

PURSES THROUGH THE AGES

RATHMORE PARCHMENT

100 % RAG U.S.A.

By

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PREFACE

The writer's interest in purses dates from pre-school years when, while living with her grandmother on a Texas cotton farm, she was permitted to entertain herself by looking at the contents of "Mammy's" trunk, which included among other things her great-grandmother's little black purse; this purse contained an old tintype wrapped in china silk and a length of fragile silk lace folded around a piece of cardboard. A rainy afternoon passed quickly by the time this little girl combed the old grey switch (hair piece), braided it carefully, pinned it atop her red curls and got her purse, song book and palm leaf fan and was then ready for church.

This interest continued as the little girl learned to sew and was encouraged to study and create fanciful patterns in the field of the costume arts. Her present interest in hand made things and the wealth of contemporary materials at hand have stimulated the author to pursue a study of the development of bag and purse designs through the ages.

The investigation has omitted the works of the American Indians since there is an abundance of material close at hand on the crafts of these people.

It is the hope of the author that this study will give the reader an appreciation of the long history of bags and purses, of the skills and artistic abilities of the people who made them, and of their many uses. The author also wishes to encourage many other people to experience the joy and satisfaction of creating a thing of beauty.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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The author is particularly indebted to her husband, Paul T. Klingstedt, head of the Voice Department, for untiring assistance in the translation of Swedish documentary materials and for constant encouragement in the preparation of the manuscript.

M.E.Y.K.

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STRA

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"The purse that started it all."



Mrs. Fanny Estill, Grapevine, Texas, great-grandmother of the author,
holding "the purse that started it all."



J. H. Webster, High-Priced
Photographer,
Dallas, Texas.

CHAPTER I

HAND-BAGS OF THE ANCIENT PEOPLE

The archaeological records of ancient civilizations reveal that the Aborigines devised pouches and bags for carrying small articles. Of necessity, the ancient man kept his hands free to protect himself and to pursue routine tasks. Thus it is presumed that the bag was created to facilitate the carrying of objects.

One of the earliest archaeological records of a bag or pouch is the ancient Egyptian "Book of the Dead" preserved in the British Museum. This stone relief shows Hunifer, overseer of the palace and cattle of Men-Hoat-Ra (Seti I, King of Egypt about 1370 B.C.), and his wife Nasha. Hunifer has, what appears to be, two flat, envelope-type purses connected by chains thrown over his left arm.¹

Also housed in the British Museum is an Assyrian relief dating from the First Empire, 885 B.C. to 856 B.C., which furnishes further evidence of the type bags used by ancient peoples. Plate III is a line drawing made of a priest figure which appears on the face of this relief. The priest is shown carrying a plain, bucket-shaped hand-bag in his left hand and a pine cone in his right one.²

In describing costumes of the ancient Persians, Houston and Hornblower included a drawing of an eighth century B.C. costume presumably worn by

¹G. Woolliscroft Rhead, Chats on Costume (New York, 1906), p. 63.

²Millia Davenport, The Book of Costume (New York, 1948), p. 51, Fig. 13.

the men of some nation to the east of Persia.³ Illustrated on Plate IV is the figure of a man with a pouch-like bag thrown over the right shoulder and a simple hand-bag of the same bucket shape clutched in the right hand. The contour of the pouch-like bag indicates that it was of a pliable material and might have been made of skin. Neither of these bags nor the one on Plate III are decorated. Of approximately the same chronological period is the woman captive of Senna Cherib shown on Plate V.⁴ The round bag carried in the left hand appears to have a flexible handle and is adorned with two very plain bands of zig-zag lines.

From the burial markers of the Etruscans of about 1500 B.C. to 1000 B.C., the archaeologists have noted the type of purse that appears to have been in use in this era. In an 1858 Journal of the British Archaeological Association, Mr. Cuming, Honorable Secretary, wrote:

"On one of the pillars of the Etruscan tomb of Greceetri, is painted a pouch in a red colour, suspended from a nail by a loop, and having its mouth closed by a round-ended bar running through its looped edge."⁵

✓ The Hellenic civilization used a balantion and the Roman a crumena. These pouches of leather were of a draw-string type. The cord or draw-string of the purse was suspended from the neck of the wearer. They were made of pig skin, preferably the sow's ear. This is probably the source of the saying, "You cannot make, my Lord, I fear, a velvet purse of a sow's ear." The finer examples of the balantion and the crumena were made of moleskin.⁶

³Mary G. Houston and Florence S. Hornblower, Ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Persian Costumes and Decorations (London, 1920), p. 85.

⁴Ibid., p. 59.

⁵H. Syer Cuming, "History of Purses." Journal of the British Archaeological Association (London, 1858), pp. 131-132.

⁶Maud Pastor, "It's in the Bag." American Home (March, 1940).

Vases and stone carvings are among the best sources of information about the private lives of the ancient Greek people. From these sources a number of representations were found of Hermes or Mercury, god of commerce. Mercury is always depicted carrying a small draw-string pouch of the type shown on Plate VI, fig. 1. This bag was called a marsupium and it was usually decorated with scallops, points, and tassels.⁷

Among other bags portrayed on ancient Greek vases is a simple undecorated shoulder-bag. Plate VI, fig. 8, is a drawing made from a vase fragment which illustrates the shoulder-bag used by Perseus "just after he has cut off the head of the Gorgon Medusa, which he is carrying off in triumph."⁸ Another vase motif depicted on Plate VI, fig. 5, shows Perseus wearing on his upper arm a bag with two straps.⁹ Plate VI, fig. 2, is another drawing made from a vase which was adorned with a scene in a pottery shop.¹⁰ The man in the scene was holding this small pouch and was evidently considering what to buy. This bag is probably of a draw-string type made of leather. The comparative size of the hand and the purse would indicate that it was small, therefore, it is assumed it was used primarily to hold coins.

Plate VI, fig. 3, is a drawing made from a red vase painting by Brygos of a discus in its case hung on the wall.¹¹ There is a marked similarity between this case and the shoulder-bag worn by Perseus.

⁷Daremberg-Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquites Grecques et Romaines (Paris, 1904), p. 1819, Fig. 4960.

⁸Ernst Pfuhl, Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen (Munich, 1923), Fig. 474.

⁹Ibid., Fig. 190.

¹⁰Ibid., Fig. 384.

¹¹Walter Miller, Greece and the Greeks (New York, 1941), p. 134, Fig. 55.

Other types of purses were alluded to in literature, but archaeological data does not identify the contour or materials of which they were made. Cuming stated that, "The bulga, follis, pasceolus, saccus and its diminutive sacculus, are money pouches mentioned in the pages of classic authors; but of their exact characteristics little is known."¹²

According to de Giafferri, in writing of the Gauls from 753 B.C. to 241 A.D., "Women carried a small bag at their waists, the Roman reticulum, and the pouch of the middle ages. Another kind of bag was called the almoner or purse (escarcelle)."¹³ The reticulum was defined by Rich as:

A bag of network, the original of our reticule, employed for holding various articles: bread, playing balls, dried rose leaves, or other aromatic productions, which were thus carried in the hand, for the same purposes as those of the modern scent bottle.¹⁴

A unique pouch attributed to the ancient Egyptians is shown on Plate VI, fig. 6. This was a tobacco pouch made of plaited straw which combines a basket-like bottom and loosely woven upper section with a draw-string closing.¹⁵ Cloche¹⁶ furnishes a picture of a man using a wicker trap and a basket or bag of wicker for catching and carrying fish. This basket appears to be of a loosely woven reed with a stiff handle. The horizontal lines add interest to the design and indicate some advance in the technique of plaiting and weaving.

¹²Cuming, "History of Purses," p. 132.

¹³Paul Louis deGiafferri, The History of the Feminine Costume of the World, Vol. 6 (New York, 1926), p. 92.

¹⁴Anthony Rich, A Dictionary of Roman and Greek Antiquities (London, 1901), pp. 553-563.

¹⁵deGiafferri, History of the Feminine Costume of the World, Vol. 2, Pl. 10.

¹⁶Paul Cloche, Les Classes, Les Metiers, Le Traffic (Paris, 1931), Plate XVII, Fig. 7.

An Assyrian noble lady's bag is depicted by de Giafferri on Plate VI, fig. 7. The ornamented bag is decorated with a typical Assyrian scene, two angels gathering fruit from a tree or bush.¹⁷ The handle is attached to the main section of the basket by placing the handle section through a loop which extends from the top of the basket, thus the handle was not stationary.

The most common type of bag found in records of the ancients was the pouch. These pouches varied in size from the small one held in the hand by the man depicted in the pottery shop to the large one thrown over the shoulder of the man from some nation to the east of Persia. These bags appear to be of skin or some pliable material; however, the tobacco pouch used by women of ancient Egypt was made of plaited straw. Most of these pouch-like bags were closed by draw-strings. They were hung from the neck or waist of the person by long cords or were carried in the hand.

Archaeologists have discovered several records of the use of plain hand-bags with attached handles. Two contours are noted in these bucket-shaped bags. The examples alluded to on Plate III, Plate IV, and Plate VI, fig. 7, appear to be square, on the other hand the bag carried by the woman captive of Senna Cherib is round in contour. The handles of each of these hand-bags are placed through loops which extend from the bag itself and all handles appear to be movable.

The use of an envelope-type bag was recorded in only one instance. Hunifer is depicted carrying two bags of this type connected by chains.

A vase-painting showed Perseus wearing a simple shoulder-bag. In another illustration he wore on his upper arm, a plain bag having two straps. Neither one of these has any form of decoration.

¹⁷deGiafferri, History of the Feminine Costume of the World, Vol. 3, Pl. 10.

Records indicate that the bags carried by the ancients were made of pliable materials, skins, sows' ears, mole skin, network, plaited straw, and wicker. Many of the bags had no form of decoration. The pouches pictured with Mercury were often trimmed with tassels and scallops. The bag carried by the woman captive had two bands of simple zig-zag lines around it. The most ornate bag found was the noble lady's bag which had a typical Assyrian design on it, a scene of two angels gathering fruit from a tree.

A priest carrying a simple handbag.

First Assyrian Empire (885-856 B.C.)

Davenport



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A man from a nation to the east of Persia.

Eighth Century, B.C.

Houston and Hornblower

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Fig. 44



Fig. 43

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A woman captive of Senna Cherib.

Eighth and Seventh Centuries, B.C.

Houston and Hornblower

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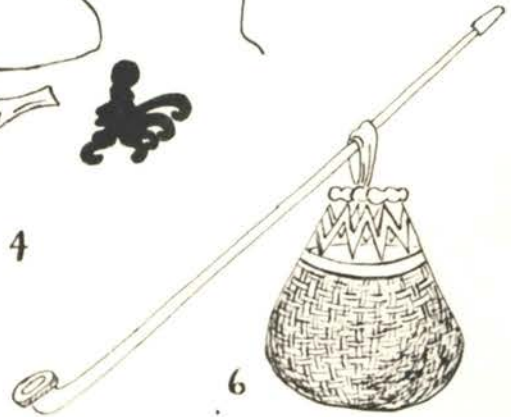
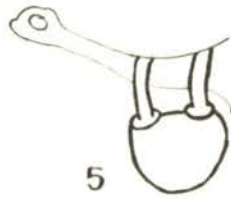
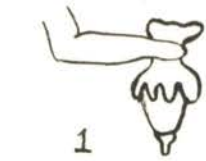
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Fig. 33

Ancient bags sketched by the author.

- Fig. 1. Daremberg, p. 1819.
- Fig. 2. Pfuhl, Fig. 384.
- Fig. 3. Miller, p. 134, Fig. 55.
- Fig. 4. Cloche, Plate XVII, Fig. 7.
- Fig. 5. Pfuhl, Fig. 190.
- Fig. 6. deGiaffferri, Vol. 2, Plate 10.
- Fig. 7. deGiaffferri, Vol. 3, Plate 10.
- Fig. 8. Pfuhl, Fig. 474.



CHAPTER II

MEDIEVAL BAGS

During the middle ages three distinct types of bags were used. In the early part of the era, a variety of draw-string pouches were carried. The style later changed to the pouch which had a flap fastened by buttons, buckles, or tied down by thongs. These were secured at the waist by the belt passing through two straps attached to the back of the pouch. At the end of the period, metal beams or frames appeared as an integral part of purse designs.

In medieval times, both men and women wore bags or pouches suspended from belts or girdles. The belt was worn at low hip level. D'Allemagne wrote:

They were designed under different names, but it doesn't seem that the form varied as much as their names. These accessories were indiscriminately named purses (bourses), money bags (alloiere), alms-bags (aumonieres), escarcelles, and also game bags (gibecieres). The purse meant to contain silver or other small objects, attached to the belt by a strap or little chain. Purses which carried reliques, objects of devotion, were suspended over the chest.

Purses were generally made in cloth embroidered and emblazoned, but often they were of skin or hide.¹

Among the Anglo-Saxons, the purse did not assume much importance as a portion of costume until the Norman era.² In the first part of the Norman period, the pouches were usually plain, often square with draw-strings, although the girdles were sometimes decorated.

¹H. R. D'Allemagne, Les Accessoires du Costume et du Mobilier (Paris, 1928), p. 108.

²H. Syer Cuming, "History of Purses." Journal of the British Archaeological Association (London, 1858), p. 132.

A good representation of an aulmoniere is found at the side of the effigy of Queen Berengia who died in 1230. She was the queen of Richard I. Her effigy is in the abby of L'Esplan, near Mans. This aulmoniere is rather pyriformed, with three tufts around the bottom, and tasseled strings to draw the mouth together. It is suspended from a girdle set with gems³ as shown on Plate VII, fig. 7.

✓In this particular period, it was the custom for ladies of the nobility to regularly distribute money and food to the poor.

The title Lady is by some said to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon, and to literally signify GIVER OF BREAD. The purse, with a similar meaning, was named as a receptacle for ALMS and not as an invention for the preservation of money.⁴

✓It is known that ladies of lesser rank and means also carried purses during this period. Chaucer describes the leathern purse at the girdle of the carpenter's wife as "Tassels with silk and pearled with latoun," impearled or studded with brazen knobs.⁵

M. R. James described the drawings of Matthew Paris in the papers of the Walpole Society:⁶

The name of Matthew Paris (d. 1259) is deservedly held in honor by historians. He gives a more vivid picture of his age than any other English chronicler, they say. He was on intimate terms with the greatest people of his times, Henry III and Earl Richard of Cornwall, for instance and the King took a personal interest in his work.....In his monastic home of St. Albans he also enjoyed a high and lasting reputation. Subsequent chroniclers speak of him as a "monk devoted to the rule (religious), an unsurpassed chronicler and a painter of the first class".....With the St. Alban monks the excellence of Matthew as a writer is rather subordinate to his skill as an artist....

³Ibid., p. 133.

⁴F. W. Fairholt, Costume in England, A History of Dress (London, 1896), p. 93.

⁵Cuning, "History of Purses.," p. 133.

⁶M. R. James, "The Drawings of Matthew Paris." The Walpole Society (Oxford, 1925), pp. 1-13.

In him, then, we have an example such as is rarely to be found, of an eminent writer capable of illustrating his own work pictorially.

First come the two volumes of Paris's HISTORIS MAIOR preserved at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, as part of Archbishop Parker's great legacy.

The earlier volume contains the history from the creation to the end of 1188. The second one continues the narrative to the end of 1233. There are marginal drawings illustrating each of these. On Plate VII, fig. 8, is shown:

The extortions of the users of Cahors. On a horizontal pole hang two purses of different forms, one the bag, the other the long pipe with sliding rings. Luard calls the latter, a bond, but I do not think he is right.

This long pipe-shaped bag is comparable to the miser purses of the nineteenth century referred to later in this text, with the exception that the opening of this purse is in one end rather than in the middle.

In writing of the medieval costumes of Europe, of Spain and Portugal, deGiafferri noted:⁷

The embroidered alms-bag had edges trimmed with network and braid. From the twelfth to the fourteenth century, in Spain, the alms-bag formed an indispensable part of the daily garb of both sexes, women only left it off on great occasions, and men when they took up arms.

Some purses were used for only one purpose. One of these was the marriage purse which was long cylinder shaped and enclosed the diary of the bride during the nuptial ceremony. In the middle ages, these were nearly always decorated with a grand richness; having the initials of the two families and the shields embroidered on them and sometimes representations of the couple.

During the seventeenth century, the purses of marriage were much in style and the town of Limoges made a considerable quantity of these accessories, in the making of which it became famous.

⁷Paul Louis deGiafferri, History of the Feminine Costume of the World, Vol. 7 (New York, 1926), p. 104.

In the East, the use of these purses of marriage remains today. At the moment of the consecration of the nuptial ceremony, the girl offers to her betrothed a purse of knit silk, which is as long as a woman's stocking. In saying these words full of mischief she hands him the purse. "My dear master, if you love me as you say, fill this little purse with pieces of gold." In this practice, the future spouse contents himself with slipping a simple sequin into the long case.⁸

Another bag made for a single use was the seal-bag. Cuming made the following comment about the chancellor's seal-bag:

(This bag) is generally supposed to have belonged to the monumental effigy of the great Walter de Merton, bishop of Rochester, thrice chancellor of England, i.e., in the reigns of Henry II (1207-1272), and afterwards of his successor, Edward I. His tomb in Rochester Cathedral has been repaired—I should rather say, renewed—by the warden and fellows of Merton College, Oxford, of which the chancellor was the founder.⁹

It is doubtful when the original memorial was erected but it is well known to have been "renewed" in the year 1598. Plate VIII shows this bag, which appears to be made of a soft material; the two side sections and the handle were cut in one piece. It is closed by draw-strings terminating in heavy cords and tassels. In 1848, the Lord High Chancellor of England carried the great seals of the realm in a bag probably similar to this early seal-bag. It was "of crimson velvet garnished with tassels, having the royal arms in broider-work on it's front."¹⁰

Plate IX is a photograph of a draw-string bag that is square and plain in form.¹¹ The foundation material is a very thin cloth of gold. There are six rows of eight coats-of-arms, totaling forty-eight. Between the points of the shields are roses of six lobes, alternating red and green.

⁸D'Allemagne, p. 111.

⁹H. Syer Cuming, "On the Chancellor's Seal Bag." Journal of the British Archaeological Association (London, 1858), p. 344.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 343.

¹¹D'Allemagne, Pl. XCVI.

The ornaments are partly in gold, and partly in silk of white, red, green, and blue violet. Apparently there were five tassels of different colors. The shields appear to be wholly of fantasy with the exception of a single one which is a design of three fleur-de-lis of blue on a field of gold.

