

I was with some dear friends who were sight-seeing in town, and who, accustomed to the quiet of a country place, were almost bewildered with the din of the great city. We were near St. Paul's, and how glad we all were to enter the great church and to rest there in a quiet corner, unconscious of all the noise and traffic which still went on around it.

My friends' stay in town was to be a short one, and they were all eager to see as many of its sights as possible. Did they grudge the little time spent in peaceful communion with God, or deem it wasted when there was so much to attract them in the great city? Ah, no!

Often afterwards, when other incidents had faded from their memories, they spoke of its

sweet restfulness, and thanked God for the open door of that grand cathedral, which offered to weary wayfarers a chance of refreshment for soul and body.

Dear ones, learn a lesson from this little incident. Do not deem the time lost which is taken from the work you love for the rest you need. You will redeem it in the best way if you turn your thoughts from earth to heaven, from the world around you to its great Creator.

Unfortunately those who under-value time are more numerous than those who realise its preciousness. We often hear the expression, "I am only giving my time." As though money and goods were of infinitely greater worth. It is when health fails and life is

drawing near its close that the preciousness of every moment is understood. I beg of you to remember now, that the right use of your time is your evidence to those around you of your union with Christ.

Let us finish our talk this evening by repeating two or three reasons why we should be misers in the use of time. Time and life mean the same thing to us all. Time is a debt we owe to God. All our work must be done in time. Eternity depends on the use we make of time. Time comes only once, and the present is all we can call ours.

Let us ask God to impress these great truths on our minds and to give us the will and the power to use time well.

(To be continued.)

QUEENS AS NEEDLEWOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

"The use of sewing is exceedingly old,
As in the sacred text it is enrolled;
Our parents first in Paradise began."

John Taylor.

NEEDLEWORK has been a favourite method of employing time, both in courts and cottages, from very early days; and one is not surprised at this, seeing that it is not only necessary for the comfort of daily life, but a very attractive occupation, one capable of great variety and of being practised without fatigue.

The history of needlework was almost unknown until Miss Lambert and the Countess of Wilton devoted their time and talents to the collection and classification of facts concerning it.

The first piece of needlework we know of is that of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, who, with a thorn, probably, for a needle, "sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves aprons."*

Milton refers to it thus:—

"Those leaves

They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
And, with what skill they had, together
sewed,

"To gird their waist."

From all records of early ages we learn that the women used first a thorn and then a fish-bone sharpened at one end as a needle, to sew the skins of animals or other material together. Most of our queens have recognised the advantages of being good needlewomen, and several have left behind them beautiful specimens of work, so that we have an almost unbroken record of their achievements with the needle.

The inducements to royal ladies to become proficient in the art of needlework have been many and varied; for example, some have been influenced by the desire to set a good example to their subjects; others in order to lighten the weariness of solitary hours; others that they might record the deeds of valour and daring performed by their husbands; some because they were thrown on their own resources through lack of outdoor amusements and the absence of good roads; others for real love of it; while other few practised it from

pious motives that they might contribute to the beauty of churches. Indeed, church, court, camp and state have all more or less influenced royal ladies to become good needlewomen.

Nothing creates a stronger bond of union between classes than like tastes and occupations, and it holds good specially between sovereigns and peoples. To know that probably the Queen and princesses of the royal house are occupied in the same way as the poorest cottager, either in sewing a seam, making a dress, trimming a bonnet, or embroidering a tray-cloth, creates a kindly feeling between one and the other, and bridges over the distance between them.

I remember when our Princess of Wales came over to dwell among us, it was stated that she begged to retrim the Queen's bonnets and make them pretty and fashionable, as she had always trimmed her own and her mother's. When some of the London poor heard it they were delighted, and said, "Bless her now; do you really think a lady such as her would a' done it?"

Nothing that has been told of Princess Henry of Battenberg has brought her so near to the hearts of the poor as the piece of news that "when she is in sorrow or perplexity she is greatly soothed by sitting down and sewing a long seam." It is something they can understand and appreciate, for it is most likely the very thing they themselves would do in like circumstances.

It has been of no slight benefit to us women and girls that our queens and princesses should have been good needlewomen, for we are, to a great extent, influenced by the daily life of those in high places; indeed, the influence of queens upon their women subjects has always been noticeable; their personal and private character, their passions and prejudices, are always more or less reflected in the women of the kingdom.

Proficiency in the art of needlework is by no means confined to the great ladies of our nation, for we hear that the princesses in the Court of Charlemagne were splendid needlewomen, and the work of Bertha, wife of Rudolph the Second of Burgundy, has a world-wide fame. She is represented on seals and monuments of her time as sitting on the throne spinning, and even when out riding continuing her work. In the old town of Payerne Canton de Freiburg, a residence of the kings of Burgundy, her bones, together with those of her husband and son, Conrad, were discovered in 1817 below the tower of the old church which she herself had built, and they were buried in the parish church, where the Queen's saddle is shown with a

hole for her distaff. To this day the expression is used, as a regretful allusion to the good old times, "*ce n'est pas le temps où Berthe filait.*"

Gisela, also, the wife of St. Stephen, king of Hungary, was a splendid needlewoman, and organised embroidery work-rooms near her palace.

The mother of Charles the Bold and Adelaide the Consort of Hugh Capet were also celebrated needlewomen.

Even nations far removed from civilisation have not been ignorant of needlework, as the discovery of gold needles, etc., in the Scandinavian tumuli testify.

