

Bath and Shirley School, the oldest lace school in Ireland. The work prospered apace. In 1846 the sad famine year, Carrickmacross became the centre of the industry, giving its name to the lace.

Carrickmacross lace is of two kinds, appliqué and guipure. In the first the pattern is cut from cambric and applied to net with point stitches. This was the lace which Mrs. Grey taught her servant to make. There is much difference of opinion regarding its origin, some claiming Persia, others India, as its cradle; while the old Florentine writer Vasari tells us that it was invented by Botticelli. Certain it is that an enormous quantity of it was to be found in Italy during the seventeenth century.

Guipure lace is made by tracing a design with thread on cambric. The design is joined by point stitches, and the superfluous parts are cut away. The pattern is then connected by 'brides' or 'picots,' further supplemented in the richer pieces of work by small 'pearls' or 'loops' springing from the 'brides.' The making of guipure lace was added to the older appliqué lace industry of the famine year.

Carrickmacross lace is exceeding rich and beautiful; of a somewhat heavier make than the Youghal lace, it has been called the 'king of Irish laces.' Exquisite specimens are made at the Convent of St. Louis, Carrickmacross.

Irish Crochet.

Once again let us turn back the pages of the years to the tear-stained one of 1846; Mother Smyth, in the Youghal Convent, is anxiously considering how to relieve the misery around her. And in another corner of the same sunny Southern country another nun, with heavy heart, is pondering over the same fateful question. There was then, as there is now, a convent of Ursulines at Blackrock, County Cork. A fair spot by 'the pleasant waters of the River Lee,' removed from the smoke and noise of busy cities. But here, too, the cries of the starving broke the stillness of cloister calm, filling another gentle heart with pain and longing to relieve. This time there was no lovely lace from far-off Italy to serve as inspiration and model. For all inspirations the Ursuline Sister had but an ordinary crochet needle, and for model nothing but what her own rich artistic imagination could devise. In her hands the commonplace crochet needle became as a fairy instrument capable of producing lace which to-day is universally acknowledged as unique in its beauty. Irish crochet, or, as the Parisians call it, 'Irish point,' is a veritable triumph of Irish artistic skill, owing its origin to no foreign source, but purely and simply the rich fancy of Irish brains woven into shape by Irish fingers. Looking at some of these exquisite creations, one can scarcely realise that they are produced by a crochet needle. Irish crochet is in great demand amongst the leaders of fashion in Paris, as we said before; it is termed 'Point d'Irlande.' The crochet industry at the present day has been brought to the highest degree of perfection, both as regards designs and execution. Foreign lace manufacturers tell us that it is quite impossible to imitate Irish crochet.

Limerick and Rose Point.

Limerick lace is another lovely Irish lace, which of late years has been brought to great perfection. It somewhat resembles Brussels lace, and is exquisitely light and graceful in appearance. There are two kinds—'run' and 'tambour'—both consisting of embroidery on net. Although Limerick is the home of the industry, it having been introduced there in 1829 by a Mr. Walker, the lace is made in various other parts of Ireland.

Some of the loveliest specimens of Limerick lace are made in the Convent School for Deaf and Dumb at Cabra, County Dublin. There is a strange pathos in beholding these girls, so set apart from their fellow-creatures by their affliction, producing with their needle these things of loveliness, destined to adorn the gay butterflies of fashion. It would be impossible to describe the beauty of some of the lace worked by these poor deaf mutes.

On the fair shores of Lough Erne, in the County of Fermanagh, we find girl-workers who in their own homes produce the exquisite lace known as 'Inishmacsaint Rose Point.' This fairy-like fabric is so exquisitely fine that its production is very tedious, a small square of four inches lace requiring a considerable time to execute. The girls sit outside their cottage doors working in full view of the beautiful isle which gives its name to the locality and the lace, Inishmacsaint—in English, Isle of the Sorrel Plain. This is, in truth, a most rare and beautiful lace, resembling Venetian rose point, on which it was at first modelled. It is worked with the needle, and has no foundation of braid. Inishmacsaint lace is extremely rich, the pattern being raised in high relief, which causes a splendid effect. Here, again, we owe the lovely work to the gloomy days of the famine year. Mrs. Maclean, wife of the Rector of Tynan, in the County Armagh, in her tender-hearted charity and desire to help the poor at her gates, gathered

