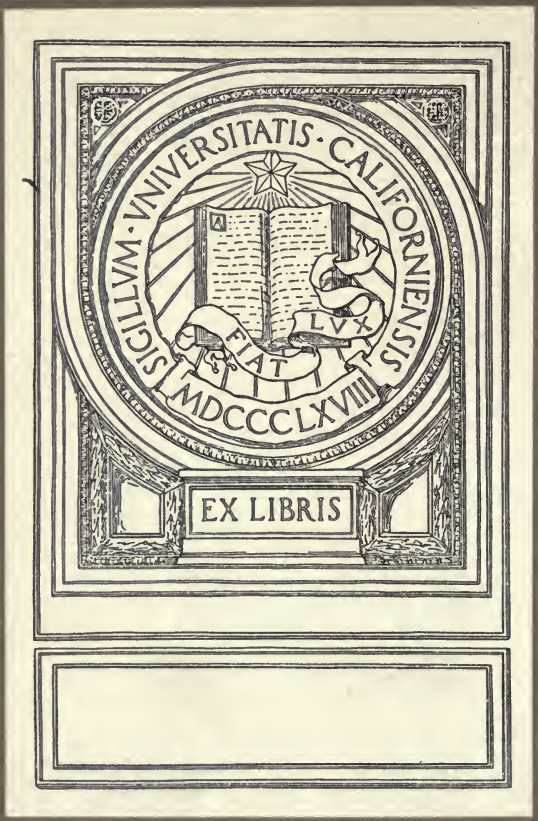

SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

ENGLISH EMBROIDERY

PORTION OF A TUNIC, embroidered with silks and silver-gilt threads on linen. Elizabethan period. (*In the possession of Mrs. Buxton.*) *See page* 75

ENGLISH EMBROIDERY

BY

A. F. KENDRICK

LONDON
B. T. BATSFORD

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

COLOURED PLATES

OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PREFACE

IT is hoped that this volume will form a reliable guide through the main ways of an intricate subject. To describe every important example of English embroidery existing would require a wider experience and unlimited space. It has not been thought necessary to swell the text by pointing out every occasion where the views therein expressed differ from those formulated by other writers. Examples in my opinion undoubtedly English, are described in various works as French, Burgundian, Flemish, German, or Italian—frequently, of course, by writers who have had little opportunity of examining the numerous embroideries showing similar characteristics still remaining in this country. The question of stitchery has not been discussed. Many excellent works dealing with that side of the question have already been published, notably, "La Broderie," by

M. L. De Farcy, and "Needlework as Art," by Lady Marion Alford. The principal works which I have consulted are mentioned in the footnotes throughout the text. Many of the illustrations are taken from examples easily accessible to readers who may wish to examine the originals for themselves. Thanks are due to those private owners whose embroideries, in every case of some special interest, have also been illustrated. I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Palmer for valued suggestions, and to my wife for help in various ways.

A. F. K.

November, 1904.

While this is passing through the press, it is announced that the cope from Ascoli (see Plates 8 and 9, and p. 34), not long ago acquired by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, has been generously presented by him to the Italian Government.

ENGLISH EMBROIDERY

THE FIRST CHAPTER

INTRODUCTORY

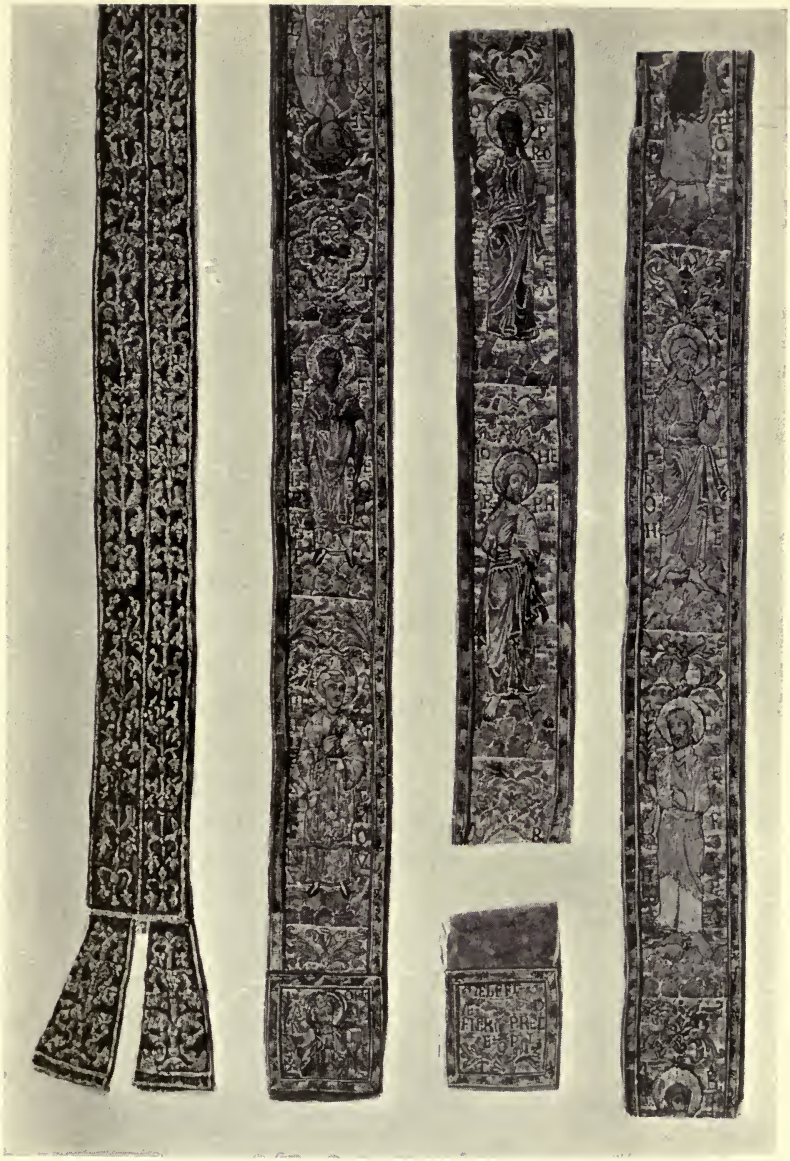
HE history of needlecraft holds a prominent place in the art record of any country. The use of the needle must have become necessary with the very first beginnings of civilization, and plain stitching instinctively develops into ornamental embroidery of some sort. In our own country the craft has always been popular, even at times when lack of taste has rendered the results of no value from an æsthetic point of view.

The earliest known specimens of English decorative needlework carry us back to a period when the social life of the women of England was very different from what it has been during the past few centuries, and they bear the mark of the times which produced them. There is little likelihood that such a work as the Syon cope will ever again be attempted with success. It is the legacy of

an age that has vanished. The feudal castle, or manor house, was the school both for the sons and daughters of the knights and gentry around. There the youth learnt the profession of arms, and the rudiments of whatever skill he afterwards attained in knightly exercises. There, too, his sister acquired the accomplishments suited to her station, and, among them, learned to spin, to weave, and to sew.

The life of the men was naturally more varied than that of their wives and sisters. They were often away on military or political expeditions, when the best security for those left behind was to be found within the strong walls of their dwellings. Books were few, and reading was a more serious matter than it is to-day. Many an hour, which would otherwise have passed idly and tediously, was spent at needlework. In this way it happened that years of labour might be devoted to a single task, and the production of these wonderful monuments of skill and patience became possible.

The circumstances favourable to embroidery in the house, are of double force in the case of the cloister. Records show that embroidery was much practised in convents; and not only there, but in monasteries



FRAGMENTS OF STOLE AND MANIPLE, embroidered in coloured silks and gold thread on linen ground, found in the tomb of St. Cuthbert, in Durham Cathedral. X century. *See page* 9

also, and even by men elsewhere. The names of many men, famous in their day for their skill in needlework, have survived from the Middle Ages, although it would be hard to single out any work done by them in this country.*

The inventories of our cathedrals and parish churches testify to the multitudes of vestments and kindred embroideries produced in the Middle Ages. The number to be seen to-day by no means corresponds with such accounts; but it is, nevertheless, considerable. There can be no doubt that many have been wantonly destroyed—some for the sake of the precious materials contained in them,† and others for no reason at all. The lasting character of the materials has rendered it possible for many that have survived to be still in an excellent state of preservation. Some have found their way into museums, others still remain in cathedrals and churches in

* Names of men as embroiderers occur on embroideries produced in the fourteenth century in Italy.

† Archbishop Lanfranc's worn-out chasubles and copes were reduced to ashes in 1371–3, for the sake of the gold in the embroidery. (See J. Wickham Legg and W. H. St. John Hope, "Inventories of Christchurch, Canterbury," p. 13.)

England—others, again, are in private hands. On looking farther afield, we find ample witness to the truth of the statement that the *opus Anglicanum* obtained a reputation in mediæval times that extended far beyond the country of its production. In Italy and Spain especially, many a fine vestment bears unmistakable evidence of an English origin. Some were intended originally as offerings to Rome,* and were distributed by the popes, in their turn, to churches elsewhere; others were scattered at the suppression of the monasteries in this country under Henry VIII., and, if not destroyed or converted to secular uses, were taken abroad by refugees.

The events just related, and the general progress of the Reformation in England, caused a notable decline in the demand for ecclesiastical work. But there was still ample scope for industry in the way of domestic adornment and costume. Although under changed conditions, the popularity of the art among the ladies of England remained,

* As early as the ninth century, we find two *pallia* included among King Alfred's offerings to Rome. The term *opus Anglicanum* occurs several times in an inventory of the Holy See in 1295.

perhaps, as great as ever. Royal and noble personages still passed many hours of the day in needlework. Catherine of Aragon, Mary Tudor, Elizabeth, and Mary Queen of Scots, were all very fond of embroidery. Portraits of the period show the extent to which the needle was used for the adornment of costumes, and many actual examples exist to illustrate the skill and care with which the work was produced.

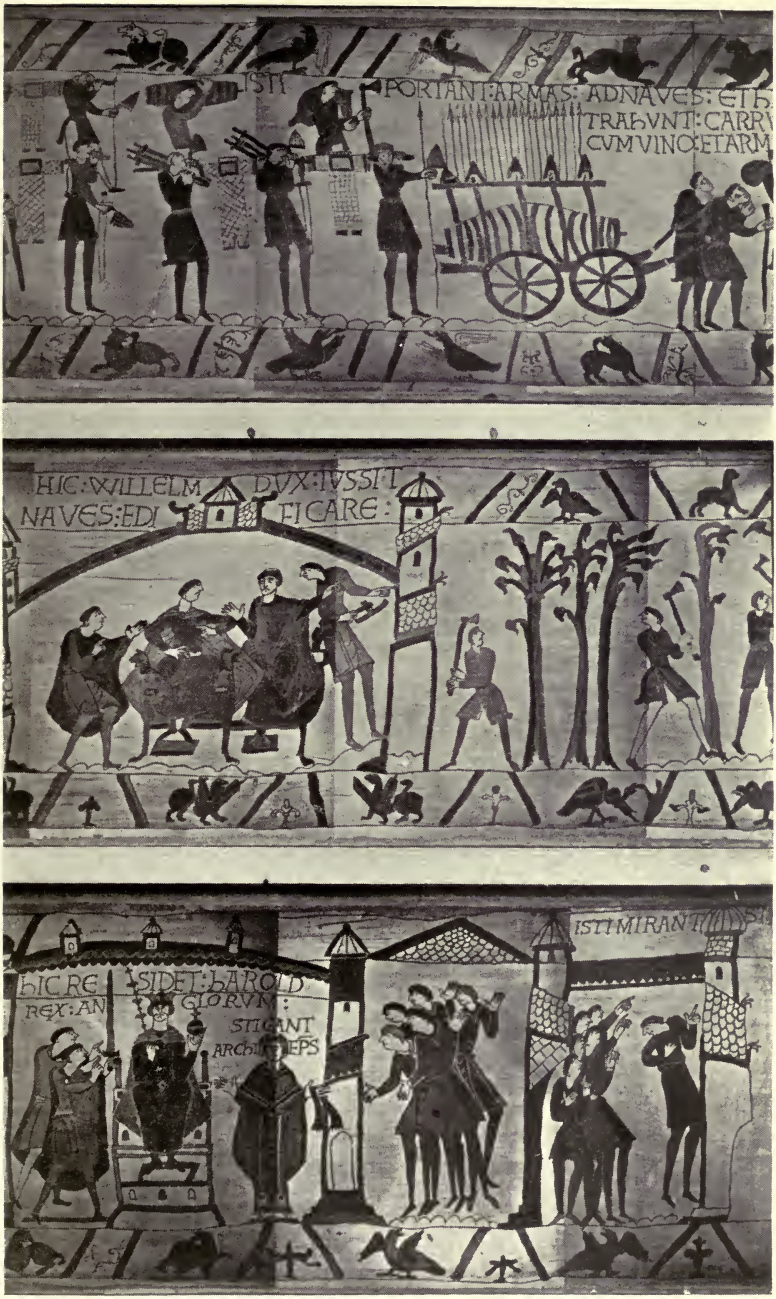
In Stuart times there was no decline in the popularity of needlework, though we are bound to admit that the designs leave much to be desired. The art, however, survived its many vicissitudes, and from the earliest times to the present there are landmarks enough to show that needlework has remained throughout a great national art.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

NOT long after the Anglo-Saxons had established a permanent footing in this country, their evangelization began from Iona by way of the north, and from Rome by the south-east. Under the humanising influence of Christianity, and with the advantages of a more settled life, they became skilled in the arts, especially in metal-work, ivory carving, illumination, and needlework. The last two arts, in fact—painting with the brush on parchment, and with the needle on woven fabrics—seem in general to have flourished together. Anglo-Saxon ladies of all ranks, not excluding royal personages, spent much of their time at embroidery. Little or nothing remains of domestic needlework of this period, but it was in accordance with the spirit of the times that their best efforts should be devoted to the service of religion. It is therefore safe to judge of their skill in general from the surviving ecclesiastical works.

Little more than a century after the arrival



PORTIONS OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY. XI century

See page 15

of St. Augustine, Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne (d. 709), the scholar and builder, speaks of the skill of Englishwomen in needlework. By this time embroidery must have been much practised in the convents. At the Council of Clovesho (Cliffe-at-Hoo), in the year 747, nuns were admonished to occupy themselves in reading and in singing psalms rather than in weaving and embroidering robes. It is hardly likely that the aim was to discourage the art of needlework in the service of the Church. It may be that the skill which might have been employed with this object was too greatly diverted in the direction of personal adornment.

There are numerous instances in the chronicles and church records of the Middle Ages of ordinary wearing apparel being converted into vestments or ornaments for Church use. It was not unusual for kings and persons of rank to present their coronation robes or mantles for this purpose. A mantle presented to the monks of Ely by King Edgar (956–978), was transformed into a cope, and this same king presented his coronation robe to the Abbey of Glastonbury, to form a decoration for the altar. The coronation mantle presented by Witlaf, King

of Mercia, in the year 833, to the monastery of Croyland was probably made use of in some such manner. This monastery also owed two precious vestments to the liberality of King Harold.

The remarkable list of gifts by King Athelstan, in 934, to the shrine of St. Cuthbert, at Chester-le-Street, includes, among other offerings, two chasubles, an alb, a stole and maniple (see p. 9), a girdle, three altar-cloths, seven robes, and three curtains.*

It is most probable that the greater number of the subjects for embroideries were designed by the clergy or by monks, as they were best acquainted with the sacred history and the legends of the saints. Archbishop Dunstan, for example—himself a skilled handicraftsman—is known to have designed for embroideries.

Among royal workers may be mentioned Eadgyth, or Edith, the queen of Edward the Confessor. William of Malmesbury states that this lady herself embroidered the rich robes worn by the king at festivals.

Enough has perhaps been said to show the wide popularity of embroidered work in

* See "St. Cuthbert," by J. Raine, M.A., p. 51.

these early times. We are fortunately not entirely dependent on documentary records.

It was customary from very early times to bury kings in their robes, and ecclesiastics in their vestments, and at the translation of the remains of a saint or especially revered personage, the body was often wrapped in later vestments before re-burial. It thus happens that a few fragments of great archæological interest have been preserved to the present day.

There are in the library of Durham Cathedral some striking examples of Anglo-Saxon needlework, having inscriptions which definitely settle their origin.

They are a stole and a maniple, embroidered in coloured silks—red, green, blue, and purple (now much discoloured)—and gold thread on a linen ground, and lined with silk (Plate 1). These precious relics were found in the cathedral in the tomb of St. Cuthbert in 1826–7. The stole is now in five pieces. In the centre was represented the Holy Lamb (AGNV $\overline{\text{DI}}$)* with probably six prophets on either side. Eleven of the twelve figures remain, though

* The letters in capitals represent the inscriptions as far as they can now be traced.

some are fragmentary. They are Jeremiah (. . . IAS PROPHET), Daniel (DANIEL PROPHETA), Amos (AMOS PROPHETA), Obadiah (ABDI . . .), Hosea (OSE PROPHETA), Joel (IOHEL PROPHETA), Habakkuk (ABA . . .), Jonah (IONAS PROPHE . . . A), Zechariah (ZACHA . . .), Nahum (NAVVM PROPHETA), and another with the word PROPHETA alone remaining. At the two ends are half-length figures of St. James the Apostle * (IACOBVS APOST) and St. Thomas (THOMAS APOST). On the reverse side at these ends occur the inscriptions: AELFFLAED FIERI PRECEPIT and PIO EPISCOPO FRIDESTANO.

