

THE · BULLETIN · OF
THE · NEEDLE · AND · BOBBIN
CLUB

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1944

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Club has recently received several requests for complete files of the Club *Bulletin*. As many of the early numbers are missing, the Committee would be greatly indebted to members who might be willing to donate such copies. Those particularly wanted are:

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Accompanying this issue of the BULLETIN is an index covering the first twenty-six volumes which is being distributed to members and subscribers. The Board of Directors wishes to express its deep appreciation of the scholarly work of Miss Elsa de Bondeli of the Yale University Library and Miss Eleanor F. Worfolk of the Brooklyn Museum Library whose generous contribution of time and skill made possible this work.



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

GERTRUDE TOWNSEND

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.

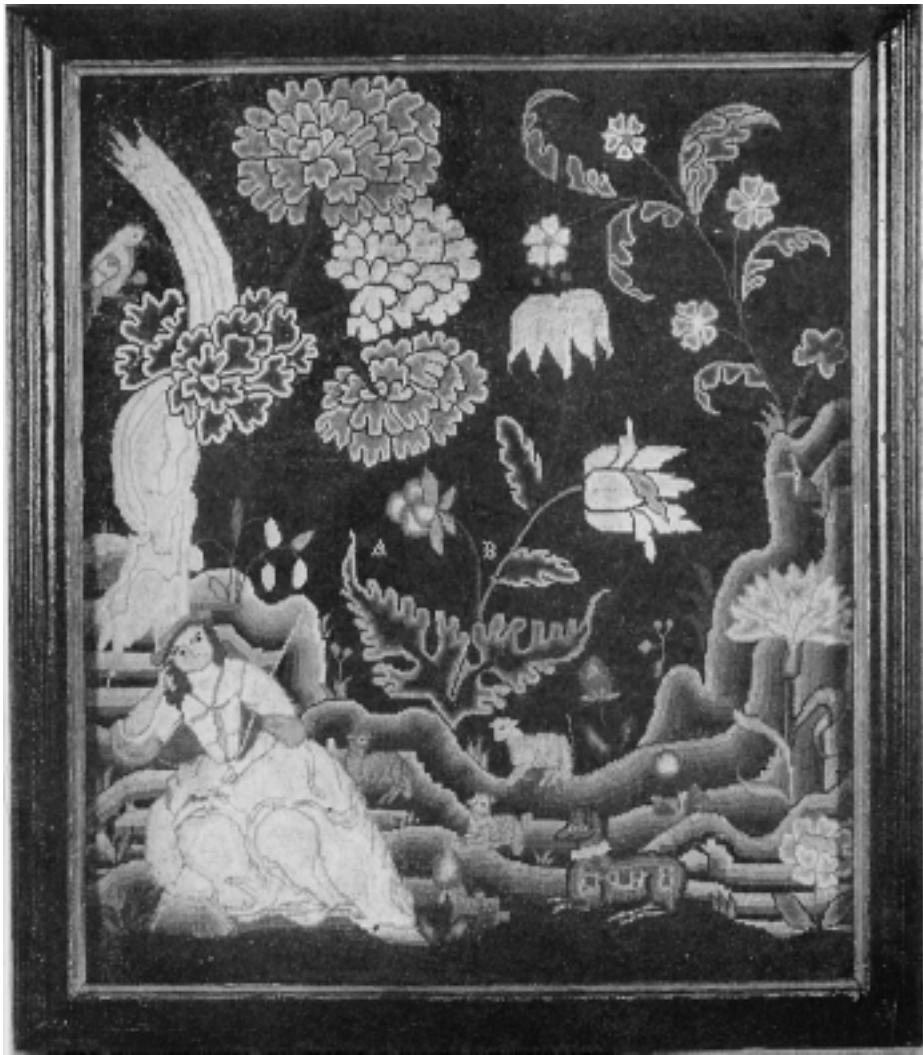


FIG. 4
RECLINING SHEPHERDESS, NEEDLEPOINT PICTURE, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY,
KAROLIK COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.

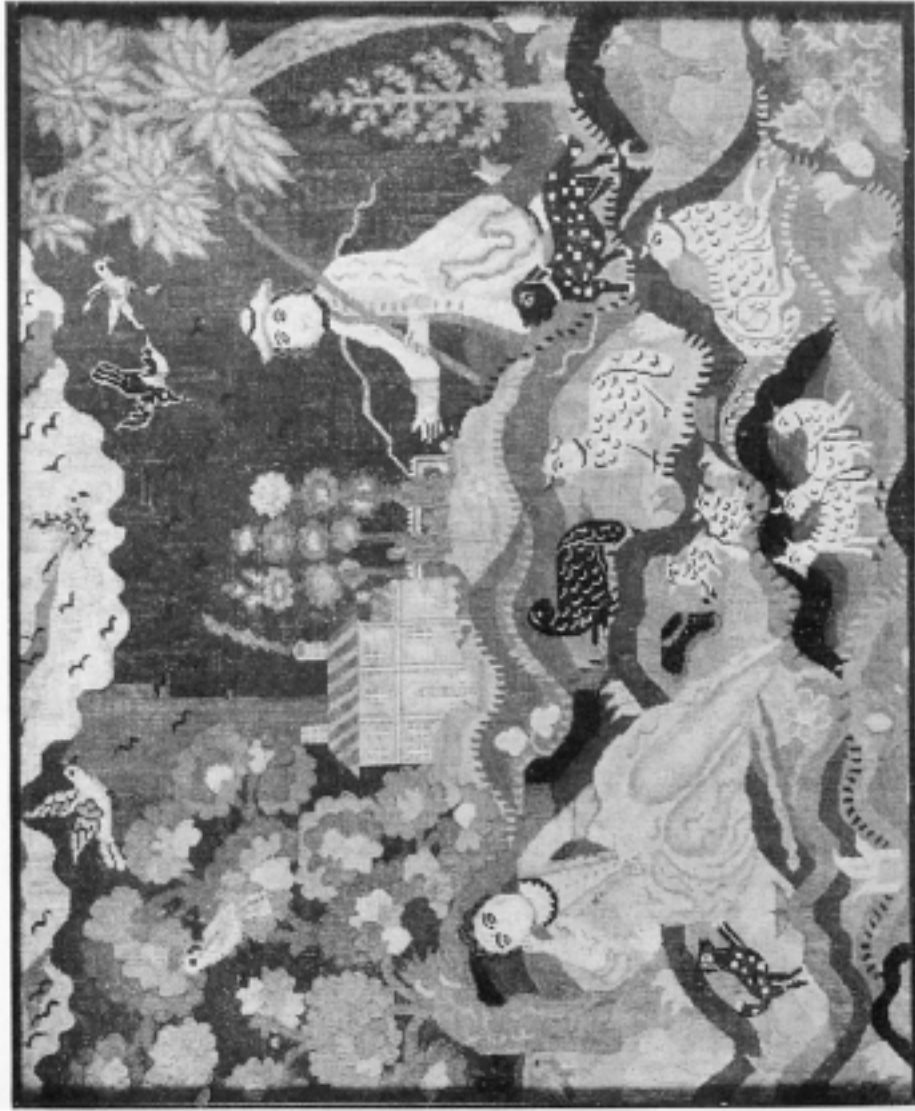


FIG. 5
RECLINING SHEPHERDESS, NEEDLEPOINT PICTURE, THIRD QUARTER OF THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.



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.



