

# Devon Pillow Lace

Its History and  
How to Make It

A. PENDEREL MOODY

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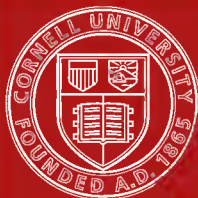
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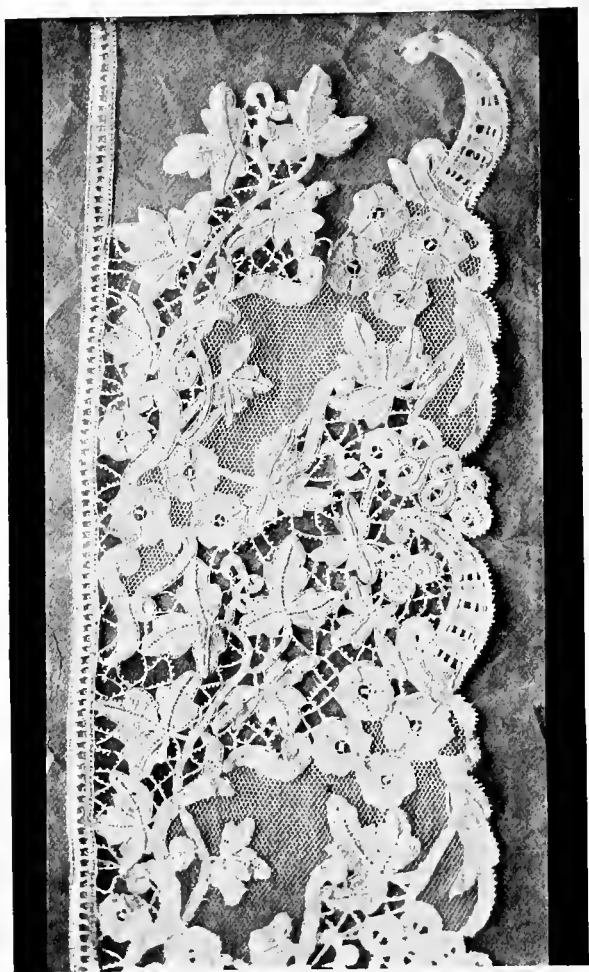
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**MODERN DEVON.**

*Designed by A. Penderel Moody.*

*Frontispiece.*



# DEVON PILLOW LACE: ITS HISTORY AND HOW TO MAKE IT

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A. PENDEREL MOODY  
=

ASSISTED IN THE INSTRUCTIONS  
BY  
A. E. TOMPKINS

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MCMVIII

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**316447**

TO

E. E. A.-W.

(WHO PLAYED THE PART OF FAIRY GODMOTHER  
TO WHAT WAS *ONCE* A LITTLE STARVED  
LACE FOUNDLING)

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED

SOUTH DEVON LACE INDUSTRY  
BEER  
*Easter, 1907*

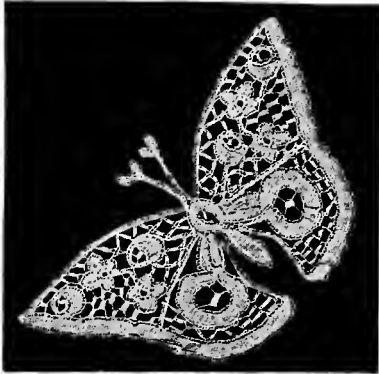


# DEVON PILLOW LACE.

## CHAPTER I.

“For the structure that we raise,  
Time is with materials filled ;  
Our to-days and yesterdays  
Are the blocks with which we build.”

—LONGFELLOW.



**R**ATHER more than six years ago a book on Devon lace must have ended in a sad confession of the steady deterioration of a craft whose position in the past was of the highest. Each old example shown in these pages would have emphasised cruelly the downfall of an industry which once ranked equally high in artistic and commercial value.

To a lace lover, the task of writing such a book would have been disheartening in the extreme; but recent years have effected such great changes, that English lace-making is to-day at that curiously interesting stage where one may stand midway between the old and the new; may, stepping into one cottage, where everything speaks of the influence of the revival, pass from the artistic masterpiece into the neighbouring room where a woman is working at a spray, as formless as it is ill proportioned. Her pattern may have been drawn originally from a floral wall-paper, odd leaves and flowers being added to bring it to the required money value; the poor maimed design has since passed through various alterations in the pricking, until the technical changes that allow of its working correctly and quickly have left little semblance to the original. 7

In answer to a question, "Lord, lov 'ee, dear," the old lady replies, "I can do a bit of linin', but I ain't no good at formin'." In quality her work is not inferior to her neighbours, but she will earn less than half. It is the "formin'" that has gone wrong and has played havoc with our English lace for eighty years and more.

In England we have very few records

relating to the actual lace-making in the country, and although the industry was important, it did not receive the attention from Government that was shown so lavishly to the same craft in other lands. While Venice, Italy, France, and Belgium framed many laws to assist the lace workers, and granted large sums for training schools, we find no such encouragement shown to our own country people beyond the occasional taxing of imported lace, or the foundation of schools by benevolent individuals.

Of the history of the lace-maker, of her, or, as was often the case, of *his* work, of the conditions under which the lace was made—why one characteristic was added and how the design altered under changing circumstances—of all this, little record has been kept, and we are forced to fall back upon supposition to a great extent. { The lace itself lives yet in our collections, in the treasuries of the great Cathedrals abroad, and in the museums; but of the English worker, history has little or nothing to say. If only the lace could speak: if we could but know the story of its birth, how infinitely more interesting it would be to us. Yet, without any such miracle, those who will not grudge time spent in mastering the first steps in the art may read a tale of by-gone years, of hope and

joy, of hardship and rebellion, written as plainly in one little piece of lace as in the clearest print.

{ A little Buckinghamshire edging with an open net filling tells of the days when Katherine of Aragon sat working and teaching among the village girls. } The fine net ground of the same piece speaks of the coming of the Huguenots, but the border design belongs to many years earlier, and was brought over by John Wycliff's early followers from Ghent. |

Sad memories cling round that little piece, and yet, though most of our lace came to us through oppression and sorrow, in a new land the workers learnt to weave happy thoughts among the threads, and the legacy they left behind has kept want from many a poor home. If the seed was sown in tears it yet brought forth joy to the many generations that have since come and gone, and as though some special blessing lay in the handling of the bobbins, it comes up again in the twentieth century, to act as a rest cure to the overwrought, and its softening, elevating influence is recognised by prison reformatories and refuges.

Leaving for awhile the records of lace as told by its stitches and design, a glance at the past



history of South Devon helps to throw a little light upon the subject.

The stronghold of the West country lace-trade may be found in Beer, Branscombe, Honiton and Sidbury. In the first two villages, and also in Sidbury, it is the exception to find a cottage without its lace pillow, and round this centre, which extended in olden days to Bath, the Honiton lace trade has flourished for over four hundred years.

Nature has made many alterations in the coast line since Colyton, now a small inland town four miles from Beer, was an important port with a large harbour. As long ago as the fourteenth century the Priory of Seaton, a little farther south, supplied two fully equipped vessels for the Calais expedition, whilst from Colyton, Sir Thomas Gate sailed for Virginia in 1609, with a fleet of sixteen vessels.

Glancing along the coast, Sidmouth seems to have been a port of almost equal size, and the neighbouring villages of Sidbury and Sidford show many signs of a past as important as that of Colyton.

The lace country proper may be said to end at Exmouth, and from the fact that the lace trade concentrated round these three

principal ports of the district, the theory of how lace came to Devon finds its proof.

As far back as the twelfth century, English seaports had been regularly visited by trading vessels from the Netherlands, who, in return for woven cloth and velvet, took back large consignments of British wool.

Bruges was the great centre of commerce for all Europe in those early days, and her lace trade received the enthusiastic support of the Government. The importance and wealth of Belgium was, in 1437, attributed in so great a measure to the sister crafts of weaving and lace-making that the order of the Golden Fleece proclaimed to the world the importance of textile handiwork. While England laid the foundation of her greatness by the sword, Belgium grew and prospered by the loom. The exchanging of designs became a matter of the finest diplomacy and an advance in art, a victory of well-nigh equal importance to the capture of a town. Ministers would confer and bargain over patterns with a zest equal to that of the English King over his war loan, and where honest effort failed to obtain the desired object, theft would frequently secure it.

The Italian Government deemed it necessary,

in these early days, to safeguard their lace by a proclamation that, should any lace worker carry on his trade in a foreign land to the detriment of the home workers, his nearest-of-kin should be imprisoned until he returned to his own country. Should he refuse to return, he was warned that measures would be taken to bring about his death.

Past histories of the Netherlands are crowded with allusions to the lace industries, their exports, advancement, and protection; and the historian specially notes that in 1449, the harbour of Sluys being blocked, the Flemish weavers who had settled in England were obliged to send their productions to Antwerp. This seems to be the first record of woven goods having been exported from England.

A little later the religious persecution in the Netherlands during the reign of the Emperor Charles V., ending in a terrible massacre under the direction of the Duke of Alva, brought many refugees to England.

Luther had made use of the art of printing to spread his new creed widely, and his teaching was taken advantage of by unscrupulous persons. He had written against the decoration of holy shrines with rich offerings, and every thief who broke into a church

excused his sacrilege under the name of a Lutheran disciple. Lawlessness raged throughout the country, and thief and Protestant zealot were judged alike.

To stem the torrent, the Emperor published most cruel and arbitrary edicts. All reading of the New Testament was forbidden, and no mention of religion was to be permitted in the home life. Persons suspected of attending religious meetings were, if men, beheaded; if women, burnt. The laws applied with almost equal severity to Protestants and Catholics, the penalty to a Catholic for sheltering a Protestant being death.

During the Duke of Alva's massacre it is estimated that twenty-five thousand persons were murdered, while fifty thousand are said to have been executed for religious belief during that one reign. A plague could not have depopulated the country more thoroughly, and it would be impossible to reckon the numbers who fled to other lands. To quote a translated extract from Schiller's "Revolt of the Netherlands":

"Fugitives whom their Fatherland rejected sought a new country on the ocean, and turned to satisfy, on the ships of their enemies, the demon of vengeance and want."

To Plymouth, Colyton, and neighbouring

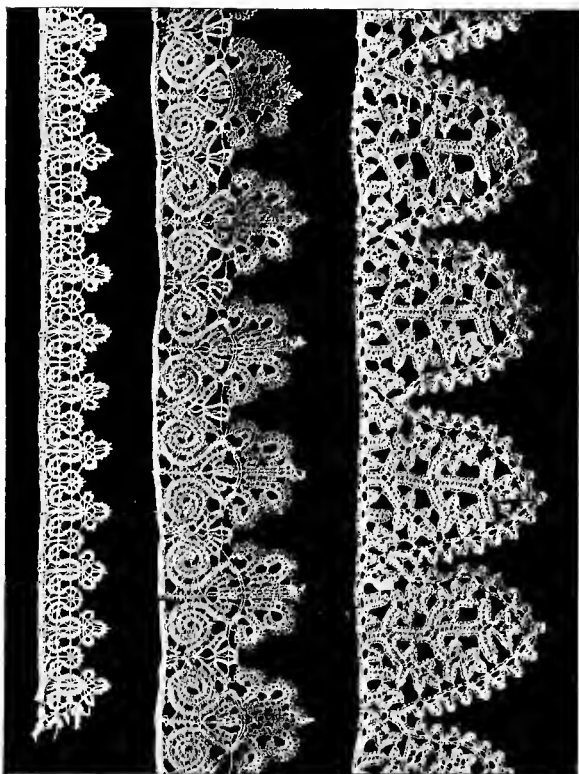
ports these fugitives came with their wives and children. From this date there are frequent notices of Flemish handicrafts gaining ground in South Devon, and the fact that the lace-making has kept so much round, what were then, the large seaports, gives weight to the suggestion that the earliest workers were the wives of these seafaring men and of the weavers.

It has been shown that at this time the Netherlands were far in advance of England in weaving, tapestry, and kindred trades. Flanders had shared with Italy in the artistic revival brought about by Cosmo de Medici. The Government had persistently encouraged the introduction of new crafts, and from time to time religious refugees of all nations settled in the provinces, bringing their various trades with them. Carving, engraving, glass blowing, and lace-making all came from Italy at different periods, and lace-making especially was so bound up with religious persecution, that it is impossible to study the subject without at the same time following the history of the Protestant Church.

To this period belongs the earliest recorded English pillow lace. Strictly speaking, it was Italian in character, having been introduced into Flanders by refugees from the north of

Italy. The lace was made of a heavy thread, the patterns that were most popular were Vand Dycked, the work was French, and the same as that which is made to-day by the Neapolitans. In England the existing patterns most like the early bone lace are the Bedfordshire, which trace back a common origin through their alliance to the Maltese. Old Italian bone lace was greatly used on fine linen cloths ornamented with drawn work, and among the many laces that have sprung from the same source the best known are Torchon, Cluny, one form of Maltese, the Neapolitan, and many of the German peasant laces. Patterns of Greek bone lace are practically identical with the Italian of the same period, and it is uncertain in which country the lace originated. Through Greece, the patterns spread to Russia, where they are still made with such small alterations that their source is easily recognised. (The lace, being made of a coarse thread, required a certain amount of pulling to bring it into shape, and for this reason the bobbins were held in the hand and the stitch consisted mainly of plaiting.) Pins were unknown when the lace was first introduced, and several writers affirm that fish-bones were made to serve that purpose,) also that the lace

PLATE 1.



EARLY BONE LACES.

*By kind permission.*

*From the Victoria and Albert Museum.*





took its name from these. If the pillows were as hard then as they are now, one wonders what particular fish provided pins that had sufficient resistance. German tradition gives sharp thorns as having been used, and these would certainly seem to have been the more serviceable.

No doubt the difficulty as regards pins led the bone lace workers to use prickings containing the least number of holes. By leaving out many of the pins in a Maltese design, and in allowing plaiting to take the place of "Whole Stitch," a very fair reproduction of the old English lace will be attained.

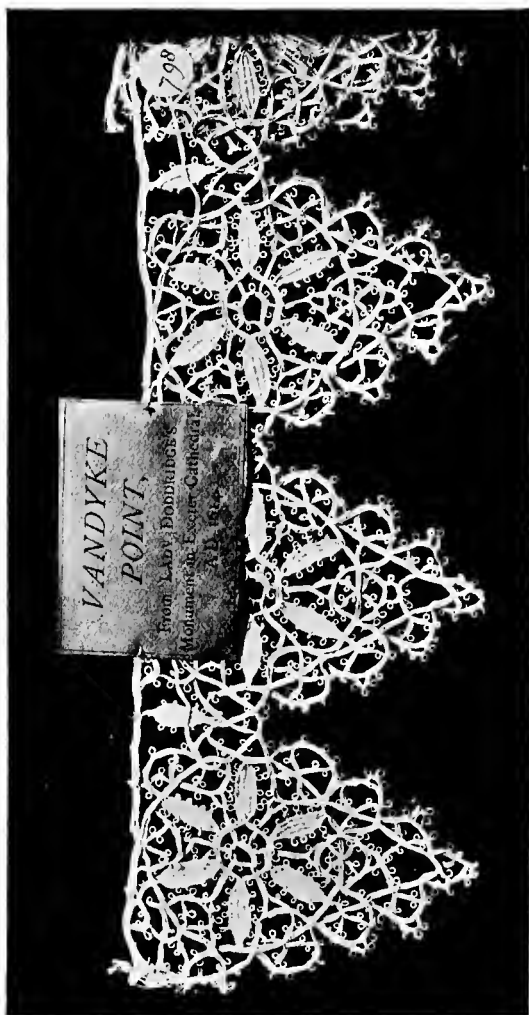
{Some old pictures show the lace thread attached to short, round bones no longer than a small reel. These are said to have been taken from a pig's foot. This heavy lace was made by men quite as much as by women, and did not need the delicate handling essential for patterns with net grounds.

The second illustration of bone lace is a copy of the design minutely represented by the sculptor on Lady Doddridge's tomb in the Exeter Cathedral. This identical piece of lace was reproduced by Mrs. Treadwin, of Exeter, and is one of several interesting experiments made

by her. The lace has been made by the needle—which may or may not have been the case with the original; and the true Greek style would seem to show that the design came from France. The date of Lady Doddridge's death given on the tomb is 1614. In 1587 the Venetian artist, Vinciolo, dedicated to the queen of Henry III. of France his book of designs for Bone Lace, giving the Greek, Venetian, and Italian forms. (The close intercourse between the two countries would admit of the book, or lace made from its designs, quickly reaching England.)

Very few of the needle bone lace designs are unsuitable for pillow lace, and in ornamenting old Italian or Spanish linen both styles may be found together. The lace in either case was very strong and worn as much for the decoration of fine house linen as for personal use, which no doubt, caused a large output. In Colyton a bone lace dealer had goods to the value of £325 17s. 9d. stolen from him by the soldiers quartered in the town (presumably to preserve the peace!) after the suppression of the Monmouth rising. Seventy years earlier Colyton Parish Register gives the marriage of William Vale of Coliford—Point-maker.

As with religious persecution the trade in



REPRODUCTION OF EARLY BONE OR POINT  
LACE DESIGN.

*By kind permission.  
From Exeter Museum.*

*To face page 12.*



Flanders decreased, so the English crafts gained by additional workers and an extending market for their goods.

The Company of Merchant Adventurers, early in Elizabeth's reign, sent, it is said, a fleet of sixty ships to the Netherlands laden with cloth manufactured by the Flemish workers in England. This is probably an exaggeration, yet there can be no doubt that English exports grew rapidly at this date, while the Netherlands, desolate with fire and sword, lost their old high position in commerce.

During the reign of Elizabeth lace was general as a dress ornament for the English nobility and gentry. Katherine of Aragon, during the long, sad time spent at Ampthill previous to her divorce, had gathered the village girls around her, while she taught them the open net grounds that would have been used in Spain. Their descendants still lovingly call patterns and stitches after her, using what was no doubt a pet name "Cat." Probably "Kate," as we should call it now, is a pronunciation of later date. "Go thy ways, Kat," says Henry VIII. in old copies of the play, and it seems the Spanish Caterina only became "Katherine" in the history book of later years.

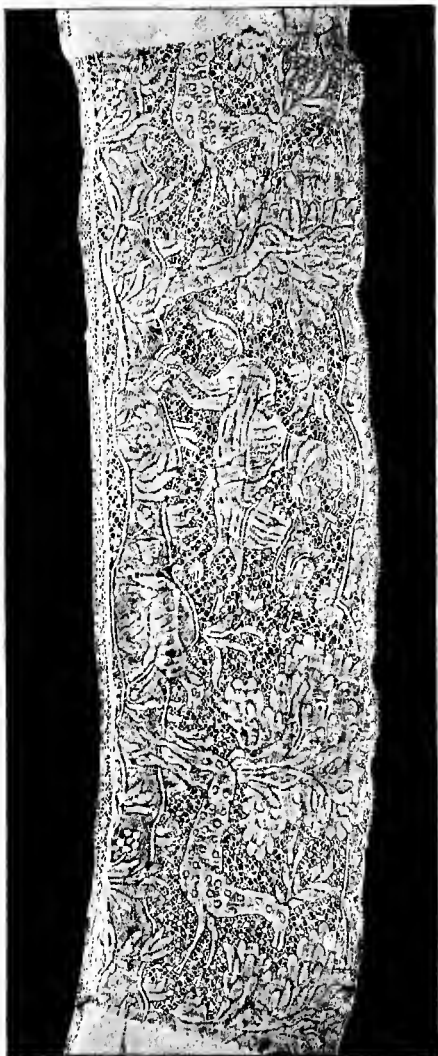
The same workers who plied their bobbins under Katherine's instruction were all too soon called upon to work for her successor, and the Clandon crown lace worked for Anne Boleyn may easily have been designed by Katherine. Elizabeth probably inherited a love for lace from her mother, and every year of her reign marked some development in the art.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew brought the Huguenots to England with new methods of grounding and a finer style, so that the complicated squares and triangles of early bone lace competed with Point d'Angleterre and Mechlin. For awhile the style of dress and the stiff ruffs kept the soft net laces in the background, but notwithstanding, the output of every kind of lace was considerable, and to Elizabeth's reign in particular belong the English "Dentelles de la Chasse."

Among the lace-makers of the period must be numbered Mary Queen of Scots, who excelled in this art as well as at the embroidery frame. In his delightful "Lace Book," Mr. Hudson Moore writes that of the patterns designed by her, sixteen were of four-footed beasts and 124 of birds. Her letters are still extant, written in captivity, and asking for more materials to work with.



PLATE 3



DENTELLE DE LA CHASSE.

*Kindly lent from a private collection*

*To face page 15.*



The Queen's bobbins were sold at a London auction some few years ago, since when they seem to have disappeared; but a spinning wheel, made for her by her cousin, Peter Stuart, is still in use at the Tilberthwaite Weaving Industry, near Coniston. How strangely the ups and downs of life may follow one's household gods! The spinning wheel is as treasured to-day in its humble home as it was by the poor prisoner of Fotheringay, and many girls have come down from the tiny white cottages scattered about the mountain passes, to have their first lessons on it before starting their own wheels at home. Queen Mary's workbox, and a little sample of her needlework, are still shown at Holyrood Palace.

