

Lace

and

the

Emerald

Isle

by Alan Brown

ILLUSTRATIONS, etc

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Introduction

Sadly, the roots of hand-made lacemaking in Ireland have been deeply entwined with hunger and poverty – with the need to alleviate both those scourges by adding even a slender extra income to needy families. In 19th century mainland Britain, particularly in the Devonshire and East Midlands areas, the bobbin lace industry helped families fare better than they could on bare agricultural wages which, even in normal times, fluctuated widely with economic circumstances. In Ireland, the catastrophe brought on by the potato famine years of 1845, '46 and '47 led to the birth and growth of lacemaking in a number of areas. Irish crochet, needlepoint and even tatting were kick-started into life by the famine. Both Carrickmacross and Limerick were revived by it, at least for some time. That out of those terrible times such beauty as that of the Irish laces could emerge is a cause for wonder.

We shall look briefly in the following pages at the pre-1845 development of Irish lace forms, but our tale - in no sense a history of Irish lace or lacemaking - deals largely with the later years after already impoverished rural areas were struck overnight by the potato blight. This came at a time when the crop had reached its zenith, with nearly two million acres devoted to its production, and half the entire population depended upon it for three-quarters of their energy requirements.

This life-giving tuber, the sole means of subsistence for millions, turned everywhere to a filthy, inedible sludge, with the result that an estimated million plus people died - in many areas succumbing to starvation as they lay in their homes. With the crop destroyed, efforts were made to introduce lacemaking as one, albeit modest, means by which some of the rural population could gain perhaps a few pence to help keep body and soul together.

A brief section deals with the tragedy of the famine years, hopefully to convey the scale of the horror which hit the Irish people in the 1840s. Those years of hunger and death were a devastating blow and, without taking into consideration the trauma they inflicted, so much of what followed in terms of lacemaking and much else would be far less understandable.

These pages, in no sense a history, are offered as a small tribute to Alan Summerly Cole [1846-1934] whose father Sir Henry Cole was a founder and first Director of the then South Kensington Museum, later the Victoria and Albert Museum. Over many years, Alan Cole helped lacemaking and lacemakers throughout the British Isles. The intention, in part, is to show his great sense of affinity with Irish lacemakers and to present his views on how, under great difficulties, the industry there could have better prospered. Evidence of his work and philosophy towards lacemaking is derived partly from the **Report** he made after his 1886 visit to Ireland at the behest of the Department of Science and Art in London [1], but mainly from an article on Irish lacemaking which he contributed in 1890 to the **English Illustrated Magazine** [2].

The present author - an English student of lacemaking whose interest lies primarily with the social conditions of those involved in producing such extraordinary beauty - hopes that non-Irish readers will gain a small insight into an important aspect of Irish history, and that Irish readers will forgive an intruder such errors as may have crept into the text.

Earlier times

The origins of Irish lacemaking, embroidery and needlework find shadowy expression in pre-Christian days, and later legends involving Saint Patrick in the fourth century add but little to the folk history surrounding Irish handicrafts. But, while lacemaking began putting down firm roots some 400 years ago in large areas of Italy, the Netherlands, England and France, thereafter playing an important role in the rural life and ongoing economies of those countries, the situation in Ireland developed differently. Hand-made lacemaking, as a commercial proposition rather than a hobby, became of widespread importance in Ireland far later and for a much shorter span of time. As we shall see, its development - indeed, its very existence - has at times rested on the goad of hunger and poverty and the response to these by often philanthropic and religious individuals and organisations. The most eloquent critic of reliance solely on such sources for the future of Irish lacemaking was Alan Cole, and the fact that out of a bare two centuries of Irish lace history has come some of the most exquisite forms of the craft is sufficient reason not to allow his work to vanish.

In 1882, S.E.A. Caulfield and Blanche C. Saward - in their **Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework** [3] - stated: 'Lacemaking in Ireland has only within the last fifty years become the industry of the people, and the laces produced are none of them national, but all are copies of those worked in other countries.' Again, Nellie Ó Cléirigh, in **Carrickmacross Lace** [4], says: 'All Irish laces began as imitations of continental European techniques and, side by side with bobbin lace, the technique of working with the point of the needle - '*needlepoint*' - also developed in Irish centres during the nineteenth century.'

Perhaps the most important word in Ó Cléirigh's quotation is 'developed' - for what may originally have been inspired by work done far away took on over the years a specific Irish character and beauty. Perhaps we can let Walt Whitman's words from *Song of the Exposition* - where he urged his North American compatriots not to assume that everything about their culture was necessarily new and original - make the point:

*After all not to create only, or found only,
But to bring perhaps from afar what is already founded,
To give it our own identity, average, limitless, free, [5] 1871*

'Until the time of Charles I,' said Caulfield and Saward, 'the Irish clung to their national costume, in spite of the laws forbidding its adoption; and as this consisted of a large three-cornered cloak, thickly-plaited vest, knitted trousers, and plain skull cap for the men, and women's dresses of the same simple pattern, lace trimmings of any description were not required, and would have obtained no sale had they been produced.' But in the early 1600s, after Charles had repealed the 'sumptuary laws' forbidding the use of laces and other adornments, the upper echelons of Irish society reverted to wearing English fashions involving profuse lace decorations.

However, it was long before any attempt was made to develop lace production in Ireland. Though the need was felt for a native industry to provide for the market which developed it was not until 1731, with the foundation of the Dublin Society [6] - which assumed its royal title in 1820 - and its formation of a lace school, that a start was made, though the school ended its days in 1774. Throughout its history, the Society has kept an interest in

the study of lacemaking, and encourages young people towards it. In early days it clearly saw this as a source of social hope where often little hope existed and, though weakly, a vital plant which needed sustenance amid the harsh realities of rural Irish life at that time.

In an overview of lacemaking internationally, which formed the body of a '**Catalogue to the Collection of Lace**' [7], published in 1936 by the National Museum of Ireland, Ada K. Longfield, M.A., LL.B. went back to the origins of embroidery and needlework in Ireland



'Herd boy of the Purple Mountains'
From *The Illustrated London News*, 1849

and expressed sorrow that 'there is little save written evidence even for the cut-work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though certainly that was then done in Ireland and used to ornament the linen shirts of the period. For the eighteenth century, however, there is abundant proof of real lace-making in Ireland, since it was one of the crafts which the **Dublin Society** [6] endeavoured to encourage from the very first days of its foundation, and so among the accounts of its activities it is possible to obtain some very interesting details about the industry.'

From among the earliest of its minutes, those for February 5th, 1739, Longfield quotes the following details: 'Mr Maple having reported that there are at least three [Dublin] schools for the making of Bone lace (viz.) Mrs Jones in Hawkins St; Mrs Roberts and Mrs Craig, both of Lazer's Hill, it is desired that we will inquire into the state of those schools, and in what manner Encouragement may be given them...' A Dr Madden then promised the Society £130 per annum [£15,000 in today's terms [8]] during his life, as well as £500 [£55,000] per annum which he had persuaded others to give. These special 'premiums' were not

arranged until 1743 but, meanwhile, premiums for teaching lacemaking appear among the first general awards given by the Society. For example, in 1741 two teachers, Elizabeth Roberts and Mary Thornbalk, were awarded £10 [over £850] for instructing several girls in 'making Bone lace, and to encourage them to increase their numbers.' At the same time, one Robert Baker received £10 for 'his improvements in making lace, and for employing many girls in that work.' There were plenty of competitors for Dr Madden's premiums. The 1743 judges had before them 'several pieces of lace made with the needle... one entirely made with the needle being real point, the other in imitation of Mechlin... Several pieces of bone lace were produced and the same judges gave their opinions...' The following year the competition expanded, there being 11 pieces of 'bone lace, together with 'many pieces in imitation of Brussels, Mechlin and Point lace', and several pieces were entered in a third class for Edgings - 'a full pattern, at least an Inch broad'. Longfield comments that such details 'are all useful as they indicate that "bone lace" was the general Term of the period for bobbin-lace, in Ireland, as well as in England.'

We cannot include here all the detail she gave in 1936, except to indicate that there was indeed a geographical breadth to the places which were making lace in Ireland - with the Society's minutes showing that 'many of the successful claimants [for the Society's

premiums] came from Cork, Queen's County, Wexford, etc, as well as from Dublin itself.' Among the items presented were 'a Lappet head... best Dresden work, a Stomacher*... a waistcoat...' Presumably,' she said, 'the same kind of pieces were worked in other years, and it is only unfortunate that none of them appear to have been preserved.' She speculated that some could still exist in the 1930s, but that they might be regarded as foreign in manufacture 'since they were so obviously based on foreign models and since Ireland, like England, imported much lace from the Continent.'

Dr Madden's prizes ceased in 1756 but the Society continued its interest in all aspects of lacemaking. In 1767, for example, it offered £34 2s 6d [over £2600] for bone lace made by the children of the Foundling Hospital in Dublin, a similar sum to that produced by other manufacturers, and £17 1s 3d [over £1,300] for thread-lace made with knitting needles. 'The Foundling Hospital centre,' said Longfield, 'seems to have been the most successful and the Premiums were continued for about 10 years.'

Mrs Bury Palliser in her '**History of Lace**' [9] mentions the Dublin Society as 'a club of patriots' taking upon itself 'the encouragement of the bone lace trade in Ireland' formed at the beginning of the 18th century. She listed several of the prizes awarded to the children, and others, for fine pieces of lacemaking, including in 1755: 'Miss Elinor Brereton, of Raheenduff, Queen's County, for the best imitation of Brussels lace with the needle, £7 [£738]... Miss Martha M'Cullow, of Cork Bridge, gains the prize of £5 [£527] for "Dresden point".' The Society, said Mrs Palliser, kept its annual premium of £30 [£3162] for the products of the "famishing children" of the city of Dublin workhouse. But, with the death of Lady Arbella Denny [6], in 1792, it appears that 'we heard no more of the Dublin Society and its prizes for point, Dresden, Brussels, or bone lace.'

Alan Cole mentioned that Lady Arbella, whom he described as 'benevolent and energetic', was given £30 [over £3,000] a year from 1743 to distribute at her pleasure to those who excelled in lacemaking. The Society continued the grant for 30 years, such was its attachment to the cause. Lady Arbella tried to promote the industry in Ireland, noting from her experience in the southern counties of England the diligence of the 'free maids who weave their threads with bones', and publicising the comments of Bishop Berkeley in his **A Word to the Wise** [10], describing how on a summer's evening labourers were to be seen 'sitting along the streets of a town or village, each at his own door with a cushion before him, and earning more in an evening's pastime than an Irish family would in a whole day.'

Lady Arbella apparently set to work teaching children in some of the Irish poor-houses how to make 'Bone lace' so that they should win her prizes. Longfield spoke of her being entrusted with distributing the prizes at the Foundling Hospital and taking an interest also in distributing the work itself. In 1770 she asked that permission be given for it to be exhibited for sale at the Irish Lace Warehouse, which Longfield comments was clearly necessary since the treasurer of the Workhouse told the Society that 'upwards of £200 [£17,000] worth in value was made there last year', and during 1773-74 Lady Arbella reported that their output was worth £160 4s 10½ [over £11,000]. As Mrs Palliser mentions, she had already, in 1765, been given the freedom of the City of Dublin presented in due form in a silver box as a mark of esteem for her great charities and

* The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives stomacher as 'An ornamental triangular panel filling the open front of a woman's dress, covering the breast and pit of the stomach and often jewelled or embroidered'.

constant care of the Foundling children in the city workhouse.'

The Royal Dublin Society, 1731 - 1981 [6], published to celebrate the Society's 250th anniversary, recounts her extensive work on behalf of the Dublin poor, becoming a Patroness of the Society's silk warehouse in Parliament Street and 'one of those to whom the "convivial" weavers raised their glasses with the words "may their patriotic example induce the Ladies of Ireland to wear their own Manufactures"'. She planted mulberry trees and bred silk worms as part of her all-round attempts to support the Society's aims of 'The Advancement of Agriculture, Arts, Science and Industry in Ireland.'

The Society's **Proceedings** of 1766 record that 'the Rt. Hon. Lady Arbella Denny was unanimously elected an Honorary Member of this Society.' She was, in fact, its first honorary member of any kind - and that, as the book explains, was a century and a half before its door were fully opened to lady members. Sadly, soon after her death, her efforts were proved short-lived and 'bone lacemaking' faltered and died out.

Several smaller centres crop up as receiving prizes from the Society - e.g. in 1767, when Mrs Rachel Armstrong of Inistioge, in Co Kilkenny, was given £11 7s 6d [nearly £900] 'for having caused considerable quantities of Bone-lace to be made by several girls whom she has instructed and lately employed in that work.' Further considerable prizes were given to groups and individuals - for items such as 'an apron of an elegant pattern curiously wrought'. Added together, these efforts indicate the seriousness with which quite a wide band of benevolent-minded ladies took their role in the lace world. Ada Longfield also mentions 'Bone-lace "of an extraordinary Degree of Fineness and of very elegant patterns" made at Castlebar, Co Mayo.'

In 1773, the Society launched a fresh initiative to encourage the manufacture for sale of good quality lace and offered prizes amounting to 20% of the sale price of such lace (requiring proof of sale and purchase before a prize could be given). This offer extended to every part of Ireland except Dublin and a five-mile radius around it, but was confined to lace which sold for not less than 11s 4½d [£40] per yard. Ada Longfield said that this offer was never repeated - probably being too expensive or that the manufacture 'may not have been considered worthy of further Premium.' She added that 'anyway, practically nothing more is heard of lace-making in Ireland for the next fifty years' - i.e. until the 1820s, when both Carrickmacross and Limerick laces were appearing on the scene.

She then had the following to say : 'Unfortunately no examples remain which can be ascribed with any certainty to the 18th century, so that it is impossible to estimate the general standard of the manufacture. Presumably the productions were mostly in the nature of simple edgings which could be done with comparatively few bobbins after a short period of instruction, for, curiously enough, the making of bobbin lace does not seem to have been very popular in Ireland. It shared in the general lacemaking revival in Ireland towards the middle of the 19th century, but even then hardly reached any very high standard, or obtained the same widespread importance as Limerick and Carrickmacross, etc.' Until the arrival of Limerick and Carrickmacross laces the teaching and encouragement of lacemaking was confined to benevolent people, moved by the plight of the poor - the 'famishing children' - and the belief that the making of lace was a way of putting perahps a few shillings into empty pockets, and some bread into empty stomachs.

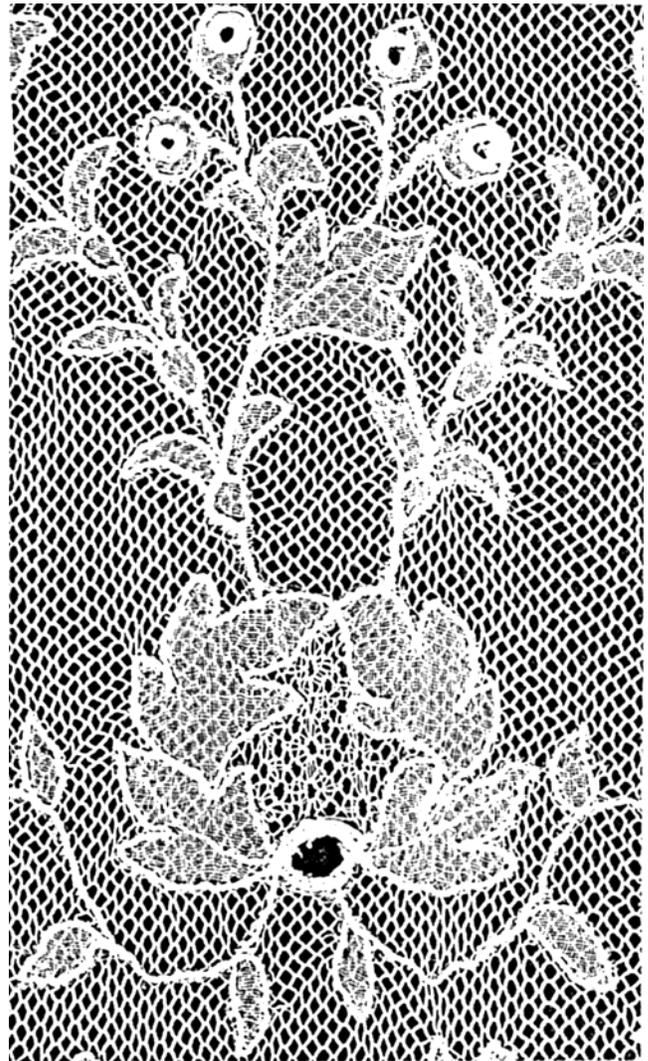
Origins and styles

Let us now take a glance at Irish laces themselves, the great diversity which developed in a country with no lengthy history of widespread lacemaking, no long-founded industry, no storehouse of experience to fall back on..

