

Studio-Talk

GHENT.—Foremost among the artistic crafts of Belgium is that of lace-making. For centuries it has flourished amid all the vicissitudes through which the land has passed, and though the French Revolution seriously affected the production at certain centres of the industry adjacent to Flanders, the manufacture of lace in the principal localities in Belgium itself, which for generations have been associated with the craft, has continued to be a national asset of first-rate importance. It is hardly necessary, of course, to say that the greatest war of all time, which for four long, weary years has placed the whole country except a tiny portion under the heel of the invader, has greatly disturbed this industry, as it has every other phase of the national life. But the war has not destroyed it, and now that the tyrant enemy has been banished from the land, the craft will assuredly revive and flourish.

In Flanders especially lace-making has for ages been carried on with ardour ; and it is here that an important undertaking has, even while the country has been subject to the



THE "ECCE HOMO" OF GUIDO RENI WORKED IN LACE BY GIRLS TRAINED AT THE LACE TRADE INSTITUTION AT ZELE, EAST FLANDERS

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domination of the invaders, been inaugurated and pursued with energetic determination—an undertaking having for its object the extension of the industry and the bringing of it to the highest perfection both from an æsthetic and from a technical point of view. This undertaking was begun at Zele, a small town in East Flanders, where the lace-makers formed themselves into a professional association for the production of artistic lace. The institution trains young girls, who are carefully selected for the work, and the results so far have been very successful, surpassing all that has hitherto been achieved. Some of the lace produced by the deft fingers of these girls is shown in the accompanying illustrations, and besides motives such as these, they produce many designs of a modern character, in all of which they display remarkable skill.

The institution just mentioned has been in existence for three years. It is continually extending its work and has a great future in prospect. It is not, however, a money-making institution; its aim is simply to assure to the lace-makers, over and above their technical education, a salary in proportion to the work which they produce, and thus to improve the pre-war conditions of their work and to aid them in raising themselves morally. It is thus a work of national reconstruction. Flanders, devastated and ruined by these long and



“THE BELFRY AT BRUGES.” WORKED IN LACE BY GIRLS TRAINED AT THE LACE TRADE INSTITUTION AT ZELE, EAST FLANDERS

terrible years of war, must rise again from the ruins in all her former splendour. M. V.



ARMORIAL DESIGN WORKED IN LACE BY GIRLS AT THE LACE TRADE INSTITUTION, ZELE, EAST FLANDERS