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The Art of Lace Making

Contributed by Miss Watt.

WITH the dawn of the middle ages the history of lace began to be separated from that of embroidery. The earliest specimens now in existence dates back to the 12th century, and seem to the ordinary observer to be more nearly allied to embroidery than to lace proper. The transition steps were taken by the religious orders, who, finding the embroidery on solid linen with which they decked their altars to be ineffective from a distance (unless worked with materials and colors which would not stand washing), conceived the idea of perforating the linen by open work embroidery called Cutwork, or opus scissum, in the wardrobe accounts of Queen Elizabeth, and Point Coupé, in France. This new work developed into Reticella proper during the 15th and 16th centuries, and was thus the forerunner of all laces.

First Division of Lace. Mediæval Lace.

Mediæval lace divides itself into six different classes: 1, Linen Embroidery and Cut Work; 2, Darned Netting; 3, Drawn Work; 4, Reticella; 5, Knotted Work; 6, Plaited Work.

In illustration let us turn to Section A., No. 1. Here we have a charming adaptation to modern uses of scraps of mediæval lace, pillow lace and the finer forms of linen embroidery. In the three-cornered pieces of the d'oyleys is shown Cut Work, in its simplest form, alone and in conjunction with Reticella; two of the arms of the Maltese Cross are excellent examples of Darned Netting, the designs showing both the earlier ecclesiastic and the later (after 1500) geometrical style. The other two arms are com-