

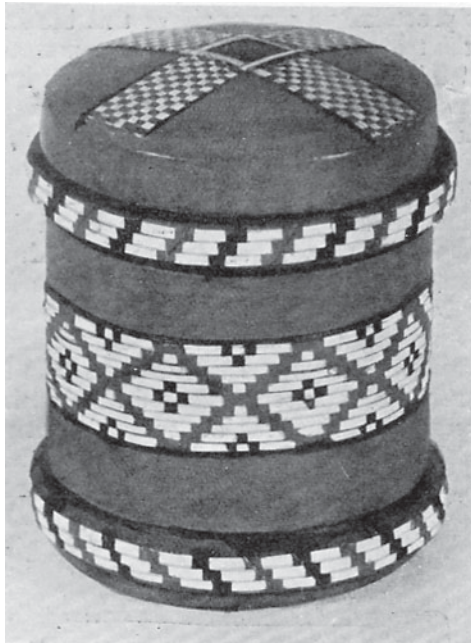
## STUDIO-TALK

France as Point d'Irlande, is concerned, has practically a monopoly of this branch of the trade. Ireland has always remained faithful to the handmade article which has ever been a woman's trade, and was, indeed, first known as "nun's work," convents being the usual centres of the industry, as is still the case in Ireland. ▯

The industry seems to have owed its origin and success always to individual effort, and this was especially the case in the black famine years of 1846-48, when lace-making took a real hold in Ireland. Nowhere perhaps was the distress of the peasantry more deeply realised than in the Presentation Convent at Youghal, where the Reverend Mother, Mary Magdalen Gould, had already exhausted all her re-

**B**ELFAST.—Two very fine examples of Irish lace are reproduced on page 119, both of them being from the collection of Messrs. Robinson & Cleaver of this city, and it may be of interest to enumerate briefly the chief facts in connection with the industry and the various kinds that are made. The term "Irish lace" is somewhat of a misnomer, inasmuch as there never was anything of the kind native to the country, all Irish laces being copies of continental originals introduced into Ireland at a comparatively recent date. Nevertheless, the peasant women have shown such an aptitude for this class of work that Ireland now ranks with France, Belgium and England as one of the principal lace producing countries of Europe, and, as far as Irish crochet, known in

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LEATHER COVERED CIGARETTE  
CANISTER FROM WEST AFRICA  
(Lent by Mrs. Onabolu, St. John's  
Wood Art School—see p. 114)

sources in the endeavour to relieve their wants. It was then that Mother M. A. Smith, chancing to discover a small piece of old Italian lace in the Convent treasure-chest, was inspired with the idea that here lay the means of helping those who were incapable of helping themselves. Taking the old lace carefully to pieces, she examined all the stitches till she succeeded in mastering their details, devised a method by which they might be reproduced, and then teaching the new art to a few of her cleverest pupils, she soon had a number of expert lace-makers under her instruction. From copying, the workers before long progressed to originating stitches and designs, and now Irish Point is justly celebrated for its beauty and artistic merit. ▯

