

of embroideries and such like, but no distinct allusion to "lace."⁴

According to Anderson, the first intimation of such an occupation being known in England is the complaint, made in 1454, by the women of the mystery of thread-working in London, in consequence of the importation of six foreign women, by which the manufacture of needlework⁵ of thread and silk, not as yet understood, was introduced. These six women, probably Flemings, had brought over to England the cutwork or darning of the time, a work then unknown in this country.

All authors, up to the present period, refer to the well-known act of Edward IV.,⁶ 1463, in which the entry of "laces, corses, ribans, fringes, de soie and de file, laces de file soie enfile," &c. are prohibited, as the first mention of "lace" in the public records.

The English edition of the "Fœdera," as well as the statutes at large, freely translate these words as laces of thread, silk, twined, laces of gold, &c.; and the various writers on commerce and manufactures have accepted the definition as "lace," without troubling themselves to examine the question.⁷ Some even go so far as to refer to a MS. in the Harleian Library,⁸ giving "directions for making many sorts of laces,⁹ which were in fashion in the times of King Henry VI. and Edward IV.," as a proof that lace was already well known, and formed the occupation of the "handcrafty"—as those who gained their livelihood by manual occupation were then

⁴ In the statute 2 Rich. II. = 1378, merchant strangers are allowed to sell in gross and in retail "gold wire or silver wire," and "other such small ware." Neither in this nor in the treaty 13 Rich. II. = 1390, between England, the Count of Flanders, and "les bonnes Gentz des Trois bonnes villes des Flandres, Gand, Brugges et Ipre" (see Rymer), is there any mention of lace, which, even if fabricated, was of too little importance, as an article of commerce, to deserve mention save as other "small wares."

⁵ Pins not yet being in common use, any lace would be called "work of the needle."

⁶ 3 Edw. IV. cap. iv.

⁷ "1463. John Barette bequeaths to 'My Lady Walgrave, my musk ball of gold with p̄le and lace.

"'Item, to John Eden, my o gr. of tawny silk with poynts of needle work,—*opus punctatum.*'"—*Bury Will and Inventories.*

⁸ Bib. Harl. 2320.

⁹ Such as "Lace Bascon, Lace ended, Lace bordred on both syde, yn o syde, pykke Lace bordred, Lace Condruk, Lace Dawns, Lace Piol, Lace covert, Lace coverte doble, Lace compon coverte, Lace maskel, Lace cheyne brode, Las Cheveron, Lace Oundé, Grene dorge, Lace for Hattys," &c.

Another MS. of directions for making these same named laces is in the possession of the vicar of Ipsden, Oxfordshire, and has been examined by the author, through the kindness of the late Mr. W. Twopenny.