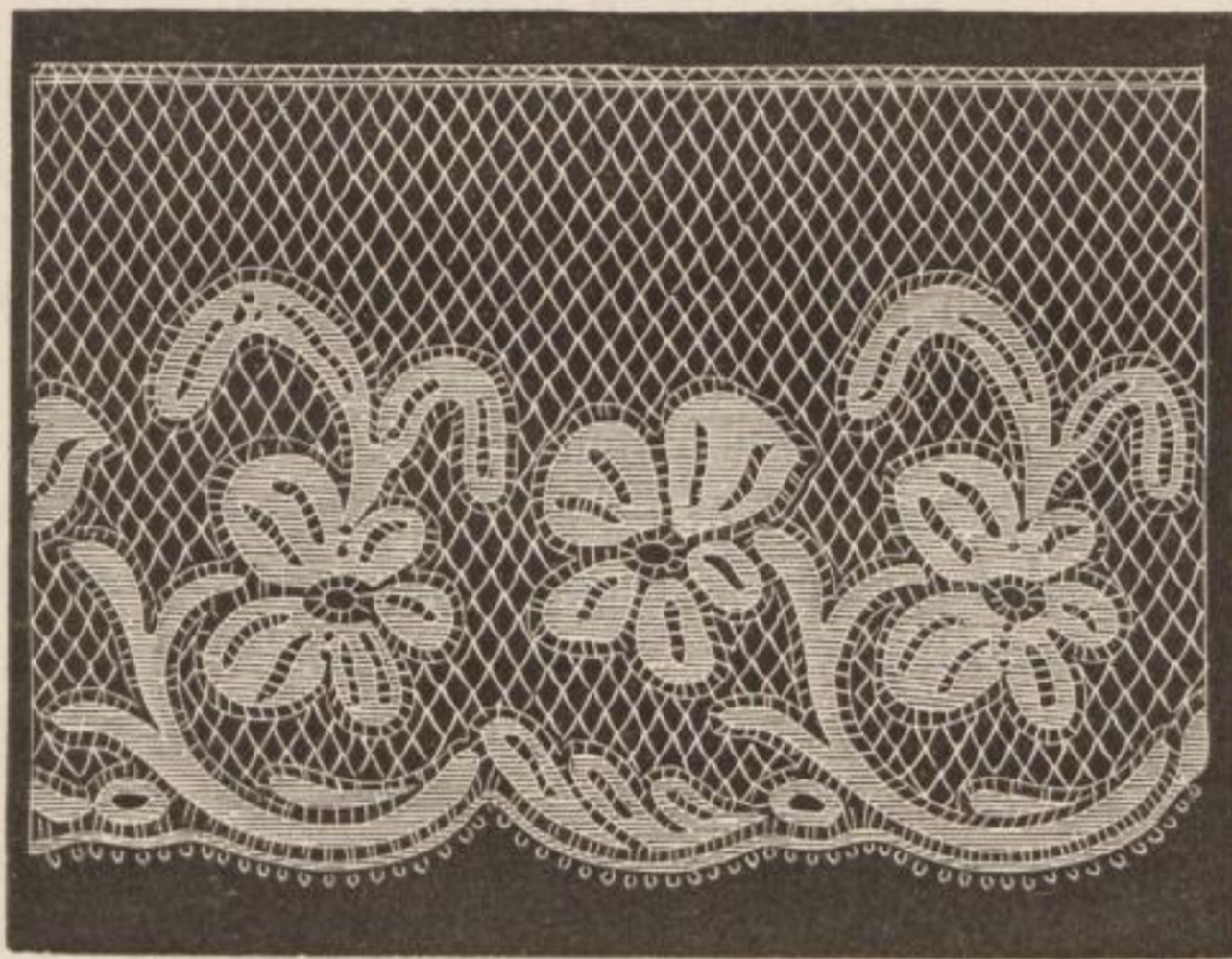


has now attained a high decree of perfection. Courtrai has made great advances towards rivalling Ypres in cheapness and quality.

Not a hundred years since, when the laces of Valenciennes prospered, those of Belgium were designated as "fausses Valenciennes." Belgium has now the monopoly to a commercial value of more than 800,000*l.*<sup>60</sup> The other principal centres of the manufacture are Bruges, Courtrai, and Menin, in West, Ghent and Alost, in East, Flanders. When Peuchet wrote in the last century, he cites "les dentelles à l'instar de Valenciennes" of Courtrai as being in favour, and generally sought after both in England and

Fig. 57.



Valenciennes lace of Ypres.

France, while those of Bruges are merely alluded to as "passing for Mechlin." From this it may be inferred the tide had not then flowed so far north. The Valenciennes of Bruges, from its round ground, has never enjoyed a high reputation. In forming the ground, the bobbins are only twisted twice, while in those of Ypres and Alost the operation is performed four and five times.<sup>61</sup> The oftener the bobbins are twisted the clearer and more esteemed is the Valenciennes.

The "guipure de Bruges," or "point duchesse," made at Bruges,

<sup>60</sup> France alone buys of Belgium more Valenciennes than all the other countries united; upwards of 12 millions of francs (480,000*l.*). Aubry.

<sup>61</sup> At Ghent two turns and a half, and at Courtrai three and a half. Each town has its own peculiar stitch.