

turning up. We possess only one dated example, the fragment belonging to Sir William Lawrence (fig. 19) of the year 1657. In this sampler there is one noticeable feature and that is the extreme regularity of the positions of the devices, which assumes an effect of bands. Some of the other examples of the type are much more irregularly planned, and it is probable that this irregularity is a feature of the earlier examples, two of which we are able to date within ten years or so. The first (fig. 5) from the Royal Arms at the head in conjunction with the Rose and the Thistle in so conspicuous a place must be dated in the reign of James I, a period to which the curiously stiff workmanship could only belong. One of the sprays with birds is to be found in Shorleyker's *Schole-house for the Needle* (see fig. 4), first published in 1624. As James I died in 1625 the sampler should belong to that year, but Shorleyker probably reproduced some earlier patterns, a fact substantiated by the presence on a charter of the Blacksmiths' Company, dated 1605, of this particular and other designs found in his book. At all events we can be certain that this sampler is before 1625. The second sampler (fig. 7) is embroidered with the letters M.C. and a coat of arms of the Chichesters of Arlington in Devon. There are only five ladies of this family, to whom the initials could belong, during the 17th century—Mary, who died in 1630; Mary, born in 1608, daughter of Amyas; Mary, born in 1615, and her sister Margaret, born in 1619, daughters of Henry Chichester; and Margaret, born in 1683. The first and last may be ruled out. Assuming that the sampler was made while the seamstress was still a young woman, which is more than likely, 1640 is about the latest year in which it could have been produced. We have, then, two examples, one before the year 1625, one before the year 1640, in which the devices are irregularly dispersed, and one example, dated 1657, in which the regularity is marked. Such other examples, as we possess, can be tentatively dated by these. The sampler on fig. 11 is probably some little time before 1650, as it is both irregular and very close in style to James I work, while that on fig. 13 is much nearer to Sir William Lawrence's dated fragment, and was probably embroidered somewhere in the region

of 1650. It sometimes happens that some feature well-known on dated needlework pictures or work-boxes may assist the placing of these samplers. This is so in the case of the magnificent sampler on fig. 15. Here the lion and the unicorn, the palace of Nonesuch, and, indeed, the whole style of the sprays of flowers and insects is so close to many Charles I needlework pictures that it is almost certain that the sampler is of that reign. There are very few instances of this group of samplers which can be definitely assigned to the second half of the century, but two in the collection of Mr. Jacoby (fig. 24) can be attributed to that period. The style of the flowers is very close to that on the curtains embroidered in wool of the second half of the century; the brilliance of the colouring is nearer the 18th-century palette than the early 17th; while the angularity of the smaller flowers is typical of later 17th-century work, and is, indeed, very close in style to a work-box dated 1698 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Certain of the patterns, however, notably the smaller diaper devices, cannot be as late as that, and we shall probably not be far wrong in dating these samplers in the reign of Charles II. An interesting survival of this type is found in a sampler by H.B. dated 1728 (fig. 41), in which the earlier patterns are preserved but elaborated in a minute manner typical of the 18th century.

With the 18th century the style of the sampler changes. In shape the shorter and narrower type of the close of the 17th century prevails throughout the first quarter, but finds a rival in the plain square variety, which gradually supersedes it. Linen is still the chief substance employed, but it is often yellower in colour, and in some cases a particularly virulent mustard tone appears. About the end of the first quarter a woollen canvas began to be used, and soon became almost universal. Towards the close of the century linen was again used and a certain kind of glazed gauze, known as "tiffany." Silk thread is mainly employed in the embroidery, but not metal, which entirely disappears and with it raised and padded work, while the colours of the silks are more vivid in the 18th than in the preceding century. The lace sampler vanishes, but in its place may occasionally be found samplers of "hollie-work." Holy- or hollie-work is a point-lace stitch, which derives the

name from its monopoly by religious houses. This kind of work is first mentioned in a secular connection in the inventories of Mary Queen of Scots ; it was much employed throughout the 18th century for baby-linen, caps and similar pieces of needlework. Mary Stroud's sampler (fig. 40), dated 1727, is an early and very perfect example of its kind.

