



FRONTISPIECE

EMBROIDERED CASKET, WORKED BY MARY AND ELIZABETH, DAUGHTERS OF GOVERNOR JOHN LEVERETT, THIRD QUARTER OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, ESSEX INSTITUTE, SALEM.

NOTES ON NEW ENGLAND NEEDLEWORK
BEFORE 1800

by

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WHILE I am well aware that my own pleasure in the study of decorative needlework as it was practiced in New England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is due in part at least to the fact that I am a New Englander, nevertheless I believe that in any serious consideration of the graphic arts in Colonial America New England needlework merits an important place.

When the hardships encountered by the first settlers are taken into consideration, it is not surprising that much of our knowledge of seventeenth century New England needlework comes from the study of records and that comparatively few examples have survived. Examination of one of the most important sources of information, the records of the Massachusetts Probate Court, reveals that comfortably furnished houses were less rare than one might imagine. Window curtains, bed curtains and valances, rugs as coverings for beds, coverlets and quilts, as well as "pillow beres,"* cushions, and cupboard cloths, appear frequently in wills and inventories before 1700. The materials used are not always specified, but some are described as "wrought" or embroidered, occasionally a tapestry coverlet is mentioned, while "Turkey work" as a covering for chairs is not unusual. I am inclined to believe that a considerable part of the "wrought" furnishings, and probably all the Turkey work and tapestry found in seventeenth century inventories had been brought from England. A small tapestry cushion cover, in Memorial Hall, Deerfield, Massachusetts, closely resembles in technique and style of decoration a Sheldon tapestry cushion cover in the Victoria and Albert Museum with the Sachev-

* "... pillow covers, or 'pillow beres' to give them their contemporary name, were clearly part of the furnishing of the bedroom." Nevinson, John L. *Catalogue of English Domestic Embroidery of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Textiles, London, 1938, p. 17.

erell arms in the center. This, which presumably is contemporaneous with the Deerfield cushion, has been attributed to the first quarter of the seventeenth century.¹ Although the records of the Deerfield cushion cover are incomplete, it seems to be quite possible that this is one of the few surviving examples of English tapestry brought to New England during the seventeenth century.

“Turkey work,” carpet-knotting,² used in New England as well as in England for upholstery, was a flourishing industry in England. A petition in the Library of the British Museum, apparently presented during the reign of William III, though undated, asks that a clause which would prohibit the making and vending of cane chairs, stools and couches be added to a bill then pending for the encouragement of woolen manufacture. The reasons given for this curious request include the statements that “there were yearly made and Vended in this Kingdom above five thousand dozen of *Set-work* (commonly called *Turkey-work Chairs*, though made in *England*), above twenty thousand dozen of *Cloth, Serge, Perpetuanoes, Chamlets, Bays, Kersies, Norwich Cheniis, and Kidderminster-Prints*, in the Cases and Coverings; whereof was spent above three thousand Packs of *Wool*; which *Wool* employs at least thirty thousand poor People,” and that “Great Quantities of these Chairs were Vended and sent yearly beyond the Seas.”³

The widow of the Reverend Jose Glover, who in 1641 married Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard College, possessed a surprising number of beds and bedhangings. Since she had set sail from England only three years earlier with her husband, who died during the voyage, and five minor children, it is probable that all her household furnishings had been brought with her. These included “Eleven featherbeds or downe all well furnisht and fitted for vse, one of them haveing philop and Cheny curtaines in graine with a deep silke fring on the vallance, and a smaller on the Curtaines, and a Coverlett sutable to it, made of Red Kersie, and laced with a greene lace, round the sides. and 2 downe the middle, . . . also to another a blue serdge suite very rich and costly. curtaines and valances laced, and fringe, and a blue Rug to the bed, also a greene sute to the same manner, also another red wrought suite, with

¹ Wace, in *The Sheldon Tapestry Weavers and Their Work*, by Wace, A. J. B. and Barnard, E. A. B., printed by John Johnson for the Society of Antiquaries of London, Oxford, 1928, p. 298.

² Tattersall, C. E. C., *A History of British Carpets*, Benfleet, Essex, England, 1934, chap. 3.

