

### Lace-Making.

THE great centre of lace-making at present is England, and the city of Nottingham and its neighborhood in particular. Since the last ninety years, not less than 660 patents for inventions connected with lace-making have been taken out in England, all of which, with only six exceptions, were the inventions of the working-men themselves. In the last fifteen years, machinery to the value of more than ten million dollars has been laid aside as no longer required for the attainment of the object in view.

Mr. Babbage, the well-known and perhaps most ingenious inventor of the present time, sat on one occasion, when visiting Nottingham, fully two hours looking at a particular machine by which some surprising results were accomplished, and, in reply to a question addressed to him, gave the following reason for his close inspection of the machine: "Although effectual for its purpose, it has been contrived and put together by a man whose contrivances show that he is no mechanic at all, but merely feels his way by trial from stage to stage." By the latest improvements made in the Nottingham lace-machines, the same mesh which used to require sixty motions is now made by only six. What an enormous saving of time, money, and labor would have been effected if the inventors who patiently found their way from one improvement to another, by purely empirical trials, had, by good preparatory theoretical mechanical education, been acquainted beforehand with the principles by which it was necessary they should be guided!

We obtain the above data from remarks made at the meeting of the British Association, held at Nottingham lately. They are interesting for ladies, as without lace no lady's outfit is complete, and they are interesting to inventors and mechanics, as containing some valuable hints in regard to the preparation for their profession.

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