

## TWO SAMPLERS AND A COLLAR

BY GEORGIANA W. SARGENT

**A**BOUT the time Samuel Pepys was writing his sketches of London life, between 1659 and 1668, Elizabeth Robert or Roberts was busily plying her needle on two samplers, now the treasured possessions of an American greatniece in the sixth generation. Unfortunately, her beautiful handiwork bears no date, nor is the year of her birth known, but sufficient data exist to prove the period at which she must have worked. Elizabeth Robert (Widow Breeden) married in England her second husband, Colonel Samuel Shrimpton, merchant of Boston, with whom she came to the Massachusetts Colony, and there Samuel Shrimpton, Jr., was born, in 1673. The portrait of Elizabeth's mother, which was brought to New England, bears the inscription—1675—aged 70. Now supposing Elizabeth to have been born when her mother was thirty-five or forty, i. e., in 1640-45, she would in all probability have been working her samplers when fifteen to twenty years old, or somewhere between 1655-60. During the reigns of the Stuarts, needlework was the rage in England and was an important branch of a young lady's education. It included needlepoint and stitches used for the cut work and laces so lavishly displayed on ruffs and falls, the flat collars of the two Charleses. One of these samplers is a fine specimen of these lace stitches, of which it gives a large variety on fine drawn linen, now of an écru shade, and the designs include the acorn, emblematic of Charles II and of his sojourn under the oak tree after the battle of Worcester; the rose and fleur-de-lis. The name, Elizabeth Robert, is worked in satin stitch across the bottom. The other sampler is worked in colored silks—blue, green, yellow, red and pale pink—on the same kind of linen and shows many different stitches. The two figures known as "boxers" appear on one line, while the rose, Portuguese pink and other well-known patterns are used. This sampler bears only the initials, E. R., in drawnwork, repeated across the lower edge. Both samplers are in perfect condition.

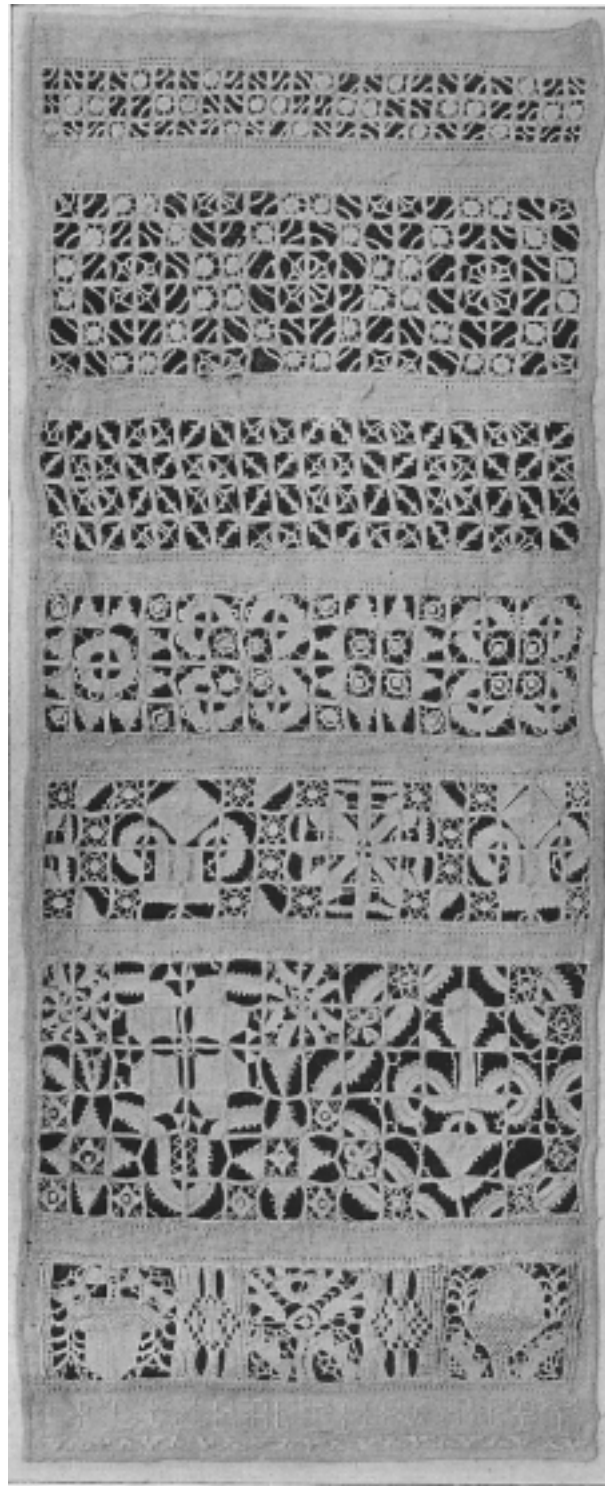
The lace collar is another heirloom from the same family, and an unsolved question is, can it have been worked by Elizabeth Robert, and



ELISABETH ROBERT



ELISABETH ROBERT SHRIMPTON



17TH CENTURY SAMPLER  
BY ELISABETH ROBERT SHRIMPTON



is it the one worn by herself in her portrait? The pattern is outlined in tape, edged with a cord, and the design is filled in with stitches which appear in the sampler. The shape of the collar has been altered by cutting and clever rejoining. The pattern of the lace resembles closely the one in the portrait. Elizabeth Robert's portrait and those of her second husband, Colonel Samuel Shrimpton, and third husband, Simeon Stoddard, hang in the rooms of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston.

Those were great marrying days, and Elizabeth sent to England for a niece, daughter of her sister Sarah, and made a match between her and her son, Samuel Shrimpton, Jr. He did not live long, however, and some years later his widow, after the death of her aunt and mother-in-law, Elizabeth, in 1713, married David Stoddard, Elizabeth's stepson, and from this couple the collar and samplers have been handed down in a direct line to the present owner. The old lady mother, in her steeple crown hat and wearing a lace collar, looks cozily down from the wall of a sunny Boston library upon a great-granddaughter in the sixth generation and refrains from showing her disapproval of the infrequency with which a needle is seen in the hand of her twentieth century descendant.



TAPE AND NEEDLEPOINT LACE, 17TH CENTURY  
ONCE THE PROPERTY AND POSSIBLY THE WORK  
OF ELISABETH ROBERT SHRIMPSON