

afterwards employed them in the labours of the distaff and the needle."

Edgitha, Queen of Edward the Confessor, was, says the same historian, "perfect mistress of her needle."¹⁷

Though needlework was greatly cultivated in France, and "Berthe aux grands pieds," mother of Charlemagne, was a celebrated worker—

"à ouvrer si com je vous dirai
N'avoit meillor ouvriere de Tours jusqu'à Cambrai";

and of Charlemagne¹⁸ it is chronicled that he

"Ses filles fist bien doctiner,
Et aprendre keudre et filer"—

still the palm may be accorded to our Anglo-Saxon ancestresses, for William the Conqueror, on his first appearance in public, after the battle of Hastings, clad himself in a richly wrought cloak of Anglo-Saxon embroidery,¹⁹ an improvement, no doubt, upon the reputed handiwork of his queen, the far-famed tapestry of Bayeux.

Perhaps the finest specimens of "opus anglicanum" extant are the cope and maniple of St. Cuthbert, removed from his coffin some years since in the cathedral of Durham, and now preserved in the chapter library of that city. The embroidery, in beauty, baffles all description. One side of the maniple is of gold lace stitched on, worked, apparently, on a parchment pattern.

It was the custom in feudal times for knightly families to send their daughters to the castles of their suzerain lords, there to be trained to spin, weave, and embroider, under the eye of the lady châtelaine;²⁰ a custom which, in the more primitive countries, continued even to the French Revolution.²¹ In French romances

¹⁷ The Anglo-Saxon Godric, sheriff of Buckingham, granted to Alcuin half a hide of land, as long as he should be sheriff, on condition she taught his daughter the art of embroidery.

¹⁸ The skill of his wife, Fastrade, and that of Constance, queen of Robert, King of France, is also recorded.

¹⁹ His secretary, William of Poitiers, states that "the English women are eminently skilful with the needle, and in weaving of gold."

²⁰ We read, for instance, that Gabrielle de Bourbon, wife of Louis de la Trémoille, "jamais n'estoit oyseuse, mais

s'employoit, une partie de la journée en broderies et autres menus ouvrages appartenant à telles dames, et y occupoit ses damoyelles dont avoit bonne quantité, et de grosses, riches et illustres maisons."
—*Panegyric de Loys de la Trémoille, par Jean Bouchet.*

Again, Vecellio dedicates his "Corona" to Signora Nani, not only on account of the pleasure she takes in works of the needle, but for "il diletto che prende in farne essercitar le donne di casa sua, ricetto delle più virtuose giovani che hoggidì vivono in questa città."

²¹ "It is usual here," writes a lady