

old point de bride, but fashion did not favour point de bride, so the plan failed.

In 1840 fresh attempts were made to revive the manufacture. Two hundred aged women—all the lace-makers remaining of this once flourishing industry—were collected and again set to work. A new class of patterns was introduced, and the manufacture once more returned to favour and prosperity. But the difficulties were great. The old point was made by an hereditary set of workers, trained from their earliest infancy to the one special work they were to follow for life. Now new workers had to be procured from other lace districts, already taught the ground peculiar to their fabrics. The consequence was, their fingers never could acquire the art of making the pure Alençon réseau. They made a good ground, certainly, but it was mixed with their own early traditions: as the Alençon workers say, “Elles bâtardisent les fonds.”

In the exhibition of 1851 were many fine specimens of the revived manufacture. One flounce, which was valued at 22,000 francs, and had taken thirty-six women eighteen months to complete, afterwards appeared in the “corbeille de mariage” of the Empress Eugénie.

In 1856 most magnificent orders were given for the imperial layette, a description of which is duly chronicled.<sup>19</sup> The young prince was “voué au blanc;” white, therefore, was the prevailing colour in the layette. The curtains of the imperial infant’s cradle were of needle point, with Alençon coverlet lined with satin. The christening robe, mantle, and head-dress were all of Alençon; and the three corbeilles, bearing the imperial arms and cipher, were also covered with the same point. Twelve dozen embroidered frocks, each in itself a work of art, were all profusely trimmed with Alençon, as were also the aprons of the imperial nurses.

A magnificent work of Alençon point appeared in the exhibition of 1855; a dress, purchased by the emperor for 70,000 francs (2800*l.*), and presented by him to the empress.

Costly orders for trousseaux are given not only in France, but from Russia and other countries. We saw one in progress which was to amount to 150,000 francs (6000*l.*); flounce, lappets and trimmings for the body, pockethandkerchief, fan, parasol, all en suite; and, moreover, there were a certain number of metres of

<sup>19</sup> “Illustrated News,” March 22, 1856.