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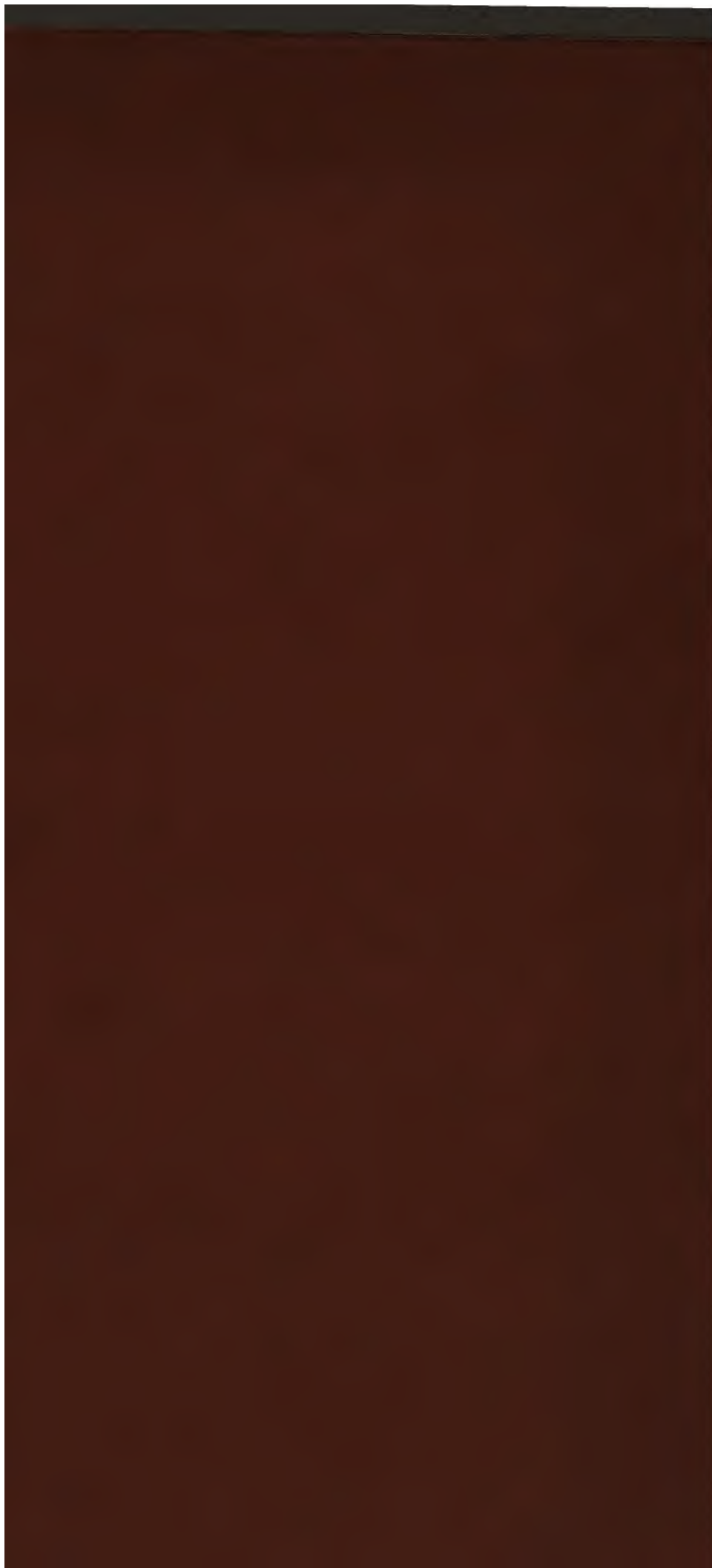
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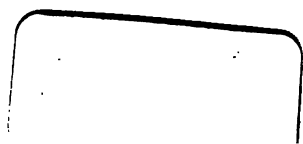
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UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

HER MAJESTY
THE QUEEN.



MANSION HOUSE

EXHIBITION, 1883.

IRISH LACE

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,
AND
A MAP SHOWING THE DISTRICTS WHERE
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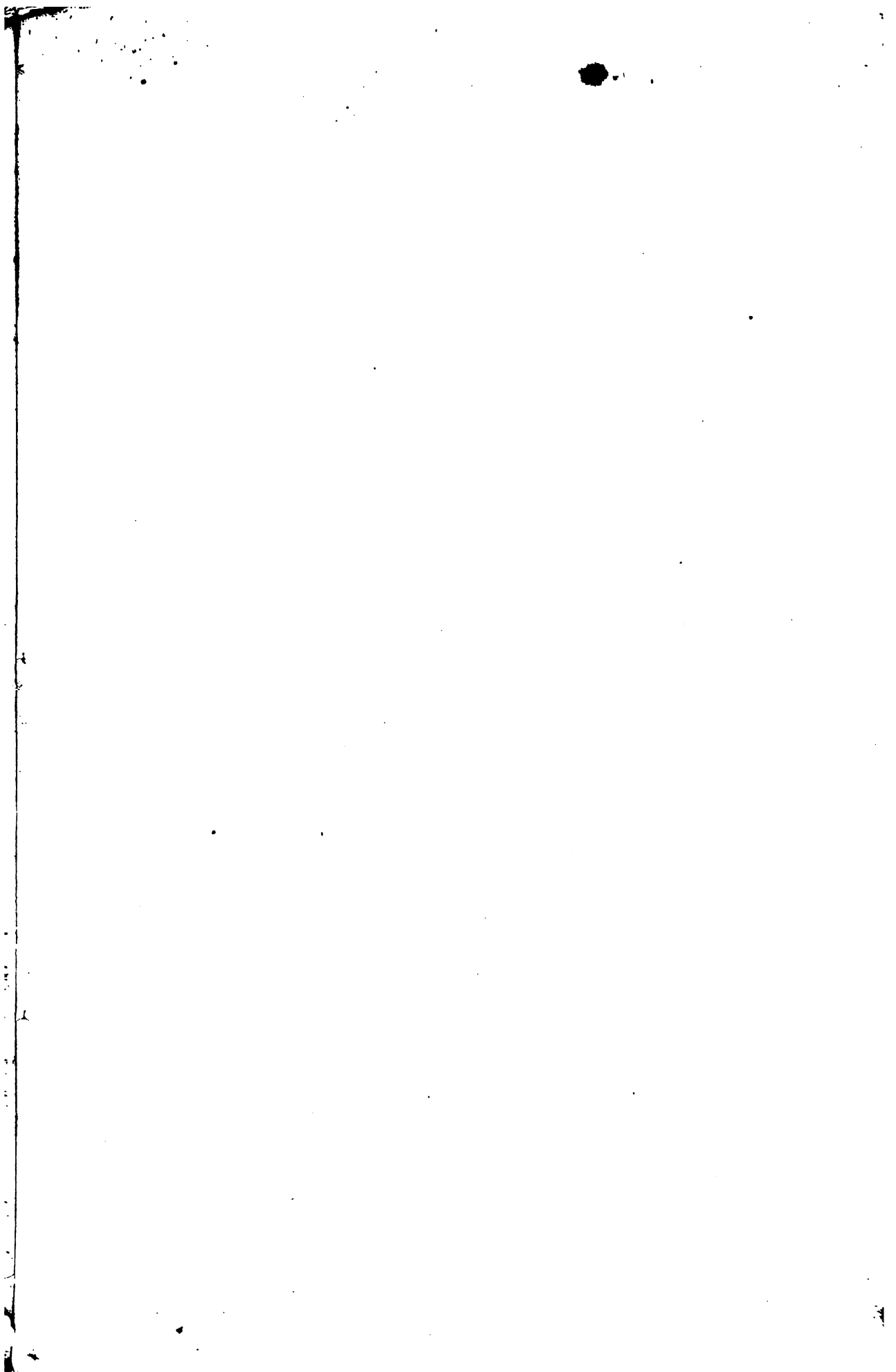
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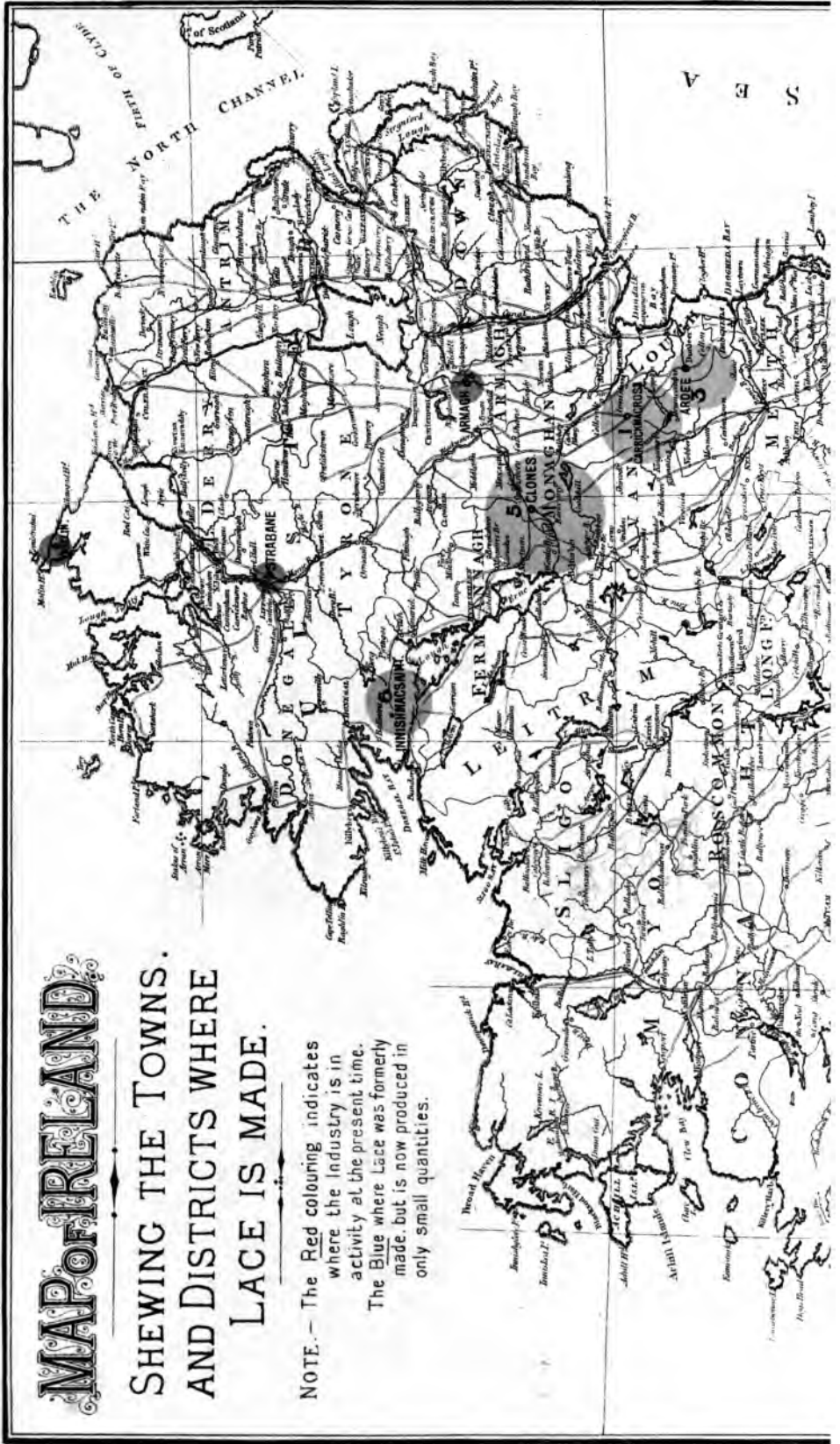
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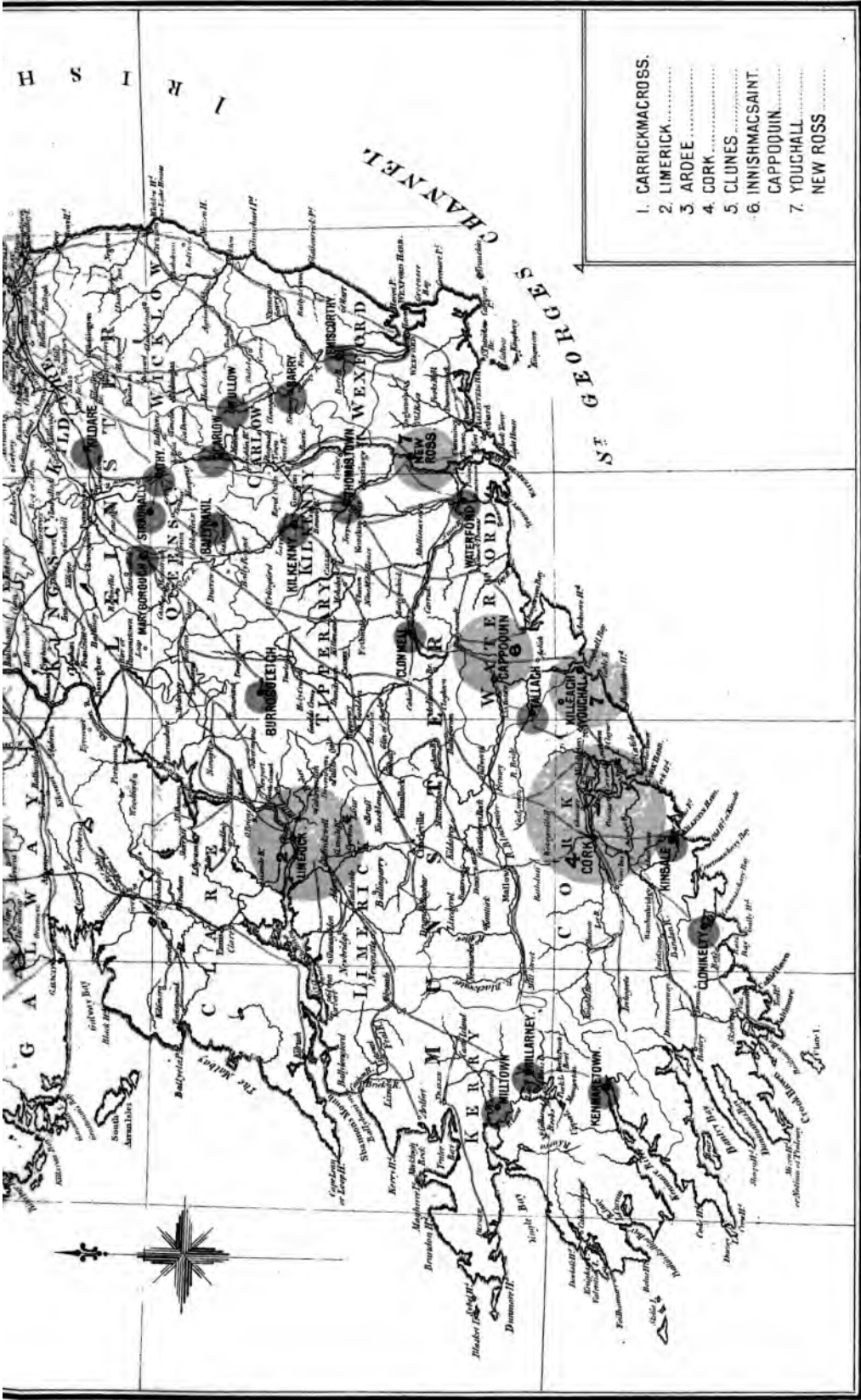


