

The year 1823 is memorable for the "bobbin-net fever." Mr. Heathcoat's patent having expired, all Nottingham went mad. Every one wished to make bobbin-net. Numerous individuals, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, and others, readily embarked capital in so tempting a speculation. Prices fell in proportion as production increased; but the demand was immense, and the Nottingham lace frame became the organ of general supply, rivalling and supplanting in plain nets the most finished productions of France and the Netherlands.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Ure says: "It was no uncommon thing for an artisan to leave his usual calling and betake himself to a lace frame, of which he was part proprietor, and realise, by working upon it, twenty, thirty, nay, even forty shillings a day. In consequence of such wonderful gains, Nottingham, with Loughborough and the adjoining villages, became the scene of an epidemic mania. Many, though nearly void of mechanical genius or the constructive talent, tormented themselves night and day with projects of bobbins, pushers, lockers, point bars, and needles of every various form, till their minds got permanently bewildered. Several lost their senses altogether, and some, after cherishing visions of wealth as in the olden time of alchemy, finding their schemes abortive, sank into despair and committed suicide.

Such is the history of the bobbin-net<sup>12</sup> invention in England.<sup>13</sup> We now pass on to France.

<sup>11</sup> McCulloch.

<sup>12</sup> *Progressive Value of a square yard of plain cotton bobbin-net.*

1809 . 5l.	1830 . 2s.
1813 . 2l.	1833 . 1s. 4d.
1815 . 1l. 10s.	1836 . 10d.
1818 . 1l.	1842 . 6d.
1821 . 12s.	1850 . 4d.
1824 . 8s.	1856 . 3d.
1827 . 4s.	1862 . 3d.

"Histoire du Tulle et des Dentelles mécaniques en Angleterre et en France, par S. Ferguson fils." Paris, 1862.

"Bobbin-net and lace are cleaned from the loose fibres of the cotton by the ingenious process of gassing, as it is called, invented by the late Mr. Samuel Hall,

of Nottingham. A flame of gas is drawn through the lace by means of a vacuum above. The sheet of lace passes to the flame opaque, and obscured by loose fibre, and issues from it bright and clear, not to be distinguished from lace made of the purest linen thread, and perfectly uninjured by the flame."—*Journal of the Society of Arts*, Jan. 1864.

<sup>13</sup> In 1825, Mr. Huskisson's reduction of the duty on French tulle caused so much distress in Leicester and Nottingham that ladies were desired to wear only English tulle at court; and in 1831, Queen Adelaide appeared at one of her balls in a dress of English silk net.