love*,³ shed tears "which trickled down her sorrowful cheeks," one might suppose that the

¹ *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*, 1725.

² *London Gazette*, Dec. 5-9, 1672.

³ P. 58.

next step would be to sop them up with what she called her "pocket handkercher." Not at all, for we are informed that she then (out of respect, one supposes, for its edging of Point lace) "immediately dried them, with fanning wind in her face to enliven her spirits." But handkerchiefs, laced or plain, did have their uses, for if an attractive young lady chanced to leave the casement of her window open, one of her admirers would be sure to fling in a knotted handkerchief full of sweetmeats.

But not only were gloves, shoes, and handkerchiefs set off with lace, garters were also bewitchingly adorned; and in order that the graces of the last should not be hidden from an unhappy public, the lady very compassionately arranged that the garter should have "long fluttering ends of ribbon"¹ which allowed the lace on it to peep out beneath her petticoat.² Where there's a will there's a way.

¹ See Ben Jonson: *The Devil is an Ass*.

² The petticoat was, of course, in those days an outside garment.

CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD EXODUS

Reign of James II. (See Map, Plate 11.)
1685—1689

As we have seen, Henry IV. of France signed in 1598 the Edict of Nantes which gave freedom of religion to the Huguenots. For long the Jesuits had plotted and schemed in order to lead Louis XIV. to persecute the Huguenots. They partially attained their ends as early as 1682, and at last on 22nd October, 1685, they succeeded in inducing him to revoke the Edict of Nantes.¹ But it pleased God to bring great good out of the evil, for tens of thousands of persons, many of whom were skilled lace-makers, flocked from Burgundy and Normandy into England, most of the lace-makers finding their way to the lace towns and villages of Bucks, Beds and Northants. The sufferings of these poor people were frightful. Some fled by land and, by a miracle as it were, escaping the vigilance of the dragoons and police, crossed the frontier into Germany and the Low Countries. Others escaped by sea, putting out

24. The
Revocation
of the Edict
of Nantes.
1685.

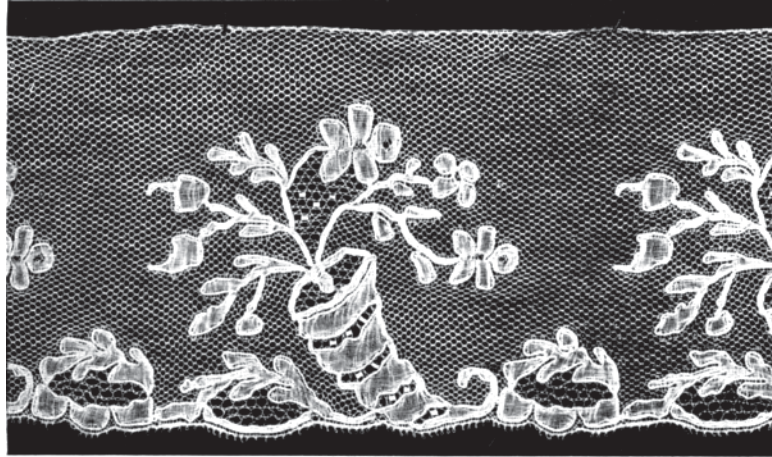
¹ See *The Huguenots*, by Samuel Smiles, p. 183.

from Havre, Nantes, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux in trading ships, shallops, fishing smacks, open boats—"any wretched werry." The masters of merchant vessels hid them under bales of goods, in heaps of coals, or in empty casks where they had only the bung-hole to breathe through. Some of the girls and women disfigured their faces with dyes, and feigned sickness, dumbness and even insanity. Some disguised themselves as lacqueys. Some died in the passage; others were landed with wounded skins, but with whole and merry consciences, at Southampton, Dartmouth and Plymouth. Many of their Catholic fellow-countrymen pitied their fate and helped them to escape, but at great risks to themselves, for any man who was caught succouring these unhappy people was sent to the galleys, and any woman was shaved and imprisoned. The Huguenot churches were demolished; their pastors when taken were immediately executed, their flocks were harried and hunted like wild beasts. But faith upheld them, that wondrous power—"stronger than any hellebore"¹—which deprives the prison of its solitariness, the stake of its horrors.

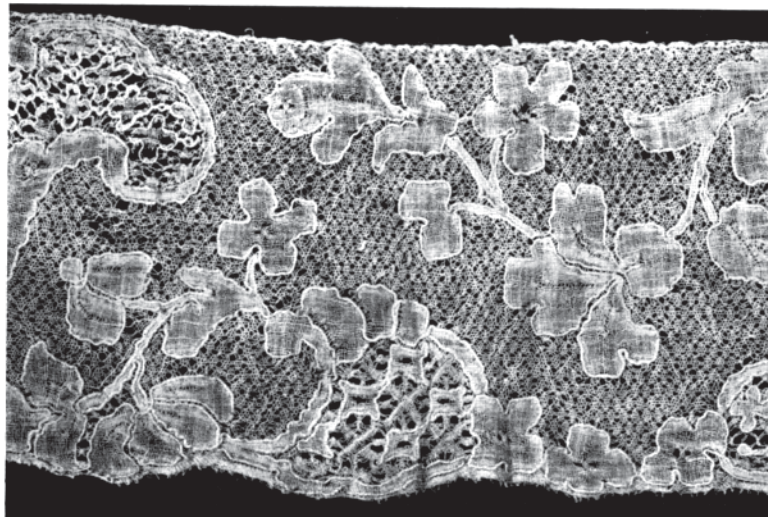
One woman, who carried with her a little casket of jewels—her sole fortune—no sooner reached the British shore than she threw herself down and passionately kissed the ground, exclaim-

¹ Samuel Ward, the Puritan divine. The roots of hellebore were considered effectual against melancholy and madness.

Plate 12

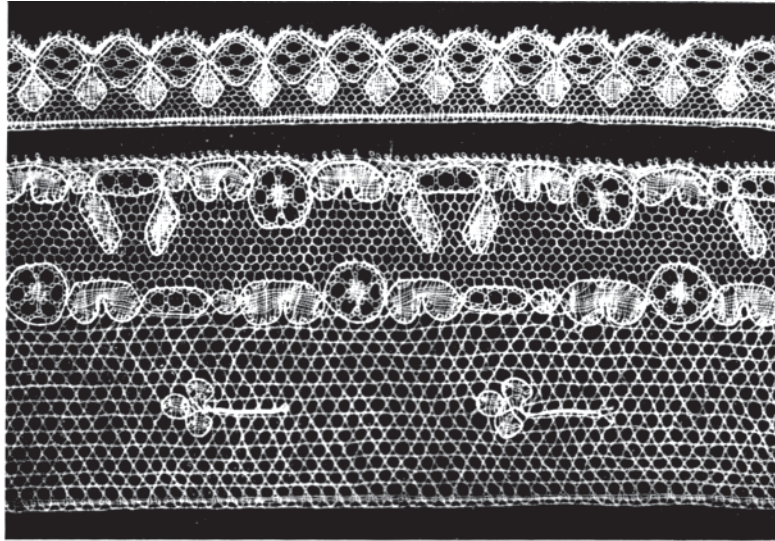


MECHLIN PILLOW LACE. See p. 15.
Victoria and Albert Museum. (*By permission of the Authorities.*)



MECHLIN LACE, MADE AT CHESHAM, BUCKS.
The broad pattern was found on the pillow of Mrs. Suthery, who died in 1814. See p. 74.
(*Lent by Mrs. Howe of Chesham.*)

Plate 13



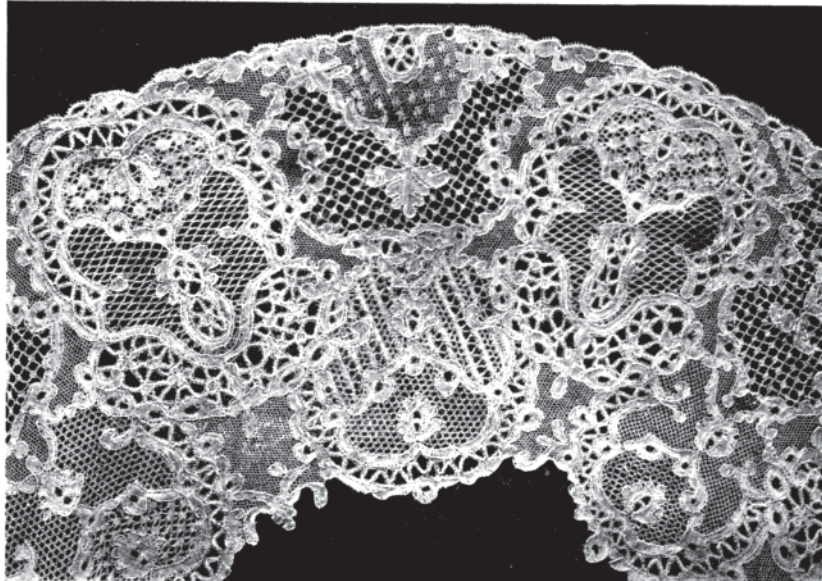
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POINT LACES.

Upper : THE DUKE'S GARTER. Made at East Haddon.

Lower : REVOLUTION LACE. See p. 212.

Headside : Point Ground. Footside : Wire Ground (Kat Stitch).

This lace seems to have been first made in England after the French Revolution of 1789.



PART OF A COPE.

(Lent by Miss Pope.)

ing: "Have I at last attained my wishes? Gracious God, I thank Thee for this deliverance from a tyranny exercised over my conscience, and for placing me where Thou alone art to reign over it by Thy Word, till I shall finally lay down my head upon this beloved earth!" What a compliment to her adopted country!

Most of the emigrants, however, came ashore hungering and in rags. The English people crowded round them with indignant and pitying hearts. They gave them a cheery welcome, received them into their dwellings and handsomely relieved their wants. The clergy in many towns made collections for them; for example under date 16 Feb., 1682, we find in the register of Clifton Reynes near Olney, "collected for the French Protestants £2 10 0," and another collection for the same purpose was made in 1686.

By their skill, their intelligence, and their industry the emigrants richly repaid this country for her hospitality. There was scarcely a branch of trade but at once felt the beneficial effects of this large influx of experienced workers. Speaking of the lace industry in reference to this exodus Defoe¹ observes that the people "are wonderfully exercised and improved within these few years past."

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the making not only of a number of English towns

¹ *Tour*, 1724—27.

but also of Berlin and other German cities, for the skilled workmen who quitted France carried with them into the neighbouring countries their trade secrets as well as their money. "What can I do to show my gratitude to you?" said on one occasion Louis XV. to Frederick the Great. "Promulgate a second Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," was the arch reply.

If the reign of Charles II. was the age of the lace collar, that of James II. was the age of the lace cravat. (See Plate 9.) Discarding their own hair, men had taken to flowing wigs with long curls that completely hid the greater part of the collar, which, in consequence, gave place to the cravat. James himself led the fashion. Sir Edmund Verney,¹ on receiving some lace made at Claydon (Bucks) by the daughter of one of his tenants, at once ordered it to be made into a cravat of the latest pattern. "The Bonny Cravat" is, or was, the sign of an inn at Woodchurch, Tenterden, Kent, and the old song, "Jenny, come tie my bonny cravat," was sung on festive occasions.

While the gentleman's lace collar shrank into the narrow cravat, the ladies' lace cap, which had flourished particularly in the reign of Charles II., took upon itself new proportions. The change had its origin in a pretty incident. The frail, but

¹ *Memoirs of the Verney Family*, Vol. IV., p. 213.

25. The
Lace Cravat
and the
Fontange.

beautiful, Duchesse de Fontanges,¹ when out hunting one day with Louis XIV. and his court, discovering that her hair was in disorder, hastily tied it above her head with a ribbon. She looked so charming in this impromptu coiffure, that her royal lover begged her to continue to wear her hair so arranged. The ladies of the court followed suit; but one thing led to another. Instead of leaving "well" alone, the ladies took to massing their hair in curls over a wire frame; lace was added to the ribbon, and lace to lace, and shooting up and shooting up, the confection became at last the enormous and unbecoming Fontange. If a lady, wearing a Fontange twelve inches high, met another with a similar head-dress a couple of inches higher, she fell into the mood of Job and lamented the day wherein she was born.

This wonderful confection — this Tower of Babel — appears in the portraits by Sir Godfrey Kneller and other artists of the reign of James II. The only persons it really suited were that monarch's ugly mistresses, whom he took to, according to his brother Charles, by way of penance. Them no head-dress could injure.

