

FRANCE.

"To the great trading nation, to the great manufacturing nation, no progress which any portion of the human race can make in knowledge, in taste for the conveniences of life, or in the wealth by which these conveniences are produced, can be matter of indifference."—*Macaulay*.

Since the failure¹⁴ of Lee, in 1610, to introduce the stocking-frame into France, that country remained ignorant of a manufacture which was daily progressing in England, on whom she was dependant for stockings and for net.

In 1778, Cailien attempted a kind of net, "tricot dentelle," for which he obtained a gratuity from the Academy of 40*l.*, but his method did not succeed; it was, like the first efforts of our countryman, only knitting.

In 1784, Louis XVI. sent the Duke de Liancourt to England to study the improvements in the stocking and net machinery, and to bring back a frame. He was accompanied by Rhumbolt, who worked in a manufactory at Nottingham, and having acquired the art, returned to France. Monarchy had fallen, but the French Republic, 1793-4, granted Rhumbolt the sum of 110,000 francs (4400*l.*). The machine he brought with him was the point net.¹⁵

The cessation of all commercial intercourse prevented France from keeping pace with the improvements making in England; yet, singular enough, at the beginning of the present century, more net was manufactured in France than in England. At the time of the Peace of Amiens, 1802, there were 2000 frames in Lyons and Nîmes, while there were scarcely 1200 in England; but the superiority of the English net was incontestable; so, to protect the national manufactures, Napoleon prohibited the importation. This of course increased its demand; the net was in request in proportion as it was prohibited. The best mart for Nottingham was the French market, so the Nottingham net trade took every means to pass their produce into France.

Hayne, one of the proprietors of the "barley-corn" net, had gone to Paris to make arrangements for smuggling it over, when

¹⁴ See p. 396, note ³. John Hindres, in 1656, first established a stocking-frame in France.

¹⁵ The net produced was called "tulle

simple et double de Lyon et de Vienne." The net was single loops, hence the name of "single press," given to these primitive frames.