

“aunage,” or border lace, for the layette. The making of point d’Alençon being so slow, it was impossible ever to execute it “to order” for this occasion.

Great as is the beauty of the workmanship of Alençon, it was never able to compete with Brussels in one respect: its designs were seldom copied from nature, while the fabric of Brabant sent forth roses and honeysuckles of a correctness worthy of a Dutch painter.

Alençon point is now successfully made at Bayeux, where the manufacture was introduced, in 1855, by M. Auguste Lefébure, a manufacturer of that town. Departing from the old custom of assigning to each lace-maker a special branch of the work, the lace is here executed through all its stages by the same worker. Perhaps the finest example of point d’Alençon, exhibited in 1867, was the produce of Bayeux; a dress consisting of two flounces, the pattern, flowers, and foliage of most artistic and harmonious design, relieved by the new introduction of shaded tints, giving to the lace the relief of a picture.²⁰ The ground (réseau) was worked with the greatest smoothness and regularity, one of the great technical difficulties when such small pieces have to be joined together. The price of the dress was 85,000 francs, 3400*l*. It took forty women seven years to complete.

²⁰ This effect is produced in the pillow-lace by varying the application of the two stitches used in making the flowers (see p. 26), the “toilé,” which forms the close tissue, and the “grillé,” the more

open part of the pattern; in the needle point by threads of different coarseness. The system has been adopted in France, Belgium, and England, but with most success in France.