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LACE-MAKING.



LACE-WORKERS.

THIS very pleasing branch of industry exhibits instructive features in respect to the application of machinery to what was before mere hand-labor. We must glance at the subject in its two aspects of *pillow-lace* and *bobbin-net*.

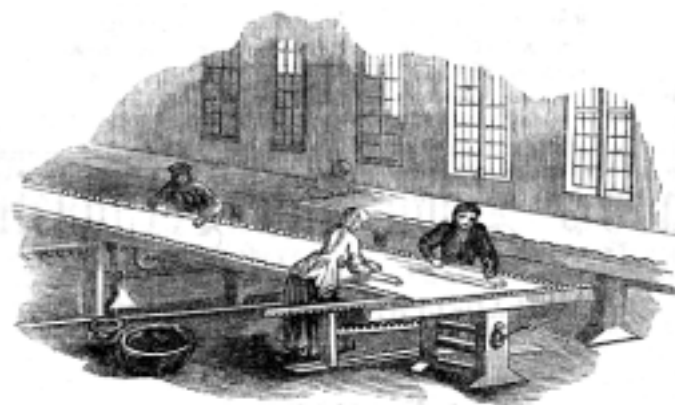
Pillow-Lace.—Real lace, such as that which often obtains so high a price, is mostly made of flax thread, and is produced in the following way: The lace-worker sits on a stool or chair, and places a hard cushion on her lap. The desired pattern is sketched upon a piece of parchment, which is then laid down upon the cushion; and she inserts a number of pins through the parchment into the cushion, in places determined by the pattern. She is also provided with a number of small bobbins, on which threads are wound; fine thread being used for making the meshes or net, and a

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coarser kind, called *gymp*, for working the device. The work is begun at the upper part of the cushion by tying together the threads in pairs, and each pair is attached to one of the pins. The threads are then twisted one round another in various ways, according to the pattern, the bobbins serving as handles as well as for a store of material, and the pins serving as knots or fixed centres around which the threads may be twisted. The pins inserted in the cushion at the commencement are merely to hold the threads; but as fast as each little mesh is made in the progress of the working, other pins are inserted, to prevent the thread from untwisting, and the device on the parchment shows where these insertions are to occur.

The kinds of lace which have obtained different names have certain peculiarities in the character of the mesh. *Brussels point* has a network

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LACE-DRESSING ROOM.

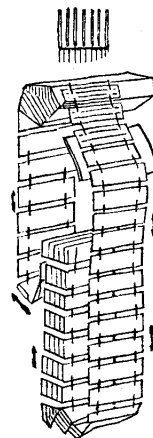
made by the pillow and bobbins, and a pattern of sprigs worked with the needle. *Brussels ground* has a six-sided mesh, formed by twisting four flaxen threads to a perpendicular line of mesh. *Brussels wire-ground* is of silk; the meshes are partly straight and partly arched, and the pattern is wrought separately by the needle. *Mechlin lace* has a six-sided mesh, formed of three flax threads twisted and plaited to a perpendicular line, the pattern being worked in the net. *Valenciennes lace* has a six-sided mesh, formed of two threads, partly twisted and plaited, the pattern being worked in the net. *Lisle lace* has a diamond-shaped mesh, formed of two threads plaited to a perpendicular line. *Alençon lace* has a six-sided mesh of two threads. *Alençon point* is formed of two threads to a perpendicular line, with octagonal and square meshes alternately. *Honiton lace* is distinguished by the beauty of the devices worked by the needle. *Buckingham lace* is mostly of a commoner description, and somewhat resembles that of Alençon.

Pillow lace, such as we have just described, is supposed to have been first made in Saxony in the sixteenth century, the earlier Italian lace having been wrought by the needle. From Saxony it extended to Flanders and France. In Brussels alone there were 10,000 females employed at lace making at the close of the last century. The art was introduced into England soon after its invention in Saxony; and it is curious that Honiton has produced the best kinds from that time to this. Throughout the midland counties, especially Bedford, Buckingham, and Northampton, almost every town and village exhibits this manufacture; but hand-made lace has suffered severely from the invention next to be noticed.

Bobbinet.—About 1770 a stocking-weaver at Nottingham, named Hammond, made the first attempt to imitate lace by a slight adaptation of his stocking frame, and many other persons gradually introduced improvements in the art; but it was Mr. Heathcoat, who, early in the present century, gave the chief impulse to the trade by the invention of his bobbin-frame,



TWISTED AS BOBBINET.



JACQUARD.

which gave the name of *bobbinet* to machine-made lace. The manufacture sprang up into wonderful activity in and around Nottingham; and though it has suffered many fluctuations since, it still constitutes a very notable department of Nottingham industry. The cotton used in making bobbinet is mostly spun in Lancashire. The machines are very costly, and are seldom or never owned by the actual worker. They are among the most complicated apparatus employed in manufactures; and when adapted for steam-power, and provided with

the Jacquard apparatus for the production of figured net, the machines are sometimes worth £1,000 a-piece. One set of threads, which we may call the warp, is stretched in parallel lines up and down the machines; another set, equivalent to the weft, is wound round small bobbins; and the meshes of the network are produced by these bobbins twisting in, and around and among the vertical threads. After being woven or made, the net is gassed or singed to remove the little hairy filaments; then embroidered or "run" by females, if the better kind of net; then mended, if any of the meshes have given way; then bleached; then dyed, if it be black net; then dressed or stiffened with gum or starch; and, finally, rolled and pressed.

Besides the specimens from Belgium, lace formed an important item in the number of things sent over from France to the Great Exhibition. The greatest in amount, however, and most remarkable for beauty, was contributed from Nancy. Besides several pieces of minor importance, one especially attracted great attention. It was a counterpane, three yards long and two and a half broad. In the middle was embroidered a bouquet of roses and poppies, and a garland all round of the same flowers, of a large size, all embroidered *au lancé*, with cotton of size No. 120, the appearance created being that of a white satin texture. The leaves were embroidered on what was termed a sanded ground. The tracery cost three months of labor.