MAP OF IRELAND

SHEWING THE TOWNS,
AND DISTRICTS WHERE
LACE IS MADE.

NOTE.— The Red colouring indicates where the industry is in activity at the present time. The Blue where Lace was formerly made, but is now produced in only small quantities.





- 1. CARRICKMACROSS.
- 2. LIMERICK.
- 3. ARDEE.
- 4. CORK.
- 5. CLONES.
- 6. INNISHMACSAINT.
- 7. YOUCHALL.
- NEW ROSS

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→ † IRISH † LACE. † ←

IN former times, the term Lace was exclusively applied to art needle-work, and the making of it was considered a part of a lady's accomplishments, as well as a leisurely amusement. The skill of the hand was developed in the process as well as the artistic qualities of the mind ; and the product was used as an appendage to the dress, adorning the persons of gentlemen as well as of ladies of fashion.

The desire to wear the beautiful fabric in process of time outstripped the desire to make it. The leisurely amusement of the wealthy became an industrial employment of the poor ; and the money that was earned by such labour gave a great impetus to the development of taste and artistic genius in that class. By-and-bye they too began to covet lace, to wear with more goodly apparel. The demand grew, so that hands were inadequate any longer to produce the supply. The skill, ingenuity, and wealth of the affluent were laid under contribution. Costly machinery was built ; steam-power brought into play, and the goodly article, though of inferior character, could be bought at lower cost to gratify the taste of the middle and lower classes. The result is that at the present moment there are probably ten times as many persons employed in making lace by machinery as were ever employed in making it by hand.

Yet, though the hand may be independent of machinery, the machine can never be independent of the hand. Take away all hand-made lace—and that produced by the machine will soon cease to be wanted : but increase the taste and skill and artistic excellence of the hand-made lace, and the machine will ever be required to imitate what is of acknowledged superiority and worth. It is a popular fallacy which cannot be too soon exploded, that the machine and the hand are in antagonism, and that the one must compete with the other for price, to secure business. This is a delusion, and when acted on leads to the extinction of both. Low price in everything means inferior quality, and eventually loss of trade ; while, in works of art more especially, superiority of work, combined with art-excellence, means employment for the hand first, and machinery afterwards.

Lace-making is an important branch of civilized industry, and this not only on account of the employment it directly gives, but as being the means of educating and training artistic skill—a precursor of ever-widening and expanding labour. Louis XIV. granted from his own purse a large sum of money to Madame Gilbert, who successfully introduced into Alençon the making of better lace than was made in Venice. In Belgium, the Government requires the female scholars in the public schools to be trained in the art of making lace, and also in some rudimentary knowledge of design. Ireland is at a great disadvantage in this respect, which it is to be hoped that time may remedy.

The term Lace is now indiscriminately applied to all productions of hand or loom that imitate or bear any resemblance to the original art needle-work. No apology then is offered for applying the designation Irish Lace to all such productions of the hand due to Irish skill and industry, though some are confessedly only imitations of better and foreign specimens, while others claim to be reproductions, with effects worthy to be compared with those that their possessors boasted were *Lace*.

The geographical position of Ireland and the social condition of its people render it almost impossible to establish the machine industry there with any hope of success. Yet they favour in a high degree the extension of the hand-work as a home or cottage industry, especially among the female

peasantry. This has been felt by many benevolent and enterprising persons for more than a century and a half ; but, unfortunately, the efforts that have been made to naturalize the art of lace-making in Ireland have not been continuous, as a glance at the history will suffice to show.

In the middle of the last century—that is, in the year 1743, the Royal Dublin Society granted to Lady Arabella Denny, thirty pounds a year, that she might distribute this sum as she pleased in prizes to those who excelled in Lace-making. This noble-hearted lady taught “the famishing children in the poor-house” to make what was called “Bone Lace ;” and in the public records it is said that one Susanna Hunt, Fishamble Street, aged eleven years, received a prize of £2 15s. 6d. ; that one Miss Elinor Brereton, of Rahensduff, Queen’s County, received £7, while a premium of £6 16s. 6d. was given to Miss Jane Knox, a poor gentlewoman. To encourage the workers to strive to attain the highest excellency, it was resolved that no prize should be given to any lace of less value than 11/4½ per yard. The grant of the Society ceased in 1773 ; Lady Denny died in 1792, aged 85 years ; and so far as is now known, lace-making for a considerable period ceased in Ireland, with no little loss to the country.

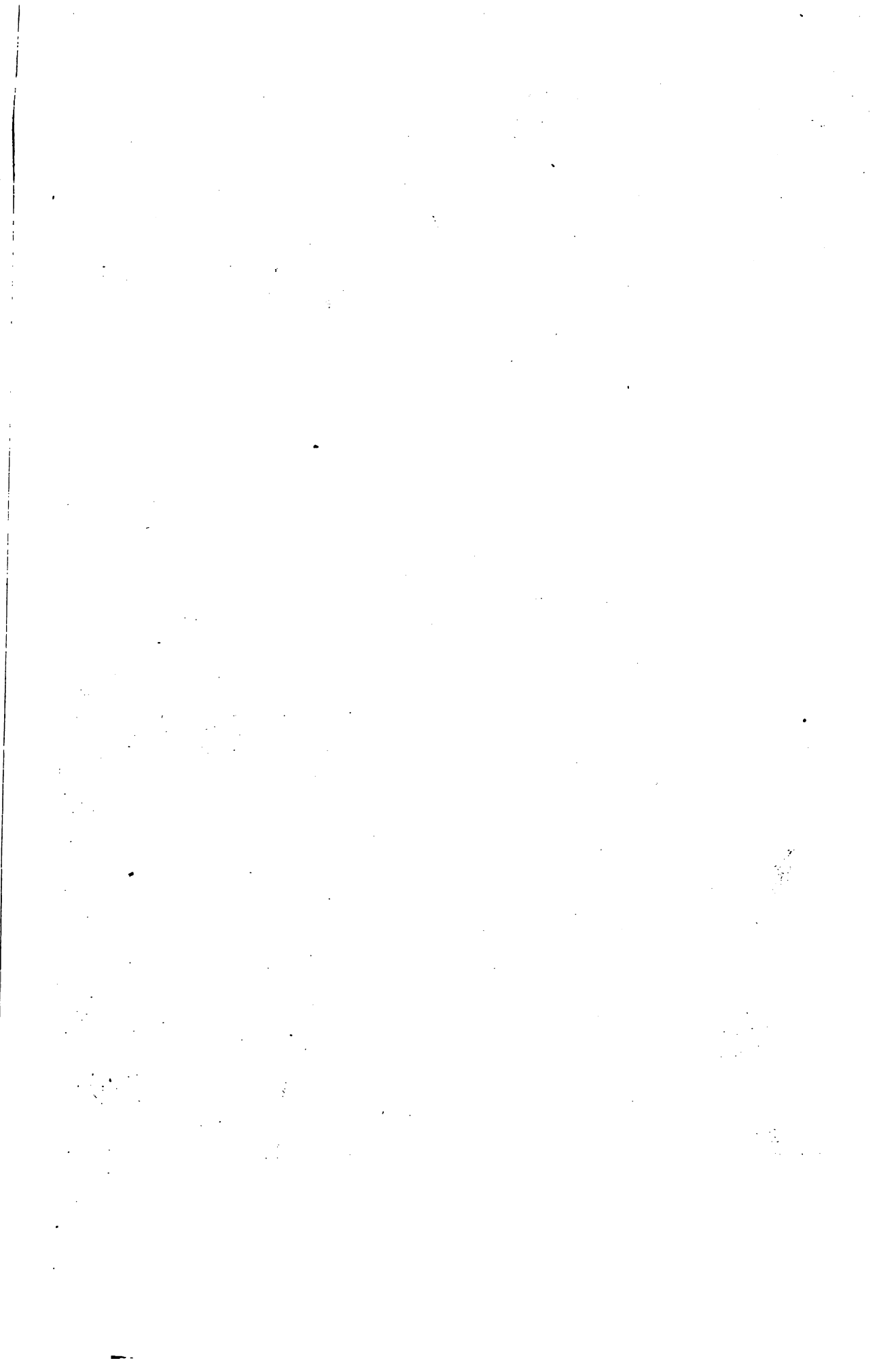
The Lace-industries that now exist can all be traced back to their origin, and are found to have commenced in the present century. With one exception to be afterwards noted, they are all alike due to a spirit of philanthropy, rather than to commercial enterprise. The oldest of them commenced in the year 1820. Since then some have risen to a temporary importance and have passed away ; while others, arising out of small and simple efforts, remain, and have become centres of usefulness, and this exhibition shews proofs of their success.