Other examples of the simple draw-string bag are those sketched on Plate VII, figs. 1, 2, 3, and 6. These bags had straps added to the upper edge through which the belt passed. The flaps of these were often closed with buttons. Illustrations of this particular purse design have been identified on the figures on the stalls in Ludlow Church, Shropshire and Gloucester Cathedral. These are placed so much to the front of the figure that they resemble the sporran of the Highlands and the shot pouch of the Americans.¹²

Regarding the sporran of the Highlands of Scotland, the following was taken from a letter written to the author by Dr. T. J. Honeyman, director of the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museums, Glasgow, Scotland:

The sporran is simply the survival of the medieval reticule or purse bag universally worn on the waist belt along with the dagger. As trunk hose allowed of no pockets, nor did the kilt or trows, it therefore survived along with the Highland dress. In the Scottish Highlands it was worn in front on the waist belt that sustained the belted plaid or little kilt and also bore the dirk alongside of it. From the close of the eighteenth century and onwards it was worn by itself on a separate strap.

The earliest form shown on old portraits of the seventh century is made of leather gathered together at the mouth with thongs, the spare ends of which hang down as an ornamental feature and are finished by small tassels, the mouth being covered by a flap held down by a button or a thong. They were used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries possibly even earlier and are now rare.

Available data would indicate that the sporran with metal clasp was in use at least as early as about 1700, if not earlier, as in the National Exhibition, Glasgow, 1911, a sporran with a silver clasp bearing a silver-smiths initials of date 1706 was shown by the Duke of Gordon. This is the type most generally to be found and still in use. The clasp is of cast brass (very rarely of silver) and engraved with ornament or incised with the ancient concentric circle ornament, a survival from prehistoric times.

¹²Cuning, "History of Purses," p. 134.

Those with the running leaf scroll ornament should be classed as the earlier but should not be confused with those engraved with leaf tips which are later. A number are closed by a complicated system of snibs and catches which have to be operated in due sequence in order to gain access to the contents. The clasp is found of three forms, semicircular, rectangular or semi-octagonal. The bag is small, usually made of deer skin, but is sometimes formed of native seal, otter or badger skin, with from one to three narrow pendant thongs of leather finished by small tassels of the same.

The large unsightly bags of goat-skin with large hair tassels came into use about 1800, and are still in use by those who know no better.

In the latter part of the middle ages, the title of *salmoniere* was dropped and the word *gypciere* adopted from the French *gibbeciere*, the large flat pouch worn at the side of the sportsman. The purse then acquired a metal beam which secured it to the belt. These beams were made of bronze, of iron plated with brass or of silver. They "Consisted of a cross-bar inscribed on both sides, from the centre a loop projected through which the girdle was passed. From the two ends an oval frame was suspended, and from it a second frame of smaller dimensions."¹³ Many of these beams did not have the suspending oval frames; rather the ends had globuse tips to prevent the straps of the purse from slipping off. This type usually had a swivel ring in the center by which the purse was attached to the belt.¹⁴ These beams often had a center shield for ornament with initials, a coat-of-arms, "various forms of a cross, a rudimentary scallop-shell pattern or a tau-cross. The significance of this last, which is normally the symbol of St. Anthony of Egypt, is not easy to determine."¹⁵ An example of a beam with a tau-cross motif is depicted on Plate X, fig. 3. Other frames had religious sentences engraved on them. The letters and ornaments

¹³Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities of London (London, 1859), p. 293.

¹⁴Cuming, "History of Purses," p. 134.

¹⁵"Purses." Medieval Catalogue, London Museum Catalogues (London, 1940), p. 164.

were inlaid with niello, the incised designs in the metal being filled with a black alloy. Occasionally these metal frames were "decorated with carved, rigid iron plates. At the Museum Le Ses des Tournelles, there exists a curious example of this type of work. The decoration figures Adam and Eve under the tree of life, in the land of Paradise."¹⁶

The directors of the London Museum stated that:

The term *gypciere* is frequently, but wrongly, applied to these metal framed purses. It was current in the fourteenth century. Chaucer's Franklin, for example, had

A gypciere all of silk
Hang at his girdel, white as morne milk.¹⁷

Much of the archaeological information about the metal purse frames attributed to the middle ages has been secured from ship burials, a unique custom of this era. In many ancient lands, it was a belief that the soul needed to be equipped with everything possible for his comfort and dignity in his travels after this life. In Egypt, a symbolic boat was placed in the tomb. In the northern lands, however, a real boat was buried, containing the body and all the paraphernalia thought necessary. This custom lasted from the late Bronze age until about 1000 A.D. when the North was converted to Christianity. On the shores of Oslo Fjord have been found two of the most famous ship burials. These are in a special museum near Oslo. Others have been unearthed in Northern Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. In all, there have been more than one thousand finds, yet each had been robbed of nearly all money and precious metals.

One of the most interesting of the archaeological finds of the last twenty-five years was the unearthing of England's oldest known war vessel, containing the remarkable treasures of an Anglo-Saxon ruler. It was the

¹⁶ D'Allemagne, Pl. CCL.

¹⁷ London Museum Catalogues, p. 160.

Sutton Hoo ship burial in Southern England, in East Suffolk.¹⁸ Sutton Hoo means the high place of Sutton Parish, there being mounds in this area. Normally these round mounds are the burial places of folk of the Bronze age. One mound aroused the interest of the owner of the land, Mrs. E. M. Pretty, because it was much larger than the others and oval in form. In 1939, she decided to have it opened. This mound covered the Sutton Hoo ship which contained a wooden burial chamber.

By extremely careful excavation, archaeologists found that the Sutton Hoo burial chamber housed full equipment for a warrior of high rank, probably that of a king. It had not been robbed for there were a great many solid gold objects having beautiful cloisonne work on them done in garnet and millefiori glass. There was a massive gold buckle and a sumptuous purse among these findings.

The purse frame is of gold with a sliding clasp of rich filigree work and round inlaid gold studs. The material had decayed, leaving in place where they were sewn to it, seven remarkable gold plaques. These are of the same rich and valuable cloisonne work. One matched pair shows a bird of prey carrying a duck. Another is of a man and two animals. Still another pair is executed in a very intricate geometrical pattern. The seventh plaque represents two intertwined animals and is a masterpiece of champleve work. The purse contained forty gold Merovingian coins and two ingots of gold.

The precious objects found in the Sutton Hoo purse were obviously all made by one jeweler, a master craftsman of the Dark Ages. They show that the early Anglo-Saxon princes had connections with the world outside England.

¹⁸C. W. Phillips, "Ancestor of the British Navy." National Geographic Magazine (February, 1941), pp. 247-268.

✓Plate XI is a photographic reproduction of the Sutton Hoo purse frame. Archaeologists are prone to believe that the Sutton Hoo burial belongs to the first half of the seventh century, A.D.

In 1856, the Historical Museum in Stockholm received a number of relics from graves in Gotland.¹⁹ Among these were a few bronze frames and mountings of unusual form and shape. These bore a marked resemblance to similar findings in other parts of Sweden. The museum also contains a few mountings of this type which were acquired many years ago and are very old. Little is known about them other than they were found in Skone. These purses were made of leather or skins and were used for coins. Some were found, however, that contained flint, weights, and in one case, sticks of sulphur and in another a comb.

In one burial place, a part of the skeleton remained. Over the left thigh was a belt buckle with a strap; by the hip bone were three straps, and near by were four purse mountings; all were made of bronze. Under the left hip bone was found a bronze key and an ax of iron and finally, on the same place, a few bronze mountings and a little bronze buckle. The buckle belonged to a penningvaska which contained a bit of flint.

✓The bag on Plate XII was apparently made of leather or skin. The mountings were round and overlapped or had bronze ribs fastened with rivets. The top rib was decorated with small ridges; the lower one was plain. The rings on either side were used to fasten the straps. There were little pieces of mounted bronze at the ends of the straps. Right under the rings was a bronze band ornamented along each edge with two parallel ribs. This band was bowed and served as a support to the round frame. The small bronze buckle was used to fasten the purse but how it was used is

¹⁹Erik Sörling, "Ännu en Penningväska Från Gotlands Vikingatid" (Stockholm, 1945).

almost impossible to say. The purses from Birka were fastened with three bronze buttons instead of buckles.

These bronze framed purses were carried by both men and women. The one found under the hip bone was probably hung from a belt. The women wore them on the left side of the chest.

Sörling²⁰ wrote in 1939, of purses found in other Nordic graves. The frame of one was almost identical to the one described earlier in this work. It was also made of bronze. In place of fastening with a buckle, however, the overlapping flap was held secure by three small buttons as shown on Plate XIII. The buttons were made with raised centers and ribs that extended down to the base, around which was a band. They were quite massive in feeling for such small buttons. The frame was covered with skin which had hair on it, skin of a mammal, possibly a squirrel. The double ribs of the frame were rounded on the edges and were riveted together with bronze rivets. The top rib was decorated while the underneath one was not. Just below the top, the ribs became smaller, forming loops to which the straps were attached. Below these was a bronze band extending from one side to the other. On the edges of each side were two parallel strips and the whole band was slightly bowed. The purse contained silver coins, therefore, it was a penningväskor.

Some bags did not have buttons or a buckle to secure the top flap; rather the flap itself was longer and tucked under the cross band as shown on Plate XIV. One purse frame that was found had the lowest rib made of iron in place of bronze.

Another purse was similar, but the rib was single and the skin was sewed around the edge. The rib tapered into slender snakes' heads, thus

²⁰Erik Sörling, Penningväskor Från Vikingatiden (Stockhold, 1939).

forming the loops to which the straps were attached. The crossband was decorated with four stamped star-like designs.

These purses were carried by means of a large ring through which passed the straps. It was attached to the belt. All the purses found in the Scandinavian burials were apparently made in the region, for they all have a Nordic character to them.

Some of the United Kingdom alms-bags were made with metal frames; however, the contour and size of the frames indicate that they were much smaller and differed from those frames employed on the Sutton Hoo and Nordic purses. The Sutton Hoo purse frame was richly ornamented while the alms-bag frame was structurally beautiful because of the gracefully curved lines. A selected group of these alms-bags with frames will be noted on Plate XV.

When the Crusaders returned from the Holy Land, they brought elaborate customs and accessories from the Orient. Women of England and the continent were skilled in the art of needlework. Some of the bags were richly ornamented with stitchery in colored silks and metal threads and some even encrusted with jewels. These pouches were often embroidered by ladies as presents for their lovers.²¹ Many families of wealth, however, hired professional embroiderers who spent their time working very intricate and elaborate patterns on bags, gloves, girdles, shoes, and other personal articles. The records indicate that embroiderers belonged to the craft guilds as early as the thirteenth century.²²

The amonieres of the later middle ages were made of satin, velvet, damask, tapestry, silks, canvas, and leather. The leather was often boiled

²¹Joan Evans, Dress in Medieval France (Oxford, 1952), p. 18.

²²Katherine Morse Lester, Accessories of Dress (Peoria, Illinois, 1940), p. 416.

in oil and stamped or tooled and then colored. Also for trimming, buttons, tassels, and braids were used in a lavish manner.

The richly jeweled girdles continued in fashion and were worn at the hip line through the middle of the fourteenth century. Soon afterwards they went out of fashion. In writing of medieval times in France, Evans stated:

In 1393, the Duke of Orleans had his gold belt of forty hinged pieces melted down. Instead, a tight narrow belt was worn at the true waistline, with a short peplum below, giving a new silhouette. It demanded an elegant figure and remained in style for young men. The gibciere or pouch continued to be worn until about 1420, but was of less decorative importance.²³

Another change in purse design alluded to in literature of the later part of the middle ages indicated that compartments were added not in the lining but in the bag itself.

In the middle ages, two types of draw-string bags were carried, the plain pouch and the long pipe-shaped bag. The early pouches were made of leather or canvas. In the latter part of the era, these provincial materials were replaced by satins, damasks, velvets, and cloth of gold. They were used to carry alms, the bride's diary during the nuptial ceremony, and the seals of the realm.

Metal beams and frames were added in the later years of this period. The bag proper was made of fabric or leather, in some instances hair was left on the skin. The frames were bronze, iron plated with brass and silver. They were decorated with niello work and cloisonne done in garnet and millefiori glass. These frames were either in the form of a straight beam or were oval shaped. The bags were closed by thongs, buckles, or buttons. Metal framed bags were used for carrying alms, small objects, coins, sticks of sulphur, etc. The girdles from which these bags were suspended

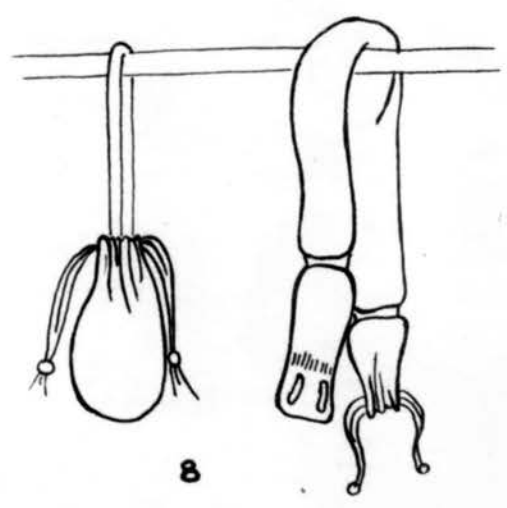
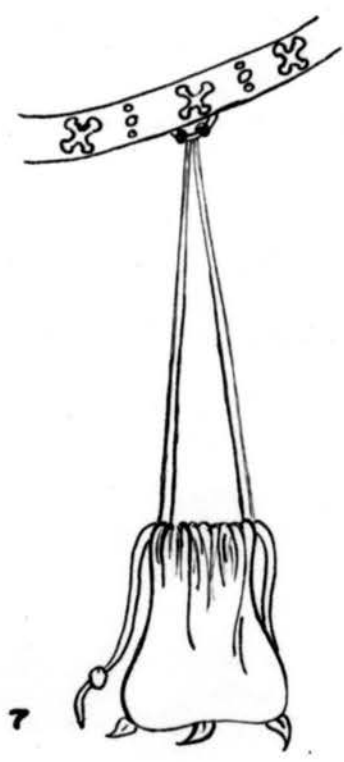
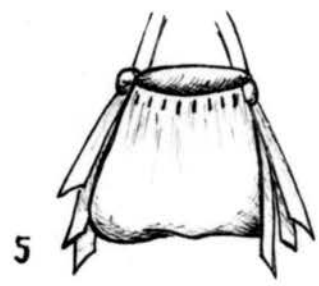
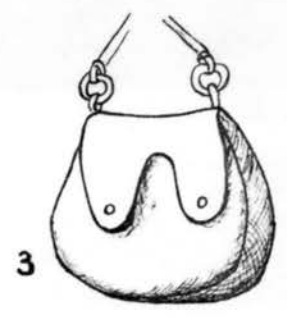
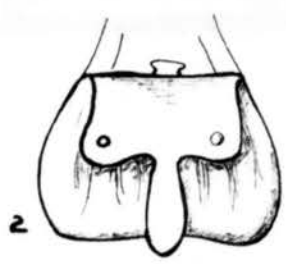
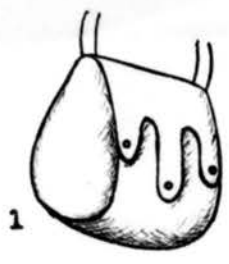
²³ Evans, p. 47.

became narrow and less elaborate after the fourteenth century.

✓ The craftsmen in the later part of the period gave greater consideration to details of purse design, such as the addition of compartments. An advance was noted in the decorative processes, particularly the embroidery techniques.

Medieval Bags sketched by the author.

1. German, Fourteenth Nobleman, Braun.
2. German, Fifteenth peasant, Braun.
3. German, Fourteenth century, a pritiaman, Braun.
4. Arabian, Fourth to sixth century, Braun.
5. German, Twelfth century, rich jew, Braun.
6. Gaul, Fifteenth century, burgher's belt, deGiafferri.
7. Queen Berengia, 1235, Fairholt.
8. Matthew Paris, Walpole Society.



The chancellor's seal bag,
sketched by the author from the
Journal of the British Archaeological Association.



PARCHMENT

6 U.S.A.

Bag of thin cloth of gold (D'Allemagne)

STRATHMORE PARCH

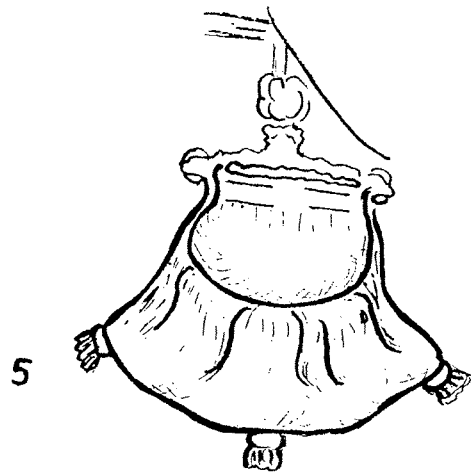
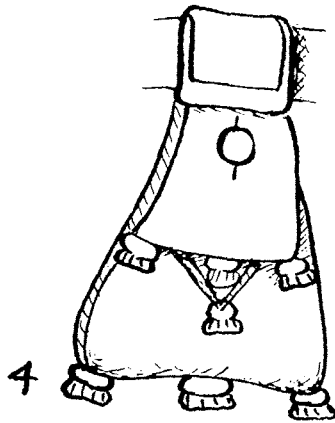
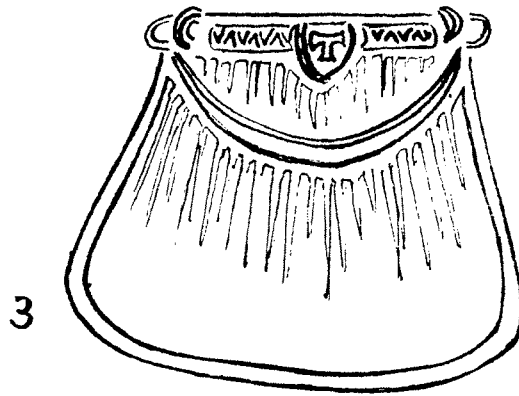
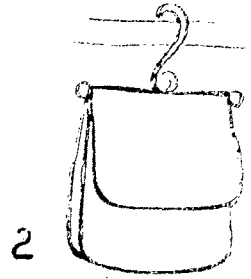
100% RAG U.S.A.



Bourse en soie tissée provenant de la cathédrale de Verdun. Elle est décorée d'armoiries de fantaisie, XIV^e siècle.
(Collection Albert Figdor.)