To come back to our own country, the palm is certainly accorded to the Anglo-Saxon ladies for excellence in this womanly accomplishment. We have proof that those of rank and royal blood were skilled not only in the use of the needle for necessary purposes but also in elegant and intricate embroidery.

The fleece which was brought home by the Anglo-Saxon men in summer was spun into clothing by the female part of each family during the winter.

Alfred the Great in his will calls the women-part of his family the spindle side, and it was understood by our forefathers that no young woman was fit to be a wife till she had spun for herself a set of body, table and bed linen; this is why the maiden was called a spinner or spinster, and the married woman a wife or one who has been a spinner (from Anglo-Saxon *wif*, the verb being *wyfan* or *wifan*, to weave). Perhaps you have noticed that the armorial bearings of women are not painted on a shield like those of men but on a spindle called a lozenge. The spindle half is a Saxon term for the female line, while the spear half is the male side.

Among the Anglo-Saxon ladies Adelfleda and her three sisters, daughters of Edward the Elder, stand out as famous for their skill in all kinds of needlework, and are known in history as cunning workers.

William of Malmesbury says, "their father caused them in childhood to give their whole attention to letters and afterwards employed them in the labour of the distaff* and the needle."

The same authority says that Edgitha or Editha, the Queen of Edward the Confessor, was "perfect mistress of her needle," while the Saxon historian, Ingulphus, a scholar at Westminster Monastery, near to Edgitha's palace, relates of her that "she was skilful in

* *Distaff*—a woman. This explains the phrase and fact that "the crown of France never falls to the distaff."

* There is an ancient engraving, in which Eve is stitching away at the fig-leaves in a very edifying manner, while Adam, far from trying to put in a stitch for himself, is gazing upon her in utter amazement. And while she continues her task, as if she had been born to sewing, his eyes follow her nimble fingers.

the works of the needle, and that with her own hands she embroidered the garments of her royal husband."

As a proof of the high value set on good needlework the Anglo-Saxon Gudric gave Alcina a piece of land on condition that she instructed his daughters in embroidery and needlework.

It was the custom in feudal times for high families to send their daughters to the castles of their lords there to be taught spinning, weaving and needlework under the eye of the lady chatelaine.

It was also a practice for great ladies and their attendants to pass their mornings at needlework, singing and relating stories meanwhile.

It seems that William the Conqueror on his first appearance in public after the Battle of Hastings wore a richly worked cloak of Anglo-Saxon embroidery. It may have been this fact which roused his wife Matilda to produce a piece of work which was to live for long ages as a specimen of her industry and skill with the needle. She was a jealous woman and might not have been pleased at other hands than her own working her husband's apparel. It is difficult to understand the working of a woman's mind.

There is no doubt that the work she left behind, and which is still preserved in the Cathedral of Bayeux, is perfectly marvellous, or as Dibdin says "it is an exceedingly curious document."

It is a piece of canvas or coarse linen

cloth two hundred and twenty-seven feet long and twenty inches wide; on it she has wrought with woollen thread of eight different colours a picture of her husband's exploits, from Harold's first landing in Normandy to his fall at Hastings.

It is a most important record of the history of the period, because the events, costumes, and warlike instruments are faithfully portrayed.

The canvas contains many hundreds of men, horses, trees, houses, castles, ships and churches, with names and descriptions over them to make the story clear; strangely enough there are only three women in the whole picture. Taken as a whole it affords a curious insight into the manners and customs of the Norman Period.

The figures and designs for tapestry work were always prepared by some skilful artist who traced them out in the colours that were to be used by the worker either in wool or silk.

Matilda seems to have employed the dwarf artist Turol to prepare her work and illuminate the canvas: he was a dependent of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. The parts intended to represent flesh in the picture are left untouched by the needle.

It is supposed that not only was Matilda assisted in her great work by the ladies of her court but by some of the beautiful workers among the Anglo-Saxon ladies. She was a woman who would not study the feelings of those around her, nor would she consider their

sorrow in having by their needle to perpetuate their sufferings and defeat.

The work which is now in Bayeux is coiled round a machine like that which lets down buckets into a well, and a woman is appointed to unroll it for visitors and explain it.

A full-sized coloured photograph of it may be seen in the South Kensington Museum, and the Society of Antiquaries have engraved the whole of the Bayeux tapestry and have coloured it like the original.

We are told in the life of St. Dunstan that he was originally in an obscure station of life, and crept into notice by means of his taste and skill in delineating sacerdotal vestments and tapestry work for great ladies. He must have had a great love of such work as well as genius, for even when he came to high estate he did not disdain making sketches for queens to work from.

We now pass on to Adelicia of Louvaine, the queen of Henry I., who was distinguished for her great beauty and talents, but especially for her proficiency in feminine accomplishments.

A standard which she embroidered in silk and gold for her father when he was engaged in recovering his patrimony was celebrated throughout Europe for the exquisite taste and skill displayed in its design and execution. For centuries it was carried in procession on Rogation days through the streets of the city of Liège, for it had been captured by the bishop of that town in 1129.

(To be continued.)

WHERE SWALLOWS BUILD.

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

CHAPTER I.

"It is my last day in London," said Alice Harper to herself.

The "last day" was a Sunday at the end of July, and Alice's box was packed, and ready for travelling. She had attended service that morning in a beautiful church, where she had often gained strength and comfort in her weariness; and the music was still echoing in her ears when she turned into Bruton Street. Wherever she went, she knew that she should hear that music still.

