

to which were attached long floating pieces of French lace, demanding of the Lords redress, and the total exclusion of foreign goods. On receiving an answer that it was too late, they must wait till next session, the assemblage declared they would not be put off by promises; they broke the Duke of Bedford's palings on their way home, and threatened to burn the premises of Mr. Carr, an obnoxious draper. At the next levée they once more assembled before St. James's, but, finding the dresses of the nobility to be all of right English stuff, retired satisfied, without further clamour.

The papers of the year 1764 teem with accounts of seizures made by the customs. Among the confiscated effects of a person of the highest quality are enumerated: "16 black à-la-mode cloaks, trimmed with lace; 44 French lace caps; 11 black laced handkerchiefs; 6 lace hats; 6 ditto aprons; 10 pairs of ruffles; 6 pairs of ladies' blonde ditto, and 25 gentlemen's." Eleven yards of edging and 6 pairs of ruffles are extracted from the pocket of the footman. Everybody smuggled. A gentleman attached to the Spanish embassy is unloaded of 36 dozen shirts, with fine Dresden ruffles and jabots, and endless lace in pieces for ladies' wear. These articles had escaped the vigilance of the officers at Dover, but were seized on his arrival by the coach at Southwark. Though prime ministers in those days accepted bribes, the custom-house officers seem to have done their duty.<sup>3</sup>

When the body of his grace the Duke of Devonshire was brought over from France, where he died, the officers, to the anger of his servants, not content with opening and searching the coffin, poked the corpse with a stick to ascertain if it was a real body; but the trick of smuggling in coffins was too old to be attempted. Forty years before, when a deceased clergyman was conveyed from the Low Countries for interment, the body of the corpse was found to have disappeared, and to have been replaced by Flanders lace of immense value—the head and hands and feet alone remaining. This discovery did not, however, prevent the high sheriff of Westminster from running—and that successfully—6000*l.* worth of French lace in the coffin of Bishop

<sup>3</sup> "1767. An officer of the customs seized nearly 400*l.* worth of Flanders lace, artfully concealed in the hollow of a ship's buoy, on board a French trader,

lying off Iron Gate."—*Annual Register.*

"1772. 27,000 ells of French (Blois?) lace were seized in the port of Leigh alone."—*Gentleman's Magazine.*