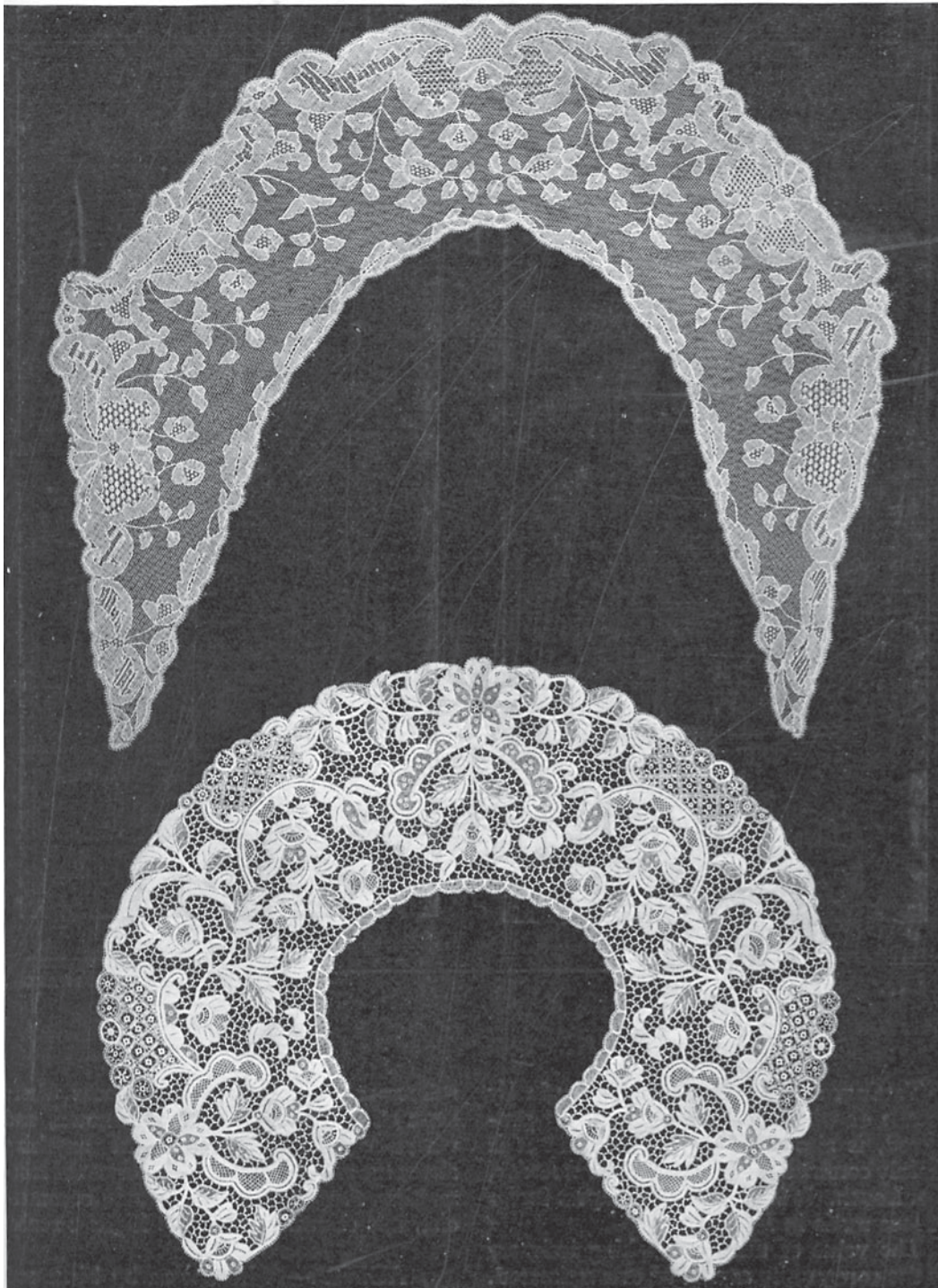
It is characteristic of the lace that it is entirely worked with the needle and is therefore sometimes called "Needle-point," and in making it the utmost care is shown. This lace has the great merit of being very durable as well as exquisite in texture and design. The chief centres of the

industry are at Youghal, New Ross, Kenmare, Killarney, Kinsale and Waterford. The work of the Convent School at Youghal, where it was first made, is, indeed, so favourably known that when the ladies of the City of Belfast decided, at the time of the Coronation, to offer to Queen Mary the gift of a Court Train of Irish Needlepoint, Messrs. Robinson & Cleaver, who were entrusted with the carrying out of the order, gave the work into the hands of the Sisters, and in the record time of six months the almost impossible task was completed, 60 highly skilled workers being continuously occupied in the production of this most beautiful and costly example of the lace-makers' art. ▯ ▯ ▯

Limerick lace, originated by Charles Walker, an Englishman, in 1829, formerly ranked next to Irish point in popularity, though that is no longer the case, Carrickmacross having at the present time the greater vogue. Limerick lace is more strictly an embroidery than a lace if one uses the term lace in any very restricted sense. Carrickmacross has been produced in Co. Monaghan since about 1820, when Mrs. Grey Porter, wife of the then rector of Dunnamoyne, taught her maid Ann Steadman to copy a specimen of appliqué lace brought from Italy. ▯ ▯ ▯

Rose Point, or Inishmacsaint, is another lace copied from an old Italian model, in this case Venice Rose Point being the original employed, and it also owes its introduction into Ireland to the great Famine. In 1855 the centre of the industry was removed from Co. Armagh to the shores of Lough Erne, and it is from its picturesque second home, Inishmacsaint in Co. Fermanagh, that the lace takes its Irish name.

Irish crochet is perhaps the most distinctively Irish product in the line of lace. It was originally an imitation of Spanish and Venetian guipure, but has far outdistanced its originals in point of beauty, grace and ingenuity of design, all of which it owes to the skill and artistic sense of the Irish worker. Most of this lace comes from Co. Monaghan, while the Carmelite Convent, New Ross, is also noted for its manufacture; but, indeed, there is scarcely a cottage in the country where at least one member of the family is not engaged in plying a crochet hook. ▯ ▯ ▯



LIMERICK LACE (TOP)  
IRISH POINT (BOTTOM)  
(The property of Robinson & Cleaver,  
Ltd., Belfast)

Tatting, made with a small shuttle by means of which loops and knots are produced, is also made in Ireland, but it is mainly confined to the district about Ardee, Co. Louth. It is one of the cheapest forms of lace made in Ireland.   ❧   ❧   ❧

The value of this lace-making industry to the community cannot be overestimated. Many a mother or delicate daughter is able to add to her income without having to abandon the shelter of her own fireside, that familiar hearth so dear to every Irish heart. It also introduces an element of

refinement and culture into places where little of that sort of thing is known, and where opportunities to learn anything about art are rare. The importance of lace-making, therefore, is not merely commercial, but educational in the highest sense.