

“Colbert Correspondence,” showing it to be coeval with Alençon. There still exists at Argentan an humble inn with “Le Point de France” as its sign. The two manufactures appear to have been distinct, though some lace-makers near Lignéres-la-Doucelle worked for both establishments. Alençon made the finest réseau—Argentan specially excelled in the bride.

The bride, or we would rather call it the “grande bride,” ground, to which we have before alluded in the notice on Alençon, belonged almost exclusively to Argentan. It was of very elaborate construction, and consists of a large six-sided mesh, worked over with the button-hole stitch. It was always printed on the parchment pattern, and the upper angle of the hexagon is pricked. After the hexagon is formed by passing the needle and thread round the pins in a way too complicated to be worth explaining, the six sides are worked over with seven or eight button-hole stitches in each side. The grande bride ground was consequently very strong. It was much affected in France; the réseau was more preferred abroad.³

The flowers of Argentan were bolder and larger in pattern, in higher relief, heavier and coarser than those of Alençon. (Coloured Plate IX., and Fig. 84.) The toilé was flatter, and more compact. The workmanship differed in character. On the clear grande bride ground this lace was more effective than the minuter workmanship of Alençon.

In 1708 the manufacture had almost fallen to decay, when it was raised by one Sieur Mathieu Guyard, merchant mercer at Paris, who states that “his ancestors and himself had for more than 120 years been occupied in fabricating black silk and white thread lace in the environs of Paris.” He applies to the council of the king for permission to re-establish the fabric of Argentan, and to employ workwomen to the number of above 600. He asks for exemption from lodging soldiers, begs to have the royal arms placed over his door, and stipulates that Montulay, his draughtsman and engraver, shall be exempted from all taxes except the capitation. The arrêt obtained by Guyard is dated 24th July 1708.

Guyard’s children continued the establishment. Montulay

³ Indeed so little is the beautiful workmanship of this ground known or understood that the author has seen priceless

flowers of Argentan relentlessly cut out, and transferred to bobbin-net, “to get rid of the ugly, coarse ground.”