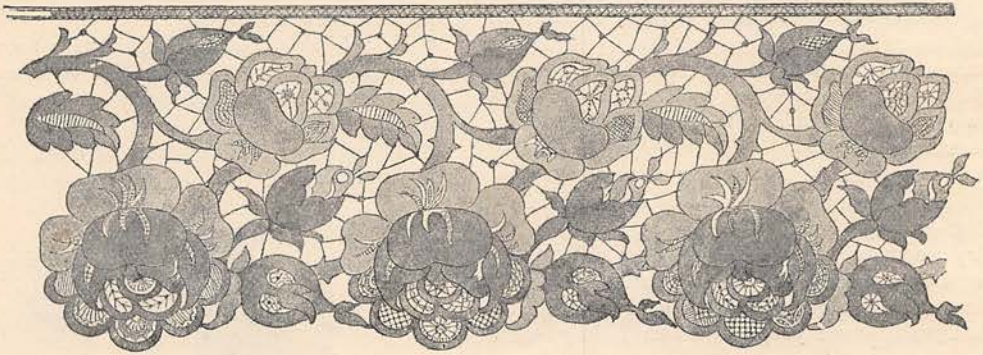
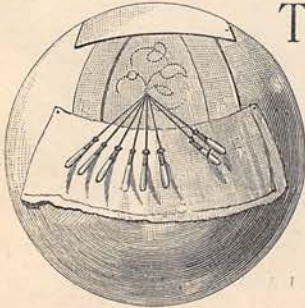


WITH THE DEVONSHIRE LACE-MAKERS.



"ROSE POINT."



LACE PILLOW.

THE beautiful fabric for which Devonshire is so justly famous is essentially a cottage industry. Those who visit the "Royal British Lace Manufactory" in the Cathedral Yard at Exeter with the idea of seeing something of the process of making are doomed to disappointment. Nothing is to be

seen except beautiful lengths of finished work, and we look in vain for the rows of workers, with their pillows, which our mind's eye, that "bliss of solitude," had so vividly depicted.

All the Exeter lace is made by workers in their own homes, under the superintendence of Miss Herbert, who succeeded the late Mrs. Treadwin. Both these ladies have personally taught many of their poor workers, but a lace school has not been established, though Miss Herbert would greatly like to start one at Exeter.

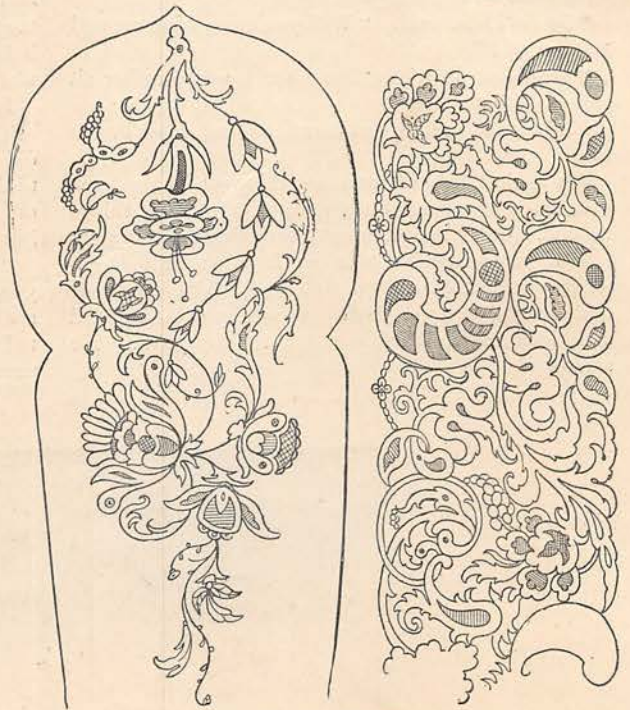
A thing of beauty when made, the whole process of lace-making is artistic, from the very pillow upon which the threads are cunningly wrought.

Among West country sights, what picture is so charming as that of a lace-worker seated at her cottage door hard at work, surrounded by the tall lilies and masses of roses which Devonshire air brings in profusion? Perhaps we have to blame this same lethargic air for the stand-still of the trade for so many years during which the workers, instead of being anxious to learn more and do better, sank into a kind of indolence; and while they persistently stuck to their old methods and patterns, looked with suspicion

and dislike upon any attempt to help and improve, meanwhile, and flooded the market with cheap bad work, and nearly ruined their trade.

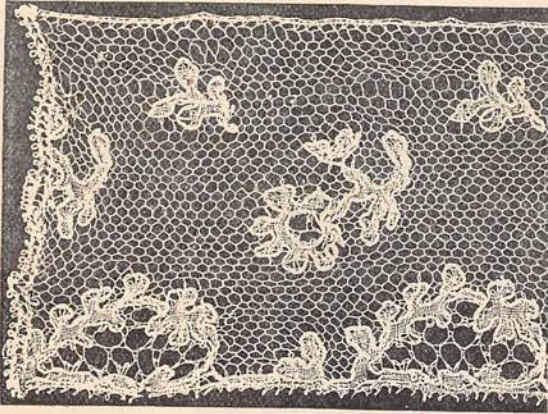
English buyers turned in disgust to France and Italy, and the country was all the poorer.