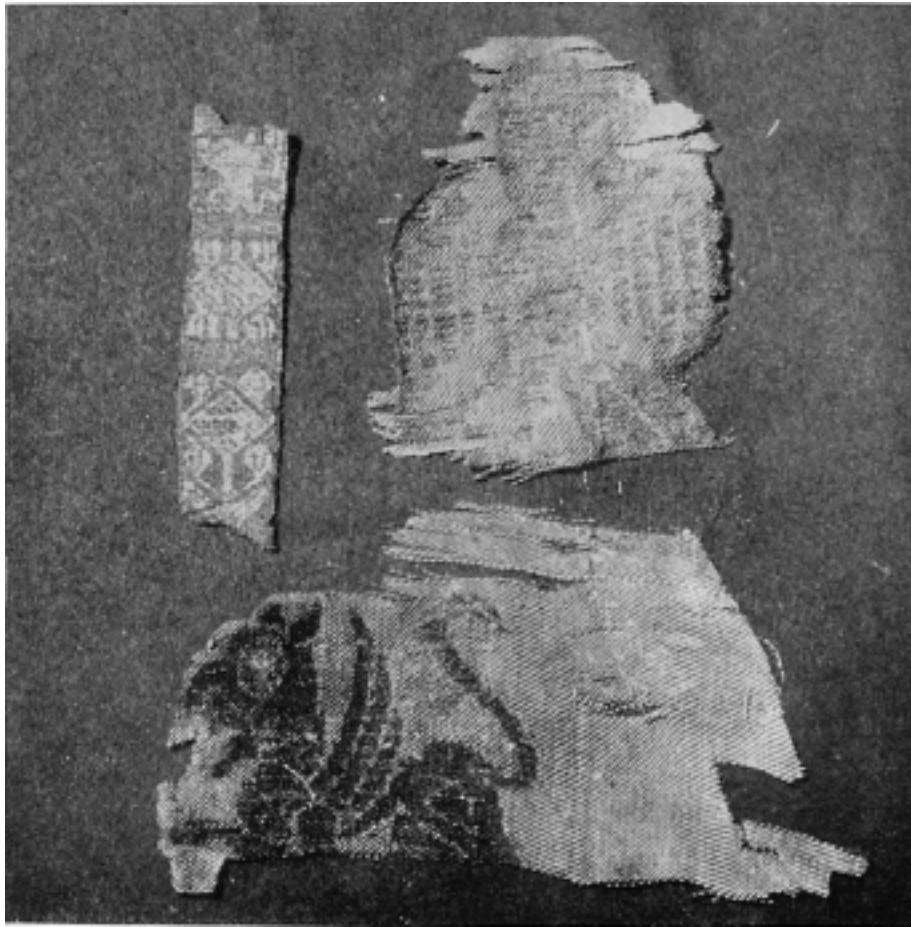
FIG. 9

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.



FRONTISPIECE

FRAGMENTS OF TEXTILES FOUND IN THE EXCAVATIONS AT ORLEANS.

TEXTILES FROM THE EXCAVATIONS IN THE ORLÉANS CATHEDRAL

by

FRANCES LITTLE

MANY a reader of current news, not necessarily of archæological bent, will remember the interest caused in 1938 by the excavations made in France, in the cathedral of Orléans, that revealed under the floor of the cathedral not only the remains of three earlier buildings but also the tombs of three bishops of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that were discovered intact.

An excavation of this kind had been the dream of archæologists for more than half a century, ever since 1890 when workmen, digging a pit under the transept for the installation of a heating apparatus, had come upon the remains of columns, still more than three meters high, which dated from the tenth and eleventh centuries (Plate I). These truncated columns, in the opinion of those qualified to judge, were nothing less than the remains of a great basilica that had been built at the end of the tenth century by Bishop Arnoul, who was bishop at that time of the cathedral, and of which only written accounts remained.

Great traditions attached to Bishop Arnoul's church. With Saint Martin of Tours, it was one of the first of the great pilgrims' churches, such as Saint Sernin of Toulouse, San Foy of Conques and Santiago of Compostela today. Here the devout would have come in throngs to worship the remains of the Holy Cross, the body of Saint Mamert and the chalice of Saint Euverte.¹ The size of the columns showed how monumental this church must have been, and more than this, it was thought that it might have had a deambulatory,² which, in such case, would have been

¹ Two early bishops: Saint Mamert, from Vienne in Dauphigny, whose body was brought to the church in the seventh century, and Saint Euverte, a bishop of the fourth century, who is believed to have built the first church.

² An ambulatory, or choir aisle, that is carried around the apse of the choir.



PLATE I
ONE OF THE CRUCIFORM PILLARS OF BISHOP ARNOUL'S CHURCH,
END OF THE TENTH CENTURY.

one of the earliest known. The greatest interest, naturally, was aroused by the discovery of these architectural fragments, but nothing more was done in the way of excavating, and the flagstones were replaced. For years these ruins were the subject of discussion and for years archæologists worked on plans to determine the original architecture. But the most important points came to no more than theory, since the necessary evidence lay further along in the church—in the choir and nave.

The occasion for settling all these questions presented itself a few years ago when preparations were being made to replace in the cathedral a set of choir stalls of superb quality which had been removed from the church during the Revolution.³ Once restored to their original position there would have been small prospect of any excavation on account of the damage that would have been done to this beautiful and delicate work (Plate II). The Department of Historical Monuments took these circumstances into consideration and believed that under such conditions it was justified in authorizing the work, though great difficulties, it was realized, lay in the way. The ruins of Bishop Arnoul's cathedral were situated more than three meters below the level of the present building; this would necessitate the removal of an enormous amount of earth (it proved to be twelve hundred cubic meters). Again, nothing was known of what might be the condition of the choir when it should be found, how much demolition had taken place there in centuries past, and how radical had been the methods used. With this in mind the Administration ordered only an exploratory survey. But when the first stages of the work revealed objects of the greatest interest and value, it was decided without delay to push the excavations to the farthest possible extent. The story of this work and the treasures that were thereby disclosed has been ably told by Canon Chenesseau, resident member of the National Society of Antiquarians of France and historian of the cathedral, who directed the work.⁴

The annals of the cathedral of Orléans considerably antedate any building that may be seen. The beginnings were early and churches

³Originally this set had consisted of twenty-four stalls with a bishop's throne and a set of panellings that showed, alternately, scenes from the life of Christ, and a series of religious trophies. Cardinal de Coislin, bishop of Orleans and Grand Almoner of France, had financed this work by means of credits set aside by Louis XIV for the completion of the cathedral, and its accomplishment had been under the direction of J. H. Mansard, the sculptor having been Jules Degoullons, one of the principal artists of the reign. During the revolution these incomparable carvings had been removed from the church by what the scholarly Canon Chenesseau, canon of the cathedral, calls "impresarios of revolutionary fêtes," and piled up in a storehouse, where some even were burned to furnish heat for the guards' lodgings.

⁴Les Fouilles de la Cathédral d'Orléans, Monuments historique de la France: 1937, p. 217.

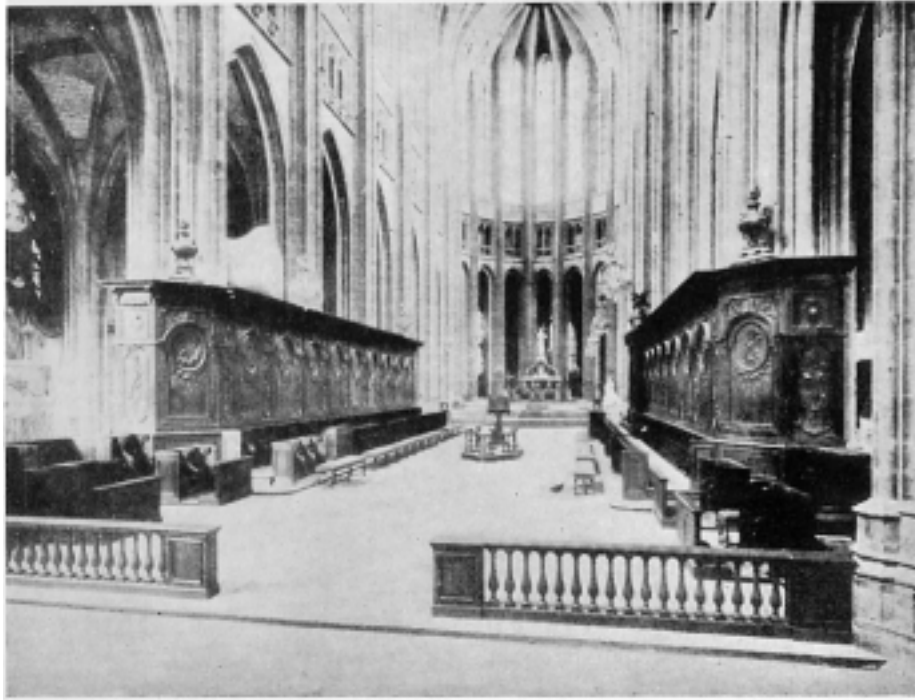


PLATE II
THE CHOIR WITH STALLS AND PANELLING REPLACED.