³ Symonds, R. W., “Turkey Work, Beech and Japanned Chairs,” *The Connoisseur*, vol. 93, 1934, pp. 221-222.

a sheet and all things compleate.”⁴ While there is every indication that these furnishings were valued for their decorative qualities, as well as for the protection from drafts which they provided, it may be noted here that paintings as decorations for a room were rare in seventeenth century New England. Even during the eighteenth century, apart from portraits which held a preeminent place in the esteem of the colonists, the average untravelled New Englander could have had but slight acquaintance with the art of painting except as it was translated into the black and white of engravings and mezzotints.

A verse by an unknown New Englander dedicated “To Mr. Smibert on the Sight of his Pictures,” which appeared in the *London Daily Courant* for April 14, 1730,⁵ expresses the appreciation of one who had lived in a land where “No laurel’d Art o’er the rude Region smil’d,” and though “An hundred Journeys now the Earth has run, In annual circles round the central Sun, Since the first Ship th’unpolish’d Letters bore, Thro’ the wide Ocean, to the barb’rous shore. . . . Politeness, and the softer Arts unknown. No heav’nly Pencil the free Stroke could give, nor the warm Canvas felt its colors live.” The cause of this ambitious effusion, which ran on for eighty lines, was an exhibition both of portraits of citizens of Boston and of copies of famous paintings executed by John Smibert during his stay in Italy between 1717 and 1720.

At a time when almost every article of beauty and luxury, as well as many necessary furnishings, had to be brought from across the Atlantic, a needlewoman’s skill in the use of colored wools and silks for the decoration of her home, as well as for the embellishment of garments, must have been doubly valued. The often quoted edict of the General Court of Massachusetts, of 1634, “That no person, man or woman, shall hereafter make or buy any Apparell, either Woolen, or Silk, or Linen, with any Lace on it, Silver, Gold, or Thread, under the penalty of forfeiture of said clothes. Also that no person either man or woman, shall make or buy any Slashed Clothes, other than one Slash in each Sleeve and another in the Back. Also all Cut-works, embroideries, or Needlework Caps, Bands or Rails, are forbidden hereafter to be made and worn under the aforesaid Penalty; . . .” suggests that our New England forebears took a greater pleasure in fine clothes than school text books have led us to believe. Anne Gower’s sampler, with bands of cut-work, drawn-work,

⁴ Morison, Samuel Eliot, “Mistress Glover’s Household Furnishings at Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1638-1641,” *Old-Time New England*, July, 1934, pp. 29-32.

⁵ Foote, Henry Wilder, “Mr. Smibert Shows His Pictures, March, 1730,” *New England Quarterly*, March, 1935, p. 19.

and embroidery all worked in white linen, which is now preserved in the Essex Institute in Salem, is evidence of the skill in needlework, a part of their English heritage, which many women brought with them to New England. Anne Gower, who married John Endecott in 1628 and set sail with him that same year, did not live to make use of this record of patterns and stitches in her new home, but, undoubtedly, similar samplers were among the possessions of other English colonists who put them to good use.

Mrs. Margaret Lake, a widow who came from England in 1635 with her sister, the second wife of John Winthrop the Younger, and settled in Ipswich, owned at the time of her death in 1672, "a small box with seavarrall Samplers, lases and broidred works."⁶ Samplers must have frequently served as guides for the decoration of coifs such as the "Three black wrought Coifes" and "Three Cut worke Coifes," which appear in the inventory of the property of Christopher Yongs of Wenham, Massachusetts, dated 1647.⁷ The following materials for needlework are listed in the inventory of the estate of John Lowle (Lowell) of Newbury, dated the same year, "4 papers of needles, . . . a pcell of orang & yellow silk, . . . a pcell of cruell, threed & silke."⁸ Earlier in John Lowle's inventory we find "1 pr. of greene Curtaines & valiants wrought," and "2 wrought Cushions."⁹ When Mrs. Elizabeth Lowle of Newbury "late wife to Jno: Lowle Deceased" made her will in January, 1650, she directed that her four brothers whom she appointed her "ouerseers" should see that her daughter Elizabeth "be brought vp to her nedle & what else they Judge meete."¹⁰

Among the earliest surviving samplers, known to have been made in New England, is the sampler in Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, worked by Loara Standish, the daughter of Captain Myles Standish. Loara, who was born in Plymouth in 1623, incorporated into the design of her long narrow sampler worked with colored silks, chiefly soft blues, greens and yellows, one of the earliest if not the first of many pious verses, in either an English or an American sampler.¹¹

⁶ *The Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts*, Salem, Mass. (Published by the Essex Institute) 1917, vol. 2, p. 291.