Bags sketched by the author from the
London Museum Medieval Catalogue

1. c. 1474
2. c. 1500
3. c. 1490
4. c. 1460
5. c. 1460



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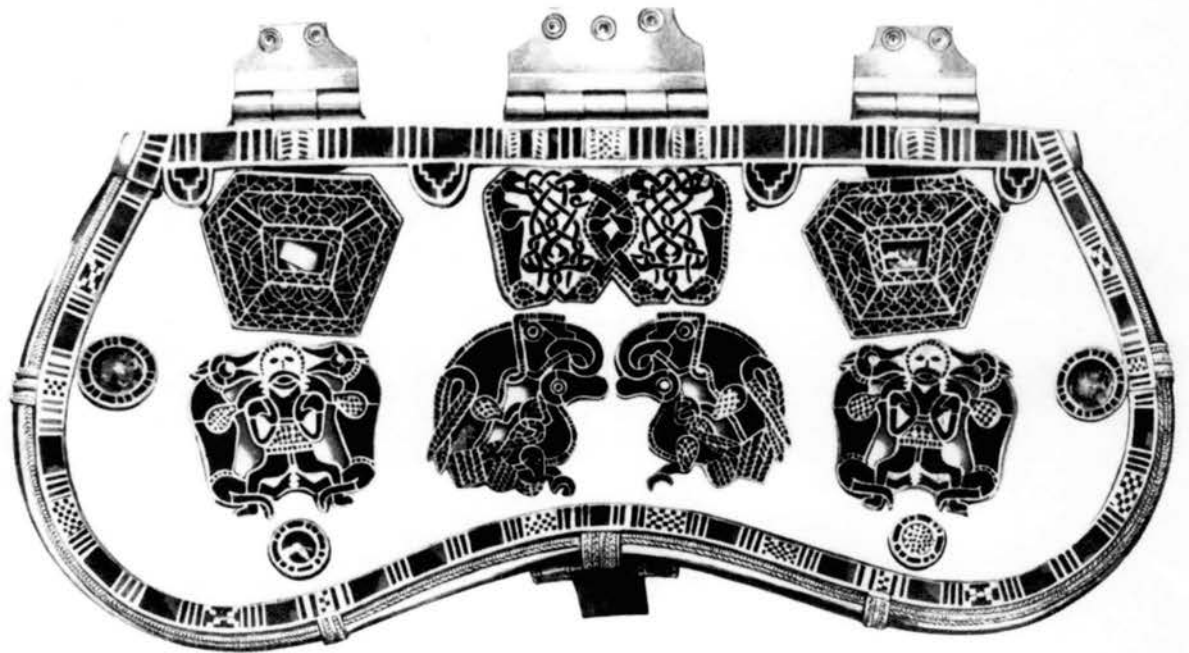
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SUTTON HOO PURSE

(By Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

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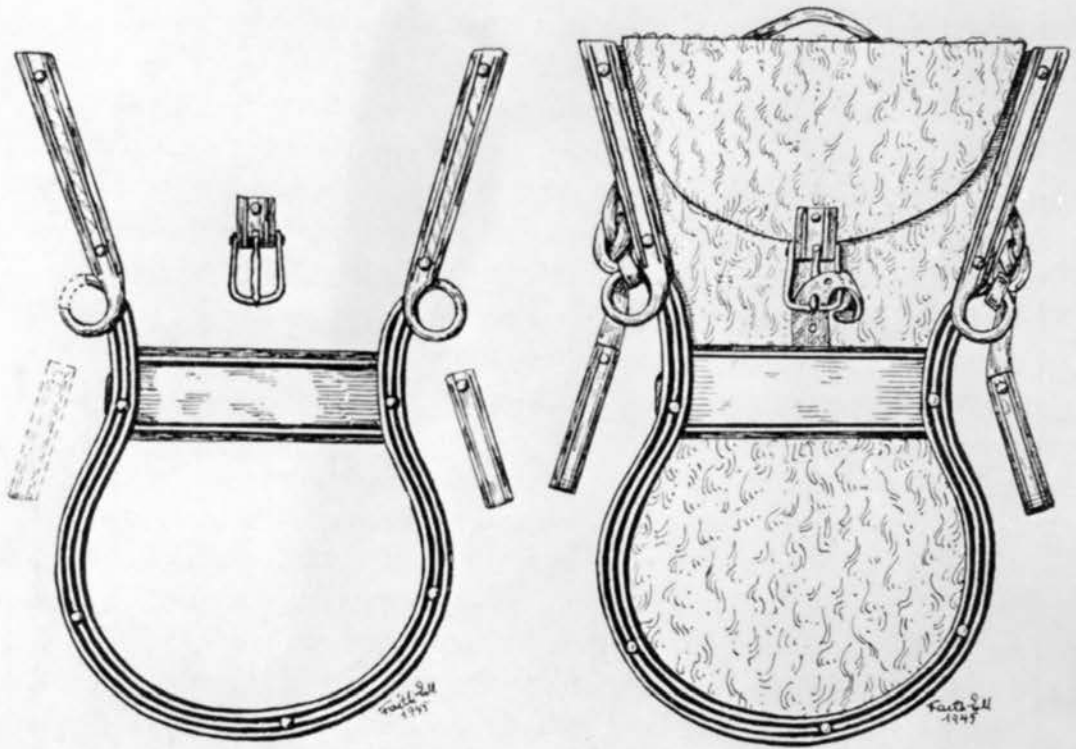
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Ännu en Penningväska Från
Gotlands Vikingatid, p. 29.

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Penningväskor

From Penningväskor Från Vikingatiden, p. 50.

ENT

STRAT

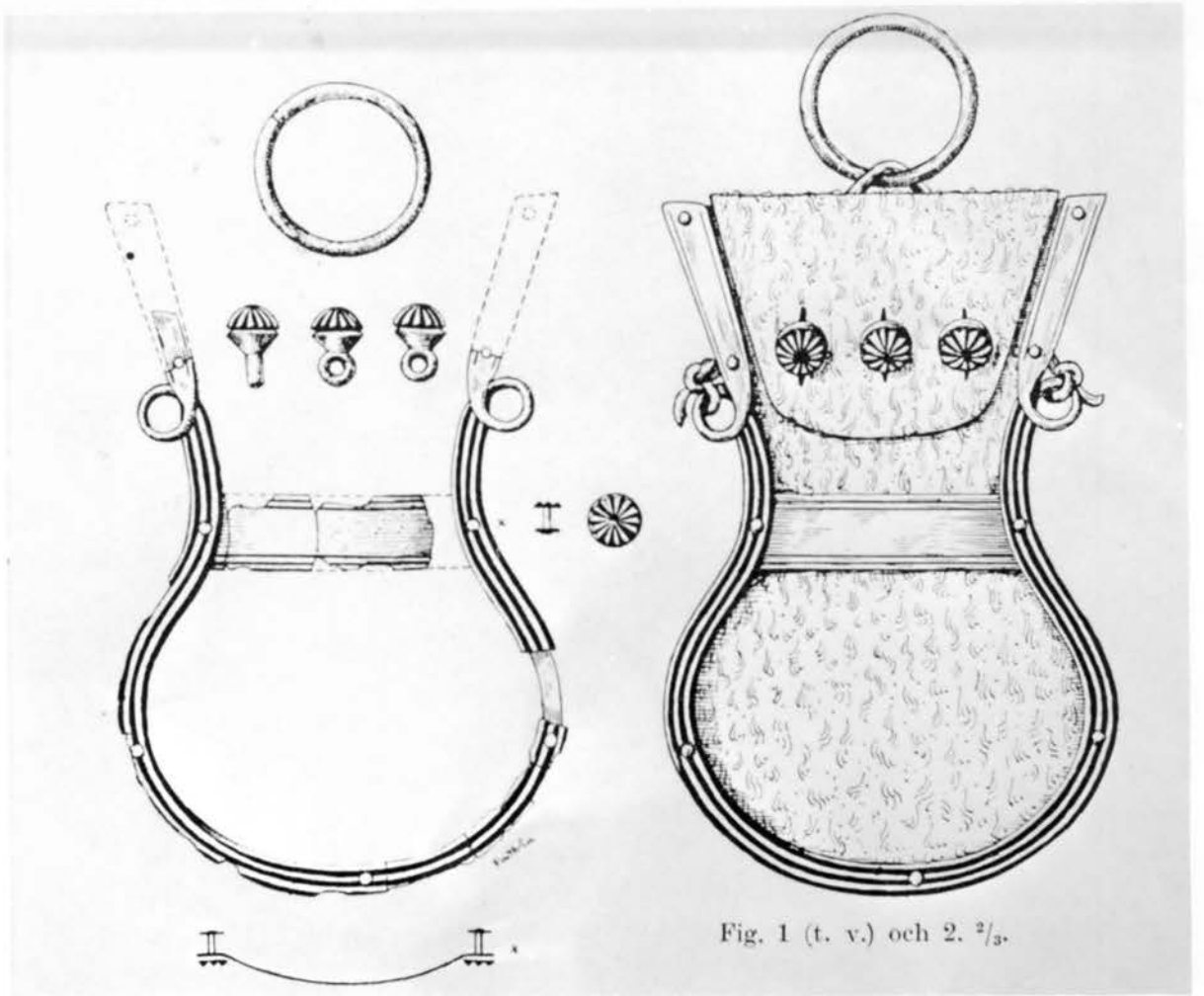
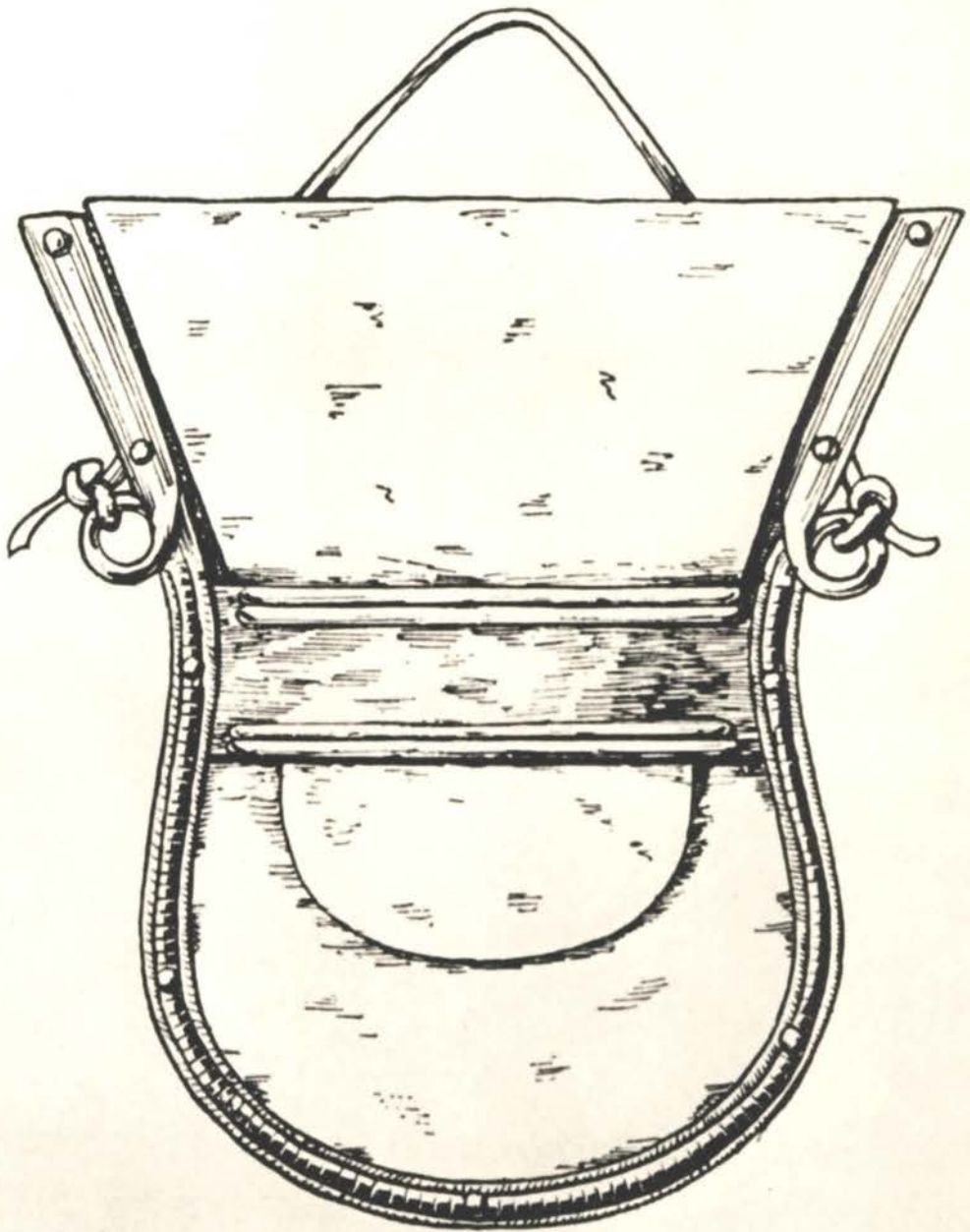


Fig. 1 (t. v.) och 2. ²/₃.

Penningväskor

From Penningväskor Från Vikingatiden, p. 47



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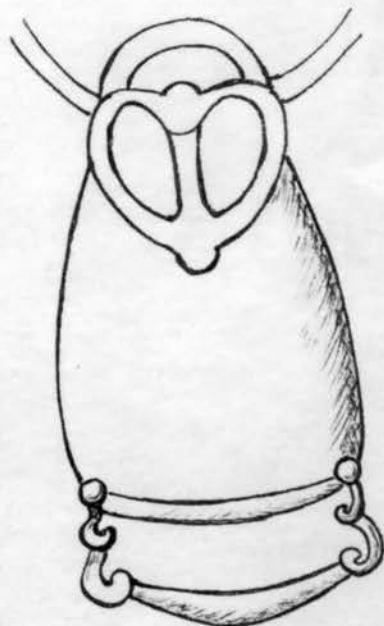
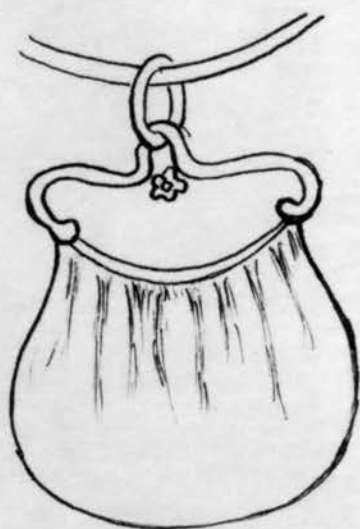
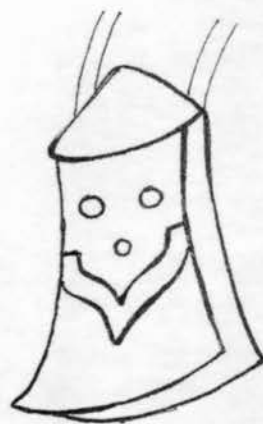
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Medieval bags of the United Kingdom

Sketched by the author from deGiaffferri.

STRATHMORE

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CHAPTER III

PURSES DURING THE RENAISSANCE

The renaissance was a period of revolt against the authority of the church in secular matters, against suppression of actions and emotions led by a group called "Humanists." Naturalism and humanism became evident in literature and the arts. The invention of printing helped to disseminate these new ideas.¹

The renaissance flourished in Italy, a country which was, because of its geographic location, seaports, and classical heritage, the logical point for such a movement to take root. Due to the Crusaders bringing in rich goods and elaborate accessories from the East and to the voyage of Marco Polo, Italy became the merchandising and banking center of Europe. Also, as a result of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, there was a great "influx of Greek scholars and craftsmen, steeped in classical knowledge."²

The fabulous wealth among the nobility enabled this social class to engage in elaborate and gorgeous functions, families rivaling each other in splendor. Young artisans lived in these wealthy homes and were easily employed designing and creating works of art. People were judged by the richness of their velvets, the amount of their gold, and the size of their

¹Sherrill Whiton, Elements of Interior Design and Decoration (New York, 1951), p. 104.

²Ibid., p. 105.

jewels. The renaissance was truly a period of lively imagination, "a pageantry against a background of gold and rich, bright colors."³ Great attention was paid to detail, both in the arts and in costume. Clothes and accessories were very ornate.

✓ During the renaissance in Italy, men's purses "became small, since pockets were now put in garments. Ladies carried handsome bags on long ribbons."⁴

The renaissance reached its height in France and Paris became the cultural center of Europe. The court life greatly influenced French dress; the kings dressed as lavishly as the ladies.

The renaissance movement was not accepted in England as readily as on the continent, nor was it ever on such a grand scale. The concepts of the renaissance were more evident in literature than anywhere else; the movement reached its height in the Shakespearian age. Entertaining was on a hearty and robust scale. In other words, the renaissance in most phases of the arts including costume remained very British in character.

Typical purses of the renaissance were the reticules. ✓ These bags were carried in the hand or hung from the waist by long cords or ribbons, often matching the dress in color. In France, some were classic in design, being shaped like Greek vases. They were made of heavy card board, tin, thin wood or leather and covered with fabric or lacquered. Rigid bags continued to be fashionable into the Empire period.⁵

✓ Plate XVI is an engraving representing the workshop of an artisan

³Elizabeth Burris-Meyer, This is Fashion (New York, 1943), p. 76.

⁴Ibid., p. 356.

⁵Ibid., p. 269.

of leather.⁶ The artist has illustrated the various types of purses created by the craftsman which are shown hanging from the pole in the archway.

Another type of reticule carried during this period was a soft draw-string bag, embroidered and fringed. Cuning described a simple one of the beginning of the sixteenth century. It was found in July, 1847, while taking down the south wall of St. Mary's church in Newmarket. ~Plate XVII illustrates the reticule that was discovered in the middle of the church wall.

This rare object is composed of two pieces of white leather sewed together up the sides, so as to produce a hemioval sack about three inches deep. The edge is waved, each wave being perforated with two round holes, through which passes a narrow thong to draw the mouth together. To the closing thong is attached a lateral cord with a tassel of twine; and secured to the upper edge of the pouch is a loop of twisted leather about seven inches long, which was passed round the girdle when worn at the side. This purse, when found, contained two Rechening pfenings, or Nuremberg jettons.....It may be worthy of notice, that a purse very similar to the above, is generally introduced into sacred heraldry as the receptacle of the "thirty pieces of silver;" and its form is also seen in the shield of the family of Conrad, count of Wittenberg, who assisted the emperor Henry IV against Rudolph of Suabia. And further, that little leathern pouches much like the one under consideration, were employed for distribution of the Maundy-money, as late as the reign of Charles II. I exhibit a Maundy purse of this period, made of white kid, the upper part perforated with eight round holes, through which passes a double thong, with a tongue of leather on each side to draw the mouth close.⁷

Still another interesting draw-string pouch of this period is the City Purse belonging to the City of London, of about 1600. Plate XVIII is a "copycat" of an engraving of this purse. Mr. Norman Cook, Keeper of the Guildhall Museum in London, wrote the author the following description of this bag:⁸

⁶H. R. D'Allemagne, Les Accessoires du Costume et du Mobilier (Paris, 1928), Plate CCCV.