The smart people were all hurrying out of town as fast as they could go. But Miss de Vigny was a very dignified little lady who never cared to hurry herself in the least. She always went away on the first of August, and could not be moved sooner or later. So that when Alice went into her house, she found her friend sitting in her old chair near the window with an open book on her lap.

Miss de Vigny had always liked Alice Harper. She had watched the girl through the season that preceded the sudden change in her lot, and had thought her distinctly genuine and courageous. She did not guess how soon that quality of courage would be called into play; but when the crash came, she was not surprised that Alice bore up bravely under the blow.

One morning the daily papers announced the suicide of Mr. Harper, the well-known promoter of companies. His daughter, left quite alone in the world, gathered together her few possessions, and quietly vanished from the eyes of society. Only two or three persons knew what had become of her, or what she was doing, and Miss de Vigny was one of them.

She had found out that Alice was going to be a dressmaker, and take care of herself in

future in her own way. Miss de Vigny met her one day in a side street in the West-end, dressed in plain black, and carrying a brown-paper parcel. She did not avoid the little maiden-lady as she would have avoided some of her former friends. She stopped and accepted the hand that was held out so readily.

"I shall be eighteen months in learning my business," she said. "After that I must work six months longer as 'an improver.' And when I have thoroughly mastered the art, or trade, or anything that you like to call it, I mean to go away, and set up in the country."

"Quite in the country?" Miss de Vigny asked.

"Quite in the country," Alice replied. "I shall learn what London can teach me, and leave it with a glad heart. Mind, I am sure that I could not learn properly anywhere else. But I shall rejoice when I am free to go."

"When the time comes, perhaps I can help you," Mary de Vigny said. "Meanwhile, let me see you sometimes. Come and spend next Sunday with me in Bruton Street."

"But I do not want to meet people," said Alice, flushing deeply.

"My dear, I do not want you to meet people. It will do me good to have you all to myself. I have never been a society woman; the smart people don't find me at all amusing, I believe. I am dowdy, and I do not know any good stories. Pray come."

So Alice went. Miss de Vigny was rather dowdy, and she did not know any good stories; but she knew other things that are better worth knowing. She knew how to guide a sad soul into the true way of peace. She was neither a rich woman, nor a smart woman: but she lived a life worthy of her

faith, and was a light to direct others to the road that led to rest.

From Mary de Vigny's house, Alice went to Mary de Vigny's church close by. And so the two toilsome years in London were sweetened and cheered; and if her outer life was hard and painful, her inner life became peaceful and fair. The time of release had come at last, and it was Mary who had found her a new home in the country.

Miss de Vigny's room was cooler than most rooms in London, and when you went in you felt you had entered into an atmosphere of contentment. There were always flowers here; to-day Alice's eyes rested gratefully on a big bunch of mignonette and some graceful feathery grasses. Mary greeted her with genuine affection, and pointed to the nosegay.

"Only think what it will be," said she, "to have your fill of flowers!"

"Oh, I have been trying to realise the delight in store for me!" Alice cried. "My poor father never cared for the country in the very least. He always bustled me about to fashionable watering-places in the summer. If my mother had lived, life would have been different for him and for me."

She sighed; but Mary spoke cheerfully.

"We must let all the 'ifs' alone, Alice," she said. "It is better to leave 'ifs' and 'might-have-beens' lying by the wayside if we want to get on upon our journey. I know how prone we are to stop, and pick up useless regrets; it has been an old folly of my own."

They had tea together, with the mignonette on the table between them. Miss de Vigny said it was like a festival, but she thought Alice looking tired and worn.

"I don't think you could have toiled on

QUEENS AS NEEDLEWOMEN.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER II.

NEEDLEWOMEN ROYAL AND RENOWNED.



FTER the time of Adelicia of Louvaine there seems to have been a period wherein little or no special needlework was done by great and royal ladies,

though its practice was kept up in what were called "The Schools." In these, young gentlewomen were taught fine needlework and embroidery to qualify them to beguile in a becoming manner the many enforced hours of leisure in their lives, brought about by the lack of outdoor amusements for women.

Many a rich and sumptuous vestment was made in these schools for the service of the Church, and some of the beautiful work done there found its way to the Palace of Westminster.

But towards the end of the 13th century, when Eleanor of Castille was queen of Edward I., needlework came to the front again with enthusiasm. She herself was a wonderful needlewoman, and her example made it the fashion in every class of life.

Before accompanying her husband on a crusade to the Holy Land, she embroidered a beautiful altar-cloth with her own hands, and gave it to the church at Dunstable.

It is to this queen we owe the use of needlework tapestry-hangings as furniture for walls. Up to this time tapestry had been used solely for the decoration of altars and other parts of churches.

Tapestry hangings were worked originally entirely with the needle, and they were found to be worth all the trouble and time bestowed upon them in the increase of comfort they brought into the palaces and castles of the great people of the land. At first they were rude in design, but those introduced by Queen Eleanor were in very superior workmanship. To her they must have been very welcome, for she felt the change from the sunny south to the damp, bleak English climate greatly.

Tapestries never remained permanently hanging on the walls of a special hall or castle, but accompanied the great people, when travelling from one residence to another, under the care of the grooms of the Chamber, whose special office it was to hang them.

The history of tapestry is full of romance, but can only be touched upon here when worked by special royal seamstresses.

Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI., was a very good needlewoman, although the troublous times in which she lived prevented her devoting much time to the art. It was she, however, who formed the first band of women needle-workers, known in history as the *Sisterhood of the Silk Women*.

Needlewomen found a very valuable patron in Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry of Lancaster. She and her ladies spent much time in needlework of all kinds.

