

A PRINT IN BLUE AND GREEN. MADE BY NATIVES OF JAVA.

CLEVER FINGERS MAKE BEAUTIFUL FABRICS

By

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TO the deft fingers of the dark-eyed señoritas of the Canary Islands, off the northwest corner of the African continent, is due a very considerable share of the prosperity of that portion of the King of Spain's dominions. Altogether, some 12,000 women and girls are engaged in the industry, for so it can now be called, the majority of them residing at Teneriffe—famous the world over for its wonderful

mountain peak, a fascinating landmark to those who "go down to the sea in ships" between Europe and South Africa.

Calado is the local word for hand-drawn threadwork, the great merit of which lies in its beauty of design and simplicity of execution. The raw material consists of linen, which is imported in large quantities from Ireland, which still holds her own in the linen industry, notwithstanding the fierce competition of Germany and

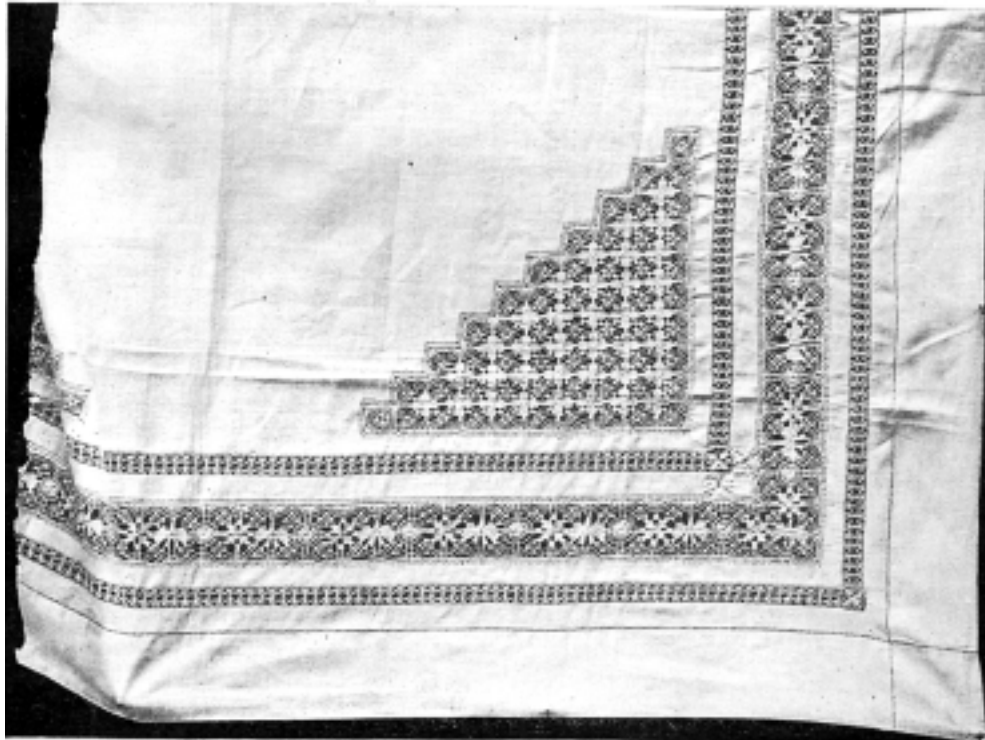


BATIK HANGINGS SHOWN AT THE ARTS EXHIBITION AT THE HAGUE.

other European countries. Calado work is indigenous to the Canaries and has been carried on there for local use for generations. Its origin, however, is "wropt in mistry." It is supposed that it was introduced by some political refugees who settled in Teneriffe, but this is by no means certain. Originally the work was of the poorest description, so far as the pattern was concerned and the materials employed. Of late years—thanks to careful organization and the introduction of superior qualities of linen—Calado work has vastly improved and is now in great vogue, whilst the peasant women engaged in it have made great strides as regards skill and manipulation. But not all the thread-work produced in the Canary Islands today is of uniform quality. Much of it is, indeed, of a very shoddy character—the product of unskilful workers who are only too ready to trade on the reputation of their cleverer sisters. Not infrequently visitors to these beautiful islands are offered bad work which the would-be

sellers know only too well would not be looked at by the regular exporters, and thus the industry as such suffers considerable harm.

As an article of export the history of Calado work is quite modern. Less than twenty years ago an observant young Englishman, Mr. J. Audley Sparrow, went out to Teneriffe for the benefit of his health and was so impressed by the possibilities of the drawn-thread work and the skill and industry of the workers that he set to work to reorganize the whole thing and put the product on a business basis as an article of export. At first he found that "the trade" in England regarded the Calado work with no very great favor. He worked to such good purpose that he was ultimately able to arrange for a regular export of Calado goods to London and, subsequently, to other parts of the continent and America. Mr. Osbert Ward in his book on "The Vale of Orotava," relates in detail how Mr. Sparrow was first attracted to Calado work and foresaw its great possi-



SPECIMEN OF CALADO WORK.



EMPLOYEES IN A CALADO FACTORY, ON TENERIFFE, ONE OF THE CANARY ISLANDS.

bilities as a revenue producer. "He procured books of designs," says Mr. Ward, "of drawn work from other countries, vigorously set to work and organized the proper development of the industry."

Needless to say, Mr. Sparrow's example was duly emulated, and today the local Calado trade is in the hands of two British and two German firms, the lion's

share, it is believed, falling to the former. The Teneriffe peasants are adepts at work of the kind—especially drawn-thread work and cushion lace work. The former is that open work embroidery in which some of the threads of the linen material are drawn out, the remaining threads being stitched into lace patterns. The resultant effects appear to be that which is technically known as "an insertion," but as a matter of fact the pattern is an integral part of the material itself.