⁷Cuning, "History of Purses." Journal of the British Archaeological Association (London, 1858), p. 138.

⁸Personal Correspondence.

It is a bag, 10 1/2 inches long and 9 1/2 inches wide, made of red cloth of gold, embroidered with scrolls and leaf work which are carried out with gold wire. (It) is ceremonially handed each year to the incoming Lord Mayor, its fictitious contents symbolizing the balance of moneys in the Chamber of London.

Shown on Plate XVII along with the St. Mary's purse is one of a little later date though still of the sixteenth century described by Cuming:⁹

It is of cloth of silver, the centre and four corners being decorated with roses and other flowers in embossed embroidery, with foot stalks of gold plat. Both sides are alike; and at the angles and middle of the bottom are little tassels of pink silk, and it is lined throughout with pink lutestring. Through perforations in the upper edges passes a cord to draw the mouth together, and which cord has ovate terminations, covered with cloth of silver embroidered in colored silks, with tassels of plaited silk and silver thread at their ends. The suspending loop is about eleven inches in length, and consists of a narrow tape of plaited silk and silver thread. When open, this purse is about three and three quarters inches in depth, and rather above four inches in width.

An entirely different type of embroidery used on bags was "stump-work," which appeared in England about 1600. The raised portions of the designs were padded with horse-hair or wool. These "stumps" were often made separately, then applied to the foundation material. This type of work did not remain in fashion for very long.¹⁰

As the renaissance movement became better established, the materials of the bags became richer, especially those of the nobility. Peasants, however, continued to carry those made of canvas and leather. During the time in which crewel embroidery was very fashionable, bags were adorned with this intricate needlework, some being almost covered with it.

Other draw-string pouches of interest were the very beautiful contribution purses. These were decorated with ecclesiastical symbols

⁹Cuming, "History of Purses," p. 139.

¹⁰Katherine Morse Lester, Accessories of Dress (Peoria, Illinois, 1940), p. 418.

and flowers and trimmed with tassels. They were kept in the churches to hold the donations.¹¹

At the close of the middle ages and in the early years of the renaissance, a new form of gypciere and beam came into vogue. Before this, the pouch was more or less square, the beam straight, and neither protruded from the person very far. Cuning described them thusly:

.....It now appeared as a bag with a bulging front, and generally enriched with three tassels at the lower part. The early gypciere had the mouth covered with a flap which fell over the front; but in the fifteenth century the back edge of the purse was stitched to a portion of the beam; and to the horizontal bar was added a semicircular frame, to which the cover of the gypciere was attached, and which was hinged so as to open and shut like a box.¹²

One of the frames of this type is of bronze inlaid with silver in a trellis pattern. On one side of the central shield is the Tau cross of the order of St. Anthony and "on the other an ascabundle, the well known charge in the shield of the ancient earls of Anjou."¹³ These, too, were engraved with moral and pious sentences.

D'Allenagne¹⁴ describes the mountings of these gypciere, also called escarcelles, as being of iron and sometimes attaining "the proportions of a veritable monument." There were some that were gothic in shape with pierced towers on each side. The richest ones were of German workmanship incrustated with silver and gold.

Plate XIX is a photograph of an iron framed German purse of the sixteenth century. The front of the bag is made of red velvet, damascened

¹¹Maud Pastor, "It's in the Bag." American Home (March, 1940).

¹²Cuning, "History of Purses," p. 135.

¹³Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁴D'Allenagne, p. 110.

in gold. This is edged with a heavy braid. The boxing down the sides and across the bottom is made of a fringed fabric. Three tassels are attached to the bottom, a typical technique of this period for trimming purses, but these are much heavier than those found elsewhere.

Bags during this period were very valued possessions. They were listed in inventories and in wills, being left to certain people. In "Two Centuries of Costume in America," Earle commented:

A very interesting link of kinship in my own family has ever been to me the marriage of the daughter of Lady Alice Lisle, the martyr to English law, to Dr. Leonard Hoar, President of Harvard College. After the doctor's death, she married a Boston merchant named Usher; and at her own death in 1725, her clothing was sent back to England to her daughter. In the list of her "apparell" made by Judge Sewall, the executor,.....(was) one red silk purse filled with knots and girdles.¹⁵

When Henry V passed some of his possessions to raise funds for the French exposition, he passed a gipsiere of purple velvet, garnished with gold. One of this period preserved in the Louvre

is of velvet overlaid with a coat-of-arms in coloured silks, bound with gold gimp and ornamented with two lines of gold thread tassels. The wrought steel clasp is of rich architectural design, and provided with a hook by which to attach it to the girdle.¹⁶

Mention is made in King Henry VIII's inventory of the contents of the palace at Greenwich of a purse of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold.

✓Plate XX pictures some of the round escarcelles.¹⁷ The escarcelle in the upper right hand corner of the plate has two pockets. It is in deer skin decorated with arabesques quilted in red. The mount, of gilded copper, is movable on an axis. There are reversed tassels at each end of the axis.

¹⁵Alice Morse Earle, Two Centuries of Costume in America (New York, 1910), p. 469.

¹⁶Cuming, "History of Purses," p. 137.

¹⁷D'Allemagne, Pl. XCVIII.

✓ According to Cuming, the purse pictured on Plate XXI is probably one of the most splendid, perfect and interesting examples of the gentleman's pouch still in existence.

It is made of rich green satin, lined throughout with the same material, and consists of four receptacles placed one behind the other, two of them being in front. The entrance of the upper one is through a round aperture, having gold twist tassels to open it with, and long silken cords, with like tassels, to draw it close. Beneath this is the second one, with the mouth closed by three buttons, and gold twist loops. The mouth of the middle receptacle is at the side, and secured with three globuse buttons of gilt brass and loops of golden twist. The mouth of the fourth, or hindmost, receptacle is at the top, and fastens with a catch of wrought brass gilt. The pouch is bound with gold gimp: down its front are seven bands of gilt terminating in rich tassels of gold twist; three similar tassels depend from the lower edge, and on the back are..... sentences of scripture, embroidered in gold....The circular mouth of the pouch is stretched over a metal hoop.¹⁸

Cuming assigns its origin to the reign of Queen Elizabeth or James I. The elaborateness of the design indicates that this purse was not made for an ordinary person nor for ordinary use. It has a case made of wood, pocket shaped and lined throughout with the same green satin, quilted. The outside is covered with it also and the top is decorated with narrow silver gimp.

These rich purses hanging at the side of the person were tempting bait for robbers, who used a special knife to sever them from the girdle, thus getting the name of "cut-purse." This knife was called a cuttle. These "cut-purses" were alluded to in the literature of the times. The ease with which the purse could be cut probably led to its being carried in the pocket, in some instances around the time of James I.¹⁹

In the eighteenth century, a different type of bag came into fashion. It was a long bag, varying from 13 to 24 inches in length, having the

¹⁸Cuming, "History of Purses," p. 140.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 141.

opening in the center. The bag was closed by one or two sliding rings of metal. Usually one end was square and the other tapered to allow for tucking through the belt; however, they were also carried in the hand. Each end was trimmed with tassels, fringe, beads, or buttons. Cuming implied that:

Whatever be the antiquity of 'Drawing the purse-strings,' it doubtless had its origin in times when the mouth of the pouch was closed by cords; and I fancy that the phrase of having a 'long-purse' (implying that the person was very rich) is an allusion to the long purses.²⁰

The long purses were made of fabric, leather, or knitted of silk like a stocking. The colored leather long-purses had leather tassels.²¹ They were called stocking or miser purses. One described by Cuming²² was of wash leather, "printed in imitation of netting....It has a sober, substantial air about it, well suited to the character of the fine old English gentleman of the reign of our second George."

Of exquisite workmanship were the armorial bags of France. They were made to carry medals. Usually they were of velvet embroidered in gold and silver and were of a draw-string type. On Plate XXII, the lower center one is of greenish blue silk, bearing in the center the crest of a member of Orleans. In the center oval of blue silk are three embroidered fleur-de-lis of gold, rising above a silver label. Around the coat-of-arms, a crest of the coronet of the princes of blood, are embroidered bands of the order of the King. The outside of the bag is decorated with fleur-de-lis separated by ornaments of five leaves.²³

²⁰ Ibid., p. 142.

²¹ Talbot Hughes, Dress Design (New York, 1913), p. 240.

²² Cuming, "History of Purses," p. 142

²³ D'Allemagne, Pl. C.

Both England and France used draw-string bags in the eighteenth century that were made of four shield shaped pieces sewed together to form four sides. The seams were trimmed with braid. Sometimes a tassel was added at the bottom. These were often worked to resemble tapestry. Plate XXIII is a reproduction of a photograph of some of these bags from the collection of R. Richebe.²⁴

Plate XXIV shows another type of shield-shaped bag of Greece or Turkey of the eighteenth century. This bag is made of silk net; the floral spray is embroidered in needlepoint. The draw-strings, the trimming on the upper edge of the bag, and the bag itself all appear to be very fragile.

There is evidence that beads had been in limited use for sometime as decoration for bags. In the late eighteenth century, however, this type of work became a real art. In France, bags were made entirely of beads. This purse-making technique was called "sable" or "sanded" work. The beads were almost minute in size, giving the effect of fine tapestry. Photographs of selected examples of "sanded" bags from the collection of Albert Figdor are shown on Plate XXV. In describing the bag in the lower right hand corner of the plate, D'Allemagne wrote:

On one of the faces is a coat-of-arms in which is seen a fiery heart surmounted on a royal crown held by two angels.....On another face of the purse one observes a ducal crown borne by two angels and surmounted on a medallion containing the bust of a lady....

The presence of a like object on a ducal crown and a royal crown authorizes the attribution of this purse to King Louis XV, which he had executed for the duchess du Barry.²⁵

Metal mesh was introduced as a means of decoration during the late renaissance. Italian craftsmen were already skilled in the art of fine metal work. Plate XXVI is a photograph of an Italian bag of the seventeenth

²⁴Ibid., Pl. XCIX.

²⁵Ibid., Pl. CV.

century now in the Metropolitan Museum. It is a square draw-string bag of satin with an outer covering of metal mesh in a spider web design. The draw-strings terminate in very ornate tassels.

The refinement of taste during the renaissance is reflected in the costumes and accessories of the period. The traditional types of bags continued in favor, but the interest in elaborate adornment and ingenious craftsmanship was evidenced in all designs.

Draw-string bags continued to be carried throughout the renaissance. In this period, however, there were many adaptations of this design. One of the simplest ones was the little, plain, white leather pouch found in the wall of St. Mary's church. It was not trimmed in any way. Another one simple in form was the City Purse of London. It is an almost square draw-string bag but the fabric is rich in appearance, being of cloth of gold elaborately embroidered in gold wire. Still another square draw-string bag, depending on its decoration for interest, was the one shown on Plate XVII along with the St. Mary's purse. Its ornamentation was in the form of embossed embroidery and tassels worked in gold, silver, and pink silk. In the seventeenth century the shield-shape was introduced as a new contour in the draw-string bags of England and France. These bags were made in four shield-shaped sections. The seams were trimmed in braid and the material finely embroidered to resemble tapestry. Still another change in the shape of draw-string bags were the classically designed ones of France. They were constructed of rigid frames resembling Greek vases and were of tin, thin wood, leather, and heavy cardboard, either covered with fabric or lacquered. Perhaps the most elaborate renaissance draw-string type bags were the armorial bags of France. These bags were richly embroidered in gold, silver, and colored silks. The family crest was

usually worked on the round bottom and the circular side was almost covered with additional motifs. Medals, tokens, and seals were carried in them.

The long purse continued to be carried; however, two important changes were made in the design. The opening was changed to the center and the purse was closed by one or two sliding metal rings instead of the traditional draw-string fastening. Generally one end was square and the other tapered to allow for tucking through the belt. These were made of fabric, leather, or were knitted of silk, and were trimmed with beads, fringe, and tassels. This type of purse was called a miser or stocking purse.

Purses with metal frames also remained in favor but they, too, changed somewhat in form. The frames and purses of the early middle ages had hung flat against the person; late in the renaissance the frame was made with a protruding hoop to which the bag proper was attached. The bag was either closed by a hinged lid or by the material of the bag itself being drawn over the hoop of the frame. The tops of these frames were very ornate, replicas of castles being worked in the metal. Some frames continued to have moral sentences and the Tau-cross engraved on them.

The applied designs on renaissance purses were often unrestrained and the techniques of application were novel and complicated. Among the types of adornment used on bags of the renaissance were stump-work, embossed embroidery, metal braids and tassels, sablework, metal mesh, damascened work and buttons and silk loops.

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Artisan's Shop

From D'Allemagne, Pl. CCCV

ENT

STRATH



Le fabricant d'aumônières, d'après « Panoplia omnium illiberalium mechanicarum artium »,
de Hartman Schopperum, Francfort-sur-le-Mein, 1578.

Draw-string Bags

From the Journal of the British Archaeological Association

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Fig. 1.

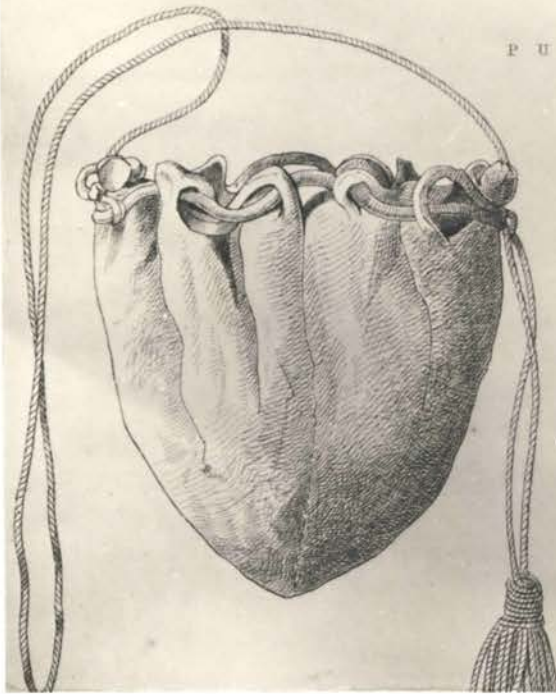


Fig. 2.

PURSES.



The City Purse of London

By Courtesy of the Guildhall Library, London



THE CITY PURSE

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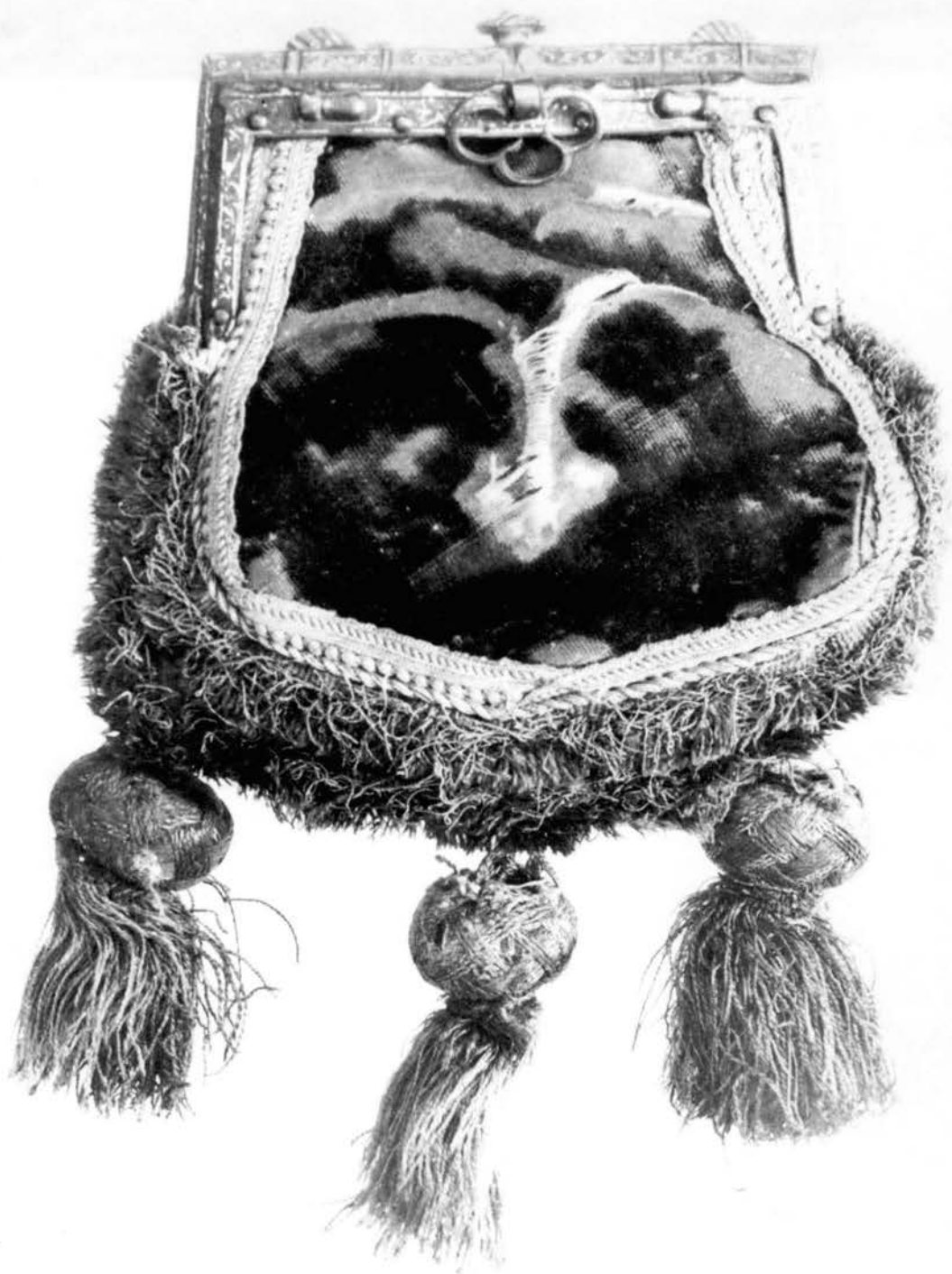
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German, XVI Century

By Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum

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Escarcelles

From D'Allemagne

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Escarcelles et bourses montées en cuir ou en filet. xvi^e siècle.
(Collection Albert Figdor.)

