



A FEW years ago, when cycling from Bedford to Northampton, I passed through the village of Lavendon, when my attention was directed to a couple of elderly women sitting outside their cottage door, busily working at pillow-lace. It was a gloriously sunny morning, so I dismounted and had a chat with the good ladies. I found that the remuneration for lace-making had gradually fallen very low, and that at the present time one halfpenny per hour was about the average earnings of a lace-worker. I was much interested in the matter, and requested one of the workers to procure for me a pillow, bobbins, etc., fitted up exactly like her own, and send it to my address with the account. This she kindly promised to do. In due time the "pillow" arrived, with all the necessary paraphernalia. In the account each item was duly charged, and at the end "trouble" was entered at eighteenpence. This

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I thought very little, but when I considered that it was equal to thirty-six hours at lace-making, probably the good woman considered she was fairly recompensed for her trouble. Subsequently I obtained the lace-makers' stool here illustrated, now becoming very rare, but at one time in general use. It stands two feet from the floor; the table is, roughly, 11 inches square, so that four workers can sit at one stool. Four octagonal uprights are let into the table. Each of these has a hole pierced in the top to the depth of about 4 inches; into each a glass globe is inserted. The globe has a neck of about 3 inches, which is let into the wood; the weight of the glass is borne by the upright. Each globe is filled with water, and tightly corked at the end of the neck.

In the centre of the stool is the candle-holder. This can be adjusted to the required height, so that the candle can be raised as it burns away. The light of the candle shining through each water-bowl sheds a strong ray of light upon the exact spot where the lace-maker is working—the height of ingenuity and economy, enabling four workers to participate in the light of one candle. Sometimes the globes are made of tinted glass.

I understand that watch-makers and jewellers even yet use a glass globe of this description, and concentrate the rays of light in the same way.



LACE MAKERS' STOOL