

manufactory on his own account, applies, in 1745, to have 200 workwomen at Argentan, and 200 at Carrouges, delivered over to his factor, in order that he may execute works ordered for the king and the dauphin for the approaching fêtes of Christmas. This time the magistrate resists. "I have been forced to admit," he writes to the intendant, "that the workwomen cannot be transferred by force. We had an example when the layette of the dauphin was being made. You then gave me the order to furnish a certain number of women who worked at these points to the late *Sieur de Montulay*. A detachment of women and girls came to my house, with a female captain (*capitaine femelle*) at their head, and all with one accord declared that if forced to work they would make nothing but cobbling (*bousillage*). Partly by threats, and partly by entreaty, I succeeded in compelling about a dozen to go, but the *Sieur de Montulay* was obliged to discharge them the next day.<sup>7</sup> I am therefore of opinion that the only way is for *M. De La Leu* to endeavour to get some of the workwomen to suborn others to work for him under the promise of higher wages than they can earn elsewhere. *M. De La Leu* agrees with me there is no other course to pursue; and I have promised him that, in case any appeal is made to me, I shall answer that things must be so, as the work is doing for the king." From this period we have scarcely any notices concerning the fabric of Argentan.

In 1763 the widow *Louvain* endeavoured to establish at *Mortagne (Orne)* a manufacture of lace like that of *Alençon* and *Argentan*, and proposed to send workers from these two towns to teach the art gratuitously to the girls of *Mortagne*. We do not know what became of her project; but at the same period the *Époux Malbiche de Boislaunay* applied for permission to establish an office at *Argentan*, with the ordinary exemptions, under the title of *Royal Manufacture*. The title and exemptions were refused. There were then (1763) at *Argentan* three manufactories of *point de France*, without counting the general hospital of *St. Louis*, in which it was made for the profit of the institution, and evidently with success; for in 1764, a widow *Roger* was in treaty with the hospital to teach her two daughters the fabrication of *point d'Argentan*. They were to be boarded, and to give six years of their time. The fine on non-performance was 80 *livres*. In 1781, the *Sieur Gravelle Desvallées* made a fruitless application to

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<sup>7</sup> 12 Nov 1745.