

termed—of the country. Now the author has carefully examined this already quoted MS., in the principal letter of which is a damaged figure of a woman sitting and “making of lace,” which is made by means of “bowys.”¹⁰ As regards the given directions, we defy any one, save the most inveterate lover of crochet-work, to understand one word of its contents, beyond that it relates to some sort of twisted threadwork, and perhaps we might, in utter confusion of mind, have accepted the definition as given, had not another MS. of similar tenor, bearing date 1651, been also preserved in the British Museum.¹¹

This second MS. gives specimens of the laces, such as they were, stitched side by side with the directions; which at once establishes the fact that the laces of silk and gold, laces of thread, were nothing more than braids or cords—the laces used with tags, commonly called “poynts” (the “ferrets” of Anne of Austria)—for fastening the dresses, as well as for ornament, previous to the introduction of pins.

In the wardrobe accounts of the time we have frequent notice of these “laces” and corses. “Laces de quir” (cuir) also appear in the statutes,¹² which can only mean what we now term boot-laces, or something similar.

From the time of Edward IV. downwards, statute on apparel

¹⁰ Bows, loops.

¹¹ Additional MSS. No. 6293, small quarto, ff. 38. It contains instructions for making various laces, letters, and “edges,” such as “diamond stiff, fly, cross, long S, figure of 8, spider, hart,” &c., and at the end:—

“Heare may you see in Letters New
The Love of her that honoreth you.
My love is this,
Presented is
The Love I owe
I cannot showe,
The fall of Kings
Confusion bringes
Not the vallyou but the Love.

“Twice twenty slender Virgins’ Fingers twine
This curious web, where all their fancies shine.
As Nature them, so they this shade have wrought,
Soft as their Hands, and various as their Thoughts,” &c.

¹² 1 Rich. III. = 1483, act xii.

When this you see
Remember me.

In the British Museum (Lansdowne Coll. No. 22) is a third MS. on the same subject, a parchment roll written about the time of Charles I., containing rules and directions for executing various kinds of sampler-work, to be wrought in letters, &c., by means of coloured strings or bows. It has a sort of title in these words, “To know the use of this Booke it is two folkes worke,” meaning that the works are to be done by two persons.

Probably of this work was the “Brede (braid) of divers colours, woven by Four Ladies,” the subject of some verses by Waller, beginning:—