The maniple is in better preservation. In the middle is represented the Right Hand of the Almighty (DEXTERA DI) issuing from clouds, with two saints on either side —St. Sixtus (SCS SYXTVS EPISCP) and St. Lawrence (LAVRENTIVS DIACONVS) on the right, and St. Gregory the Great (SCS GREGORIVS PAP . . .) and Peter the Deacon (PETRVS DIACONVS) on the left.

* It seems more probable that the figure of St. John the Evangelist, ascribed to the stole by Raine, belongs to the maniple.

FRAGMENTS OF VESTMENTS of embroidered silk, preserved in the library at Worcester Cathedral. XII century. *See page* 22

At the ends are half-length figures of St. John the Evangelist (IOHANNES EV̄I) and St. John the Baptist (IOHANNES B̄). On the ends at the reverse side occur the same inscriptions as on the stole ends. These inscriptions are of the utmost importance, recording as they do that the stole and maniple were made by order of Aelfflaeda, for Bishop Fridestan. Aelfflaeda was queen of Edward the Elder,* to whom she was married about the year 900, dying some sixteen years later. Bishop Fridestan presided over the see of Winchester from 905 to 931.

The question arises how these vestments, made for a Bishop of Winchester, found their way to Durham. St. Cuthbert (d. 687), in whose tomb they were placed, was the last of the line of Irish bishops at Lindisfarne. The bones of this holy man were much revered. After many wanderings, they found a resting-place at Chester-le-Street in 833, being there for more than a century. The body was thence removed to Durham, where it has ever since remained, except for a short period (in 1069–70) when the

* This king's daughters, according to William of Malmesbury, were skilful needlewomen.

monks, flying from William the Conqueror's approach, carried it to Lindisfarne for safety. The shrine, while at Chester-le-Street, was visited in the year 934 by King Athelstan, who is recorded to have offered among other things a stole and maniple. Canon Raine, who records these facts,* concludes that the stole and maniple are those which have been so wonderfully preserved to us; and as Athelstan was stepson of Aelfflaeda, whose name appears on the vestments, there is every probability of such being the case.† The embroideries are among the most precious existing relics of Anglo-Saxon art. The figures are represented full-length, each raised on a curious mound, and having a canopy of foliage above. As might be expected, they show a good deal of the Byzantine conventionality which was then so prevalent. The work is beautifully executed, and speaks eloquently of the skill of the Anglo-Saxon needlewomen, foreshadowing the wonderful work which three centuries later was to become so famous throughout Europe.

* "Saint Cuthbert," by J. Raine, M.A. (Durham, 1828). See also Architectural and Archæological Society of Durham, "Transactions," vol. i. p. 57.

† The maniple partly illustrated on the left in Plate 1, is also from the tomb of St. Cuthbert, but is of later date.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

NORMAN AND EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD

HE Norman Conquest does not seem to have given any appreciable check to the production of embroideries in England. Among the documents bearing on the period, the will of Matilda, queen of William the Conqueror, is of some interest. It was made the year of her death (1083), and is now preserved in the National Library in Paris. Among her benefactions is the following—

"I give to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity [at Caen, founded by herself] my tunic, worked at Winchester by Alderet's wife, and the mantle embroidered with gold, which is in my chamber, to make a cope. Of my two golden girdles, I give that which is ornamented with emblems for the purpose of suspending the lamp before the great altar. I give my large candelabra, made at Saint Lo, my crown, my sceptre, my cups in their cases, another cup made in England, with all my horse-trappings, and all my vessels except

those which I may have already disposed of in my lifetime; and lastly, I give the lands of Quetchou in Cotentin, with two dwellings in England. And I have made all these bequests with the consent of my husband."*

This document affords a striking illustration of the conversion of secular articles to ecclesiastical uses.

There is a tradition that this same queen despoiled the Abbey of Abingdon of its richest vestments, refusing to be put off with inferior ones.†

In the following century, there is a further instance on record of English embroideries having been sent out of the country. A present of such to an English pope would naturally be acceptable. It is therefore not surprising that when Robert, Abbot of St. Albans, was visiting Pope Adrian IV. (Nicholas Breakspear, 1154–1159) at Rome, he should have taken with him, according to Matthew Paris, an offering of three mitres and a pair of sandals, of wonderful

* See *Archæologia,* vol. xvii. (1814), p. 93.

† The attribution of the famous "Bayeux tapestry" to Matilda appears to have originated not many centuries ago, and it may be safely disregarded. (See p. 15.)

FRAGMENTS OF VESTMENTS of embroidered silk, from a tomb in Worcester Cathedral. XIII century. *See page* 23

workmanship, embroidered by Christina, Prioress of Markgate.

The monkish chronicler aforesaid has preserved an anecdote of Pope Innocent IV. which has been often quoted, but cannot well be omitted from a work dealing with the subject. It is said that the pope, admiring some gold-embroidered vestments, and asking where they were made, learnt that they were English. Forthwith, we are told, he caused messages to be sent to the abbots of the Cistercian order in England that he desired to have some gold embroideries sent to him. This incident is assigned to the year 1246. The story in itself is sufficient to show that English work was already becoming famous on the continent of Europe before the middle of the thirteenth century.

Among actual existing examples of the period covered by this chapter, the first place must be assigned to the famous embroidery now preserved in the Museum at Bayeux in Normandy. Although perhaps not strictly English, but rather Norman work, it claims a reference in this book (Plate 2). The work is so well known as the "Bayeux tapestry" that this title must not be interfered with. It is, however, exclusively of needlework, executed

in wools of several colours on a band of linen, measuring more than 230 feet in length. It represents, in a long series of scenes, the history of the Norman conquest of England, explanatory inscriptions in Latin being added to the subjects throughout.

The scenes may be thus briefly described, following the guidance of the Latin inscriptions explaining each subject: (1)* King Edward the Confessor seated on a throne, addresses two persons, one of whom is Harold; (2) Harold rides to Bosham, and (3) enters the church there; (4) he sets sail, and (5 and 6) lands in Ponthieu, (7) where he is apprehended by Count Guy, (8) conducted to Beaurain, and (9) imprisoned there; (10) Harold and Guy parley; (11) Duke William's messengers come to Guy; (12) William's messengers; (13) a messenger comes to Duke William, and (14 and 15) Guy conducts Harold to the Duke, (16 and 17) and they both come to William's palace, (18) where is a certain clerk and Aelfgyva; (19) Duke William and his army come to

* The numbers correspond with those marked at a late period in Roman figures along the upper border of the tapestry. They do not properly indicate the successive scenes, but are used here to facilitate reference.

Mont St. Michel, (20) they cross the river Couesnon, where Harold drags some of them out of the sand; (21) they come to Dol, and (22) Conan flies; (23) Duke William's soldiers fight against the men of Dinan, and (24) Conan holds out the keys; (25) William gives arms to Harold, and (26) comes to Bayeux, (27) where Harold makes an oath to him; (28) Harold returns to England, and (29) comes to King Edward; (30 and 31) King Edward's body is carried to the church of St. Peter the Apostle (Westminster Abbey); (32) King Edward in bed speaks to his vassals, and dies; the crown is given to Harold; (33) Harold enthroned as King of the English (notice the figure of Archbishop Stigand here); (34) his men see the Star; (35) an English ship comes to the land of Duke William, (36, 37, and 38) who gives orders to build ships, (39) which are drawn to the sea; (40) arms are taken to the ship, and a cart is dragged with wine and arms; (41, 42, and 43) Duke William crosses the sea in a great ship, and (44 and 45) comes to Pevensey; (46) the horses go out of the ships, and (47) the knights speed to Hastings to seek food; (48) Wadard; (49) meat is cooked and the servants minister; (50) a

feast is made, and the bishop blesses the food and drink; (51) Bishop Odo, Robert and William; (52) the last commands that a rampart be thrown up at Hastings; the camp; (53) tidings of Harold are brought to William; a house is set on fire; (54) the knights leave Hastings, (55) and come (56) to fight against King Harold; (57 and 58) Duke William asks Vital if he has seen Harold's army; (59) tidings of William's army are announced to Harold; (60 and 61) Duke William exhorts his soldiers (62) to prepare manfully (63) and wisely for the battle (64, 65, and 66) against the army of the English; (67) Leofwyne (68 and 69) and Gyrth, brothers of King Harold, fall; (70) English and French fall in battle at the same time; (71) Bishop Odo, holding a club, (72) rallies the young troops; Duke William; (73) the French fight, and (74 and 75) those who are with Harold fall; (76) King Harold is slain, (77 to 79) and the English take to flight. The tapestry ends here, but at one time it included two or three further scenes.

This elaborate work may seem at first sight to have been intended for domestic ornament, but there are reasons for thinking that such was not the case. To illustrate this

CHASUBLE of blue satin, with embroidery in gold thread and coloured silks. Second half of XIII century. *See pages* 23, 24, *and* 25

point, it may be permitted to refer briefly to a work of similar character, executed in the preceding century, but now entirely lost. It represented the brave deeds of Brihtnoth, ealdorman of the East Saxons, who died fighting with the Danes in the year 991. The embroidery was wrought by his wife, Aethelflaed, and given to the church at Ely. Brihtnoth had, it is true, been a great benefactor to the monastic foundation at Ely, and this circumstance rendered the gift specially appropriate. He had, moreover, fallen in battle with the enemies of Christianity and of Christian institutions. In like manner, the Norman ladies no doubt regarded the expedition of their lords against the forsworn Harold as being of the nature of a crusade. A pictorial record may therefore have been worked by some of these ladies as a gift to some cathedral or monastic foundation in Normandy. Mr. F. R. Fowke * is of opinion that it was ordered by Bishop Odo of Bayeux for his cathedral, and worked by Normans in the vicinity of that city. The evidence of the armour, of the costume, and

* "The Bayeux Tapestry." This work, the most complete and reliable existing on the subject, is the authority for the few facts here recorded.

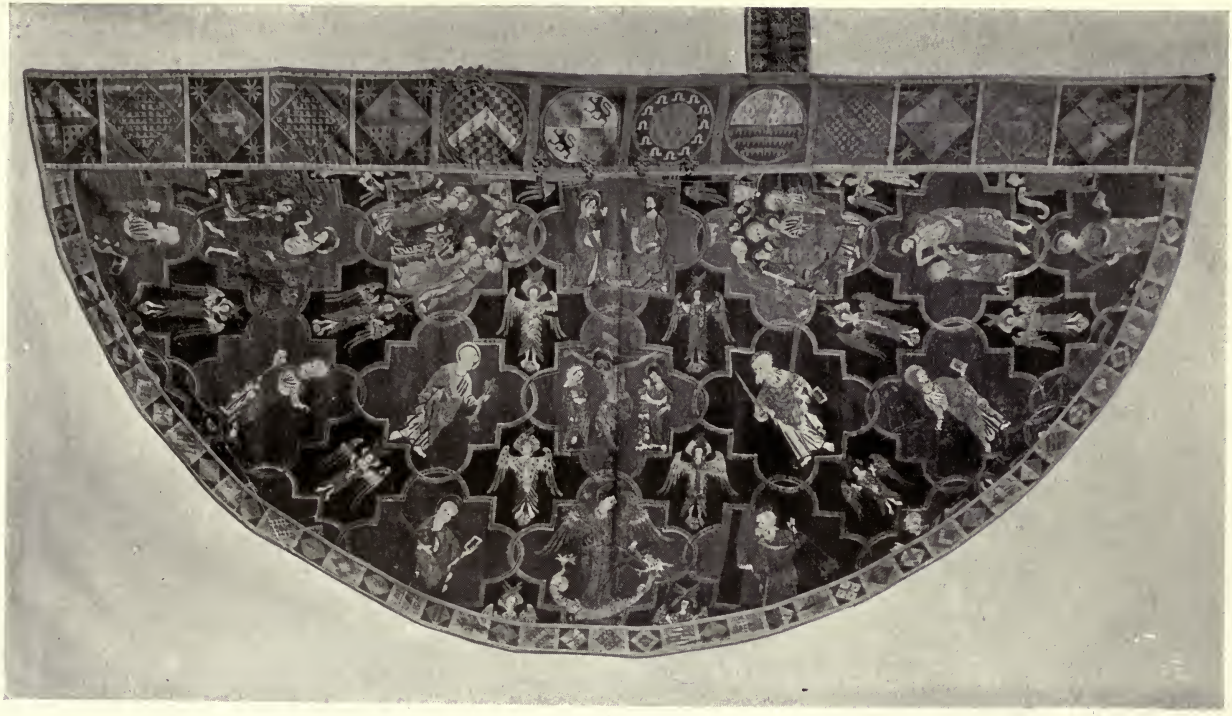
of the style generally, point to the conclusion that the work was done within a few years of the events which it portrays. It can be traced back in documents as far as the year 1476, when it is referred to in an inventory of the ornaments of Bayeux Cathedral.*

At that time it belonged to the cathedral, and was hung round the nave on stated occasions. In the eighteenth century it was still exhibited in the same manner. It is reputed then to have been annually hung up on St. John's Day,† and to have gone exactly round the nave of the cathedral, where it remained for eight days. When not exhibited, the tapestry was kept in a press.

In the time of Napoleon's wars, the tapestry was placed on a transport waggon as a covering, but was rescued by the Commissary of Police. In 1803, it was sent to Paris by order of the First Consul, and shown in the Musée Napoleon, but it was returned in the following year. It was soon afterwards

* "Une tente très longue et étroite de telle à broderie de ymages et escupteaulx faisans representation du conquest d'Angleterre, laquelle est tendue environ la nef de l'église le jour et par les octaves des Reliques" (Feast of Relics, July 1.)

† Ducarel, "Anglo-Norman Antiquities" (1767).



THE SYON COPE, embroidered in gold, silver, and silks of various colours.

Late XIII century

See pages 29, 30, 31, *and* 32

Detail of the Syon Cope.

placed in the Hôtel de Ville at Bayeux, and exhibited by the barbarous method of winding from one cylinder to another. A building was at last erected for its reception, where it has been on view almost without interruption since 1842. In that year it was relined, and the injured portions restored.

Very few examples of English needlework of the twelfth century are known. There is some doubt as to the correctness of the tradition which assigns to Archbishop Thomas à Becket, of Canterbury (martyred 1170), the beautiful chasuble and mitre in Sens Cathedral. The golden scrollwork with which each is embroidered is of a simple and dignified character. They may perhaps be English, but the influence of Byzantine tradition was still dominant, and national characteristics had not strongly developed. We are on safer ground with regard to some important fragments preserved in the library of Worcester Cathedral. These consist of shreds of vestments, taken in the year 1870 from the stone coffin of a bishop, probably William de Blois, who held the see from 1218 to 1236. Some portions of a silken stole and maniple (?) are, beyond doubt, earlier than this bishop's time, and may

well belong to the first half of the preceding century. They are embroidered with gold thread and silks of different colours or shades, although the whole has now become almost a uniform brown. Full-length figures of Apostles and Prophets are separated by plain straight bands. Some of the names may still be read: they are BARTOLOMEVS, IHOAN (*sic*), [Ia]COBBVS, ANDRE[as], PAVLVS, TADEVS, DANIEL.

Two other fragments are of similar work (Plate 3). On one is the seated figure of a king, with crown and sceptre, the name ADELBERTVS being inscribed above. It probably represents St. Ethelbert, King of the East Angles, and patron of Hereford Cathedral, who was beheaded by King Offa, of Mercia, in 794. The other figure is that of a bishop in alb, chasuble, and mitre, holding a pastoral staff of primitive form. The inscription NICO[la]VS appears to indicate that this figure represents St. Nicholas of Bari, a saint who, as patron of children ("Santa Claus"), was popular in England as elsewhere throughout Christendom. The figures are attenuated and expressionless, and do not compare favourably with the earlier work at Durham.

PORTION OF CHASUBLE AT ANAGNI. Late XIII century

See pages 33 *and* 34

The cathedral library also contains some later fragments of embroidered silk vestments. These were found in the year 1861 in the stone coffin of Walter de Cantelupe, the bishop who succeeded William de Blois, and presided over the see from 1236 to 1266. The embroidery is in gold thread and coloured silks.

The principal fragment represents a number of kings, each with crown and sceptre, seated amid scrolled foliage. The arrangement suggests a tree of Jesse, a popular subject with embroiderers. It apparently belongs to the time of the bishop in whose coffin it was found. Another fragment of the same vestment (Plate 4), which appears to have gone astray soon after its discovery, has been lately acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 1380, 1901).*

It is interesting to compare these fragments with a complete chasuble, perhaps a few years later in date, in the museum (Plate 5).

* Some remarkable examples of embroidery were discovered a few years ago in a tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. They are the buskins and sandals of an archbishop, of silk, embroidered with gold and silver thread. The tomb is probably that of Archbishop Hubert Walter (1193–1205), and the embroideries appear to be of about that time (see *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. vii., pl. iv.)

This vestment has been much mutilated, and it is now of the degenerate fiddle-shaped pattern which has become popular in modern times. The material is a blue satin with embroidery of gold thread and coloured silks. There is on the back a broad orphrey having four quatrefoil compartments enclosing the following subjects : The Crucifixion of our Lord, the Virgin and Child, SS. Peter and Paul, and the Stoning of St. Stephen. The intervening spaces are covered with scroll-work of the beautiful type characteristic of the early Gothic period. The rest of the back and the whole of the front are embroidered with lions and griffins enclosed by scrollwork.

