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SKETCHES OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

AMERICAN THREAD LACE.

It is taught in our schools that fine lace is made in Europe, and that it was first designed and made by a Belgian woman, as a means of obtaining a livelihood. It is also said that after the business had been, for many years, principally in the hands of the large capitalist and manufacturer, some of the wealthy ladies of Brussels and Paris have, within a few years, succeeded in effecting a revival of the art, as such, in the boudoir and parlor of the private family.

But few who come here are prepared to see such a display of American-made thread lace as is shown in the Women's Pavilion. And the specimens are from various makers, located at points widely distant from each other. Among others may be noticed Mrs. Rachel Stansbury, of 241 Fifth street, Jersey City, who shows the finished lace and also the common form of lap cushion used in making it. This cushion is about twelve or fourteen inches across, round, with a flat wooden bottom, the top being a firm cushion about three inches deep, upon the cover of which the pattern intended to be made is first marked out. This cushion being in the lap of the weaver, she puts certain pins into the pattern, to guide and assist her in forming the work, and taking a number of little spools of thread, she interlaces them with each other and around the pins with great rapidity. Starting upon the outer edge of the cushion, she works towards herself, moving the pins forward as the work progresses, until it gets inconveniently near her, when she "fleets" the whole back to the outer edge of the cushion, and repeats the operation.

Here are also samples and card of the "Misses Skuse, designers and manufacturers of Irish point lace, at 269 Shawmut avenue, Boston." This smacks of business, and gives the impression that making lace by hand is not merely a ladies' amusement on this continent.

Fine work is shown by the Sisters of St. Joseph's, of San Augustine, Florida; and the sample of Spanish work (a cushion cover) by Miss Sofia Bravo, of the same place, is curious and rich.

In the accompanying sketch is shown the cushion exhibited here, with specimens of her skill, by Josepha Eck, of 134 Washington avenue, St. Louis, Mo. The sketch shows the position and manner of handling the spools. It will be noticed that this cushion is made round, or properly speaking cylindrical, resting upon a neat wooden trestle of small size. The pattern may be worked continuously, and by turning the cushion as the work progresses, the position of the pins is at all times kept the same as regards the worker.

From the ease and latitude in posture it allows, as it can be used either sitting or standing, this appears to have some advantages over the flat cushions; while, from its smaller size, it can be carried in a reticule when spending the day with a friend. But Miss Eck is not limited to a mere ornamental exhibit, but offers to give lessons in the art, and claims to be the first professional teacher in her line in this country, as she naively informs us she "has already taught hundreds, and is ready to teach thousands more." She also says that "the art is easily learned, yet pays better than any other ladies' handiwork."

The cushion used by Ada Sophia Andersen, of Sweden, who is practising the art in the Women's Pavilion, is a combination of both of those described, and the rapidity with which

she handles the spools resembles a skillful piano-player running over the scales.

If, as stated, two or three millions of dollars are sent abroad annually to pay for imported laces, it certainly appears to be a matter of public interest that the art should be fostered here. And on this point it is to be observed that the Belgian and French laces exhibited here claim to have a value in the

upon which our grandmothers prided themselves, are swallowed up by the big factories, while even the more varied art of embroidery is turned over to the sewing-machine, there was little prospect that the next generation would give the ladies of the present time credit for knowing how to do any thing but talk politics or scandal, until this revival of the fashion of making their own lace opened an opportunity for

woman to retrieve her credit and leave her children some thing beautiful, and that will wear, of undoubted quality and always in fashion. How many of our Western belle would gladly be married in lace dress valued at twelve or fifteen hundred dollars or more if she could accomplish it by the expenditure of a year or more of her leisure and spare moments? And here it is we to draw the line between the pride and vanity of laces that fattens upon the labor of others, whether a wealthy father or a poor seamstress and the feeling for the beautiful, taste, patience, perseverance, judgment, skill, and other good wifely qualities shown in beautiful decorations of this class, designed and made by the wearer.

The birds plume their feathers, laying them with care; but even the proverbial lazy-bird employs no professional hand-dresser. The true taste shown by the lady who adorned her breakfast table with flowers of her own raising.

TATTING.

Nearly allied to the above is the art of making tating, but as this has been practised in this country for many years, is less surprising to see it illustrated here. Still, some of the specimens shown caused exclamations of surprise and admiration, even from ladies who have made it all their lives. Among the finest and richest is a handkerchief, the border being about three inches wide, worked of tating exceedingly rich and fine in design the number of the thread being 100. It is not to be wondered at that it took the lady, Miss J. L. Oster, of Philadelphia, three months of leisure as a spare time to complete. Another sample is a small tid by Miss Daisie Cheeney, East Greenwich, Rhode Island (who solicits orders). The design is beautiful, and attracts great attention and commendation. Some fine specimens of guipure, and all of the variations down through crochet as knitting, show evidence of great artistic feeling, and when joined to patience and judgment in choice of materials, always produces work of value.

A. V.



THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1876.—THREAD-LACE MAKING.

aggregate of over two hundred thousand dollars—or as they express it, a million francs—and include laces valued from twelve hundred to four dollars per yard, shawls from fourteen hundred to sixty dollars each, dresses from seven thousand to twelve hundred dollars apiece, handkerchiefs from five hundred to eighty dollars, etc.

There is, certainly, no more valued or characteristic heirloom than the specimen of the artistic skill and taste of the ladies of a family; and while the spinning and weaving,