The example of "Dentelle de la Chasse" is very likely to have been similar in character to that made by the Queen. At the court of France, Valenciennes, vrai and fausse, would have been well known. We cannot claim the specimen as English lace, and, indeed, Valenciennes never had a fair trial in England; but it seems probable that while the Queen of Scots and her maids would naturally make the lace after the French fashion, their patterns would be copied and adapted later on

to suit the English method. The little birds and beasts shown in these pages are known to most of the Devon lace workers, and it is probable that they are a remnant of this by-gone fashion. In needle lace plenty of old English specimens of hunting scenes are to be found, but no positive proofs seem to be forthcoming as to bobbin work. At the Victoria and Albert Museum, at South Kensington, there is an excellent example of either Flemish or Italian lace—most probably Flemish—showing floral sprays interspersed with figures and peacocks.

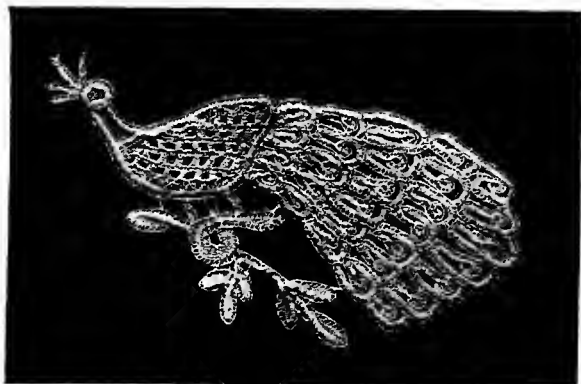
This bird has been made very elaborately in Devon; the method of covering in the tail is very old, and, though used in Belgium, is seldom seen in modern Honiton. Most probably this is one of the oldest designs of its class. The specimen shown was made near Budleigh Salterton.

Queen Henrietta Maria was another enthusiastic royal lace-maker, and her ardour called forth Sir Charles Sidney's witty epigram, "The Royal Knotter"—

"Who, when she rides in coach abroad,  
Is always knotting threads."

The Queen is said to have introduced the symbolic pin lace used for babies' caps, and

PLATE 4.





which show sometimes only a tiny plant with two little leaves, or the full-grown Tree of Life with many branches, according to the babe's importance.

By the reign of Charles I. large ruffs had to give way to the new fashion of flowing ringlets adopted by the cavaliers. With this style turn-down collars of home-spun linen were found more suitable, trimmed with the geometrical bone lace, Flemish pillow point, and some of the heavier Devon lace showing a strong Belgian influence. The finer old Devon or Point d'Angleterre laces are seen principally on cravats or sleeve ruffles at this period. >

The favourite lace of the Martyr King seems to have been Flemish, and this was the trimming that edged the simple linen collar that he wore to his execution.

It may be that he chose the utmost simplicity in dress for his martyrdom; certainly nothing could have been less costly than the simple semi-Italian design worked in heavy linen thread of similar quality to the home-spun collar. >

## CHAPTER II.

“Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And Hope without an object cannot live.”

—COLERIDGE.



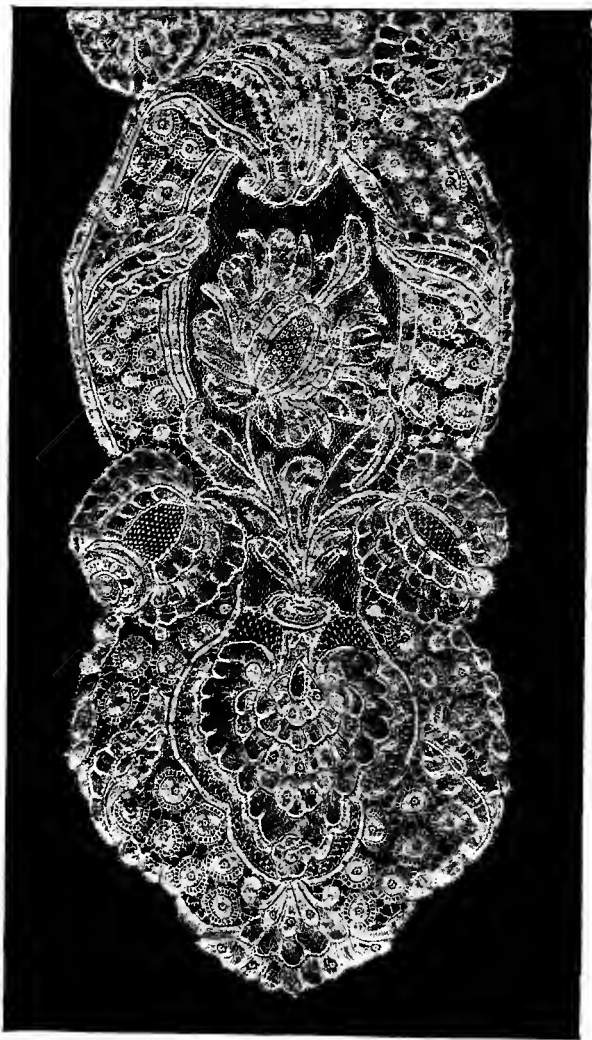
THOUGH the Commonwealth restrained the excessive use of lace, the Restoration brought back the fashion only the more extravagantly for the temporary check.

(During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English lace-making was at its zenith, not only as regards the great number of workers employed, both men and women, but also for excellence of quality and design.)

West Country lace was known as Bath-Brussels, and it is still a matter of controversy as to where the actual difference is to be found between this particular production made in the two countries at that period. Not only



PLATE 5.



POINT D'ANGLETERRE LAPPET.  
*Kindly lent from a private collection.*

*To face page 19.*



did they closely resemble each other in stitches and design, but confusion became worse confounded when, in order to avoid the tax levied by the King on all lace imported into the country, Brussels lace was smuggled into England and sold as Point d'Angleterre.

How general the wearing of fine lace had become may be gathered from some of the old records giving instances of the seizure of contraband goods. For instance, in 1678 the *Marquis of Nesmond* captured a vessel laden with Flemish lace and containing a cargo of 744,953 ells of lace, to say nothing of handkerchiefs, caps, fans, etc.

Cosmo de Medici, the third duke of that name, was greatly struck by the quantities of lace made in the West Country at the time of his travels in England during 1669. The chronicles of his visit are preserved in one of the Italian museums, and the following extract is taken from a translation published in England some fifty years ago:—

“There is not a cottage in all the county (Devon), nor in that of Somerset, where white lace is not made in great quantities; so that not only the whole kingdom is supplied with it, but it is exported in great abundance.”

It is interesting to recall that the primary

cause of the tax was to provide funds for the establishment of our first standing regiment, the King's Guards, at Chatham. No doubt the tax brought added prosperity to the English workers, even though they were unable to flatter themselves that the action was that of a paternal Government solely anxious to increase the prosperity of the home trade.

Both the examples shown of Point d'Angleterre belong to a later period than the reign of Charles II. The ribbon work crossing and enclosing the centre motif reached England from a school of design which flourished during the reign of Louis XV.

In the majority of cases this lace—the lappet in particular would be credited to Brussels—rather on the principle of “When in doubt say Brussels,” which seems a favourite way out of a lace expert's dilemma. Brussels has gathered together so many styles of lace during past generations that the chances are ten to one that the lace was made there once.

This special lappet has been chosen for illustration because it contains only two stitches that have not been made in Devon within the past five years, and even these two are familiar to all who understand old Devon lace.

The method of working is identical with that of the present day, and the little cut-works, small white dots outlining the circular ornaments in the ribbon, have always been held in special favour by West Country people. The cut-work is almost the only trace they retain in their patterns of the old bone lace.

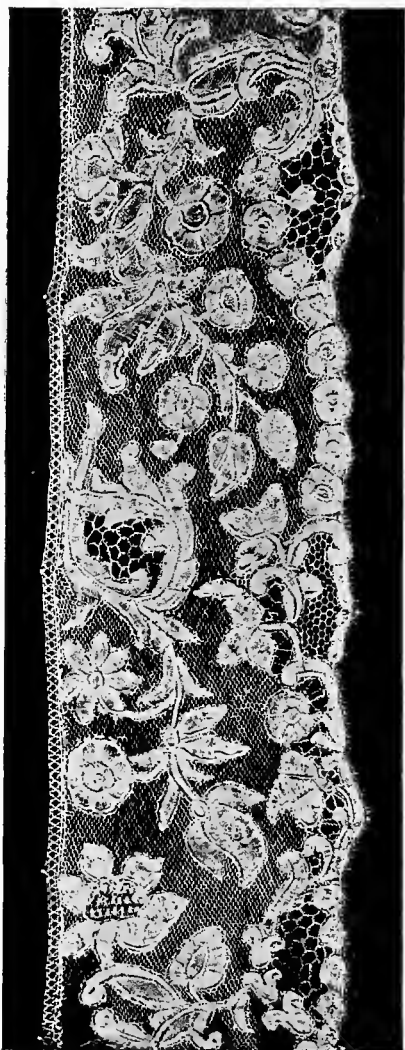
The fine raised work is described in the chapter dealing with the technical side, and will not be new to those who have advanced at all far into the intricacies of lace-making. The only stitches that would puzzle the worker of to-day—that is to say, a woman who has advanced with the times—would be the net ground and the “snow” filling in the centre flower. Several nets have been revived in Devon of late years, but the favoured one is trolly, which is the same as Buckinghamshire.

If the original lace lappet was to be compared with old Valenciennes, a lace which during the same period resembled it closely in design, it would be found that there were many dissimilar points, but one in particular which confines the lace only to Brussels or English work. The *réseau* of the Valenciennes is made simultaneously with the pattern, the bobbins from the net ground passing by degrees through the solid work one couple at a time.

The lappet, on the contrary, shows on the wrong side, places where to join the already completed sprays, the worker has fastened her threads into the near edge, twisted them loosely across, and started again from the farther side. In other places she has worked the *réseau* to the side of a leaf, joined the last pair of bobbins there, and then worked back again. A magnifying glass will show little knots in the edge where one of the net bobbins has been looped through and secured. "Toad in the hole" filling, which is shown in Plate 13, is an elaborated modern form of the dainty little filling which divides the centre ornament out of which the flower springs, from the ribbon encircling it. The lace lappet was used as a bow with flowing ends to complete the garniture of an elaborate head-dress. They were in vogue over a long period, and were as fashionable at the court of the Empress Josephine, as during the early part of the eighteenth century. The lappets were of different lengths, which accorded to the rank of their owner, only princesses of the blood wearing those of full length. The owner's rank was shown by her lace from very early days, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ladies of the Italian royal or noble



PLATE 6.



POINT D'ANGLETERRE.

*Kindly lent from a private collection.*

*To face page 23.*

families each had a special topping to their flounces, which belonged as exclusively to that family as did their coat-of-arms.

The second illustration is very characteristic of Point d'Angleterre, since it contrasts the fine net with both hexagonal picots and brides. The rather open net filling enclosed by ivy leaves in the border has been added at a later date, no doubt to replace some broken picots. This little flaw is specially interesting, as it represents the Devon net of the early nineteenth century, and is the ground that will probably be used for the fine lace of the future. < Ivy leaves figure very often in Devon work, and the general style of the lace would date it as belonging to the reign of George II. < However desirous one may be of claiming all the honours of a special lace for one's own country, it must still be confessed that it is extremely improbable that all the Point d'Angleterre used abroad was made in England. During the reign of Louis XV. it ranked high among the fashionable laces, and an instance is given of the extravagance of the Princess de Condé, who ordered that the draperies of her bath should be adorned with this very inappropriate garniture. >

Besides the fine Point d'Angleterre workers,

there were also some who made a much cheaper lace that was used for fine underclothing and for the trimming of muslin caps and collars. It was called Trolly, from a Flemish derivation of something round. The lace was worked right across the pattern, which entirely encircled the pillow. With the revival of Trolly lace in the Midlands many of the regular Devon patterns have been re-named as Buckinghamshire, and it is difficult to say with absolute conviction where the difference came in. Devon had one very inexpensive Trolly pattern, which is unlike any Midland lace, but is closely related to Suffolk. The decoration of this lace was a collection of small holes, arranged to form a scallop and finished with only two or three rows of narrow net above. The general effect was poor, and the patterns not worth reviving. Other Trolly patterns which may still be found in the cottages are of much better lace, but not in any way distinctive.

The stitches of Queen Katherine and of the Lille workers are not to be found in Devon Trolly, and the similarity to Suffolk would lead one to suppose the lace took its origin from some Flemish design now extant.

In the reign of Queen Anne, Mechlin lace



with prim little borders came to be much used for ruffles, together with Binche and Valenciennes laces, which would be apart from our subject only that each made its influence felt on the designs of the period.

The fashion for Mechlin may readily be traced in the Devon designs, and a bordering of small roses with stems running upwards all alike, was a style that copied it closely, and is used in Honiton at the present day. Mechlin has always stood by itself as one of the finest and most expensive laces, and somebody came in for a bargain when a ruff of that lace worn by Queen Caroline for her coronation was knocked down at the auction of George IV.'s effects for £2.

↳The introduction of machine work dealt a heavy blow upon the fine net laces of the Midlands, from which those centres have never entirely recovered. At first the Devon workers were equally hopeless, the net makers had lost their employment entirely, and their work, so far as the West Country was concerned, became for a while a lost art. The decrease in the numbers of workers was rapid, and for a time the industry was completely dislocated.)

The machine net was invented by an Englishman as far back as 1768, but the output was

small, and the net, being made on a stocking frame, was of no great width. Early in the nineteenth century the looms were improved, and in 1837 a Frenchman invented the flowered nets which were still more harmful to the real lace trade.

◁ An old book on the textile trades of Derbyshire gives a flamboyant account of the happy incident which brought a new life to the Devon Lace. The machine net manufacturers, finding that the growth of their trade was much behind that of France, petitioned Queen Adelaide to accept a dress made of a heavy silk tulle, ornamented with needle darning. The particular lace is best known by the name of Blonde, and originating in France, was afterwards made in villages round Exeter. After dealing with the various technical points, and lauding to the skies this new invention in terms which are an education in the art of self advertisement, the writer goes on to describe the dress:—

“The pattern was made in strips of nine inches, and consisted of an elegant star having a large open work in the middle, beautifully worked with the needle, encircled with a series of roses. The whole appearance of the dress was brilliant and absolutely dazzled the eye.

Her Majesty took the earliest and most effectual method to introduce the article to the notice of her court by wearing it at the juvenile ball given by their Majesties on May 24th, 1831, in honour of the Princess Victoria of Kent."

This Blonde dress probably started the idea of applying Honiton springs on the thread nets, for we next hear of the Queen wearing the first Honiton appliqué dress, the names of the flowers which formed the decorations each commencing with one letter of her name. This second dress was equally successful, and the Honiton sprig makers, though now considerably decreased in numbers, again found fairly regular employment. >

Other lace-makers had to thank this Queen for help at a critical time, for the Maltese lace made in Bedfordshire was introduced by her. The cottage workers seem to have appealed especially to her simple, generous nature, and the warm heart that suggested the appliqué net dress still thought of their welfare, even when ill health necessitated absence from England. At Malta the Queen collected new patterns for those at home, and it seems as if she particularly chose a lace which could not be readily reproduced by machine. This came about after the death of William IV.,

when the lace trade was well on the downward path, and although great quantities of the Bedford lace is still made, the patterns need a thorough overhauling before the upper classes would be inclined to buy it for anything but a secondary trimming.

There are still plenty of stories to be told about the lace made for Queen Victoria's coronation, of the shortness of the time allowed to complete the work, and the oddly amateur methods used, owing to which a number of spots were continually dropping off the blue paper on which they were arranged, through the fine pins attaching them cracking through the paper. Although no girl under fifteen was allowed to help on the lace, some children seem to have been permitted the honour of picking up the fallen spots. It is odd how so frequently it is the least important point that fixes itself on the mind; the memory of these spots, how they were always a different number each time they were counted, the various adventures they passed through, and the many times they were re-fixed, all comes back vividly to-day to the old women (once the children who were allowed in on sufferance), though they are very hazy as to the appearance of the completed whole. Of the actual lace-

workers who helped, one is still alive at Beer, but there can be very few left. It is difficult to know for certain, since women were employed over a large area. Taking the age limit as



fifteen years, and the date of the work 1837-8, the surviving workers would not be less than eighty-four, and it is unlikely that many were engaged so young. 7

The low water mark of Devon lace had been reached in 1901, when in the early spring the

writer went from cottage to cottage, telling of work that was to come. It was pathetic to see how eager all were in asking the same question: Would the old times really come back, and would another Queen help? The answer came in a few short months, and it passed through the village that Queen Alexandra had asked that all ladies attending the coronation should, if possible, wear goods of British and Irish manufacture. The King's lace came among many other valued orders to Devon, and, as if gratitude needed still further expression, one woman worked her Majesty's portrait in lace and framed it in her cottage window. >

The past few years have been eventful ones, and the trade has been steadily reviving. The future seems to be brightening, but the introduction of machine lace was a blow that hand work is never likely to entirely recover from. Changing customs have had their share in throwing back the work, and all fine industrial crafts have suffered from the depression, directly or indirectly, due to the demand for cheap and varied modern productions. A rapidly changing fashion in dress made it inexpedient to buy fine hand woven materials. A modern generation found no

time to wash and mend the dainty caps and kerchiefs which were the pride of their grandmothers. Two guineas' worth of trolly lace to frill a baby's cap was impossible, when it would only have to be sent to the outside laundry—regrettable indeed from the artistic point of view, though a thing to be desired on behalf of the happy tumbled baby, whose finery could easily be replaced for a few shillings, very different to the toilet of the solemn little over-dressed men and women whom Vandyck took such delight in painting.

For several generations the lady of the manor has ceased to superintend her needlewoman, neither has she now the time to do so, and a decreasing skill in needlework has gradually crept through each class. A craving for constant variety and, among the poorer classes, for the cheapness of machine goods, has left its mark upon home life, and where the mother now finds little use for her needle it is not to be wondered at if the girls pay little attention to their school teaching.

The introduction of machinery even for home sewing seems to have made a great difference in the life of a gentlewoman. The purely mechanical skill required to work the machine has tempted her to drop entirely her

own fine needlework. It became exceptional some twenty years ago to find a woman of position who cared to give up time to work requiring fine execution.

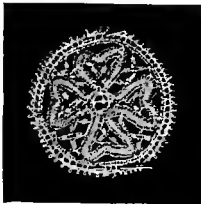
Recently a change for the better has taken place; with the rush of life, it has gradually become necessary for women to return to the restfulness of this and similar work. Hospital nurses, lady doctors, women of every class from the highest in the land, have felt the need at times of some quiet occupation, and have gone back refreshed to the busy world from the musical tinkling of the bobbins or the soft whirr of the spinning wheel. At a time when so much is written of the return to the simple life, a subject made important by the nervous over-strain of the age, nature seems to have sided with fashion in returning to a restful handicraft, thereby establishing a rest cure of her own. A worried, overwrought mind communicating itself to the fingers will snap the fine thread; self-control and patience are the qualifications without which it is impossible to attempt lace work.



## CHAPTER III.

“A small thing may make Beauty,  
Yet Beauty is no small thing.”

MICHELANGELO.



WATCH MAT.

WITH the lace revival in the West Country expression has been given to the feeling that a more general name is necessary for the work than that of “Honiton,” which would seem to confine the lace-making to one particular town, somewhat to the disadvantage of other centres in the county. Sidbury, Branscombe, Beer, and Otterton are only a few of the villages which contain as many as, if not more, workers than the town of Honiton, and the present revival offers a good opportunity for re-nomination.

The special name of Honiton was given to the lace made in this district as far back as three hundred years, though it has been known equally well as Devon and Point d’Angleterre.

In his "View of Devonshire," Westcote gives the following quaintly-worded information:—

"Here is made abundance of bone lace, a pretty toy now greatly in request, and therefore the town may say with Merry Martial,

"*Ille ego sum nulli nugarum laude secundus,*"

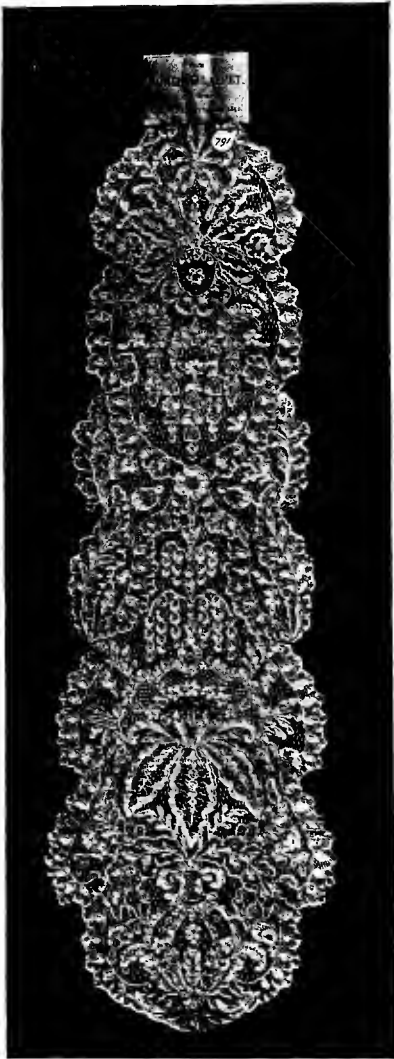
or translated,

"In praise for toys such as this,  
Honiton second to none is."

