

entries of the church registers still preserved at Honiton,³ names all handed down to their descendants in the present generation,⁴ and in these families the fabric has continued for a long lapse of years.

That the trade was already flourishing in the days of our first James, the oft cited brass inscription, let into a raised tombstone near the wall of old Honiton church, fully testifies :—

“ Here lieth y^e Body of James Rodge, of Honiton, in y^e County of Devonshire, Bone lace seller, who hath given unto the poor of Honiton P^rishe the benyfite of 100*l*. for ever, who deceased y^e 27 July, A.D. 1617, ætatis suæ 50. Remember the Poore.”

If any credit may be attached to the folk-lore of the lace-making trade, this James Rodge⁵ was a valet, who, escaping from Brussels, first brought over the secret of the finer stitches as used in the Flanders laces of that period, Having made his fortune at Honiton, he, in gratitude, bequeathed a sum of money to the poor of his adopted city.

Westcote, too, who wrote about the year 1620, when noticing “ Honitoun,” says :—“ Here is made abundance of bone lace, a pretty toy now greatly in request.”⁶ He does not speak of it as a new manufacture ; the trade had already taken root and flourished, for, including the above-mentioned Rodge, the three earliest bone-lace-makers of the seventeenth century on record all at their decease bequeathed sums of money for the benefit of their indigent townspeople, viz. Mrs. Minifie,⁷ before mentioned, who died in 1617, and Thomas Humphrey of Honiton, laceman, who willed, in the year 1658, 20*l*. towards the purchase of certain tenements, a notice of which benefaction is recorded on a painted board above the gallery in the old parish church.

³ Burd, Genest, Raymunds, Brock, Couch, Gerard, Murek, Stocker, Maynard, Trump, Groot, &c.

⁴ Up to a recent date, the Honiton lace-makers were mostly of Flemish origin. Mrs. Stocker, ob. 1769; Mr. J. Stocker, + 1783, and four daughters; Mrs. Mary Stocker, + 179-; Mr. Gerard + 1799, and daughter; Mrs. Lydia Maynard (of Anti-Gallican celebrity), + 1786; Mrs. Ann Brock, + 1815; Mrs. Elizabeth Humphrey, + 1790, whose family had been in the lace manufacture one hundred and fifty years and more. The above list has been furnished to the

author by Mrs. Frank Aberdein, whose grandfather was for many years in the trade. Mrs. Treadwin, of Exeter, found an old lace-worker using a lace “ Turn ” for winding sticks, having the date 1678 rudely carved on the foot, showing how the trade was continued in the same families from generation to generation.

⁵ Rodge, or Ridge, with all due deference to Devonshire tradition, does not sound like a name of Flemish extraction.

⁶ “ View of Devon,” T. Westcote.

⁷ Her bequest is called “ Minifie’s Gift.”