Irish lace is generally divided into four main types: Carrickmacross [appliqué and guipure], Irish Crochet, Limerick [needlerun and tambour] and Youghal. Some authors mention Clones separately, considering that, though a form of crochet, it is sufficiently distinctive to warrant separate treatment. The following illustrations, of single motifs, etc, are simply meant to indicate the detailed form of the differing styles. Briefly, the early backgrounds of each are as follows:

Carrickmacross lace

The origins of Carrickmacross - the earliest centre of 19th century Irish laces - date from the wedding in 1816 of the Rev John Grey Porter, rector of Donaghmoynne, a parish near Carrickmacross in Co Monaghan, and Margaret Lindsey, a descendant of the Earls of Lucan. Mary Shields, in her **Lásadóireacht - A Practical Workbook for Carrickmacross Lace** [10], explains how Mrs Porter and her maid became fascinated by Italian lace on her honeymoon and, on their return, decided to copy it. 'As it happens,' writes Mary Shields, 'they did not copy the Italian Lace but developed an entirely new Lace using linen cambric applied to machine made net to reproduce the effect of lace made with handmade [réseau] net.' Together, Mrs Porter and her maid, Ann Steadman, began to hold local lace classes and 'Two variations of the lace evolved, Carrickmacross Appliqué and Carrickmacross Guipure.' It took the name 'Carrickmacross' in 1872 after winning a certificate and medal at the Dublin Exhibition of that year. Longfield



Carrickmacross scarf / lappet - enlarged 50% showing motif and filling - one of several in original. [Overall size approx 4" x 50"]

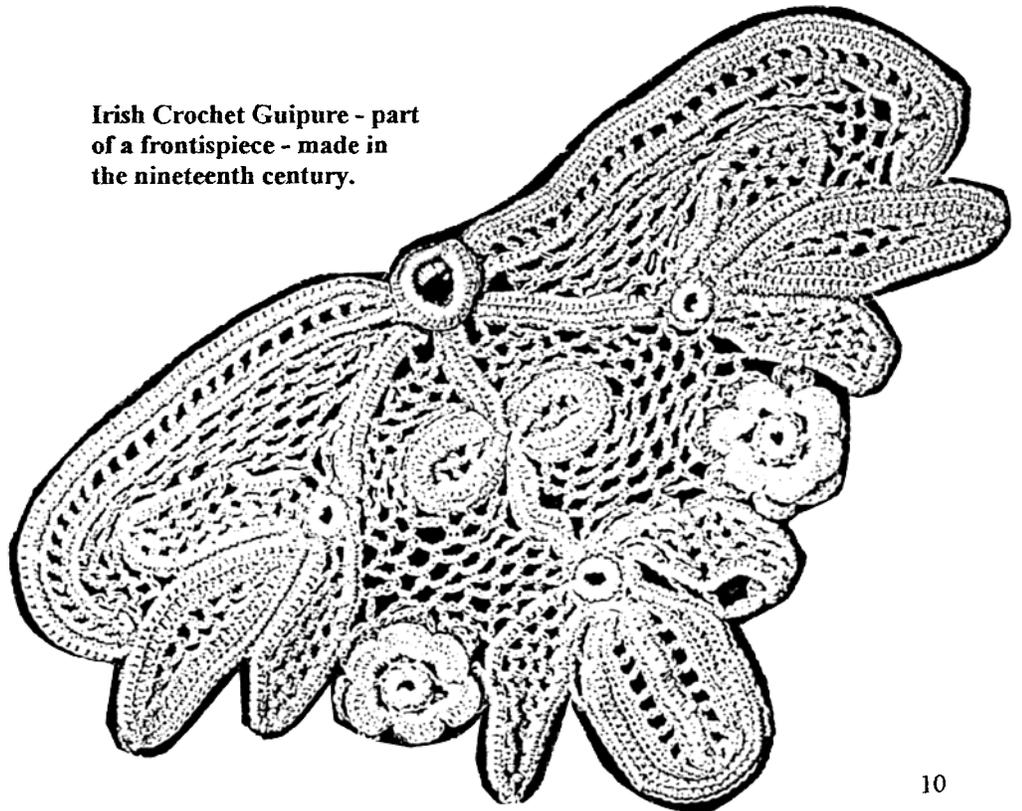
said that technically it 'is not a true lace since the pattern is cut from a cambric foundation, but it is then applied to the machine net with needlepoint stitches and further ornamented with various fillings, etc, also in point stitches.' Soon, the art 'spread so successfully amongst the peasant women of the district that Miss Reid of Rahans had many of the young girls from Culloville coming to her to learn to make lace on the same model. But the industry was dependent on private orders and was threatened with extinction from over-production and lack of a market.' No revival came until the Famine forced the issue.

Irish crochet lace

In her introduction to **Irish Crochet Lace** [11], Eithne d'Arcy speaks of a tradition for this type of work dating back to the 16th century - then known as "nun's work" because 'the technique and style of the craft was developed in Irish convent communities in imitation of continental European lacemaking styles.' Despite this background, she says, 'it did not become a cottage industry in Ireland until the middle of the nineteenth century.' 'Irish crochet,' says Ena Maidens, in **The Techniques of Crocheted & Openwork Lace** [12] 'is one of the most beautiful of all the Irish laces, owing to its fineness of thread in the working of the large number of traditional motifs.' She recalls the mid-19th century influx of French nuns into Ireland following their persecution at home, and the teaching of lace, owing to the famine, in schools in New Ross, Kenmare, Kinsale, Killarney and Clonakilty. At that time it earned the additional names of 'Poor Man's Lace' and 'Relief Lace'. It was then, with the famine upon the land, that the very lovely Clones lace saw the light of day when it migrated from Cork, recognised as the main centre for crochet lace in the south. It was introduced to County Kildare and - when the Rector's wife at Clones, Co Monaghan, Mrs Cassandra Hand, invited a teacher to the area from Cork - started a development which made one of the foremost centres of Irish crochet. In her recent book **Clones Lace** [13], Máire Treanor says that 'Within a short period, nearly every family in the area was involved in the production of crochet lace, supplying markets in Dublin, London, Paris, Rome and New York. Clones soon became the most important centre of crochet lacemaking

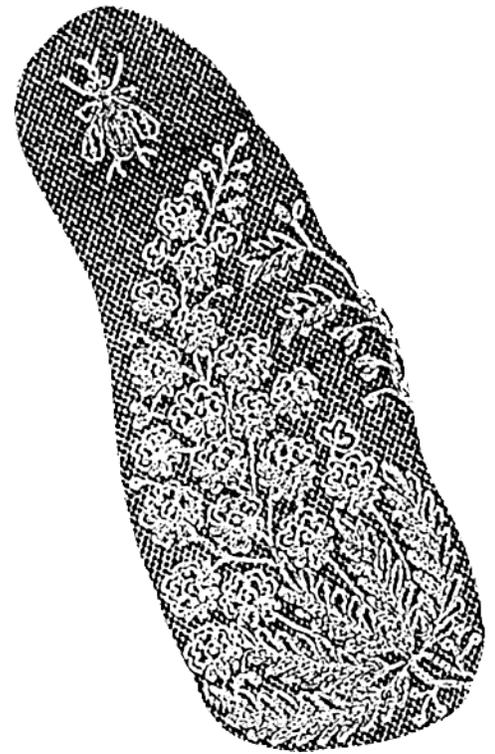
in the north of Ireland, while Cork was the leading centre in the south.' She adds that various accounts showed that between 12,000 and 20,000 girls were employed in the production of crochet from 1847. Thus once more the stage had been set, in response to the famine when it came, for a major development in Irish lacemaking.

Irish Crochet Guipure - part of a frontispiece - made in the nineteenth century.



Limerick

The Guild of Irish Lacemakers [15] are clear about Limerick lace: 'The origin of Limerick Lace differs from all other Irish Laces in that it was a purely commercial enterprise started by an Englishman, whereas the rest were the outcome of the philanthropy of Irish ladies.' The Englishman concerned was one Charles Walker who, having married the daughter of an Essex lace manufacturer from Coggeshall, Essex, set up in the business himself and moved to Ireland in 1829 taking with him some 24 girls as lace teachers and established the industry near Limerick. It prospered over the ensuing few decades, since embroidered net was in fashion and, though on his death in 1842 a number of the lace teachers returned to England, enough stayed on to keep the industry going. Some idea of the breadth of work produced is given by Patricia Wardle in her **Victorian Lace** [16] where she quotes from the catalogue entry to the Great Exhibition of 1851 of the Limerick firm Forrest & Sons: 'Lace dresses, flouncings, squares, scarfs, mantles, polkas, veils, berthas, handkerchiefs, sleeves, baby's robes, robings, lappets, lace collars, etc', while in 1863 their display at Dublin included: 'Limerick lace bridal dress and veil, ball and court dresses, etc.'



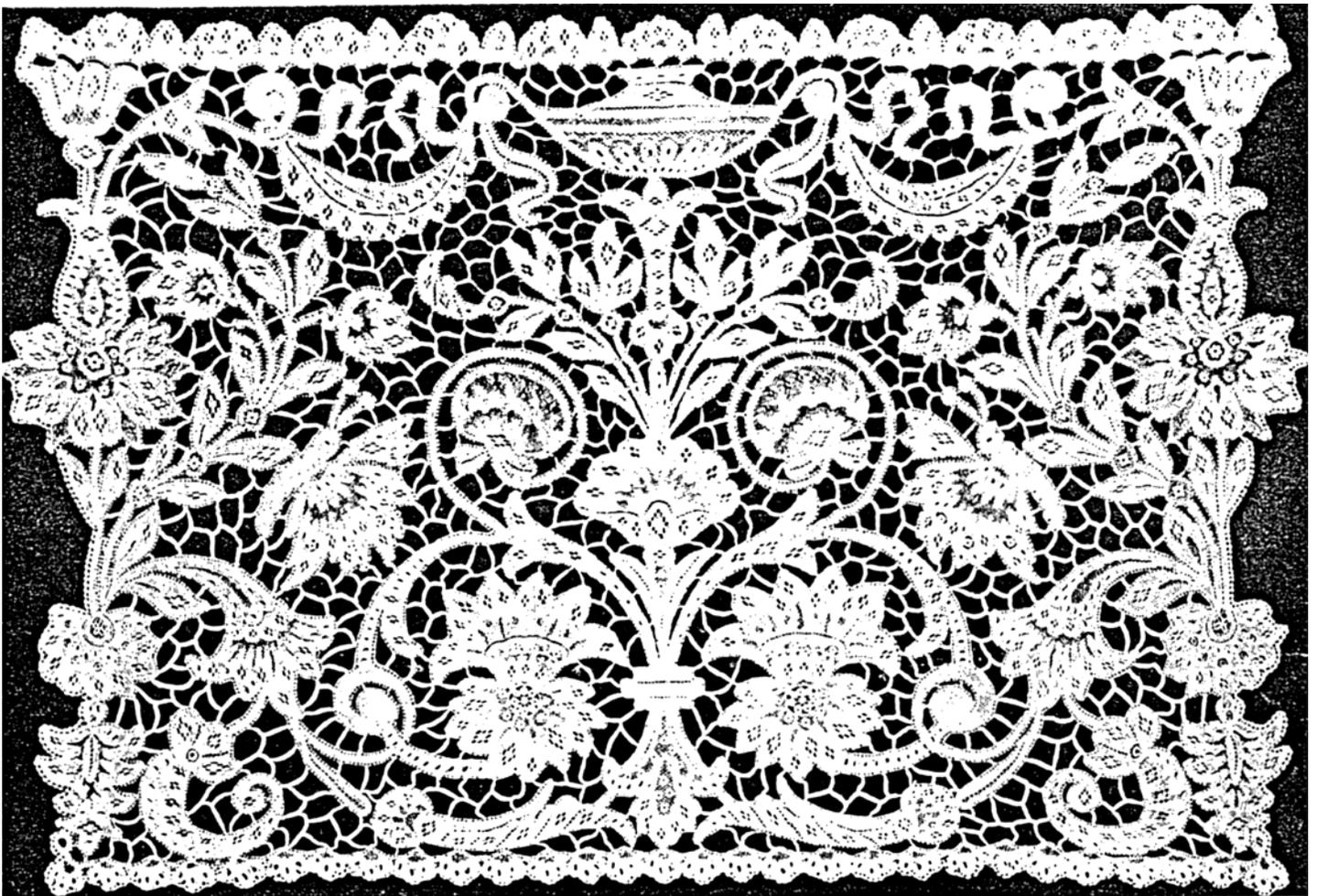
BEE LANDING ON FLOWER!
An illustration from Cole's article in *The English Illustrated Magazine* of June, 1890 - 'Part of a Limerick lace Flounce, made by workers under the direction of Mrs R. Vere O'Brien for Messrs Haywards (London), from a Point d'Alençon design.' See final paragraph on this page.

In Ada Longfield's opinion, 'Limerick, like Carrickmacross, is not a true lace in the rigidly technical sense of the term., but it is more conveniently generally classed as a lace, rather than as embroidery.' She mentions the two types, tambour and run work [needlerun], and goes on to say that 'tambour work originated in the East where it is still much done, especially for coloured embroideries on cloth. It was practically unknown in Europe until about 1750, when it began to be made in Saxony and Switzerland, but the art did not reach England till about 1820.' Needlerun lace, she went on, 'is of a lighter character, the pattern being formed on the net with a fine thread which is darned, or run in with a needle point like a darning needle. Thus it is a descendant of the 16th and 17th centuries' darning on meshed grounds or lakis, and originated in France with the *Broderies de Luneville*.' The distinction between tambour and needlerun 'is not so marked in many Irish productions because the two techniques are often utilised in the same piece. This helps to give the better Limerick lace - where the design is good - a light and graceful effect. The heavier tambour stitch gives a clear outline, while run work makes a dainty filling, especially when enriched with a variety of ornamental point stitches.'

She made the further point that, for a brief period in the 19th century, appliqué and guipure were also made at Limerick. The former, she said, was probably introduced by Lady de Vere [possibly the wife of Sir Stephen de Vere, MP for Limerick 1854-59] and usually consisted of cambric applied to net - as in Carrickmacross - but in some few pieces net was applied to net with a beautiful light effect, adding that the guipure was like that made at the Carrickmacross Schools.

Youghal

Another centre, initially flourishing in the years following the famine, was at Youghal, Co Cork, where, from the Presentation Convent, a form based on Venetian rose point was developed. Ena Maidens, in her work **The Technique of Irish Crochet Lace** [17], dated the first centre in Cork back to 1777, together with Youghal. In Youghal, she spoke of crochet and needlepoint being taught to a very high standard by teachers in the convent - mostly emigrées from the French Revolution who had learned their craft in French convents. She continued: 'The work of the convent was appreciated abroad and a market was found, enabling the poor to survive the famine years and also to save money in order to emigrate to Australia and more often to America.' Alan Cole, in his 1890 article, says of the Irish needlepoint laces that 'These however are or should be evidences of the highest lacemaking talent in Ireland,' and comments that 'the designing of patterns is, I think, more special in character for this than for any other branch.'



This piece of lace was among those taken back to London in 1887 by Alan Cole following his visit to Ireland on behalf of the Department of Science and Art. It was headed 'IRISH LACE - FLAT NEEDLE POINT LACE. Specimen[s] made by workers at the Presentation Convent, Youghal, Co Cork. From design[s] by Mr Michael Hayes.'

Scale  inches.

The famine years

When the famine of 1845 - 47 struck, some lace styles had established a foothold and a reputation for fineness and beauty, but they were not - apart perhaps for Limerick - based on a commercial footing which afforded any steady employment. So when tragedy hit the land, whatever sustenance could be gained from lacemaking would only come from newly-created structures.

Ireland had been used to famines of a lesser character, with many occurring in the previous century, and five in the previous decade alone. But these were local in character. 1845 saw the first countrywide potato failure, and a new and added tragic aspect of it was that, for the first time, there were no potatoes for sale anywhere in Europe. The shortage then meant that other crops soared in value. This of course exacerbated the problem, but was not crucial, since some half of the total population of Ireland at that time hardly ever saw money throughout their lives. The 'truck system' under which they lived meant that they paid their rent largely by exchanging an equivalent amount of work on the landlord's fields, with no money changing hands. However, not only was the famine widespread but the speed with which it struck was numbing. It was the first such catastrophe to be caused by blight - a withering disease which appeared on potatoes imported from the United States - and it found the Irish people, in their utter dependence on the potato for their food, totally unprepared and defenceless.

For an indication as to how desperate the situation was during the years 1845-7 we can turn to **The History and Social Influence of the Potato** by Redcliffe N. Salaman [18] :

'A careful perusal of the accounts, given by different authors of the state of Ireland in the winter of 1846-7, has convinced me that it would be impossible to exaggerate the horrors of those days, or to compare them with anything which has occurred in Europe since the Black Death of 1348.... Considered as a whole, the annals of the Irish famine constitute one of the most tragic memorials of which we have record, in man's long chronicle of suffering.'

Salaman quoted from a description of a party's journey from Dublin to Skibbereen in Co Cork:

'Dead bodies lay on the roadside; in some towns they could not be buried because of their number. Everywhere typhus was raging and, wherever they stopped, they were besieged by starving, almost naked beggars. They found deserted cabins, often containing unburied corpses, and everywhere a spirit of helplessness. In the small towns they learnt that tradesmen were ruined and many in no better case than the cottiers*.'

* The S.O.E.D. gives cottier as 'A peasant who rented a smallholding under a system of tenure by which land was let annually in small portions direct to the labourers, the rent being fixed by public competition.'



'Searching for potatoes in a stubble field'

A graphic from the *Illustrated London News* of Dec. 22, 1849. The hungry dig for potatoes after the crop has been harvested. 'Something like shearing hogs,' commented its correspondent.

To judge the immense impact of the famine it is necessary to understand how vital was the potato to the life of the Irish people, and how this helped create a situation which left them at the mercy of one staple food.

Dealing with the impact of the potato on Irish life, Henry Hobhouse, in *Seeds of Change* [19] argued that when an alien landlord class establishes itself in a conquered country then 'If a landlord-tenant system already exists, the conquered country is much more harmoniously occupied by the new rulers. In time the conquered class absorbs the conquerors. This had happened in England after the Norman Conquest in 1066. It never happened in Ireland. The conquerors seized the land and ignored the occupiers.' Over the centuries therefore:

'The "natives" were pushed into the least favourable areas and the least favourable fields, up the mountains and into the bogs. At some point they reached the limit of all cultivation except that of the potato.'

He further makes the point that 'A couple wanting to marry had only to throw up a cabin, which took them or their families less than a day. A turf cabin was the traditional wedding gift. The pair, who were then often only in their teens, could be supported by one of them working a score of weeks in a year, and the other a few hours a day. They had nothing else to do.'