But there is stronger reason for reverting to the name of Devon. Some sixty years ago, Mrs. Palliser (whose history of lace has long stood chief among the many English books since written on the subject), when visiting some of the villages, taught the women to make Venetian needle stitches. Mrs. Treadwin, the well-known lace expert, whose business is still carried on in Exeter, added to the teaching already given, and at a later period Braid lace in Devon evolved from this foundation. Abroad, and in Spain especially, valuable laces had been made which combined the work of the loom with that of the needle. A length of tape or braid was first woven, then tacked into a given pattern. The braid was pulled into shape with a running thread, and sometimes heavily outlined in button-holing. The special spaces left for the purpose were filled in with fancy needle stitches,



PLATE 7



HONITON LAPPET. *From Exeter Museum.*

*Made under the direction of Mrs. Treadwin for the Exhibition of 1851.*

*To face page 35.*

being held together by picot bars or brides. The fillings were, in many cases, identical with Point de Venise, but by making use of tape instead of working the heavy part of the design entirely with the needle, the lace was made with greater rapidity. Of late years the Devonshire workers have found a market for a cheaper style of lace than that made on the pillow, and have employed machine-made braid for very similar work to Spanish tape lace. By degrees this has come to be called Honiton lace, and is best known by that name in the United States and in France. The work, however good, is only partly real, and takes a lower standard than any pillow lace. It is a very common thing to hear an American woman say, "I don't want Honiton lace; I want something *real!*"

The braid lace is sometimes known as Honiton point, but there again comes the difficulty that the title "Point" causes confusion. "Point de Flandres" is entirely pillow made; "Point de Venise" belongs to the needle only. The meaning of Point is merely "stitch," and therefore applies equally to either class, though it has come to be generally understood as applying to needle lace alone.

In Buckinghamshire the name of "Point"

is given to a fine bobbin net lace in distinction to various other types that have crept in, such as Torchon and Maltese. It is possible that needle lace was a part of the Devon output in earlier days, but more likely the frequent allusions to Point lace in the old records referred to what afterwards was known as Trolly, the net lace that has already been referred to.

It has certainly done the pillow lace harm to be confounded with the braid lace, since of late years the latter has been made all over the country, and has become so shoddy and cheap that it can hardly be reckoned seriously. The best English braid work of the present time is still made round Branscombe, where the workers put very uncommon and beautiful stitches into their patterns, which are worthy of better materials.

With the increase of weaving as a home industry, it is probably only a question of a few years before real hand-woven braids will be made in this district, and one very fair reproduction of Spanish Point has already been produced.

With changing periods Devon lace has been known under various names, each of which has signified some alteration in the type. The name of Honiton has been used very generally,

but seems of later years to have become typical for the sprigged lace of the early nineteenth century.

The English lace industry has felt the decrease of trade in far greater proportion than Italy, France, and Belgium. In the last two countries the manufacture of machine lace has been carried on to a wider extent than in England, therefore the machines cannot be held entirely responsible; and France suffered severely in addition by the Revolution, which for a time put an entire stop to the making of the more costly laces. In some measure the loss of trade in England may be accounted for by the poorer classes being unused to wearing lace, and while for a period orders from the gentry were falling off, the peasant women of France and Belgium continued to buy for the lace-trimmed caps and aprons that still hold their own in the less frequented districts on the Continent. This may seem to have been a small matter, but no woman is more particular as to the quality and pattern of the lace on her *fête* bonnet than a French peasant, who will save for years rather than be content with secondary work. If the orders were few the quality was not allowed to deteriorate; therefore, while laces such as Alençon, worn

only by the wealthy, came to a standstill during those stormy years, the fishwives round Dieppe kept the trade alive with their orders on the coast. The lace most frequently found on their caps is very like Lille, but the oldest women still call it Bruges, and this is only another instance of the changing style of lace in different periods. The Lille and the Buckinghamshire all coming originally from Bruges keep the characteristics of the lace as it was in the sixteenth century, while to-day in that city the name applies only to a type similar to Honiton guipure, but made in a coarser thread and with a more conventional style of design.

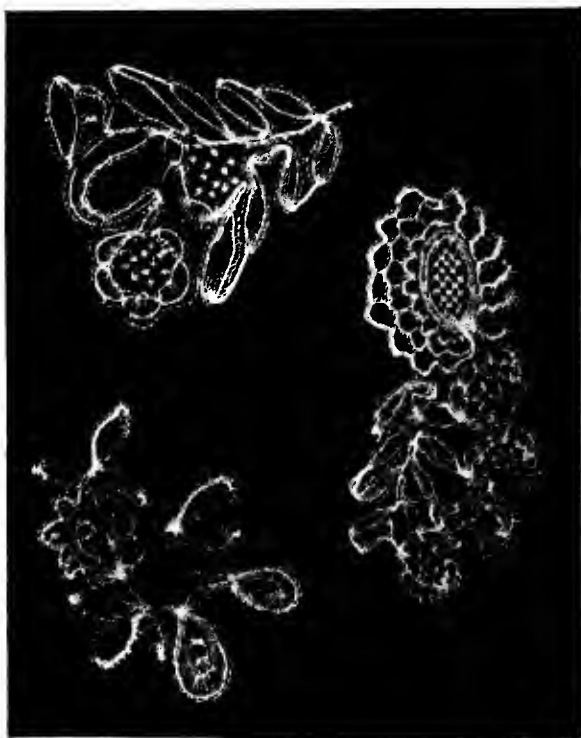
Of much greater importance than the patronage of the country people was the work of the foreign convent. The nuns never relaxed their teaching of the poorer classes, and women of refinement skilled in design were to be found in most religious communities.

The influence of the nuns kept up the old high standard of design, and as the conditions of trade improved large orders came to be placed in their hands by wholesale houses, who felt more certain of artistic results from *them* than would have been the case had the work been left entirely to the cottage workers.





PLATE 8.



OLD COTTAGE SPRIGS.

It is only when one is brought into close touch with the English lace-maker that it is possible to realise the importance of bringing the work of the two classes together.

During the panic following on the introduction of machinery, the trained expert agent, who designed for a large area and earned a good income by the clever arrangement of the sprays, threw up his work, and to a certain extent his place has never been filled.

When, on the accession of Queen Victoria, the trade had every opportunity of reviving, the lace-makers were already scattered or working for the many little dealers who had come to the front in the meanwhile. The prospects were not good enough to tempt the lace specialist, and the London trade was easily satisfied with foreign work now obtained with greater ease.

There was no convent school to bring the two classes of workers into co-operation. The lady of the manor no longer superintended the patterns of her protégées, and while under the convents Limerick, Irish Point, Carrickmacross, and crochet grew steadily in Ireland, the output of English lace was small and poor.

With the decreasing price given for appliqué lace, less care was taken with the arrangement,

and bad design hurt the industry even more than the absence of overlooking and expert teaching. Orders were carried out at a less cost, and many cottage women would start a little business, starting on a capital of £5 or £10. Pattern prickings were retained by the cottagers, pricked from and altered until all value from the artistic side was lost. Left to themselves to provide new patterns, the cottage agent or lace school teacher would seek inspiration from everyday objects. Snails, slugs, frying-pans, catspaws, turkey tails, bullocks' hearts, shells, ferns, feathers, even peacocks, found themselves immortalised in lace. Before this, only the actual making of the lace was carried out by the cottage worker, while skilled artists drew the design and, in the case of sprig laces, arranged the sprays in their final order. The patterns were jealously guarded, continually renewed, and pricked by a special hand.

When preparing exhibits for the exhibition of 1851, Mrs. Treadwin writes in her book of her difficulty in getting even one really good piece of lace ready. The women had already found that the lace buying public, spoiled by machine work, cared little for quality provided it was cheap, and "rag"

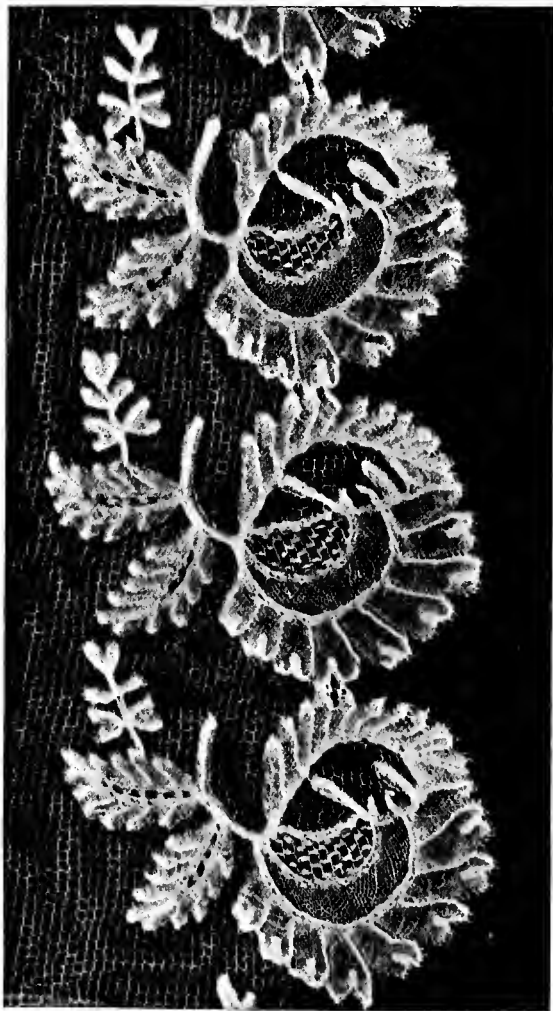
lace, quickly sold, brought in a better return for the moment. Mrs. Treadwin found it necessary to keep all her workers for the exhibition immediately under her own supervision, and even so, complains of her work being restricted by these conditions, so that it is evident that the completed whole fell short of her ideal, though it is universally praised by the Press notices of the period. The specimen given on Plate 7 was specially made for this exhibition, and speaks for itself. The cottagers themselves gave the name of "rag" to the shoddy work, but so general was the use of the term that it ceased to imply reproach. Rag lace is made with as few bobbins as will serve to hold the work together. The bars joining the sprays are loosely plaited, worked without pins and pearls. The work is generally left half finished, the fastening off of each couple of bobbins is dispensed with, the whole bunch is given a sharp twist and tied round with two outside bobbins before being cut off. In a little time the loose threads work their way through and begin to unravel. The thin leaves show open places where the foundation threads slip apart, and the least strain will bring them out of place. If the illustrations are seen under a magnifying glass,

it will be noticed that the texture for whole stitch is like that of fine linen, and for this reason the stitch is sometimes called Cloth Stitch. Such a piece of work, conscientiously made, may be safely bought as an investment, only to gain in value as years go by. The rag lace serves its purpose only until it is found out. The general shoddiness shows itself almost as forcibly in the coarseness of the bad thread.

The absolute necessity for a good design followed by a careful pricking is shown in the illustration (Plate 7) of a Honiton rose spray. It was a little quicker for the worker to join a leaf here and there instead of finishing off and starting afresh. The joins have become broader, and half a dozen prickings at least must have descended since the original copy was made, until the last is contracted and altered beyond recognition. The little spray on the left, which has such a very rakish appearance, must have been drawn to fill up some particular space. The artist (!) no doubt rested satisfied with the attainment of that object. The rose edging with its four little buds is well known in all the districts, and is excellent only in being a strong, firm border, a point often neglected by the trained artist.



PLATE 9.



AN OLD VILLAGE DESIGN.

*To face page 43.*



The illustration (Plate 9) is given as being a curious example of very beautiful work belonging to the first half of the nineteenth century. The design is most extraordinary, and it is difficult to imagine what the worker had in her mind when she attached the little odd spray growing out of the top leaf.

The village worker has usually no idea of using a pencil other than with a ruler to draw in the ornamental centres known as fillings, or the brides, and toppings of her work. This is locally known as "lining." Her only way of taking a new copy is to lay the old imperfect one over the new material and prick through. A careless worker will make new holes in the working, and her mistakes get handed down in the next copy, also each repeat is a trifle smaller than the original. In fine Buckinghamshire lace prickings the contractions are so strongly marked that in three generations the patterns become quite imperfect, and the only method to ensure accuracy is to retain for purposes of reproduction simply the first impression, always returning to that one for the new copies, and under no circumstances allowing it to be worked from.

Here and there in the Devon villages one may chance upon an accurate pricking, but

so seldom that it is usually one that has been unworked for years.

It may be that the payment of workers by the Truck system helped to decrease their numbers. In many cases the women speak very strongly in its favour, but the advantage must have lain far more with the tradesman than the employee. A woman still remembers the disappointment when, as a young girl, she worked hard for a winter dress, and pictured it in one particular colour, eventually being paid with a length of a dull drab or brown which no entreaties could change to blue or red. Workers in outlying districts had many a rough walk home, late at night, laden with provisions received in payment for their work. Saturday was pay-day, and at Branscombe about fifty years ago the quantity of work brought in to the agent was such that, with the valuing, followed by choice of grocery and haberdashery as payment, it was often past eleven at night before the shop closed. It took a considerable amount of courage, coupled with real want, to bring the women and girls back late at night through the rough lanes, each of which had its own ghost story. One wonders if it was for the special comfort of these women that the curate of Beer, the

Nonconformist minister of Branscombe, and a Catholic priest are reported to have held a service to exorcise the devil out of Bovey Lane. That the means employed were successful to some extent may be gathered from the verbal statement of a woman who, not being present at the meeting, had the good fortune to see the evil one fall into Branscombe Bay in a ball of fire! The black rabbit which still (?) haunts Bovey Lane is of small account compared with past terrors.

The ghostly inhabitants of these lanes could have been laid equally effectively by Jack Rattenbury and his smuggling crew, had those gentlemen not found it more convenient to add to the horrors of the dark which probably originated when the Duke of Monmouth held his secret councils at Bovey House, and found it desirable to keep curious folk abed at hours when their company was not required.

The small cottage agents still put out work on the same lines as was customary fifty years ago. A customer will order a collar to cost 30s., and the agent will begin to figure out what can be done for that sum. For a bordering, perhaps twenty-four turkeys' tails at so much each; an elaborate rose spray for

the centre of the back; four sunflowers will fill in the vacant spaces on either shoulder, sprays of ivy leaves will be massed together for the points. So far, in spite of the varied assortment, there is a certain quaintness about the collar, and filled in at this point it might have escaped severe criticism. Unluckily, there still remains a small sum to be accounted for, so some flies, frying-pans, and cats'-paws are introduced, and if the customer happens to be specially favoured, a cock robin may sit erect amid the general confusion. It is not always the case that he is erect! Attention was called to this when a very wonderful work of art was being shown off and he lay upon his back, but criticism was disarmed by the statement that he was *made* all right, only he must be looked at from a different point of view. Could anything point more clearly to the need of co-operation with the educated artist? In Belgium, in a convent school, such a mixture would have been impossible either to-day or for years back.

Even though the 'fifties showed a great output in a secondary class of lace, still the twenty-five thousand lace workers who were employed in the reign of Charles II. had dwindled to as many hundreds. The work<sup>s</sup> put out was

typical Honiton, a conglomerate mass of sprays, leaves, and meaningless curves made by different workers and all joined together in a mosaic form, quite innocent of any system of arrangement. Little attempt was made at design unless for the applied work.

Most of the fine old lace stitches had been forgotten, and it is of interest to note that Mrs. Treadwin's book, published soon after the great exhibition, shows only four different fillings in the illustrations, which were practically the only ones used during the Victorian era.

With the spread of education one of the great drawbacks is passing away. In small out-lying districts all orders had to be personally given out, since many of the recipients could neither read nor write. Cheques are still an unfathomable mystery to many of the smaller agents, and a customer who sent one in payment received it back covered with an explanation to a passing tradesman who had failed to cash it, together with his remarks on the subject, and the suggestion that the bank must have gone away, since it was not known in his part.

One last reason for the decline of the lace trade, perhaps the strongest reason of all—the

want of knowledge and of common sense on the part of the buying public. Where the buyer was satisfied with trash and the worker could make a little more by supplying it, the latter could not be blamed. It is comforting to be able to speak in the past tense, for although this is dying hard, yet it is dying. With the revival, design is being used to provide the extra payment to the worker. At first those whose eyes are entirely untrained in form and balance find it difficult to understand why a well-drawn collar, with its arrangement of fine net and open brides, its contrasts of light and shade, should receive more money for less work. They would be still more surprised did they know that by the profit on the design alone it was possible for the business to pay the higher wage demanded by the artist, to whom was due the inception of the new work, and who would finally overlook its completion.

The wonderful changes that have been brought about in the last five years are in every way encouraging. The classes held by the County Council have re-taught stitches long forgotten. More highly trained teachers are able to pick out old stitches for themselves, and cheaper travelling has brought the lace

museums of Bruges and Brussels within their reach. It is not to be expected that the County Council classes will continue indefinitely, though it has already been proved that the women slip back to their old ways on the classes being withdrawn. What is wanted is the co-operation of the two classes of workers. The fact that more highly trained women are already taking up the work professionally is one of the most hopeful signs of the revival.

The value of good designs has long been insisted upon by our schools of art, but the lace worker can have been seldom present to suggest such alterations as were absolutely necessary for the correct 'working' of the pattern. With the advent in South Devon of the trained artist—herself a practical worker—there should be little excuse for inaccurate drawings.

A lace is made to-day in Italy that bears the name of Michael Angelo as its designer, and the purity of the patterns belonging to most English lace of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lead one to believe that they had also their origin from the pencils of leading artists. Unluckily, the deplorable lack of interest shown towards the lace workers

of the past generation has led to many of the old traditions having died out without record. It is a little sad to think that while England can show old lace as beautiful in its form as a picture, the artist remains unrecognised and forgotten.

Philanthropic help has been of great service in the past, and has kept the better class of work from almost dying out, but it is a false basis to work upon for any industry that has sufficient life to establish itself on a firm business footing. Where charity can be so helpful to-day is in starting classes in districts where lace is already made, and where under-payment is due to want of training; local help in getting up exhibitions in giving prizes for good work—all this is most valuable; but philanthropic help is unfortunately apt to be misused, and sometimes tends towards taking work away from those whose trade it is to advance the business.

It sounds so charitable at a lace sale to explain that the work is sold at the actual price paid to the worker, that no profit whatever is desired, and all the manifold necessary expenses in getting the work together are given free. But the country agent thinks differently, who through the long winter invests her money



weekly in lace sprigs, who keeps the women in steady work even though she may pay them a little less. Without such help from the trade it would be useless to attempt to keep the industry alive, and by working against trade rules charity can only defeat her own object.

## CHAPTER IV.

“Let every action tend to some point and be perfect of its kind.”—MARCUS AURELIUS.



THE village of Beer has been celebrated for lace for many generations, and deserves a first place in description for that reason, besides being also the nearest lace centre to the Dorset border. It is rather over a mile from the town of Seaton, and is a small, tightly-packed fishing hamlet enclosed by three hills, and hidden so completely in a narrow valley that many excursionists visit the neighbouring town without finding out its existence.

Extraordinary geographical changes have taken place in the neighbourhood since the earlier days alluded to in the first chapter. A high bank of pebbles has closed the entrance to Colyton harbour, now represented only by marshy lands through which the Axe winds, until on reaching the ridge it is lost, percolating underground to the sea. No one can give any

clear account as to how the pebbles first began to close up the harbour ; but probably it is due to one of the natural causes common to this coast, and the wide open river is shown in a seventeenth century map in Exeter Museum. From Seaton Beach to Lyme there is hardly a mile which has not at some time been devastated by landslips. At the last great convulsion in 1839, which rent apart over four miles of the mainland, precipitating a corn-field almost intact three hundred feet below its original position, a great ridge was raised up in the sea a short distance from the beach. In the course of a few weeks it disappeared, but probably Chesil Beach was of similar origin, and it is possible that the latest catastrophe placed a final difficulty in the way of re-opening the harbour. There have been many attempts to do this, and one history of Devon states that one hundred years ago a strenuous effort was made when each farm and manor supplied a given number of men for the work. This last undertaking seems from the account to have come within sight of success ; but a great flood occurred while the work was at a critical stage, wrecking all that had been done, and the effort was abandoned.

On the high ground, left of what is thought

to have been the entrance to the harbour, are the remains of the fortifications erected when Bonaparte kept the coast continually on the *qui vive*. These fortifications were also the joint work of different parishes, each of which supplied a certain number of men, and local accounts do not tally well with the historian, but seem to confuse this undertaking with Worth's account of re-opening the harbour.

A fairly stiff climb over Seaton White Cliff leads to a narrow rock-path, which is not only a short cut, but also the most picturesque approach to Beer. As the brow of the hill is climbed, the small bay lies at one's feet. Beer Head juts out to the sea at the far side, and daylight may be seen between the natural arches of the Smuggler's Cave. Far away on a clear day one may recognise the headland by Torquay, Brixham slightly beyond, and Start Point in the far distance.