⁷ *The Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts*, 1916, vol. 1, p. 78.

⁸ *The Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts*, 1916, vol. 1, p. 70.

⁹ *The Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts*, 1916, vol. 1, p. 68.

¹⁰ *The Probate Records of Essex County, Massachusetts*, 1916, vol. 1, p. 139.

¹¹ Bolton, Ethel Stanwood, and Coe, Eva Johnston, *American Samplers*, published by the Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1921, pp. 4-5.

Rebekah Wheeler of Concord worked her name and the date 1664 on a piece of blue velvet with which she backed her embroidered picture of Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus. Both the plan of the picture and the figures in it resemble contemporary English stump work pictures of the same subject, but instead of being worked in relief with colored silks on white satin, it is embroidered on linen in satin stitch in wool and some silk, with a few couched metal threads. Perhaps Rebekah Wheeler found it difficult to obtain the silks customarily used in England for work of this type, but Elizabeth and Mary Leverett, daughters of John Leverett (Governor of Massachusetts from 1673 to the time of his death), would not have had the same difficulty in buying white satin and colored silks for the casket (Frontispiece), now in the Essex Institute in Salem, which is believed to be their handiwork. Both girls were born in Boston, Elizabeth in 1651 and Mary in 1655, and accompanied their parents to England in 1655, where they remained for the next seven years, during which time John Leverett represented the Massachusetts Colony at the English Court. Elizabeth was eleven years old when the Leverett family returned to Boston, and therefore old enough to have begun working on panels for the casket. Although the long flat stitches with which it is worked are not particularly fine, Mary at seven seems a little young to have contributed to this joint effort. However, in England "eight years" was not considered to be too young for a child to work an elaborate sampler with a variety of stitches, as Martha Edlin's colored sampler, dated 1668 when she was eight years old, bears witness.¹²

In the Diary of the Reverend William Bentley of Salem¹³ we find under the date June 20, 1810, a description of a "Dressing Glass" which he saw while on a visit to Ipswich and which he was told had been worked by a daughter of Governor Leverett. He writes: "It was very highly raised. It exhibited K[ing] W[illiam] & Q[ueen] M[ary] dressed in pearls & had a rich profusion of other figures." If it were not for Dr. Bentley's statement that the mirror was worked by a daughter of Governor Leverett, I should assume from the description that it was English work. Indeed the description would serve equally well for a mirror given to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1913 by Mrs. Philip Saltonstall as English. Notes sent with Mrs. Saltonstall's gift state that it was brought from England in 1633 by the father of Governor John Leverett. Tradi-

¹² Kendrick, A. F. *English Needlework*. London, 1933, pp. 135-136. On exhibition, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1939, lent by Miss Arminell Morshead.

¹³ *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D.*, published by the Essex Institute, Salem, 1911, vol. 3, pp. 524-525.

tion here must be at fault, for the date is at least twenty years too early. Embroidery of this type is generally attributed to the second rather than the first half of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, William Bentley's identification of the king and queen on the mirror which he saw in Ipswich suggests a date some twenty years too late. Since apparently neither tradition is accurate, it seems to me not impossible that the stump work mirror seen in Ipswich in 1810 is the mirror which was given to the Boston Museum in 1913 by Mrs. Philip Saltonstall. According to William Bentley, Mrs. Perkins, who showed him the mirror, was "descended from Gov. J. L. and the Cooke's."