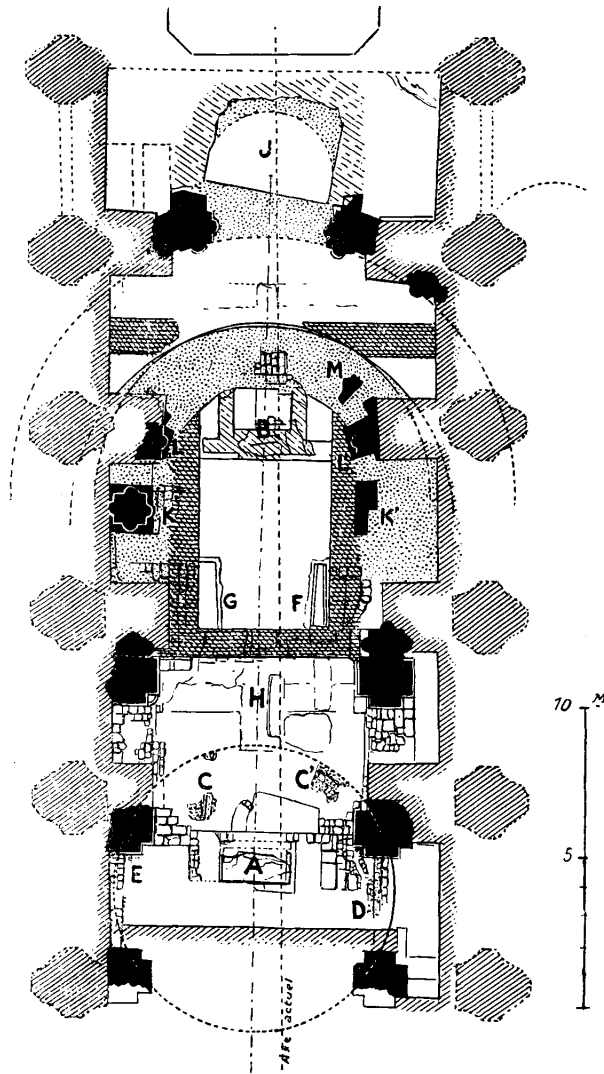







PLATE III
DETAIL PLAN OF CHURCH CHOIR.

-  BASES AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE PRESENT CATHEDRAL.
-  PILLARS OF THE X-XI CENTURIES.
-  REMAINS OF THE XI CENTURY.
-  ROMANESQUE FOUNDATIONS.
-  GALLO-ROMAN FOUNDATIONS.

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| A | HIGH ALTAR. | F G | SARCOPHAGI. |
| B | ALTAR OF SAINT MAMERT. | H | REMAINS OF A FUNERAL VAULT. |
| C C' | REMAINS OF CARLOVINGIAN MOSAICS. | J | CHAPEL OF THE AXIS. |
| D | REMAINS OF MOSAICS OF XITH CENTURY. | K K' | PILLARS WITH FOUR ENGAGED COLUMNS. |
| E | REMAINS OF MOSAICS OF XIITH CENTURY. | L L' | PILLARS WITH TWO ENGAGED COLUMNS. |

built successively throughout the centuries suffered great vicissitudes. Though it is uncertain when Christianity was established in Orléans, an Episcopal see was instituted there in the first half of the fourth century and a church was built, traditionally by Saint Euverte, who died in 391. This early bishop did not live to see his work finished, and it was completed by his successor, Saint Aignan, who held the office during the first years of the fourth century and who was the occupant of the see at the time of Attila's invasion. Nothing is known of the constructions that may have been undertaken between the fourth and tenth centuries, but the church was destroyed by a great fire that took place before 987 and that almost ruined the city itself. At once, at the end of the tenth century, it was rebuilt by Bishop Arnoul, who cherished great ambitions regarding his cathedral, and who crowned, in 987, Robert the Pious in the church of his own creating.

Nearly three hundred years later, in 1297, a new church was begun, but in 1562, after centuries of labor and before it was completed, it was burned by the Protestants (who are also termed Calvinists, or Huguenots), in one of the religious wars of the period. A new foundation thereupon was laid by Henry IV in the early years of the seventeenth century, and building went on until well into the first half of the nineteenth. Nothing, therefore, as can easily be understood, remains outwardly to be seen of Bishop Arnoul's basilica, built under the early Capets, in which such interest now was centered.

The work of excavation began in 1937, in September, and as it progressed it revealed an architecture that was plain but that had been enriched to some extent at the end of the eleventh century by additional building.⁵ Almost immediately a point was decided that had been under discussion when fourteen pillars were found that had formed the support for the central part of the choir and—as had been hopefully anticipated—a deambulatory. The remains of two altars were discovered, one at the entrance of the choir and the other at the apse. This second altar had been designed to hold the remains of Saint Mamert and still visible was the plan that permitted pilgrims to enter from the deambulatory. Near the other, which was the principal altar, on either side were mosaics still in place, and which dated from the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. On one side they were made up of small yellow and black cubes, with touches of red, framing a field in which figures still may be seen. This

⁵ The first blows of the pick brought to light a double pillar, part of which was of the tenth and part of the eleventh century, showing where two different constructions had joined.

was a style of pavements made in the eleventh century (Plate IV). On the other side, there were again these same mosaics but in this case, in addition, were pieces of a different pattern made of marble and porphyry, like work that was done in Italy, particularly in the twelfth century. Undoubtedly these latter pieces were replacements for original designs that were worn and they may even have been executed in the cathedral itself by traveling workmen who had come from Italy.

Digging further down, for these constructions of Bishop Arnoul's had been so comprehensive that they covered all traces of anything underneath, the workers came upon fragments of a second mosaic pavement which would have filled a circle more than nine meters in diameter, and which was of an older type than the one found above. All that remained was part of a circular border with an inscription that was too fragmentary to decipher and that framed a ground that was ornamented with interlaced designs (Plate V). The pattern itself, together with the character of the mosaics and the letters, which were of an archaic type, pointed to an origin that was not later than the eighth century. Could it not have been, it was asked, and with no little assurance, that these mosaics were part of a pavement for a rotunda that had been added to the primitive church at the time of Charlemagne, when rotundas were very much the fashion. This theory was the more feasible since the bishop, Théodulfe, was a contemporary of Charlemagne's and is credited with the plan, somewhat the same, of the church of Germigny-des-Prés. Bishop Théodulfe, who was born in Spain about 760, was one of the many remarkable men who occupied the see of Orléans. His talents were many and of a high order. He not only was a learned theologian but he was a Latin scholar and a Latin poet of taste; he was also a member of Charlemagne's court. It was Charlemagne who granted him, about 798, the bishopric of Orléans and several abbeys besides.

Not far away from these Carlovingian relics lay the remains of a foundation wall of ancient brick work that extended in the form of a large rectangle half-way between the two altars. These old bricks, bound together with indestructible cement and going down four meters into the ground, may well have been the very genesis of all other church constructions, the walls of the ancient church built in the middle of the fourth century by Bishop Saint Euverte, with the aid of the Emperor Constance, and endowed with the name of The Holy Cross, held in such high reverence by the imperial house (Plate VI).