As the path clears the overhanging cliff, the village comes in sight, the Fore Street being brought to an abrupt termination by the sea. On both sides of it are numerous little courts—narrow, half-hidden alleys with shut-in cottages very similar to those at St. Ives and other fishing centres. It would seem as if the fishermen on these exposed coasts appreciated the greatest

extremes in securing shelter. The narrow cobbled passages with sharp corners and unexpected steps are very fascinating, and hardly a court can be visited without the tinkling of bobbins sounding through the open door. Much fine work comes from the little dark rooms, where women of over seventy may be seen working. Outside, most of the cottages have something in the way of a creeper, but in the courts they are too closely packed together to have front gardens. A thorn branch hangs from one side of the door, which reminds one forcibly of the Butcher bird's larder. After the boats have come in, one may see each of the long spikes piercing a piece of fish, which remains hanging until the right condition for cooking has been reached. The particular fishes to be treated in this way are dog-fish and ray, both of which are secondary fish, cheap and nourishing, and known by the local name of "Duncows" and "Friars."

Inside some of the cottages nice old furniture is to be seen. Beer is too inconveniently situated to bring many dealers round, and perhaps the villagers are too conservative and too cautious to wish to exchange their old heirlooms for modern goods.

In this and other small hamlets round

there are several types of inhabitants, so distinct in their work and customs as to be truly described as "Foreigners," a name frequently given by one to the other in bygone days.

The fishing community, of whom not a few are descended from the smugglers, bear in name and feature evidence of intermarriage with the Spaniards. Local tradition goes that the plague visited the village with such severity during the reign of Elizabeth, that the crew of a Spanish vessel wrecked on the shore found only deserted houses awaiting them, of which they took unopposed possession. As the fear of infection passed, old residents returned to live and intermarry with the foreigner. "Real" is one of the purest names left, but "Restorick" (Restorique) is only one of many examples of Anglicised spelling.

In the winter the heavy seas sometimes prevent the fishing fleet going out for weeks together, and but for the lace money earned by wives and daughters, there would be some terribly hard times. The coast is rocky and dangerous, and there is neither a breakwater nor quay, so the Beer boats must wait until the conditions are favourable for their small craft to put out to sea, even though the heavier

Brixham trawlers may be having large catches within a few miles.

Quite a distinct class are the quarrymen who, like the North country miners, keep very much to themselves. They are of the same descent as the Bath quarrymen, and bring up their sons to follow the same trade. The Beer stone has been quarried since the days of the Danish Invasion, and the hills leading to Branscombe are a mass of underground tunnels. Falls of earth and landslips have lately broken connecting passages, and it is full ten years since a party of boys found their way underground from Branscombe to Beer, a distance of about two miles over the hills.

The third distinct class are the landsmen—to use a term borrowed from the beach boys. The memory of feuds belonging to old smuggling days dies hard, and probably those inland were inclined to join with the preventative men in times past ; at any rate the classes have little to do with each other, even though the wives have the lace making in common.

The difference of class has perhaps led to a certain jealousy in the safeguarding of patterns for lace, which has retarded progress, and has even gone so far as to cause stitches

and patterns to be re-named, so that one may spend a morning naming certain stitches to be put into a pattern at Beer, and walk over to Branscombe, only to use a different set of terms to describe exactly the same work.

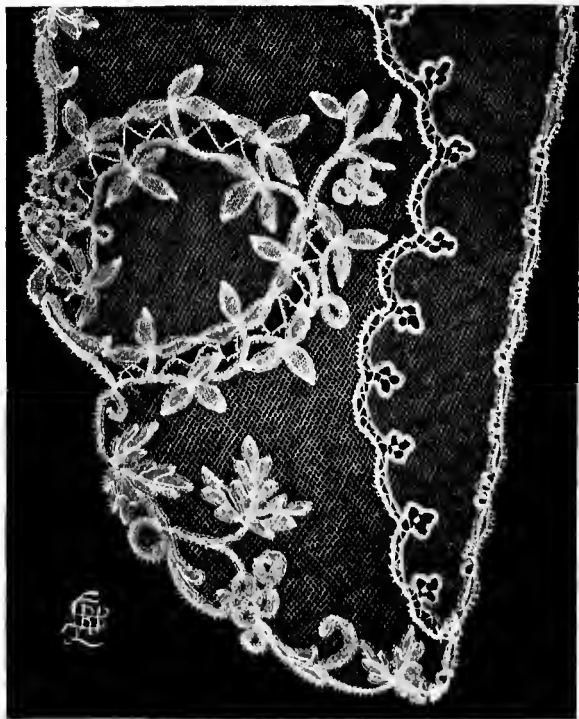
One is struck very forcibly on going into a Beer cottage to find how many old women work without glasses. Once the pattern is familiar, it is possible for them to work without looking closely into the design, and the movement of the bobbins becomes purely mechanical. A woman is always more ready to work one of her own familiar prickings at a lower price, and it is only among a younger generation that variety is sought after.

The workers generally know themselves what work they may safely undertake without injury to the eyes, or bringing on the acute headache that results from overstrain. It has been said of some that they need much pressing to undertake new work which they are quite equal to doing. If one remembers that their whole livelihood rests upon the preservation of the eyesight, it is small wonder that promise of extra pay is no inducement to them for the risk they might incur. What is almost worse for the sight than close work is a tricky pattern, something designed by an artist who





PLATE 10.



*Designed and made for the South Devon Lace Industry, Beer.*

has no practical knowledge of the method of working.

The pillows are generally very large, round, and cumbersome. Each has its "cover-cloths," and the lace is carefully protected under them and also under strips of horn, which allow the pattern to be seen through, and serve the double purpose of keeping the work clean and the threads from catching on the pin-heads left in the finished section.

Passing through Beer village several small lace shops are to be seen which do a capital trade in the summer with visitors whose purchases range from a handkerchief initial sold for a few pence to a collar costing as many pounds. In one shop may be seen patterns similar to that which took a high award at the recent St. Louis Exhibition; but lace suffers if exposed too much in the strong sunshine, so the best work will be kept inside wrapped in dark blue paper. A few steps up a lane lead to the public room, where the children have their lace lessons under the direction of a County Council teacher.

In Catholic countries the children attending the Convent schools have, in certain districts, been allowed to choose whether they will take up lace or needlework; with the

result that in Belgium, where this seems to have been the rule, the child's education has made no material difference to her lace-making. On the contrary, it is more than probable that the well-trained brain would bring the work up to a higher standard.

In Beer this interesting experiment has only recently been made by the County Council, and in several villages arrangements have been made for the school children to have lace lessons. If one might be allowed to criticise, the drawback to the movement lies in no arrangement being made for practice, so that much of the weekly lesson is forgotten before the next comes round. On the whole, the lessons seem to have answered, and the children have received a grounding sufficient to enable them to pick up more at home.

The love inborn in them for the work was shown very much when an after-school class was started one winter for additional practice. One child after another came asking if she might be admitted. They came after their tea and worked for rather more than an hour. No charge was made for the teaching, neither was any payment nor treat given. On one melancholy occasion a small girl was forbidden the class for two or three weeks, during which

term of punishment she lost no opportunity of stopping the teacher with a curtsy to know if the time was not nearly up. It always speaks well for the value set by a parent on the work, when the little ones come with tidy hair and clean pinafores ; and it is difficult to believe that the demure little lace workers, talking in soft Devon undertones, are the same small imps whose great delight is to throw an old tin into the tiny stream that runs swiftly down the Fore Street, following it with shrieks of laughter as it tinkles against the stones in its headlong race to the sea.

The example of lace (Plate No. 10) is not to be taken as a specimen of fine Beer work, but rather as a fair average example. It has been arranged so that workers of several grades could join in its production. The narrow inside edge and the fancy ribbon are specially suitable for children and the very old, that work being simple and also quick. The motif is all plain work—which is the simplest form of Honiton. In designing, the leaves have in most cases been allowed to touch, so that although the twisting of the outlining thread gives the appearance of finish, the bobbins are not severed and the work gains in strength from the fewer endings, and also is reduced in

price by the labour saved. The ivy leaves are more difficult to make, and a great many lace workers never attain to this stage. The name of "raised work" is given to that part of the lace which shows a narrow ridge joined to the foundation. The full description of the method of making the ridge is given in the technical chapter, so it is only necessary to say that this is the easier of the two methods which are described, being "rolled" instead of "stem stitch." By combining the easier work with that which is more difficult to obtain, the collar gains in distinction, but does not necessarily lose by comparison, since the plain work and the raised work are equally good according to their different standards.

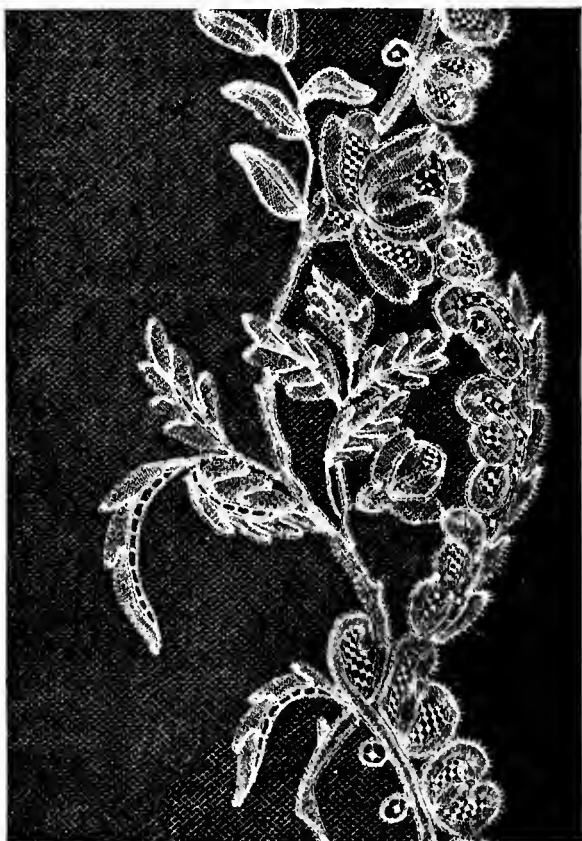
The work is a joint production of four workers: the two lace-makers, the designer, and the needlewoman who finally applies the lace.

Although finer and more interesting examples might easily be given, they would hardly convey an accurate impression of the average work of this period. Only by showing work at the mid-level is it possible to gauge the development of the craft and make fair comparison with the products of other years.

During the winter and spring, much lace



PLATE 11.



Made at Branscombe under the direction of Mrs. Ida Allen.

Re-drawn by A. Penderel Moody.

To face page 63.



is made in Beer, since from July to September summer visitors cause many pillows to stand idle. Some of the girls get good pay for temporary help in the Seaton lodging-houses, and plenty of odd charing is to be had.

From Beer to Branscombe is a pleasant walk, especially during the early spring. Leaving the road after passing the quarries, a field path cuts off a right angle and reduces the distance by nearly a mile. In every direction there must be a hill to climb, and Branscombe is no exception. At the end of the second field one stands already on high ground, and, looking back, Golden Cap, the hill beyond Lyme Regis, stands out clearly, with Portland stretching almost like a straight line on the horizon. Inland, miles of hills and common, and nearer, the hedges white in spring with thorn blossom. Crossing another field brings a complete change of scenery. Against the sky-line are the hard green outlines of old fortifications, and the straggling village with its single street, two miles long, winds between one succession of hills.

Visitors are the exception at Branscombe, and therefore it has not been thought necessary to formally name any part of the village for their guidance. It is entered from Beer

by the main road at the foot of a steep hill, and the little collection of cottages nestled together are included as belonging to "Vicarage," though some prefer the older name of "Castle." The village inn, where in bygone days the clubs used to meet, is just in the centre of "Vicarage."

There were fewer holidays in those old times, but twice the amount of fun seems to have been squeezed into them.

A Club holiday commenced about mid-day, when the men would meet at the Mason's Arms, with their banner embroidered with a great eye, and under it the text, "Thou God seest me." They would be joined by the women with the bee-hive as their emblem. The procession would be formed and would pass along the village to the old church with its three-decker pulpit. The church is exactly the same to-day as it was then, though perhaps there is more of "Nature's paint," as the children call the green moss, on the walls. After a short service, games and dancing in a field. To close the entertainment on the autumn holiday a gigantic apple tart was wheeled through the village, followed by girls and lads dancing "Sir Roger" down the whole length of the village street.

Of all this, only Apple Tart Fair still holds its own every autumn ; but squibs and crackers now accompany its progress in place of the dancing, and every passer-by is called upon to eat a slice.

It is a full mile from " Vicarage " to the second division of the village, called " Church." Here there are many workers both in braid and pillow lace. It is the centre of the village, and contains the post office, with its lace window set out to attract excursionists who may drive over from Sidmouth. The very finest work has been made in one of the cottages close by, and there is much beautiful lace to be seen on the pillows, though most is made for special orders, and is sold before it leaves the worker. In talking to the women it is strange to notice how little they know of the past history of their work. Everything that happened before the introduction of machine net seems to have been quite forgotten, and old stitches have been re-named after " Aunt Charlotte " or " Mary Ann " who re-taught them not so many years ago.

Picturesque names, such as " Running River " and " Crossing Paths," which Midland workers have given to some of their patterns, do not appeal to the practical Devon mind,

and a search for a poetical derivation usually ends in the prosaic.

A lace fan had been made, the design really more French in arrangement, although the work was Devon. It consisted only of strands of leaves, a straight stem with leaves at intervals on either side. Each of the strands covered a spoke of the fan, and the intermediate space was filled with spots. In arranging the payment, the worker asked if there was not a second "Lieaside" fan to be made. The name sounded hopeful to a collector of tales and legends, who in her own mind conjured up Lyres, and a lace story belonging to the days when Gainsborough's sitters preferred to pose as Phyllis and Chloe. In South Devon it is not the fashion to give a blunt reply to a question; it is imparted by degrees with much extraneous information relating to the rheumatism or the visit of a married daughter; indeed, unless care is taken, the answer may slip away altogether. In this case, after the expenditure of a full hour, with tactful pressing of the question, and quite unconscious evasion on the other side, the questioner's interest growing with the increasing difficulty in attaining her goal, came the reply:

"What else would 'ee call 'em, then? We

just calls 'em lie-asides, 'cos they lies aside of each other."

Branscombe village ends at "Street," and here again a little lace shop is found combined with grocery. There are a good number of workers in the village, and many travellers come round collecting from the different agents. The village is unique in its situation and worth a visit ; but unless the visitor can wait for a special piece of lace to be made, there is not a great deal to buy beyond handkerchiefs, small collars and edgings, and most of these in the old style.

The large rose spray, with the remains of an old English border, is Branscombe work. The original pattern contained the border and the large rose almost as they now stand. The centre had unfortunately been subjected to hideous maltreatment, a narrow stem joining the large flower to a series of cart-wheels with other weird eccentricities. In re-designing, although the entire spray had to be new, the original border was only corrected where out of drawing. Good old patterns are so precious, also so rare, that it is worth keeping even the small scraps that may have remained true, to build up from them completed work as like in treatment as possible.

A true Devon lace pattern is entirely unlike the flowing designs of Pillow Brussels, or the quick effects aimed at in Bruges Duchesse. There is a solidity about the Devon drawing, giving an idea of squareness rather than curve, which is very characteristic, as if the designer strove to present a compact whole, scorning to take advantage of light spiral forms which in the foreign lace give so much effect for a minimum cost.

In trying to resuscitate the Honiton lace trade, efforts were made some eight or ten years ago to introduce designs from Irish Art Schools. At the time there seemed to be no competent local lace designer. Photographs of lace made from these patterns may be seen at the South Kensington Museum, and though the worker has adapted her craft admirably to the ideas of the artist, almost all trace of the Devon style has been obliterated. Of later years Flemish, Italian, and Irish designs have been given out to the women in Beer and Branscombe, but it is more probable that these infringements only represent a passing experiment. With the inborn habit of mixing small patterns of various designs together, imagination fails one as to what might ultimately result were the arrangement of these imported



PLATE 12.



*Made at Sidbury under the direction of Mrs. Pearson.*



patterns gradually to fall into the hand of the cottagers, to be mixed up as fancy dictated.

As the warm spring days advance the early potatoes have to be gathered from the sheltered patches of red earth under the cliffs. The narrow rocky path leading from the tangled Branscombe landslip winds between numbers of little gardens, and the donkeys with laden panniers find their way back with little urging from the women. Except the very old, most of the women help both in the planting and digging of the potatoes, and when the first crop is ready for lifting, lace orders must take a second place, for every week will make a reduction in the price of the London market.

For an example of thoroughly good plain work it would be difficult to improve upon the handkerchief corner made at Sidbury. The design is a local one, and shows far more care and skill in construction than is usually the case. The lace was made just in the earliest days of the revival, which accounts for the sameness of the ornamental fillings.

The children in Sidbury receive a very thorough lace training, and the output of lace from the district is distinctly promising.

Though now little larger than a village, Sidbury, like Colyton, can look back to an

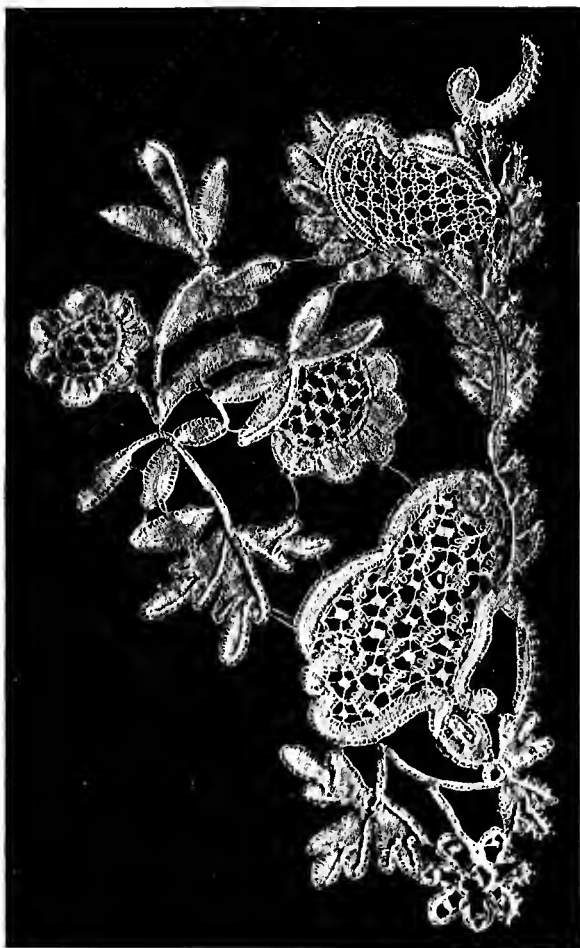
important past. It is within easy reach of Sidmouth, and its little lace shop brings many visitors over from there during the season. A very interesting piece of lace may be seen in the parish church. The design shows a conventional scheme of grapes and tulips. The tulip is a very favourite lace pattern in this district, which is no doubt the reason why the artist introduced it. There would seem to be no other reason why it should appear in what was evidently intended to be church lace.

Devonshire lace is so admirably adapted for symbolism that it is surprising so little use should have been made of it for church work. Among recent designs of any note are a Passion-flower chalice veil—true to nature in every detail; a bordering for an altar cloth, consisting of seven motifs, the three centre ones being round, in symbol of eternity, with “I.H.S.” in the centre, “Alpha” and “Omega” on either side, the two next on right and left drawn four square, as representing earth, and showing the cross, crown, the palm of victory, and the lily of purity. The seven motifs were joined together with trefoil, lilies, and palm.

Very beautiful sprays of grapes and corn have also been made recently for a chalice veil,



PLATE 13.



FANCY FILLINGS—DOUBLE-GROUND PIN.  
TOAD IN THE HOLE.

*Made near Sidmouth.  
Early Victorian Design.*

*To face page 71.*

but the original design was taken from a priest's robe bought in Flanders, and although it would puzzle an expert to say decidedly that the lace was not Devon, it cannot be actually claimed as such.

At Sidmouth, although there are several lace shops, there are very few actual lace makers. It is always in the villages that the pillow reigns supreme; in the towns laundry work, dressmaking, and charing seem to be formidable rivals.

Sidmouth is very proud of the fact that Queen Victoria lived there for some months as a little child. Her first little leather shoe was made in the town, and one of the lace shops shows a sprig of the same pattern as that supplied to the Duchess of Kent for her little daughter's use.

Beyond Sidmouth little work of good design is to be found. In Otterton there are many workers, but nearly all use coarse thread and bad prickings; so obtain only the lowest payments. The County Council classes have been held at Otterton, but unfortunately there seems to have been no one of sufficient enterprise or education able to keep the women up in the improved work, so the good that should have resulted is in danger of being lost.

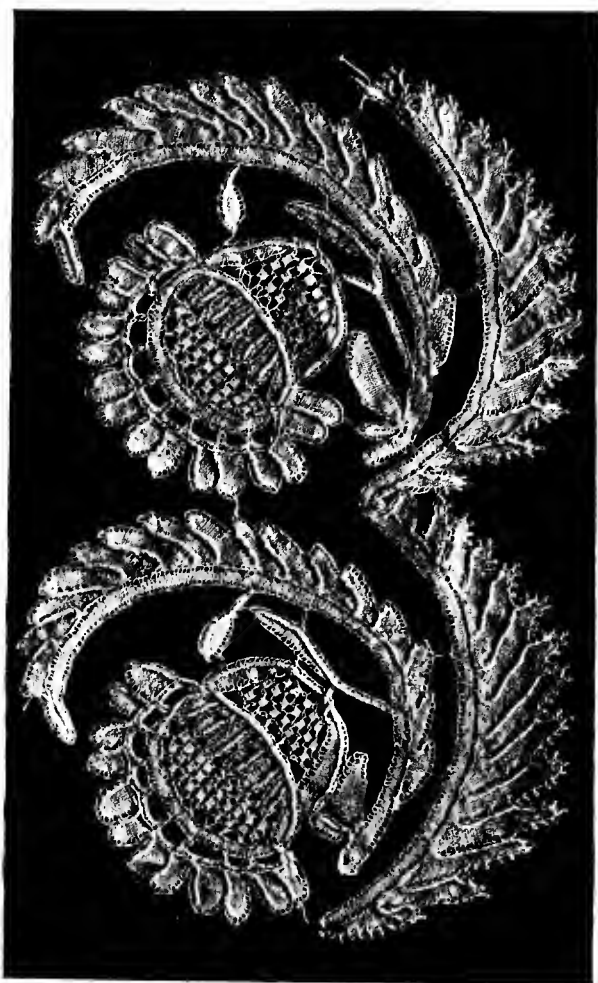
Of all the lace villages this one seems especially in need of assistance, and being within easy reach of two well-known seaside resorts, there should be no lack of custom, provided the work was of fair quality.