The change in character between seventeenth and eighteenth century art in New England, the change marked by the unknown New England observer in his poem on the sight of Mr. Smibert's pictures, is exemplified by the contrast between these seventeenth century embroideries attributed to Governor Leverett's daughters and a small needlepoint picture worked in tent stitch with crewels on linen by a great granddaughter of Governor Leverett. In the sky of this picture, a hunting scene in the manner made popular in England by Jan Wyck (1640-1702) and John Wootton (1678-1765), the letters M. C. are worked. These are the initials of Mary Cooke, granddaughter of Elizabeth Leverett who married Elisha Cooke in 1668 and daughter of the second Elisha Cooke. Since Mary Cooke married Richard Saltonstall in 1744, the picture was presumably worked before that date. The character of this embroidery, now owned by Governor Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, suggests a very youthful hand.

A considerable amount of information concerning the awakening interest in graphic and decorative arts in New England has been brought to light by the study of Boston newspapers. A notice which appeared in the *Boston News-Letter*, May 15/22, 1735, to advertise that there was "To be sold at Mr. Smibert's in Queen Street, on Monday, the 26th Instant, A Collection of valuable PRINTS, engrav'd by the best Hands, after the finest Pictures in Italy, France, Holland, and England, done by Raphael, Michael Angelo, Poussin, Rubens, and other the greatest Masters, . . ." ¹⁴ confirms the impression given by the anonymous poet that New England was indebted to John Smibert for more than his admirable portraits of her worthy citizens.

Another artist whose contributions to art and education in Boston

¹⁴ Dow, George Francis, *The Arts and Crafts in New England, 1704-1775*, Topsfield, Mass., 1927, p. 3.

exceeded his own work, was Copley's stepfather, Peter Pelham. Undoubtedly after his marriage to Mrs. Copley in 1748, Peter Pelham's influence over the young John Copley played an important part in his development. This was not, however, Pelham's first contribution to education, for ten years earlier he had advertised in the *Boston Gazette* "That at the House of Philip Dumerisque, Esq, in Summer-street (next his own Dwelling House) Young Gentlemen and Ladies may be taught Dancing, Writing, Reading, Painting upon Glass, and all sorts of Needle Work."¹⁵

While needlework was included with music, dancing, writing, and cyphering in the curricula of a number of Boston schools of this period, there were other teachers who taught needlework only. In 1739 Mrs. Margaret Laitaill announced in the *Boston Evening Post* that she taught "all sorts of Needle Work, Tapestry, Embroidering and Marking."¹⁶ In 1742 we learn from the *Boston Evening Post* that "Mrs. Condy opens her School next Week, and Persons may be supply'd with the Materials for the Works she teaches, whether they learn of her or not. She draws Patterns of all sorts, especially, Pocket-Books, House-Wives, Screens, Pictures, Chimney-Pieces, Escrutoires, &c. for Tent-Stitch, in a plainer Manner, and cheaper than those which come from London."¹⁷ Four years before she had advertised in the *Boston News-Letter* that she sold "All sorts of beautiful Figures on Canvas, for Tent Stick; the Patterns from London, but drawn by her much cheaper than English drawing;" as well as "All sorts of Canvas, without drawing; also Silk Shades, Slacks, Floss, Cruells of all Sorts, the best White Chapple Needles, and every-thing for all Sorts of Work."¹⁸ In February, 1748, Mrs. Hiller, in the *Boston Evening Post*, informed the public that she intended to open a boarding school where young gentlewomen "in Town and Country" would be taught "Wax-Work, Transparent and Filligree, Painting upon Glass, Japanning, Quill-Work, Feather-Work, and Embroidering with Gold and Silver, and several other sorts of Work not here enumerated, and may be supplied with Patterns and all sorts of Drawing, and Materials for their Work."¹⁹ We should like to know more about the patterns supplied by Mrs. Hiller, and those copied by Mrs. Condy from London patterns, but drawn by her in "a plainer manner" and "much

¹⁵ Seybolt, Robert Francis, *The Private Schools of Colonial Boston*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1935, p. 26.

¹⁶ Seybolt, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁷ Seybolt, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁸ Dow, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

¹⁹ Seybolt, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

cheaper than English drawing.” Until contemporary records such as diaries or letters throwing light on this subject can be found, we must turn for this information to the examination of surviving needlework pictures. Judging from the relatively large number of needlework pictures of this period, many of them still belonging to descendants of the girls who made them, we can only suppose that the ability to execute such pictures was considered an important part of the education of a well-bred young woman.