The principal centres that represent the different classes of lace now recognized as of commercial importance, are marked by a red circle, with numbers corresponding to those at head of illustrations and paragraphs—(see map given as frontispiece) ;—those localities where efforts were made to establish lace-making are marked by blue. Some ended in failure, some continue, with limited success, wanting either trade-support or improved taste and skill in the work produced, in order to command it.

CARRICKMACROSS.—1.

Carrickmacross is the first we make note of. In the year 1820 Mrs. Grey Porter, wife of the Rector of Dunnamoyne, taught her domestic servant, Mary Steadman, to make lace from a specimen she had brought from Italy. She succeeded so well that the then Lady Lyttelton and other distinguished persons gave orders. The circumstances became known to a Miss Reid, of Ahans, near Carrickmacross, who first sought to amuse her sister, Miss Dora, with the work, and afterwards conceived the idea of teaching the art to the deserving poor around her as a means towards their support. The two sisters combined with their charitable dispositions great practical skill, which served better than Committees, Subscriptions, and grants of Royal Societies. Without orders, without a school or building—save an out-office in her brother’s farmyard, which was converted into a sort of factory school—Miss Reid gathered together the young girls of the district and taught them to make lace, on the model of Ann Steadman’s production, a specimen of which will be found in the loan collection. By-and-bye girls also came from the town to learn. Afterwards Miss Reid built a school-house on her own property, in Culloville, which gave more employment. All the while she depended on private orders, till, unfortunately, the demand became less than the supply. Miss Reid then confined her attention to her Culloville workers, up almost to the time of her decease, when the management was given over to her niece, who continues her interest in its success.

The town of Carrickmacross stands upon the Bath and Shirley Estates. In the year 1846, Mr. Tristram Kennedy entered upon the management of the Bath Estate. Seeing the great benefit that Miss Reid’s school had been to the poor, he conceived the idea of extending as far as he could what he



called "cottage-industry." A stimulus to his energy in the matter was given in this year through the failure of the potato crop, by which famine was spread over the land. By a public grant which was made he was enabled to build seven schools on the Bath Estate, which consisted of fifteen thousand acres, with a population of thirteen thousand souls. These schools were designed also to benefit the population of the Shirley Estate, which was then managed by Captain Morant, who gave the use of a vacant house in Carrickmacross, on the Shirley Estate, for the purpose of a central school, which afterwards supplied those surrounding it with teachers, designers, and orders.

While the schools, for which grants had been sanctioned were building, the training was carried on in a house on the townland of Drumlusty. In the year 1849 the sum of £111 14s. 7d. was paid to learners. The schools were completed in 1850, and the amount paid there in that year was £326 19s. 7d., and in Carrickmacross £257 10s. 9½d. After that date it became the principal as well as the central school, and gives the name to all the lace made in the district. On the application of Mr. Kennedy to Lord Clarendon, who was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a grant was made in November, 1850, by the Lords of Committee of the Privy Council of Trade, of one hundred pounds, for the purpose of establishing a class for training young girls in drawing and designing for "the Lace Manufacture in certain Industrial Schools in that district."

In 1852 Lord Clarendon, when distributing the awards of the Royal Dublin Society for taste and artistic talent, quoted the official report of Mr. Poynter, in which he expressed his conviction that Mr. Kennedy's experiment of associating industrial with literary training had been successful, and hoped that other districts would profit by the example of his model schools. "It was gratifying and significant to know," says the report, "that through a London firm Her Majesty had ordered a large and handsome piece of Guipure Lace."

The Carrickmacross Lace is of two kinds. One is on the model of that worked by Ann Steadman in 1820, called in the trade Appliqué. This lace very closely resembles that made in Belgium, which goes by the name of Brussels Appliqué. The pattern is cut from cambric, then applied to net with point stitches. The origin of the name is explained by the process.

The other lace is called Guipure, and is due to quite a distinct method. On a cambric foundation a design is traced by a thread, and connected by point stitches; the superfluous parts being then cut away. The pattern is then joined by "brides," or sometimes with picotees, or with small pearls or loops, springing from the design or "brides." This adds much to its beauty and artistic effect.

In 1851 Mr. Kennedy left the management of the Bath Estate, and in 1852 became a Member of Parliament for the Co. Louth; but he continued for some years to take an active interest in the schools. His residence in London in attendance on Parliamentary duties greatly aided him in his purpose of establishing a connection with the London trade. On his retirement into private life a very handsome testimonial in plate was presented to him, which he valued most because the poor whom he had thus assisted by their contributions acknowledged the benefit of his efforts to do them good.

LIMERICK.—2.

This ancient city is chronologically the second important centre of the Lace-industry; but in this case, its rise, progress, and history differ materially from those of the first. A spirit of enterprise and commercial adventure instead of philanthropic impulse, originally stimulated activity. Mr. Charles Walker, a native of Oxfordshire, while studying for the Church, married the daughter of a lace manufacturer. He relinquished his professional prospects to engage in this calling. In the year 1829, he brought over from England twenty-four girls as teachers, and they commenced to teach the Irish in the City of Limerick to make lace. From this beginning there arose a large industry, and remunerative employment was furnished to large numbers for many years. At one time there was a large variety of kinds produced, at present they are reduced to the following:—

I.—**TAMBOUR**.—This is the most simple and ordinary,—so named from the fact that the **frame** on which it is worked has some resemblance to a drum-head or tambourine. On this is stretched a piece of bobbin or Brussels net. Through the meshes of the net a floss thread or cotton is drawn by a hooked or tambour needle adapted for the purpose to form the design, which is drawn on paper and placed before the eye of the worker. Some very choice and exquisite designs that shewed great skill and ingenuity were produced by this process. A specimen made about 1833, which has been lent to the exhibition by Miss Louisa Macready, Dublin, will shew how soon the Irish were trained. It will also serve to shew how they have degenerated in this branch of labour in order to compete at unremunerative prices with machinery for large orders.

II.—**RUN**.—This designation represents another kind. It is finer and lighter. The pattern is formed in the net with a finer thread, and is not drawn-in with the tambour, but *run* in with a point needle. Thence it is distinguished from the tambour by the term *Run Lace*. A specimen in the loan exhibition shews that occasionally the Run and the Tambour were blended in one production.

III.—**APPLIQUE** Lace was also made in Limerick. This branch of the industry was most probably introduced by Lady De Vere, who taught the mistress of a school on her own demesne at Curragh to copy some lace that she had bought in Brussels. It resembles very much that made in Carrickmacross—a cambric applied to net. In some instances net is applied to net. Of this, however, there have not been many specimens, though it has a beautiful effect.

IV.—**GUIPURE** has been made in Limerick, quite equal if not superior to that of any of the Carrickmacross schools. Yet from some cause or other the production of this class has almost, if not altogether, ceased.

The Limerick lace-industry is on the decline. Some years ago it was calculated that no fewer than fifteen hundred persons were employed in the city alone. Now it is not certain that there are so many as three hundred. Some of Mr. Walker's employées are still living in the city, though many of them returned to England. It is not now positively known that a single young girl in the city is learning to make lace, as the industry by which she will earn her livelihood. The majority of those who are now employed make only the coarse and inferior kind, principally for an export trade. The home demand daily declines, but would soon revive, if work of a higher merit were reproduced. For the young girls of the city other employment may be had, but for those living in the villages and surrounding districts Limerick may still be the centre of a great and beneficial industry.

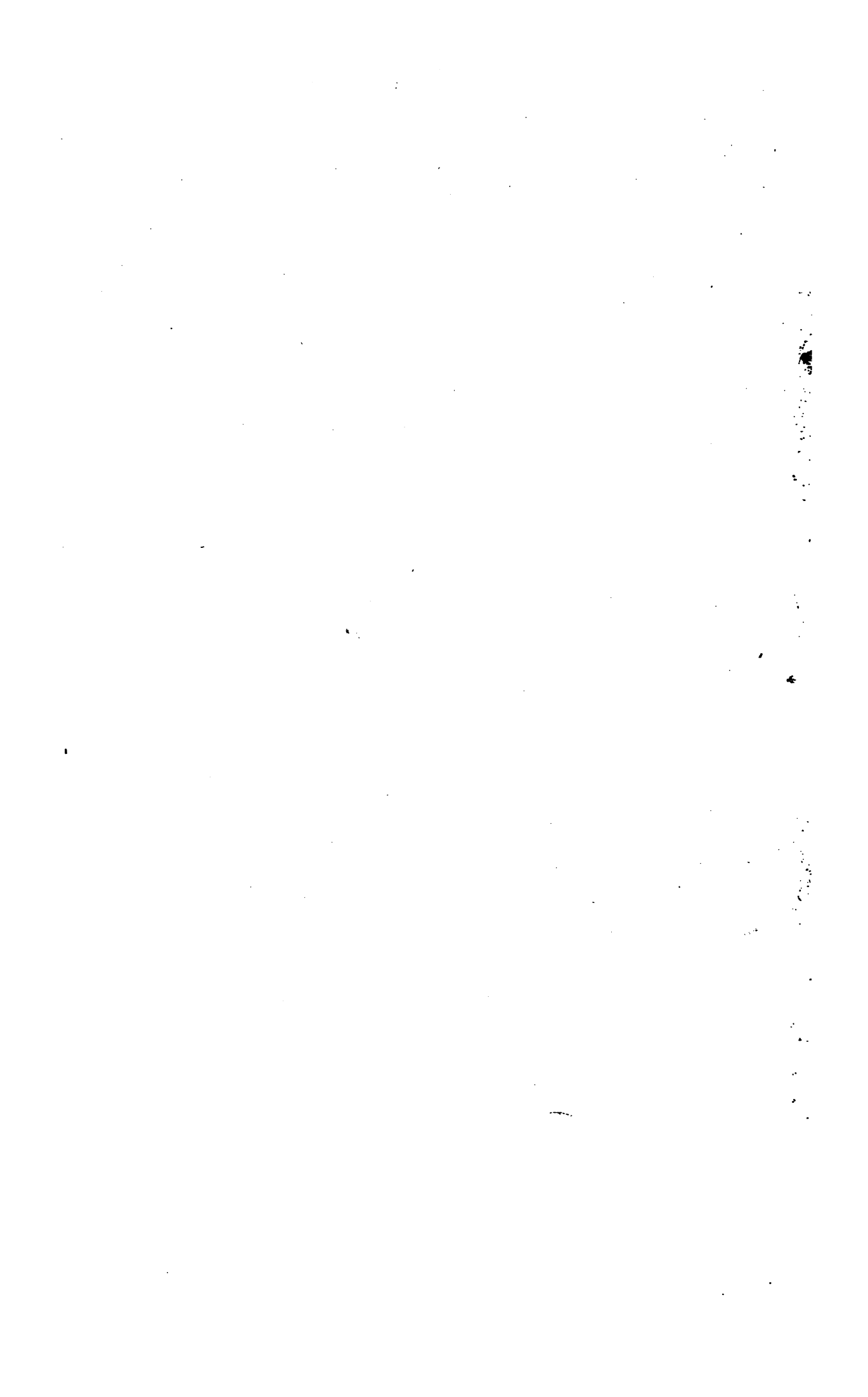
The failure of the potato crop in 1846 stirred the entire population to think of industry as the only legitimate means of relief. Lace-making was only one of many forms of labour that the benevolent adopted, but it soon became popular. It had one great advantage over many of the others that it required no capital to commence. Whoever had the heart to do good, could by teaching assist the poor to earn their bread. The difficulty was to get ready sale for what was made in the remote parts distant from town and markets of any kind. To meet this general and national want, some ladies in Dublin formed themselves into an association, called "The Ladies' Industrial Society for Ireland." At their own cost they rented premises, paid salaries and all expenses of sale, opened correspondence with every English or foreign acquaintance to sell free of charge any Irish work sent to them, and to remit to the owners the full amount that their work realized. Thus lace-working was assisted to secure a commercial basis, and though the society dissolved after a few years of active work, it prepared the way for the lace industry to become a commercial success.

