

THE  
Archaeological Journal.

DECEMBER, 1847.

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL EMBROIDERY.

SECTION THE SECOND.



BEHEADING OF ST. PAUL, ALTAR CLOTH, STEEPLE ASTON.

It is most probable that the embroidery used in the south of Europe was in great measure furnished at an early period by artists in the east, since the oldest specimens now in existence bear evident marks of an Oriental or Greek character. Thus the imperial dalmatic preserved in the treasury of St. Peter at Rome, called also the cope of St. Leo, (Leo III., 795—816,) is clearly, if we may judge from its representations, a work of the Byzantine school.

This very remarkable specimen of embroidery is laid upon a foundation of deep blue silk, having four different subjects on the shoulders, behind, and in front, exhibiting, although taken from different actions, the glorification of the body of our Lord. The whole has been carefully wrought with gold tambour, and silk, and the numerous figures, as many as fifty-four, surrounding the Redeemer, who sits enthroned on a rainbow in the centre, display simplicity and gracefulness of design. The field of the vestment is powdered with flowers and crosses of gold and silver, having the bottom enriched with a running floriated pattern. It has also a representation of paradise, wherein the flowers, carried by tigers of gold, are of emerald green, turquoise blue, and flame colour. Crosses of silver, cantoned with tears of gold, and of gold cantoned with tears of silver alternately, are inserted in the flowing foliage at the edge. Other crosses within circles are also placed after the same rule, when of gold in medallions of silver, and when of silver in the reverse order.

Both the descriptions and the drawings which have been given to the world of this remarkable vestment, for few persons have had an opportunity of examining it, would induce the belief that it can scarcely be of such high antiquity as has been generally supposed. There is no history as to the manner or the time when it came into the pontifical treasury, and its style of art justifies the conclusion of Mons. Didron, that it is the manufacture of the twelfth century. Were we to describe the foliated pattern in architectural language, which will be readily intelligible to all our readers, it would be by saying that it bears decidedly the impress of an Early English character. It has been conjectured that this dalmatic was formerly used by the German emperors when they were consecrated and crowned, and when they assisted the pope at the office of mass. On such occasions the emperor discharged the functions of sub-deacon or deacon, and, clothed with a dalmatic, chaunted the Epistle and Gospel; in illustration of this custom it may be remarked that several of the German emperors took part in the service, even so late as Charles V., who sung the Gospel at Boulogne in 1529. The dalmatic in fact was in those times, as it continues at the present day, both a regal and ecclesiastical habit, and it has constantly been the custom of European kingdoms for their sovereigns to wear it at their coronation.

But the usage of embroidered vestments by royal personages must be regarded as infinitely earlier than the period just referred to, since it was the first kind of costly attire with which we are acquainted. It was adopted from remote antiquity; nothing could be more suitable for monarchs, nor any kind of apparel more beautiful, being the means of uniting together the richest gifts of nature and the choicest productions of art. The Muse of Greece sung of these brilliant inventions in the mythic ages of the Trojan war; heroes of the Augustan era returned home from conquest in such glittering raiment, that it required the powers of inspiration to describe it: and when the Provençal rhymers, who caught the last echo of Latin poetry, wished to deck loveliness in its richest dress they clothed it in embroidered robes.

It cannot have escaped the recollection of the classical reader how Homer makes Penelope throw over Ulysses, before his departure for Ilium, an upper garment embroidered in gold, on which was imaged the actions of the chase. We behold the bard picturing the dog holding the spotted fawn with his fore feet intent upon his capture, whilst it struggles and pants for freedom; a subject so vividly expressed by the needle of the Ithacensian housewife that he speaks of the work itself as the universal admiration of beholders.

The concurrent voice of antiquity dwells with rapture on the prevalent use of golden tissues. We hear for instance of those which were woven by and adorned the persons of Dido and Andromache; of spoils of this precious cloth being carried away as the richest treasure in the pillage of Persepolis; of the robe and pavilion of Arsace, formed of gold and purple; of the aureate veils hanging over the nuptial guests of Alexander, and of the sumptuous decorations lining the tents of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Nor was this luxury limited either to personal embellishment, or to the moveables of the living. Tunics interwoven with the costly thread were cast over the images of their deities; they overspread the colossal statue of Bacchus and Nyssa at Alexandria, whilst the peplum of Minerva, embroidered by virgins so as to represent her attributes, was annually carried in solemn procession at the great Panathenaic festival at Athens, and carefully laid up in the temple of the goddess. On the throne and the sarcophagus were to be seen these emblems of magnificence; the idols of heathenism, no less than the tombs of reputed saints, rivalled