Roxana, the heroine of Defoe's story of that title, wore upon her head "a suit of lace worth two hundred pounds" — "bone lace," as we judge

¹ Marie Angélique Scorraille de Roussillé, Duchesse de Fontanges. Born 1661, died 1681.

from the *Spectator*, No. 98,¹ being meant. The nobleman, her admirer, said he liked to see “a fine laced head” and “everything suitable.” In the number of the *Spectator* just cited Addison (it was the year 1711) observed amusingly of the Fontange, or commode, as latterly it was called: “There is not so variable a thing in nature as a Lady’s Head-dress. About ten years ago it shot up to a very great height, insomuch that the Female Part of our Species were much taller than the Men. The women were of such an enormous Stature, that we appeared as Grasshoppers before them.” The fashion of wearing the Fontange also spread to Germany, and Lady M. W. Montagu, writing home² from that country, observes: “The person is so much lost between head-dress and petticoat” that it would be well if the ladies had written on their backs for the information of travellers: “This is a woman.”

¹ 22 June, 1711.

² 17 Nov., 1716.

CHAPTER IX

BUCKS POINT

As we have already said, the laces made in Bucks, Beds, and Northants, immediately after the arrival of the Flemish and Huguenot refugees, were mainly Old Flemish¹ (produced by workers from Mechlin) and Lille. Mrs. Palliser, whose *History of Lace* appeared in 1875, tells us that she received a number of the Old Flemish patterns from Mrs. Bell of Newport Pagnell, who could trace them as far back as 1780; and she describes these patterns as wavy and graceful, the ground being well executed.²

She further says that the next in antiquity is a lace of Flemish design with the fine Brussels ground, and observes that many of the earlier patterns appear to have been run or worked in with the needle on the net.

These remarks are interesting, for they show first, that the earliest laces made by the Continental settlers were Old Flemish; and secondly, that these laces continued to be made for a time

¹ All Old Flemish laces were, previous to 1665, called Malines (Mechlin) by the French.

² P. 384.

in Buckinghamshire after the inception—and indeed after the firm establishment—of Bucks Point. Now comes the deeply interesting question: When was Bucks Point first made? It is adapted, as we know, from the laces of Lille and Mechlin. As we have already observed, Lille as a continental lace is mentioned as early as 1582, and Mechlin about 1630. Assuming (as is probable) that these laces were then in general demand, we may place the inception of Lille at considerably earlier than 1582, and of Mechlin at considerably earlier than 1630. Indeed, we may safely assume that Lille was made before the Second Exodus (1572), and Mechlin as early as the reign of our Queen Elizabeth. Bucks Point is any English-made lace with the Lille ground, and the Lille or Mechlin pattern. Like other history, that of Bucks Point emerges out of the mist of tradition. Some years ago, an old woman at Shutlanger, Northants, was busy upon a piece of the very beautiful Bucks Point, which is called Queen Elizabeth Lace (see Plate 7), and she informed Mrs. Harrison (wife of the Rev. J. B. Harrison of Paulerspury) that according to tradition it was made for Queen Elizabeth during one of her visits to the county. Examination of our illustration will show that it is a lace with a Lille ground (the mesh being of two sizes) sprinkled with *dots* (*plaits*, *leadworks* or *points d'esprit* as they are called), and that it has a Mechlin pattern,

honeycomb fillings and an almost straight edge. The three facts educible are, (1) that the pattern is very old; (2) that it bears resemblances to the patterns of the earliest known Mechlin laces; (3) that the lace was spoken of in the early 19th century as Elizabethan lace.

The Bucks Point Stocking fronts which figure on Plate 7 may also have been from an Elizabethan parchment. From tradition and conjecture we pass to history and actual knowledge. Whether the "Great Bone Lace" and "Little Bone Lace" purchased by Anne of Denmark at Winchester in 1603¹ was or was not Bucks Point cannot be decided, but Mr. George Smith of Olney, who is a lace-designer and the successor of a lace-designer, possesses an acorn-patterned parchment, prepared for a flounce, which certainly dates from the 17th Century (Plate 17). It was given in 1857 to Mr. Smith by an Olney woman who was then eighty, and it had belonged to her grandmother.

As will be noticed from our illustration, the Acorn Flounce,² instead of exhibiting the crude-

¹ See Chapter 6, Section 17.

² The flounce seems to have come in with William III. and Mary, when the ladies, in Addison's words, were "flounced and furbelowed from head to foot." *Spectator*, No. 129. Addison is writing in 1711 of a lady who was at least ten years behind-hand in her dress; that is, in the mode of William III.

The flounce indeed engaged the ladies' minds by night as well as by day, for says Pope:

"Nay, oft, in dreams, invention we bestow
To change a flounce or add a furbelow."

Rape of the Lock, 1711.

ness that might be looked for in the infancy of an industry, is of a most elaborate design. It is magnificent in style and accurate in workmanship. If its grandeur is noticeable, so also is its simplicity. Moreover, it is just the design one would expect in a Jacobite, Show-your-oak Period. Apparently, an Englishman designed it. The Huguenot workers who came over from the Continent in 1685 may have used it. This parchment must be one of the earliest Bucks Point specimens in existence.

The next piece of evidence is a draught of very lovely pattern used, according to Mr. Smith about 1700, that is, in the reign of William III. The rose of England is united with a row of conventional Dutch tulips. (See Plate 16.) Instead of showing your oak it became the fashion to flaunt your tulip; and the lace-makers, who were Orange to a woman, were most happy to comply. Miss Burrowes, of Maids Morton, tells us that many of the Bucks Point designs used in her neighbourhood are the same as those of the time of William III. and Anne, and the Acorn and the Tulip patterns (see Plate 14) have always been favourites. There is indeed almost as much history in a yard of Buckinghamshire Lace—even if made only last week—as in a venerable Buckinghamshire Church. It is possible then that Bucks Point was recognised as a distinct lace under Queen Elizabeth, it is probable that it was made

to some extent in the reign of James I., and it is certain that it was firmly established in the reigns of James II. and William III.

Mr. A. A. Carnes, of Bedford, has a Lace-maker's ledger dated 1778 with patterns of the period, which are evidently the patterns referred to in the various entries, pinned into it. The grounds of those attached to the earlier entries are either Point or Honeycomb, and a few pages later we come upon other grounds, including Wire, Chain-stitch, Four-pins-and-plaits, and Chain-and-plaits. Sometimes Wire, Honeycomb, Plait and Chain-stitch are all in one pattern.

This ledger is evidence that the industry was in 1778 not in its infancy, as some have alleged, but in its maturity. It may be noted in passing that one way of telling whether a lace is old or not is to notice the gimp, the sheen or polish on which is far more distinct in old lace than in later specimens.

I have been thus careful in marshalling these facts because Mr. John Ramsay M'Culloch, in his *Dictionary of Commerce* (1832),¹ makes the absurd statement that Bucks Point was introduced in 1778—a statement that has been followed by many others who have written on the subject of Lace.

I said that Bucks Point is any lace made in England with the Lille ground and the Lille or

¹ Mr. M'Culloch died in 1864.

Mechlin pattern. In Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire fine and very beautiful lace, of which the design was entirely Mechlin, was made until about 1700, but gradually the workers discarded it in favour of the Lille. Among our illustrations (see Plate 12) is a specimen of Mechlin, made at Chesham in Bucks, by Mrs. George Sutthery,¹ seven yards of which were found on her lace pillow after her death in 1814. It has the familiar Mechlin scroll work and quatre-foil ornaments.

Northamptonshire seems to have favoured the Lille from the first, while Buckinghamshire preferred the Lille ground (sprinkled with square dots) and the Mechlin pattern. Consequently, the Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire laces were straight in the edge and had more gimp, and were stiffer in pattern than the Buckinghamshire variety, the designs of which have more floral and scroll work as well as more cloth-work; and these characteristics of the different counties prevailed until about 1850, when, as we shall see, the introduction of new floral designs from Paris into Bedfordshire considerably altered the character of the Bedfordshire fabric. Even to-day, however, as regards Point Lace, the characteristics above mentioned mark to some extent the various counties.²

¹ Mrs. Sutthery, who was born in 1750, was grandmother of the late Rev. Wm. Sutthery of Clifton Reynes, Bucks (1828—1895).

² To put matters concisely, and to save the reader from turning back,

As the ground of Bucks Point is like that of Lille, it is made of two threads only, and these simply crossed, not plaited at their junction; consequently (as in the case of Lille), if the threads at crossing are drawn tightly the mesh looks square, but as a rule they are left loose, producing a hexagonal appearance.

The firmer and stronger kinds of Bucks Point are reminiscent of Arras Lace, which, as already stated, differed from that of Lille only in texture. The Mechlin influence in Bucks Point is often seen (1) in its dainty, flowing patterns of sprays and flowers, each outlined with gimp; (2) in the roses and other flowers worked into the ground along with, or instead of, the square plaits; and (3) in the fact that the various shaped "openings" in the pattern are sometimes found filled with a smaller mesh, and occasionally with a larger mesh.

The Lille influence in Bucks Point is often seen

the following are the salient characteristics of the Lille and Mechlin Laces:—

Lille ground.—The sides of the mesh are formed by twisting two threads round each other. It is a square mesh, but as generally worked it looks hexagonal. It is "the finest, lightest, most transparent of grounds." Nobody can mistake it.

Mechlin ground.—The mesh, which is hexagonal, consists of four twisted and two plaited sides, the plaited sides being shorter than those of Brussels.

Lille designs have more gimp than Mechlin, and they are simpler and stiffer—more formal.

Mechlin designs have more floral and scroll-work, and more cloth-work than Lille.

Lille Lace generally had a straight edge.

(1) in the fact that the net (with its square dots) is all on the foot-side of the pattern (whereas in Mechlin the net approaches the border, and the pattern occurs at intervals), and (2) in the fact that it often has no cloth-work—only gimp.

Bucks Point, as we have already more than once said, is any English-made lace with the Lille ground, and the Lille or Mechlin pattern. Sometimes the whole of the lace, with the exception of the pattern, consists of point net, the meshes of which are all of one size; but more frequently, while most of the foot-side is point net, the fillings—that is to say, the spaces formed by the pattern—are point net of larger mesh, wire ground, honeycomb, mayflower¹ (that is, cloth-work buds surrounded with honeycomb), or some other fancy. Again, the head-side may be point net and the foot-side wire ground, or the head-side honeycomb and the foot-side point net; and there are other arrangements.

The fillings in Bucks Point are charming beyond description. Instead of spending myself in attempting to convey in mere words some idea of their beauty, I will ask the reader to turn to the many plates in which they are represented. All honour to the designers of Bucks, Beds, and Northants, to whom we are indebted for these lovely

¹ This filling bears some resemblance to the French *Oeil de perdrix* (Partridge's Eye).

lattices through which, by the seeing eye, some glimpses may be discerned of the artist's heaven ; and for the dainty ladders and stairways which enable us to reach it. They are oriental and un-English, just as the goldfinch with its rich, its vivid colours is oriental and un-English ; and yet that gorgeous bird is very much at home in a British hedgerow. Although we show many beautiful fillings, it is probable that careful examination of old parchments would bring others to light.

We have already spoken of dots, leadworks, or *points d'esprit*, in the net ground. Diamonds of half-stitch (as for example, in some of the specimens in the Foddy collection in the Northampton Museum) and other ornaments also occur.

Now and again one comes across eccentricities in the way of Midland lace. Mrs. Wilkinson of Northampton, for example, showed me a piece, made on her own pillow, which consisted of net with square meshes ; and lace, of which the entire net is wire ground or honeycomb, has occasionally been made to suit the caprice of some whimsical patron.

Most of the old writers speak of Olney as being the centre of the Bucks Point Lace industry. Thomas Fuller, as we have noticed, speaks as early as 1640 about much bone lace being made about "Ouldney." Defoe who made his Tours (as I show in my *Life of Daniel Defoe*) in 1684 and published his account of them in 1724, refers to the

same industry in connection with "Ouldney," and Lysons (1806—1822) tells us that the lace manufacture was then carried on to a great extent in the town and neighbourhood, veils and other lace of the finer sorts being made.

Of all the laces made in England none can compare with the beautifully designed and delicate Bucks Point. Fine as a mist, and exquisite beyond dreams, it has for generations adorned the ivory neck and the finely chiselled arm of British beauty. Dresses have been trimmed with it, hats adorned with it, handkerchiefs deeply bordered with it. To countless other purposes it has been devoted. The choicer and finer kinds spun out of the soul of the Bucks workers are handed down from one generation to another as heirlooms. Some proud owners have said, "We would rather have it than diamonds."

On many of the favourite patterns the workers have affectionately bestowed names, some of which have interesting associations. To the *Acorn* and the *Tulip* (Plate 14) we have already referred. Another wide lace is the *Bell* (Plate 42). The *Duke's Garter* reminds us of the one and only Duke to whom it could refer—him of Buckingham and Chandos, at the time Stowe was in its glory, and emperors, kings, and statesmen were his guests; and in honour of whom could the *Queen's Garter* have been made if not of that

28. Names
of Bucks
Point Laces.

Queen whom he there entertained so splendidly—
Queen Victoria!