The archæological phase of these excavations is a fascinating tale, even

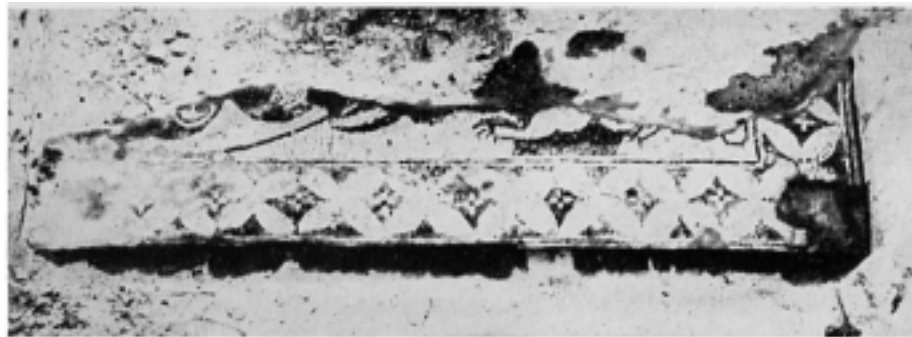


PLATE IV
PART OF A MOSAIC PAVEMENT OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

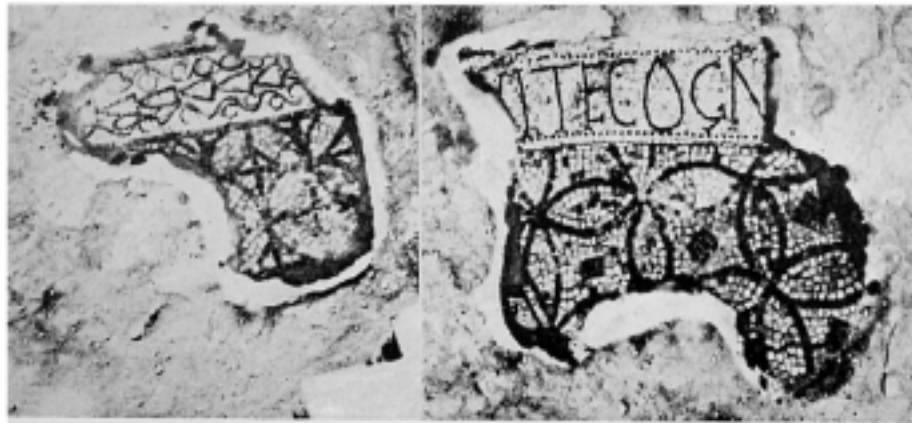


PLATE V
FRAGMENTS OF MOSAICS OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.



PLATE VI

VIEWS OF THE EXCAVATIONS SHOWING AT THE LEFT ONE OF THE CRUCIFORM
PILLARS OF THE TENTH CENTURY CHURCH, AT THE RIGHT THE ROUND COL-
UMNS OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY CONSTRUCTIONS. THE EXCAVATIONS
WITHIN THE FOURTH CENTURY WALLS ARE SHOWN IN THE FOREGROUND.

to a layman, but still more arresting to a student or collector of textiles is the matter of the silks in which the three princes of the church were buried. Half way between the two altars of the choir, enclosed in the old gallo-roman brickwork of the wall, lay the three sarcophagi. The attention of the workers had been drawn by these to the remains of a vault. In raising it the cover broke and revealed within a gleam of church jewels and what once had been rare and costly silks. Due to its long interment the body itself was reduced to ashes, but clearly to be seen was the pontifical dress with the liturgical sandals on the feet. Across the body lay the staff of a crozier of engraved and gilded copper, of the finest workmanship, of the second half of the thirteenth century (Plate VII). "Between the hands," in dramatic phrase, "shone the gold of the cup of a chalice," and with this was a paten, both of these pieces of silver, partly gilded, and with the elegance of line that characterized French goldsmiths' work of the same period (Plate VIII). There were two medallions for gloves embroidered in gold and silver, of some glints still may be seen, *caligues* or hose worn by a bishop upon occasions of high ceremony, and finally, in this rich tomb, a ring that was set with an emerald.

The removal of the textiles, which were in a fragmentary condition, required the greatest care. The pieces that were the best preserved were the hose. They were of fine silk, ornamented, as it is said, with a pattern of eagles and medallions, and attributed on account of this pattern to Byzantine workmanship. Silks of this period would certainly have come within the high period of Byzantine silk weaving when these weaves were so highly valued that they constituted the gifts of popes and emperors. Though the design is a type that was used throughout the middle ages, it still was a pattern employed in Byzantine silks at this time. As they appear in the illustration (Plate IX) these *caligues* were represented as an object rather than from any point of view of pattern. The faint traces of the design that may be dimly discerned, however, attest to the accuracy of the description. The sandals which accompany the hose in this illustration were also of silk. They were cut on a bias angle, joined and covered with embroidery.

As to the chasuble, conditions are rather more favorable. As soon as the excavations were made known, the late H. A. Elsborg, whose name is known to all collectors of textiles, and who himself, had he lived, would have gone to France to see them, sent abroad for the photographs. The plate that is here shown, together with the detail drawings of the pattern, were preserved among his papers. It is through the kindness of Miss



PLATE VII AND VIII

PLATE VII (RIGHT) A CROZIER OF COPPER, ENGRAVED AND GILDED, SECOND HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY. PLATE VIII (LEFT) CHALICE AND PATEN OF SILVER, SECOND HALF OF THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

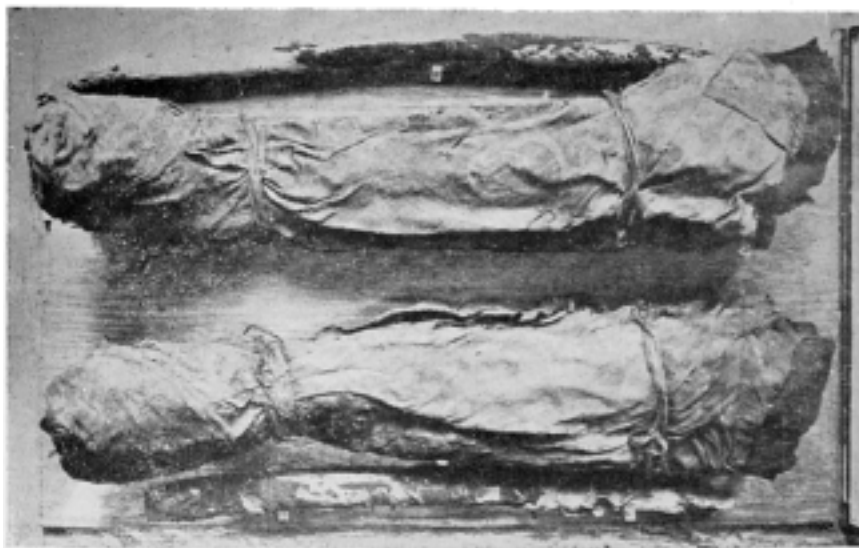
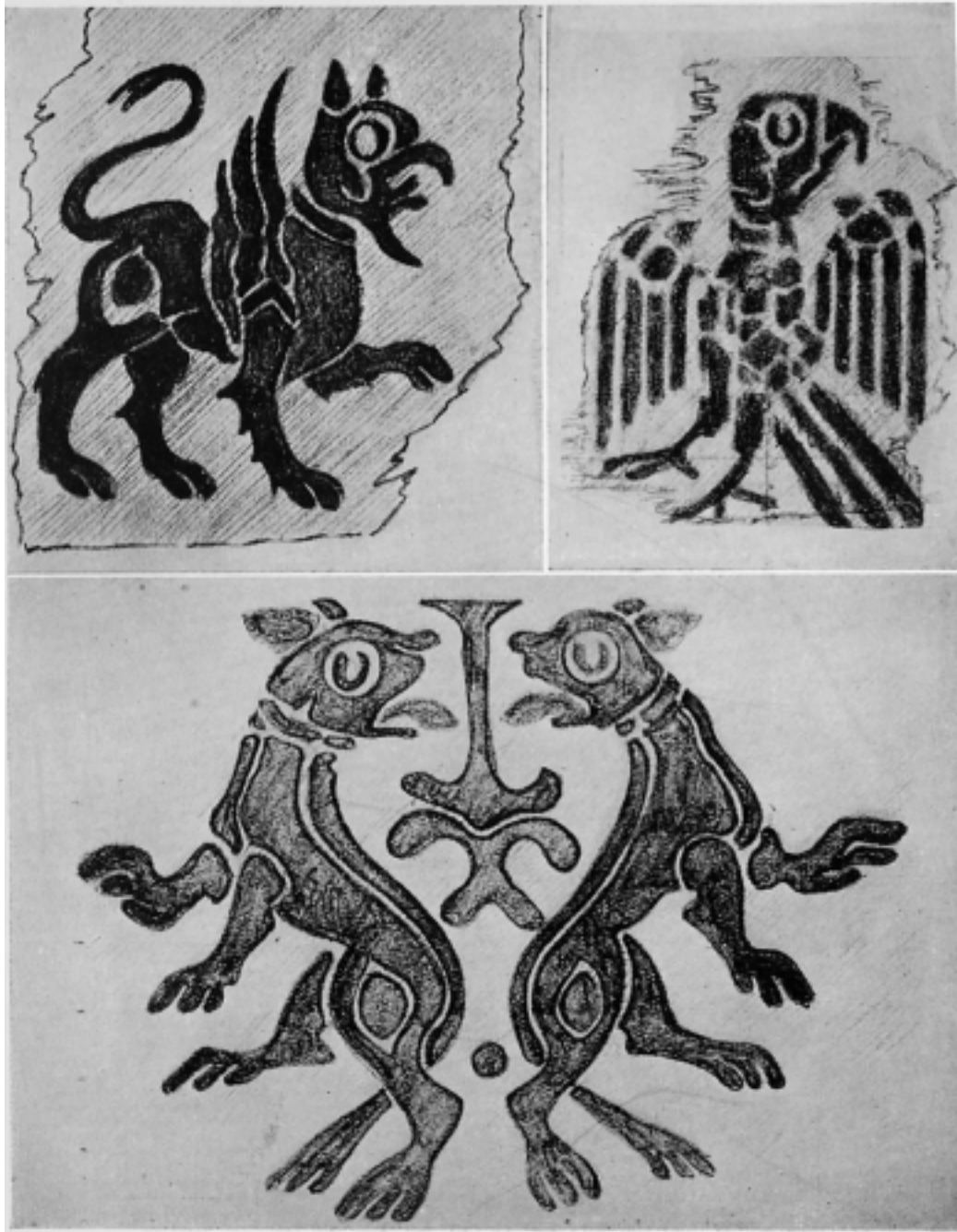


