

Point d'Alençon is of a solidity which defies time and washing, and has been justly called the Queen of Lace. It is the only lace in which horsehair is introduced along the edge, to give firmness and consistency to the cordonnet, rendered perhaps necessary to make the point stand up when exposed to wind, mounted on the towering fabrics then worn by the ladies. The objection to horsehair is that it shrinks in washing, and draws up the flower from the ground. In 1761, a writer, describing the point de France, says that it does not arrive at the taste and delicacy of Brussels, its chief defect consisting in the thickness of the cordonnet, which thickens when put into water. The horsehair edge also draws up the ground, and makes the lace rigid and heavy. He likewise finds fault with the "modes," or fancy stitches of Alençon, and states that much point is sent from there to Brussels to have the modes added, thereby giving it a borrowed beauty, but connoisseurs, he adds, easily detect the difference.<sup>11</sup>

When the points of Alençon and Argentan dropped the general designation of "points de France" is difficult to say. Probably at the expiration of the privilege, each manufacture began to adopt its own name. The last inventory in which we have found mention of "point de France" is one of 1723,<sup>12</sup> while point d'Argentan is noted in 1738,<sup>13</sup> and point d'Alençon in 1741, where it is specified to be "à réseau."<sup>14</sup>

In the accounts of Madame du Barry, no point d'Alençon is mentioned—always point à l'aiguille—and "needle point" is the name by which point d'Alençon was alone known in England during the last century. The purchases of needle point of Madame du Barry were most extensive. Sleeves (engageantes) and lappets for 8400 livres; court ruffles at 1100; a mantelet at 2400; a veste at 6500; a grande coëffe, 1400; a garniture, 6010, &c.<sup>15</sup>

Coloured Plate VIII. represents a beautiful lappet which, in her former edition, the Author has placed under Genoa, as it was sent

<sup>11</sup> "Dictionnaire du Citoyen," Paris, 1761.

<sup>12</sup> "Inv. de Madame Anne Palatine, Princesse de Condé." See p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> In the inventory of the Duc de Penthièvre, 1738. See p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> "Une coiffure de point d'Alençon à réseau."—*Inv. de décès de Mademoiselle de Clermont*, 1741. Again, 1743, *Inv. de la Duchesse de Bourbon*. Bib. Nat.

<sup>15</sup> Among the objects of religious art exhibited in 1864, at the General Assembly of the Catholics of Belgium, at Malines, was a "voile de bénédiction," the handkerchief used to cover the ciborium, of point d'Alençon, with figures of the Virgin, St. Catherine, St. Ursula, and St. Barbara. It belonged to the church of St. Christopher at Charleroi.