The decoration of the sampler in the 18th century is a much more elaborate affair than in the previous century. Early on in the period the border begins to appear, first as the edging to the pictorial panel (fig. 30), then as a more definite border (fig. 36), then in its completed form (fig. 44). The letters cease to be used primarily as examples for marking, and with the publication of Wesley's Hymns in 1736 and the consequent popularization of Methodism and its maxims, gloomy and uplifting verses are found on many examples, a favourite one being the well-known couplet :

When I am dead and laid in grave and all my bones are rotten,
By this I may remembered be, when I should be forgotten.

During the early part of the century the interest in lettering was so great that samplers are met with in which the decoration consists entirely in verses and inscriptions embroidered with a view to displaying alphabetical elaboration (fig. 37).

In the design a more pictorial effect is aimed at, houses, fruit trees, pots of flowers, birds, the seamstresses' family (fig. 48), genealogical trees, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, angels, being all employed to vary the composition. A favourite decoration in the 18th century is a row of coronets, representing the various aristocratic ranks. About the end of the first quarter of the century a band of landscape was introduced at the foot of the sampler (fig. 46), which remained popular throughout the century (figs. 47, 48, 50), being usually employed at the bottom, but sometimes in the middle of the design. The name of the seamstress and her age is almost invariably given and in many cases the school is also shown, a very early instance being that of Elizabeth Clements (fig. 35), who at the tender age of six, worked her sampler in 1712 at the foundling school of St. Clement

Danes. The penalties that awaited her, if she neglected her task, are only too plainly mentioned. Epistle samples are occasionally met with, the earliest example known being from a small girl at Wanstead in 1693 (fig. 28). About the middle of the century darning samplers, which are worked on the sampler or on squares previously cut away, began to be popular and continued in favour till the middle of the 19th century. In the earlier examples the delicacy and variety of the needlework is considerable, the back being often indistinguishable from the front. Sarah Everitt's sampler (fig. 49), dated 1777, is a particularly fine example. Towards the close of the century some very small samplers were made, and a recurrence of the popularity of black-work is noteworthy. M. Quartier's sampler, dated 1799 (fig. 54), is a good example of the latter, and Lucy Titehall's, with its admirable sentiments (fig. 58), of the former. In the last quarter are also to be found the map samplers, on which the seamstresses' native village may sometimes be distinguished by the large size of letters, in which it is shown, or by its outlandish name among many familiar ones (fig. 52). These map-samplers were nearly all made within ten years of 1790, but a few earlier examples are known, one pair dated as early as 1726. A few rare and unusual samplers are illustrated. Mary Caney's sampler (fig. 34), dated 1710, is a pattern for knotting, and is worked in two shades of cream-coloured silk on a white ground. A. V.'s sampler (fig. 45), dated 1746, stands alone for shape, and is peculiar in that it reproduces 17th-century patterns in 18th-century colours. Catherine Benskin's sampler (fig. 47), dated 1754, is a very late survival of the 17th-century type.

With the 19th century a marked deterioration of ideas sets in. Designs are, for the most part, stereotyped, a favourite form of decoration consisting of a strawberry border, always popular in the late 18th and early 19th century, a house in the centre, and verses decorously written and fitted into the composition (fig. 57). Another favourite design has stiff pots of flowers and small devices scattered over the ground (fig. 59). This dissemination of the pattern is particularly noticeable in 19th-century samplers, in which the sense of design is