The chasuble can be traced back as far as the year 1786, when it formed the subject of some correspondence in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.* There were then a stole and a maniple belonging to it, embroidered with heraldry, apparently indicating that they were made for Margaret de Clare, wife of Edmund Plantagenet, Earl of Cornwall. The possessor at the time of the correspondence had received them from a gentleman in Wales, who had

* Vol. lvi. pp. 298, 473, 584.

no traditional account of them. The work belongs to the second half of the thirteenth century. It shows an advance both in workmanship and design, and stands on the threshold of the greatest period of English embroidery.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

THE GREAT PERIOD (*circa* 1270–1330)

THE year 1300 may be taken to indicate the middle of a period of very high artistic attainment in England. The excellence is no less marked in embroidery than in other branches. During this period English embroidery was, in fact, at its best. Surviving examples are to be found in our own country, and also in France, Italy, and Spain, and it may be elsewhere. From them we may judge for ourselves whether the fame which they acquired in their day was justified. It is easy to see faults in them. The heads are disproportionately large, the eyes too staring, the colouring is sometimes unnatural—blue and green, for example, being favourite colours for the hair,—and the perspective is weak. With all this, there is a venerableness and dignity in the figures, and a genuine religious spirit, which later and more correctly designed work does not always possess ; and we are bound to confess them to be more admirable than

many embroideries in which less faults are to be enumerated.

That so many English vestments of this early time are to be found abroad, need not surprise us. There is documentary evidence of some having been thus destined from the first. For example, Edward I. made a gift to Pope Boniface VIII. of a *pluviale de opere Anglicano*, and payment is recorded to have been made by his son Edward II. for a cope which was to be sent to the pope as a present from the queen. Royal gifts were also made to churches of this country. An inventory* of Canterbury Cathedral in 1315–16, records the gift by Edward I. of a cope embroidered with the Story of the Patriarch Joseph. The inventories of this cathedral, as well as those of London,† Lincoln, Peterborough, and others, give evidence of an astonishing number of embroidered vestments at that time in the country.

The term *opus Anglicum* or *opus Anglicanum* is applied specially to the work of this

* See Wickham Legg and St. John Hope, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

† See "Two Inventories of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London, dated respectively 1245 and 1402," by Sub-dean W. Sparrow Simpson (*Archæologia*, vol. l. p. 439).

period. In its broad sense it indicates simply what the words imply, *opus* being of course restricted to the work of the needle. Among the characteristics of this "English work," one which in itself has been considered to afford sufficient evidence of such an origin is found in the treatment of the faces. These are generally worked in a kind of spiral starting from the centre of the cheek; the effect is afterwards emphasized by the pressure of a heated iron instrument of rounded form. There are other characteristics which will be seen to be very usual in this *opus Anglicanum* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The bearded figures generally present a shaven upper lip, and the foreheads are abnormally high and broad. The hair and beard are often of an unnatural colour. Birds are very frequently represented, particularly in the spandrels of the canopies. As regards architectural details, twisted or interlaced columns are not uncommon, and a leopard's head with protruding tongue—somewhat resembling the mark used for English silversmiths' work — is often found, sometimes taking the place of a capital. A peculiar foliated lion's mask occurs in several examples. In foliage, the favourite types are

the vine, oak, and ivy—especially the first. A great fondness is shown for the seraph or cherub on the wheel, borrowed from the vision of Ezekiel. Such angelic figures form a prominent feature in English embroidery from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth. It is natural, too, that English saints should be often represented. Among them, St. Thomas of Canterbury and St. Edmund the King and Martyr, occur most frequently.

Of course, it would not be safe to assign an English origin to an embroidery showing any one alone of the characteristics mentioned above. No monopoly can be claimed for some among them—such as the seraph and the vine foliage, for example,—but where a combination of these features is found, it is fairly safe to conclude that the work is English. It is, of course, not possible to be absolutely certain in every case; but the English origin of the examples about to be described is strongly supported by the evidence of the design and workmanship, and often by tradition as well.

All are agreed that among English embroideries the "Syon" cope stands easily first (Plate 6). It takes its name from the monastery of Syon near Isleworth, which was built and

endowed in 1414–15 by Henry V. for Bridgettine nuns. The cope dates from the latter half of the thirteenth century, and is consequently older than that foundation; but it appears to have been taken there at an early period. On the dissolution of the monasteries, the cope accompanied the nuns in their wanderings through Flanders, France, and Portugal. In the year 1830, the nuns came back to England from Lisbon, and brought the cope with them. Thirty-four years later it became the property of the nation, and found a permanent home at South Kensington.

The embroidery is in gold, silver, and silks of various colours, the linen ground being completely hidden by needlework. The cope is covered with interlacing barbed quatrefoils in red, with gold outline, the intervening spaces being green. In the middle, within the topmost quatrefoil is represented our Lord seated on a throne, holding the orb in His left hand, and stretching out His right arm to give His blessing to His mother, who is seated on the throne beside Him, with her hands upraised in prayer. In the next quatrefoil below is the Crucifixion, with St. John and the Virgin

Mary standing at the foot of the cross. In the lowest quatrefoil is the Archangel Michael transfixing the dragon with his lance. To the right of the subject first described is represented the Death of the Virgin Mary in the presence of the Apostles, and, to the left, her Burial. Beyond this last scene is our Lord meeting St. Mary Magdalene in the garden, and next, in the angle of the cope, is St. Philip. To the left of the Crucifixion group is St. Peter, and beyond, St. Bartholomew. Below St. Peter is St. Andrew. On the right side, next to the scene representing the Death of the Virgin Mary is our Saviour overcoming the Unbelief of St. Thomas, and beyond, in the right angle of the cope, St. James the Less. To the right of the Crucifixion group is St. Paul; next, St. Matthew; and below, St. James the Greater. In the intervening spaces are represented the three hierarchies of angels. Two other figures, those of a layman and a cleric, are placed near the long orphrey. Each figure bears an inscribed scroll, which is now fragmentary and illegible. This is, unfortunately, not the only place where the cope has been injured. There are now only nine apostles, whereas there were originally twelve.

The heads of the three missing figures may still be seen round the lower edge. It was, perhaps, at the time of this curtailment that the present orphrey, morse, and outer border were added; the last, as Mr. St. John Hope has remarked, being made from a stole and maniple.* Both orphrey and outer band are covered with shields of arms, which have been fully described by Dr. Rock.† That eminent authority points out that many of the shields belong to families well known to have been living in the neighbourhood of Coventry. He concludes that the orphreys, as well as the cope, were embroidered in the vicinity of that town.

There is in the Madrid Museum a cope,‡ formerly at the Daroca College, which in some respects resembles the Syon cope. The subjects here are also enclosed by barbed quatrefoils, these being united by coiling dragons. Within the quatrefoils are represented the Crucifixion, the Annunciation, and

* A similar stole and maniple are in the possession of Miss Weld, at Leagram Hall, Lancashire (see *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xvii. p. 272).

† "Catalogue of Textile Fabrics in the South Kensington Museum" (1870), p. 275.

‡ Illustrated in La Broderie, by L. De Farcy, pl. 21 and 22.

THE ASCOLI COPE. XIII century. *See page* 34

the Story of the Creation. Angels, some with instruments of music, others holding crowns, occupy the intervening spaces. On the orphrey are royal and ecclesiastical saints under canopies. These canopies have the lions' or leopards' heads, so frequently seen in English work. The cope may have been worked a few years after the Syon cope, but not later than the end of the thirteenth century.

It is on record that Pope Boniface VIII. made a gift to the cathedral at Anagni, near Rome, of some English embroideries. The treasury of the cathedral is very rich in embroidered vestments, but some difference of opinion prevails as to which of them are English. I have never seen the vestments, but from an examination of photographs, I am convinced that a cope, a chasuble (Plate 7), and two dalmatics are all entirely of English embroidery, with the exception of the orphrey of the chasuble, which is German, and added probably at the time that this and the dalmatics were made from fragments of copes.* On the cope are scenes from the history of our Lord and of the Virgin Mary, arranged in a series of circular compartments, with angels

* The chasuble (not a cope) illustrated by Lady Alford ("Needlework as Art," pl. 60, p. 319) is, I think, German.

swinging censers in the intervening spaces. The chasuble and the two dalmatics are apparently made from two copes. The first is embroidered with scenes from the life and miracles of St. Nicholas; fragments of this are also included in the dalmatics. Among the other scenes represented on the dalmatics are the martyrdoms of St. Thomas of Canterbury and St. Edmund the King.

A fine cope from Ascoli, now in the possession of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan (Plates 8, 9) is somewhat similar in arrangement to that at Anagni. The three circular compartments down the middle enclose representations of the Head of our Lord, the Crucifixion, and the Virgin and Child with two angels holding candelabra. In the other circles are represented the martyrdoms of St. Peter and the following popes: Marcellus (drawing a harrow), John, Clement (thrown into the sea), Stephen (decapitated), Fabianus; then six canonized popes—SS. Silvester, Hilarius, Leo, Gregory, Lucius, and Anastasius; and lastly, four popes of the thirteenth century—Alexander, Urban, Clement, and Innocent. The orphrey is embroidered in gold with circles and lozenges interlaced, and the small triangular hood has two angels swinging censers.

Detail of the Ascoli Cope shown in Plate VIII.

At St. Bertrand de Comminges, in the department of Var, France, are preserved two copes, evidently of English workmanship. They are reputed to have been the gift of Bertrand de Goth, at one time bishop of the diocese, later transferred to Bordeaux, and finally elevated to the papacy in 1300, taking the name of Clement V. The gift is said to have been made on the occasion of a visit by him to his old cathedral in 1309. One of the copes is covered with small circles and ovals linked together, and having quaint reptiles at the intersections. The circles enclose figures of prophets, and within the ovals are birds. The larger intervening spaces are filled with scenes in the Passion of our Lord. On the hood is our Lord enthroned, with the Virgin Mary seated beside him.*

The copes of Syon, Daroca, Anagni, Ascoli, and St. Bertrand de Comminges, all agree in having their entire surface broken up into formal spaces—quatrefoils, circles, or ovals. Another class exhibits a more directly architectural arrangement — Gothic

* The other cope at St. Bertrand de Comminges is described on p. 44. Both are illustrated in De Farcy, *op. cit.*, pl. 31.

arcading in successive zones. Copes of this type are preserved at Toledo, in St. John Lateran at Rome, at Bologna, and at Pienza. Another, in fragments, was formerly kept at Mount St. Mary's College, Chesterfield. It has in the middle the following subjects: our Lord and the Virgin Mary enthroned (at the top), the Adoration of the Magi (in the middle), and the Annunciation (below). The arcades on either side are formed of interlacing oak stems with masks, and enclose figures of saints and apostles, with angels in the spandrels. On the embroidered orphrey are figures of episcopal and royal saints. This cope belongs to the early years of the fourteenth century.

The fine cope in Toledo Cathedral (Plates 10, 11) is said to have belonged to the Cardinal Gil de Albornoz (d. 1367), and is apparently referred to in his will (*pluviale . . . de opere Anglicano*). It is earlier than his time, however, and must have been embroidered in the later years of the thirteenth century. The design is in gold thread and coloured silks on a gold-embroidered ground. On a vertical band in the middle are the Annunciation, the Nativity, and our Lord enthroned with the Virgin Mary. Gothic arcading is arranged

COPE IN TOLEDO CATHEDRAL, embroidered in gold thread and coloured silks. Late XIII century

See page 36

Detail of Cope shown in Plate X.

in three zones on either side of this band. Within the uppermost zone are represented —on the right, the Assumption of the Virgin and an angel announcing to the Virgin her approaching death; and on the left, the Holy Trinity and the Virgin with the Infant Saviour. In the next zone are the following figures of Apostles: SS. Paul, Simon, Philip, James, Andrew, Thomas, Bartholomew, and Peter. In the outer zone are the following saints: a bishop (unnamed), John the Evangelist, Edward the Confessor, Lawrence, Mary Magdalene, Ethelbert, Dunstan, Margaret, Catherine of Alexandria, Thomas of Canterbury, Olave, Stephen, Helena, Dionysius, Edmund the King, and John the Baptist. Peacocks and other birds rest on the finials. The orphrey has figures of bishops, a king, and a queen under canopies, with angels between.*

The cope in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Rome, called the "cope of St. Sylvester,"† is of the same period as that at Toledo. The ground is of gold embroidery, with three main rows of arcading, and two

* See British Museum, "Report on the Historical Exhibition at Madrid, 1892." By C. H. Read.

† See De Farcy, *op. cit.*, pl. 43.

lesser rows dividing them. The scenes represented are from the Life of our Lord, and of the Virgin Mary, and the Martyrdoms of Saints. In the intervening spaces are angels with musical instruments. The columns are interlaced, and octagons enclosing birds are substituted for capitals—a remarkable feature. On the orphrey are figures of royal personages, bishops, and four angels accompanied by the symbols of the Evangelists.

The Bologna cope is preserved in the Civic Museum there (Plate 12). It has, in the outermost zone, the Annunciation, the Salutation, the Nativity, the Angel appearing to the Shepherds, the Journey into Egypt, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Presentation in the Temple, the Magi before Herod, the Journey and Adoration of the Magi, the Angel warning the Magi, and the Martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket. In the next zone are, the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, the Betrayal, the Scourging, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Descent into Hades, and our Lord meeting St. Mary Magdalene in the Garden. The lower spandrels are occupied by angels with instruments of music, and the upper by angels with crowns. Between the rows are busts of

COPE IN CIVIC MUSEUM, BOLOGNA. End of XIII century.

See page 38

saints, and in the middle at the top are two angels swinging censers. The introduction of a scene representing the Martyrdom of the English archbishop, at the end of the lowest arcade, is remarkable, since the other scenes are all taken from the Gospel History.

A very beautiful cope preserved at Pienza was presented by Pope Pius II. (1458–1464), a native of that place (Plate 13). There is, however, little risk of error in assigning to it an English origin. In general arrangement it is similar to the Toledo cope, and it cannot be much later in date. The subjects, represented in three zones, are taken from the History of our Lord and of the Virgin Mary, and from the legends of St. Margaret and St. Catherine of Alexandria. The lower spandrels contain figures of the twelve apostles, each holding a scroll inscribed with a part of the Apostles' Creed. The upper spandrels have figures of Old Testament kings and prophets.

Some embroideries recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum, may be compared with the vestments referred to above. They form the upper sides of five small cushions formerly in Catworth Church, Huntingdonshire, and have been sold to the

Museum with the permission of the bishop of the diocese (Plate 14). These fragments appear to have at one time formed parts of a vestment. The work is in gold thread and silks on a silk ground, now faded to pale brown. The subjects are figures of apostles and saints beneath canopies. The shields of arms beneath some of the figures are of great interest—as giving a close date to the work. The arms are those of Clinton and Leyburne. William de Clinton, first Earl of Huntingdon, married Juliana de Leyburne in 1329; and the embroideries, doubtless, have some connection with that event.

A very beautiful example of embroidery* of about the same period as the Catworth cushions, or perhaps a few years earlier, is partly illustrated in colour on Plate B (also Plate 15). It is a band of deep red velvet, the embroidery being in gold, silver, and coloured silks. The band is in two sections, and may perhaps have formed the apparels of an alb. There are ten subjects included within an arcade of broad arches, and separated from one another by delicately wrought buttresses. The first five subjects are taken from the life of the Virgin Mary, and are as follows: the

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 8128, 1863.

PORTION OF THE COPE AT PIENZA. Early XIV century

See page 39

CUSHIONS, from Catworth Church, embroidered in gold thread and silks on a silk ground. Early XIV century. *See pages* 39 *and* 40

Angel appearing to Anna; the Meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate; and the Birth, Presentation, and Education of the Virgin. The others are from the history of our Lord: The Annunciation, the Salutation, the Nativity, the Angel appearing to the Shepherds, and the Journey of the Magi. In the spandrels are embroidered shields of arms of Thornell and Fitton. The work is simple, yet of the utmost delicacy. A more exquisite production of the needle could hardly be imagined.

Two other embroideries in the Victoria and Albert Museum belong to the close of the thirteenth century. Both are parts of orphreys, embroidered in gold and coloured silks on linen with figures of saints beneath canopies, having birds in the spandrels (Plate 16). The first is from the Hochon collection, and has figures of the Apostles: SS. Matthias, James the Greater, Andrew, and Paul.

On the second* are figures of St. John the Evangelist and St. Mary Magdalene.

The British Museum possesses a remarkable panel of embroidery, worked upon linen in gold thread and coloured silks on a gold ground. It represents our Lord discoursing

* No. 614, 1898.

to a group of Apostles, and the Betrayal; these subjects being enclosed by Gothic arches. In the spandrels are six-winged seraphs. The work belongs to the end of the thirteenth century; the embroidered inscription, MCCCXC ROMA, on the central capital, testifies that the panel had travelled as far as Rome by that date.

Descriptions have now been given of examples showing arrangements of formal panels and zones of arcading. There remains a third class, in which the subjects are enclosed by branch-work with foliage. This arrangement is, perhaps, a somewhat later development; and there are probably no embroideries of this type earlier than the beginning of the fourteenth century. The example most generally accessible is the fine red silk cope in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plates 17, 18).* It has been sadly mutilated, but most of the figures remain. The subject is a Tree of Jesse. From the recumbent figure of Jesse springs a vine, whose branches cover the whole ground of the cope and encircle the various figures. In the middle are David, Solomon, and the

* No. 175, 1889. The red ground has kept its colour in a remarkable manner.

BAND OF DEEP RED VELVET, embroidered in gold, silver, and coloured silks.