PLATE IX

HOSE AND LITURGICAL SANDALS OF A BISHOP OF THE END OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.



PLATES Xa, Xb, Xc

PLATE Xa (TOP, LEFT), DETAIL OF CHASUBLE SHOWING WINGED GRIFFIN MOTIF IN NATURAL SIZE. PLATE Xb (TOP, RIGHT), DETAIL OF CHASUBLE SHOWING EAGLE MOTIF IN NATURAL SIZE. PLATE Xc (BOTTOM), DETAIL OF CHASUBLE SHOWING ADDORSED LION MOTIFS IN NATURAL SIZE.

Dorothy Lardner, for years his able assistant, that the reproductions may be seen. The chasuble, also of silk, had a pattern of griffins, addorsed lions, and wide-winged eagles. In this case, there are no medallions; instead, the motives are arranged alternately in parallel rows between each of which is a line of triple points. In the photograph which was taken directly from the fabric is shown one of the fierce, winged creatures and above is faintly delineated one of the eagles (Frontispiece). The detail drawings which were made in France, show these figures in their natural size (Plates Xa, Xb, Xc), and the reconstruction of the pattern in the same way presents the design as it originally appeared (Plate XI). Byzantine textiles as a rule were rather sombre in color; dark blue, violet, or purple-red were shades that were often used. But in this piece, owing to its long burial in the ground, the original colors cannot be distinguished. It is now a light brown, one shade for the ground and a deeper one, in which a dark peacock blue may be distinguished, for the design.⁶ Even in the photograph it can be seen that the fabric was woven in a twill technique.

Of another piece, possibly an alb, only few pieces remain and of these it is merely said that it had an all-over design of small lozenge forms and that on two of the pieces is a pretty, decorative band, probably Oriental in origin; this may have formed the lower edge of the vestment (Plate XII). Sewed to these was a band of which only small pieces remain, ornamented with a raised pattern of gold and silver thread like one, it is stated, that is in the Cluny Museum (see frontispiece).

A burial tomb as valuable as this could only have been that of a prelate of note. Although there is nothing that serves as a precise identification, it has been suggested, particularly since the dates coincide, that it might be that of Robert de Courtenay,* grandson of Louis le Gros, cousin of the emperors of Constantinople, who was bishop of Orléans from 1250 to 1279.

The second tomb had no cover and was buried in earth. Originally this also had contained vestments, but, as readily can be understood, they were now only indistinguishable bits. Here there were only fragments of a pewter chalice, but there was also one rare and beautiful object, a crozier with a floral scroll of champleve enamel (Plate XIII). This was not the work of Limoges, rather it was Rhenish in character and has been

⁶ For this description of the colors, we are indebted to Mr. Richard C. Greenleaf, who went to Orleans at the time of the excavations to see the pieces.

* Through the marriage, about 1150, of a daughter of Renaud de Courtenay to Pierre, youngest son of Louis VI, the Fat, whose son, Pierre II, founded a short-lived dynasty of emperors of Constantinople.

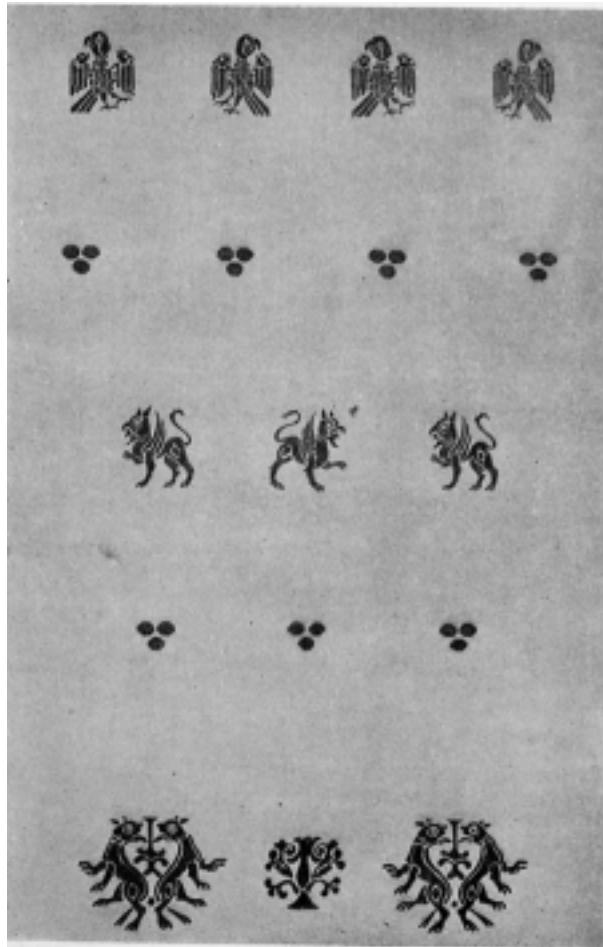


PLATE XI

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PATTERN OF THE CHASUBLE.



PLATE XII

RECONSTRUCTION OF DESIGN OF THE ALB INCLUDING A BORDER BAND,
A FRAGMENT OF WHICH IS SHOWN IN THE FRONTISPIECE.



PLATE XIII
CROZIER OF CHAMPLEVÉ
ENAMEL, END OF THE
TWELFTH CENTURY.



PLATE XIV
MEDALLIONS FOR GLOVES CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL ON GOLD,
BYZANTINE, ELEVENTH CENTURY.

attributed to the end of the twelfth century. In any case, it would seem to be the only example that exists, complete, of the work done in the ateliers of the east. It is thought that the owner of this fine piece may have been Masassès de Seignelay, who died in 1221, and who was the first bishop to be buried in the cathedral.

