


Lace-Making.

HEN we wander through the old Flemish towns, such as Mechlin and Bruges, we see in the streets where the poorer families live (be it in summer and sunshine), in the open doors, women and girls seated on the ground with their work on their knees, while their nimble fingers ply with fairy-like swiftness, the bobbins, so-named on account of their form, slip and rattle, strike and buzz.

On the pavement, between whose stones the grass often springs up, resound the wooden shoes of the bustling townspeople and the boys and girls. Through the clear air, from the steeple on the great square, sounds out every quarter-hour the soothing melody of the chime of bells. The industrious women sitting there with the Spanish faces and the Low Dutch names are making the beautiful mantillas, the airy veils, which during the next winter, at dinner or ball, will fall over glimmering satin, cling around dazzling shoulders, and rest on glossy hair.

Thus we have often observed the lace-makers in Belgium. The most lovely ornaments for women are, however, not made here, but in Germany, and not along the coast, but on the heights of the Hartz Mountains, in Saxony. And as is the place, so also is the manner of work different from that in Belgium.

"Whoever for the first time," so reads the description which lies before us, "steps into a room in which all the members of the family, both boys and girls, and from the six-year-old child to the gray-haired grandmother, are busy with bobbins, is astonished at the sight. One often finds in a little room from six to eight persons at this work. Beyond the rattle which the striking together of the wooden bobbins as the thread is intertwined during the formation of a half or whole pattern silence reigns. This is only broken when some one races, counts or bets, that is to say, urges herself to greater activity by measuring her skill and speed against another's. This contest takes place between a mother and her children, or between an expert and a less dexterous lace-maker. Thus the mother gives to the child a hundred pins already set up. Then the child says, after she sets a pin, 'A hundred,' and the mother says 'One,' and so both number onwards until the mother calls out the same number as the child, and has reached or overtaken her.

"For even numbering it requires lace-makers of equal skill. After the pins are set up, the first one cries 'Count one to me.' Whereupon the second having set up her pins, answers, 'None to me.' So the two continue until the first perhaps breaks her thread. The other works on meanwhile, saying at the same time, 'Count me one, count me two, count me three,' and so on until the first again overtakes the second. The work and also the time of its termination is fixed by wager. The lace-maker who first completes her task gets a pin from each one that she beats as her reward."

This picture is of the winter life. In summer the women gather together in companies and go out in the open air under the shade of the trees to work. Among the mountain people, the men take their part with the women if there is no other work to be had. In former times one only saw the lace-makers at the table, on which in the long winter evenings the light of a single dim lamp was heightened by being reflected through flasks and glass globes, to make it shine upon as many lace cushions as possible.

The Hartz Mountain is a region of industry. After it ceased to be rich it became industrial. The mines were exhausted, invention succeeded. The people had looked upon the silver which they afforded as God's gift, and as such gratefully accepted it. As the rich store of one mine after another gave

out the miners began to apply themselves to the various trades by which to-day they seek their support, no one of which has from the beginning been so universally successful as lace-making.

Already in their seventh year the children begin to make easy patterns. All the time which is not spent in the ordinary day school is devoted to the schools for learning lace-making, of which five and twenty are supported by the government. In many of the same perhaps a hundred diligent little creatures sit with unmovable gravity at work. In the mornings from ten to twelve and in the afternoons from three until six, or even in winter often until ten. All the girls learn without exception and a third of the boys, the latter, strangely enough, often showing more skill than the former. And the skill of which they become possessed in the end is the result of the constant drill of these schools. From the eastern end of the Hartz Mountains up to the border of the Vosges, from the crest of the mountains down to the foot, to nearly all the women of the mountain people, the wood carvers, hammer, nail and spoon makers, lace-work serves as exclusive employment.

Some name is attached to almost every great industry (either on account of its invention or its extension) which thus receives the thanks of later times. In the Court Church in Annaberg, in the Hartz Mountains, stands a monument of sandstone, and upon it this inscription: "Here rests Barbara Uttmann, died 14th of January, 1575. She it was that in the year 1561, through her invention of point lace, became the benefactor of the Hartz Mountains." This inscription is so far incorrect in that the art of lace-making was already practised in the Netherlands, consequently was not invented but introduced. Yet should Barbara Uttmann be known as the benefactor of her home and is truly even until this day, for it was she who brought the bobbin into the Hartz Mountains.

It was the same in the Wild Ecke, as the rough and wooded environs of the Pohlbergs, toward the end of the year fifteen hundred, was called. The 27th of October, 1492, through Kaspar Drechsler, from Frohman, the first lode of silver ore in Schreckenbergs was discovered. Quickly from there the news extended and cuttings were made in many other places, and even to Prozel the rich vein of silver ore was uncovered. The whole region was raised and awakened up. The hamlet which sprang up around the first mine, called Annaberg, had already grown to be a town. Since 1526 Heinrich Von Etterlein had been superintendent of the mines. He was descended from a patrician family, was born in Nuremberg in 1485 and died in Etterlein in 1582.