Fortunately, before lace-making became a lost art a revival set in. The workers understand their trade now, as a half-made spray showed me. It was simply perfect in stitch and design, and it ought to be perfection, for it was going to be worn by the highest in the land—the friend who has never failed the women of Devon since the days of long ago, when a few



EXETER AND TROLLY.

fisherwomen belonging to the small hamlet of Beer sang over their work as they sat on the shore, and wrought with exquisite fineness the wedding-dress for our queen; which same dress was worn by the Princess Beatrice upon her marriage day.



ANCIENT HONITON.

The lace ordered for Her Majesty is Honiton Point—the modern Honiton, as it is called—made on a machine-made net. We can tell the old Honiton lace in an instant by noticing the irregularity of the ground. It was impossible when the net was made by hand to make every hole the same size, and the labour was in those days, of course, very much greater.

Interesting as the history of lace is, we can hardly enter upon it here, though we must record that lace-workers are still living who remember when men used the bobbins. They were glad to earn something in their spare hours, though in those days the workers were rarely paid in money, and often got nothing but a grocery ticket, value a few pence, for many hours' work. The Trolley lace, which is very beautiful, was at one time made largely by men.

The Exeter manufactory does not confine itself to Honiton lace. They have reproduced many antique laces, Mrs. Treadwin never resting till she felt her *atelier* could equal those of Brussels and Paris.

Devonshire workers can now supply "Spanish" and "Venetian," and ancient Point, and Flemish, and Greek; while they also restore many priceless heirlooms.

The three laces for which the manufactory is specially renowned are the "Honiton," the "Vandyke Point," and the "Exeter;" this last is something like "Point de Venise," but with a difference which gives it its special value. No lace collection is now perfect without its specimen of Exeter lace.

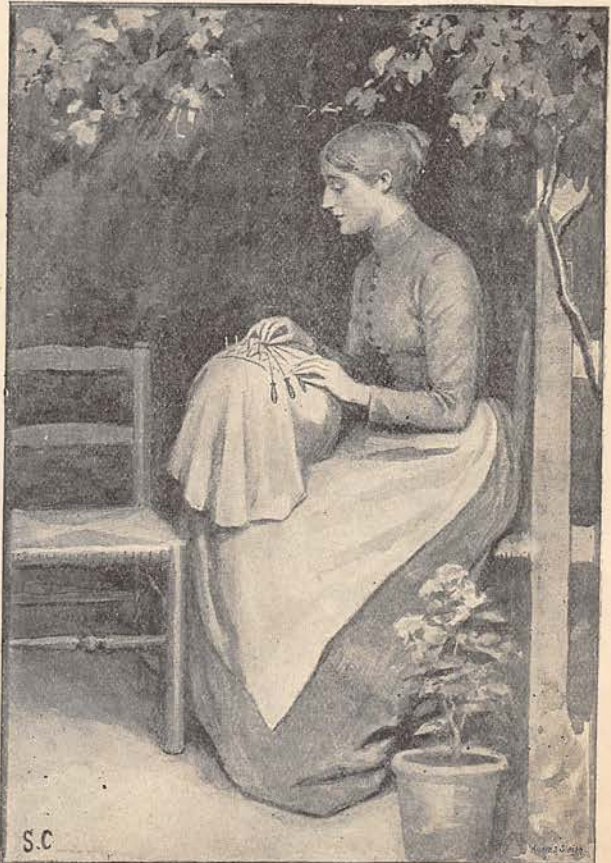
The great advantage which the workers for the Exeter manufactory enjoy is that they are

taught how to work well—only work which is perfectly done being taken. They also have the benefit of first-rate designs, which is an inestimable boon. A poor woman working independently will pull and prick her pattern quite out of its original shape. She has no idea of drawing, and as she cannot tell where it is wrong, she gets into the habit of making ugly inartistic sprays, because she possesses neither the perception of their grotesqueness nor the money to pay for having them re-drawn:

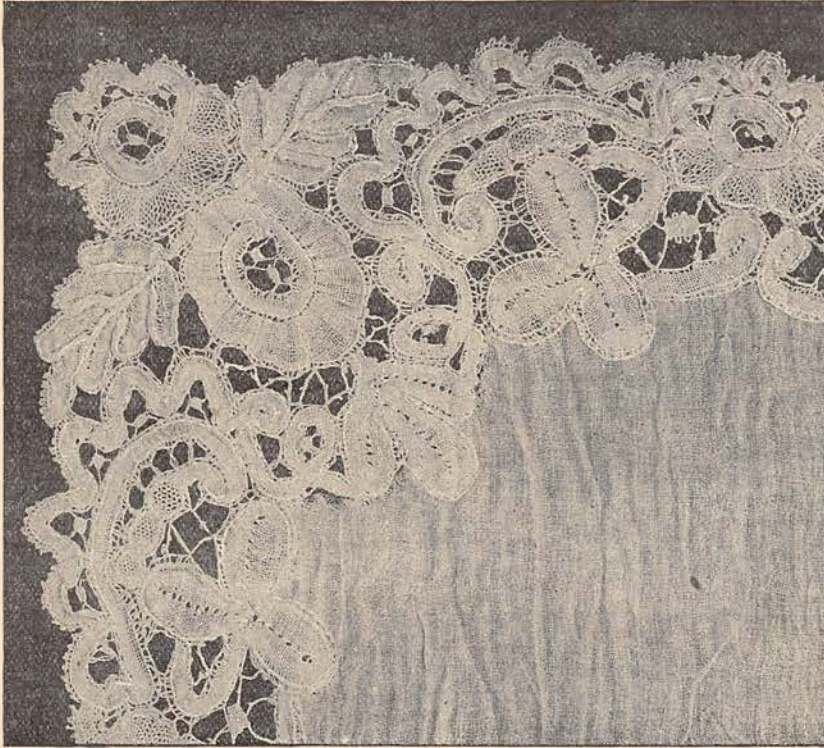
Many years ago Mrs. Treadwin, keen on her work, started on a journey to Paris to look for an artist to design a very beautiful flounce. Fortunately, she stopped half-way in London, where, taking the advice of an art critic, she offered a prize for the design she wanted to the students of Somerset House.

The successful design was so excellent that it is illustrated in Mr. Digby Watts's "Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century"; while the whole set of drawings sent in were so first-rate, that Mrs. Treadwin gave up the idea of Paris studios, feeling that England was well able to supply all that she required; while at the present time her lace-workers take a great pride and pleasure in the beautiful patterns, many of which are made for the firm by Mr. George Townsend, of Exeter.

Devonshire lace has indeed returned to its original beauty, and has added many new excellences. The



LACE-MAKER AT WORK.



MODERN HONITON.

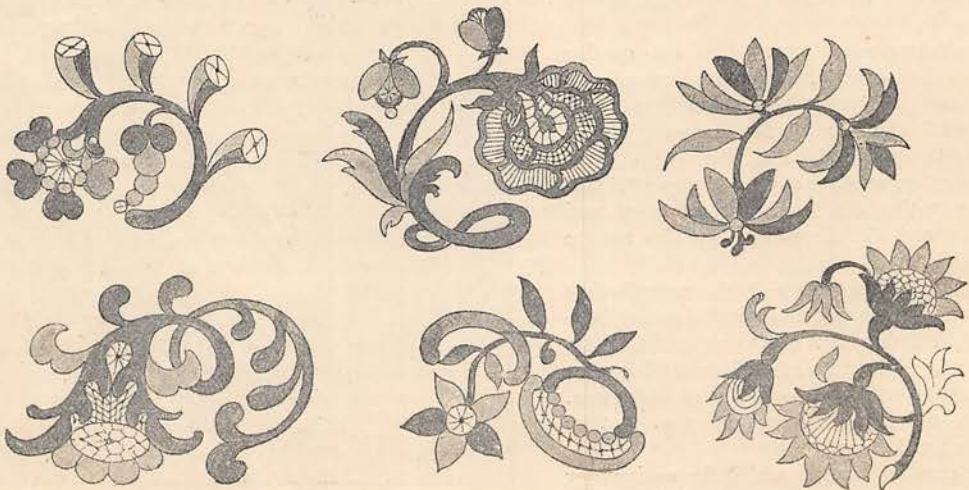
workers themselves are now well paid, and no longer break their poor backs by stooping, for the pillows are raised high in the air, which makes the work much easier.

A great part of this revival is due to the exertions of the employers of labour. The London and Continental Exhibitions have also given a great impetus to the industry, which has tended towards improvement in style and design, while local and county societies have offered prizes for good work and well-drawn patterns.

English ladies have at last awakened to the fact that

capable workers to carry them out. There are few women to whom lace is not precious, and those who can afford to indulge the taste will do well if they turn to our native industries. They will find a large variety of choice work in Ireland, Devonshire, Nottingham, Buckinghamshire, and the Isle of Wight; and while gratifying their artistic perceptions, they will have the comfort of knowing that they are helping to make life more easy to a large number of their fellow-countrywomen.

EDITH LONG FOX.



HONITON SPRAYS.

good and beautiful fabrics can be made in our native country; and only a few months ago the Princess Mary of Teck set an example which others would do well to follow, by ordering only articles of home manufacture for the trousseau of her daughter.

Many indeed were the lavish commendations passed on the beautiful bride by the workers who fashioned the buds and roses of the lovely Honiton Point ordered for her trousseau; while they seemed to weave pleasure and goodwill with the fairy lightness of the Cupids and flowers in the lovely reproduction of old Flemish garniture and flounce, which was conspicuous among the wedding presents. Orders flow in from all parts of the world, and the only difficulty is to get