During the century which had elapsed since the first settlers established their homes in a wilderness there had been many changes in this English colony. Some idea of these changes is given by the description of Boston in New England soon after the middle of the century which appears in Jaques Savary des Bruslons' *Dictionnaire Universel de Commerce* (Nouvelle édition, à Copenhague, 1765): “La beauté de ses Habitans, enfin l'abondance de toutes sortes de marchandises, dont ses magasins & ses boutiques sont toujours remplies, soutiennent bien la réputation du grand Commerce qui l'a enrichie, & qu'elle continue avec plus de succès que jamais.” It is therefore not surprising that needlework for decoration alone, without even a pretense of being useful, became a fashionable accomplishment during the eighteenth century. It should be noted, however, that in spite of the vogue for needlework pictures, embroidery for the embellishment of furnishings and wearing apparel was not neglected.

A fine and characteristic example of this purely decorative needlework, acquired by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1921 (Fig. 1), happily is still in its original frame of walnut veneer with gilded mouldings. Its long horizontal shape identifies it as a “chimney piece.” Three couples in a landscape form the main theme of the design; small figures, hunters, hounds, a stag, sheep, birds and butterflies complete it. From the central group, a *Fishing Lady* with a gentleman standing behind her, this panel has taken its name. The discovery of eleven other needlepoint pictures, seven of them small panels with only the *Fishing Lady* and her escort, as well as four “chimney-pieces” in which the *Fishing Lady* appears, suggests that there was a common source for these designs, probably a popular embroidery teacher who provided her pupils with patterns and materials. This may have been Mrs. Condry or Mrs. Hiller, or perhaps some other teacher whose name has escaped notice. Until some letter or diary provides an answer to this question, the source of these designs remains a mystery. However, small figures of hunters in the foreground



FIG. 1
THE FISHING LADY, NEEDLEPOINT CHIMNEY-PIECE, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.

have been identified as figures in prints after John Wootton, while the couple at the right of the panel is recognizable, though considerably changed, as a couple in the far left of *Le Soir* (Fig. 2), an engraving by Claudine Bouzonnet after a pastoral painting by her uncle, Jacques Stella of Lyons (1596-1657). Of the four long panels in which the *Fishing Lady* appears, only one shows approximately the same arrangement as the Boston panel with the woman spinning and the man with a bundle on his back, the fisherwoman and her companion, and the couple walking hand in hand toward the right. This picture, originally from Salem, which belongs to Mr. Henry F. du Pont, and which differs in detail only from the *Fishing Lady* in Boston, has the date 1748 worked over the door of the house on the left.

The Boston *Fishing Lady* was acquired in 1921 from Miss Perdie Phinney of Barnstable on Cape Cod. Traditionally known as the Bourne heirloom, it seems reasonable to suppose that it is the "chimney-piece" mentioned in the will of Mercy Bourne, widow of the Hon. Sylvanus Bourne of Barnstable. She was married in 1718, when she was twenty-three years old, so that her portrait by Copley in the Metropolitan Museum, painted in 1766, shows her at the age of seventy-one. She was the mother of ten children, but when she made her will in 1781 her youngest daughter, Eunice, had already died. To Eunice's daughter, Abigail Gallison, she bequeathed "her mother's work called a chimney-piece."²⁰ In the second half of the nineteenth century, Major S. B. Phinney owned "a view of Boston Common taken more than a century ago, wrought in worsted, which formerly belonged to his ancestor, Colonel Sylvanus Bourne."²¹ For many years the *Fishing Lady*, apparently quite without basis in fact, was believed to be a view of Boston Common. Since it is evident that the designer of the Bourne heirloom and Mr. du Pont's needlework picture had access, directly or indirectly, to the work of Jacques Stella and of John Wootton, it has seemed to me worth while to examine all available lists of prints either owned or offered for sale in New England during the first half of the eighteenth century. As far as this search has gone, and of course it has not been exhaustive, neither Stella's nor Wootton's name has appeared. Indeed the subjects of the engravings and mezzotints most frequently mentioned are portraits, views, prospects, and maps. One should hesitate, however, to make

²⁰ Swift, C. F., ed., *Genealogical Notes of Barnstable Families, being a reprint of the Amos Otis Papers*, Barnstable, Mass., 1888, vol. 1, p. 117.