Early XIV century
See pages 40 *and* 41

PORTIONS OF ORPHREYS, embroidered in gold and coloured silks on linen. Late XIII and XIV century

See pages 41 *and* 47

Virgin with the Infant Saviour; within the lateral branches are figures of kings and prophets, each holding a scroll inscribed with the name. The cope has been at some time cut to pieces, and parts of it used for other purposes. From the year 1718 to 1857–8 it was kept in the Roman Catholic chapel at Brockhampton, near Havant. It was afterwards in the possession of the Rev. F. H. Van Doorne at Corpus Christi House, Brixton Rise; from him it was bought by the Museum. A green velvet orphrey, embroidered with figures of angels and saints, has been preserved with the fragments, but it evidently did not belong to the cope originally.

Another example of great interest is preserved in the church at Steeple Aston in Oxfordshire. It is a cope which has been cut to serve as an altar-frontal (Plate 19). The ground is of silk, now faded to a pale buff-colour, the embroidery being in gold thread and coloured silks. Interlacing stems of oak and ivy, joined by foliated masks, enclose representations of the martyrdoms of saints, and heraldic lions. The orphreys are of remarkable design. They have figures of angels playing on musical instruments and mounted on horseback—an unusual way of

representing these celestial beings. Separating these figures are panels with animals and fishes. The ground of the orphreys is of gold thread.

A cope at St. Bertrand de Comminges* resembles in many points the mutilated silk cope at South Kensington. It also is of silk, covered by curious interlacing stems of ivy, oak, and vine. Upon these stems are placed foliated masks and leopards' heads with protruding tongues. Figures of the Apostles and St. John the Baptist stand upon the stems. In the middle is a seated figure of the Virgin with the Infant Saviour, and above, two angels playing musical instruments.†

There is in the monastery of Mölk, near Vienna, a fine specimen of English work of the period, a silk chasuble, embroidered with the Crucifixion.‡

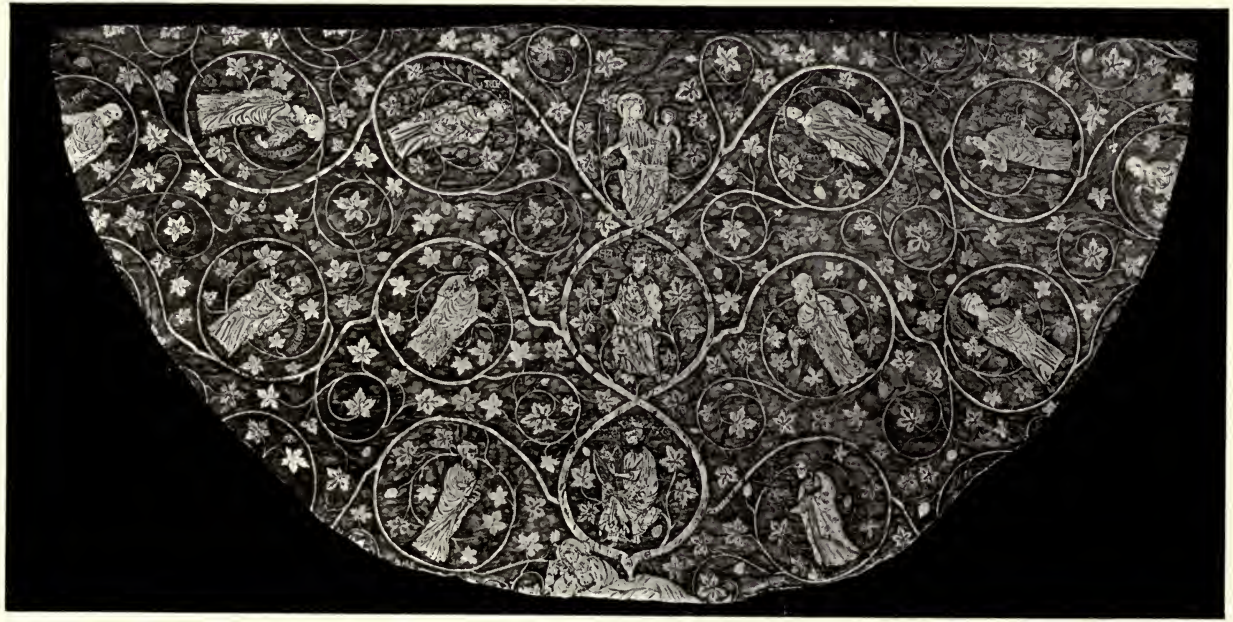
One more example should be mentioned. It is a strip from the middle of a cope, having for subject a Tree of Jesse. From the figure

* See p. 35.

† This cope has been much injured. The very incongruous hood is of French brocade of the period of Louis XV.

‡ Illustrated in Dreger, "Künstlerische Entwicklung der Weberei," pl. 178.

PORTION OF A BAND of deep red velvet, embroidered in gold, silver, and coloured silks. Early XIV century.
See pages 40 *and* 41



COPE, red silk, embroidered in coloured silks and gold thread. Early XIV century. *See pages* 42 *and* 43

Detail of Cope shown in Plate XVII.

of Jesse ascends a vine which encloses representations of David, Solomon, the Virgin and Child, and the Crucifixion. Within the lesser foliations are half-length figures of prophets. This embroidery, formerly in the Spitzer Collection, is now in the Musée des Tissus at Lyons.*

* See illustration in Cox, "L'Art de décorer les Tissus," pl. xi.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

DECLINE AND REVIVAL (*circa* 1330–1530

IN following the course of the embroiderer's art in this country during the fourteenth century, it soon becomes apparent that the excellence which marked the opening years of that period was not to be maintained. The decline is noticeable in more ways than one. The careful embroidering of the faces — a characteristic excellence of the flourishing time—is seen no longer, and the work generally loses its precision and fineness. The design follows the same downward course. Figures become squat and awkward, and the emblems of the saints are sometimes omitted altogether, rendering the identification hazardous. The graceful crockets relieving the outlines of the canopies degenerate into clumsy and formless foliations, which often entirely fill the spandrels, to the exclusion of the angels and birds found at an earlier period.

Examples of this time are not numerous, nor do any show a very great degree of skill.

PORTION OF COPE AT STEEPLE ASTON.
Early XIV century.

This Cope has been cut to serve as an altar frontal.
See page 43

EMBROIDERED PANELS, in coloured silks and gold thread on linen. Second half of XIV century. *See page* 47

The first symptoms of degeneracy are noticeable in an orphrey at South Kensington (No. 828, 1903) acquired from the Hochon collection. It is of linen embroidered in gold thread and coloured silks, with the following saints: Helena, James the Less, Paul the Apostle, Lawrence, Bartholomew, Catherine of Alexandria, Andrew and another (Plate 16). The canopies are supported by twisted columns, and have large foliated crockets. This orphrey was probably embroidered shortly before the middle of the fourteenth century.*

As the century advances, the work loses still more of its fine qualities. An illustration will be found in a series of small panels representing scenes in the history of the Virgin Mary † (Plate 20). They are as follows: The meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate; the Birth, Presentation, Education, and Marriage of the Virgin; the Annunciation; the Salutation; the Virgin

* Photographs of two English embroidered orphreys, with the shields of King Edward III. and John Grandison, Bishop of Exeter (1328–1369), were exhibited at the meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, December 17, 1896 (see *Proceedings*).

† Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 28, 1892.

and Child, the Birth of the Saviour; the Angel appearing to the Shepherds; the Purification of the Virgin; the Flight into Egypt; the Massacre of the Innocents; and the Repose during the Flight. A comparison of these subjects with similar scenes in the velvet band, illustrated in Plate B and Plate 15, shows very distinctly the contrast between the work of the beginning and the end of the century.

There is in the British Museum an embroidery which appears to show that even at the end of the century work of a high class was possible.* It consists of two panels, now let into the modern leather binding of a Psalter of the end of the thirteenth century. The MS. belonged, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, to Anne (daughter of Sir Simon Felbrigge, K.G.), a nun of Bruisyard in Suffolk, who is supposed to have worked the embroidery. The subjects are, the Annunciation and the Crucifixion, worked on canvas in coloured silks.†

A chasuble of red brocaded damask in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 935,

* The date may, however, be a little earlier.

† One panel is illustrated in Davenport, "English Embroidered Bookbindings," pl. 3.

BROCADE CHASUBLE, with embroidered orphrey. Late XIV century
See pages 48 *and* 49

ALTAR FRONTAL. XV and Early XVI centuries. *See page* 49

1901) has on the back an embroidered orphrey* dating from the latter half of the fourteenth century (Plate 21). At the top of the orphrey is the risen Saviour meeting St. Mary Magdalene in the garden. A male and a female saint stand beneath each of the other canopies; one of the figures, a crowned abbess in a black mantle, with a pastoral staff, probably represents the royal abbess, St. Etheldreda (St. Audrey) of Ely.

An altar-frontal (Plate 22)† acquired with the chasuble is, like that, provided with embroidered orphreys of different dates. The central and right orphreys are of the fifteenth century.‡ The former is now T-shaped, and has for subject the Crucifixion of our Lord; the Virgin Mary and St. John stand at the foot of the Cross, and two angels receive the Sacred Blood in chalices. Beneath are figures of St. Andrew and a female saint

* The front orphrey is chiefly of early sixteenth century work. The damask is Italian weaving of the fifteenth century. A shield of arms (Boteler impaling Le Strange) has been applied to the back orphrey.

† No. 817, 1901.

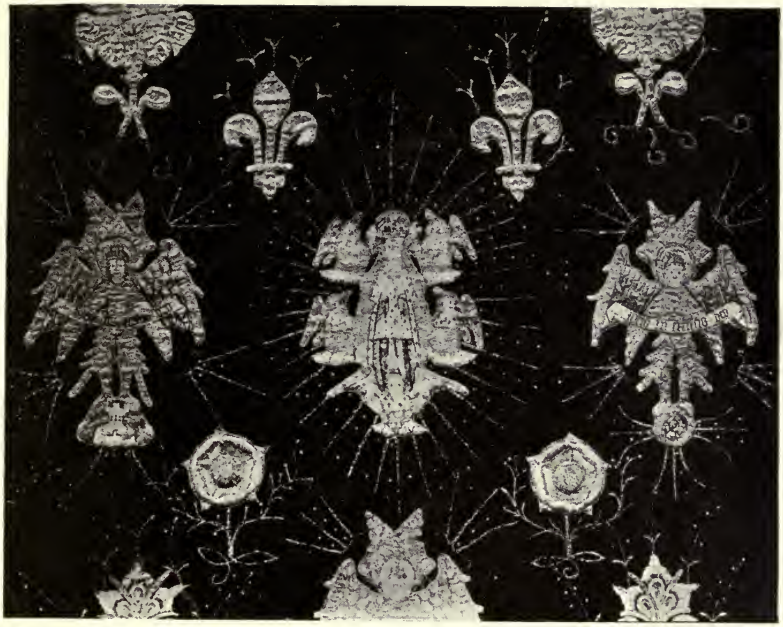
‡ The left orphrey is of early sixteenth century work. They have all been taken from chasubles. The frontal appears to have been brought into its present form in the sixteenth century.

under canopies. On the right orphrey are SS. Mary Magdalene (?), Bartholomew, and Apollonia. The whole work is very poor. The figures are short and clumsy; the twisted columns have been replaced by square pillars, and the foliations filling the spandrels are large and misshapen.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century, English ecclesiastical embroidery developed a marked style, differing considerably from that of earlier periods, and easily distinguished from contemporary foreign work. Vestments dating from the half-century immediately preceding the suppression of the monasteries still remain in churches, others are in private possession or in museums. Many have found their way abroad at different times, and through various causes, and some of these have not yet gained recognition as English work.*

The favourite ground material is a plain velvet, although satin is frequently used, and sometimes silk damask. The following is

* A characteristic piece in the museum at Padua, is stated in the catalogue to be Flemish. See A. Moschetti, "Museo Civico di Padova," pl. xxvi. In the Somzée collection sold by auction at Brussels in June, 1904, two examples of English work were also catalogued as Flemish.



PORTION OF A COPE, deep purple velvet, embroidered with gold and silver thread and coloured silks. About 1500. *See page* 53

generally the scheme of ornamentation of the copes: A central subject, frequently the Assumption of the Virgin, is surrounded by numerous devices disposed in a radiating manner, so as to fall into position when the cope is worn. The devices are chiefly double-headed eagles, fleurs-de-lys, Tudor roses, and others of a floral character; they are usually extended by a curious arrangement of radiating lines, dotted with spangles, a feature which adds considerably to the lightness and gracefulness of the work, and helps to soften the contrast between the gold embroidery and the dark ground. Among these devices are almost always placed a number of six-winged seraphs, standing upon wheels (evidently borrowed from the description of Ezekiel's vision), and holding scrolls inscribed usually with the legend DA GLORIAM DEO.* Chasubles and altar-frontals generally have devices of the same type; frequently they bear evidence of having been made from copes. The orphreys are usually of linen,

* An inventory of the cathedral of Lincoln mentions "six copes of red velvet of one suit, broidered with angels having this scripture, "Da gloriam Deo," with orphreys of needlework. (See Pugin, "Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament," p. 79.)

embroidered with saints under canopies, often on a gold-embroidered ground.

The canopies show a Gothic tendency in some instances, but more frequently they are of a Renaissance character.

We have had occasion to notice early in our history (p. 7) the custom among kings and persons of high rank of presenting their robes to be altered for ecclesiastical purposes. Even as late as the sixteenth century, the practice had not died out. In the will of Sir Ralph Verney the younger, proved in 1525, occurs the following clause:* "I will that the gownes of dame Anne Verney, late my wife, doo make vestiments to be given to Churches, according to the discrecion of myne Executours."

One of the earliest examples of embroidery belonging to this class is in the church at Cirencester in Gloucestershire. It appears to have been originally a cope, but it has been much mutilated, and adapted for use as a pulpit-hanging. The ground is of blue velvet, with embroidery of angels and floral devices. One of the angels holds a shield of arms, with the inscription, "Orate pro anima domini Rodulphi Parsons." The monumental

* Quoted in *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvi. p. 222.

BACK OF A CHASUBLE, of embroidered velvet. Early XVI century.
See page 53

brass of Ralph Parsons is preserved in the church. He died in the year 1478.

A fine cope, a few years later in date, was acquired not long ago by the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate 23.)* It is of deep purple velvet, embroidered with gold and silver thread and coloured silks. The subject in the middle is the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Above are two fleurs-de-lys, and below two roses. On the scrolls held by the three surrounding angels is the legend GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO. The remaining space is covered with floral devices of the usual character. On the hood is a seated figure of the Almighty Father, with three souls in a napkin. The orphreys have figures of apostles and saints beneath canopies of Gothic character. The date is about the year 1500.

The chasuble reproduced in colour (Plate C) is of velvet. The Crucifixion of our Lord, an appropriate subject for the cross-shaped orphrey at the back of a chasuble, occurs on this example, and also on a purple velvet chasuble in the museum (No. 665, 1896). Both belong to the early years of the sixteenth century.

Two copes of the same period in the

* No. 1376, 1901.

museum, of blue and red velvet respectively, have been cut down to serve as altar-frontals. The central subject on each is the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

Another cope (Plate 24),* in good preservation, is of Italian crimson silk damask, the orphrey being of dark green velvet. In the middle of the cope is the Assumption of the Virgin, the angels above having scrolls with the inscription DA GLORIA[m] DEO.

A chasuble, also of Italian material, a figured velvet, was found with some other vestments, a small portable altar, a crucifix, candlesticks, and other objects, in an oak chest in a farmhouse at Abbey Dore.†

There are many embroideries of this type and period belonging to cathedrals and churches in England. Besides the cope at Cirencester already described (p. 52) there are important examples in Ely, Carlisle, and Salisbury Cathedrals, at Chipping Campden and Littledean in Gloucestershire, at East Langdon in Kent, at Skenfrith in Herefordshire, at Careby in Lincolnshire, at Buckland and Stoulton in Worcestershire, at Lutterworth

* No. 230, 1879.

† The collection has been purchased by the museum, after being on loan for some years.

PORTION OF A COPE, of crimson silk damask, with orphrey of dark green velvet. About 1500. *See page* 54

in Leicestershire, at Culmstock in Devonshire, at Chedzoy and Pilton in Somersetshire, at Wool in Dorsetshire, at Sutton Benger and Hullavington in Wiltshire, at Romsey in Hampshire, at Lyng in Norfolk, at Forest Hill in Oxfordshire, at St. Gregory's Church, Norwich, at Warrington in Lancashire, and at Oscott College. The cope at Chipping Campden is especially remarkable. It is of red velvet, powdered with crowns and stars, and has embroidered orphreys (Plate 25).

The embroidery at East Langdon is one of the most beautiful existing examples of the later part of the fifteenth century * (Plate 26). It was originally a cope of red velvet, but it has been curtailed, perhaps for use as a pulpit-hanging. The subject in the middle is the Annunciation. The Virgin Mary is kneeling at a prayer-desk, and the angel Gabriel appears before her with a long scroll bearing his message, "Ave gra[tia] plena Dns [Dominus] tecu[m]." On the scroll above the Virgin is her response, "Ecce ancilla d[omi]ni fiat michi secun[dum verbum tuum]." Under the group is inscribed, "Orate pro anima . . .

* See *Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. xi. pp. 10–23. There is no need for the supposition that the embroidery may be of different dates.

