

Indeed, if we may judge by the intellectual conversation overheard and accurately noted down by Miss Burney,¹² at Miss Monckton's (Lady Cork) party, court ruffles were inconvenient to wear:—

“ ‘ You can't think how I am encumbered with these nasty ruffles,’ said Mrs. Hampden.

“ ‘ And I dined in them,’ says the other. ‘ Only think!’

“ ‘ Oh!’ answered Mrs. Hampden, ‘ it really puts me out of spirits.’ ”

Both ladies were dressed for a party at Cumberland House, and ill at ease in the costume prescribed by etiquette. If this conversation was considered worth noting down, we may be excused for repeating it.

Our history of English lace is now drawing to a close; but before quitting the subject, we must, however, make some allusion to the custom prevalent here, as in all countries, of using lace as a decoration to grave-clothes. In the chapter devoted to Greece, we have mentioned how much lace is still taken from the tombs of the Ionian Islands, washed, mended, or, more often, as a proof of its authenticity, sold in a most disgusting state to the purchaser. The custom was prevalent at Malta, as the lines of the dramatist testify:—

“ In her best habit, as the custom is,
You know, in Malta, with all ceremonies
She's buried in the family monument,
I' the temple of St. John.”¹³

At Palermo you may see the mummies thus adorned in the celebrated catacombs of the Capuchin convent.¹⁴

In Denmark,¹⁵ Sweden, and the north of Europe,¹⁶ the custom was general. The mass of lace in the tomb of the once fair Aurora Königsmarck, at Quedlinburg, would in itself be a fortune. She sleeps clad in the richest point d'Angleterre, Malines, and guipure.

¹² “Recollections of Madame d'Arblay.”

¹³ Beaumont and Fletcher, “The Knight of Malta.”

¹⁴ In coffins with glass tops. Some of them date from 1700.

¹⁵ In the vault of the Schleswig-Holstein family, at Sonderburg.

¹⁶ In the church of Revel lies the Duc de Croÿ, a general of Charles XII., arrayed in full costume, with a rich flowing

tie of fine guipure; not that he was ever interred—his body had been seized by his creditors for debt, and there it still remains.

The author of “Letters from a Lady in Russia” (1775), describing the funeral of a daughter of Prince Menzikoff, states she was dressed in a night-gown of silver tissue, on her head a fine laced mob, and a coronet; round her forehead, a ribbon embroidered with her name and age, &c.