each other in the amount of such intrinsically valuable possessions, and when the sepulchre closed over the bones of the dead, it even shut within its dark and damp recesses the glittering vestments once worn by its tenant. And thus deposited in gloomy state, enwrapped in the gorgeous raiment with which they had dazzled a crowd of satellites, mouldered the bones of the king of Macedon, of Nero, of Maria spouse of Honorius, of Childeric<sup>a</sup>, and of Cuthbert. The discoveries attendant upon the exhumation of the two last individuals form the most singular history of sepulchral antiquities that have ever been given to the world.

Interesting however as the investigation of the present subject must be, whether its illustration is sought for amid the classical literature of Greece and Rome, or in the pages of those fathers of the Christian Church, who inveigh against the use of such things as mere superfluous vanities, it is an enquiry that becomes more attractive when directed towards the particular modes of costumic embellishment or of domestic decoration which have prevailed in England.

How various have been the methods of employing the needle for ornamental purposes, and what choice specimens of its skilful use may still be seen lurking among the internal substantial comforts of the English gentry. The medieval monuments of female fancy are yet very considerable, though the moth has lent its aid to fret the canvass, and the garret has become converted into the store-house of ancestral industry. Occasionally, indeed, may be perceived a filial regard united with an uncertain appreciation for these faded heir-looms, and they are timidly brought forward into view and transferred to fresh foundations, as the evidence of lingering regard for the worker, and the proof of estimating a good but obsolete fashion. Nothing can evince better taste and discernment than the way in which these memorials of family toil are preserved at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, where the embroidery wrought by the countess of Shrewsbury forms one among the numerous remarkable features of that palatial residence.

<sup>a</sup> The death of Childeric the First, who is regarded as fourth king of the Merovingian line, took place in 482. He was buried at Tournai, where he had resided. His tomb was discovered there in 1653, and contained rings of great value and many other objects

of great interest and curiosity. Amongst these were several gold bees which had been attached to his garments, and which formed the insignia of the monarchs of the first race.

Rich, however, as this abode is in the extensive collection of tapestry with which so many of its spacious chambers are adorned, it is still more deserving notice for its splendid Elizabethan hangings. These, embroidered in gold and silver with a countless variety of devices, and surmounted by waving plumes, admirably harmonize with the interior of the fabric. Pargetting, in high and coloured relief, spiritedly representing hunting scenes, is carried round the upper portion of the presence chamber, where the labours of the loom are incapable of covering the walls to the ceiling, from its great height. You view a moving picture; the walls are vocal with hound and horn; you walk through a region of romance, of allegory and of history, as you pass from room to room, until at length the eye grows weary with the shifting scenes of delight and deception, and seeks for repose from the animated, entrancing delusion amid the various quaint and elegant designs figured over the different articles of furniture. Most of these belong to the time when the house was constructed, and indicate the artistic feeling and manual dexterity of the foundress. Here too may be seen beds of state, with their curtains of black and silver, Venetian velvets, and damascenes, 'cloth of Raynes to slepe on softe,' and hangings 'raied with gold,' hard cushions of blue baudekyn, high-seated chairs covered with samit, and powdered with flowers, yet curiously uncomfortable to sit upon.

The arms and ensigns of Mary Queen of Scots, so long the too fondly cherished prisoner of George earl of Shrewsbury, still exist, and some of her own royal work is preserved amongst these treasures, together with a carpet embroidered by her needle, and a suit of hangings on which all the virtues are represented in symbolical figures and allusive mottoes, equally offering pictorial embellishments and moral lessons.

On traversing the long range of apartments at Hardwick, and casting even a cursory glance upon the arras covering the wall, it excites surprise to see to what an extent this appropriate decoration was used before the introduction of wainscotting. And when this in turn was brought into the houses of the wealthy, it was generally painted and gilt. Symbolism and allegory lent their influence to extend the charm of this rich but unnatural species of ornament, and if the powers of the workmen were incapable of soaring so high as to create, they were contented to repeat the conventional

patterns of their predecessors. Hence may be seen a perpetual recurrence of the same rudimental forms. In Tudor and Jacobean carving this is strikingly perceptible; all the outlines of this are in reality but variations of particular figures, just as the caprice or imitative ability of the artist prompted him to make the alteration. So also in the conventional patterns painted on quarries of glass, or in those depicted on the bases of rood skreens, or on embroidered garments, the same kind of repetition is observable.