²¹ Swift, *op. cit.*, p. 118.



FIG. 2

LE SOIR, A FRENCH ENGRAVING BY CLAUDINE BOUZONNET AFTER A PASTORAL PAINTING BY JACQUES STELLA, ONE OF A SERIES OF PASTORALS.

unqualified statements concerning the question of subjects, for in the *Boston Gazette* for Dec. 23/30, 1728, it was announced that "On Thursday the second of January next will be Sold by Vendue at the Sun-Tavern on Dock Square at five of the Clock in the afternoon, a parcel of Fine Missitinto Prints, the largest Cutts that has been seen in these parts, consisting of curious Battles, Riding, Hunting, Fowling, Fishing and History peices; also some Excellent Scripture peices."²²

A needlepoint panel in the Newburyport Historical Society (Fig. 3) provides further evidence concerning sources of designs used in our New England pictorial embroideries. The sturdy woman who strides across the pleasant landscape with such determination was copied, with some modifications, from the woman in *Le Soir* who precedes the couple which served as a model for the couple in the right end of the Bourne heirloom. The small figure of the hunter on a horse from the engraving entitled, *The Going Out in the Morning*, after John Wootton, seen in the foreground of the Bourne heirloom, has been enlarged to fill a more important place in the Newburyport panel. The interchangeable character of the figures in these pictures becomes evident when we note that Sarah Warren of Plymouth, who worked both her name and the date 1748 in her chimney-piece, substituted for the couple on the right in the Bourne heirloom the man in a tree handing down pears who appears at the right of the Newburyport panel. She thoughtfully added a girl holding up a basket for the pears. These figures appear together in two other pictures, while the man alone is to be found in a picture worked partly in tent stitch and partly in Oriental stitch,²³ which belongs to the Museum of the City of New York.

A reclining shepherdess, sometimes alone (Figs. 4, 5), sometimes with an attendant swain has been found in nine needlework pictures. In a sampler worked by Catharine May, dated 1770, she also appears, but the shepherd has been replaced by the little running man, after John Wootton, seen the foreground of the Bourne heirloom. Undoubtedly this shepherdess and her shepherd, as well as the *Fishing Lady* and the *Spinning Lady*, were copied from popular pastoral prints, though it is quite possible that whoever provided these designs for the ambitious needlewomen

²² Dow, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

²³ Oriental stitch, also called Roumanian stitch, was often used by New England needlewomen as a filling stitch in place of long and short stitch. Present-day embroidery books describe it as a long stitch tied down by a shorter one taken across it. As this stitch was commonly used in New England during the eighteenth century, the shorter stitch was very slightly shorter than the long stitch, thus the angle was very oblique, only a little of the ground fabric was picked up by the needle, and almost all of the crewel was on the surface.



FIG. 3
NEEDLEPOINT CHIMNEY-PIECE, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, NEWBURYPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