What is the *Great Running River* with its perpetual meanderings but the cool, silver Ouse with the snow-white *Swan* on its bosom! What is the *Little Running River* but the laughing, babbling Lovat! And where else would we look for the *Water Lily*,¹ perfect in beauty! The *Seven Diamonds* are surely the seven wives, “all maidens,” of John Carroll,² the irreproachable Olney Bluebeard.

Buckinghamshire and honey are inseparable. The lace-makers who made the Honeycomb ground made also the *Beehive* lace (Plate 42) and, as we shall see, when the honey was drained from the combs, the residue became their favourite drink—metheglin. *Pretty Dick* sings in the hedgerows, *Lovers' Knots*³ are carved on trees; and the lovers walk among the *Barley*—George or Jacob with *Lavinia*, *Matilda*, *Agnes* and the rest of the village belles—the talk being naturally of the *Ring* (Plate 41)⁴ which George will give to Lavinia and which perhaps, and probably in imagination only, is to have a *Pearl*⁵ or a *Diamond* in it; while some-

¹ Mrs. Atkins of Paulerspury was, at the time I called in May, 1917, making a lace in which the water lily was repeated.

² He died 21 July, 1704. The names of two of his wives, Frances and Anne, occur in the parish register.

³ The Lovers' Knot is a Northants name.

⁴ There is the *Little Ring* and the *Big Ring*.

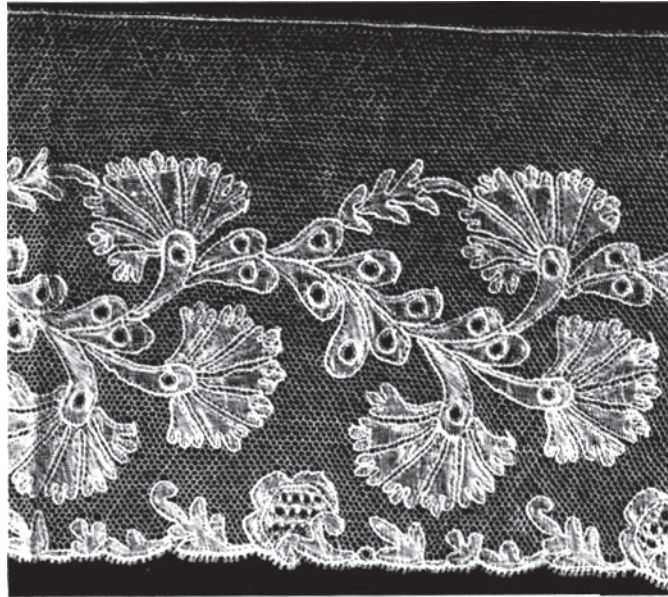
⁵ The Pearl is the narrowest of laces, “consisting merely of turn-pin and foot-pin.” Ladies use it to edge their netting.

times the fancy extends even to a *Diamond and Chain* (Plate 37), or to the *Watch*¹ which Lavinia will give to George. On their wedding day the *Wedding Bells* (Plate 42) will ring, and then George and Lavinia will settle down in a picturesque thatched cottage situated in a wood or in some sequestered village on a by-road, with the pretty name of Newton Blossomville, Weston Underwood, Lillingstone Dayrell, Maids Morton, Moreton Pinkeney or Clifton Reynes—to mention a few out of many. Their garden will be sweet with the smell of the *Primrose*, the *Rose* (Plate 41) and the *Honeysuckle*, rich with the purple of the *Pansy*,² and gorgeous with the red of the *Tulip* (Plate 14) and the orange of the *Marigold*. It will have a patty-pan bed for *Carnations* (Plate 14), a corner for *Solomon's Seal*, and a rustic arch for *Convolvulus*. On Sundays they will attend the picturesque village church or the neat and unpretentious village chapel, and the preacher will tell them to walk, not in the *Zigzag* road (Plate 49) that leads to destruction, but in the *Narrow Way*³ that leads to life eternal, and he will speak of the *Crown* (Plate 49) that awaits them at the journey's end. As years go on a little family will gather about them, and the children will roam in the field to gather the *Daisy* and the *Cornflower*, or to chase the

^{1 2} "Old designs pricked on horn parchment."—Miss Burrowes.

³ The *Narrow Way* and the *Wide Way* are varieties of the *Running River*.

Plate 14

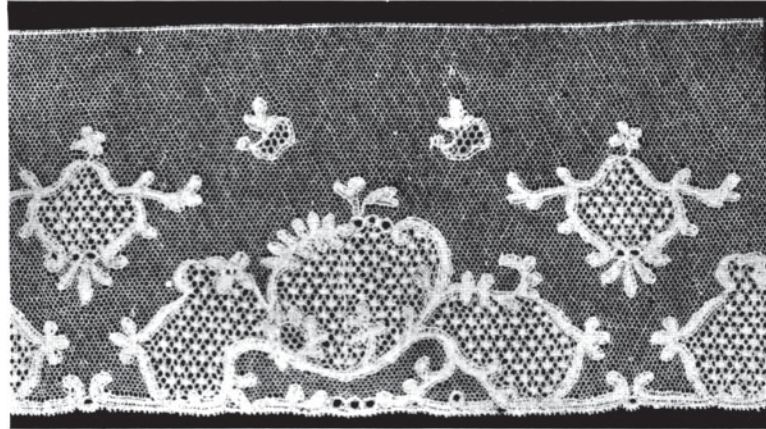


CARNATION LACE. See p. 80.

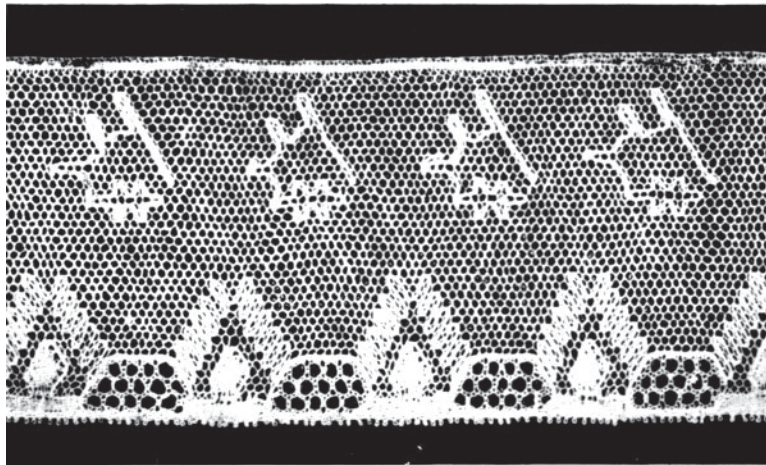


WIDE TULIP. See p. 80.

Plate 15



BUCKS POINT. Made at Akelev. Width $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches.



BUCKS POINT. Made at Akelev. Width $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Butterfly, or raid the spinney in search of a *Bunch of Nuts*.¹ If the weather is wet they will play at home with the *Kitten*,² which rubs against them and purrs softly, the *Ball*, the *Ninepin*, or the *Sea Shell* (Plate 37), while the grandmother watches them admiringly from the chimney corner through *Spectacles* with circular eye-pieces. In their hat they will wear a feather from the *Peacock's Tail* (Plate 5), a gift from the gardener at the Hall.

For supper George and Lavinia have *Cucumber and Onions*, a dish of which George partakes too freely, with the result that he has a terrible nightmare in which a *Cat's Face* glares at him. Of course they keep a pig, and their affection for it leads them to call one pattern the *Hog's Nose*; and on the Lace-makers' Holiday, Tanders Day, of which we shall in a subsequent chapter speak, nothing tended so much to make them gay as the notes of the *Fiddle*.³ It will be observed that the lace-makers have embodied their joys, but none of their sorrows, in the names of the laces. Their attitude to the sorrows may be gauged by the remark made to me by Hannah Perkins, a deaf and almost blind old lady of Weston Underwood, whose lace-making days were done. "Ah," she said, "if we had no sorrows down here we should

¹ This is a South Bucks name. The pattern, three circles arranged pyramid fashion, differs little from the Northants *True Lovers' Knot*.

² Sometimes called *Fanny*.

³ An insertion.

have" (and she pointed upward) "no joys up there;" and "up there" the good soul has since gone. But to return to the laces and their names. One is *Gretchen*. Who was she? Did she find her way here in one of the early Exoduses or is she a modern importation? And *Aimé*? Did she come over in one of those beer barrels that we spoke of in an early chapter, with her mouth glued to the bung-hole! And was *Noyen* her native place? And who was *Patience*, if she was not some demure Puritan girl who put on lace when her mother was not looking? But perhaps she stepped out of the "Pilgrim's Progress." The *Fan*¹ carries us into the 18th century, and *Dinah*² to the days when (in 1851) English girls dropped hot tears over the moving pages of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Then there were narrow insertions called the *Plait*, the *Single Button Hole*, and the *Double Button Hole*. The *Twink* was a narrow lace which "the men made." They preferred it "because" (lazy creatures!) "they could soon do a cut off."

Other patterns were the *Prince of Wales's Feathers*, the narrow *Lady Denbigh* (made some seventy years ago), the *Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock*,³ also called *Emblem Lace*, the *Spider*, the *Fuchsia*, the *Ivy Leaf*, the *Kidney Bean*, the *Acorn and Thistle*, the *Anchor*, the *Ivy Leaf*, the

¹ There is also *The Fan and Diamond*.

² This lace is said to have been named after a Paulerspury worker, Dinah Lucas.

³ For description of draught see Chapter 15, Section 64.

Kidney Pattern, and the *Spot* (in five widths), the narrowest of which had one plait in the net ground, and the widest five plaits.¹ But the most delightful name of all is surely the *Old Woman of Cosgrove*—Cosgrove being the Northants village (near Stony Stratford) where, it seems, “the moon changes in a barn.” The named parchment of this lace was found by Mr. A. A. Carnes among the collection of the late Mr. Coombs of Bedford. Who the old woman of Cosgrove was, or why the lace was so named, is unknown. Was she some centenarian, or some Cosgrove oddity? Is there a connection between her and Barbara, wife of William Bradshawe (ob. 1595), to whose memory there is a venerable brass in Cosgrove Church? History is mute.

Another charming name for a lace was the *Box of Knowledge*.² Who would not possess it? *Fremantle* is, of course, the family name of Lord Cottesloe. The ancient pattern called the *Wheat-ear and Cornflower* (Plate 49) is still made by some workers in the Winslow district.

To the “Bone Lace” industry in the 18th and early 19th centuries there is much reference in Book and Newspaper. Defoe, writing in 1726, describes the lace “of the tradesman’s wife as having been procured from Stony Stratford,” and

¹ Mrs. Howson of Olney made many of these laces. Her little granddaughter makes the *Spot*.

² A pattern of it belongs to Mr. A. A. Carnes. It is marked “Box of Knowlidgee.”

he tells us that great business was done in baby lace, and edgings mostly used in trimming babies' caps. Owen in *Magna Britannia* (1720—31) says that more lace is thought to be made in Newport Pagnell than in any other town in England. A few years later Olney again became the leading town in the trade. Towcester was for long a centre, much lace being made at the neighbouring villages of Green's Norton and Silverstone. At Abthorpe¹ flounces and sectional pieces for covering parasols were made.

Laces of various kinds were made in the 17th century at Malmesbury and other towns in North Wilts. Downton, five miles from Salisbury, produced, and still to some extent produces, a lace with a net (locally called *bar-work*) which is similar to Bucks Point, and the Kat Stitch finds favour with the workers. Lace was also made at Blandford, Lyme Regis, Sherborne, and other Dorsetshire towns.

29. Wilts.
Dorset.
Suffolk and
Ripon Lace.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum are some specimens of Suffolk lace. They are similar to Bucks Point, the honeycomb being a favourite stitch. At Ripon, in Yorkshire, a lace derived from Lille, and therefore bearing relationship to Bucks Point, used to be made, but the industry has long been extinct.

¹ Abthorpe, as its old inn, "The Stocking Frame," still bears witness, was once a weaving village.

CHAPTER X

REIGNS OF WILLIAM III. AND ANNE

1688—1714

On 15th November, 1688, William III. landed at Torbay and rescued England from the tyranny of James II. His ablest ^{30. Steinkirk} and most trusted officers and great _{and Ruffles.} numbers of his soldiers were Huguenots, and so the people of England received an invaluable reward for their kindness to the poor refugees during the previous decade.

Changes in government were soon followed by changes in fashion. To the lace cravat succeeded another neckcloth, the "Steinkirk," an outcome of the battle of that name which took place 3rd August, 1692. The French officers, being suddenly ordered into action, and having no time to arrange their cravats in accordance with the prescribed custom of the age, knotted them hastily, and drew them through a button-hole. A passing necessity became a permanent fashion—with ladies as well as gentlemen, and not only in France but in England and other countries. The mountain in labour brought forth a mouse; this battle of the Titans produced a necktie! It is

curious that the Steinkirk should have become so popular in England, seeing that at this battle the English were beaten, though not more curious than that the ladies should have adopted the Fontange—the head-dress of the mistress of a king whom they detested. The Steinkirk was often of lace (Blandford¹ Point at £30 a yard being a favourite wear), though it was often made of other materials, and we hear of a Steinkirk edged with lace of an inflammatory green! When the Steinkirk was not passed through the button-hole, it was fastened by large oval-shaped brooches of topaz or other stones.² In either case, however, the one thing necessary was to “arrange it with a graceful carelessness,” without which it would not have been a Steinkirk, while its wearer would have been pronounced a South Sea Islander. In short, the ladies and gentlemen of this country had to look as though they had just been rushed off to battle.