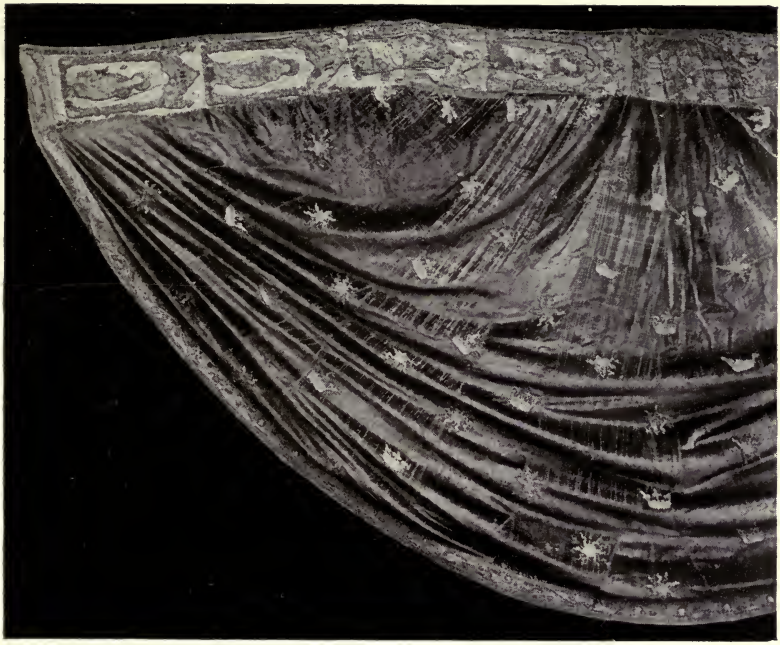
Iohis. . . ." The ground below is strewn with flowers, and between the two figures is a lily in a vase. The surrounding devices present an unusual feature; upon them are monograms representing the word MARIA and the sacred monogram IHC.

The cope at Skenfrith is of velvet; the subject in the middle is the Virgin Mary borne aloft by three angels, with other angels around. The rest of the cope is covered with double-headed eagles, fleurs-de-lys, and floral devices. On the hood is a seated figure of the Virgin Mary holding the Infant Saviour in her arms. The orphrey is embroidered with figures of saints beneath canopies.

A chasuble* at Hullavington has been converted into a square hanging for an altar. The cross-shaped orphrey from the back represents the Crucifixion of our Lord, with St. Mary Magdalene under a canopy below. Fragments of the front orphrey are placed at the corners. The remaining space is covered with seraphim holding scrolls inscribed "Da Gloriam Deo," fleurs-de-lys, and other floral devices.

At Wool, a brown velvet pulpit-hanging

* Illustrated in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xvii. p. 242.



PORTION OF THE CHIPPING CAMPDEN COPE.
Late XV century.

See page 55

PORTION OF THE EAST LANGDON COPE. Late XV century. *See page* 55

has been made from a cope; and at Careby, in Lincolnshire, is a red velvet altar-frontal also cut from a cope. The embroidered fragment at Lutterworth, which has been attributed to the time of Wicklif, bears characteristic devices of the later years of the fifteenth century.

An altar-cloth* at Lyng, preserves the remains of three vestments: (α) a cope of blue velvet, with cherubim and seraphim, double-headed eagles, and conventional flowers; (β) small portions of a cope of red velvet, with half-length figures of prophets; (γ) small portions of a vestment of orange velvet, with conventional flowers. Fragments of the orphreys are also included.

At Littledean, an altar-cloth or herse-cloth is made of pieces of tunicles, the orphreys having figures of saints under canopies. A desk-hanging at Sutton Benger† is similar to the cloth at Littledean. It has been much mutilated in the process of transformation from a vestment. The altar-cloths at Norwich and Buckland have been made from copes.

Altar-frontals, though frequently made

* *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xii. p. 252.

† *Ibid.*, vol. xvii. p. 242.

from vestments, do not always owe their origin to such a destructive practice. Fine examples, well worthy of examination, exist in the churches of Chipping Campden and Alveley, and of St. Thomas à Becket at Salisbury; another from Baunton Church is now in the possession of Mrs. Chester Master.

The Chipping Campden frontal, like the cope mentioned on p. 54, has a ground of Italian damask of the later part of the fifteenth century (Plate 27). In the middle is the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The floral patterns in horizontal rows on either side are simple and effective.*

The frontal at Salisbury† has the Annunciation for its central subject. The Virgin Mary kneels to receive the angelic message; between the two figures is a tall lily; and above the Virgin hovers the Holy Dove. The surrounding space is covered with half-length figures of angels, double-headed eagles, fleurs-de-lys, and other designs, worked in gold thread and coloured silks.

* See *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xi. p. 408.

† Figured in Hoare's "Wiltshire," plate opposite p. 589; and in Mrs. M. Barber, "Some Drawings of Ancient Embroidery."

PORTION OF ALTAR FRONTAL AT CHIPPING CAMPDEN.
Late XV century.

See page 58

The frontal from Baunton is of satin in alternate breadths of red and yellow, the embroidery being in gold thread and coloured silks (Plate 28). The main subject is the Crucifixion of our Lord, with an elaborate rebus below;* on either side are double-headed eagles at regular intervals. The frontal at Alveley church is of somewhat similar arrangement.†

Two chasubles from Hexham ‡ have evidently been made from copes, as the radiating arrangement of the devices testifies. One is of crimson velvet; the cross-shaped orphrey is a curious example of patchwork, the left transom being made from the cope morse, and the right transom from odd fragments. The other chasuble, of blue velvet, has no figures; the floral designs are, however, very beautiful, and render this vestment well worthy of study (Plate 29.)

A third chasuble from Hexham § was

* Suggested explanations of the rebus will be found in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xviii. p. 78.

† Illustrated in Mrs. M. Barber, "Some Drawings of Ancient Embroidery," pls. 28 and 29.

‡ Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Nos. 695 and 696, 1902.

§ No. 967, 1902.

used for requiem masses, and may have been cut from a funeral pall. It is of black velvet, with crimson velvet orphreys (Plate 30). Angels are blowing trumpets to awake the dead, and hold scrolls with the words SURGITE MORTUI and VENITE AD JUDICIUM. Figures of the rising dead are also represented, and angels bearing scrolls inscribed JUSTORUM ANIME and IN MANU DEI SUNT (Book of Wisdom, iii. 1). The initials R. T. with the pastoral staff and mitre, and the rebus, doubtless have reference to the bishop or abbot to whom the chasuble belonged.

Funeral palls of rich workmanship must at one time have existed in large numbers. Leland relates that, at the funeral of Prince Arthur in 1502, when the offerings of money had been made, "the Lord Powys went to the Queere Doore, where Two Gentlemen Ushers delivered him a riche Palle of Cloth of Gould of Tyssue, which he offred to the Corpse, where Two Officers of Armes received it, and laid it along the Corpse. The Lord of Dudley in like Manner offred a Palle, which the said officers laid over the Corpse. The Lord Greye Ruthen offred another: and every each of the Three Earles offred to the Corpse

PORTION OF ALTAR FRONTAL FROM BAUNTON, now in the possession of Mrs. Chester Master. Late XV century

See pages 58 *and* 59

CHASUBLE, blue velvet, embroidered with floral designs. Late XV century.

See page 59

Three Palles of the same Cloth of Gould: the Lowest Earle began first. Alle the Palles were layd crosse over the Corpse." *

Such palls were formerly possessed by almost every guild or fraternity of importance, for use at the burial of members. They were sometimes of a plain rectangular form, and sometimes provided with lappets to fall down the sides of the coffin.

Examples are to be seen at Worcester, Norwich, Dunstable, Sudbury, and elsewhere, and several are in the possession of London companies. The embroideries on the municipal pall at Sudbury may be compared with the chasuble from Hexham. The pall is of velvet, and is embroidered with figures of the dead in shrouds, the inscriptions on the scrolls being taken from the "Office of Matins for the Dead" and the "Litany of the Faithful Departed." It is of late fifteenth century work (Plate 31). The black pall in St. Gregory's Church, Norwich, has figures of angels bearing the souls of the departed.

The pall in the church at Dunstable † is

* Quoted in Michel, "Recherches sur le Commerce . . . des Étoffes," I., p. 146.

† Illustrated in Lady Alford's "Needlework as Art," pl. 79. See also "Dunstable," by W. G. Smith, pp. 91–94;

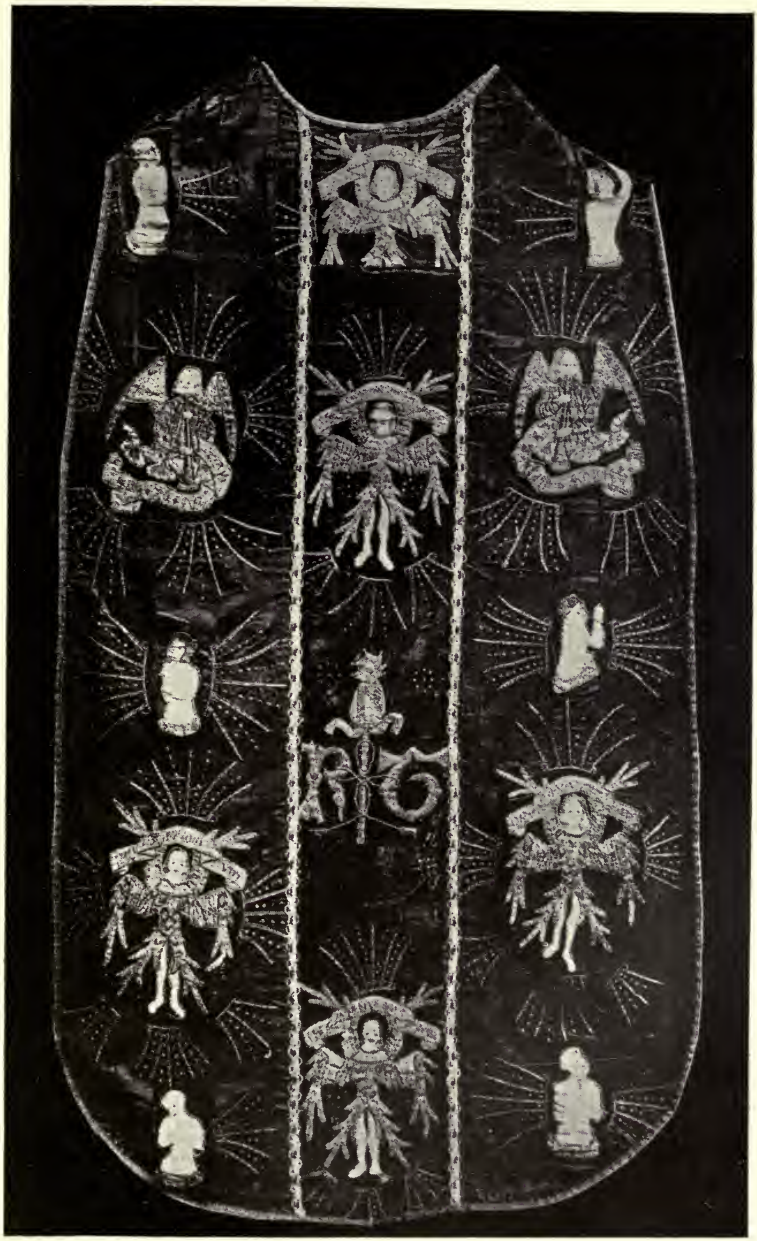
said to have been originally presented to the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist at that place by Henry Fayrey (d. 1516). The material is velvet and cloth of gold. On it are embroidered figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist, and several members of the Fayrey family, with the arms of the Mercers' and Haberdashers' Companies.

The Worcester pall is in the possession of the Clothiers' Company of that city. It bears every indication of having been made from church vestments. The long embroidered bands with figures of saints are parts of orphreys, and the embroidered devices on the velvet—angels, double-headed eagles, fleurs-de-lys, etc.—are frequently found, as we have seen, on vestments of the end of the fifteenth century.

A fine pall* of the same period is in the possession of the Saddlers' Company of London. The ground is of crimson velvet, embroidered with angels surrounding the sacred monogram IHS, and with the arms of the company. The inscription in large Gothic

and *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. viii p. 432.

* Illustrated in Shaw's "Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages," pl. 89.



CHASUBLE, black velvet, with crimson velvet orphreys.
About 1500.

See pages 59 *and* 60

letters is the last verse of the *Te Deum:* "In Te D[omi]ne Speravi no[n] Co[n]fundar In Eternu[m]." The pall is still placed on the table, when a new-comer is sworn, as a token of the vacancy.*

The pall of the Fishmongers' Company also belongs to the end of the fifteenth century. At one end is embroidered a figure of St. Peter (as the patron saint of fishermen) enthroned, with angels on either side swinging censers, and, at the other end, the Apostle receiving the keys from our Lord. The pall is also embroidered with New Testament subjects, and bears the arms of the company.

The Vintners' pall† is of Italian velvet and cloth of gold, the lappets being of silk; it is embroidered with St. Martin of Tours, a Pietà, and other subjects.

Three palls were presented to the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1562, and one to the Stationers' in 1572. Others were possessed by the Brewers', Coopers', Leathersellers', and Founders' Companies.

Two vestments—a cope and chasuble—

* See Hazlitt, "The Livery Companies of the City of London."

† Illustrated in Lady Alford's "Needlework as Art," pl. 78.

reputed to have at one time belonged to the Abbey of Westminster, should be mentioned. The first is a cope,* now preserved at Stonyhurst College. The ground, of velvet and cloth of gold, is recorded to have been woven for King Henry VII. at Florence. The pattern differs from almost all other known examples of the period in having been expressly designed and woven to suit the semicircular form of the cope. It consists of two large rose-stems with Tudor roses, encircling portcullises ensigned by crowns. The orphrey and hood were most probably embroidered in England. The orphrey has figures of saints under canopies, and the subject on the hood is the Annunciation.

The chasuble is in the possession of Lord Arundell of Wardour, and is preserved in the chapel at Wardour Castle. It is of velvet, with a straight orphrey on the front, and a cross-shaped orphrey on the back, embroidered with scenes from the gospel history. The main ground is covered with Tudor roses, portcullises, fleurs-de-lys, and pomegranates, worked in high relief. The last device is

* Illustrated in Lady Alford's "Needlework as Art," pl. 80.

THE SUDBURY MUNICIPAL PALL.

Late XV century
See page 61

that of Catherine of Aragon; the others refer to her husband, Henry VIII.*

An embroidered velvet panel in the Victoria and Albert Museum, belonging to the early years of the sixteenth century, differs in character from any other embroideries of the period yet described. The ground is of plain crimson velvet, with a figure of St. Catherine of Alexandria in regal costume, elaborately worked in silks and gold and silver thread. She stands on a patch of earth, holding a book, and resting her left hand on the pommel of a sword. Behind her is the prostrate form of the Emperor Maximin, under whom she suffered martyrdom.

One more example is mentioned here on account of the unusual way in which it has been preserved. In the British Museum there is an English manuscript book of the fourteenth century, known as Queen Mary's Psalter. Each side of the crimson velvet binding is embroidered with a large floral device of the form commonly found on vestments of the early Tudor period. It is evident that these scraps at one time formed part of a cope or chasuble. The devices are

* The orphreys of this chasuble are of Flemish workmanship.

disproportionately large for the size of the book, and there are still traces of the long tendrils, so characteristic of these devices, having originally extended beyond the limits of the binding.

An embroidery, dating from the later years of the reign of Henry VIII., is illustrated in Plate 32. It is an altar-frontal, of stamped crimson velvet, with applied groups of figures embroidered in silver-gilt and silver thread and coloured silks. In the middle is the Crucifixion, with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist on either side of the cross, standing on a strip of ground covered with flowers. On the left is a kneeling figure of Ralph Neville, fourth Earl of Westmorland (b. 1499, d. 1550), who succeeded to the title in 1523; behind him kneel his seven sons. On the right is his wife, Lady Catherine Stafford* (d. 1555), daughter of the third Duke of Buckingham; behind her are their thirteen daughters.†

* The swan beside her is a Stafford badge.

† The shields of arms above are apparently of later date.

ALTAR FRONTAL of stamped crimson velvet, with applied groups of figures, embroidered in silver gilt and silver thread and coloured silks. Middle of XVI century.

See page 66

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

HE Reformation practically put an end to ecclesiastical embroidery in England, and the needlewomen thus lost their best patron. Not only so, but the skilful works of former times were, many of them, alienated or destroyed. A large number were taken abroad, and many were left behind only to be burnt for the sake of the precious metals used in the embroidery, or mutilated to serve other purposes. The lists of Church goods sold at the Reformation, include many vestments which passed in this way into private hands. "Many private men's parlours," we are told, "were hung with altar-cloths, their tables and beds covered with copes, instead of carpets and coverlids."* Embroideries thus transformed may still be seen at Hardwick Hall, and in other English mansions.

A great deal of embroidery intended for other than ecclesiastical uses, especially for costume purposes, was, of course, done before

* Heylin's "History of the Reformation," p. 134.

the sixteenth century; but when we look for examples, the number is found to be small indeed. The reason need not be sought far. They must have suffered to a much greater extent from the wear and tear of everyday use, and the influence of fashion in their case was no doubt of a more destructive nature.

In the early Middle Ages, embroidery often served to adorn the ordinary costume of men and women, and was even employed to emblazon the armorial bearings on the surcoat of the knight. Among the tattered coats of this latter class which have survived, that of Edward the Black Prince is the best known. It is still suspended, with his helmet, shield, and gauntlets over his monument in Canterbury Cathedral. The ground is of faded velvet, originally red and blue, embroidered in gold with the Royal Arms of England.*

A statute of Edward III., in the year

* This Prince left to the high altar at Canterbury, among other bequests, a suit of green velvet embroidered with gold. (See Legg and Hope, "Inventories of Christchurch, Canterbury," p. 96.) The surcoat is illustrated in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. vii., pls. 8 and 9, and described by Mr. W. H. St. John Hope. The fragments of an earlier embroidered surcoat—that of William, Earl of Albemarle (d. 1260)—are illustrated in vol. vi. pl. xviii.