At East Budleigh, barely a mile from Otterton, some finer workers are to be found, but the really good lace is the exception rather than the rule. Westbury has a number of workers, and the same may be said of Ottery St. Mary; but the work drifts along still on the old lines, for want of the help that the future will no doubt bring.

It is a relief after the poorer work to visit the beautiful lace shop at Honiton, where much of the work has been arranged and designed by the County Council teacher. Not much lace is made in the little town itself, but the classes are well attended, and special attention is being shown to the younger generation, upon whose work largely rests the future of the trade. Honiton is just a little disappointing to the enthusiast, who comes expecting to find lace-makers; but a visit to the parish church makes up for this, since it takes one back to the old days, and an interesting old altar tomb has the following inscription :—



PLATE 14.



*Made near Sidmouth.  
Early Victorian Design.*

*To face page 73.*



“ Here lyeth ye body of James Rodge of Honiton in the county of Devonshire, bone lace seller, hath given unto the poore of Houniton Pische the Benefyt of £100 for ever. Who deceased ye 27th of July, A.D. 1617, aetatae suæ 50. Remember ye poore.”

In the lace shop at Honiton may be seen some of the original work made from the Irish and other designs that have been already mentioned. Some of the floral work is exceedingly clever in execution, though it is doubtful whether a faithful reproduction of Nature is always permissible to lace workers. Flowers so stiff as primroses with their heavy leaves would seem to call for conventional treatment. Of all the quaintest sprigs the writer remembers is one made at Beer: the winter aconite complete even to its roots.

The last illustrations for this chapter show two really fine pieces of lace. The designs are old, and have not been in any way altered.

What will strike the reader at once is the variety of stitches used for fillings. Both samples have been made in fine thread and by good workers.

Such lace is difficult to get, since the worker can book orders for far ahead; but it is worth waiting for, and bears a favourable comparison with its Belgian rivals.

## CHAPTER V.

“ We want more quiet in our works,  
More knowledge of the bounds in which we work.”

—E. B. BROWNING.



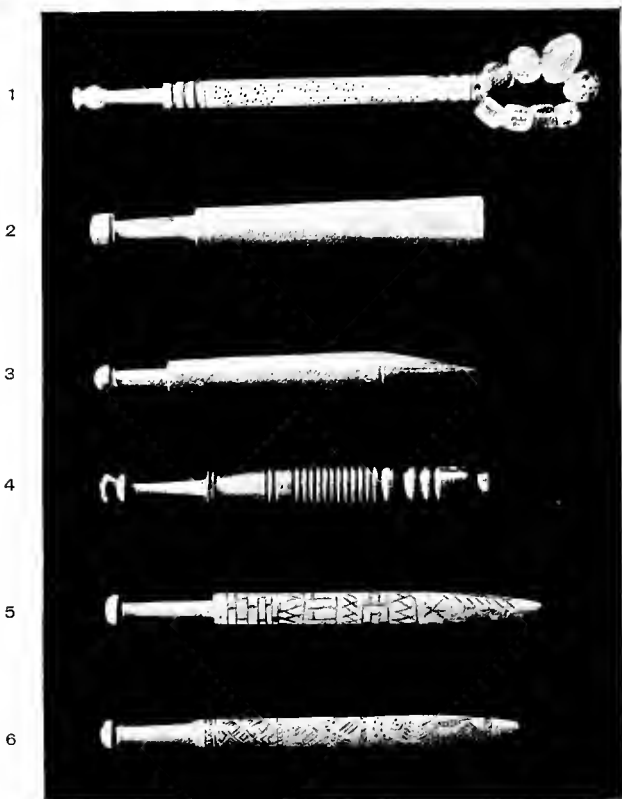
ONLY a stone's throw from the room where the children have their lace lessons to-day stood the old lace school of Beer, where their grandmothers were “learned” at a fee of one penny a week. Next door to the school lived a “twisty and disformed” man, who eked out a scanty livelihood by making and decorating bobbins.

Twelve hours was not thought too long for the lace workers' day, and a three years' apprenticeship was general before a girl began to earn anything for herself.

The severe discipline of a former age had already passed away. The teacher no longer sat in the centre of her class armed with a long white staff, with which to prod into renewed energy the worker whose bobbins rested.



PLATE 15.



1. BUCKS TROLLY BOBBIN.  
2. BOTTLE BOBBIN.  
3. DOWNTON BOBBIN.

4. WILTS TROLLY BOBBIN.  
5. BRANSCOMBE BOBBIN.  
6. BEER BOBBIN.

If she was severe upon the maker of discoloured lace, she yet allowed many a courtship to be carried on during the long winter evenings. Nothing pleases the old women more than to tell of the lads who, waiting to accompany the girls home, stood leaning against the walls, whittling at the bobbin, which with its entwined hearts was intended to mark a further step in his wooing if not a definite declaration to the lady of his choice.

Who could have had the heart to reject the lover who carved on a ringed bobbin with a reckless expenditure of labour the words :

“The ring is round and hath no end,  
So is my love for you, my friend.”

But it was a poor-spirited swain who wrote :

“You may go out  
And walk about  
When I am quite forgot.”

The fisher lads would take their sweet-hearts' bobbins to sea, carving them with ships, mermaids, fishes, and posies. The indentations were filled up with red and black wax, and a broken piece of glass was used to file down any unevenness.

Many of the posies are quite devoid of rhyme :—

“May God protect the sailor still  
From rocks and sands and every ill,”

may be considered as belonging to the more ambitious attempts.

Most of the bobbins have hearts entwined, giving the initials of the lovers and the date of the year. On St. Valentine's Day it was no uncommon thing for a little packet of half a dozen decorated bobbins to be thrown in through the cottage door, and a man would have been remiss indeed who had not carved a new set ready for his bride.

An old Branscombe worker uses bobbins decorated by all the sentences of the Lord's Prayer, and one very fine example has on it ten ships and thirty-three fishes. The bobbins at Beer have always been specially decorative, though now no one attempts the carving. Branscombe preferred a severer style of rings in black and red, and all the plain bobbins were either burnt with *aqua fortis* ("Agnes Forty," as it is generally called in the villages, no doubt under the impression that the said Agnes invented the method) or boiled in black-berry juice. The name "bobbin" is never used by the Devonshire workers themselves, who only talk of "lace-sticks." It is the custom with careful workers to scrub the bobbins always before starting a new pattern, and the yellow soap, combined with a hearty

polishing, brings a soft yellow sheen on to the wood which no superficial means can surpass. Spindle-wood is specially used, and is only to be cut in perfection at one time of the year if the bobbins are to be a good colour.

In the old days, when trolly lace required a heavier bobbin, one carved from the small bone of a chicken's wing was used ; and in an earlier period, again, some of the smaller bones from a pig's foot, upon which the thread was wound as on a reel. Pear-wood is sometimes found among the bobbins ; but the many dark woods used by the Buckinghamshire workers are quite unknown in the West. The bobbins have played an important part in the life of the lace worker, and are bound up with some of the dearest events of their lives.

An old woman was offered a good price if she would consent to exchange hers for new. "I could not sell them, ma'am," she said ; "why, no one knows how they comforted me in my sorrow." Long ago a little child had died, and for days her pillow stood untouched. It is a custom to say of a woman in these villages after a bereavement : "She is getting over it ; she has gone back to her pillow again." A neighbour will ask for an easy pattern, not too fine for poor, tear-swollen eyes, and will

not leave her until the bobbins are hung up. With the little child's mother the friends seemed to fail utterly in rousing the poor soul from a state of apathy that was becoming a serious trouble. Then the thought came that she should make in lace a Memorial card. From that day she roused herself, and the full heart was poured out and comforted by that strangely inappropriate labour of love. The picture shows the little coffin with the name and date; beside it stands the child. The whole is worked in lace, and drawn with scarcely a correct line. The little shoes are woven of the child's own golden hair.

There is a lace picture of the Crucifixion in the Cluny Museum in Paris, designed and worked by clever artists, but weird and unnatural, as all attempts to reproduce life must be in the flat surface of lace work. This little figure was infinitely more grotesque by reason of its faulty draughtsmanship, but no other explanation was necessary as to why the bobbins were priceless.

The passing of the Elementary Education Act enforcing the child's attendance at the National School brought the daily lace class to an end. Many of the children who sat all day at their pillows were much too young,



but the old village workers seem to have little fault to find with the system. There can be no doubt that the scrupulous exactitude required was, in itself, a first-rate training which in the more crowded education of to-day is often lost. If the hours were long, the work itself was restful, though one can imagine the weariness of little growing children yearning to stretch themselves.

The question as to the wages earned by the village lace workers is a very difficult one to discuss in detail, the sums being liable to many variations under altering conditions. Women living in the little towns naturally receive more than those who, in distant villages, expect their work to be called for, and some are obliged to walk five or six miles to gain the larger sums paid by the shop.

In comparing notes with a North Country weaving industry, the author was surprised to find that in a wild hill district the workers received just double the average pay of the Devon lace maker, and yet the people were no better off. The matter gradually explained itself. Cottages averaged 4s., as against 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. weekly in South Devon. Rates were more than double owing to the expense of keeping up miles of roads running through sparsely

populated districts, and the long hard winters required treble the outlay in fuel that would be needed in a warmer climate. In fixing a scale of pay, in deciding on what constitutes a living wage, all such conditions come under consideration. In Devon it is very usual to find a mother and two daughters all making lace together. Their full pay for a week's work will be about one-third less to each than that of the father or son; but while the men are out all day, the women save that extra wear and tear on their clothes, and with their lace making combine the house work, washing, and other duties.

Saturday is generally given up to a thorough house cleaning in the morning; and marketing, together with returning the lace, is left to the afternoon; so the working week may be considered as five days.

Naturally, the workers themselves vary a great deal, both in speed and in the quality of their work; but the above is given in the belief that it is a fair estimate for the more advanced centres. A really good worker, giving up most of her time to her pillow, after paying her proportion of household expenses, will have no difficulty in putting by one-third of her earnings towards dress and her savings.

How many women clerks and shop assistants in large towns could say as much, notwithstanding the higher proportion of pay? The wages now paid are far above those of five years ago, but do not yet reach the sums made about the middle of the nineteenth century. The growth of the revival is seen in the increase of payment, and where, as in Otterton, East Budleigh, and Westbury, work still continues on the old faulty methods, a drop of about 25 per cent. will be found in the prices given.

Since the tax was taken off imported lace during Queen Victoria's reign, Honiton has had a hard fight to keep its footing against the cheaper and more showy Bruges *guipure*; but while the workers have often had bad times, one may say truly that the unscrupulous sweating so rife in Belgium has never gained ground in Devon. When poor prices have been paid dealer and worker have equally shared in the loss. With so many sweated trades, it is a great pleasure to feel that a piece of Devon lace brings no sad story with it. In Bruges, and especially in Ostend, during the summer months it is possible to buy for ten francs lace that has taken full two weeks to make, working twelve hours a day. Taking

off a franc for cost of thread, and a reasonable percentage for the vendor's profit, the lace exposes a terrible state of affairs. Had we "more knowledge of the bounds in which we work," it would be as impossible for an Englishwoman to wear lace made at such a cost as to ornament her hat with the slaughtered bird. Of the two the bird may need one's pity least, since one blow and its life is over, while the sweated *dentellière* accepts hurt after hurt until to suffer has become habitual.

It is natural to ask what is the cause of the lace being offered at such a price. It is always difficult to get to the bottom of the sweating system; but in Belgium it would seem as if the convents should be held partly responsible. In many of their workrooms numbers of children are employed who give their services in return for their training. There would be no harm in this arrangement whatever did the convents only accept a worker's living wage for the children's output. Unfortunately, the nuns, to pay their way, have, during particularly hard times, entered into keen competition with the trade, and by the help of their unpaid workers have undertaken orders at prices that would mean starvation to a woman solely dependent on her own

earnings. This trouble in Belgium leads one to look ahead to the future of our English lace trade.

It has been shown already that the decadence in England was largely due to the expert agent throwing up his work during the panic attendant upon the introduction of machine work. If the old remunerative state is to be brought back, the expert must return. This would seem to be the first and most important step. Unfortunately, of later years the increased facilities that have been offered to the trade for the retailing of imported laces and the higher profits to be made by retailing these in preference to the home output, render it unlikely that this class of work would attract the serious consideration of the greater lace merchants. The lace workers are at once too disorganised and scattered to tempt a large firm to risk such capital as would be necessary to put the venture on a firm footing. Every year one hears tales of orders being turned away or imperfectly executed for want of competent workers or better superintendence, and one may count upon the fingers of one hand the few Devon lace traders who in any way represent the agent-expert of the past.

Since the opening would seem to be entirely

rejected by the business man of to-day, the future of the trade would seem to be mainly dependent *now* upon the action taken by the more highly trained classes of women workers.

After years of estrangement Art and Trade have again joined hands. At Camden, in Gloucestershire, the artist bookbinder works side by side with the printer; the industries of beaten copper and the enamel jewel-work at Newlyn provide well-paid employment for the men and lads of an unusually remote and needy Cornish village. A long list of similar industries will occur to everyone, all showing, as do these three examples, that their prosperity and development have been due, in the first place, to the artist-manager, whose skilful training has raised the village labour to a high level.

One of the most hopeful signs of increasing prosperity for our home trades is the growing recognition of the need of co-operation between the two classes of workers.

If at first there may be a slight feeling of resentment on the part of the villager, it quickly evaporates as he recognises that the newcomer has arrived to work with and for, but not against him; that the artist's prosperity grows mainly in proportion to the

increase of work undertaken for him by the villager.

In the lace trade it is essential that the higher branches of the work should be in the hands of artists who are in touch with the world of fashion. Many a good piece of lace has lost its market through its having been modelled upon an antiquated or miscut shape. Very few village workers are able to cut out an original pattern, while none are in a position to prophesy as to the coming styles.

Here, then, is the special work awaiting the artist :

The designing of patterns, together with the arrangement of the completed work and the training of young workers in the many fine old stitches that are now coming to the fore again after many years. The ideal artist-agent must be a lace maker, though she will find little time to sit at her pillow. It is she who will puzzle out the old-new stitches, and her knowledge will serve her well in valuing the sprays sent in, besides ensuring a higher degree of excellence on the part of the worker. If, in addition to this, she adds further to her income by lace cleaning and mending, very little time will be left for the regular visiting of the workers.

This is as it should be, for here comes in at once the work for the local small agent, who might otherwise suffer, but who now, instead of losing her trade owing to the newer methods, finds herself of first importance to the artist.

Her past knowledge of the workers may well be invaluable, and the payment she receives for overlooking and collecting will probably far exceed her original earnings. The saving in time by this arrangement will be great, but the artist will not allow herself to get out of touch with her women, and special orders will still require her own supervision. Supposing a very fine handkerchief is to be made—each of the several women who will be employed upon it will have to be told exactly what stitches to reproduce in each corner; while it may be necessary to warn one that her own original ideas must be kept out lest it happen that her portion is utterly unlike its fellows, and the excuse that “she thought the lady might like a little variety” be met with disapproving silence.

Another may need a little coaxing if the design is new to her. “Tiddin’ that I doan’t be villin’, but I du be that timmie.” This will mean renewed explanations as to how to get



over the particular difficulty—help which, again, could only be given by a practical lace artist.

If times are hard, perhaps the work may be sent in a day or two before its time—wrapped between tattered leaves of blue paper, dignified by the name of a “Lace Book.”

There is no surer way of gaining the heart of an old worker than by presenting her with a new piece of this blue paper, which she will cut into small double sheets, slipping her finished sprigs between the leaves.

It is considered very bad manners to talk of work as being dirty, but the agent's bag will contain a skein of new white thread, which comes out on special occasions, and, lying across the completed work, tells tales.

“It du be coloured terr'ble” is the worst anyone could possibly say. “Coloured” slightly deeper than the skein, the work is allowed to pass, but there is no reason other than carelessness why it should be deeper.

One great difficulty in working a large order to time is the hopeless unpunctuality of the older women. Words seem to have no power to impress upon them the loss a broken promise may mean to the business: there

seems to be no feeling of personal responsibility.

“If the Lord is willing, you shall have your work next week,” said one old lady, adding, *sotto voce*, “but I don’t think you will.”

The past lack of work is partly responsible for this ; for, with poor pay, lace work had to slip into a secondary position, only to be taken up when everything else failed.

Very few of the oldest workers can write with ease, and often it is a matter of some difficulty to decipher a letter that may come in with some work from an outlying district. If the order has to be returned by post, it is always well to have a ready addressed envelope to leave behind lest, when one asks for a pen to write with in the cottage, it is found after a prolonged search in a vase of paper flowers and with one half of the nib missing. One of the many little ways by which the artist may hold out the hand of good fellowship to a fellow-worker comes from her wider business knowledge. Some cottager may have received what is to her a large order from an unknown customer—how is she to know if it is safe to accept the work ?

It may mean two months of weekly expenditure to get all the sprays together ; she

could not ask to be paid so long in advance. Perhaps the artist recognises it as coming from a well-known firm in town. If so, the matter is quickly settled; if not, then only a few minutes are needed to dictate or write a letter, and when the reply brings the required references they will, no doubt, be enough.

This is only one of the many little instances one might quote of the mutual good resulting from the co-operation of the two classes; but most important of all should be the more delicately nurtured woman's influence upon the village girls. In certain lace-making districts many people object to the girls taking up the work, urging them instead to go into service. It would seem that the daily monotonous weaving of the same uninteresting pattern could, under certain conditions, blunt alike the mental and artistic sense of the young worker, and that the continued repetition of the daily routine could retard a healthy moral development. "All high beauty," says Emerson, "has a moral element in it." In Devonshire, where the work is more varied and calls for more intelligence, one seldom hears of lost respectability. Could each lace village have its own lace agent—a gentlewoman in

the true sense of the word—there should be no cause for fear.

Turning again to the practical side of this work, the question crops up as to whether an artist could expect to make a fair living by her work. It would probably only be due to her own personal shortcomings if she failed to earn more than in similar or clerical employment in a city, but, as no two women are likely to work on the same lines, only a very general reply could be given. Indeed, this is the day of lace pioneers, and it is too early to judge by results. Much will naturally depend upon the woman herself, and if she is artist born she will value far above her weekly returns the joy of creation, the daily inspiration that comes to lift her art step by step from past degradation to a more worthy position among its fellows. Again, she will work for honour and must learn how few there are who will appreciate the time and thought she has spent to draw a little nearer to perfection. She will often meet with rebuffs such as that offered to the landscape painter by a would-be patron: “Ah, very nice indeed—but give *me* a good oleograph!”

It would be much too cruel to suggest that the English lace public had not left the

“oleograph” stage a good way behind; but, alas! it is still only necessary to label a very ordinary piece of lace “Real” for the majority to exclaim, “How exquisite!”

Until lace is more generally understood, the woman who is solely dependent on sales for her livelihood will do well to yield to force of circumstances and to provide patterns at a popular price for these, the great majority of buyers. It is possible to provide cheap lace, which need not of necessity be poor; but because of the precious gift she holds, the true artist will undertake no work which she would be ashamed to own as hers.

That amid the wages of life she may be entitled to add still higher awards may be guessed from what has already been written. There is a freemasonry between lace workers which, once formed, is very strong; a feeling of kinship which is not easily understood by those outside, no matter how much their sympathy may bring them in touch with the poor. It needs only a little ill-fortune, a passing loss, for them to open their hearts to their fellow craftswoman and to give of their charity help and sympathy to tide over the bad time.

Only a passing word has been written on the

subject of lace mending and cleaning. If this is added to the industry work, much additional training will be needed before the village girls are able to help, and the cleaning is best kept apart from their work altogether. Very little mending is done in England compared with other countries, and the Devonshire village workers can do little beyond the mending of their own class of lace. In the villages they have no opportunities of buying fine nets or threads, and good work is often spoiled by remounting with cheap materials. They have very little idea as to the suitability of the kind of mending for any special lace. Of many queer blunders one could hardly surpass a sample of lace shown in South Kensington Museum. Some really fine old sprays of Devon lace have had the old hand net removed, and in its place the lace-maker has entirely regrounded the pattern with cushion, diamond and pin fillings (stitches which are shown in the butterfly samplers on plate 17). Not only are the stitches coarse and large, but they are worked at five different angles, the whole piece being only about eight inches in length. The result is an utterly valueless piece of lace, since, even had the grounding been finely worked, the conflicting direction of the stitches

displeases the eye and creates a sense of restlessness.