Under James I, the Irish people were driven out of the normal economic system - the cash economy - and became totally dependent on the potato, whose influence on population growth was extraordinary. Since half an acre of land was sufficient, in a normal year, to feed an average family, an explosion was inevitable. Thus Hobhouse calculated that in the 80 years between 1760 and 1840, the population of the whole island increased by 600 %. So it came about that an enormously increased population had grown because of the potato, the great majority of it totally dependent on the one crop. Warnings of possible impending catastrophe came over many years. Between 1800 and 1824, for example, there were nine years of notable distress, of which five could be classified as famine. In 1821 'the Irish were universally hungry to the point of starvation south and west of a line from Donegal to Youghal,' says Hobhouse. Various diseases had hit the land - including dry rot [a fungus], curl [transmitted by aphids], mould attacking nearly-ripe foliage and the fruit of several plants, and blackleg [a bacillus affecting healthy plants in the ground or in storage]. But blight, when it came in 1845, far outstripped the bad years of previous decades. Hobhouse puts it thus:

'For four or five years after the first attack of the blight in 1845, Ireland was wracked by the physical agony of famine, disease and depopulation. Although 1845-6 is usually regarded as the span of the famine, the blight in fact struck several times more, though not as severely as in 1845; and the after effects, in particular emigration, continued for a long time. Up to a million men, women and children are estimated to have died from starvation, or typhus, or cholera, or one of the other virulent diseases that followed in the Famine's wake. Additionally, up to 1.5 million Irish left the country as a direct result of the Famine, setting a pattern of continuing emigration for the rest of the century.'

Bad though the effects of nature were, the tragedy of the famine was deepened by the position of Ireland in relation to its powerful near neighbour, England. 'In Ireland there was plenty of corn,' wrote Redcliffe Salaman, 'but following the usual routine, it was being shipped to England at the rate of 16,000 quarters [i.e. 200 tons] weekly. But had it remained in the country, the starving peasantry would not have benefited from it, except the government had

intervened, for they had no cash wherewith to purchase it.'

The cottier, he explained, had long been in the habit of paying for his conacre [*a small piece of land let for producing a crop*] on which he grew his potatoes, by his own personal labour. If he sold a cow or pig, the proceeds went towards his rent, or to pay church tithes. 'Cash was so rare a commodity,' said Salaman, 'that there are abundant examples in the literature of Irish cottiers actually pawning pound notes for a few shillings.'

Perhaps the worst aspect of the famine was that, as one year gave way to the next, any hopes of an alleviation were dashed. In 1846, blight was seen first near Cork in early June, but did not make headway until late July, when it spread rapidly. Whereas in the previous year some whole fields had escaped destruction, that year 'scarcely a plant in the whole four Irish provinces [Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught] was spared - the destruction of the crop was all but complete; the terror and desolation it brought in its train, no less.' Thinking that the 1846 crop would be adequate, the government brought its relief works to an end. But, as Salaman observed: what followed was that 'with startling rapidity, shortage passed to famine, famine to starvation, and starvation to death...'

'Just as the people were looking with anxious eyes on their potato fields pregnant with the promise of plenty, the fell disease smote the land once more, and the whole fabric of their dream vanished. This final calamity broke what spirit was left in the people.'

But this was not all. The 1847 Poor Relief (Ireland) Act laid down that nobody who possessed more than a quarter of an English acre was eligible for poor-law relief. 'Interpreted in plain language,' said Salaman, 'it meant that the starving cottier must vacate his home, and his

THE EJECTMENT



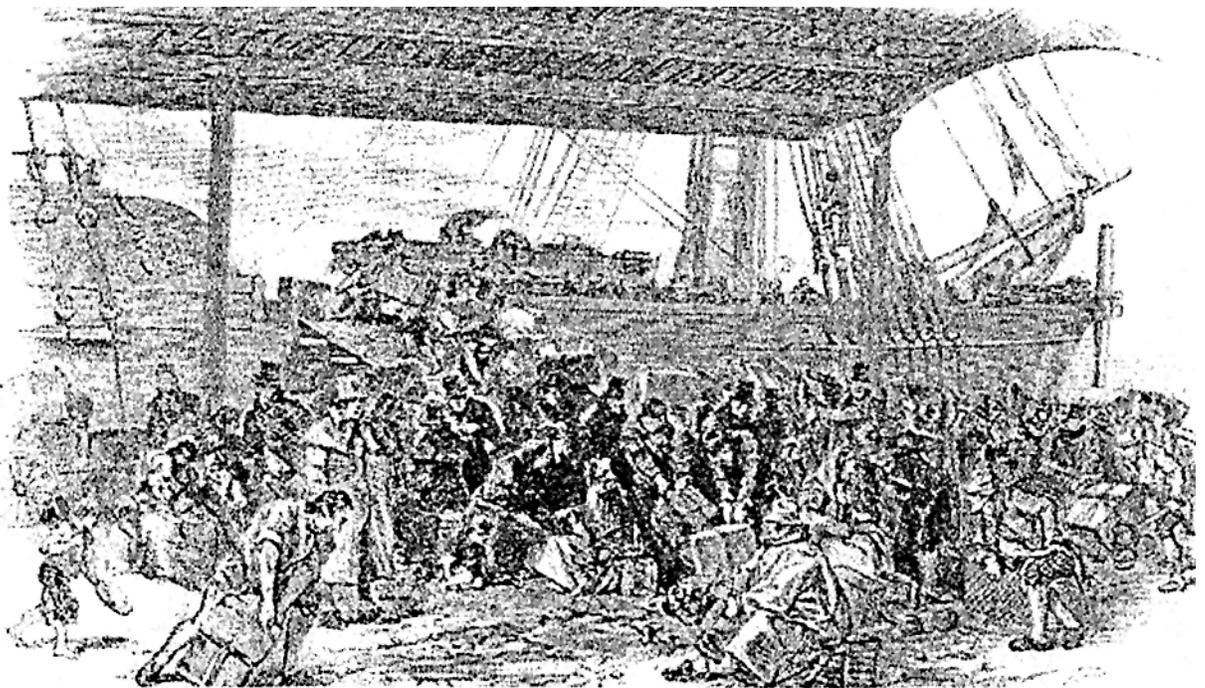
'The fearful system of wholesale ejection, of which we daily hear, and which we daily behold, is a mockery of the eternal laws of God - a flagrant outrage on the principles of nature,' said the *Illustrated London News* on December 16, 1848. 'Whole districts are cleared. Not a roof tree [i.e. ridge] is to be seen where the happy cottage of the labourer or the snug homestead of the farmer at no distant day cheered the landscape.'

scrap of potato land, before he and his starving children could be given a crust of bread.' The bald population figures were: 1841: 8,175,124; 1851: 6,552,385 - a fall of 1,622,739. But the Census Commission, taking into account the normally expected rise in population over those years, estimated that in 1851 there should have been 9,010,798 people and thus that the country had lost 2.5 million. Much of this loss, of course, was caused by the enormous rise in those emigrating to the United States or parts of the British Empire. The numbers estimated by the Commission to have lost their lives due to the famine - from starvation, dysentery, cholera, typhus, etc - was a million, but this was a conservative estimate.

The decades that followed were unremittingly harsh, with millions in or on the edge of hunger. Attempts were made to introduce lacemaking as a means of earning a pittance to help alleviate the suffering, but it was a skill learned more in desperation and out of immediate dire need than as part of a naturally-growing industry over centuries as had been the case elsewhere. In mainland England it was also a preserve of the poor and needy, often used to supplement a family's agricultural wage, but it was seldom a matter of life and death.

That the effect of the famine lasted more than just a few years is clear from the fact that, 40 years later, in 1887, Mabel F. Robinson, writing in the *Art Journal* [20], said that '... Irish lace existed, and still exists, not to supply the commercial demand for it, but to enable a poverty-stricken population to earn a meal of porridge or potatoes.' It is this motive for making good lace, based on good patterns, and sold professionally, that Cole always bore in mind, and he did his best to encourage the designing, making and efficient selling of lace as a means of helping sustain the needy in rural areas.

THE EMBARKATION



Over a million Irish people perished during the Great Famine, either from starvation or from a series of diseases which took hold of a malnourished people. Alongside this it is estimated that another 1,500,000 people emigrated. They went to England, to the USA, Australia and other British colonies. Many left directly from Irish ports, but others found their way to Liverpool first. This drawing, entitled 'The Embarkation, Waterloo Docks, Liverpool,' is taken from the *Illustrated London News* of July 6, 1850.

Cole - a candid critic

One of Alan Cole's characteristics, together with his dedication to the welfare of all forms of lacemaking throughout the British Isles, was the sheer depth and breadth of his knowledge and experience. On his 1886 visit to Ireland, we find him arguing on a given day for Limerick lace to be taken more seriously, having found that there were some 110 lace workers making a living from it around the area; then discussing lace pattern designing at the Tralee Presentation Convent; two days later dealing with reticella lace at the Presentation Convent at Killarney; helping the creation of new designs again at the Convent of Poor Clares at Kenmare; within days urging new crochet designs to be created at the Ursuline Convent at Blackrock; next at St Vincent's Convent, Cork, encouraging a newly-formed lace class making needlepoint; then on to Cappoquin House, where 'some good reproductions of Italian 16th century lace' were being produced; at the Carmelite Convent, New Ross, he left some prize designs to be worked on and was shown pieces of needlepoint and crochet; at Portarlinton he attended a 'meeting of ladies ... interested in giving a new impetus to the Mountmellick embroidery upon stout linen.' In 1881 he visited Bruges and wrote a report on his visit there for the Journal of the Royal Society. Six years later he was in Honiton on behalf of the House of Commons to report on the situation of lacemaking in Devon[21]. Much of his influence must have lain in the impression of total dedication he would have given his audiences.

In his usual direct style, mincing no words and under the simple title 'Lacemaking in Ireland', he opened his 1890 article in the **London Illustrated News** thus:

'Lacemaking in Ireland, regarded as something more than a name to cover a number of kindly meant but spasmodic efforts to find employment for the poor, has to compete with lacemaking in any other part of the world.'

As we shall see, he was adamant that if its design, production and efficient selling were not taken seriously, then lacemaking would play no significant role in the social or economic life of the country. His attitude was certainly stamped on every move he made to help Irish lacemaking forward. He was encouraged to take a direct interest in the matter by a group of Irish MPs, which resulted in 1884 in a committee being set up to promote a lacemaking revival in the 'Emerald Isle', and his fingerprints can be found all over the terms of reference which it set itself. Its four propositions were as follows:

'I. The making of lace in Ireland is a domestic industry, practised by some hundreds of peasants in their homes, by communities in Convents, by children in Industrial and other schools, and by others. Great skill in the work has been developed since the earlier part of the present [i.e. 19th] century when the industry was introduced to the country through the efforts of Philanthropists.

II. But the development of this skill has not been accompanied with the production and use of well-designed patterns. The merits of the Irish lace, through which a considerable trade has been established, rest upon excellent workmanship applied to a few forms of somewhat stereotyped and poor design.

III. Consequently the fluctuating success of Irish lacemaking is traceable to an evanescent and uncertain fancy of consumers for something "quaint and original", or to a sentimental desire for what is rather detrimentally called a 'National Production'. The absence of a regulated supply of well-drawn and composed patterns seems to prevent the industry from becoming established upon either an artistic or a sound commercial basis.

IV. The means of organising a supply of such patterns exist in the Schools of Art of the United Kingdom. But an incentive is necessary to call these means into operation and to induce the lace-workers to feel that it is in their interest to adopt improved designs. Looking at the social advantages of developing this domestic industry in the midst of a considerable agricultural and fishing population, similar in some important respects to those of France and Belgium, it is proposed to raise a fund for the distribution of new patterns amongst the scattered lace-workers of Ireland.'

In **Victorian Lace**, Patricia Wardle went on to say that setting up this committee inaugurated a period of considerable activity. 'Patterns were commissioned, competitions held, new schools were established and Irish lace was shown regularly at exhibitions in Ireland, England and elsewhere. Cole himself made annual tours of Ireland to report on progress and to encourage further endeavours. Much of the work was, of course, still bedevilled by the fact of its being largely in the hands of amateurs and philanthropists.'

Cole had his own agenda and, as he told the readers of the **English Illustrated Magazine**, though a case could be made out for the unfairness of comparing the Irish industry with those in France and Belgium, 'it is only by means of such a comparison that one can arrive at a just idea of the position which the Irish industry occupies.' Basing his arguments on his study and experience of lace and lacemaking there he said that, in the earliest days in Ireland, lacemaking by peasant women and religious communities had the support of 'a *clientèle* of patrons whose whimsical tastes stimulated the exercise of artistic invention and subtle handicraft. But whenever that was relaxed, the industry and its trade were seriously affected. Supply stimulated demand, and the nature of the demand helped to keep up a high character of supply.'

The merchant or dealer had his finger on the pulse of fashion, knowing what designers to go to for 'ornamental patterns' and how to guide them in developing new ones, knowing which local agents to go to 'in directing and supervising the peasant women in their cottages to make the required lace... and good thread was an article he himself supplied to the lace workers for most of the commissions he gave them.' Handling the laces for sale, said Cole, was a matter of ordinary commerce, well-known to the dealer.

Here we come to Cole's sustained belief that the impoverished peasant women of Ireland at that time - over a century ago - were not going to be helped by benevolent individuals alone, who simply looked around Europe and had 'hazy ideas' that what was done in one part of it could be replicated elsewhere. The general public in England and Ireland, he wrote, concluded that a principal characteristic of lacemaking, as a wage-earning employment, was that it was a peasant and cottage industry.

'This aspect of the industry commended itself to the notice of benevolent persons anxious to do good to their poorer sisters. Experience however has shown that simple benevolence does not imply artistic perception, or capacity to direct. *In fact the impulsive sentiment of benevolence usually leads to results different from the more lasting ones of commercial discipline.*' [emphasis added]

He then commented drily that 'The influence of benevolence is somewhat strongly marked in its connection with lacemaking in Ireland.'

Having been widespread in France and Flanders by the end of the 17th century, and somewhat extensively practised in England, bobbin lacemaking passed in a 'modified degree' to Ireland, but 'here from the beginning, the conditions seem to have been too weakly to secure for it a fairly promising foothold.'

Cole reflected on the experience of the Dublin Society in the 18th century and Lady Arbella Denny who was very active in teaching children in a few 'poor-houses' how to make 'bone lace' - which he described as 'a small trimming lace something like the *torchon* of modern commerce' - in order to win prizes. Nevertheless, commenting that as soon as, or very shortly after, Lady Arbella died, Irish bone lacemaking became extinct, he went on to say that the effort to give it life had depended on benevolence, and lacked 'those elements which were necessary to place the industry in a condition for it to compete successfully with similar industries flourishing elsewhere'.

He recognised however that the industry in Ireland had survived and provided the ground for new attempts to revive the work in the early 1800s. But again he put his finger on what he considered the continuing flaw in the process, for he said that 'Like the preceding one [i.e. the good works of Lady Arbella, etc], these attempts were due rather to a spirit of philanthropy than to enterprise launched with definite aim and knowledge of necessary conditions.' The first of these attempts was made in 1820 and others soon followed, attracting private funds to buy or give orders for similar work. 'Small groups of lace-makers were thus formed. But trade in their output was of an amateur nature, inevitably precarious, and beset with the difficulties which attend the want of experience in regulating wages and prices.'

The development of Limerick lace he recognised as something different - 'a rather more serious endeavour' - following the arrival in 1829 of Charles Walker with his 24 young lacemakers as teachers. They set about teaching 'how to embroider net in imitation of the patterned *tulle*, *blonde*, and Brussels pillow laces which were in considerable vogue at that time. This sort of work was identical in character with the *Broderies de Luneville*, which had been flourishing in France since 1800, and continued to do so as late as 1860.' In a short time, Cole recorded, Mr Walker's efforts were so successful that some 1,500 women were employed, though in less than 50 years this had dwindled down to 300. But, 'the name of Limerick had nevertheless established itself.'

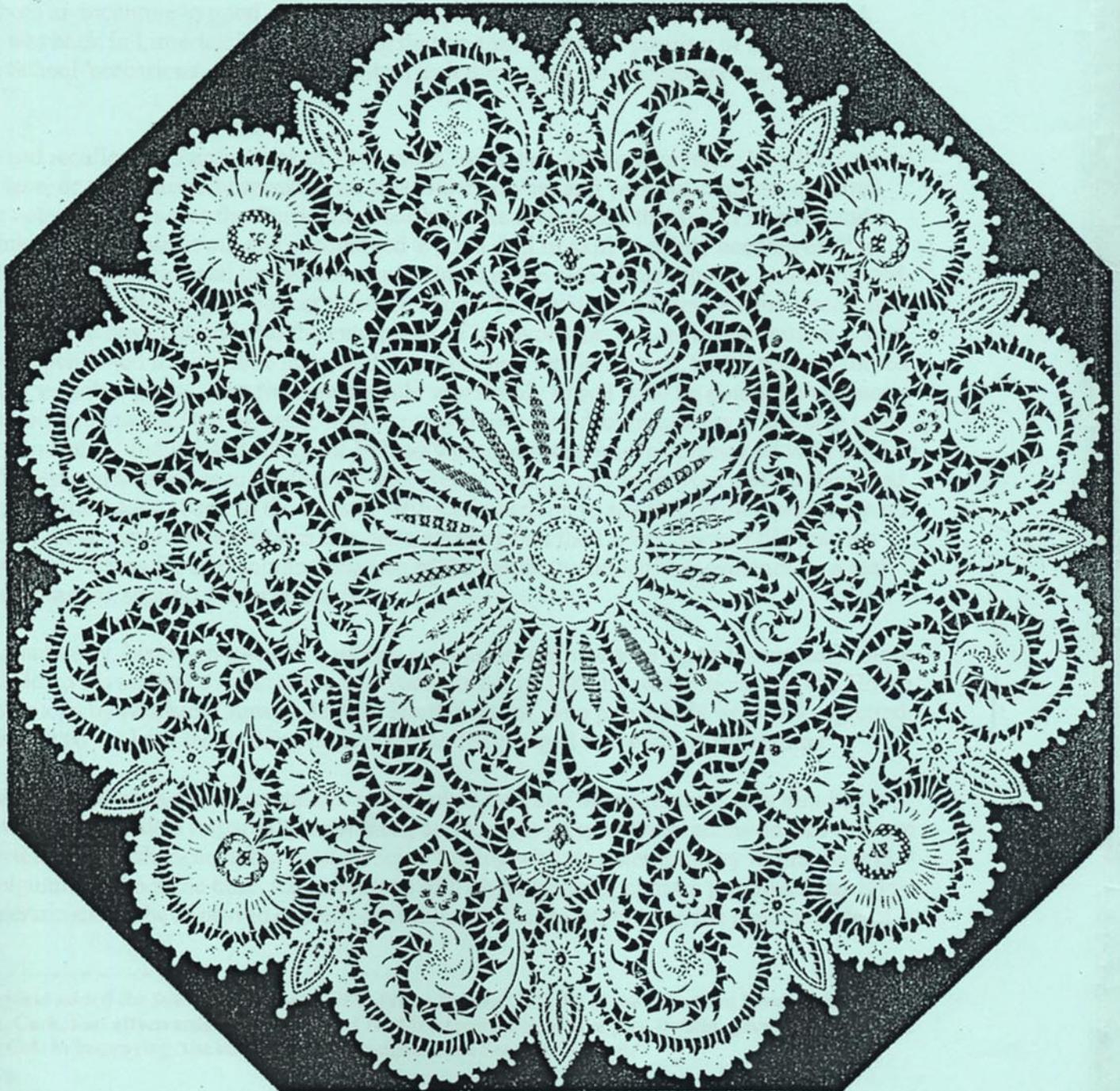
Ada Longfield, in her 1936 catalogue for the National Museum of Ireland, stated that 'the later history of the Limerick industry was similar to that of many others in Ireland. It was very successful during Mr Walker's time and found a large market in Great Britain - first through a lace house in London, and after 1834 through a traveller who went round taking orders in England, Scotland and Ireland. But after Mr Walker's death in 1842 many of his first workers returned to England and there was no proper supervision, so that the old designs deteriorated

Cole selections...

