

these young ladies are termed "chambrières," in our English, simply, "the maidens." Great ladies prided themselves upon the number of their attendants, and passed their mornings at work, their labours beguiled by singing the "chansons à toile," as the ballads, written for these occasions, were termed.²² In the wardrobe accounts of our kings appear constant entries of working materials purchased for the royal ladies.²³

During the Wars of the Roses, when a duke of the blood royal is related to have begged alms in the streets of the rich Flemish towns, ladies of rank, more fortunate in their education, gained, like the French emigrants of modern days, their subsistence by the products of their needle.²⁴

Without wishing to detract from the industry of mediæval ladies, it must be owned that the swampy state of the country, the absence of all roads, save those traversed by pack-horses during the fine season, and the deficiency of all suitable outdoor amusement but that of hawking, caused them to while away their time within doors the best way they could. Out of doors exercise for women is but of modern date. Not fifty years

from Madrid, in 1679, "for good families to put their daughters to ladies, by whom they are employed to embroider in gold and silver, or various colours, or in silk, about the shift, neck, and hands."

²² "I jor fist es chambre son pere,
Une estole et i amict pere
De soie et d'or molt soutilment,
Si i fait ententevement
Mainte croisette et mainte estoile
Et dist ceste chanchon à toile."
Roman de la Violette.

"One day, seated in her father's room, she was skilfully working a stole and amict in silk and gold, and she was making in it, with great care, many a little cross and many a little star, singing all the while this chanson à toile."

²³ In one of Edward I. we find a charge of eight shillings for silk bought for the embroidery work of Margaret, the king's daughter, and another for 4 oz. of silk 200 oz. of gold thread, a spindle, &c.—*Liber de Garderoba*, 23 Edw. I., Public Record Office.

In one of Edward III., the sum of 2l. 7s. 2d. is expended in the purchase of

gold thread, silk, &c., for his second daughter, Joanna. — *Liber Garderobæ*, 12-16 Edw. III., Public Record Office.

Elizabeth of York worked much at her needle. In the account of her household, preserved in the Public Record Office, every page of which is signed by Queen Elizabeth herself, we find—

"To Evan Petreson, joiner, for the stuff and making of 4 working stools for the Queen, price of the stool 16 pence, 5s. 4d.

"To Thomas Fissch, for an elne of linen cloth for a samplar for the Queen, 8d."

In the Inventory, 4 Edward VI., 1552 (Harl. MSS. No. 1419), are entries of—

"Item, xii. samplars" (p. 419).

"Item, one samplar of Normandie canvas wrought with green and black silk" (p. 524).

"A book of parchment containing diverser patternes" (p. 474), probably purchases for his sisters.

²⁴ See, for instance, the interesting account of the Countess of Oxford, given by Miss Strickland, in her "Life of Queen Elizabeth of York."