To him in 1514 was born a daughter who was called Barbara, and was predestined to give work and a livelihood to the women of the Hartz Mountains. At an early age she showed great skill and dexterity in all womanly work and especially in lace-making, with which only the wives and daughters of people of the highest rank then occupied themselves. This lace was used chiefly for the decoration of the altar, the communion cloth and the priest's robes, and required much time and great labor. Barbara sought for that reason an easier and less time consuming method of making point lace, and in a collar which she gave to her betrothed, Christopher Uttmann, on the morning of their wedding day has furnished proofs that her efforts and search were not in vain. The collar was the first bobbin work that was seen in the Hartz Mountains. Christopher Uttman came from Lowenberg, in Schlesien, to Annaberg and grew to be a rich land-holder, to the surprise of those who had previously known him. Recently this invention of lace work has been called in question, and it is now generally accepted that Barbara Uttman learned it from a Netherlander. This is highly probable and also easily understood, since the settlement of Netherland silk-weavers at Buchholz, near Annaberg, took

place in 1561, and lace-work of white and yellow thread may have been made, as it was by no means unlikely that among the many which the lode star of the mines drew toward Annaberg some should have been lace-makers.

Certain it is that Barbara Uttmann, who herself drove a profitable trade in point lace, both taught and extended this useful art in Annaberg. How quickly the same became national one sees when in 1568 there broke out in the Hartz Mountains a pestilence which in Annaberg alone swept away eight hundred lace-makers, the manufacture having only begun in 1561.

From Annaberg also this pleasant and lucrative employment spread to all the neighboring mountain towns, where it also became a specialty. Villagers who wished to engage in it must, according to an ordinance of 1609, pay a tax for that privilege.

In the year 1600 the number of steady lace-makers rose to ten thousand, and ere twenty years it reached fifty thousand, while about twenty thousand additional makers came in the winter season. In later times in the summer there were between thirty-five and forty thousand at work. The profits sank with the increase of workers. Whilst in the early part of the century a skillful worker could earn ten groschen a day, afterward not even if she gave herself no moment's rest from morning till evening could she earn more than six groschen and in bad years even less. So little indeed that even hard, honest work could not hinder poverty from entering the frugal little dwellings. The woven lace which in 1809 began to be made in England drove out the hand made. As is everywhere the case where machinery contends with hand work, it lowered the price of the latter to much below its value, and the people of the Hartz Mountains were obliged to engage in the unequal struggle with the new power which gives this century its individuality. Alas! they did it not in the right manner, they sought not by perfection, but by cheapness to vie with the Nottingham lace. "That this is not the right way to contend against the machine work," said Beethold Sigismund in his entertaining book on the Hartz Mountains, "is plain. The hand workers can raise its value by inventing a variety and perfection of patterns, instead of the well known though cheap curtain and cotton lace, and can in a manner not possible to the machine make Valenciennes and Brussels point. Hand work must become an Art where it is opposed to machine work. Through the discovery of photography many inferior artists lost their means of earning a living, but the fine portrait painter will never be supplanted. So it is with the point lace. The poorer workers must give way to the machine, the more skillful remain."

The people of the Hartz Mountains must carry on the contest with the low prices by the weapons of a higher Art, since they love the work of lace-making. It is among them a tradition which is handed down from generation to generation. The two womanly industries of the Hartz Mountains, the lace-making which in the sixteenth century together with the veil making came from Switzerland into the Vosges Mountains, never spread so extensively as the bobbin work.

Clara Unglemann, who was born in Bialystok and was educated in a convent at Thorn, brought with her and taught the tambour work which she had learned in the convent, when she, in 1775, as the wife of the barrister Rollain, came to Eibenstock. But she will never occupy such a place as Barbara Uttmann.

That energetic woman brought her beneficent life in peace and honor to a close. On the brass tablet which at first alone marked her grave, was inscribed, "On the 14th of January, 1575, is the honored and virtuous widow of Christoph Uttmann fallen asleep, blessed of God, on whose soul God have mercy. Her age was sixty-one years, and she had lived

to see sixty-four children and grandchildren. In the eleventh chapter of St. John, Christ says: I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

The new monument was put up in Annaberg on the 17th of October, 1834, and was of marble and iron. It shows a female figure sitting on a beehive (the symbol of industry) making lace, whilst an angel is in the act of crowning her with laurel. What was her crown for this womanly service is not clearly shown. Nevertheless the designer of the monument must have ascribed a certain value to this mark of triumph, since on the opposite side of the base, in addition to the emblems of the trade, an anchor, the wand of Mercury and a ball of goods, is this inscription:

"A worthy spirit, a cunning hand, she drew down blessings on her fatherland."

The old brass plate expressed it better. Appropriate to Barbara Uttmann were the words which the ancients applied in honor of a woman:

"Casta vixit,
Lanam fecit,
Dornum servavit."

She lived chaste, spun wool, and she kept her house.

LEIGH HUNT.

From the German.

Providence.

"Oh! trust in Providence." This is the cry
That is day after day repeated,
While some poor mortals do naught but trust,
'Till they sink out of sight, defeated.
For Faith and Works have been hand in hand
Since our beautiful work-world started,
Still going on in the good old way
And seldom if ever parted.

It is better to work at the pumps below
Than to make the terrible blunder,
Of trusting to faith and faith alone
'Till the good old ship goes under;
Though "Providence" proves a life-long friend
And scatters fair gifts, my neighbor,
The blessings fall most on the toiling brains,
And the hands that are brown with labor.

You may work and work till the sun goes down
Yet honor the good old saying,
And "trust in Providence" all the time
And never give up your praying.
But look to it well as you toil and trust
At noontide or night or morning,
That your actions never belie your words,
But add to their true adorning.

One's "trusting in Providence" doth not mean
The folding of hands together,
Or the watching of clouds for the broken rift
That may bring to us golden weather;
But it means the sowing of early seed,
Be it either in joy or sorrow,
Then *trusting* to heaven for the sun and dew
Ere the harvesting of the morrow.

MRS. M. A. KIDDER.