

The Connoisseur

LIMERICK or Tambour Lace, so often wrongly named by its owners as "Brussels," owing no doubt to its resemblance to the Belgian work in style of pattern, but totally different in its mode of production, is one of the most favourite of laces. It usually goes under the name of "Limerick," having been introduced into Ireland about the time of the potato famine, though it had been made some thirty odd years before. It was a favourite pastime for ladies to do the darned or tambour work on net, for which a frame and fine needle were used, although the more common kind was made with the crochet-hook, the

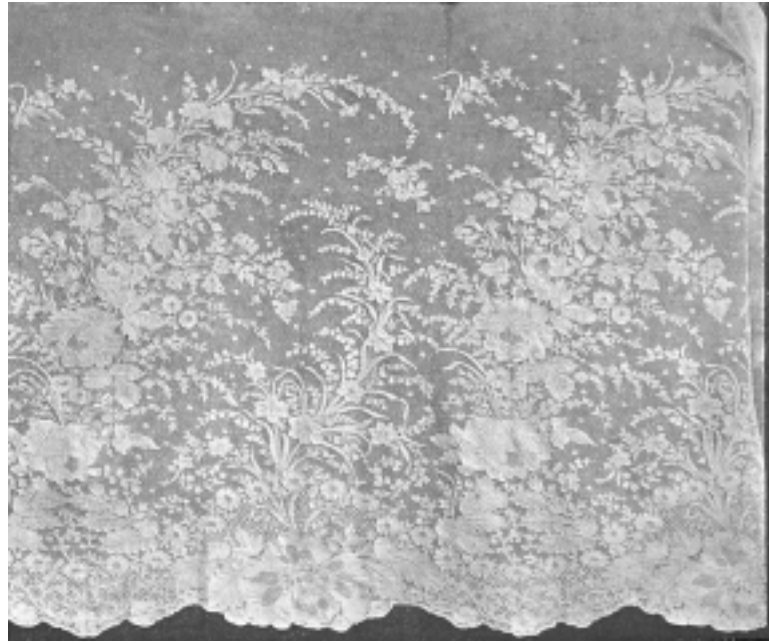
Notes

design being formed with chain-stitches, then filled in with fine needle-point stitches.

The specimen shown is in the possession of Mrs. Brown, and was purchased by her in a very out-of-the-way place in India. It was whilst accompanying her husband, Mr. J. A. Brown, I.C.S., on a tiger-hunting expedition, on the Nepal Frontier, that she met with it under rather tragic circumstances. A

settler and his wife living in a log-hut, hearing that a lady and gentleman were in the neighbourhood, called on Mrs. Brown, showing her the piece of lovely old Limerick lace, and offered to sell it. The bargain struck, the lace was handed over to its present owner, and within the next ten days a fire broke out, the hut and its contents being reduced to ashes. Had it not been for the "hunting expedition," this lovely specimen would have shared the fate of the rest of the poor settler's home. This unique piece, 3 yards long by 30 inches deep, is quite a picture, the design being beautifully arranged, with the various flowers entwined, making a most striking pattern. It is made with the chain-stitch, the petals of the flowers being filled in with fine needle-point stitches. To-day this kind of lace is produced in Belgium in large quantities, at a much lower price than in Ireland, with the result that the value of the old work is considerably reduced. It is also produced at Coggeshall in Essex, where a flourishing business has been carried on for some years past.

Tambour lace, together with the appliqué work of Honiton and Brussels, possibly dates back to



A SPECIMEN OF LIMERICK OR TAMBOUR LACE

about 1815, it being in 1809 that machine net was invented, and probably it must have been a few years later that the net was perfected and came within the reach of the lace-worker. — GEO. ROACH.