With the exception of Carrickmacross and Limerick, all other existing lace-industries in Ireland arose out of the famine years of 1846-7-8. It is not easy to find month and year when in each case the work began, so as to follow an exact chronological order, but the alphabetical order of the centres where they now prosper will suffice to guide us in giving an account of the remaining contents of the exhibition.

CARRICKMACROSS. 1 LIMERICK. 2.



No. 1. Applique Lace, Carriackmacross
No. 2. Applique Lace, Limerick.

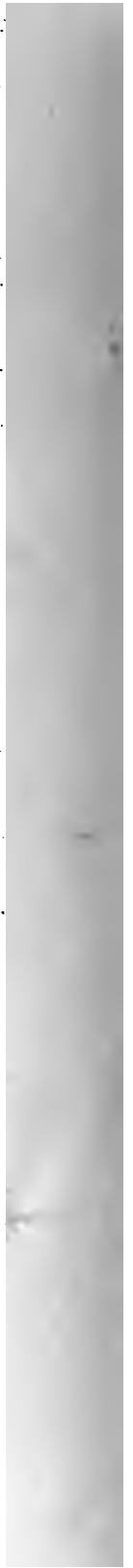


LIMERICK. 2.

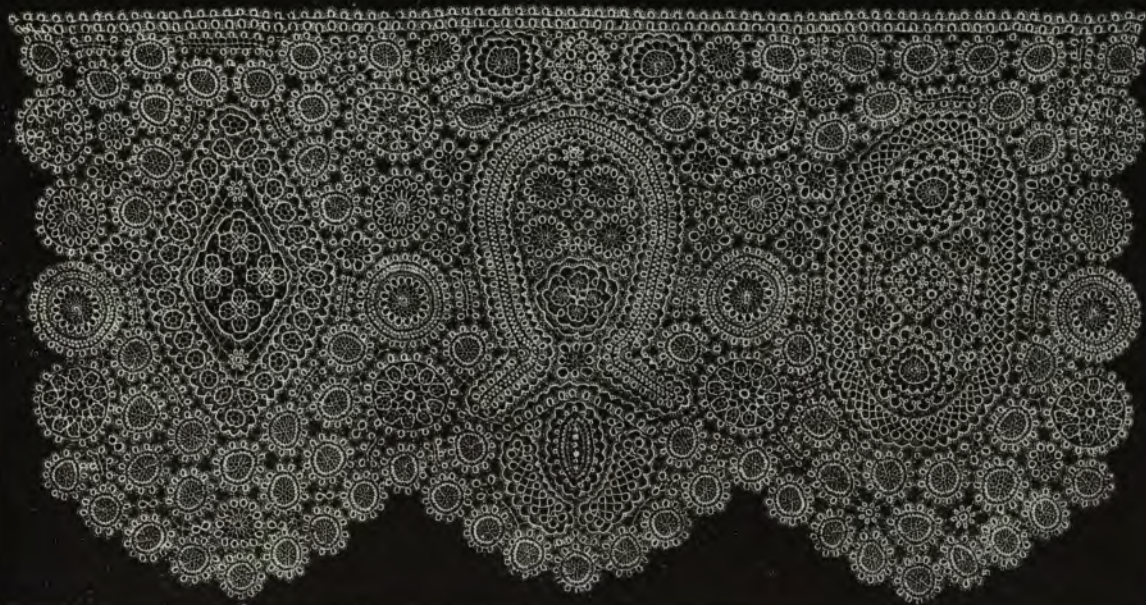


No. 1. Tambour Lace, Limerick.

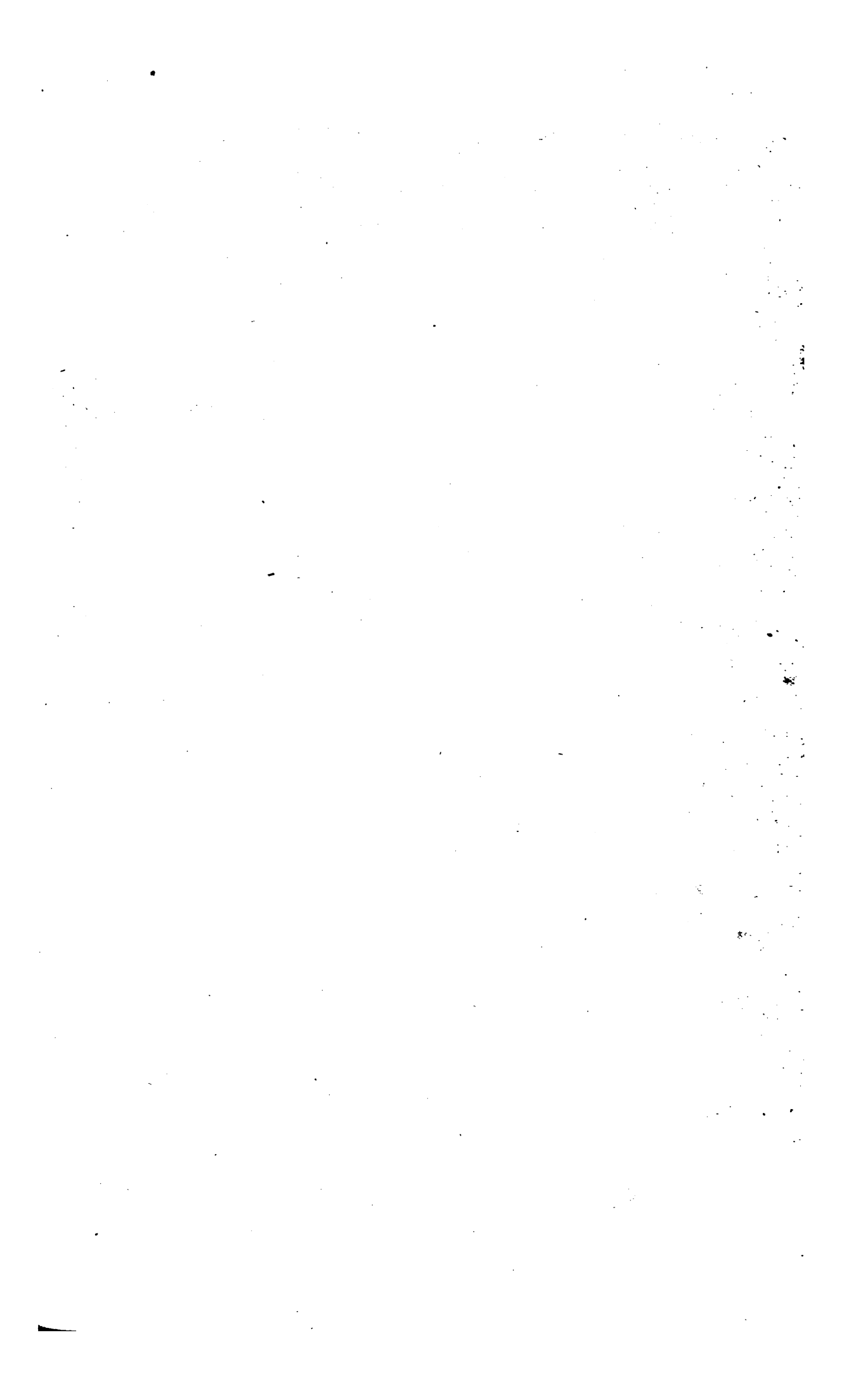
No. 2. Run Lace, Limerick.



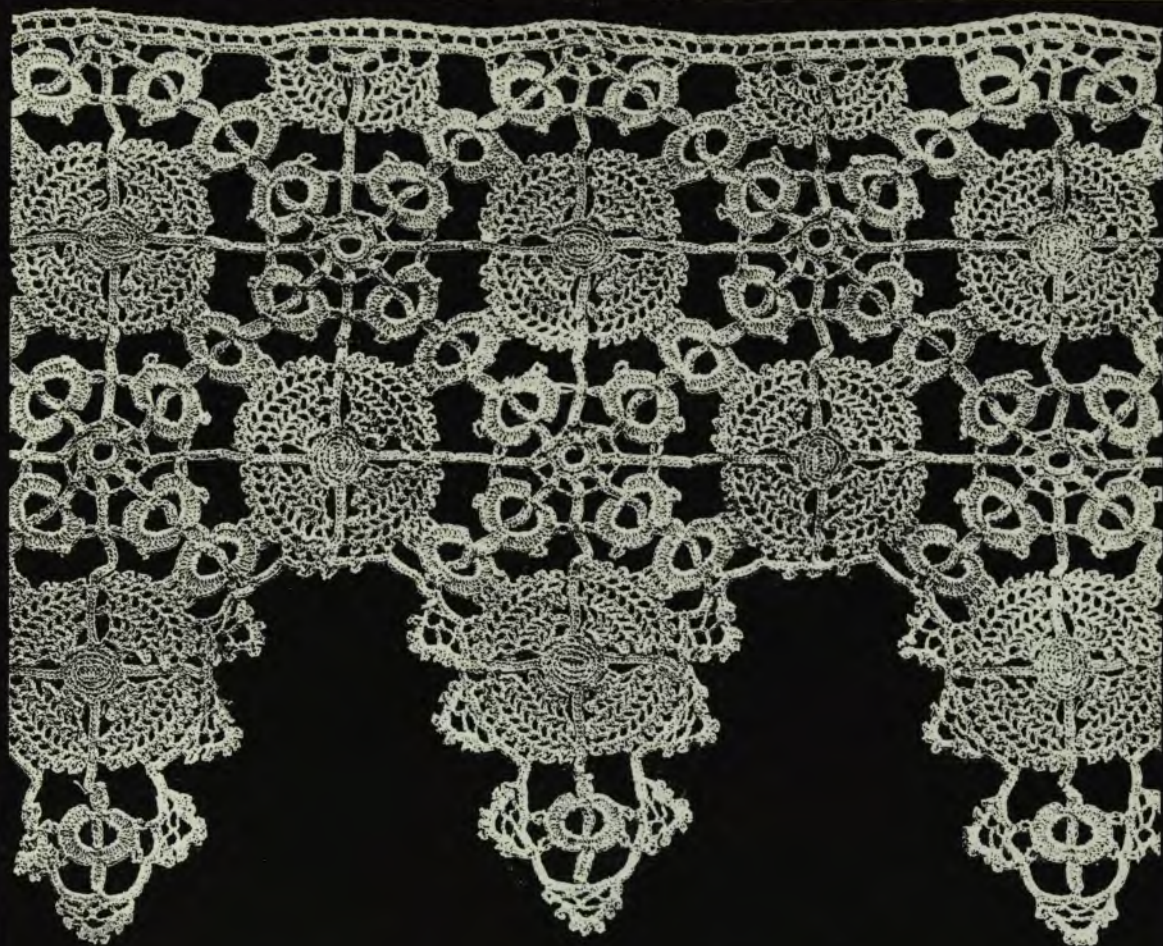
LIMERICK. 2. ARDEE. 3.



No. 1. Applique Lace (double net), Limerick.
No. 2. Pearl Tatting, Ardee.