"How oft with needle, when denied the pen,
Has she on canvas traced the blessed name
Of Henry, or expressed it with her loom
In silken threads, or 'broidered it with gold."

During the "Wars of the Roses" ladies of high rank were often compelled to earn their bread and that of their children by the use of the needle. The Countess of Oxford in the reign of Elizabeth of York was an example of this. She was the first peeress who is said to have earned her living by the use of the needle. Edward IV. had deprived her of her dower, and she and her little children would have starved had she not been a skilful needlewoman. She lived dependent on the work of her hands for fifteen years, until her husband's rank and fortune were restored.

Katherine of Arragon, the first wife of Henry VIII., was very skilful with her needle, having learned the art from her mother, Isabella of Spain, and it is more than likely that in her early days she took part in the trials of needlework established by Isabella among Spanish ladies.

She was in the habit of employing the ladies of her Court in needlework, working with them and encouraging them.

Her work with the needle has been celebrated both in Latin and English verse.

"(Although a queene), yet she her days did pass

In working with the needle curiously;
As in the Tower, and places more beside,
Her excellent memorials may be seen;
Whereby the needle's prayse is dignified
By her faire ladies, and herselfe, a queene."

In a letter to Wolsey she writes, "I am horribly busy, making standards, banners and badges."

It is a matter of history that when Wolsey and the Pope's Legate went to Bridewell to visit Queen Katherine on the subject of her divorce, they found her and her maids at work, and she came to them with a skein of red silk round her neck.

Katherine of Arragon's successor, Anne Boleyn, could not help being a good needlewoman, for she had been educated at the Court of Francis I., under the superintendence of Anne of Bretagne who made needlework the business and the pleasure of her life. It was her habit to collect the children of the nobility within her Court daily and teach them tapestry, embroidery and plain sewing till they became accomplished seamstresses.

As wife of Henry VIII. Anne Boleyn and the ladies of her Court spent much time in making garments for the poor in plain sewing as well as in embroidery and tapestry—much of the last may still be seen in Hampton Court. All this notwithstanding, she did not love needlework and never resorted to it for solace or amusement.

Katharine Howard, another wife of Henry VIII., was skilful in making pretty kerchiefs and other dainty articles of the toilette, some of which she once made out of an old shirt of fine holland which had been given her by her lover Derham. She is said, in return for the shirt, to have worked for him with her own hand a band and a pair of finely embroidered shirt sleeves.

She and her maidens made a great many shirts and smocks for the poor.

Katharine Parr, the last wife of Henry VIII., was almost as skilled a needlewoman as his first. When young she objected strongly to learning needlework; this was probably because it had been foretold by an astrologer that "she should sit in the highest seat of imperial majesty." At all events history reports her as saying—

"My hands are ordered to touch crowns and sceptres, not needles and spindles."

She must have thought better of it, however, for there are some beautiful specimens of her work preserved in Westmoreland; specially a counterpane and toilet cover.

Lady Jane Grey is said to have been a clever needlewoman, and that "instead of skill in drawing she cultivated the art of painting with the needle." There is still preserved at Zurich a toilet cover beautifully ornamented by her own hands and presented by her to Bullinger.

About this time the dress of the nobles was gorgeous and beautiful in the extreme; not that the materials themselves were so costly, but because of the exquisite work and embroidery bestowed upon them by ladies of high rank.

The beds also at this period owed their rich beauty to women's work; they were not at that time excluded from the day apartments and were frequently among the richest ornaments of the sitting-room, so much taste and expense were bestowed upon them.

The curtains of the bed were often of rich material adorned with embroidery.

"Her bed-chamber was hanged
With tapestry of silk and silver."

Shakespeare.

Royal seamstresses at this time worked rich needlework borders and belts for their dresses, but they put their richest work on the pouches or purses suspended from the waist of the dress.

Queen Mary, daughter of Henry VIII. and Katherine of Arragon, must have had fame as a needlewoman, otherwise John Taylor the historian would not have written of her—

"Her greatness held it no dis-reputation
To take the needle in her Royal hand,
Which was a good example to our Nation
To banish idleness from out her Land."

Indeed she seems to have been skilled in all sorts of embroidery, and beguiled the time after her mother's divorce peaceably and laudably with needlework. Some of her work is in the Tower. She was clever in embroidering the covers of books.

The book called St. Mary's Psalter contained the history of the Old Testament in a series of small paintings, with a very richly worked cover which is supposed to have been embroidered by Mary herself. The embroidery as far as one can see was done on fine canvas or coarse linen put on crimson velvet.

It never occurs to us to think of Queen Elizabeth as a needlewoman, yet to a certain extent she must have been one, for history tells us of a cambric smock which she made and presented to her brother Edward when he was six years old. She seems to have excelled however in embroidering the backs of books. Needlework although not enthusiastically practised in Elizabeth's reign was by no means despised.

But of all royal seamstresses, Mary Queen of Scots carries off the palm both for beauty, quantity and variety.

"She wrought so well in needlework,
that she
Nor yet her workes shall ere forgotten
be."—John Taylor.

Her teachers in the art were Lady Fleming—her governess—and Catherine de Medicis whose needlework was unrivalled. During the time the young Queen of Scots was at the French Court she and the French Princesses

assembled every afternoon in the private apartments of Queen Catherine, where for two or three hours all were occupied in needlework.

At no time of her life were her hands idle; she plied her needle even while listening to the discussions of her ministers. Needlework was to her a source of real pleasure.