Another Act for rendering more effectual the laws for preventing the importation of foreign bone laces was passed in 1698, and owing to that and to William's own steady patronage of the home industry, the lace trade in this country entered upon a new period of prosperity. Thanks to the craze for steinkirk, fontange, lace tuckers

¹ In Dorset.

² Many of these brooches have been preserved. Ladies of to-day, who sometimes wear them, may not know for what purpose they were first made.

and double sleeves, the makers were kept constantly busy.

Under Queen Anne the Acts which prevented the importation of Flanders lace were repealed, but the introduction of French lace was still forbidden. Towards the end of her reign "weeping ruffles" and laced jabots (shirt frills) became the mode. The ruffles were called "weeping" because, owing to the breadth of the lace, they fell over the hands. In weeping ruffles the beaux of the day swaggered along the Mall; in weeping ruffles the High Fliers drank, with bugloss in their wine, to the King over the water.

None was more given to these fopperies than Lord Bolingbroke, but in the rest of his attire he was so dilatory that Queen Anne once said to him, "I suppose you will some day come to court in your nightcap."

But lace was worn on everything and everywhere. The lady of the period could not possibly wait till she rose in a morning before putting it on. She must needs have it in bed, and it became the vogue for her to receive fashionable visitors before dressing.¹ On opening those eyes "which must eclipse the day," Belinda, having pushed aside the curtains of her handsomely carved four-poster, would knock with her high-heeled green shoe (green again!) to summon her maid. The feature

¹ A custom copied from the French ladies, most of whom had their *petit lever*, as it was called.

of the toilette that ensued was "a pretended negligence"—as became a Steinkirkish period. When visitors arrived the curtains, which had been closed again, were once more drawn aside, this time by the maid, when the goddess, who "breathed cinnamon" and who was supposed only at that moment to have opened those eyes that "must eclipse the day," was perceived reclining in a sea of billowy lace, with her shoulder resting on a "small laced pillow." Addison in the *Spectator*, No. 45, speaks of the custom only to condemn it, and Pope in the *Rape of the Lock* gives it a passing glance.

To stem the tide of extravagance the cry once more rose for "Moderation." Arbuthnot represents "John Bull's Mother" (as in his *History of John Bull*¹ he calls the Church of England) as avoiding both the extravagance of the Cavalier ladies and the plainness of the Puritan sisterhood. If on her hands "she wore no flaunting ruffles," neither was her head pressed by a "high crowned hat." In short, she is represented as standing for the Golden Mean.

It was quite time indeed to urge moderation, for the rage for "weeping ruffles" and "laced jabots," far from confining itself to the court and the card room, had worked down to the raffish tradesman and the "pretty valet," who was often better dressed than his master. The kings and

¹ 1712.

queens in Mrs. Salmon's Waxwork Exhibition¹ leered at one another in lace. Even some of the Quakeresses were not proof against its fascinations. Among the friends of G. A. Bellamy, the actress, whose autobiography² appeared in 1785, was "a Wet Quaker," that is, one who wore "ribands, gauzes, and laces."

In the early days of Lace-making, while the Pattern Book was made for the expert, the sampler (and the word sampler ^{31.} Samplers. means, of course, a pattern) was finding its way into the nursery and the schoolroom. The samplers from the time of Charles I. to that of William III. were worked on strips of linen a yard long, but in the time of Queen Anne they began to assume the shape with which we are most familiar. The early samplers, though consisting chiefly of embroidery patterns, also display specimens of cut and drawn work, with needle-point lace fillings in the style of reticella. Specimens, dated respectively 1643 and 1696,³ and a third,⁴ with a decorative alphabet of remarkable beauty worked in needle-point lace, are preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

¹ Near Temple Bar.

² See Vol. I, p. 48.

³ See *Catalogue of Samplers*, issued by the Museum Authorities, Plate 2.

⁴ See Ditto, Plate 5. This catalogue, priced only at sixpence, is a delightful work, and reflects great credit on the compiler, Mr. P. G. Trendell.

With the alteration in shape the cut-work and lace fillings gradually disappeared, and in place of them we are presented with that delightful world which is inhabited by Adam and Eve, squirrels, peacocks, mermaids with green hair performing their toilette in public, court beauties in red hooped petticoats who are about as tall again as the saffron houses which they inhabit, black-birds perched on trees which they could easily carry away in their beaks, all pleasantly mingled with dovecots, windmills, the alphabet from A to ampersand, and a verse from the Book of Proverbs—all done by some demure little maiden “aged seven years;” a world indeed that will ever be dear to lovers of the incongruous and the impossible. Who would not at any time during the four years of war have gladly taken a cottage in one of those idyllic, rococo gardens!

CHAPTER XI

SMUGGLING

It was the custom of the Buckinghamshire Lace-buyers, or Lace-manufacturers as they often styled themselves, to go once a week to the London Lace Markets which were held at the George Inn,¹ Aldersgate Street, and the Bull and Mouth, in St. Martin's by Aldersgate. Having sold their goods to the London milliners, they returned with a stock of thread and silk, which they gave out to their work-women to be made up according to orders. Lace Markets were also held at Newport Pagnell every Wednesday; at the Nagg's Head, Thame, once a month; and at other towns in Buckinghamshire and the neighbouring counties, lace-buyers from London being the principal purchasers.

A Decision which forced the lace-manufacturers to take out licenses as petty chapmen or hawkers caused in the year 1717 great dissatisfaction. Those living at Chipping Wycombe (High Wycombe as it is now styled) led by Ferdinando

¹ Lieut. J. L. Coales of Newport Pagnell has a letter written from Fenny Stratford, in 1765, to Mr. Wm. Atkins, Lace Merchant, The George Inn, in Aldersgate Street, London.

32. The
Bucks' Lace
Trade under
Geo. I. and
Geo. II.
The Lace Fan.

Shrimpton of Penn, who had been eight times Mayor of Chipping Wycombe, petitioned against it, but with what success is not stated.

The Lace Fan had at this period a great vogue. Fans trimmed with lace were used as early as the time of Elizabeth, but by the end of the reign of Charles I. the whole of the leaf¹ was often made of lace. The 18th century, however, was pre-eminently the age of the fan. Watteau², Pater³ and Boucher,⁴ the famous French artists, all made beautiful fans; and sometimes we meet with a lace frame containing gauze medallions on which some unknown artist had painted a pretty design. For the "sticks" wood, ivory, mother of pearl, silver, and even gold was used, and the periodicals of the time (particularly the *Spectator*) are crowded with references to this pretty toy, and to the havoc it occasioned in the masculine heart.

When workhouses were first instituted the inmates were for the most part employed in spinning, but about 1720 they exchanged the wheel for the pillow. The old Levy and other Parish Books⁵ of Olney contain numerous references to the lace made by the inmates of the Workhouse, which stood on the site now occupied by Victoria Row. Every piece of lace was sealed at the end

33. Lace-making in the Workhouses. 1720-1820.

¹ The lace before it is mounted.

² Died 1721.

³ Died 1736.

⁴ Died 1770.

⁵ The books for the years 1746, 1768, 1782, 1812, 1818, and 1819, are preserved in the Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney.

while it was on the pillow in order to prevent anyone from stealing a portion, and it was sold periodically for the benefit of the parish—the sum produced varying from £28 to £32 a year. Among the Regulations were the following :

“That if anyone in the Workhouse shall convey, take or steal either . . . lace or anything belonging to the Workhouse . . . they shall be punished as the law directs, with the utmost severity.”

“That if any person shall presume to cut off the seal affixed to the end of their lace, they shall be severely punished.”

Some items respecting Lace-making at Aylesbury Workhouse have also been preserved. Thus in 1784 the overseers entered in their accounts : “2 cloths for lace pillows and paid 4d to four girls for cutting off;” and on another occasion Mary Slade received “3s. 7d. to set up lace-making.” In 1743 the value of the bone lace made by the children in the Workhouses of the city of Dublin amounted to £160.

Moll Flanders,¹ light o’ love and pickpocket, occasionally honoured with her attention the country round the three Brickhills in Bucks :

34. Moll
Flanders.
The Coffin
Trick.

“There stand three Brickhills all of a row—
Great Brickhill, Little Brickhill, and Brickhill of
the Bow.”

¹ Defoe's novel appeared in 1722.

When she was married at Little Brickhill to her fifth husband, the bank clerk (she was very wasteful with husbands), "finding it was a lace-making town," she gave to her bridesmaid "a good suit of knots," and to the girl's mother "a piece of bone lace for a head" (a fontange), and while she was at the inn there she heard that the coaches had been "robbed at Dunstable Hill, besides some of the lace-merchants that always travel that way had been visited too." But lace being a commodity in great demand, it was often carried off, not only by highwaymen, but also by pickpockets. Moll herself, after she became an "artist," as she prettily calls it, "made a venture or two among the lace folks," and once carried off "a parcel of bone lace worth nearly £20;" but her greatest prize was when she secured three hundred pounds worth of Flanders lace, though on that occasion, aware that this variety of lace was "prohibited," she made a virtue of her peccadillo, and divided the spoil with the Custom House officer.

Moll, however, was in this line of business but a dull jade compared with numbers of persons far higher in the social scale—men and women of title—who made, by smuggling, profits of many thousands of pounds. The favourite method was the corpse trick. Somebody, it was alleged, had died on the Continent or at sea. The body was duly landed in a coffin, which was covered with

a pall and carried, followed by a procession of mourners in cloaks and hat-bands, to the nearest churchyard, where it was met by a snuffling, bewigged clergyman, reading the usual "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The coffin was lowered, and the words, "Earth to earth," were drowned in sobs which proceeded from faces buried in pocket handkerchiefs. It was a scene that would have melted the heart of a millstone. At midnight, needless to say, that grave was re-visited by the broken-hearted mourners. In most instances of this kind there was no corpse at all, but even when there was a corpse care was taken that there should be room for plenty of lace as well. When the body of Bishop Atterbury, who died in France, February 22nd, 1732, was conveyed to England for burial in Westminster Abbey, the High Sheriff of Westminster found £6,000 worth of French lace secreted in the coffin.

As time went on, however, owing to the vigilance of the Custom House officers, the trick became dangerous. Perhaps on some occasion there was too lavish a display of cambric and crape, or the sobs may have been unnaturally loud. In any case, the word went round that all coffins brought in from sea were to be opened, with the result of a sudden fall in the Continental death rate. When the body of the Duke of Devonshire was, on the 3rd of October, 1764, brought over from France where he died, the Custom House officers, not-

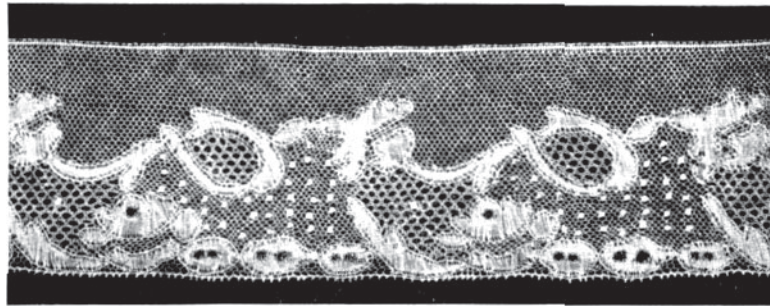
withstanding the indignant remonstrances of the family, not only opened and searched the coffin, but poked the corpse with a stick in order to see whether it was what it pretended to be, or so much *Vraie Valenciennes*.

That people were married in lace is only what might be expected. Nearly all the
 35. **Marrying, Hanging, and Burying in Lace.** laces worn by the court at the nuptials (1736) of Frederick, Prince of Wales (son of George II.), were of English manufacture. The modern reader may be startled to learn that the bride wore a "night-gown" of superb lace. But in the early 18th century it was the fashion for women to wear in the streets a night-gown, night-rail, or bedgown, as it was variously called, over the usual dress—a custom which, as may be supposed, afforded abundant food for the satirists. "On Easter Day, 22nd April, 1764," says Dr. Samuel Johnson, "I went to church [St. Clement Danes, in the Strand]. I gave a shilling; and seeing a poor girl at the sacrament¹ in a bed-gown, gave her privately a crown, though," he amusingly adds, "I saw *Hart's Hymns* in her hand."

