

CHAPTER XVI.

NORMANDY.

“Dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee.”

Congreve, Way of the World.

SEINE-INFÉRIEURE.

LACE forms an essential part of the costume of the Normandy peasants. The wondrous “bourgoin,”¹ with its long lappets of rich lace, descended from generation to generation, but little varied from the cornettes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Fig. 87). The countrywomen wore their lace at all times, when it was not replaced by the cotton nightcap, without much regard to the general effect of their daily clothes. “Madame the hostess,” writes a traveller in 1739, “made her appearance in long lappets of bone lace, with a sack of linsey wolsey.”

The manufactures of the Pays de Caux date from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Lace-making was the principal occupation of the wives and daughters of the mariners and fishermen. In 1692, M. de Sainte-Aignan, governor of Havre, found it employed 20,000 women.²

¹ “The bourgoin is formed of white, stiffly starched muslin, covering a paste-board shape, and rises to a great height above the head, frequently diminishing in size towards the top, where it finishes in a circular form. Two long lappets hang from either side towards the back, composed often of the finest lace. The bourgoins throughout Normandy are not alike”—*Mrs. Stothard's Tour in Normandy*.

² This must have included Honfleur and other surrounding localities.

By a paper on the lace trade (“*Mém. concernant le Commerce des Dentelles*,” 1704; Bib. Nat. MSS. F. Fr. 14,294), we find that the making of “*dentelles de*

bas prix,” employed at Rouen, Dieppe, Le Havre, and throughout the Pays de Caux, the Bailliage of Caen, at Lyons, Le Puy, and other parts of France, one quarter of the population of all classes and ages from six to seventy years. These laces were all made of Haarlem thread. See Holland.

“The lace-makers of Havre,” writes Peuchet, “work both in black and white points, from 5 sous to 30 francs the ell. They are all employed by a certain number of dealers, who purchase the produce of their pillows. Much is transported to foreign countries, even to the East Indies, the Southern Seas, and the islands of America.”