



(Photo by E. H. Micklewood)

The Dredge aboard

aboard the little steamer, when the otter-trawl is sent to the bottom for such treasures, mainly flat fish and crustaceans, as it may perchance bring to the surface for the eye of science, or, more important still, the tow-net scours various depths, mostly near the surface, for specimens of the floating food, the "plankton," on the careful analysis of which depends the solution of so many of the problems that continue, though in diminishing force, to confront the marine biologist.

In both its structure and manipulation this plankton-net is a delicate piece of work, and the pattern in use at Plymouth gives, I understand, results as satisfactory as any employed elsewhere. I noticed a very elaborate plankton-net in the Prince of Monaco's elegant little pavilion at the Paris Exhibition, but it is said—though I cannot vouch for the truth of this—that that enthusiastic inquisitor of the ocean's secrets is by no means satisfied with its working.

It is impossible, in a short paper like the present, to give any adequate idea of the scope of work undertaken by the Association since its inception seven years ago. That might be better acquired from a glance at its published literature, which embraces both

economic and biological works, the former ranging over the food, development and migrations of the chief food fishes; while under the second head may be found morphological contributions, for the most part on the lowest invertebrate forms. A useful summary of these books and papers was published in a recent number of the Association's Journal.

F. G. AFLALO.

### The Biddenham Cake

WHEN service is over on the afternoon of Easter Sunday a pleasant custom is annually observed in the little village of Biddenham in Kent when a distribution of bread, cheese, and biscuits, termed the Biddenham cake, is made at a place locally known as the "Old Workhouse." The origin of the distribution dates back to the middle of the twelfth century, and is some-



(Photo by E. H. Micklewood)

Surface Spoils

what legendary but none the less interesting. Two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst, who, it is stated, were born in the year 1100 at Biddenham, and who died at the same place some thirty-four years later, are alleged to have bequeathed by their will to the churchwardens of their native parish, henceforward and for ever, some twenty acres of land for the purpose of providing a certain number of cakes with bread and cheese to



The Biddenham Cake, showing the two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst, who, legend says, bequeathed a certain sum of money to provide cakes for the Biddenhamites, at Easter. By this means the sisters hoped to perpetuate their memory

be distributed to the parishioners who should come after them with the view of perpetuating their conjoint memory. Elizabeth and Mary, according to the accounts handed down to posterity, were a devoted couple; wherever Elizabeth went Mary was sure to go and *vice versa*, so when after thirty-four years of close companionship Mary (or Elizabeth) elected to proceed hence to a better world Elizabeth (or Mary) announced her intention of immediately following her sister. Some six hours later she started.

It was only natural, therefore, that a couple so attached should wish to perpetuate their conjoint memory, and without doubt no more attached sisters than Elizabeth and Mary ever lived—they were indeed joined like the twins of Siam at the hips and shoulders, as all can see who obtain a Biddenham biscuit, for upon the same they appear in bas-relief.

It was unfortunate for this pleasant tale of Mary and Elizabeth and their close alliance that the one time Master of Corsham Hospital, Edward Hasted, inquired into the matter and published the result in his "History of Kent" (1799); unfortunate because he throws cold water on the "vulgar tradition . . . that the figures on the cake represented the donors of the gift." "The truth," he avers, "seems to be that it was the gift of two maidens of the name of Preston, and that the print of the women on the cakes has taken place only within these fifty years, and was made to represent two poor widows as the general objects of a charitable benefaction."

For the sake of the legend we would that Hasted's ultimatum could be proved untrue, but there appears to be no doubt that what the artist who designed the "print" or die lacked in powers of portraiture, succeeding generations of Biddenhamites supplied in imagination.

According to the antiquarian the twenty acres are known as Bread and Cheese Land and were divided into five parcels. In Hasted's day six hundred cakes bearing the strange impression of the twi—two poor widows, were distributed, together with two hundred and seventy loaves, weighing three and a half pounds each, and two hundred and seventy doles of cheese of one and a half pounds. Perhaps the artist who designed the "print" for the cake, partook too heartily of the cheese—there is something of the nightmare in his design.

Poor Mary and poor Elizabeth, though no cup was provided by the maidens Preston in which your fellow parishioners could drink to your memory (false though it may be), yet shall that memory be ever in their hearts as long as Biddenhamites remain to assimilate the biscuit.