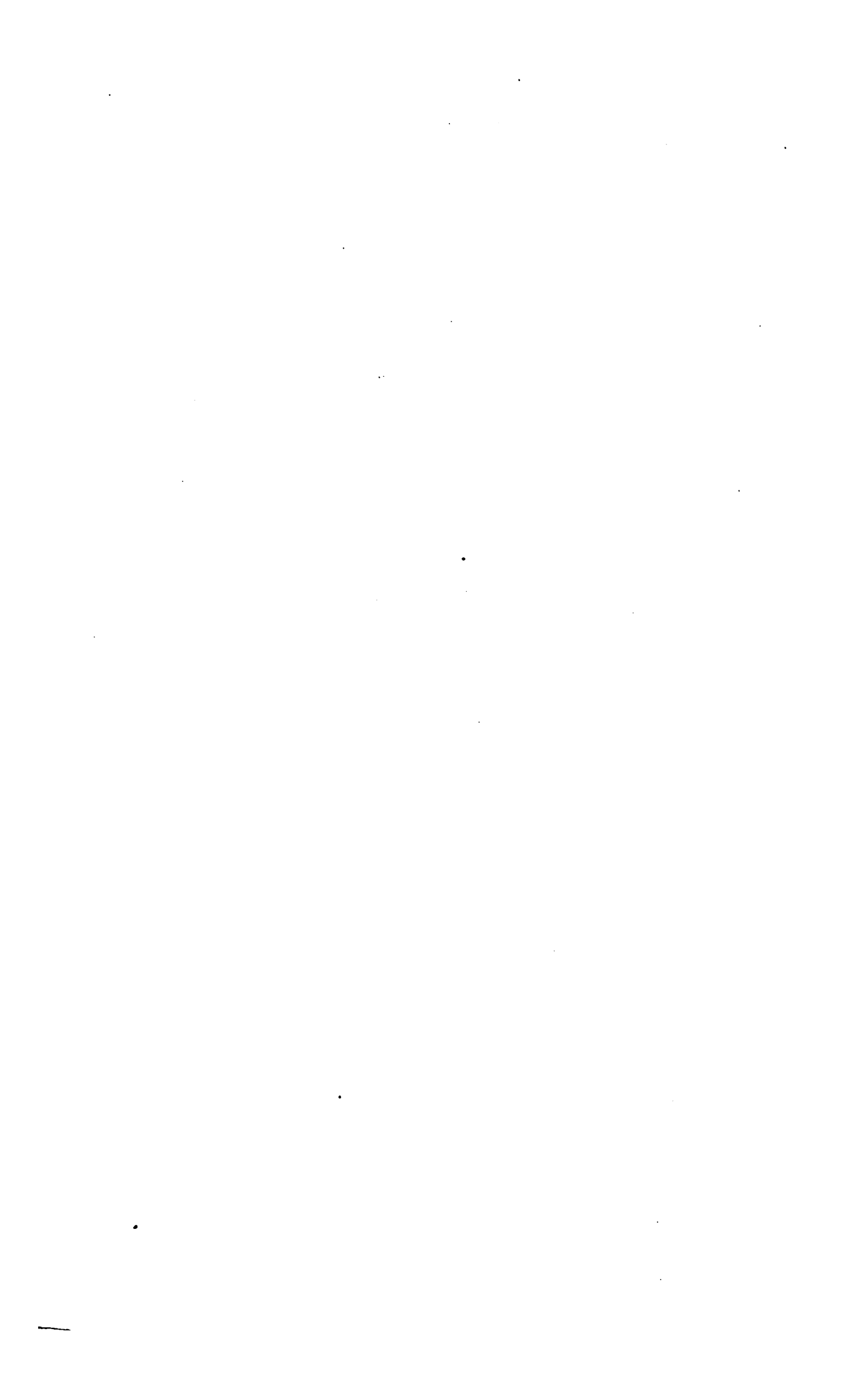


CORK, 4.



No. 1. Plain Crochet, Cork.

No. 2. Lace Crochet, Cork.



ARDEE.—3.

PEARL TATTING.—In these small towns Miss Sophia Ellis, one of the daughters of the rector, commenced with a shuttle and two spools of ordinary sewing thread to teach a few poor children to make what the French call “Frvolité,” perhaps from its having been a frivolous amusement of court ladies. It consists of a thread being looped after the manner of netting, into circles, leaving on each edge a pearl, similar to that of the pearl or loop left on the “brides” of the Guipure lace. In consequence it is called Pearl Tatting. It has an elegant effect, and can be made rapidly by the expert. It consequently comes at a moderate price. In a very few years Miss Ellis distributed five thousand pounds, the amount she realized for the work, which materially mitigated the dreadful effects of the famine. To this day pearl tatting gives employment to many poor persons, who by honest industry have realized some few of the comforts of life. The Poor-Law Guardians readily acknowledge that but for the “Tatting” great would be the increase of the poor depending on the rates for subsistence.

But in the work there is no improvement. On the contrary there is a visible depreciation in quality. There are very few indeed who strive to excel or to advance beyond the past in the quality of their work, while art-design has scarcely ever been seriously attempted, to create variety and to meet the changes of taste and fashion. A few specimens will show what it can be, and also render apparent the need of, as well as its great capacity for, improvement, by more artistic arrangements and distribution of its circles.

In this town, Mrs. Ruxton opened a school for teaching young girls to make Lacet, a kind of lace, which consists chiefly of braid or tape shaped into a design; the “brides” and pattern being supplemented with lace stitches. It is made economically, and is sold at comparatively low prices. For a few years it was a trade article, but it has for years ceased to be of any commercial importance.

CORK.—4.

Whoever suggested the tambour needle, for ladies to amuse themselves in producing crochet work, at the same time indirectly conferred a great boon on the poor. Had factories with their thousand spindles been planted in Cork, they would not have wrought so great a change as has been wrought by the magic force of this simple artistic instrument. In Limerick it was used to inweave the thread in the meshes of the net, and to form those designs of beauty that charm the eye. In Cork, it became a kind of independent knitting-needle, doing more work and better than any pair of knitting-pins had ever done.

It is not remembered into whose hands it first came, or in what spot it commenced its beneficent career of inspiring hope in distress, and of exciting those who were ready to perish to rely upon themselves as well as to make appeal to their Maker. Evidently it was known before the famine, but the famine brought out and proved its worth to the Irish people, in developing their skill and taste, and in showing their willingness to labour when their industry received an adequate reward.

The nuns of the Ursuline Convent at Blachrock, Co. Cork, while devoting themselves to the education of the higher classes, also remembered the children of the poor, and wisely added industrial training to the education of those who came to their exterior day school. It is on record that in the year 1845 they received about ninety pounds on the work they had taught their scholars to do. From this place and this period we trace the growth of a great industry that in a few years formed a part of education in almost every convent, and spread from the most southern shore of Cork to the colder shores of Donegal in the north; that extended rapidly on all sides, and did much to mitigate the effects of famine.

Cork city was the natural centre of this commerce. The merchants and traders in the midst of the suffering were moved by one common feeling of humanity to save those that were ready to perish ; and perhaps no agency came into so universal requisition in that city and county as the crochet needle, as a means for teaching the poor to help themselves. Crochet here through the large houses was soon introduced to the London trade, and has since remained an article of commercial importance. Its productions formed a conspicuous element of the great exhibition of 1851, and the question which was then asked—would it last ?—may now be decisively answered. It has gone through all the vicissitudes of commerce during the last twenty years, and may survive three hundred more, unless through the folly and short-sightedness of those concerned, it destroys itself. There is undoubtedly a danger here ; and all interested in the matter should endeavour to prevent it. The leading characteristic of this work is cheapness, which means depreciated quality, which in turn may mean extinction through stress of competition and other causes. One illustration shall suffice. In the year 185— an order was taken for an unlimited quantity of a specified quality of a shamrock-pattern collar, at 12/6 per doz. Hardly had the order been dispatched when it was qualified, owing to a competitive offer having been made, and the price thus reduced to 2/6. Eventually the goods were re-sold in Ireland for about 1/6 per doz. They were then almost too mean even for the poor Irish to buy or wear.

Notwithstanding this, and other instances of destructive competition, crochet has given to the whole county of Cork a large employment. Though the general run of its productions are of the plainest and simplest character, there are some really good specimens of artistic skill and design.

PLAIN CROCHET.—This is the most elementary, and consists of the simplest manipulation of the thread and hook in edgings, D'Oyles, articles for toilet use, and antimaccassars. These have for years been a staple production.

Articles for dress, or personal adornment, are also made. The designs or objects are wrought separately, and are afterwards rapidly combined by a second worker with a single twisted thread to serve as "brides." This economy of labour renders the work cheap but less durable.

Another is called LACE CROCHET, and consists in connecting the designs by lace stitches, and relieving the principal objects with others of curious and exquisite workmanship.

It would be difficult to say to how many places this has extended, or where the crochet needle did not come as a boon in Ireland. It was successfully established beyond Cork Co., in New Ross, Thomastown, Castleboro', Thornton, Dungiven, and Carndough.

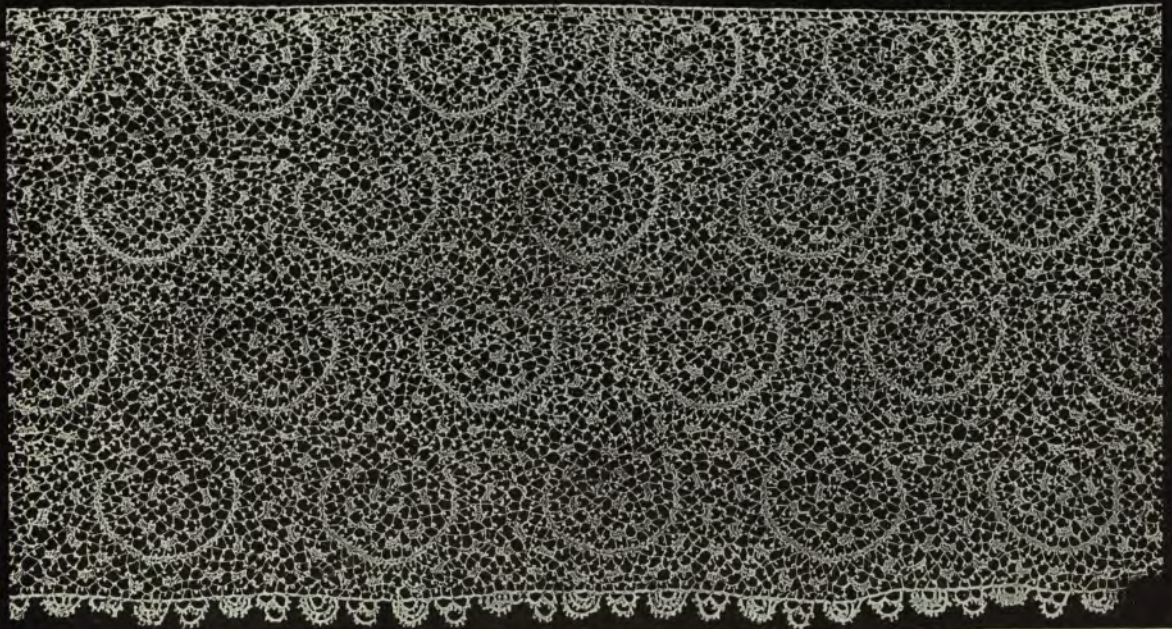
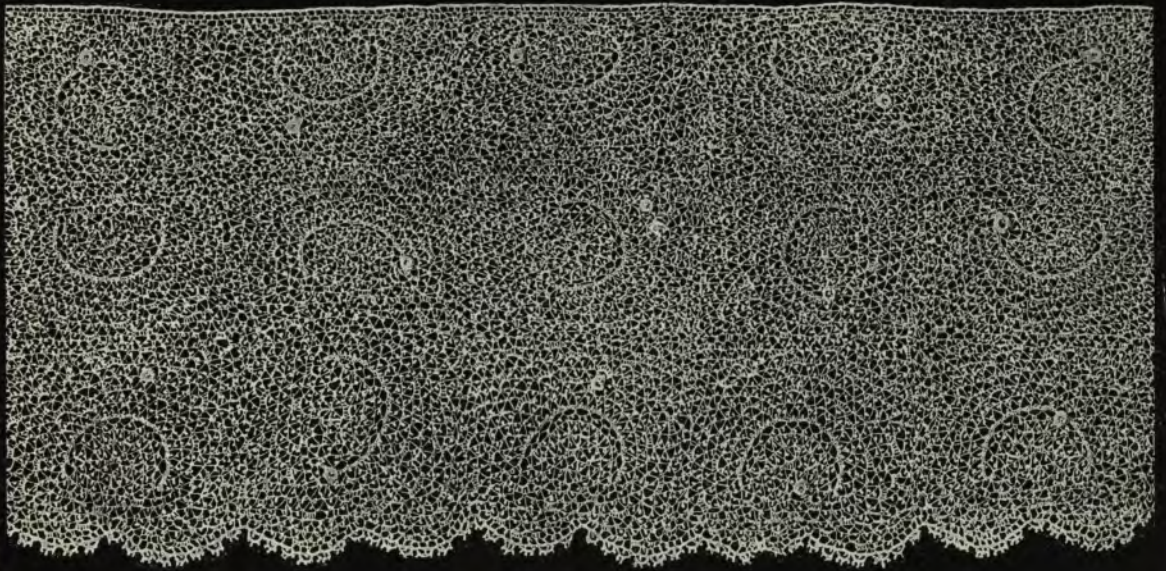
CLOVES.—5.