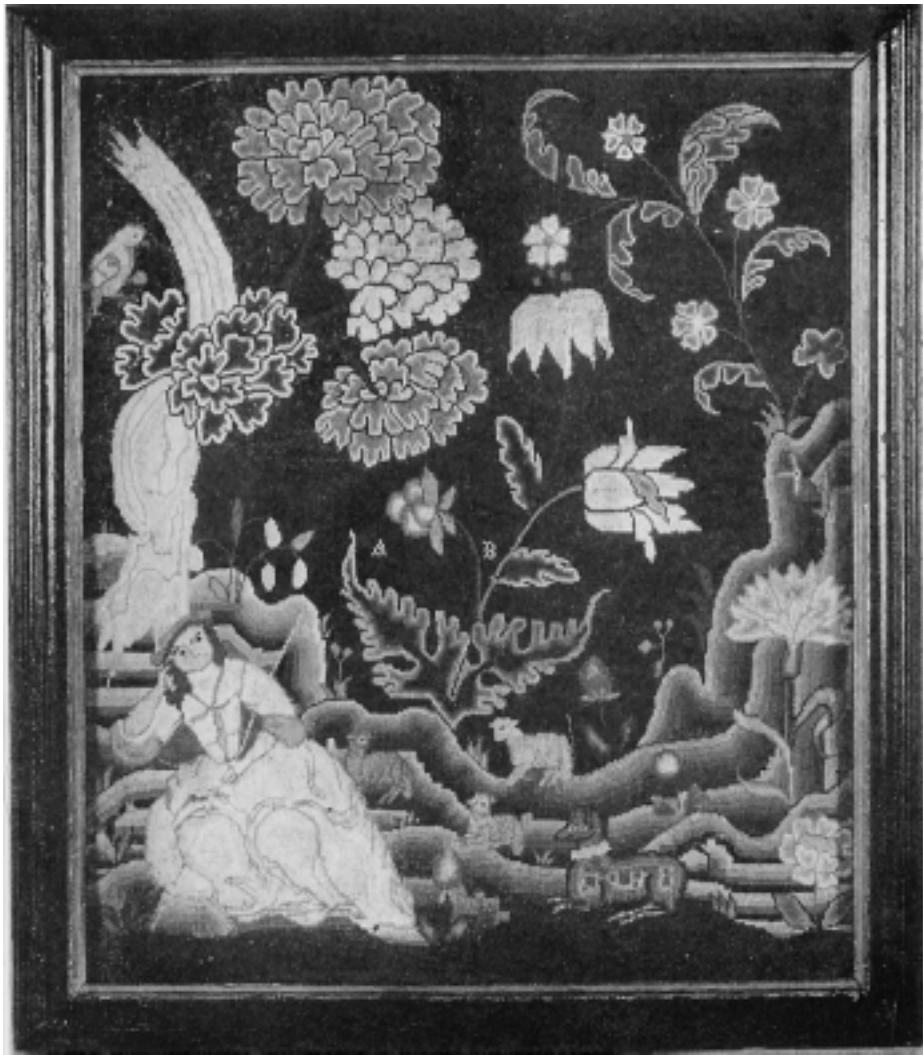


FIG. 4
RECLINING SHEPHERDESS, NEEDLEPOINT PICTURE, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY,
KAROLIK COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.