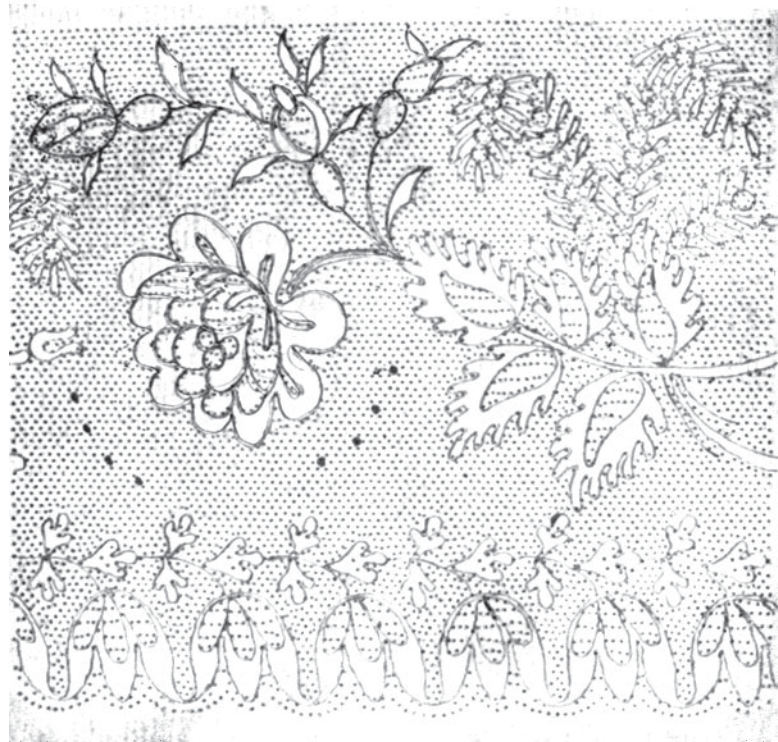
In 1750 was founded, with a view to encourage the home manufacture of lace, the Society of Anti-Gallicans, who held quarterly meetings and distributed prizes for the best work. At one of

¹ Of course, the Sacrament—"The Lord's Supper"—was in those days taken in the evening. The term "bed-gown" also occurs in Hayley's play, *The Two Connoisseurs*.

Plate 16



BUCKS POINT. Made at Great Horwood. Width 3 inches.



ROSE AND TULIP. See p. 72.

Draught of a very lovely pattern of Bucks Point Lace used about 1700 in Olney and neighbourhood.

Wherever the pattern is left blank it is whole stitch, as for example, in the outer petals and the innermost petals of the rose. The middle petals of the rose are half-stitch. They are linked together with honeycomb. The sepals of the tulip are honeycomb, the petals half-stitch. The ink lines show where the gimp is to go.

(Lent by Mr. George Smith, Olney.)

Plate 17

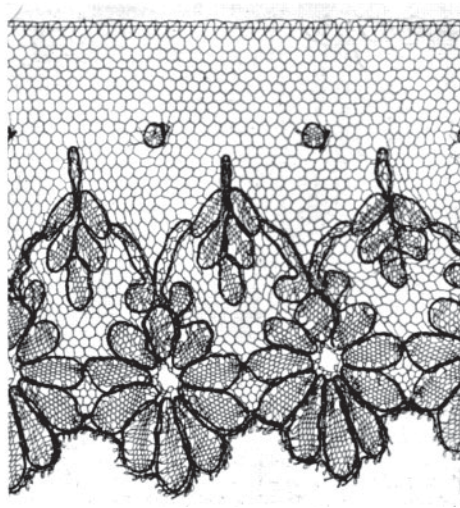


PARCHMENT OF FLOUNCE FOR A DRESS. See p. 71.

BUCKS POINT ACORN PATTERN. Date 1700, or earlier.

One of the oldest parchments of Bucks Point in existence. It was given to its present possessor, Mr. George Smith, of Olney, in 1862 by an Olney lace-maker, who was then about 80. It belonged to her grandmother.

Acorn cups, half-stitch; acorns, whole stitch; tiny fruits, 6 pins of whole stitch; circular "buds" in the ground, 8 pins of whole stitch. The ink lines show where the gimp is to go.



BLACK SILK LACE (Bucks Point). Made near Olney.
See pp. 211 & 229.

the earliest meetings, in 1752, the first prize to the maker of the best piece of English bone lace was awarded to Mr. William Marriott of Newport Pagnell. In 1761 a pair of fine lace ruffles, the output of Messrs. Milward and Company, at Newport Pagnell, was presented to George III.

The lace worn by many persons was a serious inconvenience to them, but they used to say then, as we say now, that you might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion. It mattered not how the body was incommoded provided the mind was serene. Moreover, people were martyrs to lace not only in the daytime but also at night. Lord Charles Somerset, for instance, when visiting at Wynyard's, the seat of the Earl of Londonderry, complained of not having had a wink of sleep "through sleeping in 'cambric sheets,' the Brussels Lace with which the pillows were trimmed tickling his face."

To be kept from sleeping by lace was bad enough, but to be killed by it was worse. The infant daughter of the last Duke and Duchess of Chandos was at its christening, in 1778, so loaded with lace that it collapsed. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who officiated, complimented it, as he handed it back to the nurse, on being the quietest baby he had ever held, which was probably the truth, seeing that it was dead.

For an adult, however—to die in lace was a

¹ *Creevy Papers*, 1768—1838.

privilege. From the time that James II., an exile in France, had breathed his last in a "laced night-cap," no good Jacobite peacefully gave up the ghost unless he was similarly adorned.¹

"Gentlemen of the road," as highwaymen called themselves, liked to be hanged in lace. Nor did they stand alone. Their taste was also shared by Lord Ferrers. This nobleman, who had been condemned to be hanged at Tyburn for the murder of his land-steward, chose from his wardrobe on the fatal morning (May 5th, 1760) a splendid white suit, silver embroidered, and edged with rich lace, saying, "I was married in these clothes, and I will die in them." And he did.

But people not only liked to be married in lace, bedded in lace, and executed in lace, they also liked to be buried in lace. A notable example is that of Anne Oldfield, the beautiful actress, who, when asked whether the material was to be woollen, made reply, in Pope's classic paraphrase :

"No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face ;
One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead.
And, Betty, give this cheek a little red."

Her wishes were respected, and she was buried beneath the monument of Congreve in Westminster Abbey, "in a very fine Brussels lace-head,

¹ Cf., "His night-cap bordered round with lace."
Swift's *Strephon and Chloe*.

a holland shift, and double ruffles of the same lace."

The fashion, however, soon went out. **The Lace Apron**, which had been popular from the time of Elizabeth was also doomed. Beau Nash so detested it, that he gave orders that anyone who appeared at the Assembly Room, Bath, so attired should be turned out. One day the Duchess of Queensbury ventured in wearing an apron of rich point which cost two hundred guineas. Without hesitation Nash stripped it from her, and tossed it on to one of the hinder benches among the waiting-women, with the remark, "None but abigails wear white aprons." This sally is said to have given the fashion its quietus.

About 1790, the workers in South Bucks took up the making of **Black Silk Lace**, with the view of humouring a fashion which had come over from the continent.¹ The centres of the industry were Amersham and Great Marlow, which obtained a reputation for their veils. In the Bucks County Museum, at Aylesbury, is exhibited a filmy and very beautiful veil of black silk (the gift of Lady Smyth), which was made at Princes Risborough about 1836.

In the north of the county the lace continued

¹ There was an institution in Westminster for teaching girls how to make black silk lace as early as 1775. It seems to have been both bobbin and needle.

36. The Amersham Veil and the Olney Flounce. 1790-1870.

to be chiefly of the white variety, particularly at Olney. In the beginning of the 19th century, however, we find it producing Point Ground black flounces. They were used chiefly for trimming white silk evening dresses. The white silk dress with the black Olney flouncing, which "was fine as a hair," was a striking feature in Early Victorian levees, and at other important functions. (See Plate 17.) The industry declined in the middle of the 19th century, but revived after the Franco-German War.

The *Militia Rolls*, which are lists of men chosen to serve for three or five years, as the case might be, contain, as would be expected, numerous references to persons connected with the Lace Trade. The following names occur in the Rolls of North Bucks,¹ and it will be noticed that, as in earlier days, not only women but also men made lace.

OLNEY.

1785	Jaimes Cooper.	Lace-maker.
1788	Peter Perkins.	Lace-buyer.
1788	William Sample.	Lace-man.
1788	Nathaniel Hine.	Lace-maker.

NEWPORT PAGNELL.

1785	Walter Beaty, Junr.	Lace-man.
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BRAYFIELD.

1779	Thomas Sparke.	Bobbin-maker.
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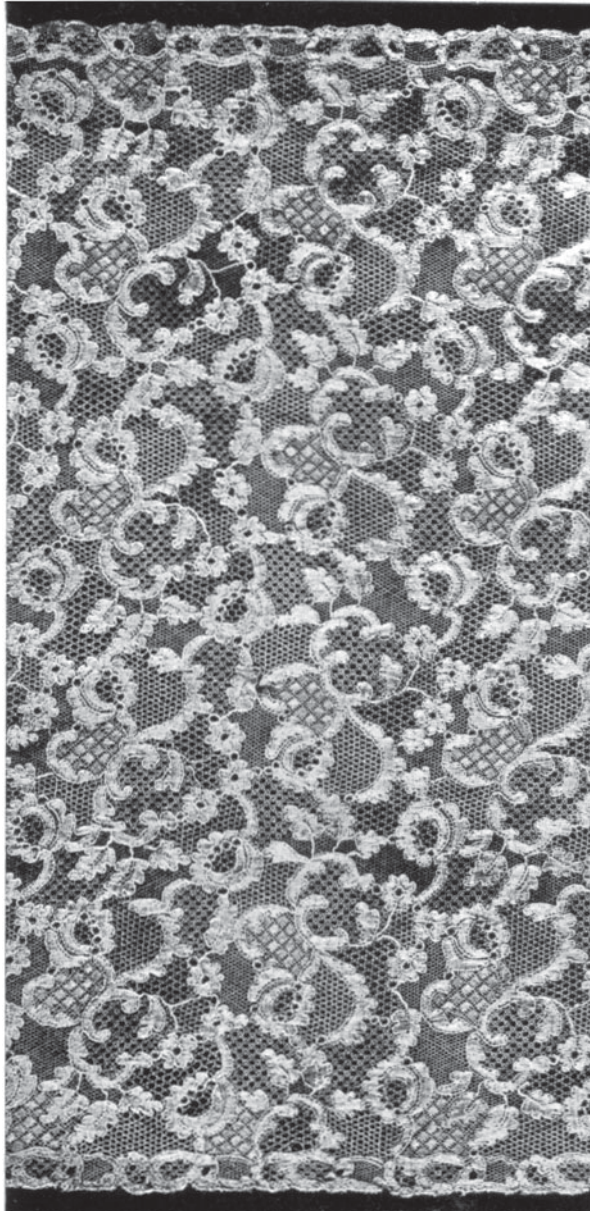
¹ In the possession of Lieut. J. L. Coales of Newport Pagnell.

Plate 18



PORTION OF A FLOUNCE OF PILLOW MADE LACE.
(BUCKS POINT.) Bucks, First Half of 19th Century.
Victoria and Albert Museum (13771). (*By permission of the Authorities.*)
Property of Baroness Kinloss.

Plate 19



SCARF OF PILLOW MADE LACE.

First Half, 19th Century.

Victoria and Albert Museum. *(By permission of the Authorities.)*

Property of Miss Best, Acton, Cheshire.

SMUGGLING.

101

EMBERTON.

1779 Charles Cooper. Lace-maker.

LAVENDON.

1785 George Osborne. Lace-man.

MOULSOE.

1788 Charles Greenwood. Lace-maker.

BROUGHTON.

1788 John Salisbury. Lace-maker.

NORTH CRAWLEY.

1803 James Cobb. Lace-maker.
William Brewer. Lace-buyer.

HANSLOPE.

1803 George Hancock. Lace-maker.

STONY STRATFORD.

1807 Edward Lever. Pin-maker.

CHAPTER XII

THE LACE SCHOOLS

Of the manners and customs of Laceland at this period we have abundance of trustworthy information. The children were taught lace-making at a lace school kept in some large room of a cottage, there being generally from twenty to thirty pupils, whose ages varied from 5 to 15. We might see them seated in several rows on four-legged stools, while in front of them are their pillows, furnished with bobbins and pins, and supported partly by the knee and partly by "the lady," as they called the three-legged pillow-horse. In some schools instead of each child having a separate "lady," a form was provided to support the pillows, and the children "sot" facing it on each side. They were very neatly dressed, with bare neck and arms, so that they could be slapped the more easily. Their hair was in plaits, lest a stray hair should fall and get worked up with the lace, and they were never allowed to touch their hair—the one great object being to keep the lace spotlessly clean. In full view of them sat, with a cane on her lap, the Argus-eyed mistress.