RE PARCHMENT

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1

Gentleman's Pouch

Journal of the British Archaeological Association

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GREEN SATIN POUCH TEMP. JAC. 1.

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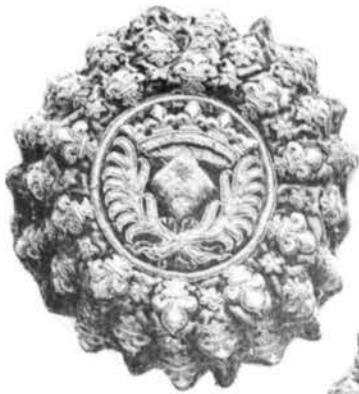
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Armorial Bags of France

D'Allemagne

PARCHMENT

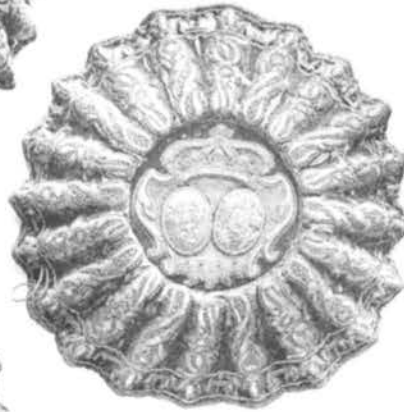
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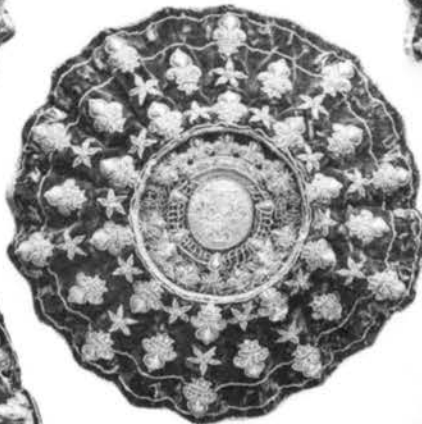
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3



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7



6



8

Draw-string Eggs of France

D'Alletagne, Pl. XXXI



1



2



3



4

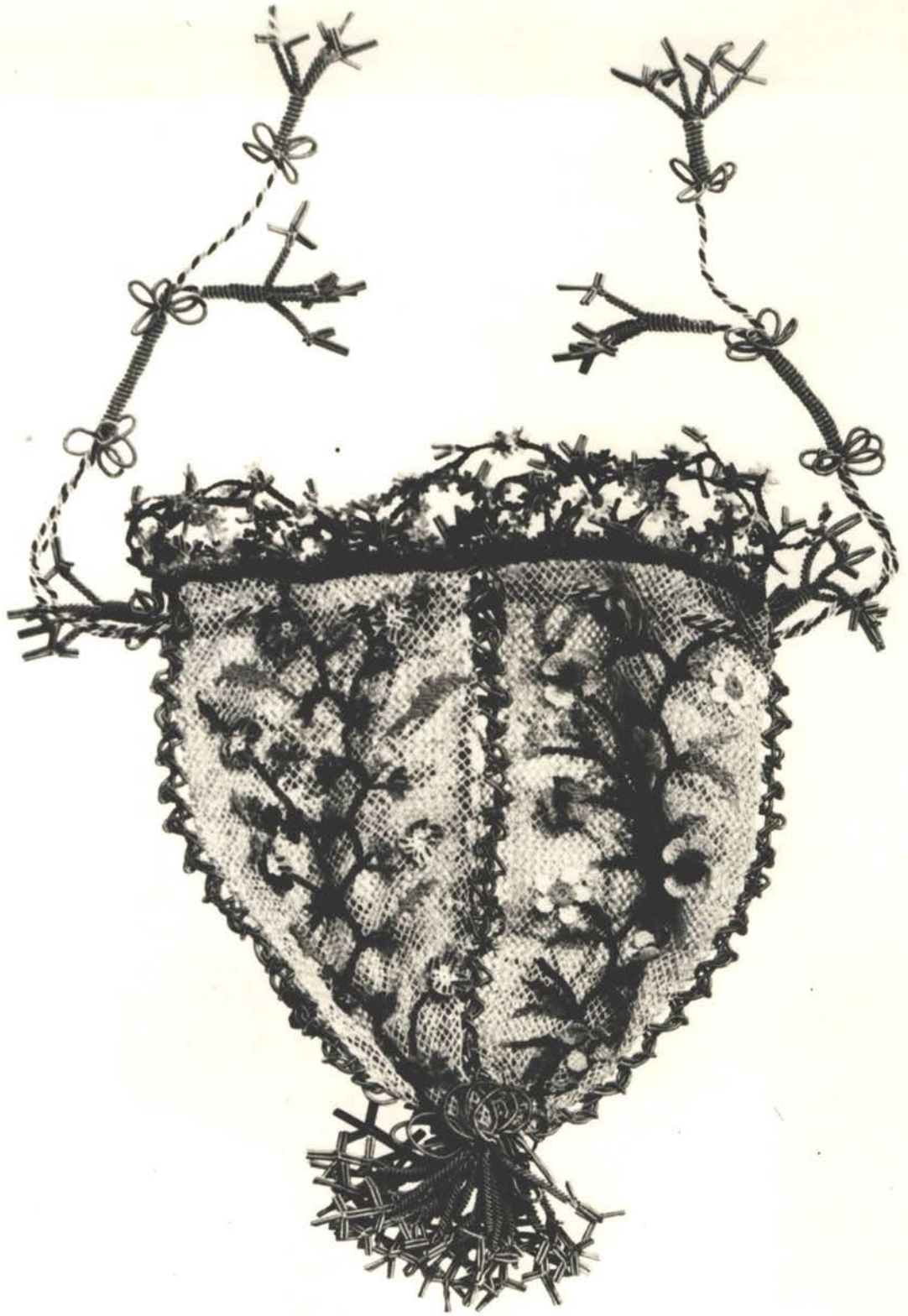


5

Greek or Turkish -- XVIII Century

Silk Net and Needlepoint

By Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum



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"Sable" Work

D'Allemagne, Pl. CV

STRATHMORE

100%



1



2



3



5



4



6



7

Pochettes à papiers. — Bourses en broderie de perles appelée « sablé », XVIII^e siècle.
Pochettes à briquet, XIX^e siècle.
(Collection Albert Figdor.)

Metal Mesh Purse lined with Satin.

Italian, XVII Century

By Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum



CHAPTER IV
COLONIAL PURSES

With the beginning of the nineteenth century, fashion decreed that ladies' gowns be made of flimsy and sheer materials. Since hoops and full skirts had disappeared, there was not enough material, and what there was was not of sufficient bulk for underpockets in milady's dress. Hence the balatine or reticule was revived and became such a necessary part of a lady's costume that it was called an indispensable. McClellan¹ stated that no lady of fashion appeared in public without one. It held her essence bottle, handkerchief, card money, and fan. In only a few years, the term reticule was changed to ridicule.

Indispensables or ridicules were made of rich materials, silk, brocade, velvet, satin, lutestring, silver tissue, scarlet, and leather. They were decorated with embroidery, sequins, petit point, beads, buillon, and spangles; and they were edged with tassels, scotch ribbon, lace, fringe, and cords. The ridicules were carried by long ribbons or cords, by which they were hung on the backs of chairs when not in use.² Some ladies possessed several in order to match their different gowns at all times.

On September 9, 1802, Elizabeth Southgate wrote in a letter to her

¹Elizabeth McClellan, Historic Dress in America, 1800-1870 (Philadelphia, 1910), pp. 81, 82.

²Katherine Morris Lester, Accessories of Dress (Peoria, Illinois, 1940), p. 422.

mother in Salem, Massachusetts: "Martha sent me a most elegant indispensable, white lute-string spangled with silver."³

During the trial of Lord Melville in 1896, the rows of pretty peeresses carried dainty sandwiches in their reticule to eat during the court session.⁴

According to McClellan,⁵ in America from 1820-1830 the ridicules were made in the latest English fashion. They were woven without a seam and were decorated with scotch plaid ribbon which was also used for the draw-string.⁶

Occasionally, aumonieres were still hung from girdles. In the April, 1864, issue of Godey's Lady's Book, an aumoniere was pictured with its matching belt. Appearing in this issue was this description:

"Aumoniere Girdle"

This girdle can be made of either black or a fancy colored silk, and trimmed with black velvet with a white edge and narrow guipure lace. The pocket is merely large enough to contain the pocket handkerchief. The band is fastened around the waist, and the bag is suspended from it on the left side.⁷

Another aumoniere was shown in the August number of the same magazine. It was called "The Marguerite Pouch, or Aumoniere." Both of these bags are illustrated on Plate XXVII. The following instructions were included for

³Clarence Cook, A Girl's Life Eighty Years Ago (New York, 1887), p. 143.

⁴Alice Morse Earle, Two Centuries of Costume in America (New York, 1910), p. 592.

⁵Elizabeth McClellan, Historic Dress in America, 1800-1870, p. 147.

⁶Elizabeth Burris-Meyer, This is Fashion (New York, 1943), p. 279.

⁷"Aumoniere Girdle." Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (April, 1864), p. 389.

the making of an aumoniere:

"The Marguerite Pouch, or Aumoniere"

Our pattern is in dark blue velvet, lined with white silk. The ornaments, the lock and chain, are in steel. The velvet may be worked with a pattern in braiding or beads, the steel hanging ornaments replaced by tassels made with steel beads, and the chain by a blue velvet ribbon embroidered with the same. Pouches of this description are very much worn made of leather, and in this material correspond well with the leather trimmings and waistbands now so much in vogue. They make a pretty finish to a linsey dress.⁸

The classic-shaped bags of the renaissance period continued to be carried in the nineteenth century.⁹ The upper part of the nineteenth century bag was made of a soft fabric but it retained the rigid form used in the previous period for the bottom section of the bag. The top was closed by a draw-string.¹⁰ This type of purse was called a tulip bag and is illustrated on Plate XXVIII, fig. 3. The following suggestions for crocheting such a bag were given in Godey's Lady's Book of April, 1864:

"Crochet Tulip Bag"

This small bag need not be made of any expensive material, and therefore Alpine pink and a middle shade of green single Berlin wool can be used, with the edges worked in gold twine. If, however, it is made for a purse, then middle size netting silk and fine gold twist should be substituted.¹¹

An example of the tulip-shaped bag is the photograph on Plate XXIX. This Venetian bag of 1860-1870 is made of plaid silk. The tips of the "petals" are trimmed with tassels.

Morroco leather bags came into style around 1822, and continued to be used to some degree during the remainder of the century.¹² These bags

⁸Jane Weaver, "The Marguerite Pouch." Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (August, 1864), p. 165.

⁹Burris-Meyer, p. 269.

¹⁰Fairfax Proudfit Walkup, Dressing the Part (New York, 1950), p. 266.

¹¹"Crochet Tulip Bag," Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (April, 1864), pp. 385, 386.

¹²Burris-Meyer, p. 279.

were small and rectangular in form, and were carried by leather handles. The handles were suspended from loops which projected from the top of a smooth metal frame. Various types of simple metal clasps which extended from the frame were used as fastenings. The little purse pictured on Plate I is one of this type. Men used tobacco pouches which were very similar to the hand-bags carried by the ladies, except they did not have handles.¹³

Approximately in the middle of the nineteenth century, large purses were carried by the French people. Some of these were made of tortoise shell, some were inlaid with gold and silver, and occasionally some were set with jewels.¹⁴

Beaded bags which had been fashionable in the last century continued in favor. In the early part of this period the usual price of a beaded bag was five dollars. Many ladies now made their own purses, some even raising silk worms in order to be assured of a supply of strong purse silk.¹⁵ These beaded bags were worked on canvas, were knitted, or were crocheted. Whereas most of the beaded bags of former years were flat and envelope shaped, they now were more often round, being worked from the center of the bottom, out, around, and up.

Patterns for hand-bags were regarded as treasured possessions, and were coveted by the owner. They were the cause of much jealousy, sometimes with sad results. Earle wrote of such an incident in "Two Centuries of Costume in America":

¹³Jane Weaver, "Tobacco Pouch." Peterson's Magazine (December, 1858), p. 445.

¹⁴Burris-Meyer, p. 275.

¹⁵Marjorie M. Mohler, "Old Beaded Bags as a Hobby." Hobbies (September, 1940), p. 51.

In one New England town Matilda Emerson reigned a queen of bag-makers; her patterns were beyond compare; one of a Dutch scene with a windmill was the envy of all who beheld it. She was the rival with Ann Green for the affections of the minister, a solemn widower, whose sister kept house for him and his three motherless children. Mathilda gave to the parson's sister the written rules for a wonderful bead bag (the design having originated in Boston), a bag which displayed when finished a funeral willow tree and urn and grass grown grave, in shaded greys and purple and white on a black background; a properly solemn bag. But when the pastor's sister essayed to knit this trapping of woe, it proved a sad jumble of unmeaning lines, for Ann Green had taken secretly the rules from the knitters work-box, and had changed the penciled rules in every line. When the hodge-podge appeared where orderly symbols of gloom should have been seen, the sister believed that Matilda had purposely written them wrong in order to preserve her prestige as a bag-knitter; and she so prejudiced her brother that he coldly turned from Matilda and married, not Ann, but a widow from another town. Disappointed of her desired husband, Ann tormented herself with her New England conscience until she revealed her wickedness to poor Matilda, whose reinstatement in the person's esteem could not repay her loss of his affections.¹⁶

Popular designs in these patterns were of flowers, trees, horses, barns, houses, and churches. Mottos were worked into the designs. Most of these were rather sentimental. On occasion only the name of the giver, the date, and the name of the recipient were used. Another motto was "Money maketh mirth where it is plenth, but small is the mirth when the purse is empty."¹⁷

A beaded bag from Norway with an unusual design is shown on Plate XXX. The locomotive in this design is embroidered in pearls.

The periodicals of the times included directions for making bags. In Peterson's Magazine, October, 1850, were the following directions for a purse by Mlle. Defour:

"Purse for Gold Pieces"

Materials.—Two skeins of blue, one ditto of white, crochet silk; one skein of fine gold twist, and a round gilt top; Penelope crochet No. 3.....

¹⁶ Earle, pp. 593, 594.

¹⁷ Maud Pastor, "It's in the Bag." American Home (March, 1940).

If preferred, gold or steel beads may be substituted for gold twist, and will look equally well.

For carrying gold dollars, quarter eagles, or half eagles, this purse is very convenient.¹⁸

In the same magazine, in the June issue of 1858, appeared the design shown on Plate XXVIII, fig. 1 and the following directions for a lady's reticule by Mrs. Jane Weaver:

"Lady's Reticule"

Materials.—Six yards of gold cord, one skein of gold thread, No. 1, and three skeins of silk of any bright color that may be desired, blue, green or cherry, being the most suitable. The trimming consists of a handsome tassel, a cord, and two small gold balls.

The gold cord here introduced is a Parisian novelty, which is extremely pretty as well as durable, and much used for purses, bags, work-baskets, etc.

It is about the thickness of very fine window-blind cord, and very brilliant, though not, of course, made of pure gold. The way of using it in crochet is to work over it in the same way as over ordinary cord for mats, but instead of taking the stitches close together, and so completely covering the cord, they must be far apart, and with very long chains to them, so that the gold is the principle thing visible, and the silk is comparatively little seen.

.....

As the reticule is only intended to hold a handkerchief, it need not be very large. Worked in the same manner and with the same materials, but not exceeding three inches in diameter, it makes a very strong and novel purse for a lady. As it is not flat, however, it is not suitable for the pocket.¹⁹

In the September issue of the same year of this magazine there was the illustration shown on Plate XXVIII, fig. 2. Mrs. Weaver gave the following directions for this bag:

"Short Purse in Crochet"

Materials.—2 skeins of fine Crimson Netting Silk; 2 skeins of Black ditto, 4 skeins of gold thread of the same size; a yard of fine Crimson cord; 2 small Buillon Slides, and a very handsome tassel of Gold, Crimson and Black intermingled.....

¹⁸ Mlle. Defour, "Purse for Gold Pieces." Peterson's Magazine (October, 1850), p. 169.

¹⁹ Jane Weaver, "Lady's Reticule." Peterson's Magazine (June, 1858), pp. 456-457.

The purse is to be finished by sewing on a very handsome French tassel at the bottom of the Purse.²⁰

Mrs. Weaver wrote directions for still another bag in the November issue of this magazine:

"Short Purse in Crochet"

Taste and elegance in purses have lately been superceded by durability. Leather has been substituted for silk netting and beads, but has been found too heavy for general use—not but what the power of daily becoming lighter lies in the nature of all purses. We might also assert it as a fact that the empty purse is the heaviest that can be carried. Notwithstanding this peculiar principle in the article, the silk purse is decidedly prettier than the leather one, and being an especially feminine manufacture, and one which, when completed, is so essentially necessary to the happiness of most ladies, and the use of which is so well understood by them, that it certainly belongs to the corner of our Work-Table department. The design we have given is in very simple crochet in one color but the effect is very pretty, and it forms a very strong purse. Colors are always a matter of taste; crimson, dark green, bright blue and brown, are most generally chosen.....When the top is made a sufficient depth, it is fastened on to a pretty steel or gilt clasp, with two tassels to correspond, and form a very useful and pretty article, either for a present or for personal use.²¹

✓A crocheted purse of France of the nineteenth century is shown on Plate XXXI. It is made of Irish crochet and lined with white satin. This type of crochet was very popular in the United States in the last part of the nineteenth century and remained in fashion until World War I.

Stocking or miser purses continued in favor until the last quarter of this century. ✓A miser purse is illustrated on Plate XXXII, fig. 1. Godey's Lady's Book published in May, 1852, included directions for making this one of canvas:

"Embroidered Purse"

Materials.—Half a yard of French Canvas, No. 40, 5 inches wide, 2 hanks of large gold beads, 8 strings of transparent white, of the same size, 4 skeins of emerald green floss silk, 2 skeins of netting silk to

²⁰Ibid., (September, 1858), pp. 216-217.

²¹Jane Weaver, "Short Purse in Crochet." Peterson's Magazine (November, 1858), pp. 364-365.

match, and a half yard of sarsnet ribbon of the same hue; 2 fringed purse ends and rings.