While under the care of the Earl of Shrewsbury at Tulbury Castle she, with the help of Bess of Hardwick, her guardian's wife, worked a pair of curtains, a counterpane, and a valance on green velvet.

In describing her daily life here, she said that all the day she wrought with her needle, and that the variety of the work made it seem less tedious.

In the drawing-room at Hardwick there are several pieces of her work well preserved, and in Scotland there are parts of certain bed-hangings in which M. S. is worked in very frequently.

Her tapestry work proved a blessing to her, as in the year 1586 she writes, "My residence is a place enclosed with walls situated on an eminence and consequently exposed to all the winds and storms of heaven . . . I have

for my own accommodation only wretched little rooms, and so cold that were it not for the protection of the curtains and tapestries which I have put up, I could not endure it by day and still less by night."

In the execution of all this work Mary Queen of Scots beguiled many a weary hour at Chatsworth, Buxton and Sheffield, while brooding over the plots for her escape and the intrigues and jealousies of Bess of Hardwick.

She made a vest for her only son but he ungraciously refused it because she addressed him as Prince and not as King of Scotland. She worked also with her own hands an altar-piece, and presented it to the church of the convent where she had been educated. She was the first, I believe, to do the raised work in crewels.

We now come to a very remarkable needlewoman, whose work is considered not only equal to that of Matilda, wife of the Conqueror, but superior to it, because it was all done with her own hands. Her name was Jean or Joan D'Albret, better known as the mother of Henry IV. of Navarre.

Her needlework which was the amusement and solace of her leisure hours was designed

by her to commemorate her love for the Reformed faith which she publicly professed on Christmas Day, 1562. She worked several large pieces of tapestry, among which was a suite of hangings consisting of a dozen or fifteen pieces which were called "The Prisons Opened," on which she represented that she had broken the pope's bonds and shaken off his yoke. She had a great sense of satire and humour which showed itself in her work.

The Duc de Sully, when sent by King Henry IV. to receive the Cardinal of Florence at Paris in grand style, ordered the keeper of the castle at St. German-en-Laye to hang the walls and chambers with the finest tapestry of the Crown. This he did, but, unfortunately, for the Legate's own chamber he chose a suite of hangings made by the Queen Joan D'Albret herself. They were very rich, it is true, but they represented nothing but emblems and mottoes against the pope and the Roman Court, as satirical as they were ingenious. Fortunately the mistake was rectified by Sully before the Cardinal's arrival.

This clever needlewoman died suddenly at the Court of France in 1572.

(To be continued.)

IN THE TWILIGHT SIDE BY SIDE.

By RUTH LAMB.

PART II.

OUR OPPORTUNITIES.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all."—Gal. vi. 10.



that the days are shortening and the weather dull, those of us who took holiday during the summer and early autumn will once more gather round the fireside in the twilight, and find pleasure in looking back upon the happy time we spent in lovely inland places or by the sea. Our winter gatherings are brightened by such retrospections, and as we talk we seem to see again the waves glittering in the sunlight, or to hear their roar as they break angrily on the beach, more beautiful in storm than in calm. We tell of new experiences and impressions, of minds enriched, and of bodily strength

renewed by change of scene and occupation, or it may be by rest and quiet surroundings.

These words apply specially to those amongst you, my dear girl friends and fortunate holiday makers, who were able to leave ordinary cares and anxieties behind you, and enjoy to the full the new beauties amid which you found yourselves.

To take holiday, without need for care about ways and means, and possessing a good share of health and strength to begin with, would seem to most of us the perfection of enjoyment. Yet I am by no means sure that we should judge rightly. Can you not well imagine that the rare holiday, obtained at the cost of long saving and even self-denial, may have brought to some an intensity of enjoyment unknown to those who have only to will in order to obtain any indulgence they desire. If each could give her personal experience this evening, what varied stories should we hear. Some, who longed for and much needed a holiday, would tell that they had been kept at home and at work all through the hot days by poverty or the sickness of one they loved and could not bear to leave.

Others, who left home hoping for renewed health, may have returned disappointed. Some may have expected only enjoyment, and have found pain and trouble as their constant companions. To those amongst you who have had all and even more than you hoped for, let me say, "Look back upon your happy experiences with heartfelt thankfulness to the Giver of all good, and resolve that, by the help of the Holy Spirit, you will use your increased knowledge and strength in His service and for your neighbour's good."

If any of you have spent money lavishly upon yourselves, or upon those who did not need your gifts, think, before another holiday season comes round, of some of those who are poor and longing for what you could so easily give them. You, who can take holiday and have change when you wish, might make some of your poorer sisters very happy by giving them a taste of what you can always

enjoy even to repletion. Try to diffuse blessings by sparing something out of your abundance, and your own enjoyment will be doubled, as well as your sense of wealth, in the very act of imparting. I am speaking in time—am I not, dear girls? I think I hear some of you say, "When the days are lengthening again it will be time enough to talk of the next summer holidays."

It may be so with those who can give out of their abundance, but by far the greater number of us could only render such help by saving a little at a time the year round. In all earnestness, but leaving the method to yourselves, I ask such of you as are able to give in the future to some poor toiler a taste of the happiness you can now look back upon from the home fireside. If, in any neighbourhood, a few of you, my dear girl friends, will combine for this purpose, all your own pleasures will be increased, and your memories enriched by so doing.

To those amongst you who have this year been saddened by disappointment, I say, "Look forward hopefully, asking the while that the power to do this may be given you. Try not to look back upon the dark days, or to dwell mentally on what cannot be undone."