Thus to take an illustration from the needlework of the countess of Shrewsbury, (for the same principle pervades this

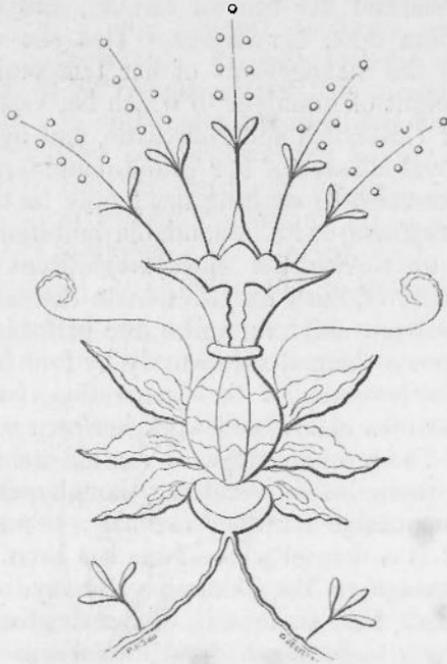


EMBROIDERY, HARDWICK HALL, DERBYSHIRE.

and every other kind of medieval art,) and this particular branch is more immediately apposite to the present subject, her framed, it may probably with stricter propriety be said, her sampler

patterns, at Hardwick, are the common conventional designs of the day, a fact not only perceptible in her own handy work so profusely exhibited here, but also in their antitypes upon a corporas cloth belonging to a gentleman in the immediate neighbourhood.

We are unresistingly carried by the imagination backwards to the period of Elizabeth, nay, we are in truth walking among the characteristic features of the time, as we pass through the stately chambers of Hardwick, since every, or nearly every article of furniture is coeval with the construction of the edifice.



*Antependium, in the possession of Mr. Bowdon.*

Yet the owner of so fair a fabric suffered none of her energies to be distracted by the care necessary to see it appropriately garnished when built. She erected both houses and hospitals, sumptuously fitting up the one, and well endowing the other. The noble dwelling at Chatsworth, and the embattled walls of Bolsover, declare the princely outlay made from her fortune, and in a land of stone like Derbyshire her palaces and manors arose as rapidly as the creations of some unseen magician in oriental fable. Her zeal for architecture was so deeply rooted in her very nature that it was only extinguishable with her existence. Hence it had been foretold by no very prophetic seer, in the language of metonymy, that she would live as long as she continued to build, and so it happened, for a wintry interruption to the works in progress, that fatal suspension of her labours, left Chatsworth unfinished, and at the age of eighty-seven carried her to the grave. Her dust lies under a magnificent monument of marble in the church of All Hallows at Derby, which either from personal

vanity or a natural desire to see suitably executed, she caused to be erected during her lifetime. The archbishop of York preached her funeral sermon, and pronounced a lofty eulogium upon her virtues. That she was discreet and prudent in the management of her temporal affairs, is shewn by the height of grandeur to which her vast estates raised the houses of Cavendish and Newcastle, and by the four ducal, even the royal alliance of her grand-daughters. Yet with all the care exercised in exalting her family to this extraordinary pitch of greatness, with a laudable ambition to decorate her native county with the most magnificent residences England can boast of, with an affectionate discharge of maternal duties to fourteen children, and a due performance of the conjugal obedience claimed successively by four husbands, she, like all the gentlewomen of that generation, found leisure to embroider her own chairs, and work her own counterpanes.

From a personage so exalted we must descend to those of a more humble station, though perhaps they may be more memorable for their manual attainments. The first we read of is a damsel whose fame has been handed down to us by a passage in the Domesday Survey. Aluuid, for such is her name, held at Achelai, in Buckinghamshire, two hides of land, freely to bequeath or sell to whom she chose, and from the demesne fee of the Confessor she had half a hide, which Earl Godric granted to her as long as he remained earl, on condition of her teaching his daughter to work embroidery. This most curious entry in the Conqueror's Survey is not however the only one which it contains allusive to the art, since there is a second that speaks of a certain Leuide, who made, and continued to make when the record was formed, embroidery for the use of the king and queen. The casula, wrought by the wife of Alderet of Winchester, and mentioned in the will of Matilda, as left to the church of the Holy Trinity at Caen, and the clamis wrought in gold which was laid up in her chamber, and the vestment worked in England, have previously been slightly alluded to. The testament itself is however so remarkable that it deserves to be placed before the attention of the reader entire.