BODICE FRONT of linen, with embroidery in coloured silks.
Late XVI century.

See pages 75 *and* 76

1. LEATHER GLOVE. Early XVII century.

2. MITTEN of crimson velvet, with embroidered satin gauntlet. Late XVI century. *See page* 77

1363, prohibited all whose incomes were below 400 marks a year from wearing embroidered garments. Like other sumptuary enactments, it was probably little regarded.

A few years later, we read thus of the young Squire, in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"—

> "Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
> Al ful of fresshe floures whyte and reede."

In the following century, during the reign of Henry VI., and again in later reigns, the importation of foreign embroideries was forbidden by statute.

The sixteenth century was undoubtedly the great time for embroidered costume. King Henry VIII. loved such magnificence, and the monarch appears on the canvases of Holbein resplendent with gold-embroidered robes.

An oil painting at Hampton Court * gives an excellent idea of the style and use of embroidery in this reign. The king is seated, with his queen Katharine Parr on his left; next to the queen stands the Princess Elizabeth, and on the other side are Prince Edward and Princess Mary. The king and queen are in rich robes, embroidered in gold

* No. 453 in new catalogue (1903).

with the small interlacing patterns characteristic of the period. A cushion beneath the king's feet and the canopy behind his throne are enriched in a similar manner.

Henry's first queen, Catherine of Aragon, and her equally unhappy daughter Mary, both sought solace from their cares in working with the needle. Of Catherine it is related that during her seclusion at Buckden, while waiting for the final decision respecting the annulling of her marriage, she and her gentlewomen "occupied themselves working with their own hands something wrought in needlework, costly and artificially, which she intended to the honour of God to bestow upon some churches."* The class of embroidery known as "black work" or "Spanish work" —generally in black silk on linen—is said to have been introduced into England by this unfortunate Queen. At any rate, it appears to have first found favour in England about her time. The sombre effect was sometimes relieved by the use of gold thread for the stems and other details. It was often employed for the decoration of tunics, caps and head-dresses, covers, pillow-cases, and

* Harpsfield, quoted in "Dictionary of National Biography."

JACKET OR TUNIC, in "black work." In possession of Viscount Falkland. Late XVI century.

See page 78

the like. Such work became very popular during the reign of Elizabeth, and numerous examples are still to be found in country houses. It survived the reign of James I., but appears to have gone out of fashion in the time of his successor. One of the most important existing examples is the tunic belonging to the Viscount Falkland, which will be described later.

Queen Elizabeth herself was a skilful needlewoman. There is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford an interesting little volume associated with her early years. It is "The Mirror or Glasse of the Synneful Soul," copied in her own handwriting by the young princess. The volume is dedicated "From Assherige, the last daye of the yeare of our Lord God 1544." The embroidered binding is conjectured to have been also the work of Elizabeth. It is adorned with interlacing bands in plaited gold and silver thread, enclosing a monogram of the letters KP. The book was intended as a present to the queen, Katharine Parr, hence the initials. In the British Museum there is another manuscript recorded to have been written by Elizabeth in 1545. The embroidered binding resembles that above described, and

is probably by the same hand. It has a large and elaborate monogram in the middle, apparently of Katharine's name, and a small H above and below.*

There was, however, a personage of equally exalted rank with Elizabeth, who is still more famous for her skill at embroidery—her rival, Mary Queen of Scots. The number of embroideries ascribed to this illustrious captive is legion. A glance is sufficient to discredit the attribution in most cases, but, as we shall see later, there is good reason for supposing that some of the needlework still preserved at Hardwick Hall is really by her hand.

Garments, gloves, hangings, curtains, valances, covers, and numerous other things of like nature which have survived from the times of Elizabeth, testify to the skill and industry of the embroiderers at that period. The wardrobe of Elizabeth alone is said to have included three thousand dresses, and many of these were richly embroidered.†

* Both these bindings are illustrated and described in Mr. Cyril Davenport's "English Embroidered Bookbindings," plates iv. and v. Those desirous of studying the subject could not do better than consult that work.

† It was from this rich collection that Anne of Denmark had to choose for her own wear, when her husband came to London as successor to the throne.

Iniurijs, infirmitas ſubiecta.

THE mightie fiſhe, deuowres the little frie,
If in the deepe, they venture for to ſtaie,
If vp they ſwimme, newe foes with watchinge flie,
The caruoraunte, and Seamewe, for theire praie:
Betweene theſe two, the frie is ſtill deſtroi'de,
Ah feeble ſtate, on euerie ſide anoi'de.

And. Alciat.
Non minuta manens vndique debilitas.

In dies

ILLUSTRATION from Whitney's "Choice of Emblemes."

See page 78

At this critical period of our national history, the playfulness which characterized so many productions of the time is remarkable. Soldiers who made the name of England respected abroad, wrote the quaintest poetry at home. The language of the court succumbed to the general tendency, and its euphuistic affectations fitted well with the sentiments it was employed to express. Design, too, did not escape. The ordered patterns of the earlier time give place to a medley of wandering stems with columbines, pansies, carnations, roses, tulips, honeysuckle, strawberries, acorns, animals, birds, fishes, butterflies, and insects.

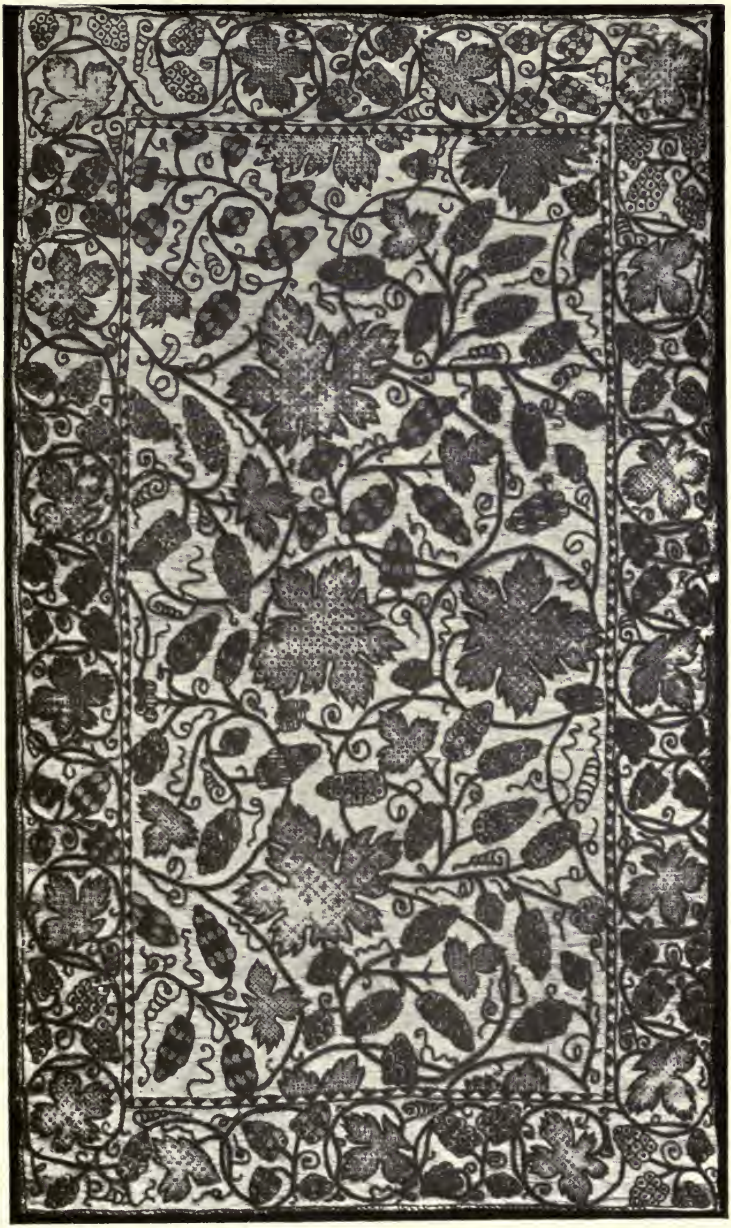
The numerous portraits of Elizabeth—in the National Portrait Gallery, at Hampton Court, in noblemen's houses, and elsewhere—illustrate the extent to which embroidery was used for costume decoration, and the style of design in vogue. Sometimes she wears a jacket with the favourite "black work" already referred to. A half-length portrait at Hampton Court (No. 616) is a good example. The sleeves are embroidered with roses, carnations, grapes, and strawberries.*

* It may be compared with the patterns on the two tunics of this period described on p. 74.

In another portrait at Hampton Court (No. 349), attributed by some to the artist Taddeo Zucchero, the queen wears a fancy-dress, consisting of a long, loose robe, embroidered all over in colours, with stems of roses, pansies and other flowers, and birds. Her right hand rests on the head of a stag, and in one of the lower corners of the picture are some verses, conjectured to be of the queen's own composition.

A portrait in the possession of the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House is quainter still. The robe of the queen is embroidered all over with human eyes and ears, symbolical, no doubt, of the vigilance and wisdom of the illustrious wearer.

There is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 173, 1869), a loose tunic with long sleeves, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. It is of cream-white silk, with embroidery in silver-gilt and silver thread and silks of various colours. The flowers (roses, honeysuckle, lilies, and pansies) are enclosed within scrolls arranged in formal compartments. A tunic of similar form (No. 919, 1873) is in a less costly material, being of linen; the materials used for the embroidery are the same as in the previous case. The



PILLOW COVER, in "black work." XVI century. In possession of Viscount Falkland. *See page* 79

flowering stems here run over the whole surface, without accommodating themselves in any way to the shape of the garment.

The colour illustration (Plate A) represents a most charming example of the needlework of the Elizabethan period: a side of a tunic belonging to Mrs. Buxton of Icklingham, Suffolk. There are three pieces of the sleeves also existing, but the other parts are now lost. The ground is linen, the embroidery being in silks and silver-gilt thread. The pattern throughout is a simple repeat of roses, each on a straight stalk, with a leaf on either side. This work displays none of the exuberance so often seen in Elizabethan embroidery, but it is very pleasing nevertheless. For simple grace, it would be hard to choose between this and the exquisite embroidered binding of a Bible of the year 1583 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.* The book, which is believed to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth, is bound in crimson velvet, embroidered with a pattern of interlacing rose-stems in gold, silver, and colours.

A favourite piece among students of embroidery is a small bodice front (Plate 33)

* Illustrated in Davenport's "English Embroidered Bookbinding," pl. 25.

of linen, with strawberries, roses, honeysuckle, and other flowers in coloured silks.

The large cream-white satin coverlet* from Ireland, partly reproduced in Plate 42, is an important example of late Elizabethan work. It has a deep floral border, and a pattern of floral sprays in the middle. The materials used for the embroidery are silver-gilt and silver thread and silks of various colours. A practice not altogether commendable is exemplified here. Some of the petals of the flowers have been separately worked, and afterwards fixed to the satin by one edge only, so as to stand away from the ground. Such devices are not infrequently found in Elizabethan work. It is doubtful whether they should be employed at all. At any rate, we may condemn without hesitation the exaggeration to which the practice was carried in the succeeding period.

In the time of Elizabeth, especially at the New Year, a favourite gift was a pair of gloves. These articles were often very daintily embroidered. There is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, a pair of leather gloves with embroidered gauntlets, said to have been presented to the queen on the occasion

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 348 (1901).

SLEEVES FOR A TUNIC, in "black work."
About 1600.

See page 79

EMBROIDERED HANGING, in black silk and silver-gilt thread. Late Elizabethan. *See page* 79

of her visit to the University in 1566. Tradition assigns an earlier origin to another pair, presented, together with other works of art associated with the Denny family, by Sir Edward Denny, Bart., to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1882. They are of leather, with white satin gauntlets elaborately embroidered and enriched with numerous seed-pearls. It is believed that they are the gloves recorded to have been given by Henry VIII. to Sir Anthony Denny, who was successively Groom of the Stole, a Privy Councillor, and an Executor of the King, and afterwards one of the guardians of the young king Edward VI. The design, however, seems to point to a later origin, and it is perhaps more likely that they are the pair given by James I. to Sir Edward Denny (afterwards Earl of Norwich), who, as Sheriff of Hertfordshire, received the king during his journey from Scotland.

A pair of mittens (Plate 34) of crimson velvet, with embroidered satin gauntlets, was given by Queen Elizabeth to her Maid of Honour, Margaret Edgcumbe, wife of Sir Ed. Denny, Knt. Banneret. The leather glove, illustrated in the same plate, is of early seventeenth century work.

The jacket or tunic of "black work" belonging to the Viscount Falkland has already been mentioned. By his permission it is illustrated in this volume (Plate 35). It is of linen, the embroidery being entirely in black silk. Amid characteristic floral work of the period are a number of devices of a quaint nature. A little flying-fish, which has leaped out of the water in order to avoid the gaping mouth of a large fish below, is attacked by a sea-bird from above; a man of Herculean type, astride a crocodile, holds a writhing serpent in each hand. Other subjects are—Actæon devoured by his hounds, Bacchus beating a drum, a man on a lion, a stag pierced by an arrow, another pursued by a hound, a pelican in her piety, prancing horses, a camel, an elephant, a sea-horse, unicorns, monkeys, foxes, squirrels, birds, and fishes.

These devices resemble in many points the quaint woodcuts so often seen in books of the Elizabethan period, and it is from such that they were probably copied. Three of them are, in fact, to be found in "A Choice of Emblemes, and other Devises," by Geoffrey Whitney, a book printed at Leyden in the year 1586 (Plate 36).*

* They have been a little simplified by the embroiderer.

EMBROIDERED CAPS. XVI and Early XVIII centuries. *See page* 80

The jacket was given by William IV. to the Viscountess Falkland, wife of the tenth viscount. It is recorded to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth. A large coverlet and a pillow-cover (Plate 37) of "black work," also belonging to the Viscount Falkland, may perhaps date from a little earlier in the same century. Each has a running pattern of vine-stems, the large leaves being filled with tiny diaper patterns. An embroidery of a similar class has lately been acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 252, 1902). The panels are shaped to form the parts of a tunic, which has never been made up (Plate 38). The pattern is almost entirely floral; it consists of columbines, pansies, acorns, filberts, birds, butterflies, and insects. There is a tradition that this work was done by Mary, the daughter of Sir Henry Pierrepont and sister of the Earl of Kingston, who was married to Fulk Cartwright of Ossington in 1606.

Another example, a long hanging of the period of Queen Elizabeth, is partly of silver-gilt thread (Plate 39). It has a pattern of pomegranates and flowers, covered with small diaper designs, and enclosed by stems of plaited silver-gilt thread.

A very considerable number of caps and head-dresses worked in this way are still existing. The caps are almost invariably of rounded form, with turned-up edges trimmed with gold lace. There are several in the museum at South Kensington, including one from the collection of Lord Zouche, and two from that of Sir Thomas Isham of Lamport Hall. The two latter (Plate 40) may belong to the early part of Elizabeth's reign. The ladies' head-dresses are commonly of a hooded shape, drawn together by a string at the back (Plate 40). The embroidery is sometimes in black alone, but oftener the stems are of plaited gold thread. It seems probable that these caps did not go entirely out of fashion until the reign of Charles I. Black was not always the colour chosen. A cap of the same form, with a pattern of roses, pansies, and strawberries in colours, the stems in gold, is in the museum (No. 2016, 1899).

Several private collections contain examples of black work of an earlier period, that of Henry VIII. Such work is also illustrated in portraits of his reign. That of the Earl of Surrey at Hampton Court, attributed to Gwillim Stretes, represents the nobleman wearing a white under-tunic with

PANEL, in "petit-point" embroidery. Early XVII century. *See page* 81

PORTION OF AN EMBROIDERED SATIN COVERLET.
Late Elizabethan.

See page 76

black embroidery in formal patterns on the front, neck, and cuffs.

Another class of embroidery, requiring a great deal of time and patience for its execution, found favour in the reign of Elizabeth, and, with certain modifications, has never since quite lost its popularity. It is known in France as "petit point," a term for which there is no satisfactory English equivalent. The work is usually in wools and silks of various colours on a canvas or coarse linen ground, which is entirely hidden by the needlework. The effect produced somewhat resembles that of a tapestry, although the dimensions are generally small, and the stitching is fine (Plate 41).*

It is not possible to enter, to any extent, into the attractive subject of needlework as associated with the mansions and manor-houses of England. Some of these are well known to contain embroideries which have been associated with them and their occupants for many generations. The most interesting collection of this kind, on account both of its historical connections, and of the variety of work which it includes, is at

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 299, 1900.

Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, a seat of the Duke of Devonshire.

Hardwick is one of the many fine mansions erected by Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, the famous "Bess of Hardwick." Within, it is full of the memorials of this remarkable woman, and of another who claims a higher place in history, the ill-fated Queen of Scots. Elizabeth was the daughter of John Hardwick, and was born in the year 1518. She was married successively to John Barlow, Sir William Cavendish,* Sir William St. Loe, and George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. Shortly after this last marriage, the custody of Mary Queen of Scots was confided to the earl by Elizabeth.

Mary is well known to have been an expert needlewoman, and the tradition that some of the embroideries now at Hardwick are her handiwork, is corroborated by the examples themselves. The mansion was not completed until after 1590, and consequently could never have been her prison-house; but it replaced an older mansion, the ruins of which are still standing hard by.

One embroidery, though not the most

* Her two sons by this marriage founded the dukedoms of Devonshire and Newcastle.