Several years ago, I was staying in a charming home, from the different sides of which we could look on scenery of very opposite kinds. The house stood just beyond what is called "The Black Country," and looking into a valley in one direction, we could see the glare of the smelting furnaces, and the smoke rising from the coal-pit banks. From these indications we knew that both aboveground and below it in the mines work never ceased.

If we looked from the other side, we saw a lovely range of beautifully wooded hills in the distance, and below them all the fair features of an English landscape. If we had kept our eyes fixed on the valley behind us, we should have seen only blackness and comparative desolation, whilst the sense of ceaseless toil would have been ever present to us.

So, dear disappointed ones, I pray you turn your backs on the inevitable, and, though there may be no fair landscape within sight,

QUEENS AS NEEDLEWOMEN.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER III.



AFTER the death of Jean D'Albret a hundred years or more passed before any Queen distinguished herself specially as a needlewoman, and by the time Queen Mary, Princess of Orange, came to the throne, needlework as an employment for the high-born had quite gone out of fashion.

She, however, seemed to have the love of it born in her. Every hour not occupied with devotion and business was spent by her in all kinds of needlework; in fact, she worked so well and so constantly that one might have supposed she was earning her daily bread.

She regarded idleness as the greatest corrupter of human nature, and she believed that if the mind had no employment it would create some of the worst sort for itself.

She tried to impress this upon the ladies of her Court, who had fallen into sad habits of idleness which, she assured them, not only wasted their time, but exposed them to many temptations.

It was to remedy this and to imbue them with her love of work that she assembled her ladies every day and worked with them for two or three hours, and while thus employed, one was appointed to read aloud some interesting book.

As usual, the Queen's example was followed by all classes of women and girls in the kingdom, and it became as much the fashion to work as it had been to be idle.

This example came in the very nick of time, for it was stated on good authority, that "women had become quite mischievous from lack of employment."

This action of the Queen, which seems but a small thing, was in reality a great step towards bettering the age.

For proofs of this Queen's own beautiful work, one has only to go to Hampton Court Palace where much of it is still to be seen.

(Before leaving the seventeenth century, I should like to mention a quaint fact. It is, that a Catherine Sloper is buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey—date 1620. Her epitaph is, "Exquisite at her needle." I thought it so curious, standing alone as it does.)

Coming to the middle of the eighteenth century, we find a group of royal needlewomen, most of whom found help and comfort in the art of needlework.

What, for example, would poor Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis XVI., have done without it in prison, or Josephine, wife of Napoleon, in her retirement, or Queen Charlotte in her domestic sorrow?

To begin with Marie Antoinette. She was devoted to needlework, even in her happy and prosperous days. In her own private room at Versailles the low chairs surrounding that in which she usually sat were always full of workbaskets and bags containing wools, silks, and canvas; these, together with the beautiful designs for the tapestry, were bought at the firm of Dubuquoy.

The Queen's hands were never idle; she was like a busy bee always at work even when chatting with friends and visitors or waiting with her bonnet on for the King to walk with her.

Not only was she clever at embroidery and tapestry, but she could both mend and make her dresses, her mantles, and under-linen; she could also trim her hats and mend her shoes.

Madame Elizabeth, her sister-in-law, who

was with her all through her sorrow, was equally clever with her needle, and the two together have left some beautiful work in silk and wool on canvas.

When she quitted her life at Versailles, she did not give up her needlework; but inquietude and anxiety assailed her as she feverishly sorted her wools in the Tuileries, hearing all the time the menaces and threats of the howling crowd outside.

Both in the Tuileries and in the Temple the Queen and Madame Elizabeth did very simple work, that is to say, work not requiring concentration of thought, which would have been impossible for them under the circumstances. One can picture them, silent and sad, with heads bent and speaking little, while their needles passed in and out the canvas watered with tears.

Yet so long as they were allowed to work there was some comfort left them, something wherewith to beguile the time.

Pauline de Tourzelle, the daughter of the governess, was taken with the Royal Family when they were imprisoned in the Temple, but she had no dress save that she had on. As some of Madame Elizabeth's clothes had arrived, she gave the girl one of her dresses, but it did not fit her, therefore the Queen and Madame Elizabeth set to work and re-made it.

One of the pieces of work Marie Antoinette did in the Temple fell into the hands of the Bernard family at Lille, by whom it is greatly treasured.

The account of the way the Royal Family passed their time in the Temple is very pathetic. When at four o'clock the King slept in his arm-chair, the Queen and Princesses worked at their tapestry or knitting, while the little Dauphin learnt his lessons, and after the King had retired for the night they mended their clothes or those of the King and the Dauphin.

It is stated that the King's coat became ragged, and as Madame Elizabeth mended it, she had to bite off the thread with her teeth, as the scissors had been taken away.

So long as they were allowed to employ themselves with needlework there was comfort for them, and yet more, for by their work they were able to keep up some sort of correspondence with their friends outside the prison. It is just possible that the jailors had a suspicion of this. Anyhow, the time came when all their sewing materials and tools were taken from them and they were desolate indeed.

Subsequently when Marie Antoinette was removed to the Conciergerie, a place of confinement of the lowest order, her suffering was greatly increased at not being allowed to work. The jailors refused even knitting-needles. At length the thought came to her of drawing out some threads from the stuffing of her bed, which, with two wooden skewers, she knitted into garters.

Some of the work done by Marie Antoinette and Madame Elizabeth during the last two years of their lives is still in existence, and consists of hangings six feet by four. The groundwork of the tapestry is in black wool, with bouquets of flowers, roses, pinks, and convolvulus, on coarse canvas.