Ego Mathildis Regina do Sanctæ Trinitati Cadomi casulam quam apud Wintoniam operatur uxor Aldereti, et clamidem operatam ex auro quæ est in camera mea ad cappam faciendam, atque de duabus ligaturis meis aureis in quibus cruces sunt, illam quæ emblematis est insculpta, ad lampadem

suspendendam coram Sancto altare, candelabraque maxima quæ fabricantur apud Sanctum Laudum, coronam quoque et sceptrum, calicesque ac vestimentum, atque aliud vestimentum quod operatur in Anglia, et cum omnibus ornamentis equi, atque omnia vasa mea, exceptis illis quæ antea dederò alicubi in vita mea; et Chetehulmum (*Quetchon en Cotentin*) in Normannia, et duas mansiones in Anglia do Sanctæ Trinitati Cadomi. Hæc omnia concessu domini mei Regis facio<sup>b</sup>. *Ex Cartulario Sanctæ Trin. Bibl. Reg. Paris*, No. 5650.

At this period then it is quite clear that the females of England were highly celebrated for their skill in using gold tambour, and they continued successfully to practise this accomplishment for several centuries. It was exclusively in its highest perfection an English art, almost to the reign of the Stuarts, when it sunk into a style of debasement so very low, that nothing more was requisite to blunt the point of the needle, and obliterate the few remaining vestiges of good taste and elegance, than the adoption of the German system of mechanically toiling in chequers, which now so extensively disfigures the rooms over every domestic threshold that can be crossed.

These were matters considered grave and important enough for even ecclesiastical historians of old to introduce into their narratives; they even gave occasion for preternatural interference. Thus Reginald of Durham furnishes us with the two following stories. 'When,' says he, 'Maud, the daughter of Waltheof, and the widow of Simon de St. Liz, was passing through Durham, with her husband, David king of Scotland, she carried in her retinue a female attendant named Helisend. The monk describes this young woman as a person nobly skilled in the science of weaving purple, and one of the most celebrated of her age for working in the best manner every kind of embroidery, or gold weaving of artificial composition. Helisend having heard that there were peculiar limits to the cemetery of St. Cuthbert, which it was not permitted for females to pass, was determined to try the experiment of escaping from all the penalties denounced against such a transgression, and in defiance of the threatenings uttered against such temerity, persisted in her resolution, and covered with a black hood, the upper part only of which disclosed the countenance, and all the rest of her body being concealed, she

<sup>b</sup> *Essais historiques sur la ville de Caen par M. l'Abbé De la Rue, vol. i. Preuves, No. 1.*

conceived it was impossible for either monks or any one else to recognise her sex. But, alas, how vain was her presumptuous curiosity! For in the meanwhile, St. Cuthbert came to a sacristan of the church, as he sat writing in the monastery, and addressing him very sharply, bade him go forth and drive the intruder from the precincts she had violated. Immediately the studious recluse shut up his books, and sallied forth, fruitlessly searching a long time for the unfortunate object of the saint's indignation, until at length he discovered her wrapped up in a man's cloak outside the church. The poor lady, whose curiosity had led her into such an unpleasant dilemma, was now assailed by a most virulent torrent of abuse, and it is difficult to say whether the monastic scribe or the saintly Cuthbert excelled in the art of vituperation, as the terms applied by each of them to the skilful embroideress are too coarse for an English translation. Nor was their conduct confined to mere words, for seizing hold of her, they violently ejected her from the building, when half dead with fright, and unconscious what she did, she stood for a while in a state of stupor, from which at length recovering, she determined to go to Elstow in Bedfordshire. Here she took a religious vow, and passed the remainder of her life in honest conversation.'

