

The manufacture of Alençon lace had greatly declined even before the Revolution, and was almost extinct when the patronage of Napoleon restored its prosperity. With the fall of Napoleon this manufacture again declined, and, when in 1840 attempts were made to revive it, the old workers, who had been specially trained to it, had passed away, and the new workers could not acquire the art of making the pure Alençon ground. But they made magnificent lace, and Napoleon III was magnificent in his patronage of the revived manufacture.

While it is clear that France derived the art of making Alençon point from Italy, yet, along with all the countries of Northern Europe, Germany and England, she is in the main indebted to Flanders for her knowledge of the art of lace making. Flanders, as well as Italy, claims the invention of lace, and, notwithstanding its glorious past, the lace trade of Belgium is now as flourishing as at any former period. Brussels lace is widely known as Point d'Angleterre, for the reason, it is said, that in the seventeenth century the English, after vainly attempting to establish its manufacture at home, bought up the finest laces of the Brussels market, smuggled them over to England, and sold them as English point.

The smuggling of lace is a very important and interesting feature in its history. From 1700 downward we are told that in England the prohibition of lace went for nothing. Ladies would have foreign lace, and if they could not smuggle it themselves the smuggler brought it to them. "Books, bottles, babies, boxes and umbrellas daily poured out their treasures." Everybody smuggled.

At one period much lace was smuggled into France from Belgium by means of dogs trained for the purpose. A dog was caressed and petted at home, fed on the fat of the land, then, after a season, sent across the frontier, where he was tied up, half starved and ill-treated. The skin of a bigger dog was then fitted to his body, and the intervening space filled with lace. The dog was then allowed to escape and make his way home, where he was kindly welcomed, with his contraband charge. These journeys were repeated till the French custom-house, getting scent, by degrees put an end to the traffic. Between 1820 and 1836 forty thousand two hundred and seventy-eight dogs were destroyed, a reward of three francs being given for each.

The thread used in Brussels lace is of the first importance. It is of extreme fineness, and the best quality, spun in underground rooms to avoid dryness of the air, is so fine as to be almost invisible. The room is darkened and a background of dark paper is arranged to throw out the thread, while only a single ray of light is admitted, which falls upon it as it passes the distaff. The exquisite fineness of this thread made the real Brussels ground so costly as to prevent its production in other countries. A Scotch traveler in 1787 says that "at Brussels, from one pound of flax alone, they can manufacture to the value of seven hundred pounds sterling."

In former times the ground of Brussels lace was made both by needle and on the pillow. The needle-ground was worked from one flower to another, while the pillow-

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