37. "The Pea" and "The Nine-pin."

Many mothers taught their little ones the rudiments of lace-making at home, chiefly because at the schools all the lace made the first year became the perquisite of the teacher—the “dilling”¹ being nearly always favoured in this way. Consequently, although a number of children were sent to the school at the age of five, most entered at six. The beginners—those who had not received instruction at home—were set to quite a narrow edging—the *Pea*, the *Ninepin*, the *Town Trot*, or the *Spider*. From these they would pass to the *Kidney Bean*, the *Plaited Star*,² the *Diamond and Chain*, or the *Double Ring*. The third step would be the *Spectacles*, the *Old Trot*, which consisted of eight plaits in a head, or the *Running River*. They were also taught how to “halse” the bobbins, that is, to wind the thread round them properly.

The children at first felt, to use their own expression, very “unkid”³ (and persons have been heard to say, “I’d pity a dog that was unkid”), for the work was puzzling and the teacher with her lynx-like eyes and her “long, thin, yellow fingers,” who could “read lace like a book,” was frightfully strict, especially when she was riled. But there was a little respite when the good woman went out to get her “baver.”⁴ One

¹ The youngest child, who always came in for a little extra indulgence.

² At Nash, Bucks, for example.

³ A Bucks word, meaning utterly miserable. Thus Olney people speak of “unkid weather.”

⁴ Refreshment between breakfast and dinner. The word is sometimes spelt “bever,” but in North Bucks it is always pronounced “baver.”
 “We must have weer baver” being a common expression.

worker, recalling the old days, said to me, "When I was five, my mother took me to the lace school, and gave the teacher a shilling. She learnt me for an hour, smacked my head six times, and rubbed my nose on the pin-heads." It must be admitted that the poor child had more than value for her money. The boys were "spunky"¹ and gave the teacher continual trouble. They preferred to be "hommocksing"² over fields, or sitting on the side of brook or path and "scolching"³ in the bank.

There were prizes, however, as well as penalties. If a child had been diligent, the mistress would, at the end of the year, present her with a bobbin (perhaps inscribed with her name) or a pair of pattens with iron rings, a gift which the dirty state of the old roads made very acceptable. The advice given in respect to Point Lace by a good Lavendon worker to the young people was :

" Do your stitch,
Stick your pin,
And do your stitch about it."

That is to say, you should, after sticking your pin, do a stitch without making a pin. Unless this advice is followed, the work becomes limp and will not last. Some mistresses had the interests of the children really at heart.

¹ Mettlesome.

² This word is in common use in North Bucks.

³ Sometimes spelt coalch. In Bucks pronounced "scolch."

At a school at Wootton, Beds, for example, the girls were required to read a few verses of the Bible every morning before beginning to work. At Elstow (Beds) the charge was 2d. a week for girls and 4d. for boys. The boys (as in Buckinghamshire) hated the work, and were "obstrepous,"¹ consequently the extra twopence was well earned. Another disadvantage as regards boys was, from the teacher's point of view, that as their necks and shoulders were covered up by their smocks, and their heads were too hard, there was nothing to "smack." It is possible, according to Ovid, to turn girls into boys; but when in Bedfordshire they tried to turn boys into girls, there was endless trouble. One villain, goaded by a stroke from the cane, ran out of school and dropped his pillow down the well—that classic well on Elstow Green from which John Bunyan had drunk; and another, similarly provoked, threw the whole of his apparatus into the duck pond. A third ran away to sea.

In the middle of a field called Dunsty, at Stoke Goldington, is an old ash tree, under which in summertime the girls and boys used to sit and work. They had to empty so many bobbins a day; and it is remembered that the boys, in order to lessen their labours, used to wind the thread round the bole of the tree. Of course, the trick was discovered; but boys never think of the future.

¹ Obstrepous.

At the Lace School at Spratton (Northants) the girls had to stick ten pins in a minute, or 600 in an hour; and if at the end of the day they were five pins short, they had to work for another hour. If little Mary Muskett dropped her pins, or tall Ann Warren "glined" out of "winder" at some hobbledehoy who leered at her when passing, a similar penalty followed. When a girl fell short of pins, she would go round the room singing :

" Polly or Betsy, a pin for the poor!
Give me a pin and I'll ask for no more."

There were within living memory three lace schools at Turvey, Beds, the position of one of them being indicated by a row of cottages in Nell's Lane,¹ called "The Lace Cottages." In front of them is a raised pathway, accompanied by a wooden rail and approached by stone steps. On this eminence a bevy of girls might have been seen any summer day busy with their pillows and bobbins.

Among the plans to incite the children to industry, one was to arrange them in two rows, in order to see which company could place "five score pins" in the shorter time. "The Five Score Breakings," as it was called, created great

¹ Named after the old Nell of the Tinker of Turvey. Nell's Well is nearly opposite the cottages. The Sign-board of the Tinker of Turvey, which shows all the figures referred to in the rhyme, is preserved in the Reading Room at Turvey. The rhyme runs :

" The Tinker of Turvey, his dog, and his staff,
Old Nell with her Budget, would make a man laugh."

emulation. "All hollered out" what pins they had stuck in. Two girls acted as "counters," and the side that was victorious called out triumphantly, "Fewest!" Usually, however, they counted to themselves every pin they stuck, and at every fiftieth pin they would call out the time, each endeavouring to out-do the other; but sometimes, instead of competing with one another, they raced the big hour-glass, which usually stood on the middle of the mantle-shelf. The children earned 6d. a day, and were paid at the end of every month.

In the summer-time, when the windows could be open, or when, still better, the children could sit out of doors, all went pretty well; but in winter-time their lot was a hard one. In Normandy, as we noticed, the lace-makers, in order to avoid the danger of having their work darkened by the smoke and dust from a fire, used to work over a cow shed. In Buckinghamshire the difficulty was met by the use of a **Fire Pot**, or **Dicky Pot** as it was sometimes called. These pots, which were of rough brown ware, used to be filled every morning, at the cost of a farthing, with hot wood ashes, obtained from the nearest baker's. A pot so filled would keep hot half a day or longer. When it began to cool, the insertion among the embers of the nozzle of a pair of bellows, followed by a few puffs, would revive the heat.

These pots were used not only in the lace schools, but also by the older girls and the women in their own homes; but the practice of keeping them very close to their feet was not without inconveniences. Sometimes there would be a cry of "I smell burn! Polly Nurseaw, is it you?" and Mrs. Nurseaw would hurriedly put down her pillow in order to attend to a smouldering petticoat. Notwithstanding its drawbacks, however, the fire pot was regarded almost with affection. Anyhow, it was better than a Normandy cow; and on a Sunday it was carried to church or chapel, as the case might be. The Prayer Book, the pattens, and the fire pot, never failed in winter time on Sundays to make journeys together to the Parish Church, as did *Davis's Hymn Book*,¹ the pattens, and the fire pot to the village Chapel—except when their owners were down with "seventh day ague."²

The fire pots used in the south of Bucks were called *Hot Pots* or *Chad Pots*. Unlike those of North Bucks, which were plain, those of the south had a number of little holes near the rim. The "High Buck" people³ ridiculed their southern neighbours for giving themselves the trouble to make holes that served no purpose; but no

¹ Much used in Northants in the 18th century. It was compiled by that good old fire-brand, Richard Davis, of Rothwell (1658—1714).

² A Buckinghamshire expression to account for the desire to stay at home on Sundays.

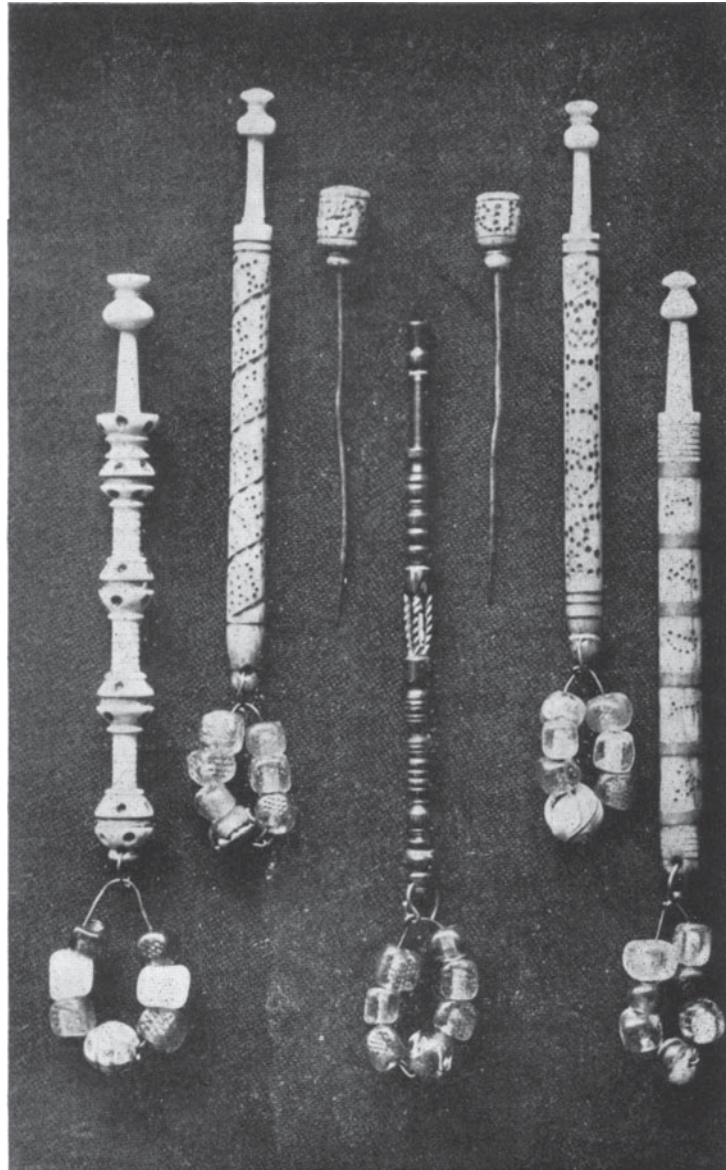
³ People of North Bucks. Cowper uses this expression in one of his letters.

Plate 20



SCARF OF PILLOW MADE LACE
First Half, 19th Century.
Victoria and Albert Museum. (*By permission of the Authorities.*)
Property of Mrs. Bousfield.

Plate 21



BOBBINS AND PINS.

Belonging to Mrs. Taylor, Huntspill Court, Bridgwater.

BOBBINS: 1. Bobbin from Paulerspury, Northants. 2. With cryptic inscription- TOB : TL : JS : EH : YB : KI : SLG : WL : DEARS : YEAR. From Paulerspury, Northants. 3. Brass "Window" Bobbin. 4. Frances Parrit, 1834. From Bedfordshire. 5. Lydia. The bands are of pewter.

PINS (from Bedfordshire): Inscribed respectively Thomas and Ruth.

southerner was ever convinced that the ashes in a chad pot could be kept in a glow without these superfluous holes. Most of the fire pots were undecorated, but others, made in "slip ware," that is, clay ornamented with colour, were extremely quaint looking. The well-to-do people in Northants went so far as to use brass fire pots, perforated round the rim; which, however, they filled with hot charcoal instead of wood ashes.

So indispensable were the fire pots that the terms, "Sitting over your pillow," and "Sitting over the fire pot," were regarded as synonymous. In Olney to this very day, when a person looks sallow and melancholy, as one does after being shut up for hours in a stuffy room, people say, "You look as if you had been sitting over a dicky pot all day." It is not surprising that there appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785 "An Essay on the Cause and Prevention of Deformity among the Lace-makers of Bucks, &c.," in which improved ventilation, among other remedies, was advocated.

To return to the lace schools, when the day's work was done, every child covered her pillow, turned her four-legged stool upside down, placed the pillow in it, and then ran off with a joyous shout. Saturday was usually a half-holiday. What a relief, after a week's work of ten or twelve hours a day, to be absolutely free for a few hours; to be able to hunt for violets in the

hedgerows, or roam the ridings,¹ racks,² and slades³ of Yardley Chase in search of primroses and wind-flowers!—to exchange the lace tell for the sough of the wind in the sycamores.

