

qu'ils figurent avec enseignes et torches au premier rang dans les solennités religieuses."

Judging from local documents, this manufacture has for more than two centuries back formed the chief occupation of the women of this province.

It suffered from the sumptuary edicts of 1629, 1635, and 1639, and in 1640 threatened to be annihilated altogether. In the month of January of that year, the seneschal of Le Puy published throughout the city a decree of the parliament of Toulouse, which forbade, under pain of heavy fine, all persons of whatever sex, quality, or condition, to wear upon their vestments any lace "tant de soie que de fil blanc, ensemble passement, clinquant d'or ni d'argent fin ou faux;" thus by one ordinance annihilating the industry of the province. The reasons assigned for this absurd edict were twofold: first, in consequence of the large number of women employed in the lace trade, there was great difficulty in obtaining domestic servants; secondly, the general custom of wearing lace among all classes caused the shades of distinction between the high and low to disappear. These ordinances, as may be imagined, created great consternation throughout Le Puy. Father Régis, a Jesuit, who was then in the province, did his best to console the sufferers thus reduced to beggary by the caprice of parliament. "Ayez confiance en Dieu," he said; "la dentelle ne perira pas." He set out to Toulouse, and by his remonstrances obtained a revocation of the edict. Nor did he rest satisfied with his good work. At his suggestion the Jesuits opened to the Auvergne laces a new market in Spain and the New World, which, until the year 1790, was the occasion of great prosperity to the province. The Jesuit father was later canonised for his good deeds; and under his new appellation of Saint François Régis,⁵ is still held in the greatest veneration by the women of Auvergne—patron saint of the lace-makers.

Massillon, when bishop of Clermont (1717), greatly patronised the lace-makers of his diocese, and, anxious the province should itself furnish the thread used in the manufacture, he purchased a quantity of spinning-wheels which he distributed among the poor families of Beauregard, the village in which the summer palace of the bishop, previous to the Revolution, was situated.

The lace trade of this province frequently appears on the scene

⁵ Died December 1640. The edict was promulgated the preceding January.