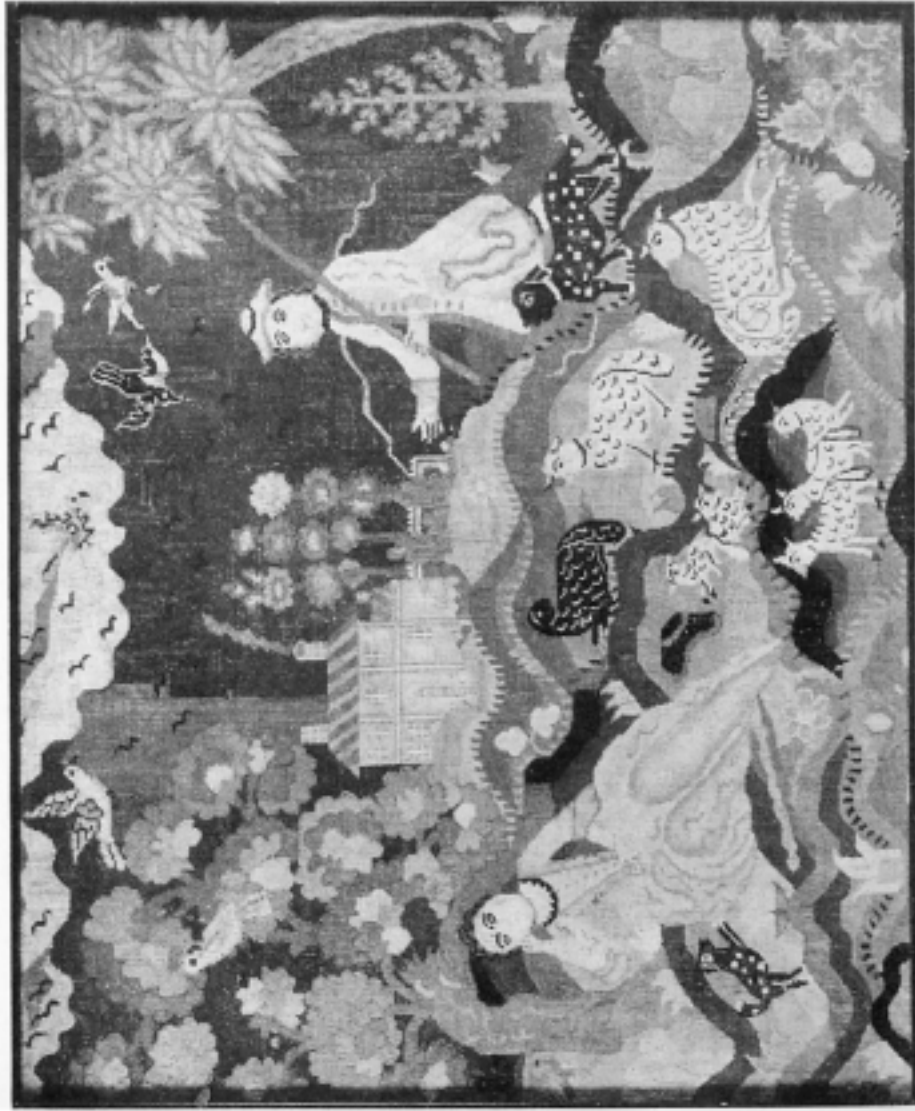


FIG. 5
RECLINING SHEPHERDESS, NEEDLEPOINT PICTURE, THIRD QUARTER OF THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.



FIG. 6

NEEDLEPOINT CARD TABLE TOP, WORKED BY MERCY OTIS, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, THE PILGRIM SOCIETY OF PLYMOUTH.

of New England had no knowledge of the artists from whom they were copied, since she in turn had merely copied embroidery designs sent from England. The fact that the reclining shepherdess with her sheep and the shepherd are to be seen in only slightly different guise on the needlework top of an early eighteenth century English card table on loan in the Boston Museum, tends to confirm this supposition.

Mercy Otis of Barnstable, who married James Warren of Plymouth in 1754, well known as a writer of verse and prose as well as for her history of the American Revolution, once wrote to a friend in satirical vein urging her not to indulge her taste for the study of history, if she has such a taste, lest it give her features too serious a cast, and warning her against the absurdity of venturing to speak when politics happen to be the subject of conversation: "In short, Science of any Kind beyond the Toilet, the Tea, or the Card Table, is as Unnecessary to a Lady's figuring in the Drawing Room as Virtue unsully'd by *Caprice* is to the character of the finish'd Gentleman."²⁴ Although these are precepts which Mercy Otis made no pretense of following, she nevertheless produced with her needle a charming card table cover (Fig. 6), gay with flowers, on which cards and Chinese mother-of-pearl counters are laid out to form a traditional pattern.

Two amusing and very pleasing pictures (Figs. 7, 9), embroidered with colored silks on black satin by Love Rawlins Pickman, mother of Benjamin Pickman, Jr., terminate these scattered notes on New England needlework. One wonders whether Love Rawlins ever saw the engravings (Figs. 8, 10) by Filloeuil after J.-B. François Pater (1695-1736) which were the models for her embroideries. These illustrate the story by La Fontaine of Guillot, a young peasant just married to his Lizette, who permits a nobleman to kiss his bride, and who shortly afterwards asks and receives the same privilege from "notre galant Seigneur."

NOTE

Any information concerning either New England embroideries before 1800, or contemporary references to these embroideries, will be gratefully received by the Department of Textiles, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where a catalogue of surviving embroideries is being prepared for publication.

²⁴ Brown, Alice, *Mercy Warren*, New York, 1896, p. 24.



FIG. 7

LE BAISER DONNÉ, EMBROIDERED PICTURE, WORKED BY LOVE RAWLINS PICKMAN, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, KAROLIK COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.



FIG. 8

LE BAISER DONNÉ, ENGRAVING BY FILLOEUL AFTER J.-B. F. PATER.



FIG. 9

LE BAISER RENDU, EMBROIDERED PICTURE, WORKED BY LOVE RAWLINS PICKMAN, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, KAROLIK COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.



FIG. 10

LE BAISER RENDU, ENGRAVING BY FILLOEUL AFTER J.-B. F. PATER.