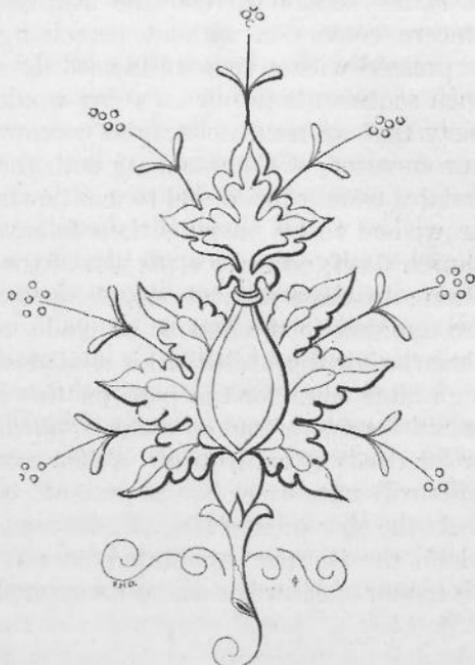
Reginald also tells a story of the same saint, in which he figures more amiably. 'A young brunette was engaged in sewing a garment 'de fustico-tincto' for her wedding, and upon being admonished by her mother to get it completed before nine o'clock, because it was St. Lawrence's day, replied she would finish the dress whether it was the feast of St. Lawrence or not; upon uttering which her hands suddenly became contracted, her fingers shrunk up and curved, so that the garment stuck fast in the palm of her hand, and she was only restored by Cuthbert's interposition.'

It is stated by Sir Henry Spelman that the influential people of the kingdom were formerly obliged to attend on the monarch at the three great festivals of the year, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, with the view both of shewing him suitable honour, and of assisting in settling the affairs of the realm, and that on these occasions he was accustomed to appear with the crown on his head, and surrounded with all the insignia of royalty. Ailred mentions the same custom as prevailing during the reign of the Confessor, when at Whitsuntide the

whole of the nobility presented themselves before him in golden raiment. This practice seems to have endured until the time of Henry II., who in the fourth year of his reign, keeping his Easter, at Worcester with great solemnity, discontinued it: when he and Eleanor his queen, going up to the altar to present their usual oblation, took off their crowns and placed them upon it, as an offering to God, vowing they would wear them no longer. After this, the three festivals were observed with less splendour, though Henry III., when a minor, kept his Christmas with considerable magnificence at Northampton on more than one occasion.

These customs tended to increase the gaiety and attractions of the court of the Plantagenets, and imparted to it a brilliancy which the feudal lords with all their natural roughness of manners could not but dwell upon with admiration. From hence the Cliffords and Fitz-Alans carried the ideas of elegance to their border fortresses of Hereford and Clun, while Albrincis at Dover, and Peverel amid the wild fastnesses of the Peak or the more genial heights of Bolsover, implanted the severe elements of other tastes, which will, as they become better known and appreciated, constitute the model for imitation among future architects.

Besides the embroidered garments worn by the monarch and his nobility, and the vestments requisite for the use of the Church, he was burdened with annual payments, more courteously termed offerings, which were occasionally made in the form of presents of gold, or of embroidered cloth, to the high altar, or to the shrine of some reputed saint. Thus Edward I. made oblations to the banner of St. John of Be-



Parcory, St. Richard, Cirencester.

verley, and gifts of cloth of gold to the church of St. George at Orcheston, and to the feretory of St. Richard at Cirencester. The Issue Rolls of the Exchequer furnish almost innumerable entries illustrative of the practice. Perhaps not the least characteristic evidence of these expensive and superstitious usages, is to be seen in a payment made by William of Wykeham to the clerk of a canon of York for a vestment which is stated to have belonged to St. Peter the Apostle. Yet copious as all this class of records are in supplying illustrations of the prevalent use of embroidery during the middle ages, the ancient wills and inventories yield a still larger amount of information on the subject.

The anxiety evinced by all classes to be buried with the honour and respect due to their stations is strikingly shewn by the language of their testaments, though this anxiety is not more apparent than the impressive manner in which these documents recite the belief of the testator, who usually prefaced the disposition of his property by an acknowledgment of his faith in the blessed Trinity. There is an edifying solemnity, nay, a heartfelt piety in the manner by which the priesthood and laity alike expressed their Christian hopes, and it is impossible to read the last record they made of their sincere conviction without perceiving how deeply they were impressed with a sense of inward devotion. The utterance of such sentiments in our own day would be at least one sign of piety that we need not fear to borrow from the professions of our ancestors. Commencing with the recital of his faith, the testator usually proceeded to mention in what part of the church he wished to be buried; then followed his bequests to the church itself, either to a portion of the fabric, or for its restoration; to those institutions, eleemosynary or monastic, which are founded to the honour of God; to holy fraternities, anniversaries for the health of his soul, decorations or lights for the high altar, alms for the poor on the day of interment, consecrated vestments, sacred utensils, payments for tithes forgotten, or for deeds of restitution. A few extracts from these ancient wills will suitably close the present paper.