The lace work—rueda, as it is called—consists of wheels or medallions, made by winding thread round pins on a cushion and then with a needle completing the desired design by knotting and darning. Some of the Calado work is of exquisite design and workmanship and of considerable value. Especially was this the case with the bed set of drawn-thread and lace work which was specially made by the loyal islanders and given as a wedding present to King Alfonso of Spain and his queen, Victoria. Even finer was the christening robe presented as a gift on



AN ART NOUVEAU SETTEE UPHOLSTERED IN LEATHER AND ORNAMENTED WITH BATIK DECORATIONS.

the occasion of the birth of the heir to the royal couple. The robe was cut on the latest Paris model and was certainly one of the handsomest of the many superb gifts presented to the proud young Queen of Spain.

Batik making is one of the oldest arts in the world, having been done by the native Javanese women and children for many generations. For some years past several artists in Holland have tried to follow the Javanese methods in ornamenting fabrics but the honor of really developing Batik making into a beautiful craft is due to the energy of a woman. Mrs. Wegerif Granestein has not confined her work to cotton fabrics, like the Javanese, but has worked on parchment, leather, silk, and velvet, giving a wide and varied scope to the uses of her craft. She has worked in conjunction with well known architects, and has introduced Batik into original decorative schemes that have made her work recognized in Europe. So successful has she been, that many orders have come to her, and she now employs thirty craft workers in her studio who do this work under her supervision. These beautiful hangings can be seen at most of the Arts and Crafts exhibitions in Europe and within the last year the knowledge of the work has spread to England and beautiful hangings can now be obtained from private studios in London.

As this has proved a lucrative employment to those who have taken it up, it is to be hoped that we will not be behind-hand in developing Batik to the best of our ability.

The bold barbaric designs made by the natives of Java have usually been adhered to, but there is no reason why other motifs should not be developed. Mrs. Wegerif Granestein makes many of her designs after the art nouveau, this style being still so popular in some countries in Europe. In this country it would seem more appropriate to develop it along Indian lines. The rather crude designs of the latter would lend them-



A FAMILY THAT, WORKING OUTSIDE THE FACTORY, CREATES FABRICS AT HOME.

selves well to the technique of this interesting art.

The actual process of Batik making is primitive in the extreme. It is merely the protection of certain parts of the material by the application of hot wax. The material is emersed in dye which does not color the parts protected by the wax.

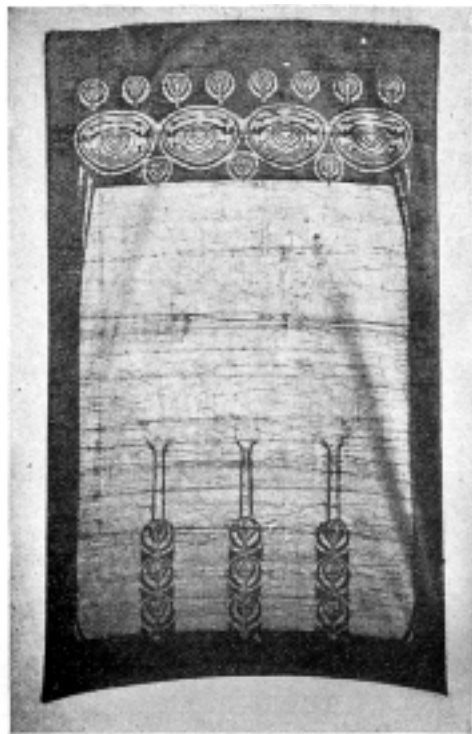
In Java the batik makers do not draw the design directly onto the material but apply the wax by means of an instrument called a tjanting onto the cloth. It is not necessary to use a tjanting to get the desired results, as this can be accom-



CHAIR COVERED WITH VELOUR DESIGNED IN BATIK OF DARK COLOR.



CHRISTENING ROBE OF THE HEIR TO THE SPANISH THRONE.
This was woven at Teneriffe and presented to the Royal couple.



A PIECE OF BATIK THAT HAS A PLACE IN ONE OF THE FAMOUS STUDIOS AT APeldoorn, HOLLAND.
This bit of art work is highly prized by the Dutch.

plished by means of a stencil, or by using a confectioner's tool for covering cakes with sugar. This enables batik to be made without drawing it first, a plan to be recommended when the worker is an artist, but for a woman who is only capable with her hands the stencil would be much more practical. If the confectioner's tool is used; however, the hot wax is put in the reservoir, which is refilled from a pan of boiling wax as it empties itself onto the material.

When the design is covered by the wax, the material is dipped in a dye bath which must not be above the heat of sixty degrees or it will melt the wax, and the batik will be spoiled. When several colors are used repeated applications of wax and several dippings in the dye are required to get the desired results. As this is somewhat a tedious process batik is usually done in one color, while the natural color of the ground is left to form the design.

When a dark design on a light ground is planned the wax is applied on the background and the design formed by dyeing the uncovered parts. It is needless to say that this takes considerably more time than the other. The wax cracks when applied in large masses, and fissures of color appear through the material giving the appearance of veined marble, and adds no little to the interesting qualities of the work. It will be noticed that most of our illustrations are all done with a dark pattern on a light ground. I have seen quite a number of batiks with a light pattern on a dark ground and they are just as beautiful as those in the accompanying illustrations.

In cutting a stencil for a dark pattern on a light ground it will be necessary to cut out the background of the design.

Batik is particularly beautiful when used for ornamenting leather. Crinkled sheep skin is well adapted to this interesting form of decoration.