Previous to 1847, Mrs. W. C. Roberts, of Thornton, Co. Kildare, greatly assisted the poor in her neighbourhood by teaching them to knit woollen jackets. In that year of famine the orders failed, and crochet was suggested as a desirable and practicable experiment. Mrs. Roberts accordingly selected six or eight of the most intelligent workers, who for some time went daily to Thornton, to be taught to use the crochet needle. Under the instruction of their benefactress, they produced in six months some admirable specimens from Guipure and Point de Venise.

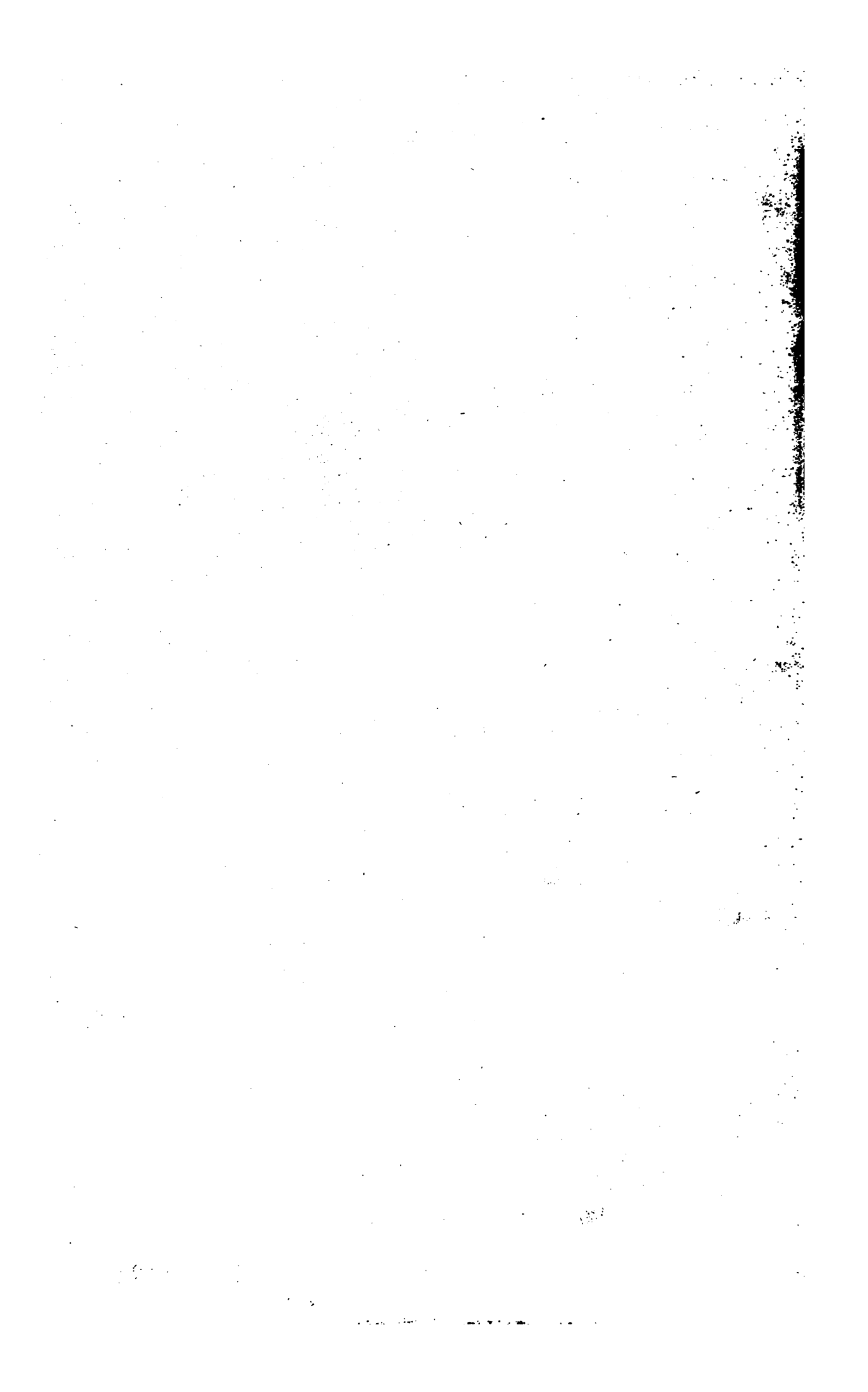
Every one thus personally taught by Mrs. Roberts was required to teach three others, and so on, until hundreds were taught. Thus sisterly kindness and charity were promoted as well as industry. If any shewed a reluctant selfishness, they got no employment until they had taught three, who could do perfect work. It should be added that the distress at that time was so great that boys willingly learned to do crochet work.

Twenty-four of the best trained and most efficient of Mrs. Roberts' workers were sent out as teachers to different parts of Ireland. At one time as many as seven hundred were earning money

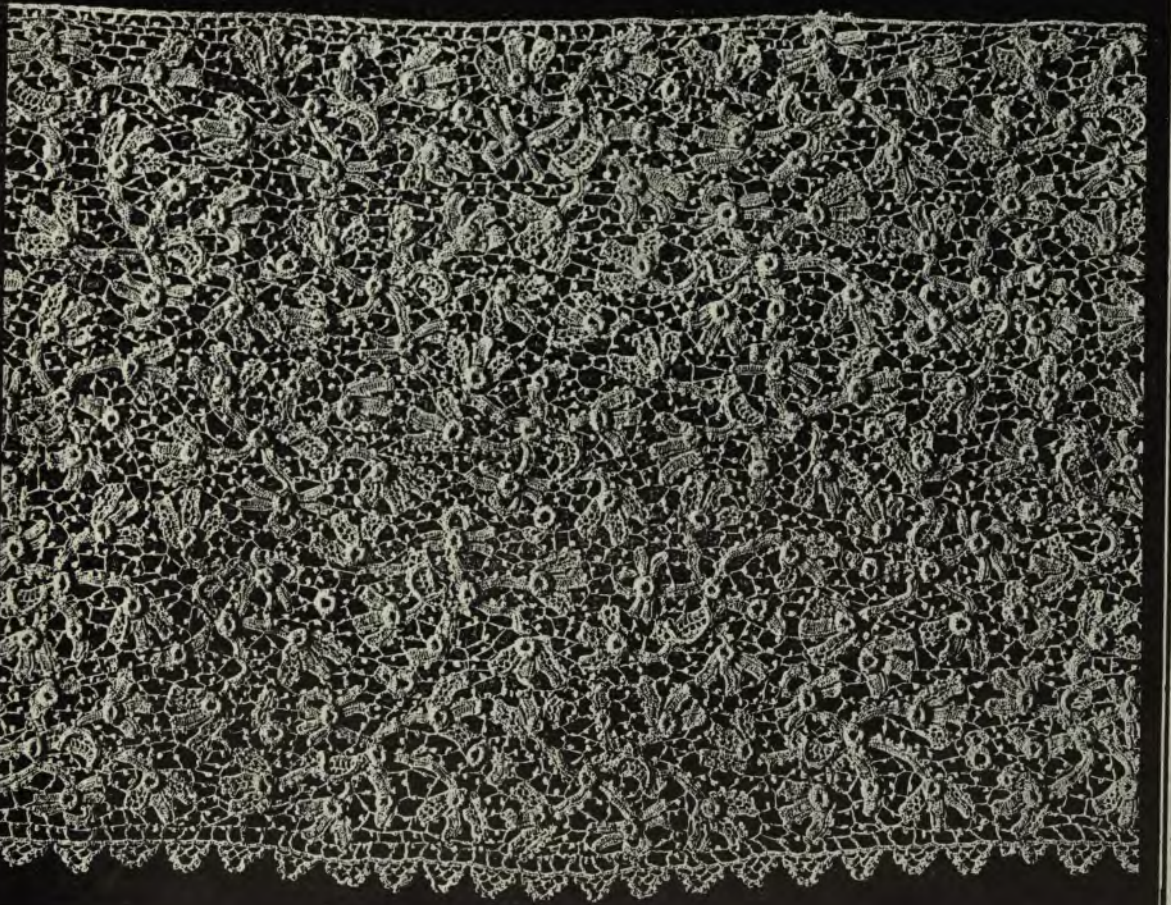
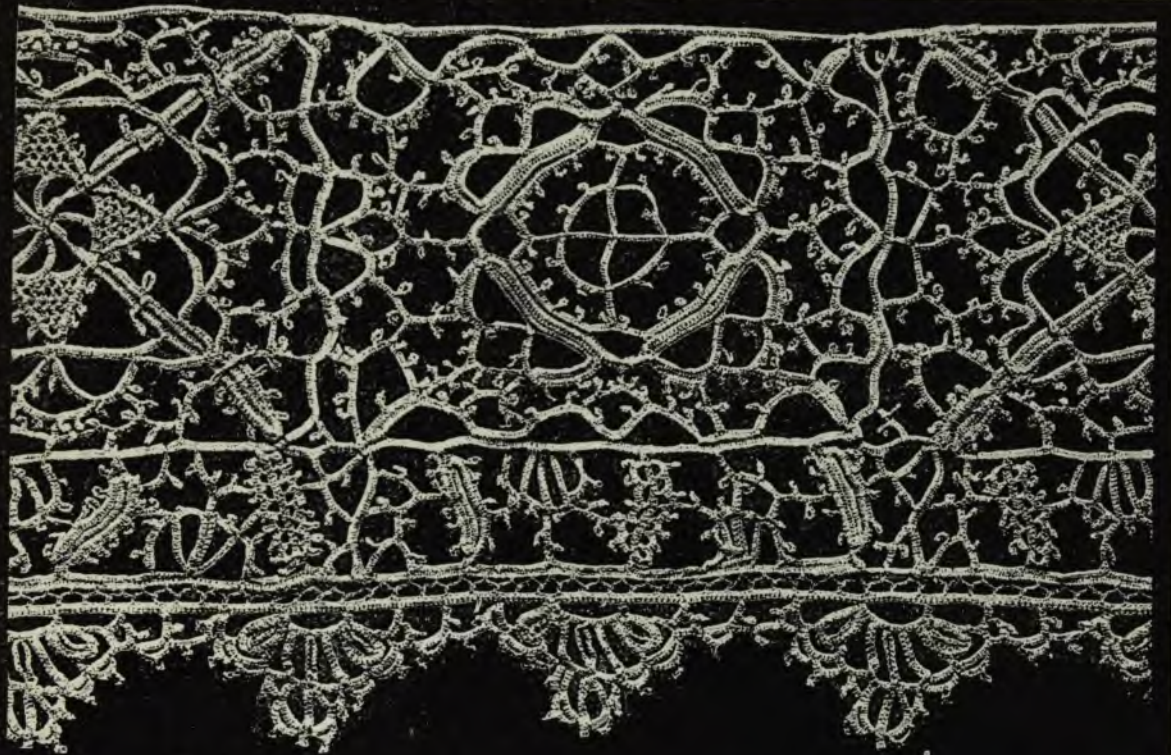
CLONES, 5.