strikingly inferior to that of the previous century. Sometimes there are amusing patterns, such as those on Mary Young's sampler (Plate VI), in which the angels in bottle-green high-waisted frocks ascend their ladder in a very restrained and dignified manner, while below a more than life-size Jacob reclines in sleep. But such are difficult to find, and an almost universal convention ruled over our great-grandmothers with a rod of iron. During the 19th century the cross-stitch was used practically to the exclusion of every other kind, and came to be known as sampler stitch. Darning-samplers continued to be popular, but are much coarser than in the previous century (fig. 62). The sampler, generally speaking, died out about 1850, but a certain type is occasionally found at a later date. This type, which is easily recognised, consists of rows of letters of every kind and number set very close together, while at the bottom a medley of small devices, names and numbers, forms a kind of ornamental border (fig. 63). These samplers are worked in red silk or cotton and were apparently made at charity schools. Some are found with the Bristol Charity School's name on them, but the majority are unmarked. Though it does not follow that this type was made only at Bristol, it seems that the Müller Orphanages there were the chief source of this class of work. Some years ago a lady in Derby acquired one of these samplers from a woman who had been brought up in those homes. The woman gave the information that all the girls there worked these samplers, but were not instructed, learning the patterns from each other. During the 19th century the sewing of samplers was part of the school curriculum, as may be seen by a little book called *The Sampler*, published in 1850. "The children," we read, "are divided into three classes. Every child, when she enters the school, is placed in the third class." The third-class sampler has back, chain, darning, besting, herring-bone, marking, overcast, button-hole and Oeillet-hole stitch upon it. When the child has practised these on the third-class sampler, she makes them accurately on the second-class sampler. The first-class merely prepares for the lower classes, and does more elaborate work itself, such as the embroidering of garments for which the sampler provided the model.

FOREIGN SAMPLERS

Upon the Continent the sampler does not seem to have been popular in every country. German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish samplers are common enough, but in France the practice of sewing them does not seem to have been widespread. No example exists, as far as can be ascertained, of the 17th and the majority are of the 19th century. The 18th-century specimens are the most interesting, but they differ only from their English contemporaries in the method of signature, which is usually in full and at the bottom of the sampler (Plate V). The embroidery on French samplers is usually in a finer stitch than English ones. There are a great many German samplers to be met with. The 17th-century variety are usually square in shape, while the long form was more popular in the 18th than in the previous century. Cotton as well as silk thread was employed. The earliest example of a dated sampler known was worked in Germany, and has been discussed above (*see* p. 1, fig. 64). The patterns were, as a rule, conventional in the 17th century in Germany, and pictorial effect was only attempted in the 18th-century examples. Here favourite scenes were the Crucifixion and Adam and Eve under the tree, while large human figures and animals are often found scattered over the surface in a rather haphazard way (fig. 68). Heraldic devices are used, and it is common for the worker's initials and the date to appear in a medallion. The darning sampler was very popular in Germany, and as it appears at a much earlier date than in England it is probable that it was first used in that country. In the latter half of the 18th century a particular kind of lace sampler worked on muslin appeared, which was used for reproducing stitches with which to embroider elbow ruffles. In the early part of the 19th century another distinctive type is found, which was confined to the district of the Vierlande near Hamburg. The shape is square and various geometric devices, stiff pots of flowers and such-like, are worked in black cotton. Scandinavian samplers differ very little from German, but a particular type with coarse cut- and drawn-work was worked among the peasants during the

late 18th and early 19th centuries. Dutch samplers are also very close in style to the German, though, on the whole, coarser in execution. They are, as a rule, square in shape, and are often worked across the material with the selvage at the sides, while complicated lettering worked in several colours is a constant feature of the design. Italian samplers are chiefly interesting in the 17th century, where the cut-work examples represent the forerunners of our own English type. A certain number of 19th-century specimens with pictorial designs are sufficiently pretty to attract attention. Spanish samplers are perhaps the most decorative of all. They are, as a rule, very large and brilliant in colour. The design consists, for the most part, in row upon row of border patterns of a floral nature arranged round a central panel, which is often heraldic. This panel nearly always contains, in addition, the worker's name and the date. The majority of Spanish samplers are of the late 17th or early 18th century (fig. 69).

AMERICA

In America the sampler, imported from England, was very popular indeed. The 17th-century examples, of which very few have survived owing to the troubled period of history between 1650 and 1700, when the danger of Indian uprisings made life so uncertain, do not differ materially from English ones. It is with the 18th century that the real American type develops. It is more pictorial in form than the English, and the whole of the ground of the sampler is often covered with stitches (fig. 71). The name of the seamstress, her age and her school, are almost invariably found. A very large number of samplers, indeed, were worked during the second half of the 18th and the first part of the 19th century, which have been catalogued in Miss Bolton's exhaustive survey of the samplers of that country. It may be said in conclusion that the actual needlework is on the whole much coarser than in England, and though the designs are often more amusing, as examples of stitching they fall very short of the work of our own ancestresses.