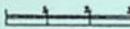
Alan Cole made numerous lace-orientated visits to Ireland, on each occasion reporting back on 'steps being taken for assisting the development of the Lace Industry in Ireland, with illustrations of specimens of recently produced laces.' Here are three examples, from 1886 and 1887, with his notes. *Further selections on pages 25-26*

IRISH LACE.

CUT LINEN EMBROIDERY. CARRICKMACROSS WORK.



1887

Scale  inches.

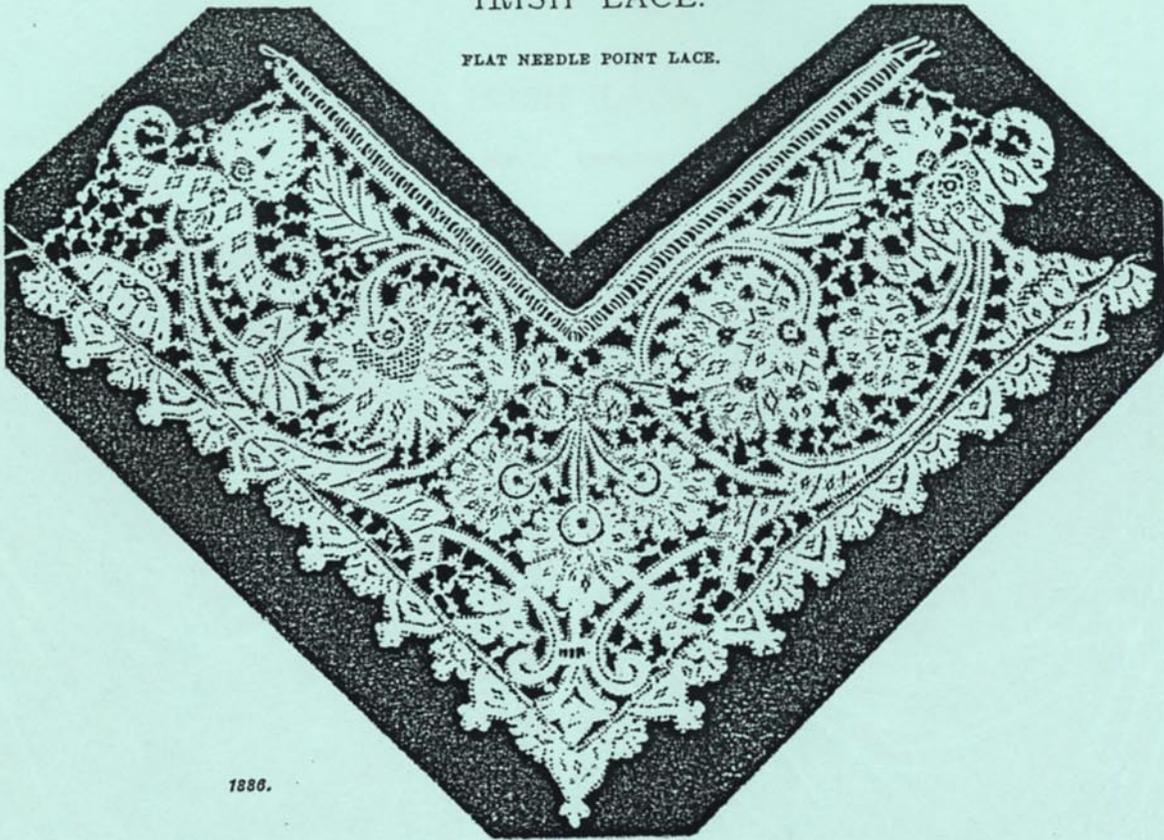
PARASOL COVER MADE AT THE BATH AND SHIRLEY SCHOOLS CARRICKMACROSS, CO. MONAGHAN.

FROM A DESIGN BY MR. MICHAEL HAYES.

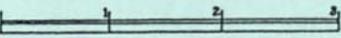
PURCHASED BY MRS. ALFRED MORRISON

IRISH LACE.

FLAT NEEDLE POINT LACE.



1886.

Scale  inches.

SPECIMEN MADE BY WORKERS AT THE PRESENTATION CONVENT, YOUGHAL, CO. CORK,
FROM DESIGN BY MR. MICHAEL HAYES.

IRISH LACE.

NEEDLE POINT LACE.



1886.

Scale  inches.

BORDER MADE BY WORKERS AT CAPPOQUIN, CO. WATERFORD, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MISS KEANE,
FROM A DESIGN ADAPTED BY MISS KEANE.

from inferior copying and there was no stimulus to create new and suitable ones. Consequently by about 1870 Limerick lace fell into disrepute and only cheap goods of poor quality were produced. The industry was saved from complete decay by the nuns of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, and after 1888 a revival took place when Mrs Vere O'Brien established and maintained a Limerick lace training school. This school partly owed its inception to Mr Alan Cole,* who gave a lecture at the Limerick Chamber of Commerce in Sept 1888, and the painful contrast between the older and the then contemporary lace was illustrated by photographs and a loan collection.' There was an increase then in the number of centres making Limerick lace, mainly in convents; the standard of design was raised through contact with special art classes at the Schools of Art in Dublin and Cork. [This, Wardle notes, was a case of the nuns taking Cole's advice and being prepared to try new designs] More help was also given by the Art Industrial Exhibition, established in connection with the Horse Show by the Royal Dublin Society in 1887 (discontinued about 1923) which during its time was both an incentive to good quality lace being achieved and helped dispose of the work. Cole was back in Limerick in 1897, noting that he considered the position of the Limerick Lace School 'precarious, depending so much as it does upon the interest and enterprise of one lady.'

Cole had recalled the famine year of 1846 when, with the blight on the land, 'another form of Irish lace, or more properly speaking an embroidery on net and with cut cambric, acquired some notoriety. This was the Carrickmacross lace.' He recognised that both Limerick and Carrickmacross brought out and encouraged 'a good deal of skill in dainty needlework', so much so that 'an occasional tradesman saw business in the sale of such things, and employed travellers and local agents to collect them for shops. To this limited extent a commercial spirit may be said to have entered into the enterprises of benevolence. But, as is not unusual, when benevolence failed to hit public taste, and its production would not sell, the tradesman turned to other vendible goods.' The tradesman's role was simply to sell what he could; he was not interested in managing the industry. But the uncertainty and declining sales of the lace gave birth to a Ladies' Industrial Society for Ireland whose purpose was to correspond with English and foreign acquaintances to get them to sell, free of charge, any Irish work sent to them and to send all the takings back to the owners. But Cole went on to say that 'With a programme so innocent of commercial conditions it is not surprising that the Ladies' Society did not live many years.' It was for him another example of the ineffectiveness of benevolence as a real and long-lasting support for lacemakers.

Not unnaturally, his down-to-earth criticism - not using soft words to make his message more palatable to his audience - was not to everyone's taste. In 1889 he was criticised in the House of Commons by Michael Conway, MP for North Leitrim, who praised his work but regretted that in a letter on Irish lacemaking he had 'rather discouraged the work'. Cole replied:

'I am sorry if such an interpretation may be placed on any of my remarks. My aim has always been to deal impartially with facts, and to discourage misapprehension. No one can pretend that Irish lacemaking is on an equal footing with its sister industry in France and Belgium. At the same time, the conditions of Irish lacemaking contain promises which to a certain extent have proved capable of fulfilment. On the other hand the general state of

* Longfield added the following footnote: 'Mr James Brennan, R.H.A., of the Crawford Municipal School of Art, Cork, and afterwards Head Master of the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, gave able assistance to Mr Cole in improving the lace industry throughout the South of Ireland.'

the conditions is admittedly weak, otherwise special treatment by means of government resources would scarcely have been asked for. Now in speaking of the efforts which have grown out of this special treatment, it would be misleading to attempt to encourage them in their incipiency by mere applause. Empty praise or "blarney," if one may say so, is at once seen through by those with whom I have been brought into contact in Ireland. And their quick perception and reasonableness require that their work should be candidly criticised. As far as I have been able to give such criticisms, I have done so.'

Returning from his 1886 visit, Cole reported '*(a) upon Visits to Convents, Classes, and Schools where Lace-making and Designing for Lace are taught, as well as (b) upon steps taken for assisting the development of the Lace Industry in Ireland, with illustrations of specimens of recently produced laces.*' [1]

He visited Limerick, Tralee, Dingle, Killarney, Kenmare, Cork, Youghal, Waterford, New Ross, Marrison, Portarlinton and Dublin over a period of 17 days, discussing, lecturing, making proposals to help the industry forward. He had previously visited Honiton, in Devon, as a House of Commons commissioner with very much the same end in view - to study the situation and report back suggesting measures which might be taken to help the industry forward.[20] In Devon he visited 10 villages and towns, and each day of his Irish tour appears to have been packed with visits to such centres as convents and schools of art, discussing their problems and giving lectures on whatever aspect appeared to him most fruitful.

Writing in 1890, Cole recapitulated on his recent work: 'For the last six years,' he wrote, 'I have had to pay occasional visits to lacemaking centres, chiefly in the south and south-west of Ireland, in order to discuss with the local supervisors of the industry, the application of ornamental design to lacemaking and to give lectures on the subject. An official inspector [Mrs Power Lalor] has also been appointed to visit such places with a view to giving information as to the latest fashions in the usage of lace, good threads, etc. These arrangements being of an official nature have come under public notice as well as that of Parliament.'

It was always in his mind, several decades following the famine, that its effects were still such that a few pennies, earned from lacemaking or otherwise, could make the difference between a family holding on to life by a thread or giving up and emigrating - most probably to the United States. He wrote:

'At the time of the famine in Ireland (1847) other efforts of benevolence sought to allay distress by teaching women and girls to earn something out of lacemaking, and by forcing a sale for the work. Convents which had sprung into existence, and managed poor schools, gave instruction in the craft and set aside work-rooms where adults also might make lace. Some of the nuns were clever at making needlepoint laces, but were not impressed with the necessity of skilfully designing ornamental patterns for their pupils. Clumsy ornaments were wrought in various sorts of needlepoint lace and sold through charitable persons, and even through professional dealers. Crochet work in imitation of needle-made laces appears to have arisen about this time, and was very readily learnt and produced by a number of peasant girls in the south and north of Ireland: so too a form of netting known as tatting. Thus Irish lacemaking, although without refinement of pattern, had assumed varied forms of expression which have survived to the present day [i.e. 1890], and it is to this variety of work appealing to different tastes that the industry seems to owe its continuance.'

In the years immediately following the famine there had been a burst of activity resulting in new lace ventures and the rebirth of others. About 1853, Cole noted, there were attempts to train talent in drawing ornamental patterns suited to lace - an aspect of its attraction and survival which had 'not been understood either in England or Ireland.' Bishop Berkeley, he went on, striking an historical note, had apparently been calling in vain when, early in the 18th century, he had written: 'How could France and Flanders have drawn so much money from other countries for figured silks, lace and tapestry if they had not had their Academies of Design?'

In 1851, the Ladies' Industrial Society established a Normal Lace School in Dublin where pupils were taken in at moderate fees and instructed in making pillow laces. The school, which became noted for its silk and cotton lace borders in Bucks lace style, petitioned the Government for a grant in aid of its expenses, and a Parliamentary vote of £500 [£31,000] was accorded it. Again, Cole takes this example to show how, without a serious approach to creating designs that would sell, and creating a properly commercial apparatus to ensure continuity of sales, there could be no secure future for lacemaking or lacemakers. The school's committee, on the basis of the grant, moved to 'a more commodious house' and advertised for 'an art teacher to instruct the lace pupils in drawing and the principles of design.' But it was not to last. The classes had not been going for more than a year when the committee reported that whilst their drawing classes had steadily increased, the lacemaking had ceased to be "any attraction to the school". The consequence was that the Government granted no more money and the Normal Lace School closed. Cole then takes up the question as to why this should have been the result of the initiative:

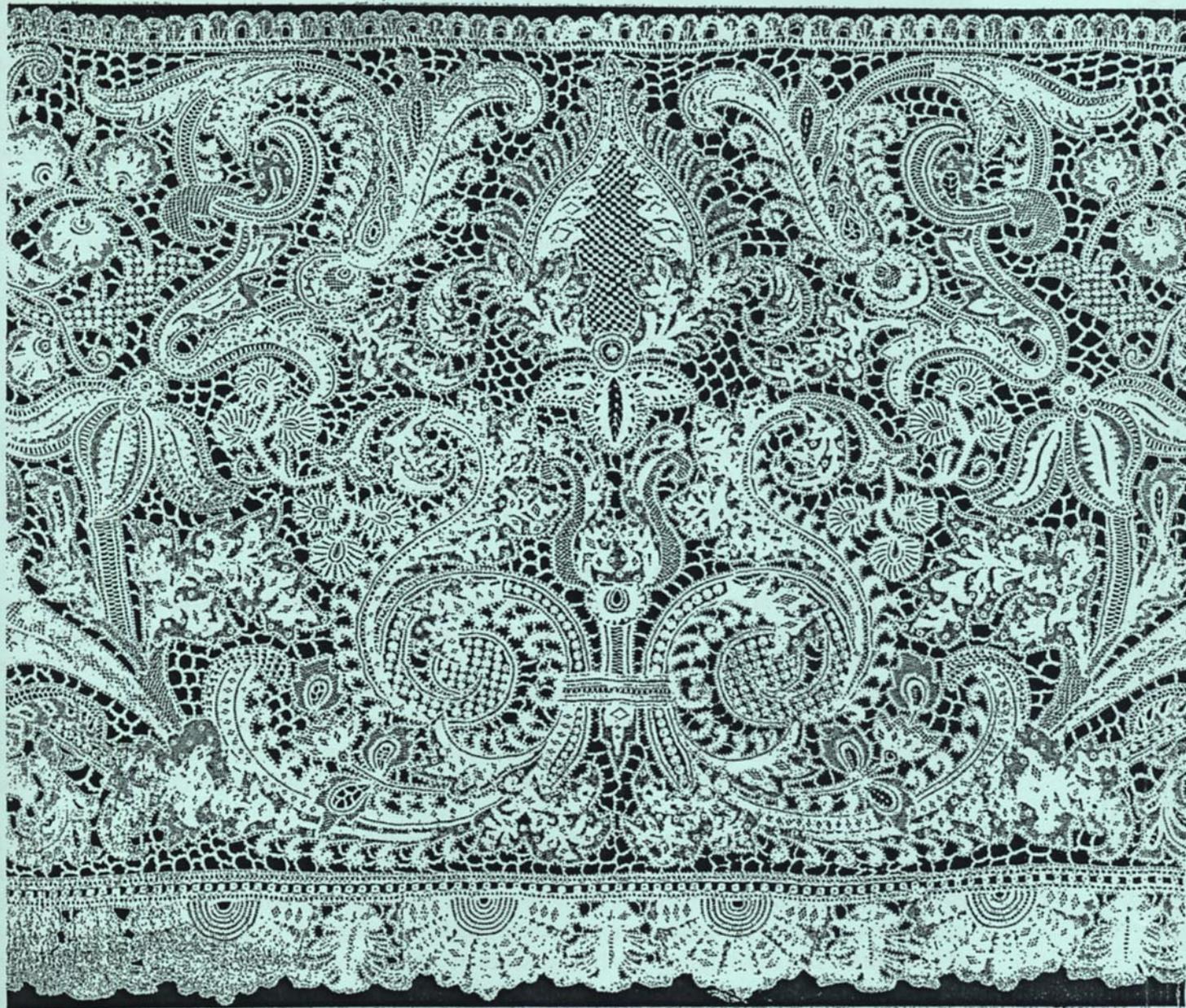
'Looking back at what the school had done, and how it had trained a certain number of pupils to make pillow lace, the quality of which was highly commended by a leading London lace merchant in 1853, it is rather hard to understand that in three years its failure was, as officially ascribed, really due to the fact "that there is not sufficient demand for the labour to make its exercise profitable". The managers of the school were benevolent persons, and at the outset attempted to make their school support itself by fees paid by students, by the proceeds of bazaars and other entertainments. Students were consequently free to pick and choose how much, or how little, or for how long, they would learn lacemaking. The Ladies' Industrial Society assumed that the work turned out by the pupils deserved treatment as a marketable commodity, and accordingly plunged into the error of "giving more than the wholesale price for it in order to prevent the workers from being discouraged in their first attempts". Then the drawing classes at the school, as has been seen, were allowed to supersede the lacemaking classes. There was no distinct notion at the school that the composition of lace patterns was a special branch of instruction to be followed by persons other than the actual makers of laces. Lacemakers are not as a body specially fitted to be trained into designers of ornament any more than bricklayers are peculiarly destined to become architects. The failure of the school cannot therefore be set down wholly to an insufficiency of demand for lace. It is more directly traceable to the system of optional and varied instruction adopted by the managers of the school, in whose report occur such passages as "the lacemaking is not sought either by the pupils themselves or by their parents for them"; and again, "since the committee received Parliamentary aid it was enabled to enlarge the education given in the school, appropriating a greater proportion of the pupils' time to elementary instruction."'

