

the Low Countries as her dower,<sup>9</sup> appears in her portraits (Fig. 48) most resplendent in lace, and her ruff rivals in size those of our Queen Elizabeth, or Reine Margot.

But to return to our subject. Of the lace schools, there are now nearly 900, either in the convents or founded by private charity. At the age of five, small girls commence their apprenticeship; by ten, they earn their maintenance; and it is a pretty sight, an "école dentellière," the children seated before their pillows, twisting their bobbins with wonderful dexterity (Fig. 49).

In a tract of the seventeenth century, entitled "England's

Fig. 49.



A Belgian lace school.

Improvement by Sea and Land, to outdo the Dutch without Fighting,"<sup>10</sup> we have an amusing account of one of these establishments. "Joining to this spinning school is one for maids weaving bone lace; and in all towns there are schools according to the bigness and multitude of the children. I will show you how they are governed. First, there is a large room, and in the middle thereof a little box like a pulpit. Second, there are benches built about the room as they are in our playhouses. And in the box in the middle of the room, the grand mistress, with a long white wand

<sup>9</sup> Married, 1599, Albert, Archduke of Austria.

<sup>10</sup> By Andrew Yarranton, Gent. London, 1677. A proposal to erect schools for teaching and improving the linen manufacture as they do "in Flanders and Holland, where little girls from six years old upwards learn to employ their

fingers." Hadrianus Junius, a most learned writer, in his description of the Netherlands, highly extols the fine needlework and linen called cambric of the Belgian nuns, which in whiteness rivals the snow, in texture satin, and in price the sea-silk—Byssus, or beard of the Pinna.