Some of the boys—for, like it or not, lace they had to make—did not lose their dexterity even when they had become men, and had exchanged the bobbin for the plough. One worker told me that when she was a little girl, and had to do so many heads of lace a day, sometimes when she was gone to bed, her father, after a hard day's work in the fields, would act Robin Goodfellow, and in the morning she would find four or five heads done for her. William Adams⁴ of Stoke Goldington used every evening, after working in the fields all day, to do a yard of *Pretty Dick*. In our illustration, an Olney Lace School (Plate 35), will be noticed among those at work an old man—Joseph Huckle—who had made lace when quite a little child.⁵

In the winter evenings the women and children used to sit and work round what was called a **Candle-stool** or **Candle-block**, a rather tall three or four-legged stool, the top or *Hole-board* of which had three, four, five or six holes in a circle near the edge, and one hole in the middle. In the

39. All
Round the
Candle
Stool.

¹ Main roads in a wood. ² Roads through a wood. ³ Dells.
⁴ He married Charlotte Warren, one of the three famous lace-making sisters mentioned in Chapter 16, Section 65.
⁵ He is still living (1919).

centre hole was a long stick—the *Nozzle*, with a socket for a tallow candle at the top and peg holes¹ through the sides, enabling it to be raised or lowered at will. In the other holes were *cups* (wooden sockets) which held inverted and securely corked flasks of “snow water;” while to prevent the flask from jarring against the cup, a circular *Flask Cushion*² made of rush was sometimes used. These flasks focused the light from the candle³ on to the pillows, after the fashion of a burning glass. Hanging round the stools were *hutches* or baskets of plaited straw or rush in which the flasks could be preserved when not in use, and the indispensable snuffers were not far away. Often there were three circles of workers round the candle-stool—whence the terms First, Second, and Third Lights; and the stools were sometimes on different levels, those nearest the flasks being the highest. On a shelf at no great distance from the candle-stool would be seen the *Tinder-box*, which was usually circular and of tin. At the bottom was the tinder (burnt rag), and above the tinder was a circular cover on which rested the flints and the iron striker. In the lid of the box was a candle holder. In order to get a light, a spark had to be struck so that it fell on to the tinder. A slip of wood tipped with sulphur having been

¹ Some nozzles had notches and a wire check.

² Miss Haynes, of the Arcade, Bedford, has one.

³ “Eights” were generally used; that is, eight to the pound.

applied to the spark, the candle could be lighted. Mr. J. S. Elliott of Bewdley has another object that was sometimes seen in the workers' cottages—a *Lace-dyeing Bottle*.

For the drawing of patterns and the pricking of parchments the designer requires, not
 40. The
 Parchments. only an artistic eye, but also skill and great patience. For five centuries this work has occupied many men of taste, genius and singleness of mind. Wonderful patterns were brought over from the Continent by the refugees of 1568, 1572 and 1685, and many patterns executed in England by our own designers are marvels of beauty.

From the 17th century those made in Olney were, as we have seen (Chapter 9), both original and delicate, but the names of the early designers are lost, unless among them were the Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Breeden and James Rogers (see page 54) referred to in 1669, the two Brierlys of a later date (see page 56), Thomas Osborne, "Lace-dealer," buried June 6th, 1763,¹ Thomas Abbott, "Lace-buyer," buried October 22nd, 1765,² Peter Perkins, mentioned as a "Lace-buyer"³ in 1788, and William Sample as a "Lace-man"⁴ in the same year.

The late 18th century and the early 19th have been called the Golden Age of Parchment Design-

^{1 2} Olney Church Register.

^{3 4} Militia Rolls. See p. 100.

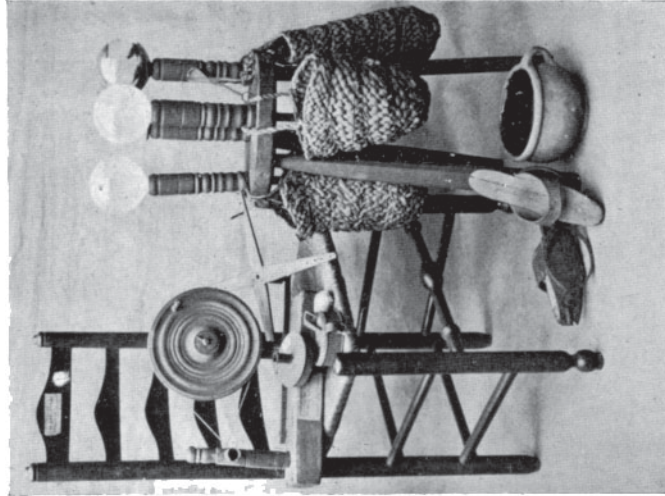
Plate 22



WILTS AND DEVON BOBBINS. See p. 176.

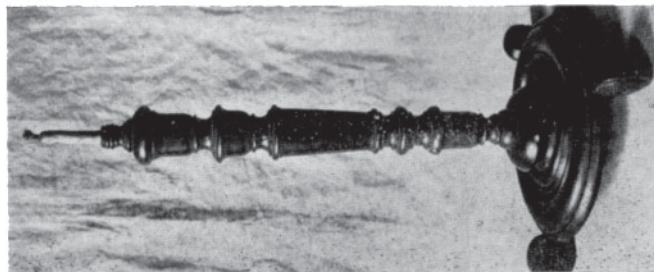
1. Old carved Downton (Wilts) Bobbin. 2. Old Honiton Bobbin from Branscombe, with red and black rings. 3. Old Honiton gimp Bobbin from Beer. Lettered in red at top—M! S † R † †. The ornamental work below is black and red alternately. 4. Old Honiton Bobbin from Beer. J A † E was married May 12, 1878. 5. Old Downton gimp Bobbin.

Plate 23



Mrs. Unwin's Bobbin-winder on chair : Tinder Box, with lid removed, on chair : Candle-stool, with flasks and hutches (rush bags) : Patters and Fire Pot.

By permission of the Trustees, Cooper and Newton Museum, Olney.



THE LACE-MAKER'S GREAT CANDLESTICK.

Described on p. 196.

Preserved in the Museum, Aylesbury.

ing, and of the Olney designers of that period two stand out as men of exceptional ability and enthusiasm—John Millward¹ of Olney, and a Mr. Harbert, whose parchments date from 1820, and who seems to have lived first at Olney, where the family had property until a few years ago, and afterwards at Woburn Sands. The Harberts are mentioned 70 times in the Olney Church Register. Some of the members of the family spelt the name Herbert.

The Millwards, who were a family of Lace-buyers and Designers, seem to have come from Newport Pagnell, where a designer of that name was carrying on business in 1761, but our knowledge of them, and indeed of all the early designers, is unfortunately nebulous. They are first heard of in Olney on October 31st, 1780, when William, son of John and Elizabeth Millard (as the name is also spelt) was christened. This "William Millard" may have been the father of the John Millward already mentioned, who designed many signed draughts dating from 1822 to 1850. Of Millward we shall have more to say later. He is the Byron of the Lace world. He was a tall, thin, sharp-featured man with a long pendulous nose. Like Byron he had a club foot, and it may be said of him too that he became famous in a night.

¹ "Millward's," or as it is generally called, "Millard's Entry," a narrow passage leading from the middle of High Street to East Street, took its name from his house, which adjoined it.

The work of Mr. Millward was continued by Mr. George Smith, who from 1870 has made very many tasteful designs. The trade at Newport Pagnell was for long in the hands of Mr. William Ayers,¹ and the principal dealer at High Wycombe was Mr. Gilbert, at one time mayor of the town.

To Rennals, 1668, and Reynoldes, 1658, of Buckingham as Lace-dealers we referred on page 57; and in the *Verney Memoirs* there is a reference to one Hartley, a lace-buyer of Buckingham, but whether any of these were designers or not is not stated. The most distinguished designer of Buckingham was Mr. E. Godfroy, usually known as "the Black Man," because he was the first to introduce black silk among the workers to be made into lace; and he is probably the "black man" riding "on a white horse" of one of the lace-tells which we shall give in a subsequent Chapter.²

Leaving Caen, in Normandy, he settled in Buckingham about 1840; and ten years later he introduced into the district first the Maltese³ and subsequently the Yak⁴ laces, and he exhibited at the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, where he won gold medals. Mr. J. Raftery joined

¹ Mr. Ayers supplied the chapter on "The Lace Trade" in Mr. F. W. Bull's *History of Newport Pagnell*.

² See Chapter 14.

³ See Chapter 16, Section 67.

⁴ See Chapter 16, Section 70.

him in his business in 1871, and subsequently succeeded him.

The Abrahams were also a distinguished family of lace designers. William Abraham,¹ who resided at Stony Stratford, and afterwards, I believe, at Emberton, worked chiefly for Mr. Joseph Foddy, who, in partnership with Mr. Kightley, traded as a lace-buyer in Abingdon Street, Northampton; and his kinsmen, Samuel and George Abraham, lived at Kempston, near Bedford.

Much of the work of these designers is beyond criticism, and our indebtedness to their originality, fecundity, and versatility has never been sufficiently acknowledged. The patterns elaborated by them are their most jewelled thoughts stereotyped in parchment, just as the work of an inspired author is the expression of his inmost soul imparted, as Blake would put it, "fearfully and tremblingly" to the printed page. They did great things, for their thoughts were hitched to the stars. In moments of ecstasy, say the old philosophers, the soul divests itself of the body. In the finest of lace, as in a precious book, we seem to come into contact with the detached soul of a great personality.

The first business of the designer is to make and prick the pattern on cardboard, and to ink the lines where the gimp is to go. This is called

¹ Information supplied by his grand-daughter, Mrs. C. Randall, Northampton.

the *draught*. Over the draught is placed a piece of transparent sheepskin¹ or calf-skin parchment which is, in its turn, pricked and inked. Without the inking the workers would, of course, be unable to trace the design. We said "transparent parchment" for some is cloudy, owing to the action of the weather at the time it was prepared, and therefore quite unfit for the purpose. The old *prickers* were of brass and quaintly fashioned—being indeed themselves little works of art, but a common needle fixed in a bobbin has often served.

The parchment, which is generally fourteen inches long, is called a *down*, and when the lace-maker has done a down she has to "set up," that is, to move the lace back to the top of the parchment—a proceeding that requires both skill and care. In Buckinghamshire, however, some workers used, instead of the one parchment, two *eaches*,² which, like the parchments, were generally fourteen inches in length, but there were "long eaches" and "short eaches," just as there were long and short parchments. By allowing one "each" to follow the other the lace-maker can go quite round the pillow and so avoid the operation

¹ Nowadays, for the making of Maltese and Torchon Laces, cardboard is often used instead of parchment, the "legs" as well as "the gimps" being inked.

² I have spelt the word "each" because it is so pronounced, rhyming with speech, but it is also spelt "eche," "eke," and "etch." We say, "I must try to eke it out." See also Chapter 14.

of "setting up"—hence the expression, "Each your parchment."¹

Shakespeare uses very beautifully this archaic and quaint word, bidding us (*Pericles*, Act III.), as life is so short, to lengthen it by giving rein to our imaginative powers :

" Be attent,
And time that is so briefly spent,
With your fine fancies quaintly² each."

That he had often watched the lace-makers at their pillows is quite certain. A single parchment that went all round the pillow was occasionally used.

Old parchments were generally provided with linen ends in order that they could more easily be secured to the pillow, and these linen ends were also called "eaches"³—hence the expression, "Sew your eaches on."

In all old laces the pattern is quickly repeated. In the mid-Victorian period a taste for "enormous heads" prevailed, and as a result the lace lost its daintiness. Of recent years a return has been made to the small heads.

Parchment used to be manufactured at Olney by a family named Grace.⁴ For long it was made

¹ Which means, put the "each" after your parchment. It also means, as will be seen a few lines further on, "Fix your parchment to the pillow by means of the linen 'each.'"

² Skilfully, ingeniously.

³ Thus the word "each" meant (1) a parchment that succeeded another parchment; (2) the linen bands at the end of a parchment. In short, anything that extends anything else is an "each."

⁴ First mentioned in the Church Register 1809. The widow of George Grace died at Newton Blossomville about 1914.

by Mr. William Cowley at Newport Pagnell, and the business is now continued by his son.

The old-fashioned pillows were almost round.

41. The
Pillow, the
Lady, and
the Lace
Chest.

Then oval or bolster-shaped pillows, with a hole at each end, came into use; and in recent years the half-pillow, which being flat-bottomed can be used on an ordinary table, has here and there found favour. In respect to the half-pillow, the parchment being fixed on a smaller and revolving pillow let into a well in the large pillow, the worker is saved the trouble of "setting up" her work again; but, of course, half-pillows cannot be used for wide patterns. The workers scornfully refer to these as "Drawing-room pillows. A new-fashioned fad. No good to us." Oxfordshire pillows differ from Bucks and Beds pillows in being "more round, and not so flat and wide."

Lace pillows, "firm as a rock," could be purchased at Olney and a few other places. At Aylesbury one family named Smith had the monopoly of making them. They were covered with Hessian canvas. On receiving the pillow, the worker, having covered it with a *pillow cloth*, which was usually of butcher blue, attached the parchment to it, pinning down the eaches (the linen ends) with *corkings*. Then sitting down to her *bobbin-winder*, with its wheel, spool, and blades, she placed the thread round the pegs of the blades, "hotched" an end of the thread on to the

head of a bobbin, held the spangle in the spool, and turned the wheel.

In the Cowper and Newton Museum at Olney is the bobbin winder used by Cowper's friend, Mrs. Unwin.¹ (See Plate 23.)