More selections

Two further examples of lace collected
by Alan Cole on his visits to Ireland

IRISH LACE.

"LACET" WORK. (BRAID AND NEEDLEPOINT STITCHES.)



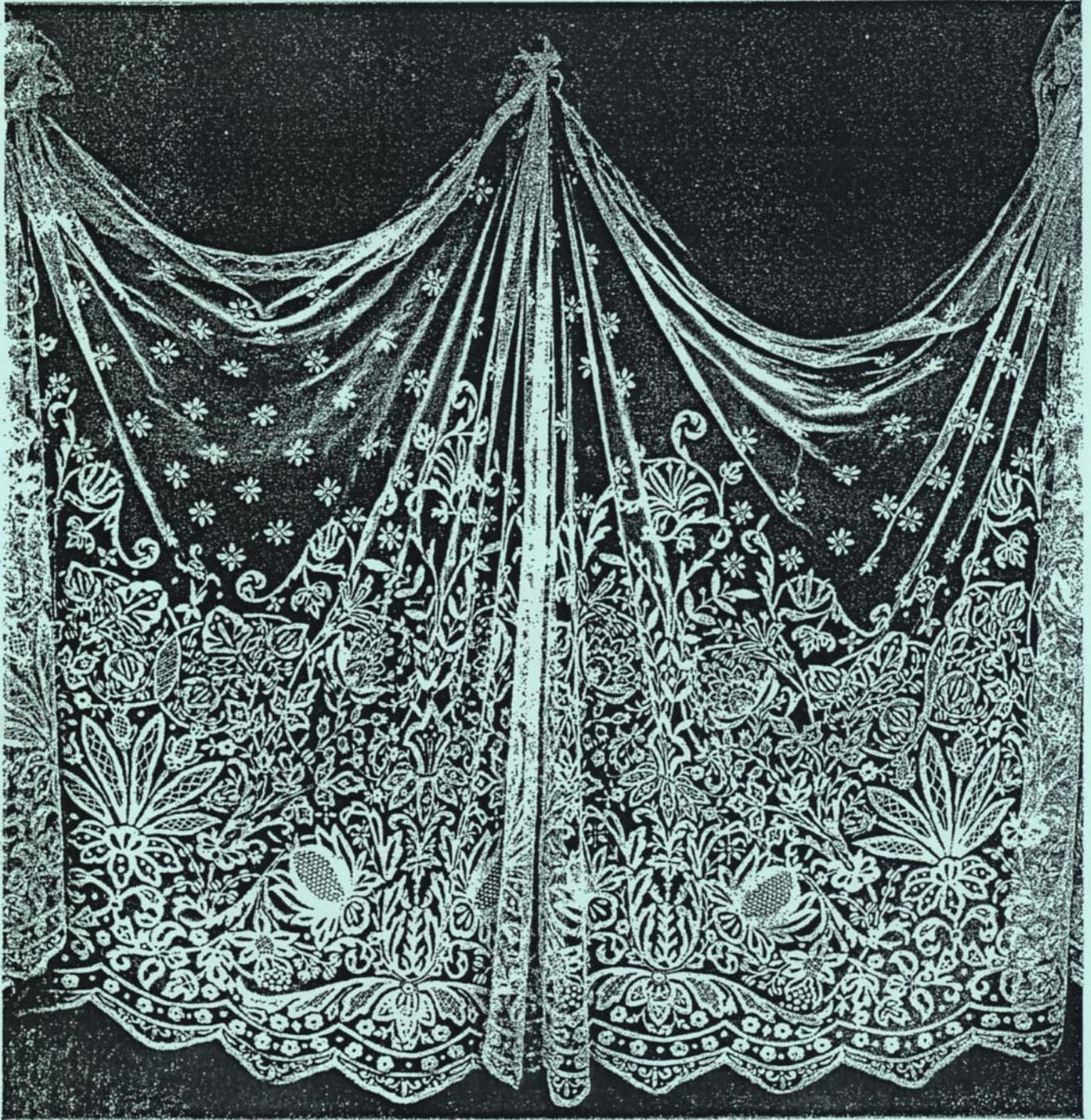
1880.

Scale $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

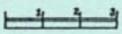
PART OF AN ALB MADE BY WORKERS AT ST. MARTHA'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, MERRION, CO. DUBLIN,
FROM A DESIGN BY MR. MICHAEL HAYES.

IRISH LACE.

EMBROIDERY ON NET. LIMERICK (TAMBOUR) LACE.



1886.

Scale  inches.

FLOUNCE MADE BY WORKERS AT LIMERICK UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MRS. R. VERE O'BRIEN,
FROM A DESIGN BY MISS AGNES FARMAN, LEICESTER SCHOOL OF ART.

SPECIMENS PURCHASED BY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, THE COUNTESS
OF ABERDEEN, AND MRS. ALFRED MORRISON.

Cole then summed up his criticisms in one succinct sentence: 'The plea for lacemaking secured a Parliamentary grant the possession of which, however, seems at once to have demoralised the committee, who dashed off in other directions altogether.'

There was, anyway, very little pillow-lace made in Ireland. Cole speaks of one or two '*torchon*-making' centres in Galway and the West, while 'some of the industrial school children under the Convent of Mercy at Parsonstown learn to do a sort of Honiton and Brussels *appliqué* lace, but the annual output is small. Attempts have been made by the managers of the Donegal Industrial Fund to introduce amongst Donegal peasants pillow lacemaking, especially with coloured threads, after the style of certain Bohemian and Russian laces. Encouraging reports have been made of these attempts and of the trade in their results.' Lacemakers who have an interest in their craft and its literature - descriptive, illustrative and purely pattern books - will know that today both Bohemia and Russia still stand out for their lacemaking with coloured threads, incorporating bold, imaginative designs which they continually give the lace world. It is fascinating to reflect on what Irish lacemakers might have given the world over the past century and more had Torchon lace been adopted there.

For some time after the closure of the Normal Lace School, Cole said, there was a considerable sale of Irish laces, showing that the demand for it was lively. But at this time, referring to specimens in the South Kensington Museum, he said that 'all sorts of poorly contrived patterns - frequently debased imitations of old foreign laces - were in use by the lace workers, who on the whole were left to themselves not only to devise quaint and semi-barbarous [i.e. crude or coarse] ornaments, but in their poverty to make shift with inferior qualities of threads.' He went on to say that it was hardly surprising that the time arrived when trade became stagnant, the public being satiated with Irish laces. Merchants held stocks of poorly-patterned goods and indifferent materials, prices fell and so did the wages paid for labour. 'It seemed,' he said, 'as if the lace industry in Ireland was irretrievably moribund.'

At that time, 1883, a number of important firms who had dealt in Irish laces, decided to make an effort to save the industry by holding an exhibition of Irish lace at London's Mansion House, where every description of Irish lace and crochet was displayed. 'The cleverness of the different sorts of handicraft was generally acknowledged,' wrote Cole, 'but it was felt that the artistic or ornamental taste displayed in them was not only dull but was low in standard; and a few specially prepared specimens made from good patterns and with superior threads did not materially alter this feeling. The exhibition however served to give some hope of new possibilities in Irish lacemaking, and certainly awakened new, if limited, interest.'

A few Irish MPs took advantage of this and applied to the Department of Science and Art to arrange for lectures on lacemaking and on designing lace patterns at such centres as should request them. Cole notes that 'In less than a couple of years some of the lacemaking convents in Counties Kerry, Cork and Waterford applied for the lectures, started art classes, and began to earn payments on results of examination, in drawing and designing, from government.' For the most part these convent classes were branches of the School of Art at Cork, connected with the Department of Science and Art. The school, by means of local funds and a grant from the department, bought a collection of old hand-made laces for both its own students and those in the convents to study. Advanced students with some proficiency in drawing studied 'ornamental composition', and those of them who could make lace or knew how it was made, undertook the study of how to adapt skill in this type of composition to that of inventing patterns for various sorts of lace and embroidery work. The numbers at the lacemaking convents were, he said, few, and for the most part were nuns, but Cole went so far as to say

[1890] that apparently, upon the training and influence of such people 'the possible future success of lacemaking in Ireland will largely depend.' At these centres, many young people - as well as a few older ones - who were learning how to make lace 'learn to draw and so accustom themselves to good flowing lines and a sense of proportion in ornament 'though very few, if any, of them possess or can be expected to possess the capability or aptitude to compose ornament [i.e.motif].'

These art classes, scattered though they were, had good examples or photographs of old lace to guide the students, together with works which illustrated ornamental composition, and were in touch with groups of lacemakers. 'This feature,' Cole wrote, 'which is at least a new one in the conditions of lacemaking in Ireland, has been developed since 1884. There are now eight of such classes at lacemaking centres, besides six similar classes at convents where varieties of industrial* instruction are given. At the schools of art in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford small classes of lace pattern designers have been established, and the students in them are sometimes commissioned by dealers to compose patterns for laces which may be made in different parts of Ireland.'

In 1884 a scheme based on private subscriptions was started which had its impact on Irish lacemaking. Under it, money prizes were competed for by 'designers of ornament suitable to be wrought into lace.' The committee running the scheme encouraged great numbers of motifs to be made, while other new patterns were worked as commissions for Queen Victoria, the Marchioness of Londonderry, the Countess of Aberdeen and other grandees. All these were specimens which would not have been produced in the normal course of trade - intricate patterns, the best materials available and labour of the best current standard. The scheme aimed at producing Irish laces whose quality would affect - and if possible elevate - the style of the industry in its normal production. The first public display which it inspired took place at the Irish Exhibition, held in London in 1888, and the second at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1889. At the latter, the Society of Arts awarded special prizes for many of the specimens on show.

'The scheme, said Alan Cole, 'touched all branches of the Irish lace industry. Delicate needlepoint laces involving quite new effects were made by the Presentation Convent at Youghal, and by the Convent of Poor Clares at Kenmare.' The designs were by nuns, by a Miss Julyan of the Dublin School of Art, and a Mr Hayes, formerly of the Limerick School of Art. Cole commented that 'Some handsome, heavy, raised needlepoint laces were made by workers under the direction of Miss MacLean at Innishmacsaint, Lough Erne, and by others directed by the Carmelite Convent at New Ross, Co. Wexford [see Figs A and B, p 30], the patterns for these being designed by Mr Scott and Miss Perry of the Cork School of Art, Mr Murphy of the Waterford School of Art, and some of the nuns at New Ross.' Specimens of Limerick and Carrickmacross laces were worked at Mrs Vere O'Brien's school of workers, the Convent of Mercy, Kinsale, and at the Bath and Shirley School, Carrickmacross. 'Miss Keane, of Cappoquin, caused some of her workers to produce dainty specimens in the style of such early Italian needlepoint laces as were made from patterns by Cesare Vecellio and F. Vinciolo, of which [Fig C, p 31] may be taken as an example,' recorded Cole [22]. Some novel 'crochet works' were produced by workers in the south and south-western districts of Ireland from designs by Michael Holland of Messrs Dwyers, and by Mr Murphy. Bringing things up

* Cole would have used this word in its older sense, meaning to do with productive labour, rather than with an industry based on organised production.

to date in 1890, Cole said that 'the activity thus engendered is to be fostered for further development under the auspices of the Royal Dublin Society who, besides prizes given in 1888 and 1889, have announced their intention of giving prizes annually, for new and good lace and embroidery done in Ireland, as well as for drawings of patterns for such work.'

Cole then gave details of developments showing that, albeit in a modest way, progress was taking place in a number of centres. At Innishmacsaint, Cappoquin, Newtownbarry, Borris and elsewhere, ladies were supervising 'the work done by little groups of peasant women'. There was again a prosperous lace-school on the Bath and Shirley estate at Carrickmacross, serving to keep it alive. Samples of Brussels and guipure lace were obtained and 'soon the better workers were able to make as well some of the finest guipure produced in Ireland. The guipure is fairly distinct from the appliqué - on a cambric foundation a design is placed by a thread and connected with point stitches. The superfluous parts are cut away and the pattern is then joined by needlepoint brides and sometimes enriched with loops and picots.' But, Cole declared, 'at none of these last-named places are there any drawing and pattern-making classes corresponding with those at the convents.' For some 25 years, however, Ada Longfield reckoned the Carrickmacross industry a success, but 'then stagnation gradually set in - the patterns degenerated and no effort was made to get good designs. Consequently the standard of the work went down and the market declined so rapidly that towards the end of the century the industry again threatened to die out. It was saved by the nuns of the St Louis Convent of Carrickmacross, who not only kept a knowledge of the work alive by teaching it in their school, but put fresh life into the manufacture by obtaining better designs and thus raising the standard of work. From the St Louis Convent the making of Carrickmacross spread to other places all over Ireland - mainly lace classes attached to convents - but of course the number and extent of the centres depends very largely on the fluctuating state of the market.'

At Limerick, Mrs R. Vere O'Brien was endeavouring to improve the methods of work, quality of materials, character of patterns and means of finding sales for the work. The items Cole mentioned included a flounce of Limerick lace, made shortly before Cole was writing, under the direction of Mrs O'Brien for Messrs Haywards of Oxford Street 'who derived the pattern from a flounce of French needlepoint lace made at Alençon for the Empress Josephine some eighty years ago.'

As we can see, Cole, in his determination to do everything possible to help forward lacemaking, never allowed his enthusiasm to cloud his judgement, or to lead him into ill-thought out judgements about what possibilities could be opened up. It may well have been this aspect of his personality which sometimes brought down criticism on him for appearing doubtful of people's possibilities, or hesitant to paint things in brighter colours than he thought correct. He would go to the heart of what he considered the failings of lacemaking to survive as he believed it could and should, and continually emphasised his views as to the needs of the moment and the future. For example, referring to 1890, he wrote: 'Limerick has now opened a training school for young lace-makers. This school is supported by public subscriptions started by Mr Shaw, of Limerick, but has hardly been at work sufficiently long to prove its value in influencing the industry. A greater number of children apply for admission than can be accommodated. But with this encouraging sign, much depends upon competent personal supervision of the children, and steady and continued effort. The School of Art, under Mr Brophy, at Limerick, has also bestirred itself, and a small class of designers of lace patterns has been formed there. Local prizes are offered to stimulate these designers, and some of their patterns have been made use of in the lace training school.'

Some of Cole's Irish lace illustrations



A

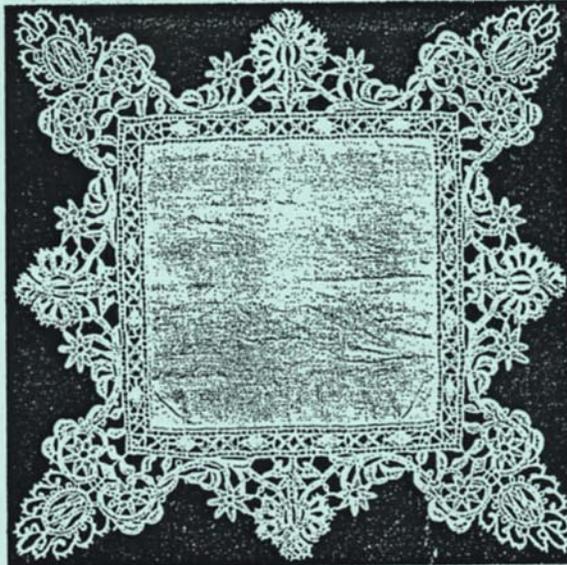
—RAISED NEEDLEPOINT LACE, MADE AT THE CARMELITE CONVENT, NEW ROSS, CO. WEXFORD,
FROM A DESIGN BY MR. MICHAEL HAYES.



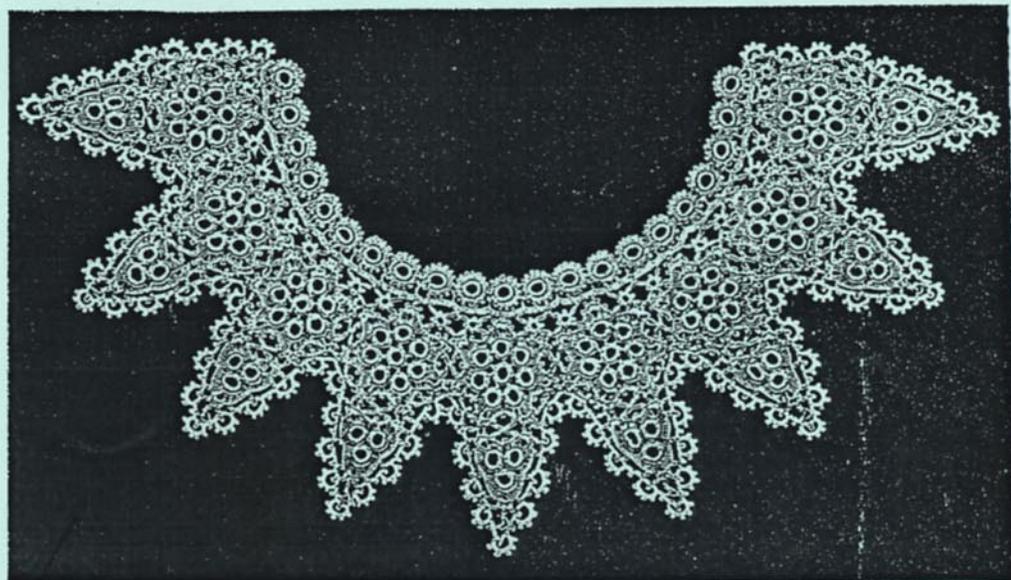
B

—RAISED NEEDLEPOINT LACE, WORKED AT THE CARMELITE CONVENT, NEW ROSS, CO. WEXFORD,
FROM A DESIGN BY MISS PERRY OF CORK SCHOOL OF ART.