The third tomb was found between the two others. Here again there was no crozier, but a pewter chalice, a copper ring with a stone and a few remains of silks and *galons*. This sepulchre would have proved to be of very modest character in comparison with the two others were it not for one remarkable exception; mixed with the bones of the hands were two small gold disks decorated with cloisonné enamel, with representations of Christ and the Virgin. These were Byzantine jewels of rare quality, designed to be worn as medallions for gloves (Plate XIV).⁷ Unlike the sarcophagi previously found, this one was not anonymous, for it contained a lead plaque that bore the name of Raoul Grosparm, who was bishop of the cathedral in the years 1306-1311.

At the time when the material on these excavations was published this remarkable collection had been sent to Paris, to the Louvre, where it was to be displayed. Later it was to be returned to Orléans where it was to be added to the treasure of the cathedral. It was the intention also to make of these excavations a little archæological museum. With a roofing of iron and cement they were to be kept in the same state as when they were discovered so that visitors might be able to see the various strata of church constructions just as they had succeeded the primitive edifice built in the fourth century.

⁷ In the Metropolitan Museum, in the Morgan collection, is a set of medallions of this same type Byzantine work of the XI century, representing Christ, the Virgin and saints, that came from an old monastery in Jumati, Georgia, where they once ornamented an icon.



PLATE I

PORTRAIT OF MRS. GHERADI DAVIS BY ROBERT HINCKLEY,
MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

A CENTURY OF NEW YORK NEEDLEWORK AND DECORATIVE FABRICS, 1820-1920

THROUGH the generosity of the Museum of the City of New York an exhibition, Needlework and Decorative Fabrics made in New York between 1820 and 1920, was arranged by the Exhibitions Committee of the Needle and Bobbin Club, in one of the special exhibition galleries on the first floor of the Museum. Opening on March ninth, with a private view and tea, in the Paine Memorial Room, for the members of the Club, the exhibition was shown to the public on the following day and continued through May.

Since the Club program for the current season (1943-1944) was devoted to the subject of American textiles, this afforded an opportunity of bringing together examples of needlework and weaving reflecting the changes in taste of a century during which various art movements influenced American design. Neo-classicism, characterized by imitations and adaptations of ancient Greek and Roman art which followed the excavations at Herculaneum in 1738 had persisted throughout the eighteenth century. Eventually, in the first decades of the nineteenth, this culminated in the Empire style in France, the Biedermeier in Germany, and the Regency in England. The Romantic period which followed brought a revival of Gothic and Renaissance forms, or rather their simulations and modifications, and to these early motives were added realistic flower and fruit designs. During the Crimean war there was a wave of Orientalism throughout the field of decoration. This was evidenced in what was termed "fancy work," whose popularity was accelerated by the increasing number of women's magazines and stitchery manuals which provided a wide circulation of designs from one country to another.

In the machine age of Queen Victoria's reign the patrons of the decorative arts were not the cultivated few for whom artists created as in the eighteenth century, but rather they were the numerous and prosperous middle class born of industrialism who had a heritage neither of taste nor of fine traditions. Mass production by the machine, though quite unneces-

sarily, produced sterile patterns devoid of imagination for the indiscriminating industrial barons. Nevertheless, despite the mediocre quality of domestic architecture and furnishings, the women of this era produced in many cases beautiful pieces of needlework both for domestic use and personal adornment.

In æsthetic revolt from this debased type of design, William Morris from 1860 until his death in 1896, endeavored to revive the regard for hand craftsmanship which he believed to be the requisite for creative design. The Arts and Crafts movement which he fostered brought in new designs, to be sure, but disregarding the potentialities of the machine, this movement necessarily had its limitations. After 1880, however, France started to collect Far East art and as a result Japanese and Chinese patterns were adopted as themes for decoration. At the turn of the century again a new style made its appearance, l'Art Nouveau, the trend toward naturalism in floral ornament, sponsored by two Frenchmen, Eugène Grasset (1845-1917) and Émile Gallé (1846-1904). In America also John La Farge and Louis Comfort Tiffany subscribed to the new order and strove to rid the world of what was deemed commercialism.

It was to demonstrate what happened in New York during this somewhat neglected period that the Needle and Bobbin Club's exhibition was undertaken, even though restrictions of time and space made it impossible to tell the story as completely as might be desired. In cases and on walls of the Museum gallery an attempt was made to show what the New Yorkers wore and used for the decorations of their homes from 1820 to 1920.

Among the earliest pieces that were shown in the exhibition were samplers, some of them dating just after the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Of great interest were two panels of a needlework carpet which was sixteen feet square when Mrs. Eliza Y. Miner of Canton, New York, finished it in 1843 (Plate II). It was probably Lafayette's visit to the United States that inspired the hand-loomed bedspread of blue and white that bears the legend, "Agriculture and Manufactures Are The Foundation Of Our Independence, July 4, 1825. Gnrl. Lafayette." Caps and collars of embroidered muslin, accompanied by patterns for this charming work in both pencil and ink, taffeta and satin aprons delightfully worked in colored silks, jewel cases ornamented with raised embroidery in chenille and beads, pearls and gold thread, knitted and beaded purses, handkerchiefs and scarves illustrated the feminine needs for decorative needle-



PLATE II

TWO PANELS OF A NEEDLEWORK CARPET MADE BY MRS. ELIZA Y. MINER,
LENT BY THE FOLK ARTS CENTER.

work while a velvet waistcoat, braces, and a house cap showed what the Victorian gentlewoman worked for the masculine fancy from patterns sometimes borrowed, sometimes copied from those already drawn in needlework shops. Beneath one window in the exhibition was a sewing table of black and gold lacquer with ivory fittings, that was brought from China in the early part of the nineteenth century, for Julia Matilda Clinton who married George Clinton Tallmadge in 1826.

Petit point panels, ornamental panels of fruit and flowers embroidered on satin, birds worked in colored wool in an amazing variety of stitches, all showed that in the middle decades amateurs produced really charming handiwork as contrasted with the atrocities of Berlin woolwork and crochet which to many, due no doubt to the commonplace designs in embroidery books, characterizes work of this period.

Inspired by the exhibition of the work of the South Kensington School at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, Mrs. Candace Wheeler, in 1883, joined a group that was striving to raise the standard of needlework design in America. This group was called The Associated Artists. Shown in the exhibition as an example of their attainments were printed velvets and linens designed by Mrs. Wheeler as well as silks woven under her supervision by Cheney Brothers. One of the most characteristic examples of Mrs. Wheeler's work was a cloth of silver hanging upon which was applied a floral pattern in rose and green velvet. Another hanging, also of velvet, recently acquired by the Museum of the City of New York, showed, with its exotic birds and scrolling pattern embroidered in silk and metal threads, the Oriental influence in vogue in 1889.

At this same time the Needlework Class of Pratt Institute was actively operating. Its pupils were conscious of what the leaders in the *l'Art Nouveau* movement were striving for, together with those who aspired to a higher quality of design, and they, in their turn, endeavored to make a contribution. Linen cloths and pillow tops of their workmanship shown in the exhibition were skilfully designed and as carefully executed in colored silks and white thread.

In the nineties and the early part of the present century the rose was a favorite among flowers, not only the American Beauty which enjoyed great popularity, but other varieties as well. Such roses, from her southern garden, inspired the pattern that Mrs. Robert Coleman Taylor drew and embroidered in shades of red and yellow on a linen tea cloth; with its fringed border this decorative embroidery was a perfect expression of its

period. Also characteristic were "needle etchings," figures taken from a beloved Kate Greenaway, fitted with other verses, and worked in fine black silk on squares of fringed linen for doilies. The popularity of outline embroidery at this time induced Miss Eleanor Garnier Hewitt to copy on silk a design from one of the many plates of engraved ornament with which she endowed the Museum of Cooper Union. Only partially worked in blue, with needle and silk still intact, it is a charming memento of an outstanding New York figure of her era.

