

## CHAPTER XXII.

## ENGLAND TO QUEEN ELIZABETH.

"We weare most fantastical fashions than any nation under the sun doth, the French only excepted."—*Coryat's Crudities*, 1611.

It would be a difficult matter for antiquaries to decide at what precise time lace, as we now define the word, first appears as an article of commerce in the annals of our country.

As early as the reign of Edward III.<sup>1</sup> the excessive luxury of veils, worn even by servant girls, excited the indignation of the government, who, in an act, dated 1363, forbade them to be worn of silk, or of any other material, "mes seulement de fil fait deinz le Roialme," for which veils no one was to pay more than the sum of tenpence. Of what stuff these thread veils were composed, we have no record; probably they were a sort of network, similar to the caul of Queen Philippa, as we see represented on her tomb.<sup>2</sup> That a sort of crochet decoration used for edging was already made, we may infer from the monumental effigies of the day.<sup>3</sup> The purse of the carpenter is described, too, in Chaucer, as "purlled with latoun," a kind of metal or wire lace, similar to that found at Herculaneum, and made in some parts of Europe to a recent period.

M. Aubry refers to a commercial treaty of 1390, between England and the city of Bruges, as the earliest mention of lace. This said treaty we cannot find in Rymer, Dumont, or anywhere else. We have, as before alluded to, constant edicts concerning the gold wires and threads of "Cipre, Venys, Luk, and Jeane,"

<sup>1</sup> Rot. Parl. 37 Edw. III. Printed p. 278, col. 2, No. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See her monument in Westminster Abbey. Sandford's "Genealogical Table."

<sup>3</sup> "Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, wife of John of Gaunt, wears a quilted

silk cap with a three-pointed border of broad lace network." (Sandford. St. Paul's monument, after Dugdale.) "Elizabeth, Duchess of Exeter, died 1425 (Sandford, p. 259), wore also a caul of network with a needlework edging."