The mode of working this purse, by doing the ends on fine canvas, is one now first introduced to the public. It is particularly suitable for those who carry a good deal of money about with them, as the ends can never tear or give way. We all know the consequences of a dropped loop in knitting, or of a stitch giving way in crochet; and how often a handsome purse is rendered utterly useless....Embroidered ends are quite free from this defect, and have a very handsome appearance.....²²

Plate XXXII, fig. 3, pictures a bag of the same shape which appeared in this magazine in July, 1858. This miser purse was trimmed in a different manner, however, flowers were applied to each end.²³ Also in this issue, an illustration and the directions for making a "Mourning Purse" were given.²⁴ This purse is pictured on Plate XXXII, fig. 2. It was to be made in black and silver, and was a much simpler design than other miser purses. Plate XXXIII is a miser purse of Norway. It is knitted and decorated with cut steel beads. Some very delicate and beautiful French beaded miser purses of this period are shown on Plate XXXIV.²⁵

Plate XXXV depicts a lady's traveling bag. It is of the same type as the miser purse.

"Lady's Traveling-bag or Pouch Pompadour"

This elegant traveling bag is especially suitable for a lady. It is made in the shape of a very large purse, and is of violet rep embroidered in white. These colors may, of course, be changed according to taste. Two and a half yards of rep or other woolen material, twenty-seven inches in breadth are required, and the same quantity of white calico for lining; two and a quarter yards of silk fringe, and five skeins of white embroidery silk for trimming; two ivory rings and some pearl buttons. The pattern is not worked twice on the same side of the purse, but on one side at one end

²²"Embroidered Purse," Godey's Lady's Book (May, 1852), p. 401.

²³Peterson's Magazine (July, 1858), p. 8.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 69-70.

²⁵D'Allemagne, Les Accessoires du Coetume et du Mobilier (Paris, 1828), Pl. CIII.

and on the opposite at the other, so that both patterns may show when the bag hangs over the arm. The bag is entirely lined, a pocket is formed on each side, and a slit is made in the center of the bag exactly in the same way as in a purse; two rings are slipped over and the slit is further fastened by pearl buttons and silk loops. Each pocket is edged with silk fringe up to the slit in the middle. These pockets are very convenient to hold the numberless small articles which a lady always wishes to have by her during a journey. The embroidery is worked in a satin stitch, the inner part of the fine pattern being filled up with colored silk. The material should be stretched over a frame in order to be worked neatly. The bag is very easy to make up, being, in fact, nothing but a purse of very large dimensions. The embroidery can easily be dispensed with, and a useful bag made of plain materials. One of the advantages that this bag possesses over the ordinary kind is that it really has a graceful appearance when properly carried, which can scarcely be said of many traveling pouches.²⁶

√ Flat purses were used to some extent. They were usually made of satin and embroidered. Plate XXXVI shows one of these bags from Finland. They were made of one flat piece folded in the middle. The shape resembled a card case.

↓ Toward the end of the century, chatelaine bags were the height of fashion. These hung from the belt by a chain slipped over a metal hook. The hook shown on Plate XXXVII from which hangs the round purse of cut steel beads is of sterling silver. It belongs to Mrs. Carl Yates of Grapevine, Texas, who wore it at the turn of the century. These chatelaine bags were knitted, crocheted, made of velvet, and other fancy materials and were beaded.²⁷ The metal frames were made of oxidized silver. Hall stated that a few of the bags were made of leather and were suitable only for the tailored costume.²⁸ These bags were square, rectangular, or round in shape and were flat.

²⁶"Lady's Traveling-bag or Pouch Pompadour." Godsey's Lady's Book and Magazine (December, 1864), p. 537.

²⁷Wallrup, p. 326.

²⁸Carrie A. Hall, From Hoopskirts to Nudity (Caldwell, Idaho, 1938), p. 86.

During the last years of the eighteenth century and the early ones of the nineteenth, a new steel making technique was developed which made the creation of intricate work on jewelry and purses possible. Jewelry combining paste, cut-steel, and mother-of-pearl filled a longing for luxury on the part of those who could not afford diamonds and precious stones. Purses were made of tiny links of steel decorated with flowers, ribbons, buttons, etc. of the same material. ✓ Some of these purses from the D'Allemagne collection are shown on Plate XXXVIII.²⁹ Handsome buckles and buttons were also made by this new process.

Purses were built with rigid steel frames. Some were in the shape of classic Greek vases as shown on Plate XXXIX, center left and center right. The one on the center left is covered with stamped white leather and decorated with ornaments of polished steel. The one on the center right is also covered with leather. Each side is gadrooned and there are steel moldings around the edge.³⁰

Others were made of folding frames. The bag at the top center of the same plate shows an accordion frame, covered with moire. It is trimmed with metallic passementerie from which are suspended the tassels.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century and in the nineteenth, ladies of Colonial America carried their caps in silk-lined baskets. These were usually large enough to hold three or four caps. One such basket is to be found in the Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, Massachusetts. This basket belonged to Ann Grant, a famously beautiful Southern belle. She no doubt traveled around a great deal and had a need for several of these dainty bits of needlework. After a lady returned from her travels

²⁹D'Allemagne, Pl. CCCVIII.

³⁰Ibid., P. CII.

and removed her bonnet, she then donned one of these little caps.³¹ Some bags today are almost duplicates of Ann Grant's little cap basket.

A great variety of bags and purses were carried in the Colonial period; some were new in contour and design, while others were purse designs of the previous periods interpreted in novel materials, in unique trimmings, and of a different scale.

Records indicated that the amoniere which had been worn in the renaissance continued in favor into the nineteenth century. Several interpretations of the draw-string bag were in fashion. The indispensable, or ridicule, reflects the same contour employed in designs of earlier periods. The ridicules of colonial period, however, were intricately trimmed and were made in a variety of colors and materials. The beaded draw-string bags were much in favor and the patterns for them were treasured possessions.

The miser purse or long-purse of the renaissance became one of the popular bag designs of the colonial period. The shape of this purse remained the same, but the trimmings became ostentatious. The rap traveling-bag was an exaggerated version of the miser purse.

Flat purses shaped like card cases were popular. The purses were usually made of satin or fine silk and were embroidered.

The Morroco leather hand-bag was introduced in 1822 and became one of the popular purse designs of the late nineteenth century. It was a plain, rectangular bag attached to a simple metal frame and was carried by a leather handle.

³¹Georgiana Brown Harbesow, American Needlework (New York, 1938), p. 146.

Classic shaped bags continued to be carried in the Colonial period. The vase-shaped Venetian bag and the crocheted tulip bag are examples of this style. The classic purses of France differed slightly from these two bags in that the French purses were made with a rigid metal framework. Two popular forms of this framework were the urn and the accordion.

Purses made of steel mesh were fashionable in the early nineteenth century. The mesh bag was made by interlocking small chain-like links together to create the desired form. The bags were usually adorned with a self-trim.

Near the close of the century, bags were again hung from the belt. These so-called "chatelaine" bags were flat, metal-framed purses which were crocheted or made of fabric. Irish crochet was one of the most popular crochet techniques used. Many of these chatelaine bags had oxidized silver frames.

Purses carried in former centuries which continued to be fashionable during the Colonial period were the amoniere, the reticule, the miser purse, the classic vase-shaped bag, and the purse made of metal mesh. The Morocco leather handbag was the new purse design of this era.

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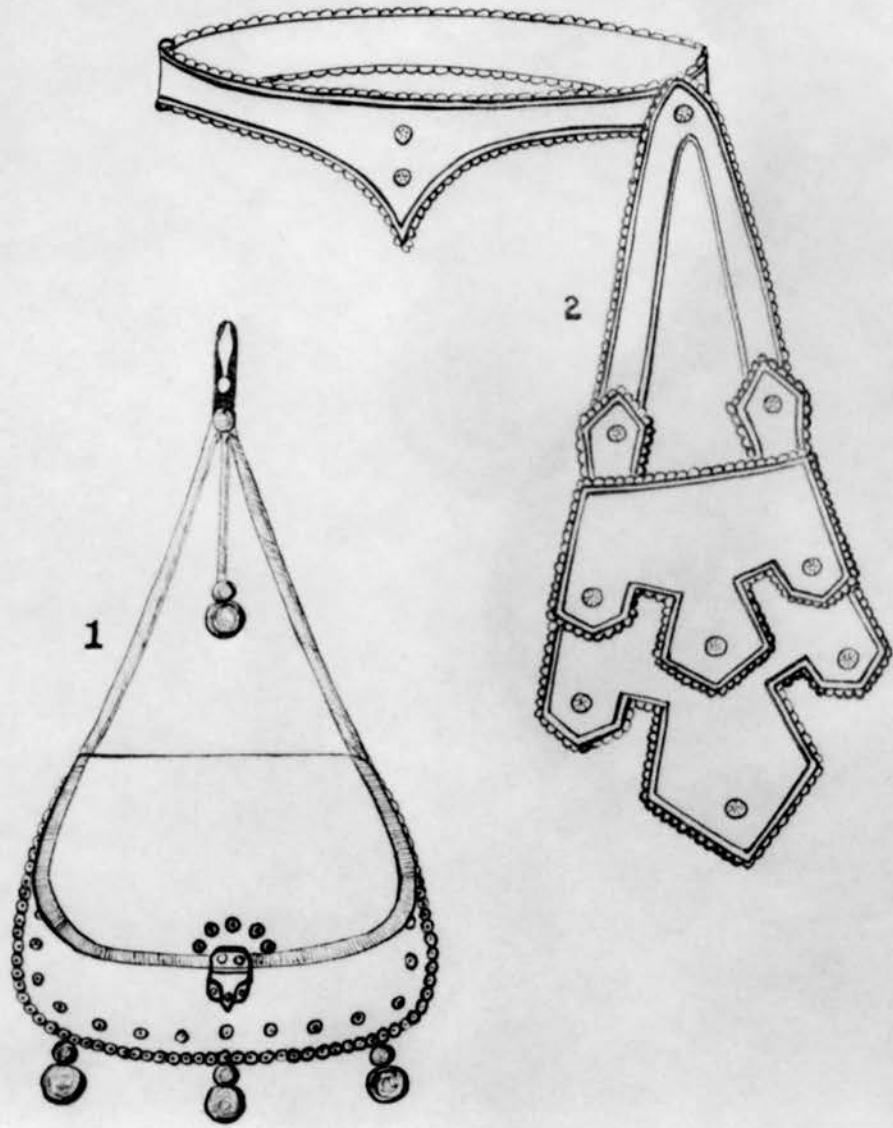
Aumonieres

- Fig. 1. "Marguerite Pouch"
Fig. 2. Aumoniere Girdle

Sketched by the author from Godey's Lady's Book

RE PARCHMENT

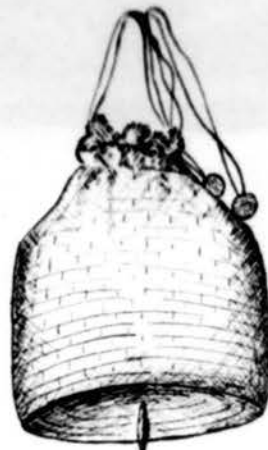
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Reticules

- Fig. 1. Lady's Reticule.
- Fig. 2. Short Purse in Crochet.
- Fig. 3. Crochet Tulip Bag

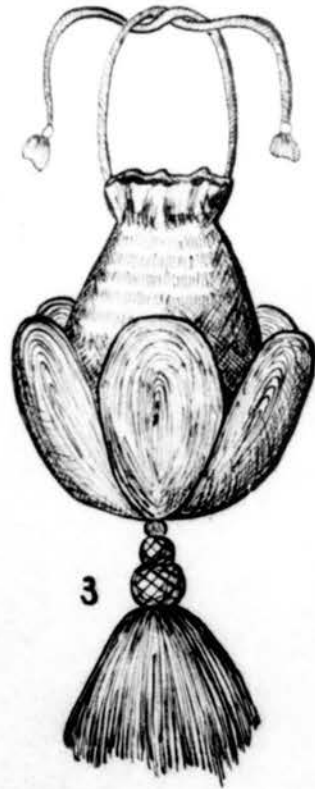
Figs. 1 and 2 sketched by the author from Peterson's Magazine and Fig. 3 from Godey's Lady's Book



1



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3

Silk bag of Venice, 1860-70.

By Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum.



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Embroidered Purse from Norway (1860)

By Courtesy of the
Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo, Norway.

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STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

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French—XIX Century

By Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum

PARCHMENT

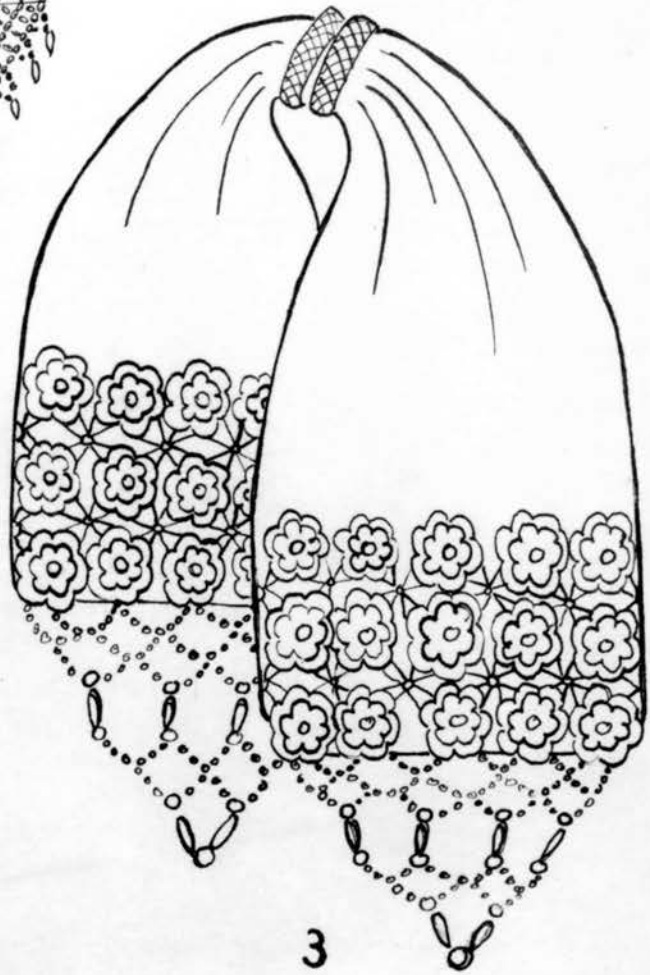
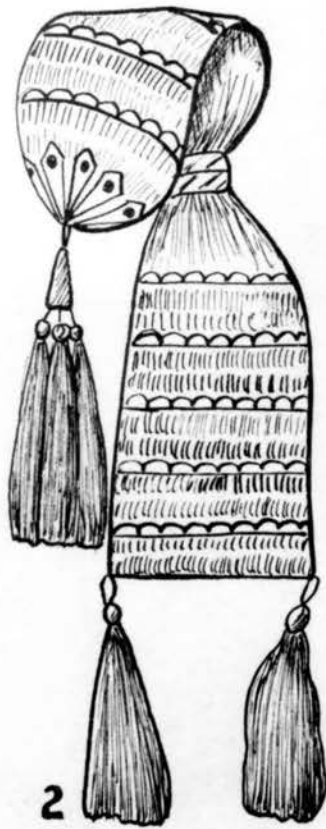
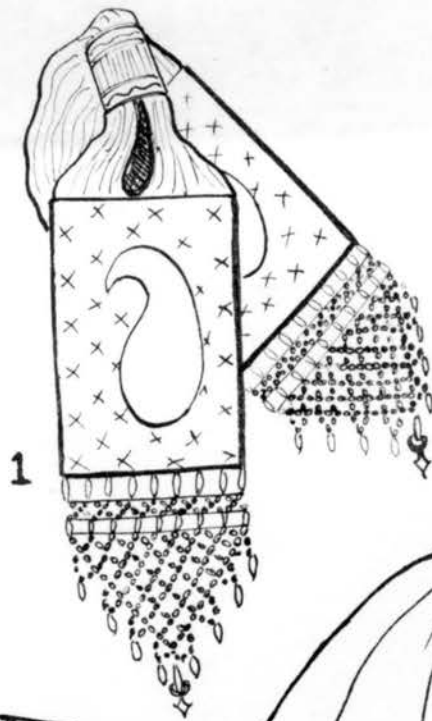
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Miser Purses

- Fig. 1. "Embroidered Purse"
- Fig. 2. Miser Purse
- Fig. 3. "Mourning Purse"

Sketched by the author from Godwin's Lady's Book.



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Miser Purse of Norway—XIX Century

By Courtesy of the
Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo, Norway.

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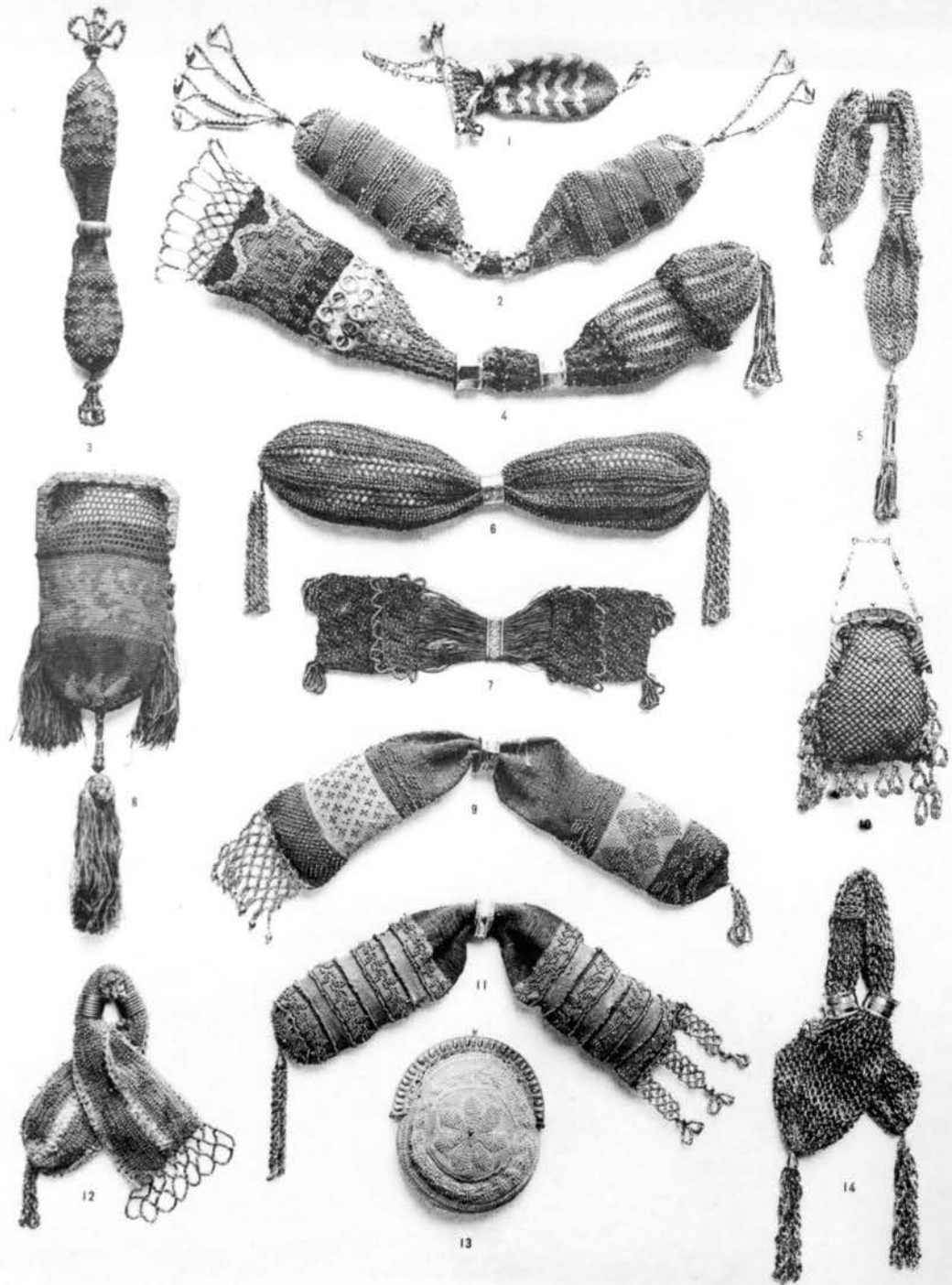


Miser Purses of France

From D'Allemagne

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Bourses longues et porte-monnaie en filet de soie garni d'acier. Milieu du XIX^e siècle.
(Collection H.-R. D'Allemagne.)

