

## CHAPTER VIII.

## FRANCE TO LOUIS XIV.

“ Il est une déesse inconstante, incommode,  
Bizarre dans ses goûts, folle en ses ornements,  
Qui paraît, fuit, revient, et renaît, en tout temps :  
Protée était son père, et son nom est la Mode.”

*Voltaire.*

“ To day the French  
All clinquant, all in gold.”

*Shakespeare.*

To the Italian influence of the sixteenth century France owes the fashion for points coupés and lace.<sup>1</sup> It was under the Valois and the Medicis that the luxury of embroidery, laces of gold, silver, and thread, attained its greatest height, and point coupé was as much worn at that epoch as were subsequently the laces of Italy and Flanders.

The ruff, or fraise, as it was termed, from its fancied resemblance to the caul<sup>2</sup> or frill of the calf, first adopted by Henry II.<sup>3</sup> to conceal a scar, continued in favour with his sons. The queen mother herself wore mourning from the day of the king's death; no decoration, therefore, appears upon her wire-mounted ruff;<sup>4</sup> but the fraises of her family and the “escadron volante” are profusely

<sup>1</sup> Italian fashions appeared early in France. Isabeau de Bavière, wearer of the Oriental “hennin,” and Valentine de Milan, first introduced the rich tissues of Italy. Louis XI. sent for workmen from Milan, Venice, and Pistoia, to whom he granted various privileges, which Charles VIII. confirmed.

<sup>2</sup> In Ulpian Fulwell's “Interlude,” 1568, Nichol Newfangle says—

“I learn to make gowns with long sleeves and wings,  
I learn to make ruffs like calves' chitterlings.”

<sup>3</sup> “Collerettes et manchettes fraisés

furent leur première entrée dans le costume des hommes vers 1540.”—*Quicherat, Histoire du Costume en France.*

<sup>4</sup> The queen was accused by her enemies of having, by the aid of Maître René, “empoisonneur en titre,” terminated the life of Queen Jeannede Navarre, in 1571, by a perfumed ruff (not gloves) (“Description de la Vie de Catherine de Medicis”); and her favourite son, the Duke d'Alençon, was said, circa 1575, to have tried to suborn a valet to take away the life of his brother Henry, by scratching him in the back of his neck with a poisoned pin, when fastening his fraise.