EMBROIDERED PANEL. At Hardwick Hall. XVI century

See pages 82 *and* 83

important at Hardwick, is of particular historical interest, as it bears a monogram of the name MARIA ensigned with a crown, worked into the pattern in yellow silk, on the oval in the centre of the panel. The design, too, composed of the English rose, the Scotch thistle, and the French lily, tends to strengthen the theory that we have here an actual example of the queen's handiwork (Plate 43). The small subjects in the ovals may have been copied from some illustrated book of fables. There is another panel belonging to the same set.

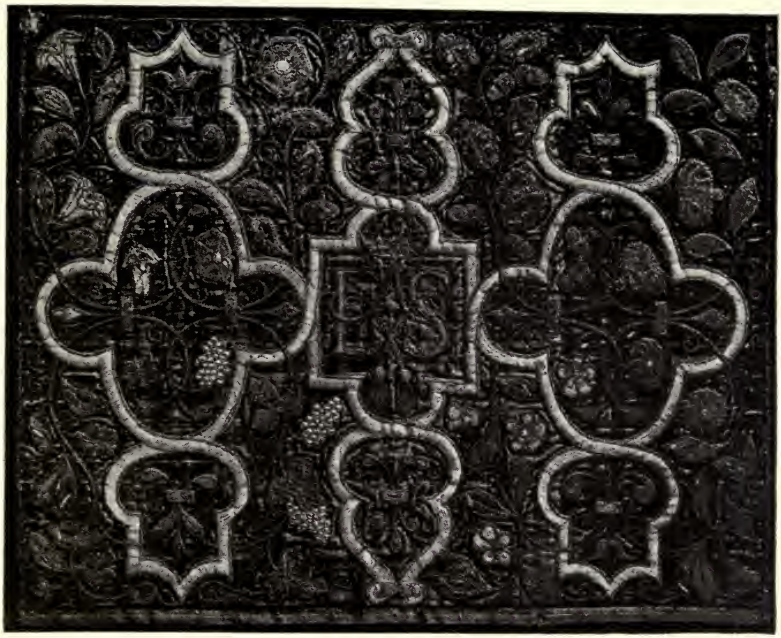
If these be the work of the Queen of Scots, there are others which have an undoubted connection with her jailer. A set of small velvet panels bears, besides various symbolic devices, the initials E. S. (Elizabeth Shrewsbury) and the date 1590.

Two other panels of appliqué work on red velvet, with designs of scrollwork interlaced with flowering stems have, in one case, the same initials ensigned with a coronet (Plate 44), and, in the other, a stag tripping, the crest of Hardwick (Plate 45). Another series represents the sciences and virtues—Astrology, Perspective, Faith (with a prostrate Turk before her), Chastity, and others—

each symbolized by a female figure beneath an arcade.

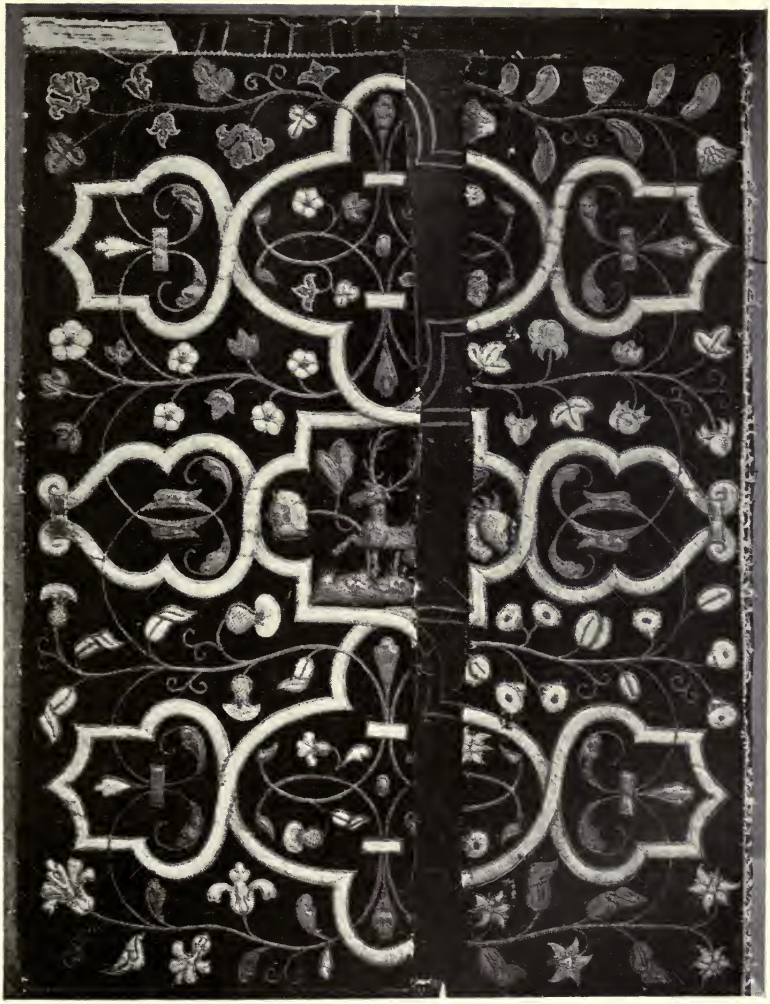
One of the larger embroideries at Hardwick, worked on canvas in coloured silks and silver-gilt thread (Plate 46), bears in the middle the arms of Talbot impaling Hardwick, surrounded by the Garter. The armorial devices in the corners are as follows: (1) a shield, Talbot impaling Hardwick, within a wreath having the initials E.S., G.S.; (2) The Hardwick crest, a stag tripping, with initials E.S.; (3) the Talbot badge, a Talbot dog, with initials G.S.; (4) the Cavendish crest (an intertwined serpent) surrounded by the motto CAVENDO TVTVS, still borne by the Dukes of Devonshire. The complicated heraldry of this piece is explained by the short biographical reference to Elizabeth of Hardwick (p. 82).

This description of Elizabethan embroidery may be closed by a short reference to the Broderers' Company, incorporated by the queen three years after her accession to the throne. The company, however, is mentioned at an earlier period, and it was probably in existence three centuries before. No doubt, some of the funeral palls referred to in an earlier part of this book were the



PANEL of appliqué work on red velvet, with initials of the Countess of Shrewsbury. At Hardwick Hall. Latter half of XVI century

See page 83



PANEL of appliqué work on red velvet, with crest of Hardwick. At Hardwick Hall. Latter half of XVI century. *See page* 83

work of "broderers" belonging to the guild. The members received much employment for ceremonial and festive occasions. By the time of Charles I. the company seems to have fallen upon evil days. A petition was presented to that monarch in 1634 pleading that "trade was then so much decayed and grown out of use, that a greater part of the company, for want of employment, were . . . much impoverished." The company still exists, but in common with most of the other livery companies of London, it has gradually become dissociated from the work for which it was incorporated.*

* See Hazlitt's "Livery Companies of the City of London." The company has lately given a stimulus to the embroiderer's art by holding competitive exhibitions of needlework and offering prizes (see *The Art Workers' Quarterly*, vol. ii. p. 103.)

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

ALTHOUGH much excellent needlework was done in the seventeenth century, the art in some respects failed to maintain the level of earlier periods. The characteristic patterns of Elizabethan work survive her reign, but they gradually degenerate into a stiffness and sameness which at last finds expression in some of the ugliest and most trivial work that ever occupied the needle. We are obliged to take the grotesque stump work, so popular in its day, as the general expression of taste among needlewomen of the seventeenth century. It is a relief to turn from these to the samplers which first found favour at this period, and prove that better taste was not altogether wanting. Many of the latter are of excellent design and evince considerable technical skill. Designs on a larger scale, for curtains, hangings, etc., are sometimes boldly drawn, and effective when put to their proper use.

Towards the end of the century we meet

EMBROIDERED PANEL, in coloured silks and silver-gilt thread; with arms of Talbot. Latter half of XVI century. *See page* 84

with some charming examples of quilted work with embroidered patterns in yellow silk, and larger silk embroideries in varied colours are often admirable.

There is in the British Museum a panel for a cushion, which belongs to the early years of the century. It is of canvas, worked in wools and silks. The shield of arms in the middle is enclosed by a wreath from which spring carnations, pansies and other flowers popular among embroiderers in the previous century. An inscription round the border intimates that the work was made for the Mayor of Hereford, and dates it as follows TERTIO DIE JULII ANNO SECUNDO IACOBI REGIS.

The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses a panel of similar workmanship (Plate 47). The shield in the middle bears the Royal arms of the United Kingdom, and the letters I R date the work as belonging to the reign of James I. The materials used are silks of varied colours, and silver-gilt and silver thread, the ground being of canvas. The name of the embroiderer, MARY HVLTON, is so conspicuous that the work might almost be classed among the early samplers. A small cushion in the same collection (No 9047, 1863) is still more

reminiscent of the sampler. Both sides are broken up into small panels with a curious combination of devices. On one side may be seen a lady wearing a ruff, a mermaid, and a man surrounded by stags and rabbits. On the other are lions, unicorns, a rose, a crown and the letters I R (Jacobus Rex). There are also clasped hands, fleurs-de-lys, honeysuckle, pansies, acorns, strawberries and interlacing and geometrical patterns, on embroidered grounds of different colours.

A piece of work in the Maidstone Museum belongs to the beginning of the century. It is evidently intended to illustrate the progress of the Reformation in England. King Henry VIII. is seated in the middle with his foot on the prostrate figure of a friar. On his right stands his son and successor Edward VI., crowned and holding a sceptre in his right hand and a Bible in his left. Beyond is Queen Mary holding a rosary, with a dragon at her feet. On the other side stands Queen Elizabeth, with a sword in her left hand, and a book in her right, on the open page of which may be read GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY LVK II. The sovereigns wear the costumes of their own times, affording an illustration of the use

EMBROIDERED PANEL, with silks of varied colours and silver-gilt and silver thread on canvas. Early XVII century.

See page 87

EMBROIDERED BAG AND CUSHION.

Early XVII century

See pages 89 *and* 90

of earlier costume in the picture-embroideries of the seventeenth century.*

A favourite device in the reign of James I. is the obelisk or pyramid. It frequently occurs in architecture, wood-carving and silver-work, and sometimes it is to be seen in embroideries of the period. A small canvas panel in the Victoria and Albert Museum † has a pyramid rising from a crown, with rows of flowers between. In another piece, a bag or purse,‡ the pyramids rest on pedestals.

Small bags of this nature, generally square or oblong, are frequently met with. Some were intended to contain books; others may have been used for holding embroidery materials and such articles. They generally have a string for drawing the open side together. The usual ornament is a spray of flowers. Such a bag is illustrated in Plate 48;§ it has a flowering tree embroidered in colours on each side, on a ground of silver needlework, and is united by a cord of plaited

* The panel forms the frontispiece to Mr. Marcus Huish's "Samplers and Tapestry Embroideries," a work dealing exhaustively with the subject.

† No. 1372, 1853. ‡ No. 244, 1896.

§ Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 316, 1898.

silk to a small pincushion with embroidery of a similar character. The larger cushion,* of the same style and period, has a pattern of flowers, fruit, birds, and insects, in coloured silks, on a canvas ground embroidered with silver thread. The lady's jacket reproduced in Plate 49 † belongs to a valuable collection of costumes, worn by various members of the Isham family of Lamport Hall. The costumes range from the time of Elizabeth to the end of the seventeenth century, and form a unique collection. The jacket, which is of pink silk, finds a place in this volume on account of the embroidery. The scrolling pattern is formed by an outline of blue silk entwined with silver thread.

An embroidery of some historical interest belonging to the next reign was presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Sir Edward Denny, Bart., together with other things, in 1882 (see p. 77). It is a military scarf,‡ such as may be seen in many portraits of the seventeenth century, worn across the cuirass and passing over one shoulder. The floral pattern is embroidered in gold and

* Victoria and Albert Museum No. 317, 1898.

† Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 177, 1900.

‡ No. 1509, 1882.

LADY'S JACKET of pink silk, with scrolling pattern formed by an outline of blue silk entwined with silver thread. Early XVII century

See page 90

silver and colours on a ground of purple silk. The scarf belonged to Charles I., who wore it at the battle of Edgehill, and gave it after the battle to Mr. Adam Hill of Spaldwick, who rallied his troop of horse, and is said to have thereby preserved the life of the king.*

Souvenirs of this king must have been carefully treasured by the Royalist party. A needlework portrait of Charles I.,† in a small oval medallion, was formerly in the collection of Lord Zouche. The king wears a white falling collar, and has the ribbon of the Garter. The portrait, entirely of silk embroidery, is a work of great skill. It may be compared with another representing his favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, which adorns the cover of a volume of "Bacon's Essays," given by the author to the duke, and now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.‡

A style of embroidery known as "stamp" or "stump" work, referred to above, flourished greatly during this monarch's reign. It appears to have originated in the time of

* A porcelain table-service was made from the pattern of this scarf, by Messrs. Chamberlain at Worcester, by the command of King George IV.

† Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 812, 1891.

‡ See Davenport, "English Embroidered Bookbindings," pl. 31.

James I., and to have remained popular through the Commonwealth and the reign of Charles II. Its most patent characteristic is perhaps its grotesque ugliness; but another, which more effectually differentiates it, is the high relief, produced by stuffing and padding, introduced into many parts of the design. Tent curtains, draperies, etc., are so made that they can be pulled aside, the arms of the figures are modelled in the round, and rockeries are thrown into deep relief. The work is, in fact, a mockery of sculpture, and departs altogether from the legitimate province of the needle. It is not considered necessary to enter far into the history of this branch of our subject. A summary of its principal characteristics, and a short description of a few examples, is all that will be attempted.* A large number are in the form of caskets and work-boxes. Many of these are fitted with cupboards, sliding drawers, and secret recesses, and provided with ink-wells, glass bottles, and other requisites for toilet and writing purposes. Mirror-frames are frequently embroidered in this way. Other examples are framed and glazed as pictures.

* The whole subject is well treated in Mr. Huish's "Samplers and Tapestry Embroideries."

BOX, in "stump" work. First half of XVII century. *See page* 95

PANEL, in flat embroidery. First half of XVII century. *See pages* 95 *and* 96

The favourite subjects are those connected with the royal house of Stuart. Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, and Charles II. and his queen, are frequently pourtrayed. Even when Biblical, mythical, or allegorical scenes are represented, the principal figures often take the likenesses of these royal personages. The work is aristocratic and royalist throughout. The shepherd playing the pipes, and the shepherdess with her crook, are dressed in the fashionable costume of the time. The following are the principal among Biblical subjects: Adam and Eve in the Garden, Abraham entertaining the Angels, Abraham and Hagar, the Offering of Isaac, Isaac and Rebekah, Joseph and Potiphar's wife, Moses found among the bulrushes, David and Abigail, David and Bathsheba, the Judgment of Solomon, the Visit of the Queen of Sheba, Jehu and Jezebel, Esther and Ahasuerus, Susanna and the Elders, and the Daughter of Herodias before Herod. The favourite classical subjects are the Judgment of Paris and Orpheus charming the Beasts. Single figures sometimes symbolize qualities and virtues, such as Faith, Hope, Justice, Peace, Time, the Five Senses, etc.

A peculiarity of the work is that the

figures in a single example frequently have costumes of different periods. Among animals, birds and insects are the lion, unicorn, leopard, stag, camel, hound, sheep, squirrel, rabbit, peacock, parrot, hoopoe, pheasant, swan, robin, butterflies, caterpillars, snails, and moths. It has been thought that special meanings should be attached to some of the smaller creatures, but it is probable that their chief function was to fill small gaps in the designs. The flowers and fruits are largely those found in Elizabethan work, and include roses, columbines, carnations, pansies, tulips, lilies, daffodils, honeysuckle, apples, pears, strawberries, nuts, and acorns. The scenes generally have landscape backgrounds with castles, houses, tents, mounds, rockeries, wells, fountains, and fishponds. Clouds and smoke are in full force; the sun and moon often shine together, and an angel frequently hovers over the scene. As regards materials, silk and metal threads are used; pearls and beads often enrich the designs, and pieces of glass and mica fill subordinate offices. A picture is occasionally worked entirely in glass beads of various colours. The dated pieces are mostly included between the years 1640 and 1660.

SAMPLERS. Dated 1643 and 1696. *See pages* 97 *and* 98

The box illustrated in Plate 50 is from the collection of Lord Zouche.* The ground is of cream-white satin, a material almost invariably used. The figures are in extremely high relief, and have suffered accordingly. The subjects include the Visit of the Queen of Sheba, the Judgment of Solomon, Susanna surprised by the Elders, and the Sacrifice of Isaac. The female figures round the slope of the cover symbolize the five senses. Various flowers and other designs are worked on the drawers and compartments inside.

A mirror frame in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 247, 1896) is unfinished, and is more interesting in this condition as it illustrates the method of procedure. The whole design has been first outlined in ink on the satin; parts of the flat embroidery have been then completed, and the relief work has, in a few instances, been added. There is at the Guildhall Museum in London, an embroidered panel also unfinished, the outline of the whole design having been similarly traced in black. It is said to have been rescued from a house in Cheapside at the time of the great fire of 1666.

During the period when this relief work

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 745, 1891.

was in vogue, boxes and panels were sometimes covered with scenes of the same kind in flat embroidery (Plate 51).

It is hard to say when samplers were first worked. As we now understand them, they are supposed to serve as evidences of the embroiderers' skill, or as exercises. As such, they appear to have originated in the time of Charles I., although an embroidery like that of Mary Hulton (Plate 47), dating from the previous reign, might almost be regarded as a sampler in the former sense. But samplers have, or at any rate once had, another purpose as well—that of serving as records of patterns and lettering for reference, and methods of stitching. In this wider sense they go back another century at least.

