

people in general. It is not a set thing, handed down from so remote a time that its origin and purpose are almost forgotten, but is of immediate and practical use. Beside, it does not require a trained artist to do it, so it is within the reach of everybody. The difficulty is "everybody" seems to give it very little thought, so that the linens of our churches are sadly lacking or in bad form, or no form at all. The women of a church are responsible for this furnishing, and they ought to be as careful in regard to it as about their household linen—indeed, more so. The crooked ironing and bad form one often sees, especially on the tables in non-ritualistic churches, are nothing less than blameworthy.

Further in detail we may say that veils are often most exquisite bits of embroidery, entirely covered with fine work. When the linens are edged with lace, they should be mounted on the edge and sewed with fine running stitches, never without the edges but is difficult to rip when the lace is taken down as should be done for laundering, since washing lace is a process quite apart from

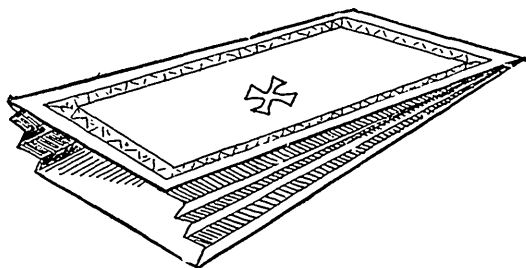


FIG. 105. BURSE.

different from washing embroidered linens. Sometimes veils are complete lace fabrics, and fine drawn work is used, especially in the countries where it is a general occupation. As a usual thing, however, one would not be led to quote anything seen on Mexican altars or those in Cuba, for the dreadful doll-baby images are frequently dressed up in all sorts of knickknacks.

Linen is an exquisite fabric—a vegetable fabric, so pure and simple that its beauty is unsurpassed by the "purple" we associate with it. All the sumptuous vestments and hangings are not more lovely than the "Fair" linens of the church. Embroidery on them is within the reach of amateurs, and certainly a pleasant task could hardly be found. Before we leave the subject of church linens we may say that the yoke and sometimes the sleeves of surplices are embroidered with cross in the French laid work.

Chapter III.—Silk Embroideries, Hangings, Altar Cloths, Etc.

The most luxuriant antique embroideries are on church vestments and hangings. As already said it is not within the scope of this article to treat vestments such as the Cope, Chasuble, Dalmatic, etc., further than to speak of them as a magnificent opportunity for needlework. The imperial dalmatic at Rome, in the sacristy of St. Peter's, must be ranked as the first and most superb of ecclesiastical embroideries. It is embroidered on blue satin, now threadbare; a large part of

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