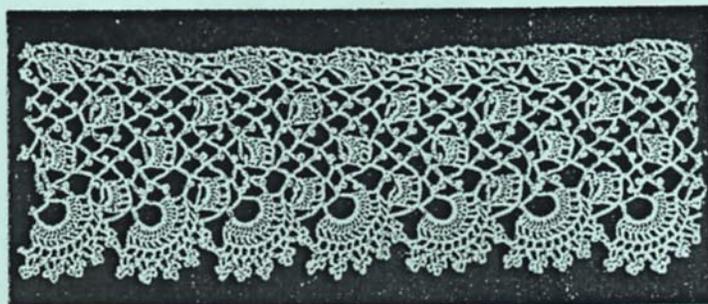
These pieces and others were used by Alan Cole to illustrate points in his 1890 article for the *English Illustrated Magazine* [see previous page]. He dealt with various aspects of the development of Irish lacemaking at that time, particularly stressing the need for constant improvement in the design of new lace patterns.



C —DOYLEY EDGED WITH NEEDLEPOINT LACE, WORKED FROM A DESIGN BY MISS KEANE, BY WORKERS AT CAPPOQUIN, CO. WATERFORD, UNDER HER DIRECTION.



D —COLLAR OF CROCHET BY WORKERS IN CO. CORK, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. MICHAEL HOLLAND (MESSRS. DWYER OF CORK).



E —CROCHET EDGING, MADE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. MICHAEL HOLLAND (MESSRS. DWYER OF CORK).

Limerick and Carrickmacross 'embroideries on net' were, in Cole's opinion, 'perhaps the more easily produced of the different Irish laces.' He spoke particularly of a flounce and an insertion and trimming for a dress, both done at the Bath and Shirley School, Carrickmacross, and in his opinion 'rather more elaborate in pattern and of better materials than usual'. There was also part of a curtain worked in the same way as Carrickmacross lace 'but with coarser net and heavier material for the cut linen and *appliqué* objects.' This piece, however, was worked at the lace school of the Convent of Mercy at Kinsale, on the south-west coast of county Cork. Cole stated that it was only within the previous two or three years that this lace school had got to work, but that there was 'an admirable drawing and pattern-making class' in connection with the convent school and that 'the children who are instructed here in the Limerick and other methods of embroidering on net, do their work from patterns made by senior students in the drawing class.' Thirty years previously, this convent had done 'much in the locality towards organising the peasant and fisher-women's cottage work, and for a time some success was secured for it.'

'Crochet', Ada Longfield had declared, 'may be regarded as an art closely allied to those of lacemaking and knitting - the product of a kind of independent knitting needle.' It developed from tambour work, she said, with the same needle but without any cloth or net foundation. Moreover, she went on, 'it is yet another branch of the lace industry which did not develop in Ireland till after the great famine, although the making of crochet was known earlier in the century both in England and Ireland. One of the first Irish centres was at the Ursuline Convent, Blackrock, Cork, for even in 1845 the nuns there were teaching it to the poor children in their schools, and received as much as £90 [£5,000] for the work produced that year. But the value of crochet work as providing a suitable form of cottage industry was not realised till the famine years when the making of crochet spread very rapidly from the Cork centre throughout the South of Ireland. Again it was the convents which provided the necessary organisation, and in the years immediately after the famine they made it a practical part of their educational system.'

She also said - though Cole may not have wholeheartedly agreed with her - that credit should be given to the 'philanthropic efforts of many merchants and traders through whom Irish crochet was introduced to the London trade and thus made an article of some commercial importance.' She then also mentioned the 1851 Great Exhibition where the crochet lace 'was well displayed, and the success of the industry may be judged from the fact that in the sixties of last century [i.e. the 19th], 12,000 women in the neighbourhood of Cork alone, were able thus to find partial, but remunerative, employment.'

Longfield went on to comment that: 'What the Cork centre has been for the South, Clones in Co Monaghan has been for the North. The history of the latter, however, has been somewhat different, for it really originated at Thornton in Co Kildare, through the efforts of Mrs W.C.Roberts to give employment during the worst period of the famine in 1847. Previous to that date she had been in the habit of helping the poor of that neighbourhood by teaching them to knit woollen jackets, but when orders failed in that year and the need for some kind of industry was still more urgent, she thought of crochet as a possible experiment. Choosing some of the most intelligent workers, she began by teaching them carefully herself, and in six months time they were able, and encouraged, to teach many others in the district. Indeed, so great was the distress that even boys were glad to learn to make crochet, and the success of Mrs Roberts' enterprise led to a demand for teachers from her centre to go to other parts of Ireland. It was one of these who went to Clones on the invitation of Mrs Hand, wife of the then rector of the parish. Moreover 'Clones was particularly suited for an industry of the kind

since it was the centre of a mountainous district with many poor willing to be employed, if the employment could be found. Thus they flocked to the rectory to learn crochet, where they not only received skilful teaching, but had the valuable guidance of Mrs Hand herself in choosing models of taste.'

Ada Longfield then gave a description of several types of crochet made at various times throughout Ireland:

Plain crochet: this was 'naturally the most elementary, consisting of the simplest manipulation of thread and hook to form edgings, articles for toilet use, etc, worked all in one piece. These have for long been a staple production. Appliqué laces were frequently used for more ornamental articles for dress, etc., when the pattern motives were done separately and then joined up by another worker using a single twisted thread to make the connecting "brides". This gives a lighter effect and economises labour, but is less durable.'

Lace crochet: in this type, the separate portions of the pattern were linked up with needle-point lace stitches, and 'the salient parts of the design are often enriched to force them into relief - often with results curious rather than beautiful'.

Plain guipure: this was one of three classes of guipure, made especially around Clones, and consisting of crochet brides worked close and tight, with a few small patterns introduced. 'A simple, but artistic effect was thus attained, and success depended mainly on good workmanship.'

Knotted guipure: Was developed from a Venetian model, and was more complicated, for the threads had to be knotted as the work went ahead.

Lifted guipure: took yet more time and skill as the stitches had to be raised in the working; consequently it was expensive to produce and comparatively uncommon, although the effect was both artistic and durable.

But, she added, 'the most successful type in Ireland was the *Point de Venise* - so called because it was copied from the various kinds of Venetian lace which lent themselves particularly well to imitation in crochet work. The Clones industry especially was deservedly noted for its copies of *gros point* and *plat Point de Venise*, for the best specimens really reproduced most of the beauties of the originals at comparatively moderate prices. It is this form of lace crochet which has given '*point d'Irlande*' its chief claim to distinction in the Continental markets. Other varieties are also known after the laces from which they are copied. Thus Spanish lace crochet is so called from the models which were dispersed on the dissolution of the monasteries in Spain in 1830, and which formed a basis of design for many patterns going under the general terms of Spanish lace. Similarly the designation Jesuit lace is due to the originals (from which the copies were made) having belonged to that order.'

She then made a harsh criticism of many within the Irish crochet industry - one which could have come from the pen of Cole himself. She wrote:

'The crochet industry as a whole in Ireland has gone through many vicissitudes since its expansion during the famine years, and it is perhaps wonderful that it has survived at all. *Some of the great obstacles to success have been from within the industry itself, owing to the short-sighted policy of many of the organisers and workers. Even as early as 1855 there was a*

lamentable tendency to do cheap work of poor quality with inferior cotton thread, rather than to execute more difficult and tedious styles with good materials.' [emphasis added]

She then went on to make the point that Cole had been hammering away at half a century before: *'Moreover, lack of artistic training has been another disadvantage. The whole industry died out in a very few years in Co. Kildare after a most promising beginning, for the above reasons, which also partly account for the decline in other centres as well, since a very small proportion of bad work will quickly destroy the market even for good productions!'*

Among outside difficulties which harmed the industry, reducing its potential, she mentioned the competition from the Continent. Then, 'a period of unique prosperity during the Franco-German war of 1870 when the supply of Continental laces diminished in the British markets... was followed by years of depression when Irish crochet was unable to compete with the machine-made work from Nottingham and Switzerland. The very popularity which Irish crochet had acquired made it the more vulnerable to competition from machine-made copies, or the imitations produced through cheap Asiatic labour.'

Unable to see what lay ahead, she completed her comments on crochet thus: 'Nevertheless, the industry has survived and should keep alive so long as there are purchasers ready to appreciate the beauty of the hand-made article, and ready to patronise it accordingly.'

We find some strong words from Mr Cole also about the makers of crochet, for which 'a rage ensued' but which was 'a class of work more easily made, when the pattern is not exacting, than embroidery or net.' He described the scene thus:

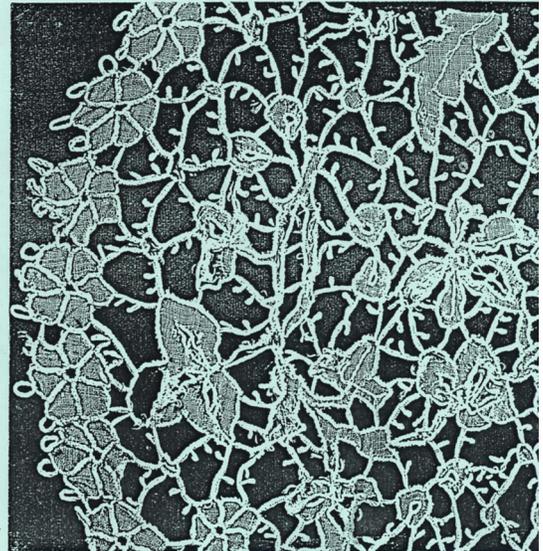
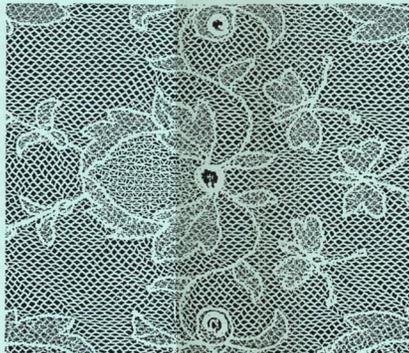
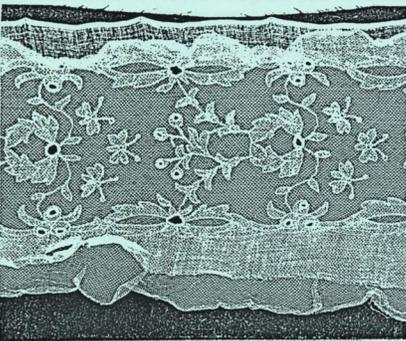
' "Wanton-eyed" women standing at their doors, and chattering with any one who would stop and talk , greatly favoured crochet-making , and it soon superseded the embroidery on net. Crochet was readily bought up, but it as quickly earned a bad name - not merely on account its artistic deficiencies, but also because of its socially demoralising effects. Godly people held the crochet-worker in horror , and so long as travelling agents bought the work freely, and enabled the demoralised crochet women to thrive, there was no doubt a justification for the outcry made against the vice which seemed inseparable from this form of industry. But the lesson has not perhaps been useless or too severe. Crochet-making has managed to survive a desperate period of decline and is now in a healthier state than previously. Dealers are beginning to require more careful and more artistic work, and the consequence is that the crochet-worker cannot be the heedless gossip and mischief-maker she was if she is to survive with her *métier*.'

He then went on to say that there were then many hundreds of crochet-workers around Cork, Waterford and Clones. Messrs Haywards had within the previous four years 'invented a sumptuous-looking crochet fabric of silk, which they call "Royal Irish Guipure".' This, apparently, had had the effect of lifting standards elsewhere, for in the Cork and New Ross districts the firm of Dwyer and Co had recently raised the quality of crochet. Two to three years beforehand, he had been told that the firm found it difficult to give regular employment to 60 workers, trade was bad and they had large stocks of old and poorly patterned crochets.

'Now, however, the report from this firm is that the demand for well-patterned crochet is unprecedented, and instead of sixty workers, six hundred are busily kept at work. The Americans and the French are the larger buyers of the southern Irish crochet. The collar [Fig D, p31] is one of the newer patterns for small goods produced by the thousand. The



Carrickmacross diversity Above, part of a flounce, fashioned with lawn on net, with needlerun fillings in the main motifs. The lawn is laid on the net; a cordonnet (foundation thread) is stitched through both to outline the design; where required, both lawn and net are cut away, where the net remains, needlerun fillings can be used; where both are removed, then brides and picots, or needlepoint fillings, can be used. The picoted edge is worked at the same time as the cordonnet is laid. **Below left**, a piece of Carrickmacross edging, unfinished, showing the overall design but with the lawn uncut at the edges and two large motifs unfilled. **Below right**, the same work, enlarged, showing a filled motif. **Right**, Carrickmacross guipure - a different design approach with smaller motifs, areas of lawn cut out, but needlepoint plaits and picots joining the motifs. The cordonnet and edge is laid as before. [Approx. twice original size]



pattern is merely a repetition of two forms, each of which has to be carefully wrought and shaped in order to fit its duly assigned place. In the days of degenerate crochet, (and this is not extinct in some districts) the worker made her forms or objects irregularly, and fitted them together irregularly. The ornamental qualities of the collar and the little bit of trimming [Fig E, p31] may not perhaps be high in aim, still the crochet-maker employed upon such patterns is forced to pay somewhat closer attention to her work, for carelessness would waste her labour. This disciplining of the crochet labour has been carried a good deal further in the production of elaborate and striking effects like those of the "Royal Irish Guipure" above named, which involves a certain amount of point lace stitchery in constructing the groundwork between the different crochet-made objects.'

Endeavours were being made in Dublin to improve the artistic appearance of crochet from the Clones district, Co Monaghan, where the influence of convent supervision and drawing class did not reach. In **Clones Lace** Máire Treanor makes the point that the traditions of flax spinning and linen embroidery had given the women of Clones an aptitude for handwork, and that Clones lace was less expensive to make than many other Irish laces, which required expensive base linen or net. The ball of thread would make a lot of lace, she pointed out, and the hook could be filed from a sewing needle and pushed into a wooden handle that was retained when the hook needed replacement. 'It was a very welcome industry for people who had suffered the ravages of famine.' For long after, the hooks made by hand, rather than the machine-made variety, were known as 'famine hooks'. Many influences helped the development of Clones lace following the famine, and lace schools became a feature of life in the south Ulster region as early as 1848. The women of Clones adapted Italian lace, Treanor writes, replacing ornate Italian flowers with those which grew naturally around them. Cassandra Hand, wife of the local Rev Thomas Hand, managed the lace business locally for many years until her death in 1868, after which standards began to fall as work was rushed and ill-trained lacemakers were employed. Treanor chronicles the revival of Clones lace in the latter part of the 19th century and mentions various co-operative movements, such as the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, which helped protect lacemakers and others in the west of Ireland by strengthening their demands for good prices for their work. Like other Irish laces, Clones is now extinct as an industry, but - as also with the other styles - it survives as a craft pursued for love and no longer to keep body and soul together.

'Modern Irish needlepoint,' wrote Ada Longfield, 'owes its beginning to various efforts which were made to provide work after the great failure of the potato crop.' She traced its genesis through the unravelling of a piece of Italian needlepoint at the Presentation Convent at Youghal, enabling them to open up a lace school in 1852. Youghal, she wrote, was 'a true lace in the technical sense of the term, since it is worked entirely with the needle.' At first the tendency had been to copy old Italian pieces, but new and original patterns were designed or acquired, and some new stitches added. Good craftsmanship and thread gave Youghal a high place among the Irish lace manufactures. Moreover, she continued, it was from Youghal that the making of Irish point spread to many other centres - especially to the convent schools at Kenmare, New Ross, and Killarney, and private schools - often developing distinctive characteristics at each place. At Kenmare the Convent of Poor Clares concentrated on making flat point, appliqué and guipure laces, saying that they always used linen thread, whereas cotton was occasionally used at Youghal. At the Carmelite Convent at New Ross, at first they produced cut work (in imitation of the 17th century Italian pieces), flat point and net lace; then, as the workers became more skilled, they made the heavy *gros point de Venise* - soon realising that it was too heavy for current fashion, however, and saw that they had to turn to

finer work. This was provided by some examples of old Venetian Rose point lace which, once again, were unravelled and their secrets exposed. The experiment was successful and, wrote Longfield, 'For many years, New Ross was, consequently, especially noted for its adaptations of Venetian rose point.'

Alan Cole had declared that needlepoint laces 'are, or should be, evidences of the highest lacemaking talent in Ireland. The designing of patterns is, I think, more special in character for this than for any other branch.' Most Irish needlepoint, he went on, was 'filmy and flat as compared with the substantial raised or relief lace of which as a class the *gros point de Venise* is the heaviest and boldest in character.' It was made principally at Youghal, Co Cork, and the Presentation Convent at Kenmare, Co Kerry. Youghal, under the direction of the Presentation Convent, had produced for a good many years some remarkable lace of this sort, he commented, and then went into 'critical mode' again, stating:

'But until the attention of the convent was directed to making a special study of the patterns used by the lacemakers, the ornament of the laces remained poor in style. It is now improving, and such a specimen as that in Fig F [p 39] shows marked progress. The critic conversant with canons of ornamental composition will no doubt detect passages in this specimen capable of correction and revision with advantage in procuring better effect from the abundance of ornamental forms and delicate workmanship displayed here. The design is by Sister M. Regis of the Presentation Convent. The width of the flounce itself is close upon fifteen inches.'

