

Again, in "Laugh and Lie Down"⁷²—

"There she sat with her poking-stick, stiffening a fall."

When the use of starch and poking-sticks had rendered the arrangement of a ruff easy, the size began rapidly to increase. "Both men and women wore them intolerably large, being a quarter of a yard deep, and twelve lengths in a ruff."⁷³ In London this fashion was termed the French ruff; in France, on the other hand, it was called "the English monster."⁷⁴ Queen Elizabeth wore hers higher and stiffer than any one in Europe, save the Queen of Navarre, for she had a "yellow throat," and was desirous to conceal it.⁷⁵ Woe betide any fair lady of the court who dared let her white skin appear uncovered in the presence of majesty. Her ruffs were made of the finest cutwork, enriched with gold, silver, and even precious stones. Though she consumed endless yards of cutwork, purple, needlework lace, bone lace of gold, of silver, enriched with pearls, and bugles, and spangles in the fabrication of the "three-piled ruff,"⁷⁶ she by no means extended such liberty to her subjects, for she selected grave citizens and placed them at every gate of the city to cut the ruffs if they exceeded the prescribed depth. These "pillars of pride" form a numerous item among the New Year's gifts. Each lady seems to have racked her brain to invent some novelty as yet unheard of to gratify the queen's vanity. On the New Year, 1559-60, the Countess of Worcester offers a ruff of lawn cutwork set with 20 small knots like mullets, garnished with small sparks of rubies and pearls.⁷⁷

The cutwork ruff is decorated or enriched with ornament of every description. Nothing could be too gorgeous or too extravagant.⁷⁸ Great was the wrath of old Philip Stubbs⁷⁹ at these

⁷² "Or the World's Folly," 1605.

⁷³ Stowe.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Therefore she wore "chin" ruffs.

"Eidem pro 2 sutes de lez chinne ruffs edged cu' arg., 10s."—Eliz. 42 & 43.

⁷⁶ Ben Jonson, "Every Man Out of His Humour," 1599.

⁷⁷ Lady Cromwell. "Three sutes of ruffs of white cutwork edged with a passamayne of white."

Lady Mary Se'm'. "3 ruffs of lawne cutwork of flowers."

⁷⁸ "They are either clogged with gold,

silver, or silk laces of stately price, wrought all over with needleworke, speckeled and sparkeled here and there with the sunne, the moone, the starres, and many other antiques strange to beholde. Some are wrought with open worke donne to the midst of the ruffe, and further some with close worke, some with purled lace so closed and other gewgawes so pestered, as the ruff is the leest parte of itself."—*Stubbs's Description of the Cutwork Ruff*.

⁷⁹ "Anatomie of Abuses," 1583.