It is surprising how much lace is sold from little villages, often several miles from any railway station. The motor-car, increasing facilities in railway travelling, and the growing need of short visits to the country to recoup the strain attendant upon the increasing demands of city life are three great factors tending to advance our village trades. The pendulum of time, which on the one swing brought the country people, rich and poor alike, to concentrate in the cities either for work or shopping, now swings back to the opposite extreme, using practically the same means to bring about the change; while the overgrowth of the city, the cost of living and the conditions under which the poorest workers exist, tend to keep others at home.

Of late years there has been a growing desire on the part of the thoughtful to support home industries, and recent exposures of the horrors of sweating dens have not been fruitless.

Trade in the country villages is steadily on the increase, and forgotten hamlets, miles from a railway, are re-opened to the outside world by the advent of the motor-car.

To those who give consideration to the conditions under which their wants have to be supplied, it is a great satisfaction to buy under the reasonable assumption that the worker has been honestly dealt with. Perhaps the most effectual blow to the sweating evil may be dealt through the increasing encouragement of the village worker.

With much that is extremely hopeful for the future, there is just one small cloud which threatens the increasing prosperity of the village lace maker, and it is strange that this should be the outcome of charity.

In China, Japan, India, and Ceylon, English missionary ladies are teaching lace making to the Christian converts. At first Torchon and Maltese were the laces taught, and later foreign missionaries brought in Bruges. More recently, with the revival of lace making in the Midlands, Buckinghamshire lace was studied by these ladies previous to their opening more native classes. The work is already coming home in small quantities, and at a price for which no English woman could work. Two annas a day has been quoted as the wage for which a native woman will work. If the copying of English lace grows to any real extent, this unfair competition must ruin the



home trade. If our countrywomen abroad will pause for a moment's reflection, they will remember that charity begins at home. It is to be hoped that in the near future the talked-of "School of Oriental Lace Design" may become an accomplished fact, so that we may gladly give to the Eastern lace the patronage that is already given to their embroideries, and that without hurt to our own.

Much more might be written of the work in a Devon village, and of our missionary schools abroad, but as yet the days are too early to allow of clear results being shown. It is possible—nay, probable—that many of those who are working to-day may never see the ripened fruits of their labours, but the work goes steadily forward notwithstanding, and Whittier might have voiced the thoughts of many working to better the conditions of their fellow-labourers when he wrote :

" It may not be our lot to wield  
The sickle in the ripened field,  
Nor ours to hear on summer eves  
The reapers' song among the sheaves ;  
Yet where our Duty's task is wrought  
In unison with God's great thought,  
The near and future blend in one  
And whatsoe'er is willed is done."

## PART I.

### LACE MAKING.

“He that will have a cake out of the Wheat,  
Must tarry the grinding.”

SHAKESPERE.

#### MATERIALS AND OUTFIT.

*The Pillow.*—The first thing to be thought of is the pillow. In the cottages these are large and extremely heavy, differing in make from the old trolley shape rounded like a misshapen orange to the flat mushroom pillow. They are usually filled with wheat straw, and a man is generally called in to make them, since he is able to pack the pillow more firmly than a woman could do. A good, serviceable pillow will be about thirteen inches across, and five to six inches deep, rising gradually in the middle to another inch. Two circles of heavy cotton material, jean, or Oxford shirting, will be cut, size about fifteen inches across, with a long strip to connect the two, about three inches deep. The centres, top and bottom, will be machined strongly on to the side piece, of which a few

inches should be left unfinished so that the hand can easily pass the chaff through the hole. The casing is turned right side out and the stuffing put in, which every few handfuls must be pressed tightly into place, a certain amount of shape being shown from the first. When it becomes difficult to get any more chaff into the pillow, beat it well with a flat iron, the blows being directed from the opening to press the stuffing to the farther side. Continue to fill up the gap made, until the beating shows no further effect beyond the necessary shaping. Leave the pillow for a day or two on the kitchen rack, or in warm weather bake it in the sun. With the heat, the straw will contract, and after another beating will allow of more being added. To finish, sew up the aperture and put a loose cover on the pillow which can easily be removed and washed.

These directions are for the ordinary useful pillow as used in many of the cottages and for the schools. For the work of a village industry they can hardly be improved upon, as they are both too flat and heavy to be easily overturned, while the necessary materials are always within easy reach. The drawback to the lace worker who is frequently from

home lies in the weight and bulk ; therefore, if the pillow is required for travelling, it is better to pass from the old ways and to have a wooden circle made, upholstered in the same way as a footstool, and padded with horsehair and fibre. The total weight of such a pillow need not exceed three pounds. The extreme height from the centre should be about three inches, which would drop to two inches at the sides. In the cottages it is advisable to have no covering that cannot readily be removed and washed. For the drawing-room there is no reason why the pillow should not be covered with a restful green or blue linen or silk. Some rather fanciful pillows have been sold in Paris covered in velvet and plush, but such dust collectors find little favour with the practical lace maker.

*Covering Cloths.*—Even though the outer covering may be of linen, two covering cloths will still be required. In the cottages these are usually of sprigged prints, and the cloths are washed for the setting up of each new pattern. The pricking is first pinned on the pillow, and as the lace grows upon it two strips of horn or talc known as “sliders” will be needed to cover that which is finished, thereby

keeping it clean and preventing the weaving threads from catching on the used pins, which can then be pressed down close to the card, each alternate one being removed. Being transparent, the pattern is clearly shown through the sliders. The cover cloths are folded in half and pinned tight across pattern and sliders, keeping the latter from slipping, but leaving enough of the pattern exposed to show the worker plainly what she is doing. The folded sides of the cloths will cross the middle of the pillow, and when leaving off work, the top half of each will be unpinned, one half covering the bobbins, so that they lie enclosed as in a pocket, while the second cloth is drawn and pinned down over the lace itself.

*The Pattern or Pricking.*—In olden days this was looked upon as being of the greatest importance, and care was taken to ensure a long life to the pricking. The transparent parchment used in the Midlands is seldom met with in the West, but some of the best work was made on white skins, often remnants of old wills. The tracing of the design was first laid over the parchment and then outlined by fine pricking. The instrument used for this is called a needle pin, which in the cottages is generally a No. 8 sewing needle forced into

a short wooden handle. The pricking is slow and laborious work, and needs a skilled hand. Any irregularity in the distance the holes may lie apart will be shown in the lace, and only a lace-maker can know exactly when certain holes are necessary. There are also signs for special stitches, two pricks above and one under to signify a pearl edge; two pricks close together to denote half stitch; a single prick to show where the gimps are crossed. Some day it may be possible to arrange a little dictionary of these signs; unfortunately at present they vary so much in different localities that it would be useless to attempt the arrangement of a complete code.

As the decline of trade set in, the cottagers were probably without the means of obtaining parchment, and most of the Honiton patterns of the past fifty years have been pricked on any paper that was fairly stout. The thick cream paper used by grocers for sugar bags is still saved for this purpose, but ordinary thin note paper has been made to serve when nothing better could be found. The soft material lasted perfect for a very short time, also having no resistance for the pins, a careless worker continually made new holes as she worked, so that her lace could rarely stand

critical inspection. Of later years new kinds of card have been introduced into other lace centres, and Devonshire has, on the whole, taken fairly kindly to a brown glazed board which is inexpensive and fairly durable, though without the strength of a real parchment. Many of the women say that it rests their eyes to work on the dark material, but in parts of Buckinghamshire we hear quite the contrary, and when the workers there cannot afford clear parchment, they prefer a firm white card, coloured with strong saffron. For good Devon lace nothing could be better for the work or more restful to the eyes than opaque saffron tinted parchment; only the additional cost is of real importance to the village worker.

*The Bobbins.*—For this lace these are very light. The heads should be chosen as small as possible, and the length should not exceed four inches. It is of very little use attempting to produce good work with the heavier bobbins used for Torchon, Italian, or Buckingham. The body of an Honiton bobbin is little thicker than the head, and the end is rounded to a point for convenience in taking a sewing. The favourite wood used in the West Country is spindlewood, but pear and sycamore are met with among some old specimens. It is

the custom with the country people to give the bobbins a good scrubbing with coarse yellow soap and water before filling them for a new piece of work, and this serves a double purpose in keeping the thread and hands beautifully clean, while the bobbins by degrees take the polished surface that may be seen on the well-scoured deal tables of a farm house. Three dozen bobbins are the smallest number necessary for an outfit, since, although only fifteen couples may be needed for the work, it saves trouble to have some ready wound to take the place of the empty ones. If elaborate fillings are to be made double the number will be needed.

*Lace Thread.*—Several different qualities of thread are sold as Honiton, and since the outlay is in any case very small, it is false economy to buy any but the very best. A poor thread will be harsh to the touch, and being made of a short fibre, will look fluffy if held to the light. In working it is apt to break off short, and does not lie well in the weaving. When buying, it is well to avoid thread which has been shown in a shop window, as the action of the sun upon it causes brittleness. No good lace worker will work in the sun for this reason, and it is curious to notice how the thread



frays out and runs down if worked under a direct ray or in a draught. So careful were the old spinsters obliged to be that they spun in a cellar. A single ray of light was allowed to fall on to the thread, as it passed from the distaff to the wheel, and the worker's sight being fixed only upon the thread as it left her fingers, is said to have been rendered specially acute, so that her work, under such conditions, was finer than anything she could have produced in full daylight. To give temporary resistance to the thread during spinning, a humid atmosphere was frequently produced by warm water, and certain parts of the country were, on account of the atmosphere, found to be specially favourable to good results.

To understand how completely the art of such fine hand spinning has been lost, one needs only to compare the thread used in making Point d'Angleterre with the hand-woven damask of to-day. Every year manufacturers of hand-made muslins and linens have found greater difficulty in procuring fine home-spun thread, the finest of which now comes from France. Our own British and Irish hand industries spin a flax thread only suitable for damask or linen, and lace threads are now made entirely by machinery,

which, it must be confessed, is a great improvement on the past unhealthy conditions.

Honiton thread is sold retail in hanks of one ounce, each of which are divided into four "bunches"; the bunches are again divided into a number of smaller skeins which vary according to the fineness of the thread and are called "skips," a term answering to the Buckingham "slip." The thread is ordered according to the number of these small skeins, and for Devon lace quite the coarsest number to be used should be eight skip, and that only for a beginner. The finer the thread the better the work, and no one need be afraid of starting with ten skip, while in using No. 14 the delicate half transparent look of good lace becomes evident. One of the characteristics of Devon lace is the heavy out-lining thread. In the Midlands this is called the gimp, but in the West that term is used for a particular narrow lace bar, so one is forced to use the village expression, "shiney thread." It is a bright flax thread, very soft and flat, and is sold by the single skein. A few workers use ordinary sewing cotton in place of the shiney thread, but this seems to be quite local. The sizes of the gimp suitable for working with Honiton thread are 24 to 36, the highest number would

go well with 17 skip. An unbleached thread may be used if preferred, which is a deep cream colour, and gives the appearance of old lace, All thread should be handled as little as possible, and kept wrapped in blue paper to preserve its colour. Black Honiton is very rarely made now, and the special silk thread used for it has to be imported, although for the white work it is satisfactory to note that our English, Scotch, and Irish lace threads go all over the world, and are largely used in France and Belgium.

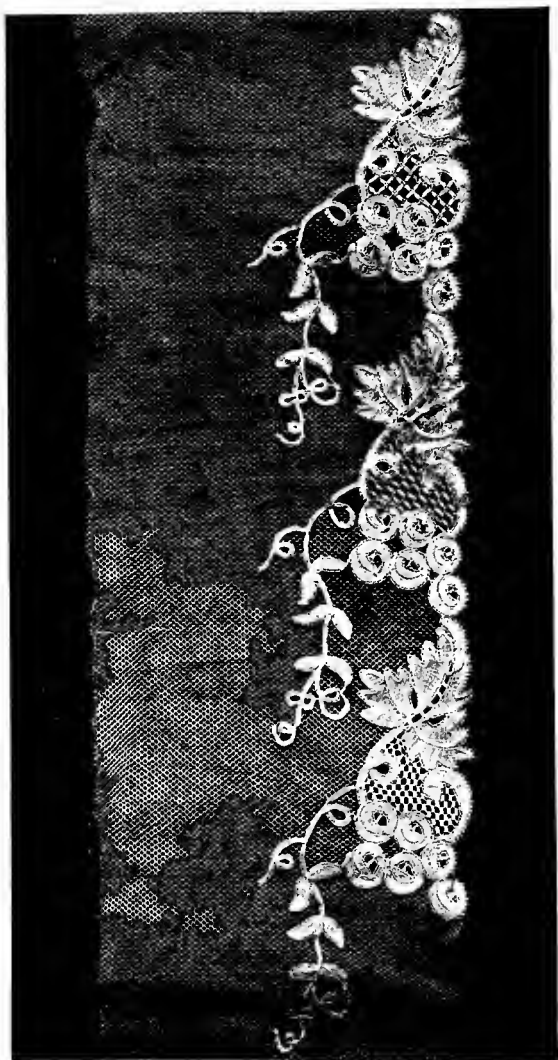
*The Turn.*—If a turn or winder is used the process of filling the bobbins is very simple. The skein must be carefully opened and placed on the skein holder, the little pegs arranged to hold it fairly tight. Hold the bobbin in the right hand, and twist two or three rings of thread over the neck. Place it in the nozzle of the turn and commence winding. To keep it steady in its place rest its head lightly against the left hand, allowing the thread to slip between the second and third fingers, which guide it. The even winding of the thread will have much to do with preventing the bobbins unravelling during working. When full the thread must be secured so that the bobbin does not run down. Hold

it in the right hand, and with the first and second fingers of the left hand twist the thread into a loop towards yourself. At the same time bring the bobbin over the loop, pass it through from underneath, and draw the end close. To lengthen the thread when working, pull against the loop without unknotting.

The bobbins will be hung on in couples. To join them, bend the ends of the thread into a loop between the thumb and first finger of the left hand, having the ends of the thread coming from the bobbins; pass the threads over and through the loop; then pull tight and cut off the ends. Next unwind some thread from one bobbin and wind on to its fellow until the knot is hidden. Wind some of the knots further back than others so that in working they can be disposed of by degrees.

*Needle Pin.*—In those parts of the pattern where the lace has to be joined by what is technically known as a “sewing,” a “needle pin” will be used. The same instrument has been described already in the account of the pricking. Although the Devon bobbins are so unusually well decorated, the needle pins are, as a rule, very plain. By amateurs a very fine crochet hook is sometimes used,





DIAMOND.—SWING AND PIN FILLINGS.

*Designed by A. E. Tompkins*

*To face page 107.*

but this is apt to strain the edge of the lace and to enlarge the hole through which it passed.

*Pin-cushion.*—Devonshire lace differs from other English laces in being worked from every angle of the cushion, which is moved with each new curve, in order that the bobbins may always hang down the way they will be woven, and be continually facing the worker. Instead of putting the unused lace pins into the cushion on either side of the pricking, as is usual with most laces, it is necessary to have a tiny pin-cushion which can be moved from place to place as required, and this is often pinned to the worker's bodice.

*Checked Paper.*—This is closely ruled in squares. Useful sizes for lace work run from eight to twelve squares to the inch. In pricking nets and fillings the paper will give greater accuracy with infinitely less trouble than would be the case if the work was ruled by hand.

*Pins.*—There are special lace maker's pins, of better quality and very much finer than the ordinary. For Honiton the finest are used, and these are about one inch long and as fine as an 8 needle.

Brass or glass-headed pins should not be bought, as either are apt to hurt the pattern—

the former by the inequality of the size, and the latter by a tendency to rust.

*The Sampler.*—The materials having been provided, only a pricking is needed before the start can be made. It will save time in the long run if the pupil, supposing her to be quite a beginner, will start upon a sampler until she is fairly at home with the opening stitches. To save repetition, in the later descriptions, each stitch is given separately, so that, with the exception of the first pattern, only a few general hints are needed on each particular design.

The patterns have been chosen rather with the view of teaching a variety of stitches as easily as possible than showing off a particular style, and the worker is left free to alter or to introduce new fillings as she feels disposed, changing these in contrasting repeats to suit her own fancy, and so giving the touch of individuality lacking in machine work.

For the first sampler pricking a piece of glazed board, about four inches long by one inch wide, is needed. Checked paper No. 12 over the glazed board will ensure perfect accuracy. Two lines of holes, making a straight braid down the centre of the card, are needed. Prick one side first, using every second line



of the checked paper ; then start the corresponding line three spaces away and prick down, only starting a line lower down.

Once the plain braid, with whole and half-stitch, is mastered, the beginner would have little difficulty in starting upon one of the butterflies. It is always well to start upon a small pattern which can be quickly finished, as, supposing a more ambitious piece is chosen, the difference in quality between the first production and the last is likely to spoil the effect of the whole. The butterflies have been chosen as samplers on account of the excellent practice in turning stitches and of the scope they give for different fillings.

*Handling the Bobbins.*—For Honiton, Brussels, and similar light laces the bobbins are allowed quite a short thread of about two and a half inches, and lie flat upon the pillow, each couple being lightly lifted over the other and slipped into place—not held in the hands as is the case with Torchon work, or thrown like a Buckinghamshire bobbin.

*Names of Stitches.*—In describing the various stitches the names that are given are those that are most generally in use among Devonshire workers. Many, and indeed most, of these terms differ from those described in

other works upon the same subject, which have adopted those French and Italian names entirely unknown to our cottage workers. Some of the old English names are quaint and original enough to be well worth preserving, but to prevent confusion the more classical as well as the local name is given, as far as possible. When different districts have given new names to the stitches the more generally known has been chosen.

#### TO WORK A PLAIN BRAID.

Hang up eight couples of bobbins wound with ten-skip thread and one couple of gimp No. 24. Twist each couple once, arranging them so that the gimp bobbins fall third on the left and fifth on the right. The outside couple on the right will be the workers; they will pass from side to side of the sampler, weaving the stitch. The bobbins which hang straight down are called the "Passives," the last couple on either side being the edge couples. The gimp bobbin is always worked as an ordinary passive, and retains its position as third bobbin from the edge, not counting the workers. Care must be taken not to displace the bobbins, as the regularity of the stitch is lost at once if they are wrongly crossed.

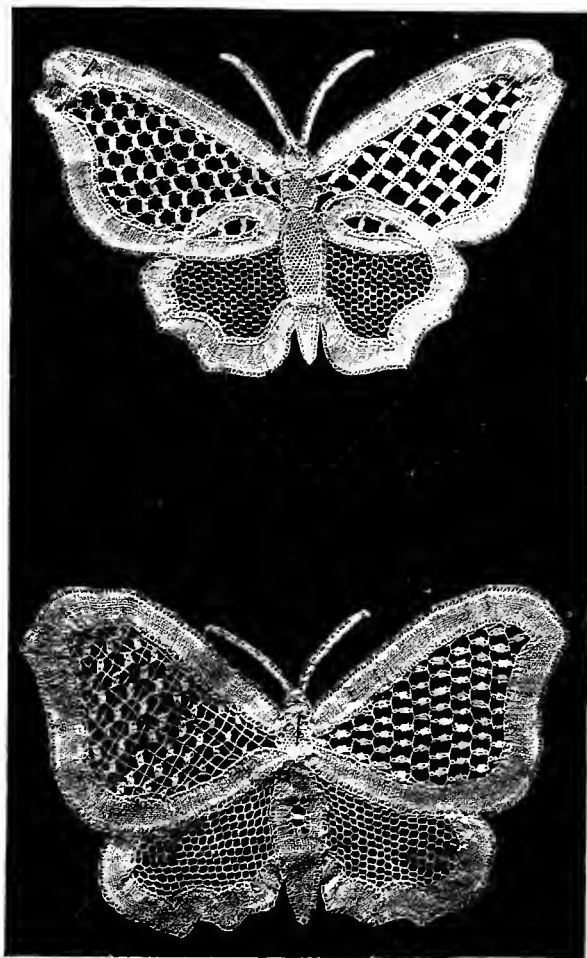
*Whole Stitch.*—Commence working on the right. Place the nearest passive in between the two workers, bring the two workers over the two passives, place the two passives together; this will leave the two workers together and the passives immediately behind them on the right. Work through all the couples in this way until you come to the edge couple on the left, which is twisted three times; twist the workers three times with the left hand, put a pin in the hole next on the left. Work the outside couple in the same way as before, twist them three times, and leave them. Twist the couple nearest the pin three times. It is now their turn to become the workers, while the old workers remain as the outside couple. In working back from left to right the stitch is reversed, and the first movement will be made with the workers. Put the right hand worker in between the two passives next to it. Lift the two passives backwards over the workers, and bring the two workers together. Twist the workers three times before using the edge couple, which should always be left twisted. Put the workers up behind the pin in the hole they have now reached on the left, work with the edge couple, twist each pair three times, leave the old

workers as edge couple, and bring the new pair of workers across to the left. Repeat the instructions.

In making Whole Stitch, bear in mind that working from left to right the workers take the first step because they are on the *left*, while in passing from right to left the passives take the first step because *they* are then on the left. The stitch must always begin on the left, and although Whole Stitch can be made without the reverse movement, the lace will always be rough in appearance. This is one of those small differences which mark good work. A capable lace maker, working in ten-skip and paying attention to this rule, by laying her threads correctly, will make her lace look as fine in texture as that of an uneven worker using twelve-skip. This stitch is also known as Linen Stitch and as Cloth Stitch.