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PLATE I





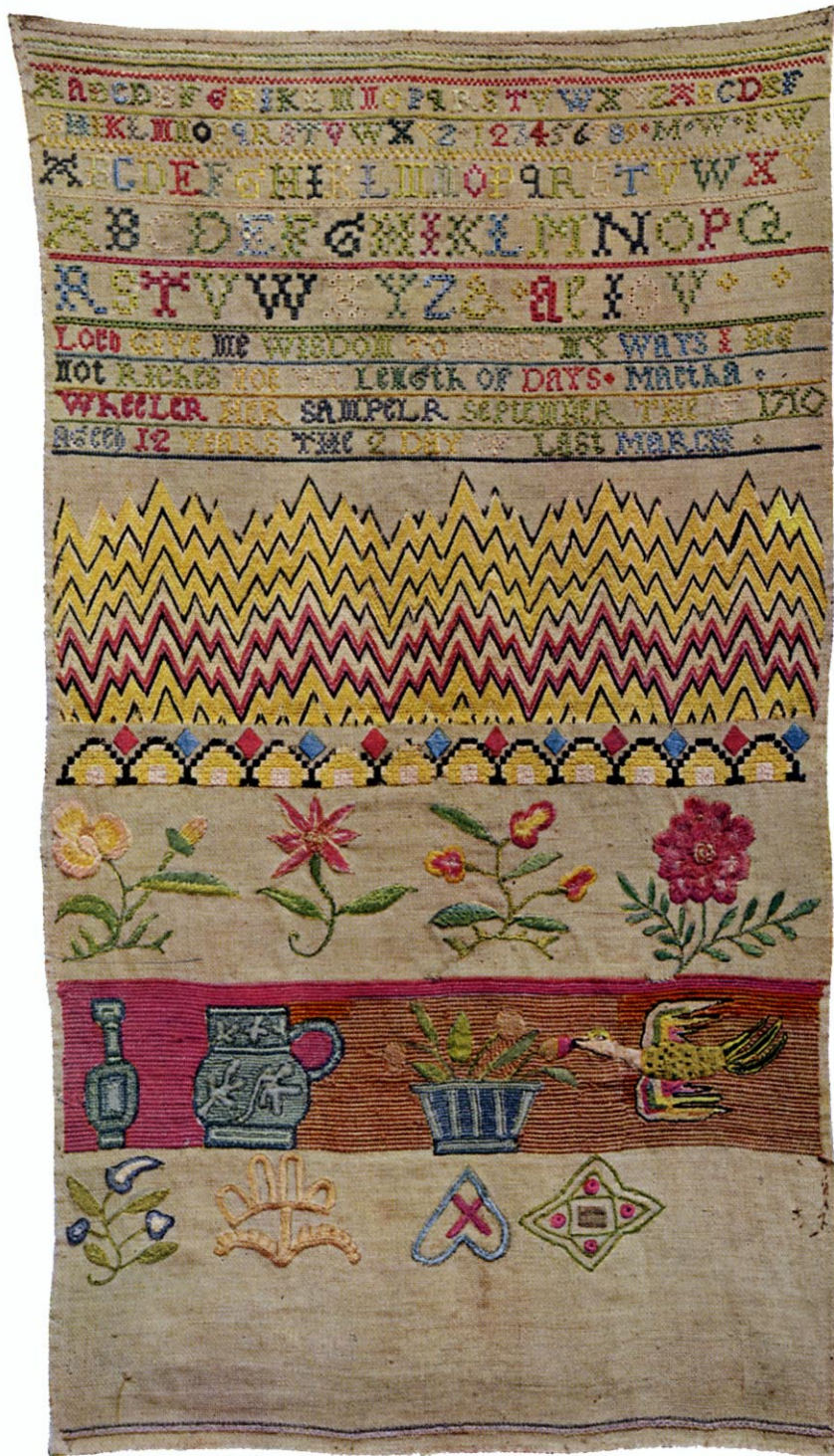