a class of girls round her and taught them the mysteries of lace-making. The model was a piece of Venetian rose point. It was slow work at first, but at last the intricacies were mastered. The industry prospered amazingly, and in 1865 the centre of the work was removed to Inishmacsaint. Experts who have visited the Murano School of Lace in Venice declare that Inishmacsaint lace is far finer and more beautiful than modern Venetian rose point. The Irish product is quite as lovely as the precious old Venetian point, and can be had for about one-third of the cost.

Very beautiful needle point, both flat and raised, is made in the Convent of Poor Clares, and also in the Presentation Convent, Killarney.

It would be almost impossible to estimate fully the importance of the Irish lace industry. North, south, all over the land, the lace centres provide hundreds with the means of earning a comfortable livelihood. Homes otherwise bare and desolate, lacking the very necessaries of life, are rendered bright and prosperous. Many an aged parent owes the comforts of his or her declining years to Irish lace. Happiness sits beside many a cottage fireside, which otherwise would be cheerless, and simple comforts hitherto unknown are now within the reach of the industrious worker. Can wealth be better employed than in fostering such an industry by the purchase of the lovely and precious work? 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' Never were the poet's words better exemplified than in the case of Irish lace. Truly, it is 'a joy for ever.' The fashionable beauty who drapes her form with this lovely fabric may indulge in the sweet reflection that while adding to her charms she is at the same time clothing her soul with that garment of charity which we are told 'covers a multitude of sins.' If ever extravagance in dress might be condoned, it is surely when it takes the form of Irish lace.

H.A.C.B. SOCIETY

BIENNIAL MEETING

The fifth biennial meeting of the Executive Directory and Interstate Deputies of the H.A.C.B. Society was opened in Hobart on May 13, Bro. D. F. Brazel (chief president) in the chair. The other members of the Executive Directory present were Bros. J. Bradley (chief treasurer) and F. B. Keogh (corresponding secretary). The delegates included: Bros. W. H. Taylor (D.P.), R. Clerehan (D.T.), J. W. Ryan (D.S.), representing Victoria; J. L. Mullen (P.D.P.), and L. Courtney (D.P.), representing New South Wales; G. L. Murphy (D.P.), and P. F. Riley (D.S.), representing South Australia; Rev. Father P. Lynch and M. O'Dea, representing West Australia; P. J. Nerheny, representing New Zealand; and R. J. Meagher, representing Tasmania.

In welcoming Archbishop Delany (says the *Catholic Press*), the Chief President made grateful acknowledgment of the help received by the society from the Cardinal, the hierarchy, and clergy of Australia. Were it not for their co-operation and assistance, the society would not be in the excellent position it was to-day.

His Grace the Archbishop of Hobart said it gave him the greatest pleasure to be present at the deliberations, which would be of such high interest to their organisation and to the Catholics of Tasmania and other States. He feared that the actual position of the society in Tasmania would seem to be disappointing in spite of the kind words which had been said about assistance given by Bishops and priests. His Grace then went on to explain how the society had not progressed in Tasmania owing principally to the scattered nature of the Catholic population. The clergy had done all in their power to advance the interests of the society, but had not been very successful. He hoped that the presence of the delegates would galvanise the whole movement in the State, and that before long flourishing branches would be in existence throughout Tasmania.

The following cable was transmitted to the Holy Father:—

'Representatives of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society assembled at Hobart in congress submit an expression of filial devotion to our Holy Father, Pius X., and implore the Apostolic Blessing of his Holiness.'

A reply was received through Archbishop Delany from Cardinal Merry del Val, Secretary of State, as follows: 'Our Holy Father, Pius X., thanks the members of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society assembled in conference at Hobart for their cable message of filial homage, and sends them his Apostolic Benediction.'

The following resolution was unanimously carried:— 'That this biennial meeting, gathered together in Hobart from every State in Australia and New Zealand, expresses