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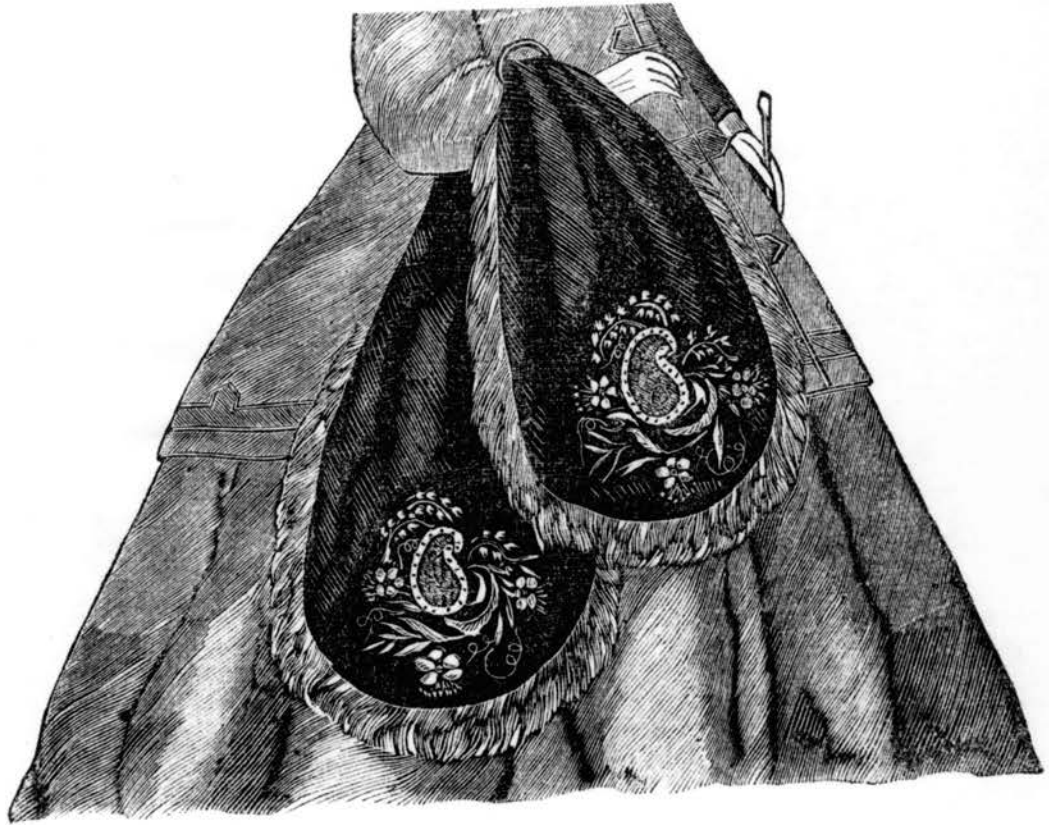
Lady's Traveling-Bag or

Pouch Pompadour

From Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine

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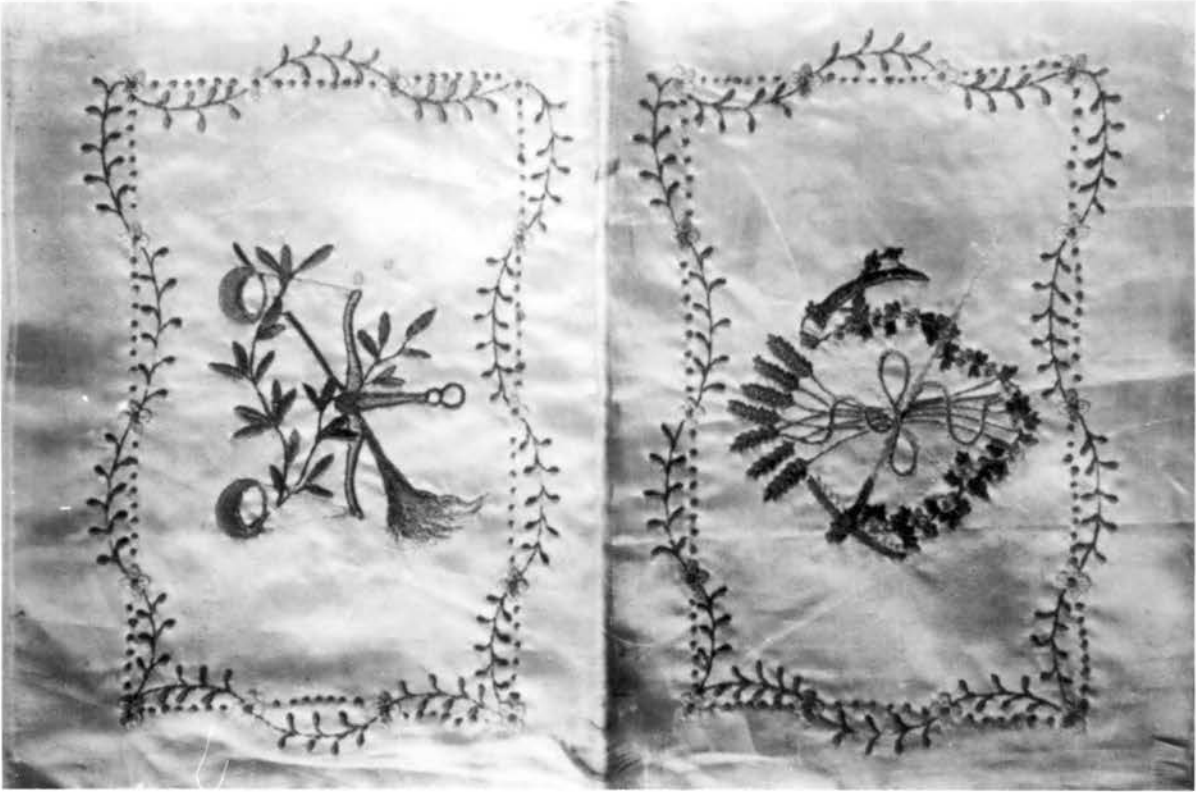
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Satin Purse of Finland

By Courtesy of the Arkeologiska Avdelningen,
Helsinki, Finland.

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STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

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Chatelaine Bags and Bag Hook

From the collection of Mrs. Carl Yates.

PARCHMENT

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Steel Bags

From D'Allemagne

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

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LES ACCESSOIRES DU COSTUME ET DU MOBILIER



STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% RAG U.S.A.

Classic Bags of France

From D'Allemagne

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Réticules et sacs de dames montés en acier. XIX^e siècle.
(Collection Doisteau. Musée des Arts Décoratifs.)

CHAPTER V

TWENTIETH CENTURY HANDBAGS

Chatelaine bags were still very much in vogue in the early years of the twentieth century. They were made of leather, silk, or were beaded. In the Home Needlework Magazine of January, 1900, the following directions were given for such a bag:

Crocheted silk purses and bags are very popular, and the revival of crochet work is quite marked. In the shops we see a large assortment of beaded purses and bags of all sizes and descriptions. The crocheted silk chatelaine bag illustrated has an oxidized silver clasp top, with chain and ring, and a geometrical design worked in bright steel beads....The oxidized silver top, with chain and ring, will cost about \$1.25.¹

Also shown in the same issue was a gate-top purse. This purse had a folding metal hoop with a ring on each side, which collapsed into a small circle and was closed by a top that snapped over the frame. These frames were usually of oxidized silver; on occasion, stones were set in the top. On Plate XL is pictured a gate-top bag of this type which belongs to the author's mother. In 1900, these gate-top frames were purchased for thirty or forty cents.

A greater variety of materials were used in the twentieth century than ever before. Popular leathers were alligator, walrus, seal, calf, lizard, deer, snake, and kangaroo. Fabrics included crepe de chine, satins, velvets, brocades, damasks, and many others.²

¹E. & P. Verges, "Crocheted Silk Chatelaine Bag." Home Needlework Magazine (January, 1900), p. 48.

²Katherine Morris Lester, Accessories of Dress (Peoria, Illinois, 1940), p. 424.

Designers in this period began to consider the interiors of the purses. Both the linings and the appointments assumed roles of importance. Rich and interesting materials such as satins, taffetas, both plain and plaid, soft kid skins, and suede were used. Compartments, coin purses, and mirrors were included in almost all bags and purses. Occasionally, the mirrors were set into the linings. In 1940, fine bags began to include toilette articles such as a comb, nail file, compact, lipstick, and cologne bottle and a cigarette case.

Beaded bags of different kinds continued in favor. Plates XLI and XLIII show some bags of this type from the collection of Mrs. E. V. Sheerer of Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Purses were made for every occasion and for every season. Evening bags were made of gold and silver mesh.³ These bags were small and designed to hold only the handkerchief and a few coins. In the after-math of World War I, money carried in these small bags was called "mad-money." It derived its name from the then current idea that if a young lady, called a "flapper" in the slang of the day, became angry with her escort or "date," she would not have to walk home but would have enough money to "ride the street car" or to take a taxi.

In 1922, an envelope bag became fashionable.⁴ Ladies were wearing wrap-around coats which were clutched about the hips. Since the coat did not fasten but was held together with the hand, the envelope bag could be held under the arm and was a very convenient adjunct to the costume. The envelope bag continued to be used in one form or another for many years.

During the thirties, the economic crisis in the United States caused

³Ibid., p. 424.

⁴Elizabeth Burris-Meyer, This is Fashion (New York, 1943), p. 285.

a stalemate in the fashion industry. The purse designs of this epoch were unimaginative and limited in number.

In the forties, however, with the increased flow of money resulting from the employment of women in industry during World War II, many new accessories appeared on the market. The government restricted the use of vital metals, hence the manufacturers could not make purse-frames. Thus the draw-string pouch again became very popular. Many times, the draw-strings were run through casings, the bags did not even have metal eyelets.

Another influence of World War II was the revival of the shoulder bag. Due to the need of the service woman for having her hands free when working or marching, the designers, in working out the uniforms for the WAVES and the WACS, created bags which had long straps and were hung over the shoulder. This type of bag was quickly adopted by the public and is still popular today. In the late forties, when the ranch life of western United States began to influence fashion to a great extent, these purses acquired the character of feed-bags and saddle-bags. With this trend also came the revival of leather tooling as a means of decoration. Plate XLIII is a photograph of tooled leather bags made for the author by her son, John Paul Klingstedt. A shoulder-bag made by the author of natural colored deer skin and decorated with brass ornaments is shown on Plate XLIV.

In 1945, bags made of covered rigid frames became popular. While the covered bags of the renaissance and colonial periods were classic in design, these were box-shaped. They were covered with velvet, satin, damask, jersey, woolen materials, leathers, and synthetic fabrics. Plate XLV shows a group of these box-like purses.

A closing device introduced for the first time about 1930 was the zipper. This was a sliding metal fastener. They were used to close inner compartments of the purse as well as the purse itself.

Economics and world affairs have probably influenced all phases of costume design in the first half of the twentieth century as much as in any previous period of our history. There has been great industrial advancement on one hand and two world wars on the other. Synthetics have played an important part in the designs of clothing and of accessories.

Many purse designs popular in the colonial period have continued in favor in the twentieth century. However, there has been a greater variety of fabrics and leathers used than ever before. The interiors of the purses have assumed greater importance. Two new devices for closing bags were introduced, the gate-top frame which was a collapsible hoop made of metal, and the zipper.

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Gate-top Bag

From the collection of Mrs. Carl Yates

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Beaded Bags of the Twentieth Century

From the collection of Mrs. E. V. Sheerar

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RAG U.S.A.



PARCHMENT

U.S.A.

Beaded Bags of the Twentieth Century
From the collection of Mrs. E. V. Sheerar

STRATHMORE PARCH

100% RAG U.S.A.



STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100 % RAG U.S.A.

Tooled leather bags
belonging to the author.
Made by John Paul Klingstedt

PARCHMENT

U.S.A.



PARCHMENT

Shoulder-bag of deer skin

Made by the author.

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STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100% RAG U.S.A.

Box bags of 1953.

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CHAPTER VI

IN CONCLUSION

In tracing the development of purses through the ages archaeological data and literature has revealed that definite styles, materials, and methods of decoration have become more refined as the culture advanced. The study has revealed that most types of bags in use in the twentieth century have evolved from simpler prototypes identified in earlier periods.

The simple pouch with a draw-string closing, one of the earliest bags of which we have any record, has appeared and reappeared throughout the centuries. People of ancient Greece and Rome were portrayed in sculpture and ceramics carrying pouches of this type. Effigies of people of the medieval ages also showed this style of bag. In the renaissance era, the seal and medal bags of both England and the continent, the contribution purses of the churches, the City Purse of London, the little purse found in the wall of St. Mary's Church, and many others now preserved in museums were draw-string bags. In the Colonial period, most of the reticules and indispensables were of a draw-string design. The fashions of the twentieth century continued to decree the draw-string bag as a type fitted to the mode of the day. The style varied in interpretation from the small petite beaded bags of the first quarter of the century to the large felt draw-string purses of the thirties. These bags have always been made of both leather and fabrics of different kinds. The fabrics used have shown the skill of the craftsmen of the times, becoming richer as the art of weaving progressed. In regard to the decoration employed on the draw-string bags,

this too, has been an indication of the craftsmanship of the people as well as the mode of the day. Leather tooling, embroidery, and beading have all been fashionable at intervals.

Purses with metal frames of one design or another have been used since the early years of the Middle Ages. They have changed from straight bars to very ornate frames and back again to simple frames. The first frames were hung from the belt or girdle, then later carried by handles, and then held under the arm. Today purses with frames are carried by handles or held in the hand.

It has not been ascertained when purses were first closed by a clasp. ✓
The most authentic data in regard to clasps has been secured from the following discourse by Cuming:

Among other undecided points in the history of purses is the period when they were first closed with a clasp or snap. The gipciere in the Louvre, already referred to, is stated to have a steel clasp; and the steel clasp of another lately seen in France, is graven with the date 1508. But the clasp certainly did not come into much employ until the last half of the seventeenth century. An embroidered pouch in the British Museum, bearing the date 1693, has a gilt metal clasp; and in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is a curious purse-clasp of the time of William III, in which pistols were secreted, and so contrived that their charge enters the hand of the party attempting to open it, if its real construction be unknown. This specimen is of interest as being the one which gave Sir Walter Scott the idea of guarding the pouch of Rob Roy with a like apparatus. "I advise no man to attempt opening this sporran till he has my secret," are the cautionary words of Rob Roy to bailie Jarvie.¹

Shoulder-bags also had a forerunner in ancient times. The shoulder-bag shown in Plate VI, fig. 8, taken from an ancient Greek vase, was very similar to those in use in the twentieth century.

The wicker and straw bags have also evolved from ancient sources. Plate VI, fig. 6, depicts a tobacco pouch used by women of ancient Egypt. In the same plate, fig. 4 is a wicker fish basket of ancient Greece.

¹Cuming, "History of Purses," Journal of the British Archaeological Association, Vol. XIV (London, 1858), p. 143.

Ladies of Colonial America carried their delicately embroidered cape in baskets. The handles were attached to the center of the rounded tops. The fashions in the spring of 1953 included little basket-bags with flat hinged lids decorated with painted peasant designs. These tops are hinged across the center just under the handle and open from each end very much as some picnic baskets do. This purse form also had an ancestor in the past as shown in the baskets carried by the peasants of the Black Forest. Father Stork led the children on a glorious pilgrimage on the twenty-second of February, in search of nuts, fruit, and small cakes. The baskets were used to catch the favors as they were thrown to them.²

Ladies have carried box-like bags since 1945. They are made in many shapes, covered with either leather or fabric and carried by handles. The same principle was employed in France in the eighteenth century, except the shape was classic.

As a rule, purses were used in the past for purposes corresponding to those of today. In the twentieth century compartments were added to the interiors or linings of the purses to accommodate the various articles carried in them. Purses have always been used for coins of different kinds. Other treasures kept in them were articles such as medals, rings, jewels, ornaments, strings of beads, ingots of gold, seals, reliques of devotion, talismans and card money. Measures of health were not forgotten as home remedies and medicinal herbs were included. Our vitamin and aspirin tablets are but a modern version of the same need. Implements of business were also necessary as records state that keys, weights, scissors, gay gilt knives, note pads, and writing tablets were carried in them. To take the place of these, we have substituted car keys, check books, and grocery

²Georgianna Brown Harbeson. American Needlework (New York, 1938), p. 146.

lists. In place of our chewing gum and mints, ladies of the past carried dainty sandwiches, preserved fruits, and cocoa leaves. Cosmetics seem to have been considered as important then as they are now. Among these listed in each period were combs, perfume bottles, scent apples, essence bottles, and scent. Other items mentioned were flint, sticks of sulphur, tobacco, handkerchiefs, fans, gloves, a lock of hair, a tiny billet doux and pincushions.

