

owner, had a label attached to it, "Queen Elizabeth's lace," with the tradition that it was made in commemoration of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. At this we beg to demur, as no similar lace was made at that period; but we do not doubt its having been made in honour of that victory, for the building is decidedly old Tilbury Fort, familiar to all by the pencil of Stanfield. The lace is point d'Argentan, and was probably the handiwork of some English lady, sent as a present to Queen Charlotte.

"Since the Reformation the clothing trade declined," writes Defoe, of Sherborne. "Before 1700, making buttons, haberdashery wares, and bone laces employed a great many hands." Other authors, such as Anderson, declare, at a far later date, Sherborne to carry on a good trade in lace, and how, up to 1780, much blonde, both white and black, and of various colours, was made there, of which a supply was sent to all markets.

The points of Lyme Regis rivalled, in the last century, those of Honiton and Blandford, and when the trade of the last-named town passed away, Lyme and Honiton laces held their own, side by side, in the London market. The fabric of Lyme Regis, for a period, came more before the public eye, for that old, deserted, and half forgotten mercantile city, in the eighteenth century, once more raised its head as a fashionable watering-place. Prizes were awarded by the Anti-Gallican Society<sup>6</sup> to its townswomen for ruffles of needle point and bone lace, and the reputation of the fabric reached even the court; for when Queen Charlotte first set foot on English ground, she wore a head and lappets of Dorset manufacture. Some years later, a splendid lace dress was made for her Majesty by the workers of Lyme.<sup>7</sup>

The laces of Lyme, like all good articles, were expensive. A narrow piece set quite plain round a cap would cost four guineas, nor were five guineas a yard considered an exorbitant price.

The making of such expensive lace being scarcely found remunerative, the trade gradually expired; and when the order for the marriage lace of H. M. Queen Victoria reached the southern counties, not one lace-maker was to be found to aid in the work in the once flourishing town of Lyme Regis.

<sup>6</sup> In 1752.

<sup>7</sup> Roberts' "Hist. of Lyme Regis."