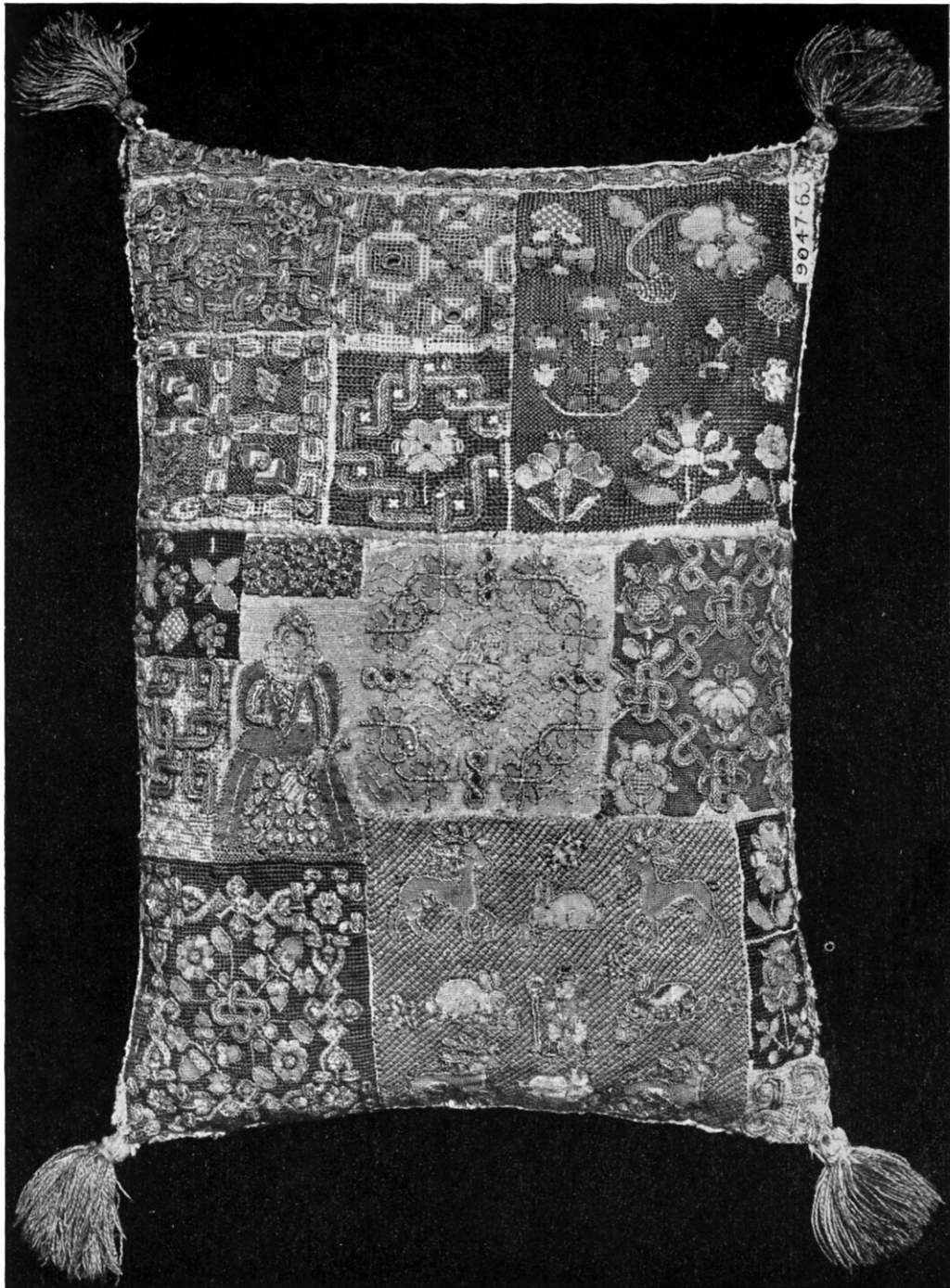






FIG. 1



Victoria and Albert Museum

ENGLISH OR SCOTCH. PERIOD OF JAMES I (1603-1625)