Some of these hangings were acquired by Rome in 1881.

The Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon Buonaparte, both loved and excelled in the art of needlework, and it certainly was of the greatest possible comfort and solace to her during the years of her retirement.

Like Marie Antoinette, she always worked at her embroidery or tapestry when receiving

her most intimate friends, and chatting with them late in the evening.

After her separation from Napoleon she took up her abode in beautiful Malmaison, where, between botany and needlework, she spent most of her time. The hangings of the saloon were entirely her own work, and the exquisite furniture of her drawing-room was upholstered in embroidery and tapestry worked by herself and her ladies in previous happy years.

Needlework was not infrequently put on one side during the evening hours, in order that Josephine, her ladies, and guests, might make lint for the Sisters of Charity, who were greatly in need of it for the wounded soldiers.

We now come to our Queen Charlotte, wife of George III. Had it not been for the intense delight she took in the cultivation of decorative needlework, the art itself might have been forgotten.

She was not only very fond of needlework, but exceedingly anxious that the Princesses should excel in the art.

In the room where she usually sat with her family were some cane-bottom chairs, and as an amusement in their play hours she taught the little Princesses the different stitches on this rough substitute for canvas. As the children grew older a portion of each day was devoted to needlework, and with their mother for teacher they became very accomplished needlewomen.

The Queen herself embroidered the dresses which the Princesses wore on the coming of age of the Prince of Wales. They were white crêpe embroidered with silver.

She worked several sets of chairs, which are now at Frogmore and Windsor. These she did in her early days. Later in life she employed herself almost entirely with knitting.

The Princess Royal, when only ten years old, was such an accomplished needlewoman that she worked a suit of rich embroidery for her brother, the Prince of Wales, which he wore on his birthday.

Queen Charlotte used to find the strict English Sunday hang heavily on her hands. Her industrious fingers "ached," as she said, "for employment. If I read all day my poor eyes get tired. I do not like to go to sleep, so I lock my door that nobody may be shocked, and take my knitting for a little while, and then I read a good book again."

Her chief delight was needlework. When in the morning the weather was unfavourable, her Majesty occupied herself with needlework, and in the afternoon she worked while the King read to her.

When it was known that the British troops in Holland required flannel waistcoats to screen them from the severe cold and insalubrity of the soil, the Queen Charlotte sent to London immediately for a large quantity of flannel, and she and the elder Princesses cut out several dozens on the very day it was sent. The poor in the neighbourhood of Windsor were employed in making the waistcoats.

One of her most important acts in connection with needlework was the establishment of an institution for training and educating in an accomplished manner the daughters of poor clergy and decayed tradesmen.

She purchased a house and grounds in Buckinghamshire, where a lady of high attainments was placed at a salary of £500 a year to instruct the pupils in plain needlework, embroidery, and tapestry.

The work done in this institution was exquisite. For example, the dresses worn at Court on New Year's Day, 1787, by Queen Charlotte and the two elder Princesses were made there. The state bed of Queen Charlotte, together with several ottomans now in

Hampton Court Palace, which are highly-finished pieces of embroidery, were executed by the pupils in this school.

Few people knew how much good Queen Charlotte did in a quiet way.

One never thinks of Catherine II. of Russia as devoting any time to needlework, yet we find that she worked and presented to Voltaire a likeness of herself, which he placed in his chamber at Ferney. It is still in existence in Ferney, but very much faded, and instead of hanging on the wall as formerly in the place of honour, it is now placed in a dark corner of the room.

Once again needlework took a back place until our Queen Adelaide introduced it as a fashion, and required of all ladies who were invited guests at her Court that they should

be good needlewomen, otherwise she could not receive them.

It was a bold thing to do even for a queen, but it turned out well, causing ladies who took it up for convenience to become skilled workers and to like the occupation. Queen Adelaide herself was a beautiful needlewoman, and set an example to all her people.

Thus we have seen how our queens have kept alive the useful and ornamental art of needlework—an art invented by woman and kept going by her for the necessities, comfort, and ornament of the whole peoples of the world.

Dr. Johnson says: "Women have a great advantage, viz., that they may take up with little things without disgracing themselves; a man cannot except by fiddling." I suppose he refers to needlework.

It is an occupation that allows the thoughts and tongue of the worker full liberty; indeed, it is woman's pretty excuse for thought.

We have noted its power in the lives of the highest of the land—how it soothes sorrow, calms the troubled mind, and causes solitary hours to pass more pleasantly, and, as asserted by some rude man, it keeps us women out of mischief. But whatever it does or does not do, it is without doubt a gentle, graceful, elegant, and feminine occupation.

These papers would not be complete without mentioning the work of our dear Queen Victoria, who in her moments of leisure knits warm garments for the poor. These may be seen in many a cottage round about Balmoral.

CHRONICLES OF AN ANGLO-CALIFORNIAN RANCH.

By MARGARET INNES.

CHAPTER III.

THE JOURNEY DOWN SOUTH. HOUSEKEEPING. CHINAMEN.

THE journey from San Francisco to San Miguel, some six hundred miles, we took by steamer, and it was the most delightful episode of all our Californian experiences. It was the month of April, and with exquisite weather; the sea was like a pond, so calm and still; the sun was not too hot, and there were numberless interesting living things to watch as we moved along the summer sea. Several enormous whales went past, generally in couples, their great fat backs rising out of the water side by side, and passing our boat swiftly and with the greatest ease, when we would see them in a few moments, far in the distance, spouting up big fountains of spray. Not far off from the whales were generally flocks of the tiny whale birds, which seemed to use these monsters as their jackals, feeding greedily on the shoals of fish they drive before them, so greedily indeed, that many of them were too gorged and heavy to rise out of the water and our way, but, after a helpless attempt, would duck under only just in time. The flying fish were more alert, and would rise away out of the water, going many yards through the air before dropping again into the sea, and glittering with every rainbow colour in the sunshine.