*To Cross the Gimps.*—At equal divisions of the pattern there may be one small prick by itself. This is a sign that the gimps are to be crossed, while the two little pricks in the centre of each alternate space signify half stitch. On perfecting the whole stitch, leave the workers on the outside, take the inside gimp bobbin, and pass it under all the hanging passives. This is most easily done by

PLATE 17.



TOP BUTTERFLY.—CUSHION AND DIAMOND.  
FILLINGS, POINT D'ANGLETERRE NET.

LOWER BUTTERFLY.—CUTWORK NET AND  
PIN FILLINGS TROLLY NET.

*To face page 112.*



slipping the end of the bobbin under all the passives close to the pins ; hold it up about half an inch, and slip its fellow gimp across into its place ; pull the first gimp through, so that on completion each has changed places with the other ; then work on as usual.

Another method of crossing the gimps is to pass the inside bobbin under all the intermediate passives, twisting it round the opposite gimp and returning to its original place. The second gimp bobbin will remain in its own place, but must hang loose, while the crossing gimp will have been pulled fairly tight.

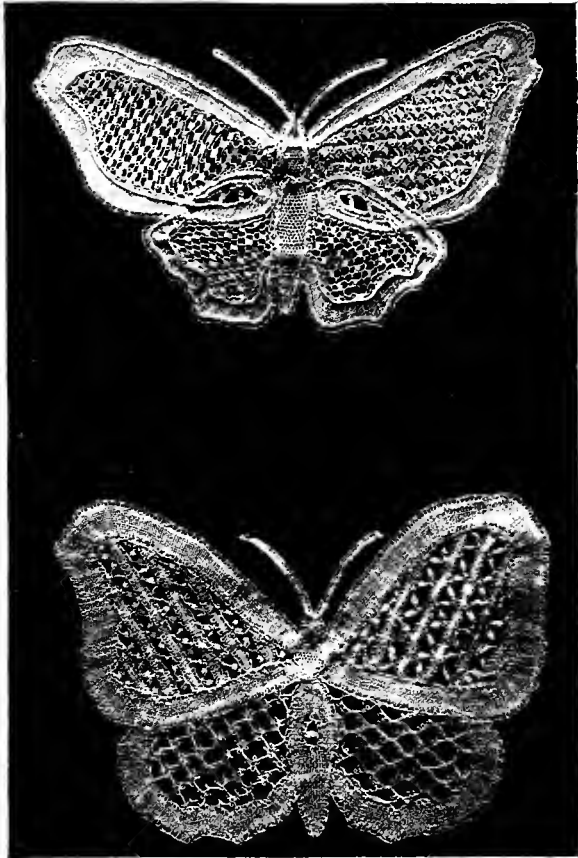
The crossing of the two gimps as first given is inclined to pull the pattern into something of a waist, which is useful in accentuating the scalloped outlines of small flowers ; while the second method drags the work less, and keeps it more strictly to the pattern. Where a broad surface has to be crossed by the gimps, to prevent the thread becoming loose and untidy, it is better to weave the inside gimp bobbin across, merely slipping it in and out between the passives, looping round its fellow and returning the same way. The crossing of the gimp generally denotes a change from Whole to Half Stitch.

*Half Stitch.*—When thoroughly at home in the first lesson, pass on to the more open Half Stitch. This is a much lighter stitch, and will be used for the upper sides of leaves and petals to afford relief to the heavier shading of Whole Stitch.

Begin by giving a single twist to each couple of passives, with the exception of the gimp couples. The edge and gimp couples are worked as before. The workers will be on the left side. Place the right-hand worker between the next pair of passives, bring the passives over the two workers. Only one more movement is needed and the Whole Stitch is made, but that last step is left out. The result is that each couple is left with a single twist, while only one worker runs across. In returning, twist the workers once after working Whole Stitch through the gimp couple. This is much lighter than Whole Stitch, and plays an important part in the shading of lace. As a general rule, all the lighter parts of flowers and leaves would be worked in it, the whole stitch being used for the under parts, partly in shadow. The stitch is quite as easy as Whole Stitch, but more difficult to follow by the eye. If by chance the worker is lost, it is generally the quickest way to undo as far



PLATE 18.



TOP BUTTERFLY.—2<sup>ND</sup> SWING FILLING.  
BLOSSOM, POINT D'ESPRIT NET.

LOWER BUTTERFLY.—BARS AND CUTWORKS.  
PEARL AND HEXAGONAL BRIDE FILLINGS.

*To face page 114.*



back as the gimp couple; but if this is done the worker must see that each passive couple is lying in its right place with a single twist before she makes another attempt.

*To Add Bobbins.*—The fancy stitches will often require more bobbins. To add these, before putting up the new pin twist the workers and hang the new couple over them, and work to the edge as before. Slip the gimp through the new couple into its original place, and work as before. Let the next couple be added on the opposite side, but never increase by more than one couple at a time.

*Plain Hole.*—A single prick in the centre of the braid is the sign for a plain hole. It is unfortunate that the same sign is used for crossing the gimps, but since it appears at less regular intervals it can be easily distinguished.

Leaving the workers at the edge, divide the bobbins equally and work Half Stitch with the two middle pairs of passives. Weave the workers through to the nearest middle couple, work through, give a single twist, turn and work back to the edge, putting up the pin in the usual way. Now take up the second couple of centre passives through which the workers did not pass. Weave to the outside edge on their side, put in pin, and return. The

division of the centre passives now shows clearly. If the hole is to be a large one, the two pairs of workers may again be taken to their respective sides and back, a second pin being used ; but in either case the hole is closed by the original centre couples being worked in Half Stitch, after which the workers are brought out from the edge and passed through them in the ordinary way.

This hole is only to be used with cloth stitch. It is often very helpful when a sharp corner has to be turned. There may be some five holes in the outer side to correspond with one on the inside. In such a case the inside workers may pass once through the inner centre couple and back ; while the outer workers may repeat the stitch two or three times, the hole made shaping itself to the turn of the pattern. The instruction on turning stitches explains this with fuller detail.

*Fancy Hole.*—This is to be found in most of the old Devon lace, and is of purely Flemish origin. Four holes will be pricked diamond shape in the centre of the braid. On approaching the top hole leave the workers on one side, divide the passives equally, work Half Stitch with the two centre couples, put in a pin, and close with Whole Stitch. Bring the

workers out from the edge, but on reaching the nearer centre couple twist the workers once and bring them back without passing them through either pair of centre bobbins. Put up a pin in the usual way, and this time, working again to the middle, include the nearer centre couple; put a pin into the nearer centre hole of the diamond, close it with Whole Stitch, and work back. Now it is necessary to find a new pair of workers for the opposite side, which is at present unequal. If it is necessary to gain on that side—that is to say, if an outside corner is being turned—an extra pin-hole can be disposed of by making workers of the inside pair of passives adjoining the unused centre couple. These workers will pass to the edge, cover a pin, return to centre and again to edge and back, putting up two pins before working through their centre couple.

If, however, the braid is quite straight, the new workers should be the passives nearest the gimp. They will be brought from edge to centre and back, using only one pin, and on their return they include the centre couple, putting in the pin and closing. On taking the workers back to the edge, it will be seen that the work is quite equal on either side of the hole.

Work the two couples remaining in the centre with Whole Stitch, put in a pin, and close with Half Stitch. The workers on either side repeat the movements already given, stopping in their original position. The new pair of workers are done with, while the old ones weave straight across from side to side as before.

*Making a Blind Pin.*—In turning a corner, or when working round a circle, it must often happen that there are many more pin-holes on the outer than in the inside edge. In order to get round, the same pin-hole must be used more than once. Often the difficulty of neatly turning a corner can be lessened by a little forethought, the worker commencing the curve before it reaches an acute point. Until the curve is close at hand the weaving must be kept perfectly straight; from that stage it will follow the slant of the pattern, doing so gradually at first and at the sharpest point so directly as to become even again as the pillow is turned round. The edge couple are not used while the blind pin is being made. On reaching the narrowing inside edge, the workers are only given a single twist, after which they are put up behind the new pin and across the pattern, leaving the inside edge

couple unworked. Next time, as they return to the inside edge, the pin—now called a blind pin—will be taken out and replaced again in the same hole as the workers are passed behind it. In putting the pin in the second time, care must be taken to avoid sticking it through the loop made in the previous row, and which should disappear during the working of the next few stitches. The same blind pin may be used two or three times by an experienced hand, but the inside edge couple is not brought into use until the pin has been put in for the last time.

*Gaining on a Pin.*—Another way of disposing of the inequality of the pin-holes may be used with good advantage, combined with the instructions already given. It may happen that six or seven outer holes must be used with only one to correspond on the inside—a thing which will frequently happen in turning a leaf.

Alternately with making a blind pin, the lace maker, on reaching the inside edge, can drop her workers as they are put, untwisted, behind the pin, and, changing them for the nearest couple of passives, can take these across and back. Reaching the pin, the new workers pass through the old, the pin is taken out, the

old workers fall into position as the last couple of passives and the pin is completed with the new workers.

If taken alternately, these two methods result in a very neat and even piece of work. The trouble with blind pin used too frequently by itself lies in the unsightly collection of little loops; while gaining on a pin several times in succession is likely to draw the passives to the outer edge, making an awkward hole on the inside. Both faults can be avoided by an expert worker; but, notwithstanding, many people prefer to work the stitches alternately. In finding a new pair of workers, the gimp must always be left in its correct position—namely, third from the edge.

*Taking a Sewing.*—This expression is rather a misnomer, since it has nothing to do with sewing in the ordinary meaning of the word. If some of the floral examples are examined, it will be seen that certain parts, such as the two sides of a leaf, have been joined together. This is specially noticeable in the grape design given in Plate 16. One side of a leaf has been worked, and as the pricking gives only a single row of holes up the centre by the time it is half finished, the inside pin-



holes have all been used. The joining of the second half of the leaf must be done by "sewing."

The workers are brought through the inside edge couple and twisted once. The pin is removed, and the needle pin comes into requisition to draw a loop of thread from the outside worker through the hole left by the pin in the lace edge. The fellow worker is next passed through this loop, after which both bobbins are pulled evenly into place, and, the pin having been replaced in its original hole, they are twisted once again, and work as before.

The beginner must notice the difference between the shape of the hole made by the pin in the lace braid and the open spaces on either side. The pin-hole, being made by the workers, has more resistance than the holes enclosed on either side; and if by mistake the sewing is taken through one of the latter the edge is quickly pulled out of place. Generally speaking, the hole made by the pin is smaller than those on either side; therefore there is a special temptation to the novice, who finds the larger hole much easier to manage. If at first it seems impossible to draw the loop through with only a needle pin, a

fine crochet hook may be used ; but this is not considered professional, though in the early stages of lace-making it will often save a pattern from resembling a ploughed field ! Anyone who has spent an agonising five minutes scratching at the thread which inevitably avoids the loop will understand what this means.

*Ten-stick and Turning Stitch.*—The word “bobbin” is very rarely used in Devonshire, the women always speaking of “lace sticks ;” hence the name “ten-stick” given to the narrow one-edge braid made with five couples of bobbins. It is used for narrow stalks, open rings, and also in raised work. Only a single row of pin-holes are needed.

The five couples will be hung up as required, either over a pin or attached by sewing to some portion of the lace already made. Each couple is given a single twist before starting to work. The workers will be the last pair on the right, and they will be brought across in whole stitch to the edge couple, twisted, the pin put in, and the edge made as usual.

*Turning Stitch.*—On reaching the last couple on the right, Whole Stitch is repeated a second time, and the inner couple of bobbins, lying

second from the edge, are then taken into use and work back to the pin without any of the usual twisting.

*Pearl Pin.*—At the foot of all the best Devon lace, in common with many other varieties, little loops will be noticed which are only to be found round that part of the pattern which forms the edge. The lace maker's sign for pearl pin is two pricks above and one below, on the pattern, pricked when the stitch is to begin, and also to leave off. While most of the stitches can boast of several names, pearl pin has only one, but, to make up for this apparent neglect, no two writers seem to agree as to its spelling.

On reaching the outside edge, twist the workers three times before working through the outside couple, then twist seven times. Take the outside worker in the left hand, and with the right bring the pin under and round the thread, making a complete loop by putting the pin in its hole. Next take the inside worker and twist it round the pin from the outside, and then twist the workers once. Work Whole Stitch through the next couple, and twist both three times.

*Pearl Pin Bars.*—These are identical with the “Picot Brides” of the Flemish school,

and are much used in joining the Honiton Guipure. Of recent years the bars have been used, crossed to form a very open net-work ; but the Devonshire worker has, as yet, a very untrained eye for correct line, and in each new section of grounding is apt to hang on her bobbins at a different angle, with the result that no two sections of pearl bars run in exactly the same direction, which is most distracting to the artist.

This can easily be overcome by careful pricking, or by joining the sprays over ruled paper.

Most of the faulty work comes through no set design having been used, and by the worker starting her bars at the angle that will enable her to cover the widest space with the fewest number of bobbins.

Much the same fault may be found with the single pearl pin bars ; but they, occupying much less space, escape notice more easily. It is, perhaps, natural that a worker paid by piece-work should be tempted to sacrifice some of the appearance of her work for the sake of covering the ground more quickly. To gain the happy medium, the designer must work in with the lace maker as far as possible, lest bars placed more strictly in accordance

with artistic rules may terminate in awkward places, calling for the rehangng of the bobbins more often than is necessary.

Four couples are needed for each bar, and will be sewn through the lace at the point from which the bar is to start, each couple being given a single twist before starting.

Take the outside couple on the right for workers, and bring them through to the left, making a turning stitch with the last couple.

Work back again to the right and make a pearl pin. This will be slightly different to that used for an edge ; the workers will only be twisted once instead of three times before they are worked together preparatory to putting in the pin, also only once on their way back again. The pearl pins will not always be the same distance apart, but any intervening space between the pin holes may be filled up by repeating the plaiting as often as the distance would seem to demand.

If the pearl pin bars are intended to cross each other for the groundwork already described, the bars will be joined by bringing one inside couple through both couples of the neighbouring bar, next, the outside couple through the same pair. When this is done, the

original two couples of each bar will be together again.

*Tying Out.*—When the time has come to end off a part of the lace, throw out the gimps and tie the workers firmly round all the remaining bobbins. Knot the passives together in pairs to prevent them slipping; tie again with the workers, and cut off.

*Cutting Off in Couples.*—Twist the threads from a pair of bobbins in a single loop round the closed blades of a pair of rather blunt scissors. With the points of the scissors catch and hold the double threads so firmly as to draw the loop over the points without cutting the thread until it has passed over. The couples are then ready knotted together for further use.

#### RAISED WORK.

Devon lace makers lay a great deal of stress upon the value of raised work, which is used for all the best lace. The part of the lace that has been raised shows plainly in the illustrations; but the little ridges formed are of two kinds—rolled and ten-stick or gimp.

The rolled work is thought to be the easier, and is also the more generally used. Perhaps the reason why some workers are inclined to

look down upon it is that it is sometimes made loosely, while the stem stitch does not lend itself to careless treatment.

A very easy example for a first lesson will be found in the rose spray in Plate II. Begin upon the leaf that touches the rose bud, and which consists of six small sections, known locally as "taps."

Hang up at the end tap and work down as usual, adding bobbins as the braid widens.

On reaching the foot of the tap bring the workers through all except the last three couples on the outer side, and leave them.

Make new workers of the pair nearest the old ones, and cross these over and under the remaining couples, twisting them as though they were to be cut off.

Sew the new workers into the bottom hole and tie firmly. Roll again, using the same couples, and, turning the pillow right round, continue to roll them inside the workers, sewing into every third hole of the braid until the new holes are reached.

More couples will now be needed for the new tap.

Before putting up the pin into the highest hole, put out the next couple to the edge over the leaf. Add two new pairs, hanging one

over the leaf in the same way, but putting the other into the place of the one already disturbed.

This must be repeated for each of the top holes, by which time there will be enough couples for the tap.

Turn the pillow round and work cloth stitch across the leaf, passing through all the new couples, but tying the last pair in a knot which keeps the workers firmly against the roll and does away for the need of a sewing.

The knotted couple are taken for the next pair of workers.

Returning again to the roll, a top sewing must be taken. Instead of the worker being looped through the pinhole, as usual, it must be drawn through sideways inside the edge couple—pulling, not against the outside edge of the pinhole, but against the side bar made by the workers on their return journey.

Continue sewing in this way until the foot of the roll is reached, and where the original couples were left hanging. Sew the workers into the bottom hole where the roll began, and leave them. Take the old workers across to the opposite side and work through all till the last pinhole is used, throwing out couples as the space narrows.



After using the last outside hole, work to the inside stem and knot the workers round all the couples, rolling up to the top of the next tap, when more couples must be added.

On reaching the base of the last tap, all couples except five, having been gradually thrown out, the workers will be tied round these five couples, and a roll will be made right up to the top of the highest tap on the opposite side. This long roll will be sewn in every three holes.

On reaching the top, the taps will be made as usual.

As many couples as possible will be thrown out before the extreme base of the leaf is reached, and the final tying off is done after a sewing, and not at the last pinhole.

#### GIMP RAISED WORK.

The rolled raised work is classed as plain work, and though often used in very fine work, it cannot compete with ten-stick or gimp. The example chosen for a lesson is the leaf on the lower spray of Plate 13, just above Toad in the hole filling.

The stalk is worked in the ten-stick, which is sometimes called a "gimp"—a term which has no connection with the shiny thread called

by that name in the Midlands. It is continued up the centre part of the leaf.

Three holes from the top of the first tap extra couples must be hung in to fill up the leaf. Hang one in at each pinhole, but do not work through them. On reaching the highest point turn the pillow round, and begin to make the tap in Cloth Stitch, working in the last new couple; knot these so that the workers are kept firmly against the gimp. No sewing is taken.

The new couple now become workers, and the old are left hanging to be worked through on returning.

Each new couple should be tied in the same way after which top sewings must be taken, as explained in the last lesson.

When the inner holes of the first tap are all used, the workers are brought from the outside through all the couples, except the last five on the inside, and are left hanging to be used again when the centre tap is done.

The five couples which have been left are used to work the gimp up the centre tap. The inside couple is taken for workers, and brought through the remaining four pairs. A turning stitch is made, the pillow turned

round, and the workers brought back and sewn into the first hole of the tiny tap.

The gimp is now made as usual, the pins being put up on the outside and new couples added on nearing the top. Having covered the centre tap and used the last hole, the workers are taken across to meet those hanging down, and are sewn into the bottom hole, the point where the five couples were turned to make the gimp. They are then left.

The old workers are next worked through all the bobbins except the last four couples, which are used to make a gimp for the last little tap.

When this is finished, the workers are sewn in as before, and the old ones taken to finish the remainder of the leaf.

## PART II.

### FANCY FILLINGS.

THE opening lessons have been so specially devoted to teaching the foundation of the lace design, that the fancy fillings come with a renewed interest.

These pretty stitches should be to the lace-maker what the jewel is to a goldsmith. The choice of each for its particular setting will call for the exercise of equal taste and discretion. These stitches are known as "modes," or "jours," in the great outside world of which the village worker knows so little; needless to say, such terms are quite unknown in the West ' Country, where as often as not we talk of them as "villins."

The fillings enrich the work, and also by judicious rearrangement break up the monotony of a repeating design. The individuality, if one may so express it, of a piece of lace, is enhanced by these small changes, and while

the foundation remains unaltered, each repeat is slightly different, emphasising the fact that it is not machine made.

The space to be filled will often vary very greatly in shape and size. Here it rests with the worker to decide which is the most suitable stitch to use, and the best point at which to hang on.

It will often happen that by starting at one particular point some bobbins may be cut off on the one side in time to allow of their being used again for the widening of the pattern elsewhere. Naturally this is a saving of trouble, but the worker must bear in mind when pricking her filling that if, to avoid the use of extra bobbins, she works at a wrong angle, the effect of her work is spoilt.

The butterfly with cushion and diamond filling will serve as an illustration ; the cushion filling running in straight lines is opposed to the slanting lines characteristic of the diamond.

Had it not been necessary to give the greatest number of fillings in each sampler, each pair of wings would have been worked with the same stitch and at the same angle. This rule applies still more strictly when nets or

brides are being used, whether for grounding or for ornamentation.

#### THE CUTWORK.

The loop formed in separating the butterfly's wings contain little solid fillings which in Devonshire are called cutworks, though in other parts of England they are better known as leadworks.

Two couples of bobbins will be required, one pair being sewn into the braid on either side of the loop. The inside bobbin on the left hand will be the worker, and needs a longer thread than its fellows.

Keep the two outside bobbins rather far apart, and, holding the worker loosely, pass it over the centre bobbin and then alternately under and over each bobbin, going first to the one on the right.

After making several lines, draw the outside bobbins a little further apart, holding the worker loosely in the hand meanwhile. This will bring the weaving threads more closely together, and will regulate the shape.

Any dragging on the part of the worker bobbin will make the cutwork uneven and narrow, instead of being smooth and wide.

