

Balbriggan.

The Sea Mills hosiery factory is on the low cliffs overlooking the pretty little bay of Balbriggan. Across the blue sea may be seen the hazy outlines of the Mourne mountains, while on the right lies the little white town of Balbriggan. A pleasant spot indeed for a factory; the fresh breezes from the sea are blowing through the open windows, and the workers daily and hourly exchange the monotony of toil for scenes of peace and beauty, a contrast to the smoke-laden, heavy air and repulsive ugliness of our factory cities. The word "Balbriggan" has been most unfairly usurped as a generic name for hosiery, and quantities of power-loom German "Balbriggan" hosiery of a cheap and inferior kind have been thrown on the market. This is now at an end, and the name "Balbriggan" will, by law, in future only be applicable to hosiery made at Balbriggan. Behind the warerooms and offices stretches the long weaving shed; on each side are arranged the looms, and complete and thorough ventilation is obtained by large windows on either side. The machines are beautiful and delicate instruments, worked by hand and foot, and they are controlled with such nicety and exactness that the most perfect finish is obtained. Each stocking or sock is woven on three machines before completion, viz.: the topper, middler and footer. Careful attention is paid to the shaping of the hose, which is made in accordance with the natural form of the leg. The ribbing, or top, is woven on the most complicated of the machines, and that which requires the perfect

workman. The elasticity, or "clinging," of the Balbriggan socks is produced by the perfect way this work is done, and by the ribbing being finished with a double elastic welt. The hosiery is finally handed over to the seamer and embroiderer. We found sixteen of the girls sitting in the high, airy room overlooking the sea, all busily engaged, some sewing the seams of socks, and some embroidering the silk socks. Most of the work, however, is given out to be done in the cottages; and is a veritable cottage industry: one hundred girls are thus employed, and the dainty embroideries of the Balbriggan hosiery shown at their exhibit at Manchester are the work of these girls. The last process is to wash, press and box the goods. Hosiery of the finest description can be produced by these methods of hand-work. The complete control which the weaver has over the hand-machine enables him to modify his work to any extent. In proof of this we were shown a stocking made of the finest flax thread, specially ordered for a barbaric princess of the far East. Her "understandings" must be peculiar, for the stocking was like a truncated cone, standing on its apex. These fine hoes are evidently to her liking, however. The firm are now making underwear in their hand-looms. Great attention has been paid to the finish of these goods, and this is an important part with regard to comfort. Unlike much of the foreign underwear, which is made on the assumption that the human form divine is like a Dutch doll, the underwear made at Balbriggan Sea Mills is shaped to fit the figure exactly, and to follow the outward curve of the hips, the shape of the

back and form of the legs. The ribbing round the ankles and wrists, being made as described above, retains its elasticity and fit.

We left the pleasant little factory on the cliffs by the sea with regret. We wish there were hundreds of such all over Ireland, that every stream had its mill, and every village its industry. This would be the true solution of the Irish question, and all who thus try to solve it deserve well of the nation.—*Irish Textile Journal.*

German Trade in Shoddy.

A very large industry has grown in Germany in a product politely termed artificial wool. The raw material of which it is manufactured is old hosiery, flannel, woolen goods, tailors' mungo, old clothes and rags. From this knowledge as to the origin of "artificial wool," we may safely call it genuine and unqualified shoddy. For the last eight or nine years Germany openly acknowledges in her statistics that she has imported on an average over 6,000,000 kilogrammes of this commodity, and further that she has exported a yearly average of the same article of nearly 14,000,000 kilogrammes—that is to say, 140,000 tons of shoddy a year. The import duties levied on the importation of cheviots into Germany in 1880 have to a great extent stopped the trade between Great Britain and Germany in this so-called "artificial wool," which was formerly used in making water-proofs, etc. Berlin and Saxony are the only surviving strongholds of the industry.—*New York Commercial Bulletin.*

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