The coast scenery is not beautiful; it is too bare and dry-looking, especially after passing Santa Barbara, but the glamour of the southern sun is over everything, and gives all a caressing smile, at any rate, from a distance. It was a delight to see these wonderful effects again, and we felt glad to be once more in the warm sunshine.

When we arrived at the bay of San Miguel late in the afternoon of the fourth day, it looked so radiantly beautiful in the soft glow of the setting sun, as if it might indeed be the gate into a real land of promise; a land flowing with milk and honey.

It is a splendid bay, and the position of the town is quite ideal, and though the most has not been made of its possibilities, many improvements are going on steadily. Given money and taste, it should be one of the most lovely places in the world.

We found comfortable rooms in a boarding-house, and settled down to rest awhile from searching and questioning. The boys went to school as in San Francisco. These free State schools are exceedingly good. The teachers are among the most charming ladies we have met, and the plan of using the same books, and the same system of teaching all over the State, saves much loss of time, since a child coming to a new school can at once be

placed in exactly the same position where he left off, in his former school, some three hundred miles away.

But in spite of our determination to let ourselves drift for a time, we were very soon drawn into the same old probing and exploring, more especially as we were delighted with the climate of San Miguel. On the strength of this, and because our English hearts were hungering for some place more homelike than any boarding-house can ever be, we took a little house, hired the necessary furniture, and began our first experiences of Chinamen as general servants.

We had the most wonderful procession of Celestials through the little kitchen before we left that wee house. There was no room convenient for the Chinaman's bedroom, without giving him one close to our own, which was not to be thought of, so the arrangement was, that when supper was over, and the work done, he should retire to Chinatown, coming back in good time in the morning to get breakfast and do his other duties. He seemed quite pleased with this plan, and we got along swimmingly for a fortnight. Then he dropped the news casually to me that he was going to Los Angeles the next day. When I exclaimed at the shortness of the notice, he beamed all over, and said, "Me bling other boy, him allie lightie, him stay."

Before I had quite made up my mind what to do, I heard breathless jabbering in the kitchen, and on going in there, was introduced by Sing Lee to Quong Wong, our new cook. Both of them were very friendly and smiling. No. 1 was showing No. 2 where everything was kept, and giving him what sounded like most eloquent instructions about his duties, both of them being very grave and business-like over this. I did not seem to be needed, and so quietly went back to the sitting-room. Supper was prepared and cooked by the two together to an unending accompaniment of Chinese chatter.

This was the beginning of the procession. Some men stayed a week, others three weeks or a month, and each brought and carefully installed his successor, I taking no part whatever, except to learn a new Chinese name. We had tall fat fellows, tall lean ones, little dumpy ones and spare wiry ones; all of them clever and quick beyond anything I had ever seen or known. They keep themselves exquisitely neat, in their white linen coats and aprons, which seem always to remain spotless. Their hands are perfectly fascinating; such delicate tapering fingers, and such a masterly way of touching everything. One member of the profession, I remember, who had the most dainty taper fingers, was very fond of music, and, seeing that I was interested, sat down

very simply at my Broadwood grand (the only piece of furniture which we had brought from Frisco) and played some hymns quite nicely. He used to sing, too, at his work—all day—in a curious high falsetto, of which he seemed very proud. He had learnt to play the piano at the mission schools, where many of them go, and are converted—so they say. But they find the free lessons in English, which are given there, so cheap and convenient, that their motives in being converted are rather mixed. When he left me, it was to go the very next day to San Francisco on most important business, so he said. That, of course, was only the usual way of giving notice, and did not prevent his greeting me smilingly whenever I chanced to meet him in the streets of San Miguel. He came to the rescue also, when, through some hitch, the chain of succession was broken, and I was left to struggle alone in my little kitchen, and he stayed with me till he could find another "boy." I began to be haunted by a story I had heard often repeated. A certain lady was much puzzled and distressed because she could never keep any Chinaman beyond a few days; they would arrive, smiling and seemingly much pleased with everything, but invariably on the third or fourth day they would insist upon leaving at once. At last, in despair, the poor mistress persuaded her Chinaman to explain the mystery to her, before he had carried himself and his bundle away.

He led her to a dark corner of the kitchen, and showed her some Chinese writing high up on the wall, which he interpreted, "too much talker here." That was all. But it had been enough to upset all the comfort of the household.

Probably after that she took the hint and let her Chinaman do the work in his own way, with as few words or instructions from her as possible. They are so marvellously clever in taking up the work of a new place the very moment they arrive, exactly as though they had been always in this one house only, that it is no wonder they resent any interference; and the sooner one learns to leave them entirely to themselves, the sooner one reaches some kind of peace.

However, I found to my relief, that no secret sign had gone out against myself or the house; the difficulty was the long daily walk to China-town. With their small feet and uncomfortable shoes, they are all bad walkers, and each in turn had tired of the effort, and handed the place over to a friend. This explanation, kindly given me by Mr. Kee Mane, who kept the Chinese stores, lifted a weight from my mind, and I resigned myself to continuing my lessons in fresh Chinese names.

(To be continued.)