

tres, the work of Christina, abbess of Markgate, were among the valuable gifts presented by Robert, abbot of St. Albans, to Pope Adrian IV. Numerous other instances might be cited from the historians, were it necessary to enter more fully into the subject. Maids used to work with their mistresses; and men, especially the monks, practised decorative needlework. In fact, to the time of the Reformation it formed the principal occupation of the secluded life of the nuns in the various religious houses throughout England."

The working of tapestry, known in the earliest times in the East, and from them introduced into Greece and Rome, was long lost in Europe; and its revival is to be attributed to the ingenuity and industry of the Flemish:

"The first manufactories for weaving tapestry which acquired reputation in Europe were those of Flanders, and they appear to have been long established in that country principally at Arras, before they were introduced either into England or France: the precise period when they were first manufactured by the Flemings is uncertain. Guicciardini, in his history of the Netherlands, published at Antwerp in 1582, ascribes to them the invention of tapestries, but without mentioning any particular date. Whether the Flemings did or did not derive their knowledge from the East, to them is certainly due the honour of having restored this curious art which gives life to wools and silks scarcely inferior to the paintings of the masters. The weaving of tapestry was first introduced into England in the time of Henry VIII. by William Sheldon; but it was not until the reign of James I. that it acquired any particular reputation. This monarch greatly patronised the art, and gave the sum of two thousand pounds towards the advancement of a manufactory which was established by Sir Francis Crane at Mortlake in Surrey. The patterns first used for making these fabrics in England were obtained from pieces which had already been worked by foreign artists; but as the tapestries produced in this country acquired greater celebrity and perfection, the designs were furnished by Francis Cleyn, who was retained for that purpose. There is extant in Rymer's 'Fœdera' an acknowledgment from Charles I. that he owed Sir Francis Crane the sum of six thousand pounds for tapestries; and that he grants him the annual sum of two thousand pounds for ten years, to enable him to support his establishment."

It is to France, however, we are indebted for the perfection to which this costly art was

ultimately brought. Henri Quatre established the first manufactory in Paris in 1606; but it was not till the time of Louis XIV. that the Hotel des Gobelins was formed, from whence all the wonders in this way have emanated.

The art of netting is as ancient as it is simple and universal:—

In the museum of Montbijou, at Berlin, are preserved specimens of the nets made by the Egyptians above three thousand years since; and in this, and other collections, are some of the needles they employed in netting, instruments similar to those of the present day. These nets are such as were used for fishing and fowling; but we are not to infer, even in this remote age, that they were ignorant of netting of a finer description; indeed, if we may credit the ancient writers, their productions of this kind surpassed those of modern times."

In the concluding chapter we have some very curious anecdotes concerning needlework and its personal history. Of Mary Stuart we are told that she was a capital workwoman:—

"To Mary Queen of Scots needlework was a great source of amusement. During her imprisonment at Tutbury Castle it afforded her great solace at those intervals not devoted to reading and composition. At the time she held her court in Scotland, she gave four or five hours every day to state affairs: she was accustomed to have her embroidery frame placed in the room where her privy-counsel met, and while she plied her needle, she listened to the discussions of her ministers, displaying in her suggestions a vigour of mind and quickness of perception which astonished the statesmen around her; at other times she applied herself to literature, particularly poetry and history. Several pieces of the work of this unfortunate Queen are preserved in the castles of the nobility in Scotland. At Allanton House was formerly a splendid bed embroidered by Mary Stuart and her ladies; but this was most unfortunately burnt by accident. At Holyrood Palace, in her chamber, is shown a box covered with her needlework."

The late Queen Charlotte was also devoted to this art, and was anxious that all the young Princesses should excel in it as well as herself:—

"The late Queen Charlotte was exceedingly fond of needlework, and was solicitous that the princesses should excel in the same amusing art. In the room in which her Ma-