Continue the stitch until the cutwork has grown to the required size ; then gently twist each couple twice. Lay the worker carefully on one side to avoid its dragging, and sew out the opposite couple through the next pinhole of the braid, after which knot them. Sew out the worker couple into their corresponding pinholes, retaining the worker as the bobbin to pass through the loop, since this will strain the thread least, then knot. Twist each couple three times, and sew into the braid two or three pinholes lower down. Make a second cutwork in the same way, cutting off the couples on completion.

An experienced worker would prefer to make her cutworks all in one with the braid.

On reaching, the position for the first, a new couple of bobbins would be added in the usual way, which would be left hanging until the opposite side of the curve was reached. At that point the workers on passing the edge couple would join in making the cutwork, afterwards returning to the braid.

Cutwork is an old Elizabethan name belonging properly to the ornamental button-hole embroidery worn by apprentices and

commoners whose rank did not admit of their wearing lace.

#### DIAMOND FILLING.

This is the name of the star made by the joining of four cutworks with a fancy centre.

Cutworks of several shapes and sizes may be found in Torchon, Maltese, and other laces, but although many patterns show these brought together into a cross, the dainty little five-hole centre belongs especially to Devonshire.

To start as shown in the sampler butterfly, four couples, in sets of two, must be hung up at the body. The first is an incomplete diamond, so the worker begins at the centre.

After working Whole Stitch once with each set, the couples are each twisted three times, and each set is divided by a pin placed in the two upper of the four holes pricked close together. This division leaves a couple of bobbins outside each pin, with two couples together in the centre. Work Whole Stitch and three twists with the inside couples once, then cover the pins to left and right by working each inside couple with the neighbouring outside edge.

After twisting, work the centre couples together again in Whole Stitch, twist three times again, and put in the two bottom pins. The



outside couples being twisted, all are now ready to make their respective cutworks.

After finishing the cutwork on the left (which is done by working Whole Stitch round a pin close to the braid), the couples are sewn in as described in making the first cutwork, after which they are twisted, re-sewn and used again a little lower down.

To return to the two couples still hanging on the right side. These will be worked down to the top left pin-hole of the next set of holes, and come to a standstill after the pin divides them. Two more couples are now hung on to the braid immediately beyond the top right pin-hole, and after working Whole Stitch, twisting and dividing these with their pin, the centre stitches are repeated as before.

It is easy to see how the sets of couples work across the pattern, old couples coming out to meet the centre ones, or new being joined in. As the narrower part of the pattern is reached the couples are thrown out on the same principal.

#### PIN FILLING.

This is one of the easiest and also prettiest fillings. It is worked in straight lines, and should be commenced in the narrow part of

the wing close to the body. Sew two couples into the braid above the first pinhole of the filling, work them together in Whole Stitch, give three twists, place the pin between, and make a cutwork long enough to reach the pinhole of the line below. When this is done, twist the couples again three times, put up and close the pin as usual, twist the couples, which must then divide to right and left, and work with new pairs brought from either side. Each new couple is brought in with the same stitches, first whole then twisting. The new pair on the right will work a Whole Stitch and three twists with the old couple on the left. Put up a pin in the first hole of this second row of cutworks, and work to the pin below, twist, put up, and close the pin as usual.

A new couple must be sewn in on the left of the line above, and following on the instruction work with the original left-hand couple hanging from the first cutwork. When the second cutwork of the lower line has been made, new couples will again be needed for the line below, and the directions are repeated.

#### CUSHION FILLING.

This is pricked and worked diagonally in the same manner as the diamond filling. Four

couples are required for each square, and it is commenced [as is the case with most of the fillings] in the narrowest part of the wing. Sew two couples in respectively to right and left above the first holes of the pricking and make the usual start ; Cloth Stitch, three twists, put up the pin, and close with Whole Stitch. All four couples being worked to this point, next twist the two inside couples once, and the outer ones three times. Make a cutwork with the two centre couples, then twist them once and work each pair with the couples hanging on either side—the usual Cloth Stitch and three twists—putting up a pin between them in the bottom holes of the square. Close each pin with Cloth Stitch, twisting the outside couples three times but the inner ones only once. The two couples on the right are sewn into the braid, returning again to take their place in the next line. The two on the left are ready for the next cutwork. Two more couples must be sewn into the braid on the left, worked round the pin as usual, and used for the next cutwork. From this point the stitch is repeated.

One more cutwork will still be required in this diagonal line, for which two more couples must be added on the left. When

the line is completed, return to the right and start the second line, working down in the same way.

#### BRICK FILLING.

The name of this filling is open to controversy, since it is also known as "cushion." This tiresome contradiction as to names applies to many stitches, and especially to those recently revived. In describing them in these pages as far as possible the best known name is used, but since this filling is known equally well by either, to avoid confusion only "Brick" is given. It is really only another variety of cushion. The prickings are identical, but instead of every alternate square having a cutwork, each one is filled, which makes a closer and more elaborate filling. The stitch is shown in the design on Plate 14, and the lesson is given on the top right-hand thistle. While the ordinary cushion is worked diagonally, "brick" is made in straight lines of cutworks.

Working down the narrow way of the space, two couples will be sewn into the braid above the first two holes on the right side. Work Cloth Stitch, twist, put up, and close the pin, following the instructions for cushion until the first cutwork is made, after which twist

each couple *once* and drop the left-hand pair.

Sew the couple on the right, which hangs above the cutwork, into the point of the little leaf (already described as a "tap"), then work it with the right-hand couple of the cutwork. Put up the bottom pin in the usual way, and do the same with the left-hand couples. Begin again on the right, the line now containing two cutworks, the new couples being sewn in on the left instead of on the right, which is more usual.

#### TOAD IN THE HOLE FILLING.

This filling may be recognised with slight differences in many pieces of Point d'Angleterre, and an early form of the stitch is shown in the lappet, Plate 5. All the varieties are alike in showing the little cutwork toad guarded by four walls, of varying thicknesses and dimensions. Like Diamond, the pricking is diagonal, but there are groups of six holes instead of four. Even to cover a small space a great many bobbins will be needed. Each "wall" requires four couples and each cutwork, two.

Begin at the extreme left-hand corner of the pricking by sewing in two couples a little distance apart. Twist each couple three times,

make a cut-work, and again twist three times. Sew in two couples on either side of the filling just above the two top holes of the pricking, work each set of two couples together in Whole Stitch, then bring those belonging to the cut-work through them on either side, working Whole Stitch. This will leave one cutwork couple in each of the two next squares ready for the cutworks there.

Return to the four couples required for the wall, work each set together in Whole Stitch, and start making the wall with the inside right-hand couple. The wall is made in Whole Stitch, and on reaching the edge the workers are twisted three times, brought round the pin, and worked back. The little loop formed in this way is found in very old bone lace, and the actual stitch is known locally as "making a winkie-pin." "Wincken" is the Dutch word for a quick movement, hence the English word wink. The winkie pin edge would naturally be made in less time than the ordinary edge with its outside couples and extra twisting. When the last of the set of holes has been worked, the bobbins are again divided into two sets, each set worked together again in Whole Stitch as at the commencement and left for the moment.

Sew in two more couples from the braid on either side of the filling and make cutworks, using the one original cutwork couple that hangs ready on either side. Some workers prefer to use no pins to keep the cutworks in place; others find that a pin at the foot is an assistance. The cutworks should come exactly in the middle of each square. Work the inside couples from the cutworks through the set of "wall" bobbins nearest it, from which position they hang ready to make the cutwork immediately under the first wall. The pattern is all worked in this way, two new couples being sewn in for each fresh wall and one couple for each new cutwork. The additional bobbins for cutworks or walls would be already in place.

#### NO PIN OR SWING FILLING.

Either name refers to the working of the stitch, no pins are necessary, and the same worker is swung from each cutwork to the one below.

This filling is illustrated in the first of the grape sprays.

Begin with the three cutworks at the highest point. Sew four couples into the braid at equal distances, missing one pin-hole

between each. After twisting, make a cutwork with the first two couples on the right, finishing by having the worker on the left. Twist three times. Make a second cutwork with the worker couple and the pair hanging down nearest them, being sure to use the same worker as before for the weaving. This will necessitate the cutwork being started from the right side—an exception to the general rule. The second and third cutworks of the line are made in the same way, after which the worker couple are sewn into the braid, but not cut off; since they will be required in the next line.

Returning to the right side, the couple left over from the first cutwork will be sewn into the braid and twisted three times, then worked with the next couple to make the top cutwork of the next line. This stitch is repeated in the same way, without any change of worker, throughout the line. More couples are added on either side as required, the total number employed for the longest line being fourteen.

#### ANOTHER SWING FILLING.

To describe the working of this filling, the butterfly must be reversed. The stitch is easy but apt to fall loosely unless carefully



worked. The pricking is diagonal, and no pins are required for the cutworks.

The lines of cutworks are done exactly like those in the swing or pin filling. Begin at the top corner of the wing, sew in four couples, twist all three times, and make the first three cutworks, sewing out the last couple. Sew in one more couple on the right, twist three times, and work it Whole Stitch and three twists with the worker hanging from the first cutwork. Put a pin up between these couples, and close it with Whole Stitch and three twists. Without changing the worker, do the same with the couple from the next cutwork, and continue this down the line of pin-holes, sewing out at the end of the braid.

The next line will, of course, be of cutworks, and the stitch goes on repeating, adding couples or throwing them out as the space may demand.

#### POINT D'ESPRIT OR CUTWORK NET.

Although this net was described as "Point Desperate" by a small apprentice with a passion for long words, it is not nearly so dreadful as that name would imply. The net stitch is described fully in the plain net ground, the only exception to the directions being the cutwork spots. These may be

arranged in groups or lines, near or far apart, as required.

A good arrangement is to work a first row alternately with net stitch and spot. A next row all net and the third alternate again, bringing the second line of spots to lie between those worked above. Very little explanation is needed for the working. Where the spot is to come instead of the two net couples being worked together, a cutwork is made, after which the next couple are worked as usual.

#### BLOSSOM FILLING.

This is at once elaborate and rather difficult, also it requires an unusual number of bobbins.

It is pricked in straight lines, little groups of four holes, each group being at right angles to those above or below. The method of working is very like Toad in the Hole, for it is worked straight, and the four holes are covered in Whole Stitch with winkie pins on either side.

Blossom filling is shown in the top right hand wing of the butterfly, but for explanation one must imagine the sampler turned wrong side up, the way in which it was worked.

Starting at the extreme top corner of the

wing, three couples should be sewn into the braid on the right, two couples one pin-hole to the left, then one pair alone, finally two pairs more together still further to the left.

In the first line there is only room for two group holes instead of four, but the couples have to be prepared for the succeeding lines.

Beginning on the left, the third couple is worked through the two on the right, twisted three times, and left hanging ready for a cutwork on the next line. The two pairs on the right are then worked together in Whole Stitch repeated twice, the next two couples (which were twisted and joined in Whole Stitch directly after being sewn in), are then worked through them. The original pairs are worked again in Whole Stitch, the single couple intended for a cutwork in the next line is worked through them, and again the first four are worked in Whole Stitch.

Pick up the inside couple and work it through the two new pairs hanging on the left, twist it three times and put up behind the pin in the top left-hand hole, work it back through the three couples, and put up the second pin.

The four bobbins are divided again, and each two pairs worked together Whole Stitch

as at first. The two on the left are sewn into the braid, and those on the right worked together in Whole Stitch and left.

This ends the preparatory line.

The second row is cutworks alone. Sew in one more couple on the right, as high up as possible, and twist three times, making a cutwork with it and the next couple already twisted. Twist both three times.

Sew the right-hand pair out into the braid, but do not cut off; work the left pair through the two couples on the left, which have already been worked together. Take in the next single twisted couple to make a second cutwork. Twist again, work through the next bar, and for the third cutwork bring in the couple sewn into the braid on the last line. Sew the left-hand couple into the braid, but do not cut off.

The worker must now go back along the line, working twice in Whole Stitch each of those two pairs through which the cutwork couples have been passed. Beginning from the right side again, two more couples are sewn in and worked together. The inner couple of the two is then worked through the next two pairs on the left, and the first winkie pin made at the top pin-hole on the left. When

all four holes have been used in this way, the four couples are again divided, and each two pairs worked twice together in Whole Stitch.

The right-hand couples will be sewn out into the braid. On the left the couple from the cutwork above is passed through the two pairs, ready for the cutwork below, and these two are again worked together, the inner couple being worker for the next winkie pin.

Each line is worked in the same way: first a line of winkie pin squares, then a line of cutworks. The passing of the cutwork couples through the little bars from the squares must not be overlooked. This little filling requires no less than forty-two couples—that means eighty-four bobbins, a very unusual number for a piece of Devonshire lace.

#### BARS AND CUTWORKS.

This filling needs hardly any explanation. The bars are worked first in Whole Stitch, using six couples. The cutworks are made throughout with two couples, and after they are sewn into the braid a pin must be put up and covered before making the next. The same must be done before sewing out into the braid.

The filling in the opposite wing is done

in the same way, only the bars being worked with "winkie pins" only five couples are required.

#### DOUBLE GROUND.

Although this stitch closely resembles a net, it is seldom used except as a filling. It always finds favour with the novice at lace-making, since there are no cutworks to exhaust the patience. It is nothing more than the centre of the diamond repeated again and again. The little sets of four holes are pricked very closely together. The couples are each twisted three times; they close the pin in Cloth Stitch, and are again twisted, ready for the next pin. The cutworks are done away with, but otherwise the directions only repeat those for the diamond centre.

#### CUTWORK NET.

This is worked in straight lines, and no pins are used. One couple should be sewn into the body of the butterfly, and one into the wing a little to the right. A third couple must be sewn into the wing at the next pin-hole. Twist all three times.

Take the third couple as workers and make Whole Stitch through the two pairs hanging down, twisting three times between each.

The hanging pairs are also twisted three times after being worked.

More couples must be sewn in at equal distances, for the second line. This line is worked alternately Whole Stitch and a cut-work, with three twists, the same worker being carried across, and used for each cutwork as in the swing filling.

#### PLAIN NET GROUND.

This net did not belong originally to old Point d'Angleterre, but has crept in of later years to take the place of the true réseau, which is practically obsolete. The net is made with the same stitch as the Buckinghamshire Point, but with the difference that the threads are only sewn into the heavier portion of the lace, while for small spaces no pins are used, the sewing to the braid being thought sufficient. The old Trolly lace made in the West Country, and reaching as far as Downton, was all made in this way, the patterns showing only the pricking of the ornament and a single line of holes for the head.

In grounding a large space it would be almost impossible to keep the net a good, even shape without the use of a pattern pricked as for Buckingham.

The art of net making has so fallen away in Devonshire, that one of the finest workers was discovered pricking her pin-holes by the eye as she worked. An exact pricking for a Buckingham net is very difficult to get without the use of a protractor and checked paper running fourteen to the inch. If the net is to be accurate in form and size, a pricked pattern should certainly be used, and this would prevent groundings being put in all askew to save a little extra trouble.

To work, start with the left-hand wing of a butterfly and sew in four couples, one in every alternate pin-hole at the extreme left-hand corner. Twist all three times, use the right-hand couple as workers, work half stitch with the next couple, giving each couple two extra twists. Work through all the bobbins in the same way.

On coming to the end of the row, sew the workers into the braid and leave them after twisting three times.

Beginning again on the right, the space suddenly widens, and three extra couples are sewn into the braid at the same equal distances as before, the new worker coming from the corner where the bottom wing joins the upper one. Work down the line in the same



way, pulling the net into equal meshes while working. The stitch merely goes on repeating with the only difference that couples are added or thrown out as the altering shape of the pattern requires.

In Buckinghamshire, where this net is made in perfection, the women use heavy bobbins, often weighted with beads. Here and there one may still meet with an old Devon trolly bobbin, often as heavy as the Buckinghamshire, and generally three times the size of the Honiton bobbin. The net requires a certain amount of pulling to bring it into shape, and the little modern bobbins do not help the lace-maker much in this respect.

The filling in, or netgrounding of a pattern, was formerly the work of a special hand who very probably used different bobbins than those of the sprig maker. Since the net grounding is the highest form the Devon lace can take, it is to be hoped the work will become more general as the demand for better work increases.

#### POINT D'ANGLETERRE NET.

This net is identical with Old Brussels and Mechlin. It is worked in straight perpendicular lines.

Starting on the right-hand wing of the butterfly, hang up six couples in three groups each a little apart, reaching to the extreme left-hand corner of the wing.

Work each group together in Whole Stitch and one twist, repeat this, and twist each couple three times.

For the second row sew in one more couple on the right, repeat the stitch with the couple on the left. Drop these two couples and make the same stitch with the next two, and do the same with each set down the line.

The two couples which were worked together in the upper line are, in this way, divided off and worked with fresh pairs on either side. The net always requires a fine thread—18 skip is excellent, and in the widest part of the filling shown twenty couples are needed.

#### HEXAGONAL NET.

Thirty-six couples are required to make the filling illustrated. Each pearl pin bar requires two couples, but the straight plain bars, coming from the pearl bars on either side, take four couples. Start at the upper part of the butterfly's body, sewing in four

groups of four couples in each, at equal distances down the body.

Commencing on the right, work the four couples together, but using the threads double, passing two bobbins over two others, so that the stitch made is identical to that made by only half the number. Work Whole Stitch twice in this way. Divide the couples off, working two to the right and two to the left. On the right work Whole Stitch followed by Half Stitch, and make the pearl pin. Twist three times before putting in the pin, and once after. Work Whole and Half Stitch again, and sew into the braid.

On the left make the same stitch, only adding the pearl pins. Work Whole and Half Stitch after the second pearl pin, and leave until the next little bar has been worked down from the left to meet it. Then work the four couples together in the manner already described.

Each of the groups sewn into the body should be worked together before commencing the pearl bars.

#### PEARL FILLING.

A very old stitch to be found in fine old Devon lappets: and only made by a few of the really fine lace-makers at the time of writing.

It is pricked and worked diagonally in sets of four pearl pins joined by Whole Stitch bars. Two couples should be sewn into the body of the butterfly and two into the wing at the upper point of the filling. Whole Stitch bars must be made with each two pairs, long enough to reach to the top of the first four pin-holes.

With the inside couple on the left, make a pearl pin into the top hole, twisting three times before putting up the pin and once after doing so. Cover the pin, using the outside couple.

Work the inner pair in Whole Stitch with the nearest couple of the next bar and twist once; this joins the bars. Work the right-hand couples in Whole Stitch and make a pearl with the outer one in the right-hand hole, covering the pin with the couple from the left. Work the left-hand pearl pin in the same way. The two centre couples must be twisted and worked together. Work Whole Stitch with the two right-hand couples, and make the fourth pin-hole with the inner pair. Next make a bar with the same pairs to the group of four holes below in the next line.

A bar will have to be made with the left-

hand couples and sewn out into the braid, but not cut off, as they will be needed for the following line. Commence again on the right by sewing in four more couples, and continue working in the same way.

#### CONCLUSION.

The variety of stitches that may be used in the decoration of Devon lace, without introducing a foreign element, will come as a surprise to those who are only acquainted with modern Honiton.

Many beautiful stitches, all of them true English, might be added to those already given, but the lace-maker who has perfected herself in these will have little difficulty in finding them out from the old laces.

The fine pieces of Point d'Angleterre shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum offer a tempting study, and the true artist will refrain from the temptation of mixing the stitches of other kinds, which would do away with the distinctive character of her work. The collection of Devon lace at this museum is small, but very interesting. Among a number of sprigs is a spray of honeysuckle, such as was designed and worked for the wedding veil of the Empress Frederick; there is also a

dahlia, one of the flowers used to spell Queen Adelaide's name.

The Devonshire workers have always relied very much upon Nature in finding motifs for their designs. Some of these, from an over-accurate treatment, have fallen as short of success as those which were ill drawn.

Of the modern work at South Kensington, two pieces are of particular interest. The one is a reproduction of Point d'Angleterre, of which the only serious difference between it and the veritable lace is a needle net *réseau*. Having accomplished so much, it seems a pity that the old English or Mechlin ground, shown in these pages, should not have been attempted. The second specimen which calls for special notice is a handkerchief, designed by a lady who did much to assist the lace-makers at a time when the industry was at a very low ebb.

The design consists entirely of the many ferns that are familiar in the Devon lanes. The treatment is clever and characteristic; the lace is well made, if a trifle monotonous.

One would be inclined to quote these two specimens as types of the high-water mark of some six or eight years ago.

The present revival marks a new era in treatment. While it is too early yet to prophesy what the present impetus may lead to, it would seem that the output of the early twentieth century will be remembered for the variety of fancy stitches and general improvement in design. This book has been written in the hope that it may awaken more interest in a village handicraft that is well worthy of support, and also that the lessons may be the means of raising average work to a higher level. Would that it were as easy to persuade the public taste what to like and how to choose as it has been to give these few lessons!

At every town or village mentioned in these pages there is some lace dealer ready to sell, but the output of fine lace must be regulated by the popular demand. To speak more plainly, the wearer shares the responsibility for its quality and artistic merit. Ruskin has recognised lace as an art product, standing high above the ordinary fashionable trimming, and with his words we bring our writing to a close:—

“The real good of a piece of lace, then, you will find, is that it should show, first, that the designer of it hath a pretty fancy;

next, that the maker of it had fine fingers ;  
lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness  
or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult  
to obtain, and common sense enough not to  
wear it on all occasions."

FINIS.