The earliest dated sampler known is of the year 1643, but the word is used at an earlier period by Shakespeare, Herrick, and others.*

The sampler of the seventeenth century is usually a long narrow piece of unbleached

* "We, Hermia, like two artificial girls,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion."
Midsummer Night's Dream, Act III., Sc. 2.

"Come, bring your sampler, and with art
Draw in't a wounded heart."
Herrick, *The Wounded Heart.*

WALL-HANGING, one of six found in Hatton Garden.
XVII century.

See pages 98 *and* 99

linen, worked with floral and geometrical patterns in successive horizontal bands. The work is generally in coloured silks, with a few illustrations of cut and drawn work in linen thread. Specimens of lettering are added, as a rule, with perhaps the name of the worker and the date of the production.

Many of the cut-work patterns resemble Italian work of the time, giving rise to the conjecture that some of the ruffs and falling bands worn in this country may have been the work of English needlewomen.

Raised work is not altogether wanting in samplers, but it is usually employed in a restrained manner. The sampler above mentioned, bearing the date 1643, is reproduced in Plate 52. It illustrates both the floral embroidery in silks, and the geometrical openwork in white linen threads. Sometimes the sampler is devoted entirely to the latter class of work. The name "Margreet May," with the date 1654, occurs on one such piece.* In another sampler,† dated 1666, coloured silks alone are used.‡

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 323, 1872.

† No. 741, 1899.

‡ One cannot always be certain whether these samplers have been divided or not.

In the later years of the century, the floral patterns show a tendency to become less formal, and the petals of the flowers are often detached from the ground. One of this class * bears the name Elizabeth Macket and the date 1696 (Plate 52).

The development of the sampler in the following century will be referred to in the next chapter.

Some embroideries of the seventeenth century, designed on a far larger scale, remain to be briefly described.

A few years ago there was discovered, behind an accumulation of wallpapers in an old house in Hatton Garden, a series of hangings, of a remarkable character, probably embroidered soon after the middle of the seventeenth century. When the stripping of the walls brought them to light, they were so dirty as to be hardly recognizable; but a careful process of cleaning led to a very satisfactory result. The hangings are six in number, each measuring about 7 feet 9 inches high by 4 feet wide. The canvas ground is completely hidden by embroidery of coloured wools in varied stitches. The illustration of one of the hangings (Plate 53) will give a

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 433, 1884.

EMBROIDERED HANGING.

Late XVII century
See pages 99 *and* 100

general idea of them all. On each is represented part of an arcade supported by round columns, with capitals of a foliated type. Round the columns trail stems with large flowers and leaves. Birds of gay plumage are to be seen among the foliage, and on the ground below are various animals, including elephants, camels, a lion, a horse, hounds, a goat, deer, foxes, sheep, rabbits, a squirrel, a unicorn, and a dragon. The panels are of great decorative value, and the large scale is well suited to the purpose for which they were designed.

Many large embroideries, used as hangings, curtains, and valances, have survived from the seventeenth century. They are generally of linen, or a mixed material of linen and cotton, worked with large patterns in bright-coloured worsteds. The designs may be classed in three varieties. Some have isolated sprays of flowers at intervals over the whole surface; others are divided into narrow upright panels by borders of flowering stems, with a row of floral sprays running down the middle of each panel (Plate 54). Another class is more frequently found than either of these. Along the bottom is indicated a strip of soil, generally diversified

with little hillocks, and dotted with small animals (Plate 55). From this ground at regular intervals rise large trees whose trunks generally assume a serpentine form. The flowers of various kinds and large leaves growing from the trunks are designed with great boldness. Birds are frequently scattered among the branches, which intertwine so as to cover the whole upper part of the hanging. It is probable that none of these hangings are earlier than the middle of the seventeenth century, and the greater part belong to the latter half of that century.* They are sometimes in sombre colours, green being predominant. Occasionally a piece is found worked entirely in shades of red.

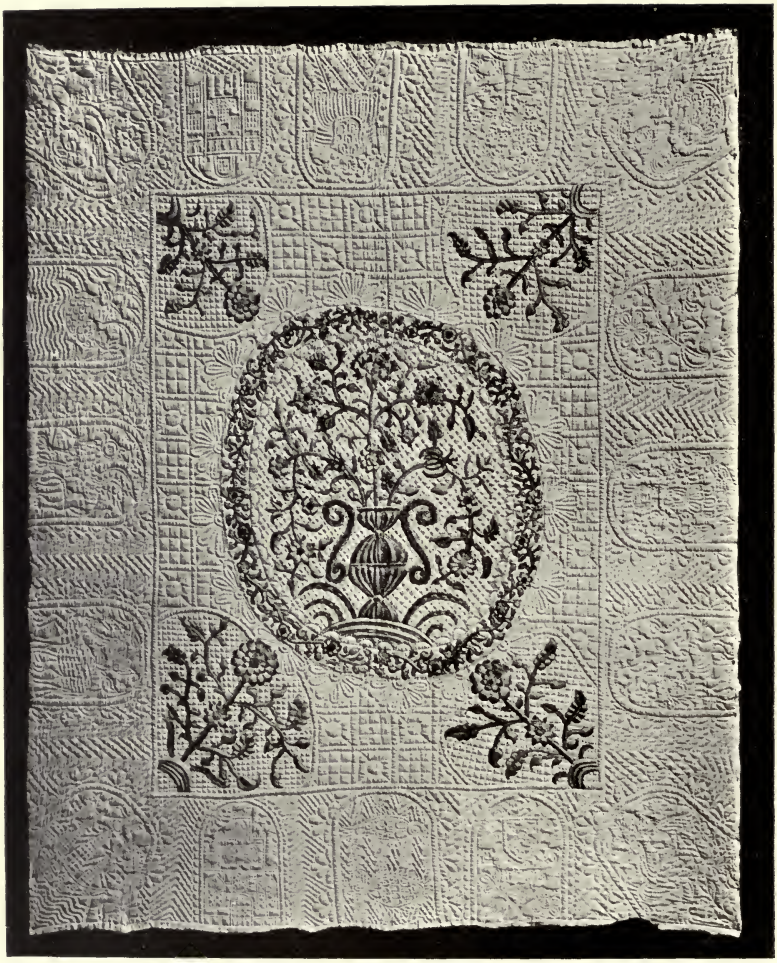
In the later years of the century, large numbers of embroideries were produced in England—chiefly small panels and articles of costume—worked only in yellow silk. The designs are usually floral, the linen ground being quilted in small diaper patterns. A ground quilted in this way is sometimes worked with sprays of flowers in bright colours.†

* They have been sometimes assigned to the period of James I.

† A quilted and embroidered petticoat in the museum of the United Service Institution at Whitehall, is traditionally associated with Queen Elizabeth. It is, however, a century later than her reign.

PORTION OF A COVERLET, embroidered with worsteds. Early XVIII century.

See page 102



COVERLET, linen, quilted with white thread, and embroidered with coloured silks. Dated 1703. *See pages* 101 *and* 102

PORTION OF A COVERLET, linen, embroidered with red and green silks. Early XVIII century. *See page* 102

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

TOWARDS the end of the seventeenth century, the great development of our intercourse with the Far East, and the large number of Chinese works of art brought by traders to Europe, had introduced a strong Chinese element into Western design. Even embroideries did not escape the influence of the Celestial empire. Gay birds, with tails resembling flames, like the mythical Chinese phœnix, fly amid flowers designed on Chinese models. This influence gradually died out as the eighteenth century advanced. The most noticeable change is the increasing tendency to produce a deceptive resemblance to nature—there is less of design and more of direct imitation. Flowers are shaded to have the appearance of relief, and embroidery encroaches on the province of the painted picture.

An embroidery dating from the beginning of the century, before the development of its chief characteristics, is illustrated in Plate 56.*

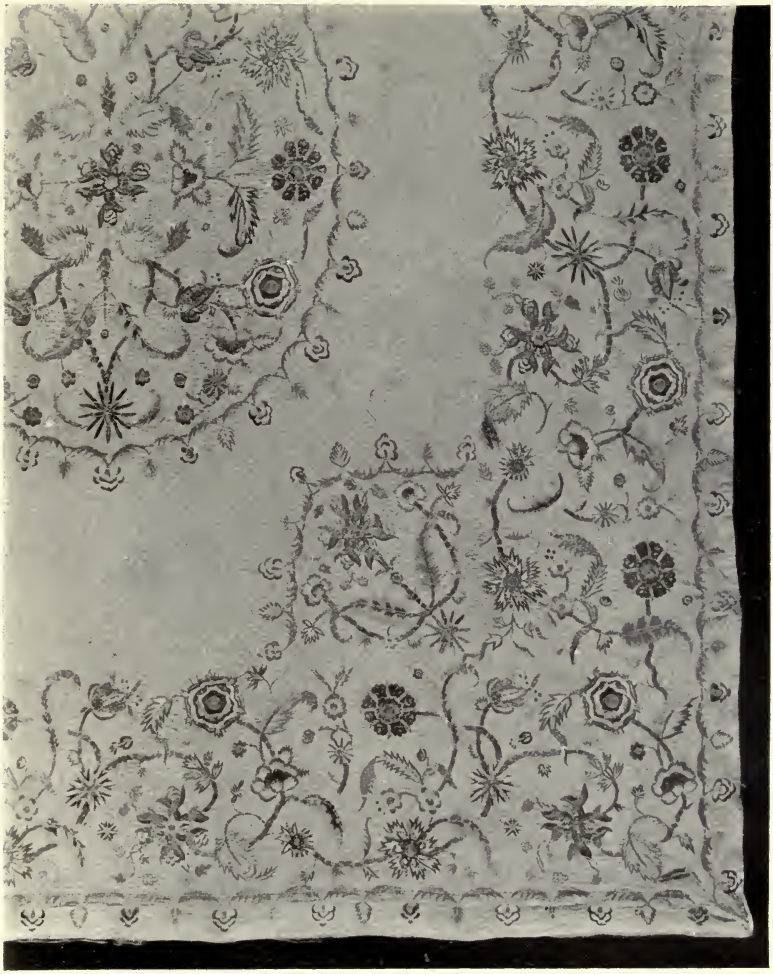
* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 1564, 1902.

It is a linen coverlet, quilted with white thread and embroidered with coloured silks. One of the border compartments contains a shield of arms with the initials E S and the date 1703; in the others are such designs as the following: a griffin, a lion, a horse, a standing figure, a mermaid, a merman, a castle, a three-masted ship, a camel, a hound, rabbits, a duck and other birds, and fishes.

Worsted work for large coverlets and hangings survives the seventeenth century, but the designs are of a different character. The cover partly reproduced in colour (Plate D) belongs to the best type of the earlier half of the century. In other examples the stems are arranged in a less ordered manner, and run over the whole field.

The use of silk for embroidery gradually replaced that of worsteds, in the eighteenth century, for these large pieces. There still exist a great number worked in the former material, sometimes on a linen ground, and at other times on silk. The coverlet illustrated in Plate 57 is on linen, the embroidery being entirely in red and green silk. The honeysuckle border is particularly effective. Sometimes gold thread was also used (Plate 58).

A great deal of embroidery was done in the



PORTION OF A COVERLET, linen, embroidered with coloured silks and gold thread. Early XVIII century. *See page* 102

eighteenth century for upholstering purposes. The panels are generally made in shapes to fit the backs, seats, and sides of settees and chairs, and there are sometimes also square pieces for cushions. The work is usually in wools, with silks for the high lights, on coarse linen or canvas. The favourite designs are landscapes, with shepherds and shepherdesses or other figures. Sometimes the armorial bearings of the family are represented, and occasionally a vase of flowers or some such ornament takes the principal place. It is not unusual to find on these panels the name of the worker and the date. An embroidery in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 269, 1893, see Plate 59) represents a vase of flowers in colours, the ground being covered all over with a diaper pattern in cream-white silk. Underneath the basket is worked the name ELIZABETH RVSSELL, with the date 1730. This panel may have been intended for a cushion-cover.

The changes in embroidery designs in the eighteenth century are illustrated by the samplers of the period. The openwork lace patterns disappear entirely towards the end of the preceding century, and the sampler becomes more of a picture, with an embroidered

border all round. It is at about the same time that Bible texts, mottoes, and rhymes begin to appear. Many of the verses would be far more appropriate in a cemetery. Sometimes, in fact, the identical verses worked in samplers may be found also on old tombstones in our country churchyards.*

Mary Wakeling's sampler, dated 1742, bears some doggerel lines, the theme being that "poor wretched life's short portion flies away." Ann Woodgate, in 1794, after describing the inevitable withering of flowers, concludes that—

> "Such and so withering are our early joys,
> Which time or sickness speedily destroys."

The quotations are sometimes more happily chosen. Extracts from hymns and from metrical versions of the Psalms are met with, besides the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and quotations from different books of the Bible.

A sampler by Elizabeth Cridland, of the year 1752, with its trim little house, windmill, and dovecot, is one of the earliest known

* *E.g.* "Man's life is like unto a winter's day,
Some break their fast and so depart away.
Others stay dinner, and then depart full fed.
The largest age but sups and goes to bed."

EMBROIDERED PANEL. Dated 1730. *See page* 103

of the landscape class; above is the Lord's Prayer, and below a verse from the Book of Proverbs, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the slothfull shall be under tribute." Devices of houses, vases of flowers, human figures, animals and birds, all of a very formal type, are popular for the remainder of the century. Maps of the world, of continents, or of our own country, often bear dates as far back as the later years of the eighteenth century.

The popularity of the sampler appears to have greatly declined after the first two or three decades of the nineteenth century. One sampler* of the earlier part of that century may be described. Besides the customary house, with trees, animals, and birds, it has the quaintly designed figure of a man in a red coat—perhaps an army pensioner. The little embroideress has supplied the means of identification by working the following inscription above the figure: "This is my Dear father."

A great deal of embroidery of a pictorial type was produced in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Figure-subjects in bright-coloured silks were popular, and also

* Victoria and Albert Museum, No. 1373, 1900.

imitations of popular engravings laboriously embroidered in black silk threads.

Copies of oil-paintings in wool-work, such as were produced by Miss Mary Linwood (b. 1755, d. 1845) and Miss Knowles (b. 1733, d. 1807), "the Quaker, that works the sutile pictures,"* represent the climax of this mistaken art.

A single illustration (Plate 60) exemplifies the extent to which embroidery was used for the decoration of costume in the eighteenth century. It is a gentleman's coat, of the latter half of the century, worked in floss silks of several colours.

Of the nineteenth century we must say very little. Taste during the earlier part of the century was not good. Since then a revival has set in. Excellent results have already been attained, and there is good promise for the future.

* Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

GENTLEMAN'S COAT AND WAISTCOAT, embroidered with floss silks of several colours. Latter half of XVIII century. *See page* 106

SOME USEFUL BOOKS OF REFERENCE

Needlework as Art. By Lady Alford.

Archæologia. Vol. XVII. (1814), Vol. XXXVI. (1855).

Archæologia Cantiana. Vol. XI.

Archæological Institute of London Journal. Vol. IV. (1847).

On English Mediæval Embroidery. By the Rev. C. H. Hartshorne.

Some Drawings of Ancient Embroidery. By Mrs. M. Barber.

Art Workers' Quarterly. Vol. II. (1903).

Clifton Antiquarian Club Proceedings. Vol. I. (1887–8). "A Descriptive Catalogue of Some Remarkable Copes." By the Hon. and Rev. W. I. Clifford, S.J.

L'Art de décorer les Tissus. By Reymond Cox (Paris, 1900).

English Embroidered Bookbindings. By C. J. H. Davenport.

Art in Needlework. By Lewis F. Day.

Church Embroidery. By A. Dolby.

Church Vestments. By A. Dolby.

Anglo-Norman Antiquities. By A. C. Ducarel (Description of the Bayeux Tapestry, by S. Le Thieullier, 1767).

The Bayeux Tapestry. By F. R. Fowke (1875).

Gentleman's Magazine. Vol. LVI. (1786).

The Livery Companies of the City of London. By W. C. Hazlitt.

The History of Modern Wiltshire. By Sir R. C. Hoare.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS OF REFERENCE
—continued.

Samplers and Tapestry Embroideries. By MARCUS B. HUISH.

Embroideries and Lace. By E. LEFÉBURE (translated and enlarged by A. S. COLE).

A List of Parish Churches retaining Special Mediæval Features, Vestments, etc. By H. LITTLEHALES.

Inventory of Christchurch, Canterbury. By J. WICKHAM LEGG and W. H. ST. JOHN HOPE.

Old English Embroidery. By F. and H. MARSHALL.

Recherches sur le Commerce, la Fabrication et l'Usage des Étoffes. By FRANCISQUE MICHEL.

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries. Vols. VIII., XI., XII., XVII., XVIII.

Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament. By A. W. PUGIN.

St. Cuthbert. By J. RAINE (1828).

Report of the Historical Exhibition at Madrid in 1892. By C. H. READ.

Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages. By H. SHAW.

Dunstable, its History. By W. G. SMITH.

A Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Tapestry and Embroidery at South Kensington Museum. By A. S. COLE.

Vetusta Monumenta. Tomb of an Archbishop in the Cathedral Church, Canterbury. By W. H. ST. JOHN HOPE. Vol. VII.

Künstlerische Entwicklung der Weberei und Stickerei (Vienna Museum). By M. DREGER.

The Art of Needlework. By the COUNTESS OF WILTON.

INDEX

INDEX

INDEX

INDEX

INDEX

INDEX

INDEX

THE END

PRINTED BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BECCLES.