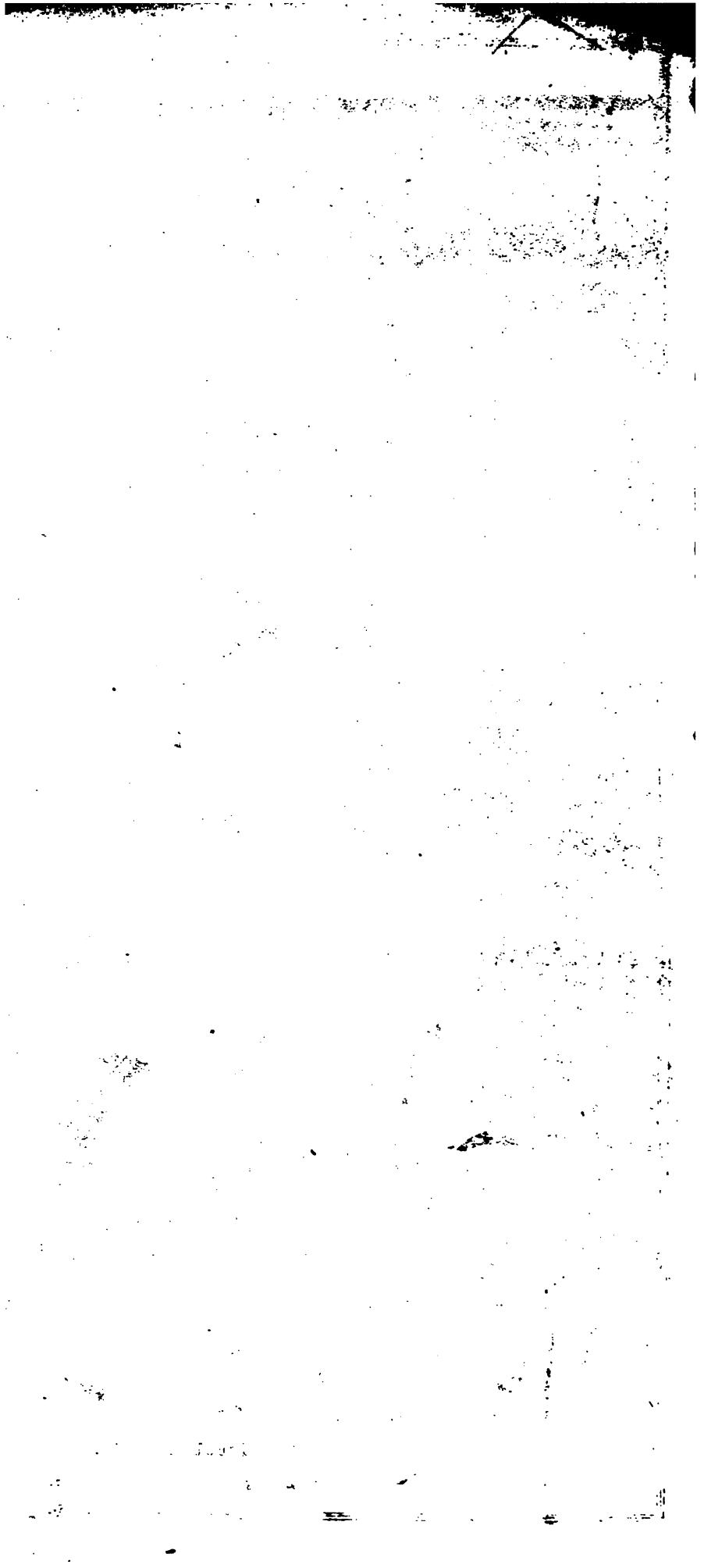
- No. 1. Imitation Guipure, Clones.
No. 2. Knotted " "
No. 3. Lifted " "



CLONES, 5.



No. 1. Greek Crochet, Clones.
No. 2. Venetian ,, Clones.



around Thornton by the crochet needle. Time works great changes ; only a few months since an inquiry was being made in Dublin for a competent person to go into Kildare, to teach the young people how to do crochet work.

The causes of this failure will hereafter be referred to ; it would not now be mentioned, only it was necessary in order to explain an after-success. One of the twenty-four sent out as teacher went, on the application of Mrs. Hand, to Clones, Co. Monaghan. She was the wife of the Rev. T. Hand, then rector. The parish is the largest in that county, consequently it contained many poor who were willing to be employed but could not get employment.

Mrs. Hand had great talent for business, though untrained to it. She appreciated the ideas of Mrs. Roberts, and through the teacher she applied them to the circumstances in which she was placed with great energy and skill. Clones is a market-town, and a great centre of a mountainous district. To its Rectory, for miles round, came the poor to learn crochet, and they were taught under the guidance of Mrs. Hand, after the best models of skill and taste. The terms by which the various kinds are now denominated cannot be guaranteed as the most correct or appropriate, for in the process of improvement or the progress of decay, the work has undergone a change in style or design, such as scarcely leaves in some cases any trace of the original. Notwithstanding this, as the goods have been long known in the trade, the appellations by which they are distinguished must be adhered to.

GUIPURES.—These are very distinct from those of Carrickmacross and Limerick, and are classified under three different heads,—first, those consisting chiefly of border, worked close and tight, and among them small objects of design, having a plain and simple effect. The chief merit of these is the excellence of the work ; the design allowing no scope for taste. This is made chiefly in two qualities of thread, 40 and 60.

KNOTTED GUIPURE.—This lace is evidently from a Venetian original, and consists of knotting the threads as the work of knitting them together proceeds. Here the value rests upon the skill of the worker—and it demands considerable skill. There are not many, indeed, that can learn to do it well, but those who do are well remunerated, as the work always obtains a ready sale.

LIFTED GUIPURE.—This is the name applied to another specimen, on account of the stitches having to be lifted in the working. This is more difficult than knotting, consequently this work is more expensive. Its value consists in its solidity, while a light and elegant appearance is maintained. It is exceedingly durable, but it is not always appreciated.

GREEK LACE.—This class has never been so much used for dress as for toilet or furniture ornamentation. The original is a kind of button-hole stitch. This, however, is worked by the tambour needle, and copies are almost perfect in their resemblance, and nearly equal in value, to the original.

SPANISH LACE.—According to some authorities this was made chiefly for ecclesiastical purposes. The monasteries being dissolved in 1830, a large quantity of choice specimens came into the market ; and such as came to hand formed the basis of design from which was worked a large variety of quality and pattern that now go under the general term of Spanish Lace.

JESUIT LACE.—This designation appears to have originated from the fact that some of the specimens from which copies were made had belonged to this religious order. They were richer in effect and more difficult to work than the Spanish. From them have risen many varieties that are classified by the same designation, though very inferior. The original imitations, however, were very effective, and greatly admired.

POINT DE VENISE.—This lace has been very successfully copied by the crochet workers. Some specimens, indeed, can scarcely be distinguished from the best models of the ancient lace, while they are reproduced at a much less cost than the original, and are within the reach of the many who are

affluent, if beyond the reach of the million. The durability of these is quite equal to the old. The skill of their curious workmanship and the artistic beauty of the best designs have gained for them patronage in every market of the civilized world. The leaders of fashion in Paris, New York, Vienna, and Brussels have used them freely, and given the Clones industry deserved encouragement.

The cause of the failure in Kildare may now be stated, in the words of Mr. Roberts, as applicable not only to the industry there, but as indicative of the causes that have prevented the larger development and growth of high-class Crochet Lace, and also of what underlies all this industry, whether in or out of Ireland. Firstly, want of strictness in compelling the worker to do perfect work; secondly, want of more artistic training; and lastly, the inducements offered to make cheap or inferior work. "The natural carelessness of the poor Irish always induces them rather to fall from, than to go on to, greater perfection. They more willingly make twelve bad collars for 5d. each, than one good one for 5s.—never caring to learn that twelve inferior specimens of work more readily alienate twelve patrons, than one good specimen can do to regain them."

INNISHMACSAINT.—6.

It is not known how the crochet needle reached the small village of Tynan, co. Armagh, but a piece of old Lace, that had served some generations, and was only waiting to serve the generations following, reached it when it was in a state of semi-idleness. The intricacies of this visitor excited great curiosity. It was examined and re-examined, looked at and pored over, until every stitch was understood. Then arose the hope that the poor of the parish might be taught its workmanship, and live by their industry.

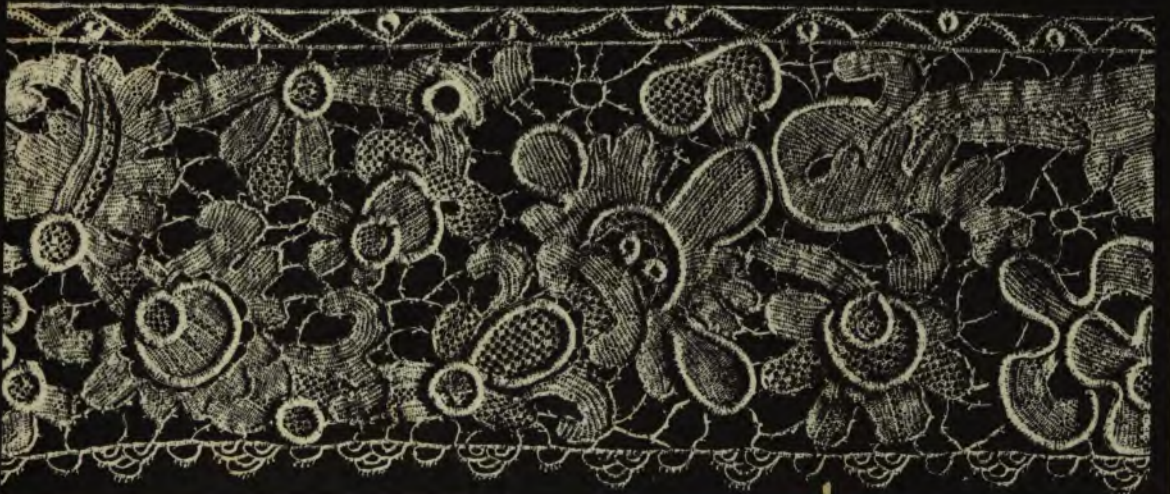
Such thoughts occupied the mind of the late Mrs. Maclean, whose husband was for twenty years Rector of the Parish; that is, from 1845 to 1865, when he died. About the year 1849, the effort, suggested by sight of this old relic, began in Tynan to teach the poor to make exact copies of old lace. In 1851 a handsome flounce was completed. The late Lord Primate, Lord John George Beresford, purchased it for a remunerative price, and allowed it to be shown in the Great Exhibition in London that year. It attracted much attention, was admired, and brought many orders. Lady Stronge, with many other ladies, took great interest in promoting success, and by private orders it was sustained and encouraged for some years.

On the death of the Rev. W. Maclean, the family left Tynan; and though they made efforts to carry on the work, it failed, chiefly from the want of regular orders, and lace-making declined in Tynan. About this time, Rev. Geo. Tottenham became Rector of Innishmacsaint; and, anxious to obtain employment for the poor, he gave every assistance in his power to Miss L. Maclean, his sister-in-law, to teach them. The parish consists of a desolate tract of land on the southern shores of Lough Erne, and derives its name from one of the many islands it contains, Innishmacsaint being an Irish expression for "The Island of the Sorrel Plain." Here are some of the very poorest of the Irish peasantry, whose small earnings at lace are to them a great boon, and from whose hands come forth the native flax in the form of the ancient Venetian, Spanish, and Rose Point Lace.