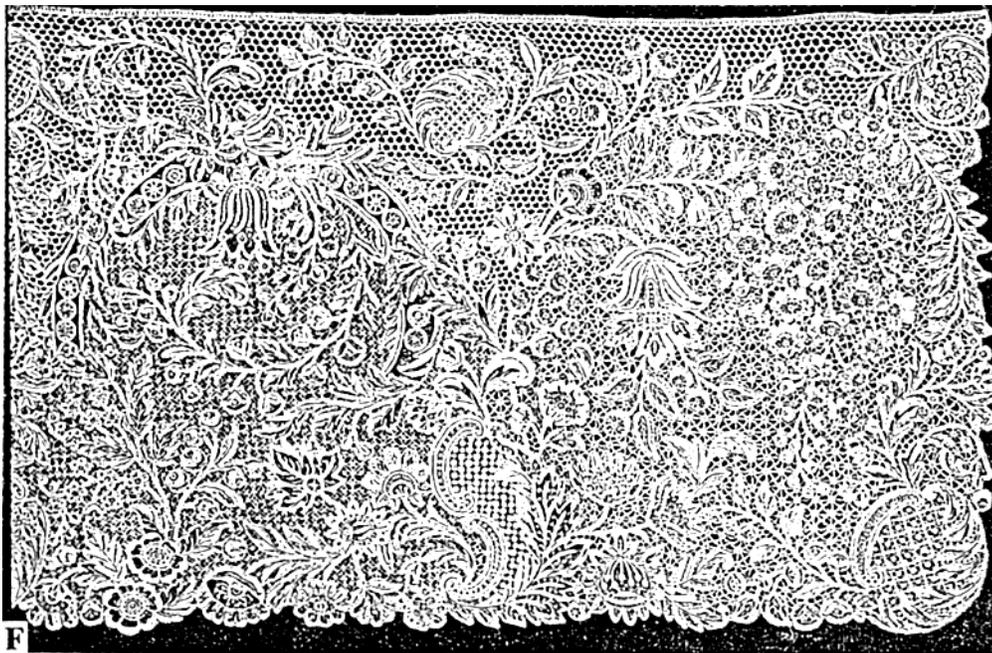
Indeed, Cole had visited the Presentation Convent on his previous visit in 1886, when he had commented that the lace there had recently declined but added that 'through the art class and the use of new patterns it is hoped that new life may be given to the industry.' He gave a lecture there to lacemakers and others who were interested.

Longfield saw things from a different slant: 'As usual,' she wrote, 'one of the greatest difficulties at all these centres has been to secure a regular market, private orders being irregular and uncertain. But here the various Exhibitions in London and Dublin, the Shows at Ballsbridge, and the efforts of the Irish Industries Association, the Board of National Education, and the Department of Agriculture were invaluable. They provided a stimulus and the necessary publicity for bringing the centres into touch with a more regular market through the big lace houses, etc. Yet even such agencies cannot do much in periods of world depression, and a consequent falling off in the demand for lace.' She added that, although Youghal was first mentioned as being one of the early and parent centres for making Irish needlepoint, it should not be forgotten that there was another contemporary and independent effort of a similar kind at Tynan in Co Armagh. The wife of the rector there, likewise inspired by some pieces of old Venetian Point, teased out its manufacture and soon Tynan workers were so successful that in 1851 the then Primate of Ireland, Lord John Beresford, purchased a large flounce and had it exhibited at the great Exhibition of that year in London. This brought many orders to Tynan but, as had happened elsewhere, when the rector died in 1865, his family left the district and 'the industry decayed almost immediately from lack of supervision and organisation.' Elsewhere, Inishmacsaint, a poor area near Loch Erne, became a centre for the production of Venetian, Spanish and Rose Point laces worked from local flax thread which were distributed for some time by a local merchant.

The convent at Kenmare was unable to provide any suitable specimen of its lace for Mr Cole to use for illustration. The fact was, he explained, 'that the local stock is sold out and lace

now in process of making there is being made to order from comparatively unimportant patterns. Kenmare was the first of the lacemaking convents to establish an art class, and during the past five years has not only manifested much energy but has also produced one or two quite remarkable bits of lace - so remarkable indeed that they would, I think, hold their own against similar pieces of either Alençon or Brussels lace. One may not however speak in the same terms of all the usual Kenmare laces. In some respects they are superior in ornamental design to ordinary Youghal laces, on the other hand these latter are rather daintier in workmanship and lightness of texture.' On his 1886 visit to the Kenmare Convent of Poor Clares, he had found what he considered a satisfactory state of things, with lace being made from new patterns only, rising demand, increased sales and profit, and work in hand to last about another year.

Though little attention is given to tatting among Irish-made laces, it had a quite significant role to play, beginning as a famine relief measure. This form of lacemaking, said Longfield, owed its origins to the 16th century Italian *macrame* work, and was a variation of the *punto a grupp*o or knotting stitch. This 'very minor branch of lace-making also owes its practical introduction to Ireland as a famine relief measure.' The knotting is done with a tatting shuttle 'and indeed is entirely composed of knots and loops on a running thread. Though not often referred to,' she went on, 'it was done in France in the 18th century where it went by the name of "Frivolité", possibly because it was an easy occupation suitable to the frivolous amusement of court ladies. It was also made in England, but was not much known in Ireland until about 1847, when Miss Sophia Ellis, one of the daughters of the rector at Ardee, started to teach it to some of the poor children around. Since it had an elegant effect and could be made rapidly and sold cheaply, the Ardee industry was quickly successful. As much as £5000 [£314,000] was earned for distribution in that district in a very few years, thus affording considerable relief at that bad time. Tatting has continued to be done in the neighbourhood, and also near Ballintubber, but unfortunately the quality of the work has not improved, and there has been little effort made to vary the designs, or make them more artistic.' That, of course, was written in the 1930s.



—PART OF A FLOUNCE OF NEEDLEPOINT LACE, MADE FROM A DESIGN BY SISTER M. REGIS, BY THE LACE SCHOOL AT THE PRESENTATION CONVENT, YOUGHAL, CO. DORK.

A further illustration from Cole's 1890 article for the English Illustrated Magazine - see page 38

The convents

As we have seen, convents in many parts of Ireland played a significant and positive role in spreading lacemaking among women and girls to help raise the level of incomes after the Famine. By their nature, of course, convents had one major advantage over the many philanthropically-minded people who, almost overnight, encouraged a bubble of local endeavour only to have it burst when they moved away or died: they had behind them a structured life and society, with traditions which, when wedded to a social effort, could not but give it added stability and continuity. Wardle makes the point, referring to the Carmelite Convent at New Ross, Co Wexford, that 'In spite of fluctuations of trade, the convent maintained the lace industry in its neighbourhood to the end of the century. Cole noted that it sold many of its products direct to a French firm.'

In preparation for this booklet, several convents were approached which Alan Cole had visited during his 1886 visit, and some very kindly replies received. In most cases there was little if any mention of Cole in their archives, while in others closure and removal to new homes had made the scent go cold. One reply made mention, referring to a closure, of 'a very destructive kind of auction where many relics of our archives came to a sad end.' Though direct links with Cole were not in evidence, the following extracts are included since they add a flavour to our narrative from today's world as well as that of a century and more ago.

Sister Philomena McCarthy wrote from St Clare's Convent, Gortamullen, Kenmare, Co Kerry: 'So few people understand lace. From 1914 the lace industry faded out and we obliged many people with our designs, etc. Many art students from the Leicester College got the use of our best designs. The industry was in abeyance from 1914 to 1948 when World War II was over. American tourists poured in then and we tried to build up a trade, but workers were accustomed to high wages in the War in England and only very few were interested in lacemaking. Having just a few good designers among the Sisters, we passed our skills on to a few interested parties and encouraged them to keep the industry alive.' Sister McCarthy, at 89, apologised that she could not help, but enclosed a copy of Cole's original article of 1890 which has been invaluable.

Sister Ursula Clarke, of the Ursuline Convent, Blackrock, Cork, regretted that 'Our archives/annals carry remarkably little information re local lacemaking, but we do have some facts. In a classroom in our Primary School (built 1827, destroyed by fire 1987) crochet classes were held, by the nuns, after school hours, for the women and girls of the village of Blackrock during, and after, the Famine Years. The inhabitants of the village here in the 19th Century were very poverty-stricken, depending for income on (seasonal) salmon fishing on the River Dee. So, the Sisters in the convent here tried to help them in this way.'

Sister Ursula said she was not aware of any mention of Alan Cole in their archives nor of any documentation. 'Historically, as if to prove the point, the classroom used for lacemaking was always referred to as "the Crochet Room" right up to its end in 1987. To this day, Sisters in the Presentation Convent, Youghal, Co Cork, engage in lacemaking. *We do not now.*' Sister Ursula also enclosed a quotation from 'The Ursulines in Cork, 1771 - 1996', which they published in 1996 and from which the following is taken:

'On the national level [i.e. in 1847], Ireland was suffering from the Famine and its

consequences. When the potato crop failed, hunger, fever and cholera were widespread. Whole families, even whole districts, were wiped out. The commercial interests of the country were reduced to a minimum. The number of boarders decreased so much that the division was reduced from three Schools to two. To replace the relinquished school, a day school was opened under the patronage of St Anne... it was not expected to prosper, nor did it. During this time of misery, not one case of either the Famine fever or cholera occurred in the house... to help the stricken families in Blackrock village, the nuns taught crochet to the women and girls. Classes were held after school hours in the Fourth Room of the Extern school, a room ever since known as the Crochet Room. From here, many pieces of beautiful lace found their way across the world. They were sold by the Blackrock women to Americans in Queenstown when big liners called at the port. The money earned was godsent and kept the wolf from many a Blackrock door.'

Sister Attracta wrote from the Presentation Convent, Killarney, to say that their Annals contained little written information, but enclosed a written note headed 'An older Sister's contribution': *'When I came to Killarney in 1940 there was a room in the school known as the Lace Room. At that time there was one skilled lacemaker, Mary Theresa Coffey. I was told that there were anything up to 10 lacemakers earlier on, and the lace was very popular with American tourists who bought supplies of lace to take back to America. There was a notice in big print over the Lace Room so that it caught the eyes of everyone travelling through New Street on their way to the cathedral.'* She added that lace provided 'a great source of income during the summer months.'

From the convent's Annals for 1878, Sister Attracta also enclosed the following note concerning an example of local benevolence. 'On 16th July, 1878, Lady Margaret Browne celebrated her 16th birthday [sic] by commencing a School of Art for the benefit of the poor children. The school room was decorated for the occasion. Beautiful specimens of work were brought from the Continent and were hung around the room by the Countess of Kenmare, Lady Margaret's mother. Lord and Lady Kenmare were also present. The needlework that the children had been doing for some time previously were examined by the Hon. Miss Doyle, and then seventeen of the best were selected to begin the new school. Lord Kenmare promised to pay the children £1 per week. There was great emulation among the workers as the proficiency of their work was examined frequently.'

A further note read: " '1896: Girls from the Industrial School were paid £50 [£3,200] for their work.' This might be Lace School."

Also enclosed was an advertisement (right), which appeared in a book, published in 1931: *'Killarney Land and Lake'*.

EXCELLENT

IRISH LACE.

∴

Mercy Convent, Killarney.

∴

Irish Needlepoint, Guipure,
Carrickmacross and Limerick
Lace, as well as Irish Crochet.

UNSURPASSED FOR DESIGN AND EXECUTION

Gives Employment to Local Girls.

Won Gold Medal St. Louis Exhibition, 1904.

From the Carmelite Monastery, New Ross, Co Wexford, came a note about the Mount Carmel Lace School, stating that, though Carmelite nuns live a contemplative life, due to the circumstances of the early 19th century, New Ross was asked to open a school for poor children to receive religious instruction and some basic education. When they left school, however, there was little employment for them. The records say that an industrial school was opened in 1833 in order to give work to local girls. The front room of the school building was a work-room, so the lacemaking area was probably housed there. The note continues: 'Needlework orders were sought and carried out, and the proceeds divided among the workers. Most likely the girls attending this school were also given lessons in crochet and lacemaking, though the oldest extant samples are rather thick and heavy. Later, under the direction of Mother Austin Dalton, the more talented girls learned to make the beautiful varieties of delicate point lace which made Mt Carmel lace school an international name.

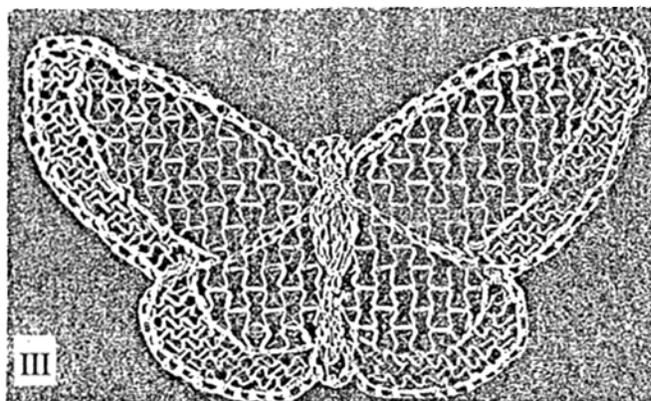
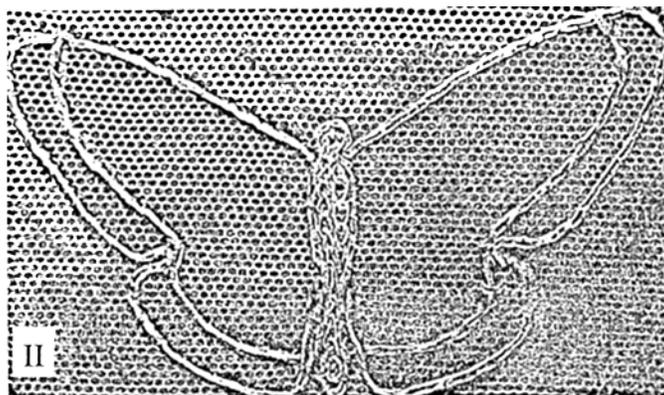
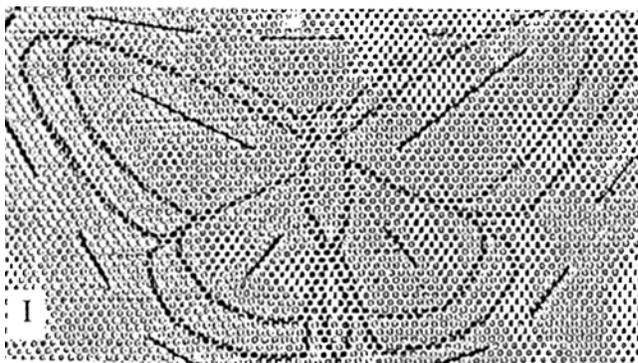
'A cutting from a local newspaper of July 1883,' it goes on, 'speaks of some 70 girls and women being trained at the school at that time; another later cutting mentions 45 - 50. Mother Dalton, a native of Ballygub, Inistiogue, rediscovered the lost art of making Venetian Point Lace through painstakingly undoing, stitch by stitch, a sample which chanced to come her way. She then designed variations such as Rose Point, Flat Point, Needle Point, etc.' Samples of her work won awards at exhibitions around the world, including London, Edinburgh, Brussels, Paris, Chicago and New York, and orders came from clients in many parts of Ireland, as well as Britain, France, New York, Boston, Buenos Aires, etc. Point Ground was supplied for Papal Coronation robes, to the British royal family and to Empress Elizabeth of Austria (wife of Emperor Franz Joseph). As late as 1963 President Kennedy visited New Ross, Mount Carmel lace was among the gifts he took home. The note concludes by saying that 'relatives of some of today's townspeople were competent lace workers, but almost all have died by now. Samples of the lace may be seen in museums round the world, and the monastery treasures some precious heirlooms. With the introduction of rayons early in the 20th century the demand for lace declined and World War One saw the end of its production.'

From the Dominican Sisters, Riverston Abbey, Dublin, came information dating from the 1860s onwards about the use of lacemaking in the education of deaf mute girls. Passages from an 'Outline History of St Mary's School for Hearing-impaired Girls, Cabra, With special reference to lacemaking' by Catherine Wall [*published in March, 1980*] explained that lacemaking provided work for many of the girls they cared for. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, it said, 'employment for deaf mutes was concentrated for the most part in trades such as tailoring and shoe-making for boys and machining for girls. Having completed their education in St Mary's, many of the girls remained at home, busily employed in running the home and looking after aged parents or bachelor brothers. Girls leaving normal school face very similar lifestyles, as job opportunities and the prevailing social influences meant that only a limited number of girls were able to follow a career. As most of their time was to be spent as "manifest housekeepers", it was vital that they should be well-trained in culinary and domestic arts. In 1863, in order to provide these girls with additional skills, it was decided to open a Vocational Department in St Mary's Institution. This development was to provide an occupation for poor girls prevented by age or other circumstances from being able to procure a livelihood in the world.'

Lacemaking, the story continued, was one of the varied and numerous arts taught in the new department: 'The revived interest in lace, the ready market for it and the aptitude displayed by the deaf mutes in this field meant that several hours each week were spent at lacemaking.' The

lace work at St Mary's, the extracts say, could be termed an industry in the sense that eventually some of it was sold, one reference showing three shillings a week being made from lace. No 'dirty, untidy, slovenly' work was allowed, and that done on a frame was covered when not being worked on. Pieces worked on small hand-held frames were kept clean by spreading a white cloth across the knees.