At the obsequies of Hugh Pudsey, who died bishop of Durham, 1195, the Church<sup>c</sup> appointed horses to bring his body from his manor of Howden where he expired, to the city of Durham,

<sup>c</sup> William de Karilepho, first bishop of Durham, who died 1095, amongst

other ornaments left several embroidered vestments to the church.

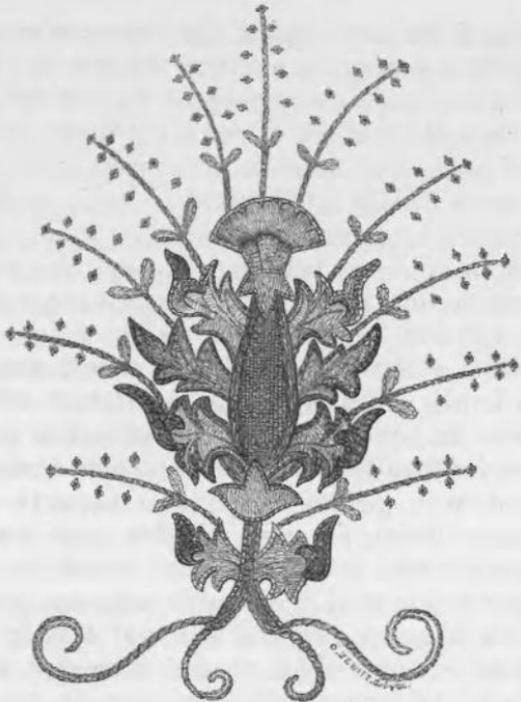
and from the chapel of the former place a cross and a chalice each of pure gold, a lettern of silver and gold, his mitre, staff, sandals, and other episcopal decorations. Nine chesables, of which the first was of red samit nobly embroidered with plates of gold and bezants, and many great pearls and precious stones. Also another red chesable, and a third black, with griffins and golden stars and precious stones: other six of samit of divers colours. Three stoles and three maniples, of which one stole and maniple were red, embroidered with kings and towers. Five copes, of which one was red; another white, embroidered with griffins and stars; a third black, and a fourth green with only the margin wrought in gold. Ten albs embroidered, the first of which was red, with golden eagles with two heads, standing in small wheels: the second red, with griffins and flowers in large wheels: the third a large green alb with griffins: the fourth of purple, with griffins and flowers, in small wheels: the fifth and sixth of green, one with lilies and flowers and another with apostles: two of samit, one red and the other black, with large gold borders: two black ones embroidered, which are called sandalls. Four veils skilfully sewn for the altar, two without, and a third with a frontal, embroidered with the representation of the holy Trinity and twelve apostles in gold, around whose heads were sewn pearls, and the fourth with a frontal of silk.

The eagle displayed is a pattern of very common occurrence on the ecclesiastical vestments of the middle ages, and from the mention of it in this will seems also to have been of considerable antiquity. It was probably intended to be allusive to the eagle mentioned in Ezekiel.

Another conventional pattern of common occurrence on ecclesiastical vestments, is the figure of a four-winged cherubim, standing on a wheel. This appears under a great variety of modified forms, in the sculpture at Chartres of the thirteenth century, in illuminations of the same period, and in stained glass in St. Alban's abbey a century later. The annexed engraving taken from the pulpit cloth of Forest Hill, shews with the closest fidelity its character at a time when embroidery was becoming less extensively practised. It has been shewn that this and all the common forms were susceptible of being multiplied simultaneously, which may explain why they were so frequently repeated. This mode of sewing the several patterns on the velvet after they were embroidered is alluded

to in the will of Ralph Neville, which shews that appliquee was the general practice. "Item dedit Priori unum lectum de nigro Syndone cum eisdem armis *insutis*, cum cortinis et plumaribus et pluribus laneis nigris tapecis." The symbolism of the figure itself is very distinctly described in the following verses from the first chapter of the Prophet Ezekiel :

"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour



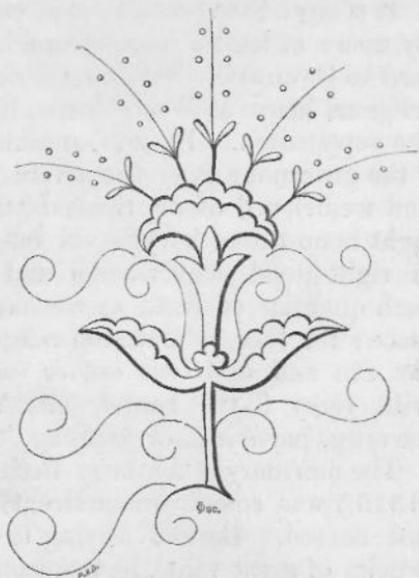
of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went."