Improvements in the work were hindered by the irregularity and uncertainty of orders. That was a serious discouragement both to the workers and patrons. In 1869, the work was introduced to a merchant who has since given constant orders which have annually grown. The quantity of the work has thus been increased, and the quality of the lace at the same time improved.

The same kind of work is done in Cappoquin, co. Waterford, under the patronage of Miss Keane. It is very excellent, and deserving of more encouragement than it has hitherto received.

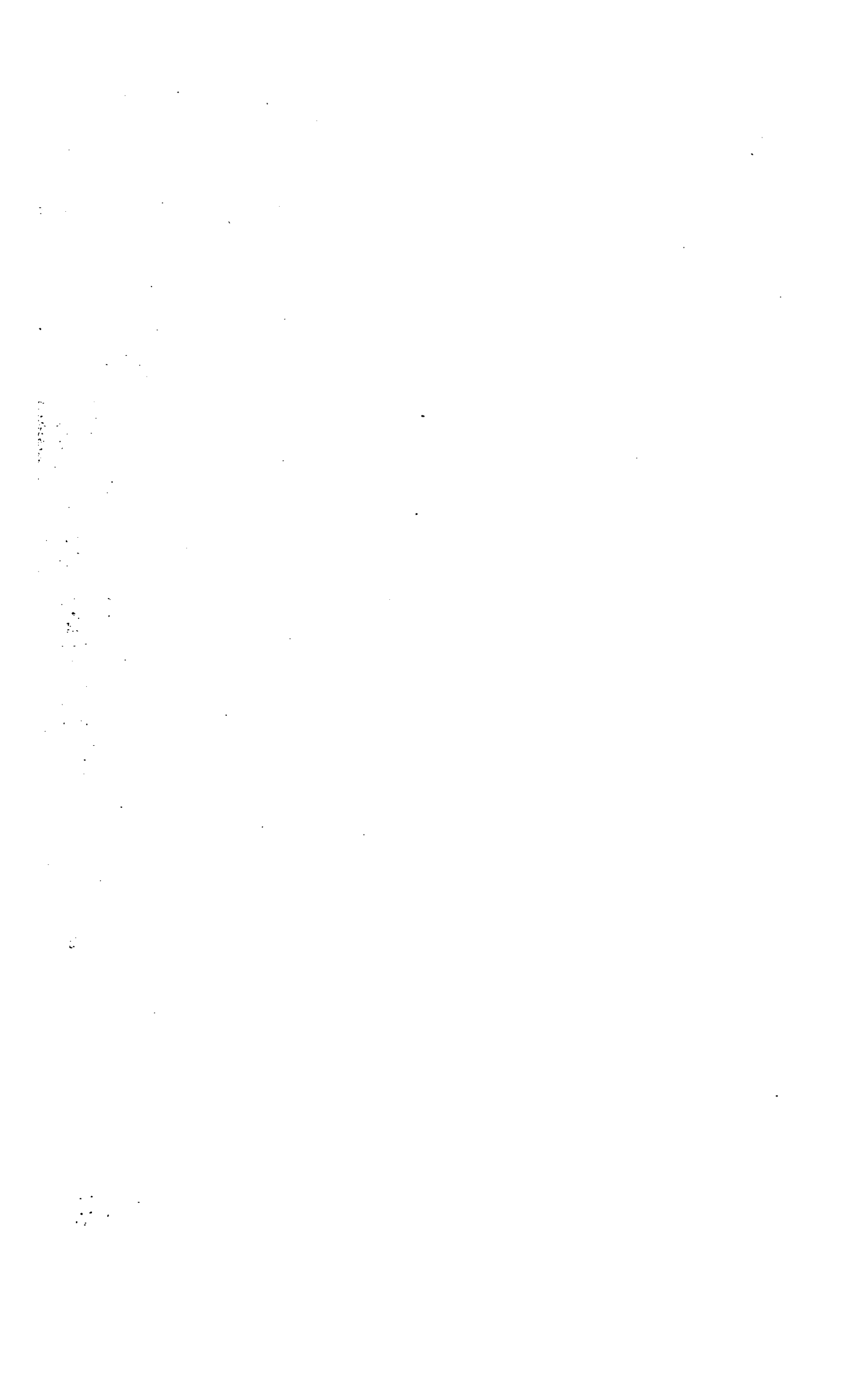
INNISHMACSAINT. 6.



No. 1. Point Lace, Innishmacsaint.

No. 2. " " "

No. 3. " " "



YOUGHAL.—7.

IRISH POINT.—The lace history of Ireland supplies coincidences of great interest: Mrs. Porter buying lace in Italy; Lady de Vere, in Belgium, and out of these laying the foundation on which Ireland may yet raise herself to prosperity; one of Mr. Walker's twenty-four English women living to see more than fifteen hundred persons employed, and these in a few years reduced to less than three hundred; Mrs. Roberts, with her seven hundred employed around her, and then their work ceasing; while one of the twenty-four that were sent forth as missionaries of industry, inaugurates an employment in Clones for more than seven hundred that are now fully occupied; a piece of old lace in the Tynan Rectory starts an employment for the poor inhabitants, and that again wafted, as if on the wind, to the more dreary and desolate region of Innishmacsaint repeats the tale. Now we have to chronicle the value of a piece of old Lace found in Youghal Convent, and its capacity to give to birth another branch of the Irish Lace Industry.

Youghal has had its centuries of fame as giving a home to the unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, and as the place where the first potato took root in Irish soil. For some years the Presentation Order of nuns have possessed a Convent with its school, where Mrs. Mary Ann Smith, had by solemn vows, devoted her life to do what good she could. The famine was sore in the land; the children who attended the school wanted bread; the only employment offered was muslin embroidery, at which it was then calculated that a moderate good worker could earn one penny by ten hours of diligent labour. An old piece of lace came to sight, and excited thought and meditation, and, as in Tynan, it induced the worthy nun to try to copy it, and then to teach the poor to do the same.

A specimen was made in the form of a Handkerchief Trimming, and sent to the Cork Exhibition of 1852, and was sold at a remunerative price. Its excellence was also appreciated, and this, with the solid price, gave the greatest encouragement to this devoted lady to persevere in the work she had begun. There were no external aids or grants to assist her efforts, as in the model schools on the Bath estate. It therefore originated its own model according to the insight and far-sightedness of Mrs. Smith, whose wisdom, patience, and practical energy contributed so much to its success.

The children were not promiscuously taught to do Point Lace. First, the good lady considered what taste or aptitude they had for the work; secondly, what were their circumstances in life. Were they such as lace-making would be calculated to improve, or were they such that it would retard them in learning to do perfect work? Thus discriminating the condition and character of those who came to the National Schools attached to the Convent, she drew aside those who appeared likely to learn, and afterwards to profit by it, and they were separately taught to make lace. Such as learned to do it well became her children.

Success led to greater success. Patterns of old lace were brought or sent. All were carefully examined, every stitch and thread noted, the design studied and improved upon. To the many stitches found, others were added by her own ingenuity. Some specimens contain a variety of twenty-five or more; their varied and altered combination gives it some degree of originality and as the production of Irish skill and genius, it is called Irish Point Lace. The making of the same kind has been taught in many other Convent Schools, New Ross, Kenmare, Killarney, Kinsale, Clonahilty, and Waterford, but everywhere The Youghal is preferred and acknowledged to be the first and best.

The irregularity and uncertainty of orders from private sources was a great drawback to its development and consequent improvement. In 1868 a merchant arranged to take the whole that was produced to whatever extent. This has been so far a permanent benefit to the poor in Youghal. The orders now on hand will give them full employment for the whole year. The magnificent specimen

of this work which is here illustrated, is after an ancient lace-flounce, now in the possession of Mrs. Alfred Morrison, who gave an order to a West End firm for its reproduction, and who has in many ways shown an interest in the industry and been generous in its encouragement.

Having accounted for what is exhibited, the public will judge the various productions by their merits. They are not perfect. Blind praise would only injure, while faithful comment will tend only to aid further advance. In every exhibition since that of 1851, Irish Lace has appeared, and its progress has been advanced. Unless this tends to excite a desire in the workers to excel in their work as well as in the public to appreciate their labours, it will only lead to failure.

A few observations on the importance of this industry to Ireland, and on the conditions which it now demands that its usefulness may be extended, and its benefits rendered permanent, may not be out of place.

The Marquis of Lansdowne stated a very short time since in the House of Lords that there were in Ireland four hundred thousand holdings of less value than ten pounds per annum, and that more than half of these were of less value than ten pounds per annum. Beyond what the Irish peasant can make of his holding, he has no means of subsistence. These holdings are for the most part miles distant from any railway or market town, and it may safely be inferred that there are half a million of Irish compelled by circumstances to subsist on holdings of less than ten pounds value. To them no industry can be more conveniently extended than lace-making; and for their sakes all should be done that can be done to extend the benefits of it.

This exhibition displays what the Irish have done through the benign and encouraging influences of private energy and benevolence rather than by aid of public benefactions. Defects of taste are to be detected, and in many instances the want of such perfectness in work as is to be desired. These defects arise chiefly from this fact that their training is not in the school with its discipline, but in the home with its laxity. The mother through the cares of life has herself degenerated in her lace-work; and though she teaches her daughter, it is only to do the commonest work that the market demands; and they have not the forecast to see how the future would reward them for pains and carefulness in the present. Through Limerick, Cork, and Ardee more especially, the work has so far degenerated as to be of little market or trade value; while in Carrickmacross and Clones there has been little or no improvement for years. Innismacsaint is yet guided by an active patron, and the work improves; while in Youghal the basis of teaching adopted by Miss M. A. Smith is such as maintains and ensures growth and progress.

Learners can only do inferior work. When done the little it brings is acceptable, but to teach poor girls to make cheap lace that brings down ten hours' work to the value of one penny is foolish in the extreme and ought in every way to be discountenanced. On the other hand, every possible inducement and facility should be given to improve the work by improving the discipline, skill and taste of the worker.

Teaching young girls indiscriminately to make lace is not necessary nor desirable; but in districts where no other employment can be given, the schools should be remodelled, and teachers of a higher order—trained and well-experienced in lace work, and also in art-design—should be appointed, who can distinguish the apt and skilful children from the slower and less promising, and train them to earn their livelihood while they are also teaching them to spell, and read, and write.

Prizes for excellence in work and design should be periodically given to the learners, as the best way of inducing them to improve. The late Dr. Steele, director of the Museum of Art and Science in Dublin, informed the Duke of Marlborough, when he last distributed the prizes of the Royal Dublin Society, that he had received an offer from a private source of some twenty or thirty pounds for that object, on condition of space being given on the premises of the Society for an exhibition of the specimens.

YOUGHAL. 7.



Irish Point Lace, Youghal.



Last, new and artistic designs should not only be encouraged by extended patronage, but be specially protected by law. The hope to obtain from the present schools of art in Ireland designs adapted to its lace productions are fruitless and vain ; but no matter from what source such designs may come, those engaged in the manufacture require some simple protective law to prevent their outlay and expenditure being ruthlessly appropriated.

What would Belgium be without its many lace-industries ? What may not Ireland become through her lace-industries ? The past proves of what value they may be. They relieved the misery and desolation of a three-years' famine ; they taught the peasantry to see in their rulers their friends ; and this Exhibition has already convinced them that friends are prepared to give their countenance to the effort ; that the Chief Magistrate of the City of London is earnestly alive to advance the cause of Ireland's prosperity, by encouraging its lace-industries ; and that the heart of their beloved Queen herself is bent on encouraging their efforts, and doing them good. These worthy efforts are ably seconded by the trade—an agency *best* calculated to advance such a cause as this.

BEN LINDSEY,

C. HARRY BIDDLE.