To serve by way of tribute to the ladies of this period whose proficiency and devotion to needlework made possible such an exhibition, a case was arranged, in the center of the gallery, holding a silver bowl and tray, inscribed "Phoebe Lord Day." They represented the prizes won by this talented amateur at the Ladies' New York Club, where for the years 1890, 1891, she held the Needlework Championship. In the same case were shown two examples of her colored embroidery on linen. Occupied at embroidery frames, competing for the award, may have been any number of the women of New York whose work is now in museums in the city as part of American costume and decoration. Beneath a window of the exhibition gallery was just such a frame and the one before which Mrs. Gheradi Davis sat for the portrait painted by Robert Hinckley about 1890 (Plate I). Both portrait and embroidery frame are now in the Museum of the City of New York.

This also was the period when the financial magnates of America were beginning to erect as homes the huge stone edifices which in New York are fast disappearing or being converted to other uses. The wide expanses of panelling and marble thus created demanded tapestries. Fired with the taste for *antiquarianism* which had sprung up years before in England, it was thought in this country only proper that these tapestries should be copies of Flemish Gothic and eighteenth century French designs; the chance of acquiring originals was rarely considered. Through the agency of William Baumgarten and Company, who furnished many of the sumptuous American interiors, the Foussadier family of Aubusson arrived in New York early in 1893. Jean Foussadier, the father, had begun his apprenticeship at the tapestry looms of Aubusson in 1852 and with his two sons, Antoine and Louis, had worked at the Royal Windsor Tapestry Works of England. At the old Hotel Gorbets on the Bronx River in Williamsbridge, the Foussadiers made the first tapestries in America. An exhibition of the work of this family was held in 1894 and for many years they executed orders for several of the most elaborate of the great



PLATE III

TAPESTRY WOVEN ON THE FOUSSADIER LOOMS FOR WILLIAM BAUMGARTEN & COMPANY.
LENT BY FRENCH & COMPANY.

houses of America. A typical example from their looms, a pastoral scene after Boucher, occupied a prominent place in the exhibition (Plate III).

Albert Herter, mural and portrait painter, while studying abroad became deeply interested in the crafts of Flanders and especially in tapestry weaving. In 1908 he built his own loom which was a counterpart of those used at Aubusson. In three years the Herter Looms, established first in East New York, increased to over a dozen looms on which were woven copies of old French and Flemish tapestry designs. But Herter, too, felt impelled to produce something new in textiles and to an ever-increasing extent his manufactory turned out the products of his own designing. Two of the notable pieces of the exhibition were a cushion top in tapestry weave and a brocade, both of them woven from Mr. Herter's original designs and both testifying to the artist's importance in this field. Unlike William Morris and his following who had held tenaciously to work by hand, Albert Herter realized the possibilities of the power loom in the production of his textile patterns. Far from disdaining such mechanical aid, this type of loom was used to advantage under his direction.

The Baumgarten tapestry manufactory and Albert Herter influenced the painter and designer, Lorentz Kleiser. Though Mr. Kleiser was born in Elgin, Illinois, his parents were Norwegian, and he returned to Norway when he was five years old. There he spent his childhood, followed by an apprenticeship with a mural painter, and by several years in Munich where he studied art. After this preparation, he began his career of painting and illustrating in Norway. In 1900 he returned to America. Deeply interested in weaving crafts and the new trend in design, he worked for a time both at the Baumgarten looms and with Albert Herter. Up to this time weaving for this artist had been only a hobby, but in 1913 he started the Edgewater Looms in Edgewater, New Jersey, in a workshop which he had built next door to his own home. By 1928 he was employing around a hundred workers, weavers, tapestry restorers and apprentices, who, under his direction, enlarged his designs to full-sized cartoons. Inspired by the Tournai tapestry acquired by the Metropolitan Museum from the Bardac collection in 1909, Mr. Kleiser in 1914 made an adaptation of this piece. This adaptation, the Rose Garden, was shown in the exhibition. After 1916, the Kleiser manufactory, in its turn, instead of copying old tapestries, produced original designs until, in 1933, the Edgewater Looms closed. At the present time, Mr. Kleiser carries on his tapestry weaving in California where he is

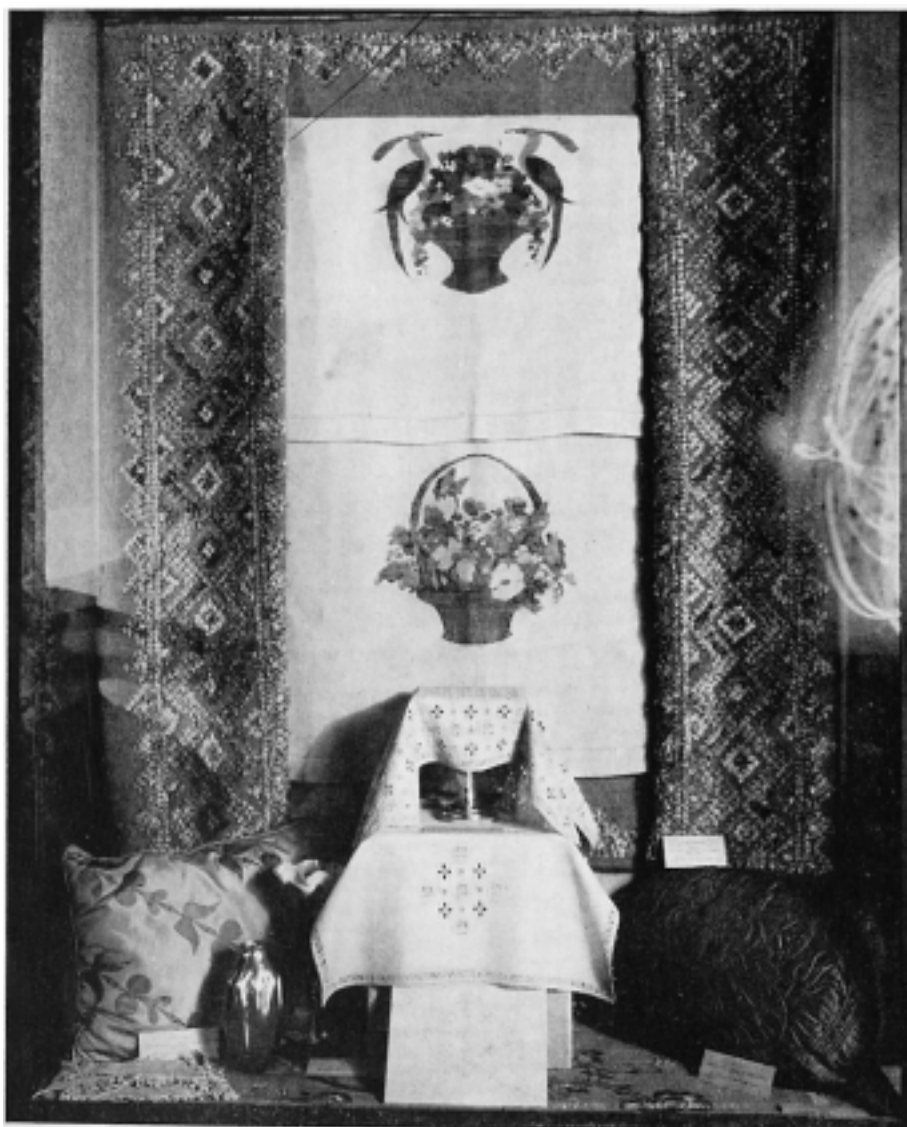


PLATE IV

WORK OF THE FISKE WEAVERS, THE GUILD OF THE NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CRAFTS AND THE
SCUOLA D'INDUSTRIE ITALIANE. LENT BY MRS. ROBERT C. TAYLOR, MRS. GINO SPERANZA
AND THE MUSEUM FOR THE ARTS OF DECORATION, COOPER UNION.

now at work on a large pictorial tapestry map of Wisconsin for the American Club at Kohler.

In an early number of *The Craftsman* (Vol. XII, pp. 404-409) is an article by Elisabeth A. Irwin entitled, "The Story of a Transplanted Industry: Lace Workers of the Italian Quarter of New York." It is an apt title for the story of an enterprise started in the early years of this century by several American women who, while visiting in Italy, arranged for a lace industry to be started in New York. Under the name of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, this undertaking started in 1905 in downtown New York under the direction of Signora Carolina Amari who came from Italy with patterns and materials not only for lace but also embroidery. The work was done by the Italian girls of the neighborhood, and proceeds of the sales were devoted to the maintenance of the project. Over a period of years during which the products of the Scuola became an important part of New York trousseaux and household furnishings, this industry flourished for the benefit of girls who otherwise would have been obliged to gain a living at much less congenial occupations, and who at the same time were reviving the art of their ancestors.