The bobbins being wound, the worker ties the threads of two of them together, and sticks in the parchment her first pin, in order to keep them in their place. She next takes another pair of bobbins and inserts her second pin, and so on. Over the front of the pillow cloth and under the bobbins she pins another cloth of stronger material called the *Worker*, which owing to the friction of the bobbins has from time to time to be renewed. The "Worker" also protects the parchment where the hands rest. In order to keep the lace on the pillow clean, she covers that portion of it from which the pins had gradually been removed with a home-spun linen or patchwork slip, called the *Draw* or *Drawter*. I have seen one with a date in bold figures—1807. Covering the whole, when the lace-maker is not at work, is the *hind-cloth* or *hiller*. A pin-cushion at the top of the pillow, a pair of tiny scissors suspended by a chain, and a *bobbin bag* with two compartments—"Empty" and "Full"—hanging at the side, usually complete the equipment; but at Bozeat and some other places it was customary to fasten

¹ Many of the bobbin winders were home-made. Mr. H. H. Armstrong of Olney still makes them.

to the left of the pillow a *Flour bag*, containing flour or starch to dry the hands of the worker.

At Stoke Goldington and other of the best lace-making villages, however, it was considered a shameful practice¹ to use flour or starch, either for the hands or to whiten (“get up”) lace² that had been soiled. If at the lace school a girl was detected at this practice, a smart slap on the bare arms or shoulder and “I’ll give you ‘get up’” was the customary sequel. The children were told that the only way to keep their lace clean was by drying their hands on a cloth kept for the purpose. In the various accessories of the pillow the workers took great pride.

Children had besides their big pillow a *Play Pillow*; that is, a pillow of their very own, at which they could work—doing such patterns as the nine-pin³—at the end of their nine-hour day. The money earned in this way they could spend as they liked. Some devoted it to taking in a child’s magazine, for the lace-makers have always been lovers of reading. Surely, however, the play-pillow idea was a mistake. Such close application must have been attended by ill results; but most of us are the victims of our virtues.

The pillow was supported, as we have already said, partly by the knee and partly by the three-

¹ Told me at Olney.

² Even in a photograph one can tell whether the lace has been “got up.” When it has been tampered with the cloth-work looks clogged.

³ Nine pins to a bead.

legged pillow horse. Of late years a bow has been added, enabling the horse to stand upright by itself, hence the terms *Single Horse* and *Bowed Horse*. Some of the bows are elaborately carved, and I have seen one with the initials, "B. H."—Bet Hinde, who once kept a lace-school at Olney. To one of the names for the pillow-horse, *The Lady*, we have already referred. Another name, *The Maid*,¹ occurs in John Askham's lines, "The Old Granddame," where we read :

" There she will sit with her pillow
Propt with a wooden maid."

A few years ago Mr. H. H. Armstrong of Olney invented a collapsible pillow-stand, the advantage of which is that it can, when not in use, be folded and put away.

In Askham's poem is a reference to another of the lace-maker's necessaries, "her brown, old-fashioned *yard-wand*," which was taken down on "Cutting-off Day."

In many homes there was one more appurtenance to the industry—the old *Lace Chest*, which had the appearance of an ordinary oak chest standing on a low table. The chest itself consisted of two parts: the upper, in which was placed the pillow when not in use, and the lower, which consisted of a drawer or drawers for holding the bobbins and patterns. A picture of a beauti-

¹ In *Judith and other Poems*, by John Askham, the Northamptonshire poet.

ful lace chest, carved with the initials, E. H., and bearing the date 1702, is given in *Point and Pillow Lace*, by "A. M. S." (Mary Sharp). As a passage in Cowper's *Task* (IV., 400) indicates, the lace chest was to be seen in even the humblest cottage in North Bucks. Speaking of the trials of the poor during a hard winter, the poet says :

" All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes but just
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet, and old carved chest from public sale."

The early brass pins made in England had a globular head of fine twisted wire made
42. Pins. separately and secured to the shank by compression from a falling block and die. Consequently the heads often came off. It was not until 1840 that the kind with solid heads now universally in use appeared on the market.

The workers liked to use pins with red waxed or beaded heads for the *Headside*¹ (or *Turnside*) of the lace, and gold wax or green beaded pins for the *Footside*. Sometimes, however, for these purposes they used pins on which were threaded six or more tiny beads of blue and white or red and white placed alternately. In North Bucks these pins are called *Limicks*, in South Bucks *Bugles*, in Beds *King Pins*, and like the other coloured pins they added greatly to the beauty of the pillow. In making limicks, after the beads had been

¹ Also called *Dykeside* if the lace has dykes.

threaded on a pin, the head of another pin (often removed, I am sorry to say, by the teeth) was threaded to prevent the beads from dropping off, so for every limick that was made one pin was wasted. As the heads of modern pins are not removable, limicks cannot now be made. Other pins were ornamented with the seeds of goose-grass—*Burheads* as they are called, which were put on over the head of the pin; not pushed up from the point. Mrs. F. Taylor of Huntspell Court, Bridgwater, has the great curiosity of two pins with bone heads, inscribed respectively, in the usual dotted fashion common to bobbins, with the names Ruth and Thomas. They were purchased twenty years ago near Brackley, Northants. (See Plate 21.)

The Olney workers, in order to time themselves, used to stick in a specially ornamented pin called the *Striver*, and they would notice how long it took before that pin was worked out again.

The Bucks Point Laces are sometimes made of Pure Irish Linen, which is sold in skeins, Number 250 being in most ^{43.} Thread. demand, though the finer Number 300 and the coarser Number 200 also find their way to the pillow.

Many workers use ordinary Lace Thread (which is, of course, cotton), sometimes called *Gassed Thread*, from the fact that it is drawn at a slow but regular pace through a flame of gas in order

to deprive it of all film. A two ounce packet contains four "parcels," and each parcel a specified number of "slips." In the case of the extremely fine "14 slip thread" there are 14 slips, in the case of the "12 slip thread" 12 slips, and so on down to "3 slip," which is the coarsest in use.¹

It may here be mentioned that the processes of the Olney method of washing lace are: (1) Stitch it round a bottle covered with flannel; (2) Place it in soapy water and gently smooth it with the hand; (3) Put the bottle on a stick in the garden, and leave the lace to bleach and "hazel."²

What, it may be asked, was done with the babies while their mothers made lace? At Gawcott, near Buckingham, there was in each cottage a *Revolving Post*, with a wooden arm to which baby children were secured, so that they could run round and round, "and thus enjoy exercise without the possibility of making their escape."³ At Olney in some cottages there were *Go-carts*, but most of the workers had recourse to the simple device of an "*Imprisoning Board*" at the door.

On the whole, the lace-maker's lot in the 18th and 19th centuries was a hard one. A year or two ago I overheard a child telling her troubles to her grandmother, an old lace-maker. "Get along with ye," was all the comfort she got, "ye don't know what troubles are!"

¹ For the thread used for Maltese and Torchon see Chapter 16.

² To dry and sweeten. This word is in common use in High Bucks.

³ *Bucks Biographies*, by Lady Verney, p. 210.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOBBINS. CATULLUS IN A SMOCK-FROCK

The Lace District of North Bucks, West Beds
44. ^{Wooden} and South Northants, is pre-eminently
^{Bobbins.} the country of beautiful bobbins. It
is but rarely that one meets with bobbins of super-
lative merit in South Bucks or the other lace
districts. Head, short neck,¹ long neck, shank
and spangle—to every part has been devoted affec-
tionate care. The materials chiefly used were
wood and bone, while some few were also made of
brass, silver, gold, pewter and even glass, and it is
asserted that ivory has been used for the purpose.

The earliest bobbins—called *Dumps* or *Bob-
tailed Bobbins*—were ordinarily of box-wood, quite
small and without spangles; and they were used
to make only the finest kinds of Bucks Point, the
thread of which would have been broken by
heavier or spangled bobbins. To these seem to
have succeeded the wooden bobbin with spangles.
Almost any close-grained wood was used. Plum

¹ The thread is first wound round the long neck and then three times,
or more, round the short neck. Honiton Trolley Bobbins have also the
two necks, but other Devonshire bobbins have only the one long neck.
All weighted bobbins require the short neck as well as the long neck.

and damson found favour owing to their darkness, and bobbins of box, ebony, rosewood, maple, spindle-wood, yew, blackthorn, may, cherry, apple, and oak are often seen. A branch from a favourite tree was sometimes utilised in this way. Historical trees, such as Gog, Magog and Cowper's Oak, all situated within a few miles of Olney, have been put under tribute. Of the wooden bobbins there were many varieties. Thus there were *Bitted Bobbins*, made of dark wood inlaid with wood of a lighter colour, which lost their popularity owing to the fact that the inlaid parts were apt to drop out; *Bedfordshire Tigers*,¹ with circles of pewter let in; *Bedfordshire Leopards*,² with spots of pewter let in; *Butterfly Bobbins*, so called from the shape of the metal mountings; *Old Maid Bobbins*, which were plain and particularly slender, and *Mother-in-Babe Bobbins*, in the hollowed shank of which a tiny wooden bobbin rattles. Sometimes instead of a tiny bobbin one finds beads or shot. *Quills* are bobbins on which the whole of the gimp from a skein is wound. They are never attached to the pillow, but the gimp is wound from them on to another bobbin called the *Trolley*, which was always surrounded with loose pewter rings called *Gingles*. The trollies used in Huntingdonshire were called *Bedfordshire Trailers*. Quills and trollies were in every cottage sixty years ago, and they are still

^{1 2} These are names given in Huntingdonshire to the bobbins of this kind made at Bedford.

used in South Bucks. In the net ground of many Point Laces appear four small plaits. The bobbins which were used to make these were distinguished by having tin bands round them, and they were called *Tallies*. Sometimes one comes across bobbins partially burnt that were rescued from Lucy Gutteridge's Lace School¹ at the time of the Great Fire of Olney, June 26th, 1854, which destroyed all the North end of the town.

When Yak lace first came in, enormous bobbins were used. These early *Yak Bobbins* were seven inches long and their heads were some four inches in circumference; but as time went on, smaller and more slender bobbins were made, until five and a half inches became the standard length.

Gold Lace Bobbins of a still later period were of plain wood and about four inches long. Like the Yak bobbins they were ugly. A variety of the gold lace bobbin is the *Cow and Calf Bobbin*, or *Jack in the Box*, the lower part of which pulls out or unscrews, and releases a miniature bobbin, also of wood. Sometimes on a tawny wooden bobbin one finds carved a girl's or a boy's name, or a date, but the material is, of course, one that does not readily lend itself to any kind of lettering.

The Rev. A. J. Roberts, Vicar of Harting, has a bobbin inscribed "Wakes Oak," made by James

¹ Nos. 86 and 88 High Street occupy the site.

Compton of Deanshanger, from the famous oak tree in Whittlebury Forest which was traditionally connected with Hereward the Wake, the last of the Saxon princes. The tree was burned down by schoolboys from Trinity School, Old Stratford, near Stony Stratford, in 1866. A Renhold bobbin inscribed (G P—F H August 26th 1813) probably commemorates an engagement or a wedding; another from the same village is lettered "Jesus weepd." A Northampton bobbin has the single word "Glory," and two Turweston bobbins are inscribed respectively, "L. K. 1844" and "M. A. G. Ag. 18. Ro."

Charming as are some of the wooden bobbins, it is only when we come to the Bone variety that we find the bobbin in all its glory. With the bone bobbin invention ran riot and ingenuity capped ingenuity. The French blood in the people of North Bucks and the surrounding districts revealed itself in ten thousand artistic devices; for these people are, as a whole, more imaginative, more poetical, fonder of colour and altogether more artistic in their ideas than those of the other districts.

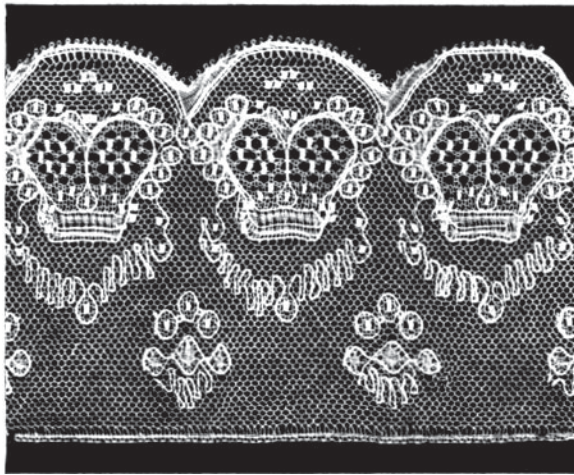
And yet the Huguenots did not influence in the same way every locality in which they settled. The bobbins of the Aylesbury and Thame district, for example, are squat in form, plain to a wonder, and they have no spangles; yet they are called,

¹ Perhaps short for "Robert."

Plate 24



The late Miss JANE MORRIS of Shelton, Beds.



Lace made by Miss JANE MORRIS for Queen Mary's Coronation.