It is more than probable that embroidery was often produced by men; at least a passage in a letter written by George Gyffard to Cromwell, wherein he is describing the suppression of a religious house at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, would favour the supposition. He says, speaking of the establishment here, "the governour wherof is a vere good husbond for the howse and welbeloved of all thenhabitantes thereunto adjoynng, a right honest man havng viii religious persons beyng prestes of right good conversacion and lyvyng religiously, havng such qualities of vertu as we have nott fflownd the like in no place; for ther ys nott oon religious person thear butt that the can and doth use eyther *imbrotheryng*, wrytyng bookes with verey ffayre haund, makyng ther own garnementes, karvyng, payntyng, or graffyng."

The mortuary of Anthony Beck, another bishop of Durham, (1310,) was equally magnificent with that of his predecessor just named. Besides leaving to the church plate and other articles of great value, he bequeathed to the cathedral amongst several vestments one of red samit, embroidered with many small images of saints standing in quaint circles, ornamented with small pearls and silk, and an alb of the same work, with gold platys about the edge, surrounded with small pearls of divers colours. Also a vestment of red cloth of Tars, embroidered with golden archangels, which belonged to an English baron who was going with the king against the Scots, and there lost in battle. Walter Skirlaw, who was successively bishop of Lichfield, Bath, and Durham, a long time before he was informed of the custom which prevailed of presenting mortuaries to the cathedral of Durham, gave the prior and convent liberty of choosing the best vestment which he possessed, and in furtherance of this permission they sent a monk to the manor of Auckland, who selected a vestment of

cloth of gold with precious orfrays, besides another of the same kind sumptuously embroidered, which they destined for the use of the high altar.

Another illustration of this species of decoration may be taken from sepulchral brasses. These frequently give a portrait of the cope usually worn by the deceased ecclesiastic, thus furnishing a most minute and faithful copy of the several designs which were wrought upon the habit. It would be hopeless to search in these days for the actual proof of such a supposition as regards ecclesiastical costume, but that it was the case will not reasonably admit of a doubt in the minds of those who have perused the evidence adduced in respect to the jupon and monument of the Black Prince. It may not however, be entirely without affording corroboration to these opinions to state that the writer has remarked a strong resemblance betwixt the architectural forms on the orfrays of a cope, represented in a brass to a priest in the church of Castle Ashby, and a similar pattern wrought upon a vestment still existing in the possession of Mr. Bowdon of Southgate House, Derbyshire.



Vestment, Southgate House.

In the sepulchral memorial, saints are represented standing under Gothic arches which have twisted shafts. In the corresponding piece of embroidery, now used for a frontal, but formerly for a cope, the same peculiarity of shaft is observable. There can in short be no reason whatever for disbelieving the fact, that all the dresses, whether secular or ecclesiastical, as we see them delineated in brass, or marble, or stone, or wood, were expressly meant to be the best portraits of the deceased that could be obtained from the artist.

A work of the same nature, and exquisite as the frontal just alluded to, it would be perhaps impossible to find. It is a work in which architectural design, accuracy of drawing, careful ex-

pression of mouldings, crockets, finials, canopies, and pedestals, are all so admirably displayed that the needle which produced such masterly outlines is not for an instant supposed capable of having finished the picture. In this antependium of red velvet, all the architectural portion is of gold tambour. It pourtrays saints standing on brackets under foliated arches with open interlacing shafts, which rest on lions' heads, and out of the shafts, as from a tree, spring boughs and acorns of gold. Contrast this design with those on the thin caffetans of Adrianople, with the striped brocades of Brousa, or the gaudy scarfs of Albania, (for it would be lowering the subject to speak of the degenerate taste which employs itself in wool-working, crochet, and braiding,) and it rises as far above all modern inventions as the materials are in themselves more precious, as well as more suitable to be employed by the hands of an English gentlewoman.

CHARLES HENRY HARTSHORNE.



COPE CHEST, YORK CATHEDRAL.