

appealed to the empress. She thinking the price not unreasonable, considering the beauty of the points, showed them to Napoleon, and told him the circumstance. "I was in the room at the time," writes the authoress of the "Mémoires." The emperor examined minutely each carton, exclaiming at intervals, "Comme on travaille bien en France, je dois encourager un pareil commerce. Pauline a grand tort." He ended by paying the bill and distributing the laces among the ladies of the court.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it may be said that never was lace more in vogue than during the early days of the empire.

The morning costume of a French duchess of that court is described in the following terms:—"Elle portait un peignoir brodé en mousseline garni d'une Angleterre très-belle, une fraise en point d'Angleterre. Sur sa tête la duchesse avait jeté en se levant une sorte de 'baigneuse,' comme nos mères l'auraient appelée, en point d'Angleterre, garnie de rubans de satin rose pâle."<sup>13</sup> The fair sister of Napoleon, the Princess Pauline Borghese, "s'est passionnée," as the term ran, "pour les dentelles."<sup>14</sup>

That Napoleon's example was quickly followed by the "élégantes" of the Directory, the following account, given to the brother of the author by an elderly lady who visited Paris during that very short period<sup>15</sup> when the English flocked to the continent, of a ball at Madame Récamier's, to which she had an invitation, will testify.

The First Consul was expected, and the élite of Paris early thronged the salons of the charming hostess—but where was Madame Récamier? "Souffrante," the murmur ran, retained to her bed by a sudden indisposition. She would, however, receive her guests "couchée."

The company passed to the bedroom of the lady, which, as still the custom in France, opened on one of the principal salons. There, in a gilded bed, lay Madame Récamier, the most beautiful woman in France. The bed-curtains were of the finest Brussels lace, bordered with garlands of honeysuckle, and lined with satin

moins quinze livres l'aune." Arch. Nat. Y. 58.

1764. Anne Challus leaves her "belle garniture de dentelle en plein, manchettes tour de gorge, palatine et fond." Ibid.

1764. Madame de Pompadour, in her will, says, "Je donne à mes deux femmes de chambre tout ce qui concerne ma

garderobe . . . y compris les dentelles."

<sup>12</sup> "Mém. de Mademoiselle d'Avrillon."

<sup>13</sup> "Mémoires sur la Restauration. Par Madame la Duchesse d'Abrantès."

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. t. v. p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> After the Peace of Amiens, 1801.