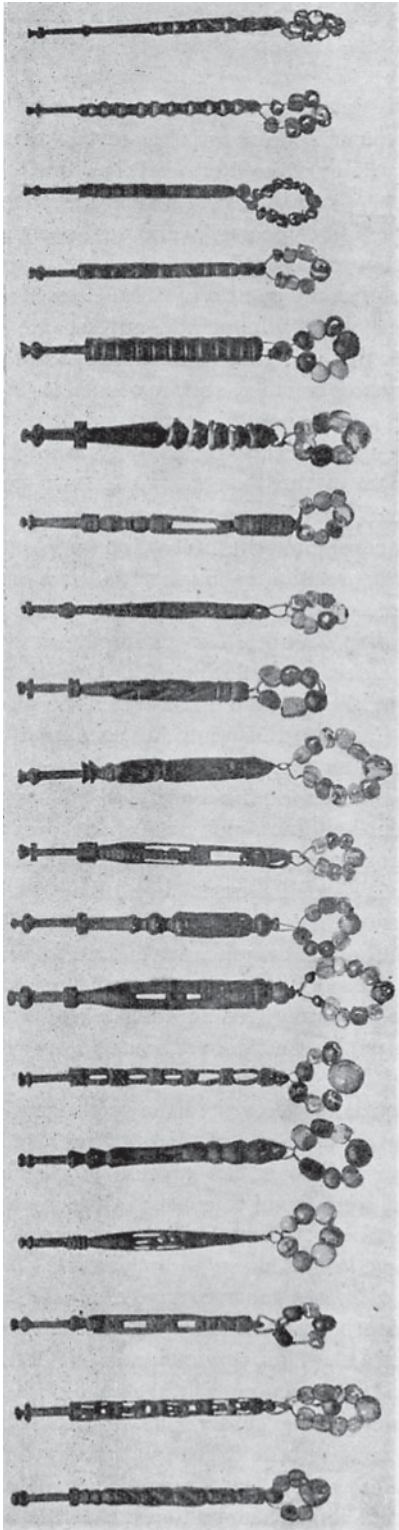


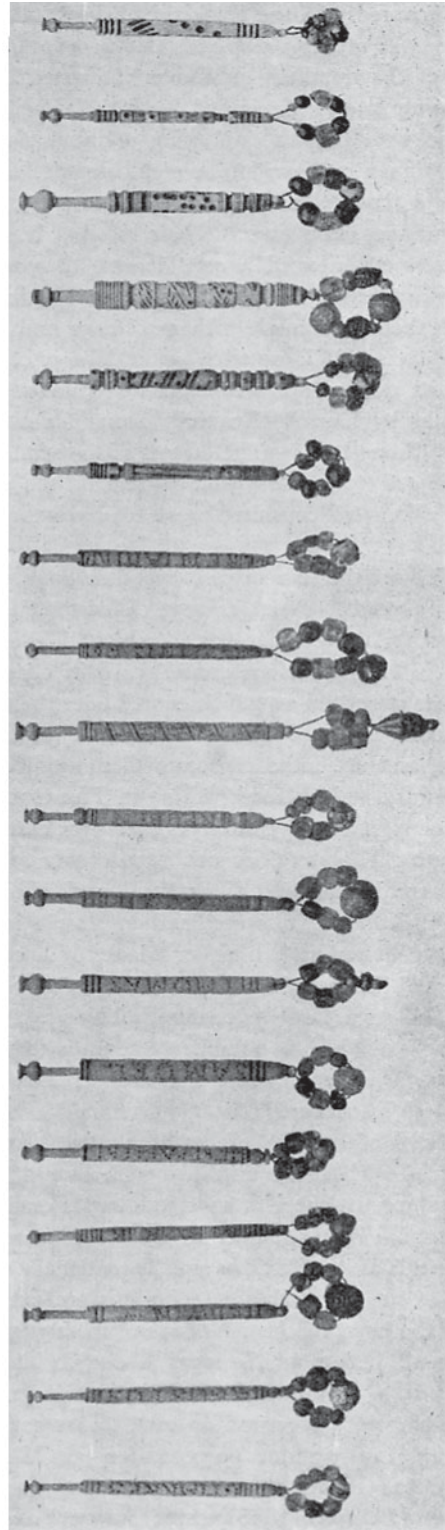
The Connoisseur

PILLOW-LACE is said to have been brought to this country by Flemish fugitives from the "Spanish Fury" of 1568-1577. The industry was maintained in some families for generations, but the introduction of machine-made articles, in the latter part of the eighteenth and commencement of the nineteenth centuries,

**Some Old
Lace Bobbins**



No. I.—OLD LACE BOBBINS OF WOOD



No. II.—OLD LACE BOBBINS OF BONE

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struck a blow at the craft from which it has never really recovered. In the Buckinghamshire volume of *The Beauties of England and Wales* (1801), after reading of the numbers of women interested in the trade whose profits depended on "their facility of execution," we find the following ominous note:—"Some women can earn from eighteenpence to two shillings a day; others cannot get more than one shilling in the same time. Their receipts, however, have lately experienced a considerable drawback, a manufactory having been established at Nottingham in which the lace is made with *machinery*, and being quicker executed, is retailed at a less price; yet neither its quality nor workmanship is so good as that made by hand." An early name for bobbin-lace was "bone-lace." The editors of the same work were obliged to confess that "some of the oldest makers whom we consulted were totally ignorant of the term."

Bobbins are the thin strips of wood or bone which carry the threads. A larger type called the "gimp" was used for the coarser thread which defined the patterns. Their forms are conservative in character. A number of specimens which come under the notice of collectors emanate from the Midland and home counties, and are more elaborate than those of the West country. Mrs. Head, writing in *THE CONNOISSEUR* (vol. x., page 155), observes that "the custom of ornamenting bobbins does not appear ever to have been general in the West of England, and when any decoration is found, it is confined to simple incised patterns, coloured red, blue, or black, or a curious tortoiseshell-like mottling produced by some brown stain. Old decorated Devonshire bobbins . . . are exceedingly difficult to obtain." She adds that they "are always made of wood, and are perfectly plain and smooth in outline."

A number of bobbins are evidently love-tokens or family gifts. These are inscribed with names, either straight along the piece or in spiral bands encircling it. Some are quite definite in intention, presenting such legends as "A Kiss," or equally tender addresses. Certain of the more elaborate designs are cut right through the heart of the material in such a way as to leave small pellets which move about inside their narrow prison. Another form of decoration consists in movable rings of wood or some other material. These are not without purpose, for, as Miss M. Jourdain has remarked in her excellent book on *Old Lace* (Batsford, 1908), "the 'tallies' are four bobbins used to make the small square dots; these have metal bands twisted round them to distinguish them from the ordinary lace bobbins." The loop which weighs the lower end of the bobbin is called a

"jingle," and is generally composed of beads, although seals, buttons, and other miscellaneous trifles are frequently found.—LATHAM BURTON.