'Lacemaking proved to be a thriving industry, and in 1890 when the first specimen of their work was exhibited, the Royal Dublin Society awarded the workers the first prize and a silver medal. On many other occasions the deaf lacemakers secured prizes both at home and abroad



The 'Outline History of St Mary's' also contained instructions for making simple lace designs. In this case, for making a butterfly, they read: I. Net tacked over design; II. COUCHED OUTLINE - Body filled with chain stitch; III. Wings filled in with filler stitches [given elsewhere]. The convent also sent copies of medals it had won from the Royal Dublin Society between 1890 - 5. The one above reads: *St Mary's Dominican Convent, Cabra, for TAMBOUR & RUN WORK 1892*

- in Ireland and in America.' The annual reports refer to distinguished guests at the Public Examinations commenting on the beautiful lace work done by the girls.' The 38th Cabra report - dealing with the years 1886 and 1887 - records that there were 387 pupils in the Institution at the previous census. They made 'Pieces of Mountmellick and Drawn-Thread Work... 40'; 'Fancy Crochet Articles... 150'; and simply 'Pieces of Lace... 220.*' A footnote to the last item reads: The first prize and 5 silver medals were awarded by the Royal Dublin Society to the Deaf-mutes of St Mary's, Cabra, for their Lace Work; also a medal and Diploma at the Chicago Exhibition.

On the subject of deaf mutes throughout Ireland at that time, the Report gleaned the following from the 1881 Census, adding their own comment: 'The total number of mutes in Ireland on the 3rd of April 1881, was 5,136.. Of this number, 1,746 were already educated or under instruction, and 353 were incapable of being instructed. **Three thousand and thirty-seven are uneducated. [Emphasis in the original] All could have been easily instructed as they were not suffering from any infirmity which rendered them unfit for admission to institutions had they been sent to them when of the school age.'*

Interior shots...

At the end of Cole's 1890 article in *The English Illustrated Magazine*, he recounted a visit to the home of Sir John Colomb on the north shore of Kenmare Bay in October 1889 and how Lady Colomb approached the abbess at the local convent for permission 'to make photographs which might illustrate the operations of the lace school.' This was granted, and through the first of the illustrations, in Cole's words, 'we are brought as it were into the inner life of the convent, and can see nuns at work composing and drawing out patterns for the lacemakers. The lacemaking room is a more public department of the convent. Tourists on their way from

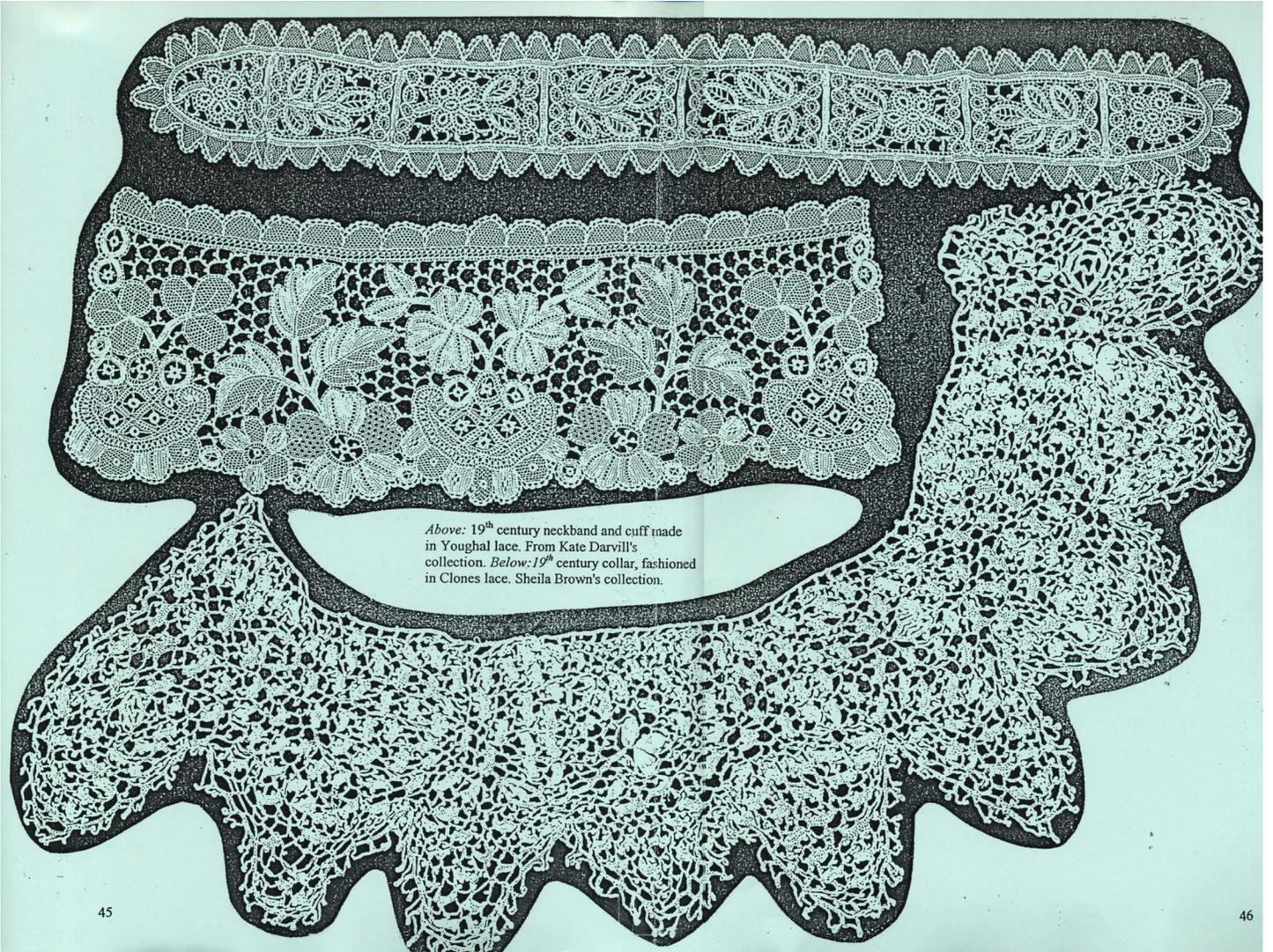


Killarney to Glengarriff, or *vice versa*, are admitted to this room. As a rule there are some fifty or sixty women and girls at work in it.' In the second photograph a group are shown making needlepoint lace under the nuns' supervision. Cole continued: 'This class of lace is a fabric slowly wrought over the face of a piece of stout linen or parchment on to which an outline of the pattern has been carefully transferred. It is a species of needle embroidery done, as the French say, *à la main*, and not like the Limerick lace, in a frame.' Limerick, he continued, was much more readily produced than needlepoint lace; but the apparatus for doing it is more imposing. The third illustration [not reproduced here] represents the lacemaking



teacher and two of her pupils at work at the industrial school of the Convent of Mercy, Golden Bridge, Dublin. The fourth illustration [below] shows 'a group of industrial school children engaged in making little pillow lace edgings and insertions generally known as *torchon*, of which great quantities are more skilfully made in the Auvergne and other parts of France and Belgium, by women and girls who are born lacemakers, and are the descendants of generations of lacemakers.'





Above: 19th century neckband and cuff made in Youghal lace. From Kate Darvill's collection. Below: 19th century collar, fashioned in Clones lace. Sheila Brown's collection.

Conclusion

It is paradoxical that some Irish lace styles might never have been born, and others not developed to their eventual full beauty, had it not been for one of the world's most terrible disasters: the Potato Famine of 1845-6-7 or, as many Irish people call it, *The Great Starvation*. We have looked briefly at its effect and physical impact on Irish society, and it ill-behoves someone from 'across the water' to speculate further. But, coming fresh to the history of lace in Ireland, it seems foolish to imagine that one had no effect on the other.

Whether Cole felt in any way constrained from speculating too deeply about the impact of an event which was still very much alive in people's memories - and certainly that of the Establishment - it does seem a little surprising that, in a masterly *tour d'horizon* of Irish lacemaking in the 19th century, he had so little to say about the social impact of an event which took the lives of at least a million people, left masses traumatised, denuded whole localities of human habitation, and left people in such a sad state that great numbers left their beautiful land and took their chance in foreign climes.

He did not, in his 1890 article at least, attempt to assess the impact of all this on Irish lacemaking though he must have sensed that it had destroyed for many years the confidence the Irish people needed to go forward to build a firmly-based lace industry, among many other things. At times he appears critical when, if a local benefactor moved away or died, this resulted in the collapse of lacemaking in the area.

When he said that it might be unfair to compare the development of the Irish industry with those in Continental countries, with centuries-old traditions and established styles and trade outlets, he clearly had in mind the contrasting Irish situation where its roots were shallower and there was little or no tradition to fall back or build on. But, though he was correct in saying that any other comparison would not serve to put the Irish situation in proper perspective, he must surely have sensed that Ireland was a society with its heart wrung out by the famine and the social horror which attended it. Redcliffe Salaman's comment that, in 1846, when the luxuriant-seeming fields fell victim to the disease once more '*This final calamity broke what spirit was left in the people,*' should, I believe, be taken into account in any evaluation of lacemaking in Ireland in those days.

The second half of the 19th century was not kind to hand-made lacemaking anywhere. Devon lace, which Cole also did much to try and help during those years, together with the East Midlands industry, suffered both from the vicissitudes of fashion and from the tremendous competition offered by the Nottingham machine lace industry, producing very beautiful examples of all manner of laces but at a fraction of the cost of the hand-made product.

It would be fruitless and pointless to try to compare the quality, beauty or style of, say, Devon lace with that of Clones, Bucks Point with Carrickmacross, etc, but in comparing the development of the industries which produced them, account has to be taken of the historical circumstances in which the various industries operated.

While it is true that, certainly by the outset of the First World War, hand-made lacemaking as an industry had all but died in Ireland, that is not a reflection on the strength of the Irish people's love of the craft or skill at producing its many varieties. The same can be said of

lacemaking throughout the British Isles. Irish lacemaking was certainly alive in 1911. In that year the **Bucks Cottage Workers' Agency** produced a catalogue [23] of its lace wares, with a vast array of items ranging from lace edgings to parasols. Of some 115 pages of illustrated lace items, no fewer than 12 of them were devoted to Irish-made lace. *There are now over 100 Irish Peasant Girls connected with the Bucks Cottage Workers' Agency,* the Agency informed its customers, *'and some beautiful specimens of Irish Hand-made Laces may be seen.'*

The agency's *raison d'être* is interesting in our context:

'The founding of the Agency was the outcome of a dire need felt for an institution that would collect and market the productions of the village women, therefore ensuring for them immediate remuneration for their efforts, to add to their husbands' scanty income. Previously, Cottage Lace-makers were never certain of being able to dispose of their lace even when made, and this state of things naturally resulted in the industry being considerably curtailed; many workers being forced to lay aside their pillows.'

B. C. W. A. :: :: Olney, Bucks., England

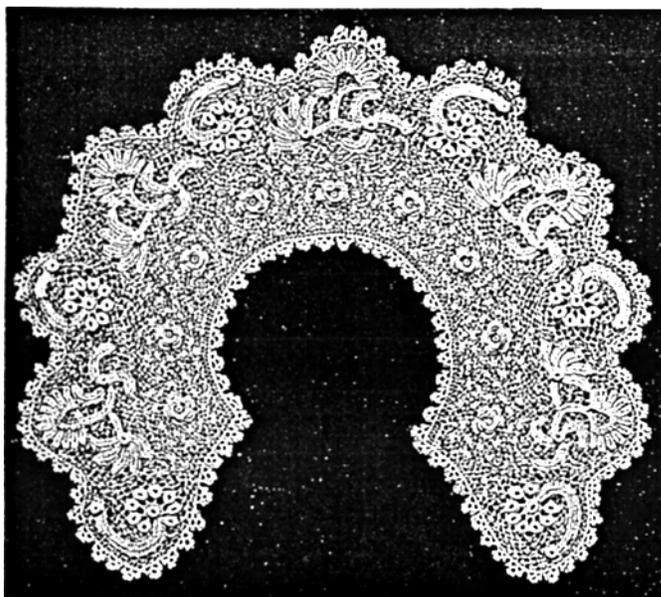


From our
— Irish —
Workers.

There are now over 100 Irish Peasant Girls connected with the Bucks. Cottage Workers' Agency, and some beautiful specimens of Irish Hand-made Laces may be seen.



Set. Neck-band and Cuffs, Irish Crochet. Price 8/9 and 9/6 the set or \$2.20 and \$2.35 the set.



Collar. Irish Crochet. 5¼ inches deep. Price 10/3 and 11/6 each, or \$2.55 and \$3.00 each.

Do not cut out illustration, but when ordering the page number and name of article are quite sufficient particulars.

It went on to say that, being quite self-supporting, 'it relieves the workers from any feeling of injured self-respect, or in any way encroaching on their independence.' An article in the **Agriculture Economist and Horticultural Review**, which it quoted and had presumably appeared at about the same time, said that the Agency 'is engaged in that best of all forms of philanthropy - helping people to help themselves,' adding that, when agricultural wages were 14s a week the lacemakers were able to earn between 5s and 10s - a not inconsiderable addition to the family purse. Cole might well have applauded!

The point here, though, is that this agency,

which lasted until 1940, would hardly have been conceivable in Ireland. It rested on a considerable lacemaking tradition and settled community production going back for generations - carrying a variety of East Midland laces together with Honiton. How different this was from the Irish experience - the cruelty and havoc of the Famine, the sudden growth of laces as an anti-starvation measure, and their [mostly] short-lived nature through dependence on philanthropy which did not have the solid philosophical base of such as the Bucks Agency.

For all the great road-blocks in their historical path, Irish laces have given the world distinctive styles which have enriched it greatly. While England and Continental Europe have contributed a great array of bobbin and needlelaces, Ireland adopted and gave its own identity to crochet and many needle-laces, renowned wherever there are people who admire and appreciate lace beauty, fineness and intricacy.

Nor, of course, is it a dead art. As in England and elsewhere, so in Ireland, the past 20 and more years have seen a renaissance of it as a hobby which has produced lacemakers young and old and brought them together in thoroughgoing organisations [24], inspired scores of books, added a mass of beauty to the treasure house that is the lace world, and revitalised a tradition which continues to develop and give pleasure to countless people.



Notes

1. **Report to the Department of Science and Art of the Committee of Council on Education by Alan S Cole: 'IRISH LACE; Report Upon visits to convents, classes, and schools where lacemaking and designing for lace are taught, as well as upon steps taken for assisting the development of the Lace Industry in Ireland, with Illustrations of specimens of recently produced laces'** LONDON, January 1887
2. **English Illustrated Magazine**, Vol VII, No 81. June 1890
3. **Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework**, S.F.A.Caulfield, Vol I Dover Publications, 1972. Republication of the second [1887] edition
4. **Carrickmacross Lace**, Irish Embroidered Net Lace, Nellie Ó Cleirigh, Dryad Press, London, 1985
5. **Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry & Selected Prose and Letters** Nonesuch Press, London 1938
6. **The Dublin Society, Dublin**, was founded in 1731 'for the Advancement of Agriculture, Arts, Science and Industry in Ireland.' **The Royal Dublin Society 1731 - 1981 (eds Meenan & Clarke)** appeared in 1981 to celebrate its 250th anniversary
7. **Catalogue to the Collection of Lace**, Ada K. Longfield, M.A., LL.B., National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, 1936
8. **The up-to-date values of amounts of money from past years, given in square brackets, are by kind permission of the author:** 'John J. McCusker, "Comparing the purchasing power of Money in Great Britain from 1264 to Any Other Year Including the Present." Economic History Services, 2001, URZ: <http://www.eh.net/hmit/ppowerbp/>
9. **History of Lace**, Mrs Bury Palliser, Sampson Low, Marston & Co, London 1902. 4th Edition
10. **Bishop George Berkeley, 1685-1753**. Philosopher, educated Trinity College, Dublin
11. **Lásadóireacht - A Practical Workbook for Carrickmacross Lace**, Mary Shields, Wee-Hills, Cootehill, Co Cavan, Ireland. 1992. ISBN 0-9519910-0-0. Companion volume 0-9519910-1-9
12. **Irish Crochet Lace**, Eithne d'Arcy. The Dolmen Press, Mountrath, Ireland. ISBN 0 85105 421 8 and Dryad Press 0 8521 9615 6. 1985
13. **Techniques of Crocheted & Openwork Lace**, Ena Maidens. Batsford 1982. ISBN 0 7134 2568 7
14. **Clones Lace**, The Story & Patterns of an Irish Crochet, Máire Treanor. Mercier Press, Cork and Dublin, 2002. ISBN 1 85635 383 4
15. **The Guild of Irish Lacemakers**. Hon Sec: Miss Imelda Kelleher, 9 Beechfield Close, Walkinstown, Dublin 12. 00353 14508233
16. **Victorian Lace**, Patricia Wardle. Ruth Bean, 1982. ISBN 0 903585 13 8
17. **Technique of Irish Crochet Lace**, Ena Maidens, Batsford 1986
18. **The History & Social Influence of the Potato**, Redcliffe N. Salaman, Cambridge University Press 1949
19. **Seeds of Change**, Henry Hobhouse. Sidgwick & Jackson, London 1985. ISBN 0 283 99226 3
20. **Art Journal** - no further information available at present as to this periodical

- 21 **The Honiton Lace Industry in 1887**, Alan Brown. ISBN 0 9535206 5 See page 2
- 22 Those interested in this particular aspect may like to refer to two books in particular: *Renaissance Patterns for Lace, Embroidery and Needlepoint*, by Federico Vinciolo, ISBN 0-486-22438-4 and *Pattern Book of Renaissance Lace*, by Cesare Vecellio, ISBN 0-486-25828-9 - both available from Dover Books, 10 Orange St, London, WC2H 7EG
- 23 **Bucks Cottage Workers' Agency**. Catalogue for 1911, facsimile reproduction by the Luton Museum and Art Gallery, 1988
- 24 **These include:** The Lace Guild, The Hollies, 53 Audnum, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 4AE 01384 390739. Oidfa [International Bobbin and Needle Lace Organisation]. Contact: Tamara Goulding, Nonsuch Too, 27, Ollands Road, Reepham, Norfolk, NR10 4EL Tel: 01603 870249. Lacemakers Circle, Correspondence to: 19 Canford Court, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 7AH. 01234 407337



LACE-MAKING IN AN IRISH COTTAGE