Examples of their exquisite work, much of it patterned on sixteenth century models, were presented in this exhibition. Shown in the same case with the pieces from the Scuola were products of two other industries, the Fiske Weavers of Vermont, whose patterns originated in New York and who employed a variety of techniques and yarn, and the Guild of Needle and Bobbin Crafts, an affiliate of the Needle and Bobbin Club, where women were trained to do fine needlework. With the vari-colored bird and flower designs of the Fiske Weavers, the applied or quilted pillows, and the large cover with wide, ornamental border tufted in raw silk, made by the Guild of Needle and Bobbin Crafts, and the beautiful cut-linen altar set of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, the whole heightened by the tones of Tiffany glass, this colorful case (Plate IV) represented in the exhibition the last chapter of the story of the decorative work created in New York in the years between 1820 and 1920.

M. A.

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

MRS. WALTER AYER
BROOKLYN MUSEUM
MRS. WENDELL T. BUSH
MISS E. MABEL CLARK
MISS GRACE O. CLARKE
MRS. DEWITT CLINTON COHEN
THE FOLK ARTS CENTER
FRENCH & COMPANY
MRS. T. RIDGELY HUNT
MISS FRANCES MORRIS
THE MUSEUM FOR THE ARTS OF DECORATION,
COOPER UNION
MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MRS. FREDERIC B. PRATT
MRS. GINO SPERANZA
MRS. ROBERT COLEMAN TAYLOR
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
MRS. NELSON B. WILLIAMS



CLUB NOTES, 1944-1945

The twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Needle and Bobbin Club was held at the apartment of the President, Mrs. Frank B. Rowell, 1040 Fifth Avenue, on Thursday afternoon, February twenty-fourth. After the reading of reports by the Officers, Mrs. Herbert E. Winlock, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, announced the election of the ballot, and the meeting was closed. The President then introduced the speaker of the afternoon, Miss Gertrude Townsend, Curator of Textiles at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, who gave an illustrated lecture on New England Needlewomen, 1620-1820. Miss Townsend's scholarly investigations, as evidenced by her talk, and the article in the present number of the BULLETIN, brought to light many interesting facts about amateur needlework in Boston and its vicinity. There was an unusually large attendance and the material presented by the lecturer furnished a valuable contribution to the Club's program for the year on American textiles. Thanks to the generous hospitality of the President, the lecture was followed by a pleasant social hour.

An account of the exhibition in March is contained in the article in this number, "A Century of New York Needlework and Decorative Fabrics, 1820-1920."

On Tuesday April the fourth, through the courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, members of the Club were invited to meet at 50 East 70th Street, the George Blumenthal house, where, against a background of arms and armor Mrs. Edith Greer, a representative of Textron Incorporated, gave a novel and interesting talk on duration and post-war synthetic fabrics evolved to meet the demands of modern warfare. Mrs.

Greer showed such new materials as nylon parachutes, Alpine ropes, cargo chutes and tents adapted for use both in the jungle and in cold climates. Despite wartime restrictions against present-day use by civilians, chemists in firms specializing in synthetic fabrics, it was stated by Mrs. Greer, are continuing their experiments for the post-war consumer. Responding to the lecturer's enthusiasm, a lively discussion followed on the materials to evolve from new, and as yet untried, yarns.

On April the twenty-fifth, the Advisory Council of the Museum for the Arts of Decoration, Cooper Union, generously invited the members of the Needle and Bobbin Club to share with the Friends of the Museum the rare pleasure of hearing Mr. Edward Ringwood Hewitt speak on "Ringwood and the Cooper Union." Mr. Hewitt's delightful account of family life at Ringwood was interwoven with charming humor. It covered the latter decades of the nineteenth century when the philanthropic dream of Peter Cooper's broad vision became realized in the education center that today is a monument of his beneficent attitude toward mankind. The story of this great New York benefactor fascinated the large numbers who made up the audience and who deemed themselves fortunate indeed to have been able to hear it.

Originally, as it will be remembered, it was the intention of the Club to devote the season's program for the latter part of 1944 and of 1945 to the textiles of occupied countries. The happy liberation of these nations following so rapidly upon this first arrangement, however, made it necessary to change this program, at least to the extent, without altering the main topic, of broadening the field to include textiles of other countries.

Preceding the regular Club program of the season, through the courtesy of the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum, the members were afforded the opportunity on October seventeenth, 1944, of a private view at the Museum of two loan collections, one of European textiles woven and embroidered, owned by a New York collector, and the other, peasant and native costumes from Europe, the Near East and Central America, including pieces from the Museum collection, arranged by Mr. Lee Simonson. Notable among the first, which filled two galleries, was the lovely work of the late Renaissance when linen was embroidered with rich and delicate effect with colored silks and metal threads. Also to be mentioned were panels of silk worked with designs in gold and silver of both French

and Italian attribution. Among the woven pieces, extraordinary in regard to number and variety of design, was a group of those sumptuous Venetian brocades, woven in colors combined with gold and silver, that have long been held in high esteem by both museums and collectors. The elaborately embroidered peasant costumes exhibited not only an infinite number of fine embroidery stitches, but exemplified the designs and colors that have made peasant costume so eminently decorative.

November ninth. On the invitation of Dr. Phyllis Ackerman, the first regular meeting of the Club was held on November the ninth at the Iranian Institute for Asiatic Studies, at 9 East 89th Street. In the handsome and spacious surroundings of the Institute, Dr. Arthur Upham Pope spoke briefly, but eloquently, and with a kind word on the increased value of the BULLETIN articles, on the beauty and importance of early Asiatic textiles, of the reverence in which they were held, and the fabulous sums that were expended for their acquisition. Dr. Ackerman followed this address with an interesting interpretation of certain Persian designs, and directed the attention of the appreciative audience to the exhibitions on other floors of the Institute, in one of whose rooms tea was served.

On November thirteenth the Metropolitan Museum, together with the Department of Near Eastern Art, invited the members of the Club to a private view of "Great Rugs of the Orient and Enamelled Islamic Glass." In the large rug room, the superb rugs owned by the Museum were displayed to great advantage, and in another gallery the rare Islamic glass showed jewel-like tones in cases with concealed lighting.

The Bring and Buy Sale for the benefit of the Red Cross that was so successful last year, was held again on December sixth at the apartment of Miss Frances Morris, 39 East 79th Street. The great variety of articles contributed generously by members met with such appreciation from the potential buyers that more than twelve hundred dollars was realized for the fund. Certain pieces were bought for presentation to museums, one of them an exceptionally fine panel of Italian *fil tiré* that is illustrated (Plate XI) in the Club's publication, *Antique Laces of American Collectors*.

On January tenth, Miss Miles Carpenter generously invited the members of the Club to see her fine collection of Sicilian *tela tirata* at her apartment, 950 Fifth Avenue. These beautiful linens, richly decorated with embroidery, of which there was a large number, were for the most

part of the seventeenth century, and exhibited in great variety the range and artistry of this beautiful work. There was a large attendance to see this rare and specialized collection, and to these members a delightful tea was served.

With the passing of Mrs. Robert C. Monks, in the first week of November, the Board once more is faced with the loss of a valued member whose helpful cooperation for many years had been so dependable a factor in the activities of the organization. In the course of her several and extended sojourns in Athens and the Near East, Mrs. Monks had become an enthusiastic student of Greek Island embroideries, and she assembled during that time a large group of these beautiful fabrics whose quality reflected how discriminating was her taste and judgment in the art of collecting. Hers was a personality that radiated a quiet cheer and a friendliness that endeared her to all who knew her. Her loss will be deeply felt by the many friends now bereft of her sympathetic companionship.

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1944-1945

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* Deceased.