



#### AN "OUVRAGE DE POINT COUPPE"

**A** COVER of unusually fine filet and cutwork of the sixteenth century, with many details very closely resembling patterns in the book of Frederic Vinciolo (published 1587), is shown in the accompanying illustrations. It is in the collection of Mrs. Albert Blum.

Between the squares of netting are oblong strips of linen lawn which are embroidered with cutwork and are joined at their ends by smaller squares of reticello of very fine, firm workmanship and delicate drawing. The linen is fine and both that and the embroidery suggest the work that is more often found in France than in Italy or Spain.

The thread of which the filet is made is of a finely spun and rather wiry quality, and each square is bordered by a row of large meshes in which every third thread passes around the preceding two, forming a loose cluster—a rather unusual arrangement.

The bands of linen and the reticello squares contain several devices which appear more significant than mere patterns for an embroiderer, although perhaps only one more example of the custom which was so prevalent during the Renaissance and the seventeenth century of using the symbols of political or religious allegiances as ornament in textiles and other forms of decorative art.

The fifty-nine oblong pieces of linen which separate the filet squares are in two designs; one which has for its principal characteristic a globe at each end, and the other design having a lily, like the Lily of France or the Florentine lily, in the corresponding positions. They are worked in fine cutwork, eyelet work and an outlining stitch (a whipped back-stitch). In between these devices are stars, squares and eyelet work that seem more purely for ornament.

Philip II of Spain (1527-1598) used a globe as his device. His third wife was the French princess, Elizabeth of Valois (1545-1568) whom he married in 1559. She was the daughter of Henry II of France and his wife Catherine de' Medici.

The Queen Catherine de' Medici was a great lover of needlework, and caused Frederic Vinciolo the Venetian to come to Paris in order to make designs for lace and embroidery for her; and when she died, among her belongings were found almost a thousand squares of *réseuil* similar to those shown in the second part of Vinciolo's book.

If one chose to believe that this lovely cover had been made at about the time of that marriage, it would account for such a combination of emblems: the double-headed eagle and globe for King Philip, and the fleur de lys for his French Queen, as well as the monogram of her parents. At least such surmises may be the excuse for various pleasant day-dreams.

One apparent discrepancy might be that the patterns of Vinciolo, which so closely resemble many of the designs in this cover, were not published until 1587, twenty-odd years after the time of the marriage, but then, again, the designs may have been in use for many years before being published.

The designs in the reticello squares may be divided as follows:

The crowned double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire appears in four squares.

A square with a monogram composed of the letter H and reversed C's (such as one finds in the apartments of Henry II of France and his wife Catherine de' Medici), surrounded by fleurs de lys—eight squares.

A design composed of a six-pointed star formed by two superposed triangles (often called the seal of Solomon), surrounded by a wreath of pomegranate-like forms and with little fleurs de lys in the four corners—eight squares. A five-pointed star was used as *impresa* by Mar-



DETAIL FROM THE COVER BELONGING TO MRS. BLUM





COVER IN "RESEUIL" AND "POINT COUPPE" BELONGING TO MRS. ALBERT BLUM

guerite of Valois, sister of Elizabeth, afterward married to Henry IV of France.

A letter S as the center and four pomegranate forms in the surrounding reticello work is the design of eight squares.

The eight remaining squares are filled by a design which suggests the rays that surround a sacred monogram on a chalice veil.

As to the designs in the squares of filet—*réseuil*—only one of those in this cover appears in Vinciolo's book—the griffin with the waving tail—<sup>1</sup> but various others, such as the spotted boar, who seems to have been a great favorite, and the saddle-horse and the elephant, may be seen in other covers of the period.

M. H.

<sup>1</sup> Frontispiece.

