

No one would suspect the Virgin Queen of solacing herself with the charms of the needle. Every woman, however, had to make one shirt in her lifetime, and the "Lady Elizabeth's Grace," on the second anniversary of Prince Edward's birth, then only six years of age, presented her brother with a cambric smock wrought by her own royal hands.

The works of Scotland's Mary, who early studied all female accomplishments under her governess, Lady Fleming, are too well known to require notice. In the letters of the ill-fated queen are constant demands for silk and other sewing materials wherewith to solace her long captivity. She had also studied under Catherine de Medicis, herself an unrivalled needlewoman. Assembling her youthful daughters, Claude, Elizabeth, and Margaret, with Mary Stuart and her Guise cousins, "elle passoit," says Brantôme,²⁸ "fort son temps les apres-disnées à besogner apres ses ouvrages de soye, où elle estoit tant parfaicte qu'il estoit possible." The ability of Reine Margot²⁹ is celebrated by Ronsard, who exalts her as imitating Pallas in the art.³⁰

Needlework was the daily employment of the convent. As early as the fourteenth century it was termed "nun's work;"³¹ and even now, in secluded parts of the kingdom, ancient lace is styled by that name.³²

Nor was the occupation solely confined to females. Monks were commended for their skill in embroidery;³³ and in the frontispieces of early pattern books published in the sixteenth century men are

²⁸ "Dames illustres."

²⁹ The "Reine des Marguerites," the learned sister of Francis I., was not less accomplished at her needle, and entries for working materials appear in her accounts up to the year of her death, 1549.

"Trois mars d'or et d'argent fournis par Jehan Danes, pour servir aux ouvrages de la dicte dame."—*Livre de dépenses de Marguerite d'Angoulême, par le Comte de la Ferrière-Percy*; Paris, 1862.

³⁰ "Elle addonnoit son courage
A faire maint bel ouvrage
Dessus la toile, et encor
A joindre la soye et l'or.
Vous d'un pareil exercice
Mariez par artifice
Dessus la toile en maint trait
L'or et la soie en pourtrait."

Ode à la Roynie de Navarre, liv. ii. od. vii.

³¹ 1380. "Œuvre de nonnain."—*Inventaire de Charles V.*

³² "My grandmother, who had other lace, called this" (some needle-point) "nun's work."—*Extract from a Letter from the Isle of Man*, 1862.

"A butcher's wife showed Miss O—a piece of Alençon point, which she called 'nun's work.'"—*Extract from a Letter from Scotland*, 1863.

A lace-maker of Totness, now in her 94th year, still uses what she calls a "nun's pillow."

1763. In the "Edinburgh Advertiser" appears, "Imported from the Grand Canaries, into Scotland, nun's work."

³³ As, for instance, "the imbrothering" of the monks of the monastery of Wols-trope, in Lincolnshire.