

Setting aside the jewels which still glitter around her parchment form, no daughter of Pharaoh was ever so richly swathed.¹⁷

In Spain, it is related as the privilege of a grandee : all people of a lower rank are interred in the habit of some religious order.¹⁸

Taking the grave-clothes of St. Cuthbert as an example, we believe the same custom to have prevailed in England from the earliest times.¹⁹

Mrs. Oldfield, the celebrated actress, who died in 1730, caused herself to be thus interred. The lines of Pope have long since immortalised the story :—

“Odious! in woollen! ’twould a saint provoke!
 (Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.)
 No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
 Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face;
 One would not, sure, be frightful when one’s dead—
 And—Betty—give this cheek a little red.”

“She was laid in her coffin,” says her maid, “in a very fine Brussels lace head, a Holland shift with a tucker of double ruffles, and a pair of new kid gloves.” Previous to her interment in Westminster Abbey, she lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber.²⁰ For

¹⁷ Alluding to this custom of interring ladies of rank in full dress, Madame de Sévigné writes to her daughter:—“*Mon Dieu, ma chère enfant, que vos femmes sont sottes, vivantes et mortes! Vous me faites horreur de cette fontange; quelle profanation! cela sent le paganisme, ho! cela me dégoûteroit bien de mourir en Provence; it faudroit que du moins je fusse assuré qu’on ne m’iroit pas chercher une coëffeuse en même temps qu’un plombier. Ah! vraiment! fi! ne parlez plus de cela.*”—*Lettre 627. Paris, 13 Dec. 1688.*

¹⁸ Laborde, “*Itin. de l’Espagne.*” Again, the Duc de Luynes says: “The Curé of St. Sulpice related to me the fashion in which the Duke of Alva, who died in Paris in 1739, was by his own will interred. A shirt of the finest Holland, trimmed with new point lace, the finest to be had for money; a new coat of Vardez cloth, embroidered in silver; a new wig; his cane on the right, his sword on the left of his coffin.”—*Mémoires.*

¹⁹ That grave-clothes were lace-trimmed we infer by the following strange announcement in the “*London Gazette*”

for August 12 to 15, 1678:—“Whereas decent and fashionable lace shifts and Dressings for the dead, made of woollen, have been presented to his Majesty by Amy Potter, widow (the first that put the making of such things in practice), and his Majesty well liking the same, hath upon her humble Petition, been graciously pleased to give her leave to insert this advertisement, that it may be known she now wholly applies herself in making both lace and plain of all sorts, at reasonable prices, and lives in Crane Court in the Old Change, near St. Paul’s Church Yard.” Again, in November of the same year, we find another advertisement:—“His Majesty, to increase the woollen manufacture and to encourage obedience to the late act for burying in woollen, has granted to Amy Potter the sole privilege of making all sorts of woollen laces for the decent burial of the dead or otherwise, for fourteen years, being the first inventor thereof.”

²⁰ Betterton’s “*History of the English Stage.*” Her kindness to the poet Savage is well known.