The material available regarding purses carried by ancient people is limited to archaeological data ascertained from stone carvings and pottery. These sources revealed the use of draw-string bags, shoulder bags, basket-like bags, and bucket-shaped bags. The movable handles on the bucket-shaped bags indicate an advancement in the skills of the craftsmen.

The first written documentary material concerning bags was found in the works of Matthew Paris in the Medieval period. The archaeological findings and documentary materials exemplify the experimentation in the contour and the fastenings of medieval purses. One of the most noteworthy purse-making techniques of this era was the introduction of metal beams or frames as an integral part of the design. Compartments were added and new techniques of decoration were used.

Purses of the Renaissance reflected the superfluous living of the period. Emphasis was on the method of decoration and some of the bags were jewel-like in appearance. New purse-making techniques introduced during this period were metal mesh, "sanded" work, and covered, rigid frames.

Victorian sentimentality was reflected in the purses of the Colonial period. Handwork was a fashionable hobby of the ladies and sewing circles were of primary importance in the society of the century. The profuse descriptions of bags and purses in the ladies' magazines of the period indicate the importance placed on these accessories of the costume.

Purse designs in the twentieth century appear to have been more sensitive to the social, political, and economic upheavals than those designs of foregoing cultures.

Research in this area has been hampered somewhat in that most of the documentary materials had to be secured from great distances. More intensive research in the field would undoubtedly reveal pertinent facts not yet alluded to in the present literature.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

The following word-list is a compilation of terms used during a specific era to refer to bags and purses. These terms were obtained from primary and secondary source materials.

| | | |
|------------|---------------|------------------|
| Alloiere | Escerelle | Porte-monnaie |
| Almoner | | Porte-feuille |
| Almoniere | Follis | Porte-feuille |
| Alner | Funda | Pouchet |
| Alwar | Gibbeciere | Pucker |
| Amner | Gibciere | Pung |
| Amoniere | Gibeciere | Punge |
| Aulmoniere | Gipciere | Purs |
| Aumoniere | Gypciere | Purse |
| | Gypcyre | Puse |
| Balantine | | |
| Balantion | Gypsere | Reticule |
| Bourses | Hand-bag | Reticulum |
| Bragetto | | Ridicule |
| Bulga | Indispensible | |
| Bursa | Marsupium | Sacculus |
| Bygirdlum | | Saccus |
| Byrsa | Palke | Saracen alms bag |
| | Pasceolus | Sarrasenaies |
| Cabas | Pence Jug | Sporran |
| Chatelaine | Pocket book | |
| Crumena | Poke | |

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APPENDIX B

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

FROM MUSEUMS AND LEARNED SOCIETIES

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EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

WASHINGTON 8, D. C.

December 19, 1952

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt
Oklahoma Agricultural and
Mechanical College
Department of Household Arts
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

Thank you for your letter of December 9. I should like to suggest that for information on ancient bags and purses, you write to the Nordic Museum in Stockholm. The address is Nordiska Museet, Djurgarden, Stockholm.

Also, I think you might be able to obtain information from Professor Sigurd Erixon, Institutet for folklivsforskning, Lusthusporten, Djurgarden, Stockholm.

If you can find any of the following historical publications in the main library of the University of Minnesota or in some other big public library, I think that you would be able to locate some valuable and interesting material in one of them. I am referring to either "Fataburen," "Rig," or "Kulturen."

Very truly yours,

(Miss) Berit Stiernstedt
Attache'

EMBASSY OF IRAQ

WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 18, 1952

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt
Household Arts Department
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

This morning our office received a book which we thought might be useful to you. It is called "A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of BOOKS AND PERIODICALS IN WESTERN LANGUAGES DEALING WITH THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST with Special Emphasis on Medieval and Modern Times." It is edited by Richard Ettinghausen and is brought out by the Middle East Institute, 1830 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

Hoping you find this information of interest,

I remain,

Very truly yours,

K. Sherifi
Cultural Attache

KS:mLc

THE MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE

1830 Nineteenth Street, N. W.

Washington 9, D. C.

February 9, 1953

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt
Oklahoma Agricultural and
Mechanical College
Division of Home Economics
Department of Household Arts
Stillwater, Okla.

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

I believe that you may obtain material for your thesis on the development of bag and purse design through contacting the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art since they have published illustrated books on art in the Muslim world including rug, carpet, textile, silk designs, and other similar art forms. Several of these books are listed in the bibliography you mentioned - A SELECTED AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS AND PERIODICALS IN WESTERN LANGUAGES DEALING WITH THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST. It may be possible for you to obtain such publications through the library loan service with the assistance of your University Library who can contact the Near East Division of the Library of Congress for you.

Since the copyright on the bibliography which Mr. Ettinghausen edited is held by the American Council of Learned Societies, 1219-16th St. N.W., Washington, D. C., I suggest that you write to their Executive Secretary regarding use of items in your thesis.

Under separate cover I am sending you selected material regarding the publications of The Middle East Institute.

Sincerely yours,

Frances C. Mattison
Information Service

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Washington 25, D. C.

Reference Department

Division of General Reference and Bibliography

February 25, 1953

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

We have received your inquiry of February 4.

The Library of Congress has compiled no bibliography on the subject of your inquiry, and the pressure of current official duties does not permit members of our staff to undertake a compilation of this kind at the present time.

We sincerely regret that we are unable to be of service to you in this instance.

Very truly yours,

Roy P. Basler
Chief
General Reference and
Bibliography Division

P.S. The Main Catalog of the Library of Congress contains no subject headings on bags and purses. Your letter is returned herewith.

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
Department of Household Arts
Stillwater, Oklahoma

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
 UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM

Washington 25, D. C.

November 24, 1952

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt
 Department of Household Arts
 Agricultural and Mechanical College
 Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of November 16, requesting available material concerning bags and purses.

In reply, we regret that the Smithsonian Institution has no publication on those topics, nor do we have a listing of specimens in the national collections. However, 8" x 10" photographic prints of a number of these of American Indian and European (mostly French) provenience, are available at 40 cents each. A selection of prints can be made for you by our staff, if desired. Remittance should be made direct to the Smithsonian Institution.

Our division of archeology has a limited number of prints of woven fabrics including several from prehistoric Peru.

We are enclosing a selected bibliography of European and American costumes which you may find useful. You are also referred to an illustrated paper, "Aspects of aboriginal decorative art in America based on specimens in the United States National Museum," by E. W. Krieger, from the Smithsonian Report for 1930, which includes a number of illustrations and descriptions of woven bags from various American Indian tribes of the United States and Mexico.

You will find brief articles on bags, purses and leather pocketbooks in the Magazine Antiques in the following numbers:

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Vol. I | page 174 | March, 1941 | page 136 |
| Vol. XVIII | " 213 | June, 1942 | " 373 |
| March, 1940 | " 12 | April, 1944 | " 194 |

Finally, you are referred to the monumental work "Textiles of Highland Guatemala," by Lila M. O'Neale, and published in 1945 by the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Very truly yours,

F. M. Setzler
 Head Curator
 Department of Anthropology

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

Washington 6, D. C.

Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor

December 9, 1952

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt
 Oklahoma A & M College
 Household Arts Department
 Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

Although The Society has not published a comprehensive article on bags and purses, you may be interested in seeing some of the following text references to and illustrations of various types of bags, purses, and pocketbooks:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| September, 1932 | - illus. 386; out of print |
| February, 1941 | - pp. 254, 256, ill. 255, 256; \$1.00 |
| June, 1942 | - illus. 821; \$1.00 |
| May, 1943 | - illus. 629; \$1.00 |
| September, 1944 | - illus. 319; \$1.00 |
| July, 1948 | - illus. 95; 60 cents |
| June, 1951 | - illus. 777; 60 cents |
| December, 1952 | - illus. 819; 60 cents |

Copies of issues in print are available from the headquarters of The Society. Possibly you could refer to these references and illustrations in the bound volumes of The Magazine in a large public library.

Thank you for your interest. I trust this information will prove helpful.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Gilbert Grosvenor

GM:j

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY
NEW HAVEN • CONNECTICUT

November 25, 1952

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Household Arts Department,
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

I am sorry to say we have no publication that includes any of our bags or purses. We have several rather nice Persian purses and a few Indian and Burmese bags, but probably nothing that you do not already know. The two places in the East that would have the largest collections of these things are the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Museum of Fine Arts textile collection in Boston. I presume there is some sort of a book on "Bags and Purses," but I do not know of it. Either of the two collections I have mentioned may be able to help you, as they both have excellent libraries.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Margaret T. J. Rowe,
Curator of Textiles

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

NEW HAVEN • CONNECTICUT

December 15, 1952

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
Okla. A. & M. College,
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

The Burmese bags are modern. They are made of two bands woven on a narrow loom, $4 \frac{5}{8}$ inches wide sewed together. "The central band has a continuous pattern, reversed at half length, the side bands are finished at each end below the pattern with a fringe, above the pattern is a plain cloth woven area which makes the carrying strap. The warps are red silk, wefts red cotton with pattern wefts in silver and white, blue, orange, green, magenta and black silk. The selvages are embroidered in green silk and flanked by rows of white seeds." This is the catalog card description of one bag, the other is the same except for the color of the warps and the embroidery. I have seen similar bags in anthropological collections in other museums but I cannot give you any bibliography on them.

Our Persian pieces are 18-19 century, they are embroidered and envelope style purses rather than bags. We also have two of the Peruvian bags for coca. We have one Indian bag of printed cotton 17th century and a number of modern bags made from Greek or Moroccan dresses.

If any of these would interest you, I could order prints for you. We have had to increase the price of prints to 75 cents for a 5 X 7 or \$1. for 8 X 10 and 20 cents postage.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Margaret T. J. Rowe
Curator of Textiles

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Boston 15, Massachusetts

November 21, 1952

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

Your letter addressed to our Museum, asking for a bibliography on bags and purses has been referred to me since most of the "bags and purses" in our Museum are in the Department of Textiles.

I am sorry that you cannot come to the Museum to study our collections. I am afraid that a complete bibliography, such as you outline, would take some weeks of research. You place no limits on your field of interest, but I believe you cannot plan to cover all countries and all periods.

For a beginning, and I know it is only a beginning, I suggest Chapter XIV of the Catalogue of English Domestic Embroidery of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries by John L. Nevinson. This is a catalogue of some of the English embroideries in the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1936. Mr. Nevinson gives us his first reference Domestic Needlework (1926), Chapter XIV by Seligman and Hughes.

I should be very grateful if you would let me know whether these two books are in your library. I should also appreciate it very much if you would let me know as nearly as possible the limits you are placing on your research in this field.

Because most of the references to bags and purses in our library would have to be run down by chapter and even by page, the preparation of such a list as you request, would take considerable time. If I knew just what you were working on, I could send you additions to the list from time to time.

Very sincerely yours,

GT:jke

Curator of Textiles

Mrs. Paul J. Klingstedt
Division of Home Economics
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
Stillwater, Oklahoma

MISS RUTH H. HILL
82 Franklin Street
Peabody, Massachusetts

December 19, 1952

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt,
Stillwater, Oklahoma.

My dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

Your letter was given to me to answer and since receiving it I came across the enclosed article on bags in the "American Home" March 1940. I hope it will be of interest to you. We have several bags similar to the illustrations I have checked, but no information except who gave the bags. Please keep it.

I wish I could be of more assistance to you. Have you used the "Reader Guide" to locate articles about the subject you are interested in?

"Back Number Wilkins" of Danvers, Mass., is very near here and I often go to his place of business, an old barn filled with out of print magazines. Mr. James Fleming, the present owner, is very accommodating and can, as a rule, supply the back numbers wanted.

If I can be of further help to you, please let me know, and I will do what I can.

I am sorry we have no information on bags at the Historical.

Sincerely yours

Librarian of the
Peabody Historical
Society

Corporation of London

Guildhall Museum, E.C.2.

18th November, 1952

Dear Madam,

It is rather difficult to know where to begin to answer your letter.

We have in this Museum, a large collection of gipciere purse frames, of which we could no doubt send you a selection of photographs. On the other hand a collection of identical material is in the London Museum, Kensington Palace, who publish it in their medieval catalogue pp. 158-170.

Then there is the famous purse belonging to the City of London, dating from about 1600.

I imagine that you know all about the magnificent jewelled purse found in the Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo.

There is a good paper on early purse frames in the British Archaeological Association Journal 1st series, vol. 14 (1858) pp. 131-144.

But you probably know all about these references. I do not want to duplicate the information which you already have. Could you perhaps ask me for more specific information.

Yours faithfully,

Norman Cook

Keeper of the Museum

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College,
Household Arts Department,
Stillwater,
Oklahoma, U.S.A.

The London Museum
Kensington Palace
London, W8

23rd January, 1953

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt
Okla. A. & M. College
Household Arts Dept.
Stillwater, Okla.
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

Thank you for your letter dated 31st December, 1952. This Museum has a large collection of purses and pouches ranging from late medieval times onwards. We can supply photographs of any of our exhibits; the price of a half-plate photograph is 2s.6d. As the choice is so wide, however, I would be glad if you could be more specific as to the date and type of purse you require.

As most of the late medieval purses have been excavated, in most instances the perishable material (fabric or leather) has disappeared, leaving the decorated metal frames to which the material was sewn. We have a number of these frames. Of rather later, sixteenth century examples, there are some fairly complete leather pouches.

Your best source of illustrations of complete medieval purses is in contemporary MSS, effigies and brasses. Perhaps the best of early representations (dated about 1250) is in Matthew Paris's "Historia Maior" (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS.16, f.95, and reproduced in "Walpole Society," Vol. XIV, Pl. XIII, which may be available to you).

As Mr. Cook of the Guildhall Museum pointed out, our "Medieval Catalogue" has a liberally illustrated section dealing with early purses.

Yours faithfully,
Brian W. Spencer
Assistant Keeper

CITY MUSEUM

PARK ROW

LEEDS, 1

18th November, 1952.

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
Oklahoma A. & M. College,
Household Arts Department,
Stillwater,
Oklahoma,
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

My friend and colleague, Mr. Musgrave, of Temple Newsam House has forwarded your letter to me. He tells me that he has nothing in Temple Newsam which would be of any help. We have no publications, pamphlets, pictures or books here. The only publication I know and to which I think you might refer is the London Museum Catalogue No. 7 (Medieval Catalogue) where a number of plates and diagrams of purse frames, together with several Medieval purses are shown. They give a very fair idea in a dozen pages, of the purses in the Middle Ages. Coming on to more recent times, in our small Folk Museum at Kirkstall we have about thirty purses of the last century. We have no illustrations of them but would consider having some made if you were to want them.

The Castle Museum at York is extremely likely to have a good collection of purses although I do not think they have illustrations of their series.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ David E. Owen

Director.

Corporation of London

Guildhall Library, E.C.2.

11th February, 1953.

Dear Madam,

Your letter of the 2nd February, 1953, addressed to the Lord Mayor, has been passed to me.

We have a photograph of the Purse, but it is not suitable for "Copycat" reproduction. I am sending therefore a "Copycat" of a small engraving of the Purse, which should answer your purpose. There is no charge for this.

Yours faithfully,
Raymond Smith
Librarian and Curator.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt,
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
Household Arts Dept.,
Stillwater, Oklahoma,
U.S.A.

The British Museum,
London, W.C.1
Department of British and Medieval
Antiquities
28 January 1953

Dear Madam,

There are no bags or purses in our Early Christian collection, nor is there any mention of them in Dalton's Catalogue. We have a number of medieval purse-frames of the well-known kind and the only example of importance is the Sutton Hoo purse (of the 7th century) which you must know already. We have only two references to further material:

Proceedings of the Soc. of Antiquities, 1st. Ser. IV;

London, 1859, p. 293

London Museum, Medieval Catalogue, (1940), p. 158.

Yours faithfully,

P. Lasko

Assistant Keeper

Mrs. Paul J. Klingstedt,

Oklahoma A. & M. College,

Stillwater, Okla., U.S.A.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, W. C. 1

Department of British and Medieval Antiquities

2. 3. 53.

Dear Madam,

You may reproduce the photograph of the Sutton Hoo purse to which you refer. You no doubt realise that the photo. shows the lid of the purse—the contents was contained in a bag or pouch, which had totally perished.

You should acknowledge the use of the photograph 'by Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.'

Yours faithfully,

/s/ Bruce Milford

Assistant Keeper

Musee Des Arts Decoratifs
Palais du Louvre
Pavillon de Marsan
107, Rue de Rivoli, Paris

Mrs. P. Klingstedt
Oklahoma A & M College
U.S.A.

November the 18th 1952

Dear Madam,

In reply to your letter of the 9th of November, I regret to tell you that we have no publication on bags. Our Museum possess Leather handcases of the XVII^o and XVI^o centuries (photographs of them can be obtained: 18 x 24 cm: 200 frs. each, two cases on each photo) and a collection of XVIIIth century perle purses, and a few from the nineteenth century, photographs of which, don't exist but could be made at your charge.

If you wish I can look up in our Library if there is anything interesting, give me more details about the period you request.

I remain, Dear Madam, yours truly.

Monique de Wouters
Chargee de Mission

Agora Excavations
American School of Classical Studies
Athens, Greece
January 12, 1953.

Mrs. Paul J. Klingstedt
Department of Household Arts
Division of Home Economics
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
Stillwater, Oklahoma,
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt:

Your letter of November 9, 1952, addressed to the Corinth Museum and enquiring about ancient bags and purses, has been turned over to me.

I enclose some sketches of types of bags and purses. Most of these are taken from Greek vases of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. The pictures on these vases are our best source for the details of private life among the Greeks, but, although there are a great many such pictures, very few bags and purses are represented. As you can see from the enclosed sketches, these are apt to be nothing more than a string-bag, or a small purse which reminds one of the knitted purses of late Victorian times.

Enclosed also is a list to show the sources of our sketches. You will probably find these books, and others similar, in the Okla. University library. So far as we know, there is no special study of bags and purses in antiquity.

Sincerely yours,
Lucy Talcott
Agora Excavations Records
American School of Classical Studies,
Athens

Athens 24 November 1952

Dear Sirs,

Replying to your letter of the 9th inst. I inform you that for what you are interested you can find in the Catalogue of the Museums as well as and O. M. Dalton, Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East of the British Museum, London, 1901.

Assistant of Byzantine Museum

G.S.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES OF SCOTLAND
 Queen Street
 Edinburgh, 2

16th December, 1952

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
 Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College,
 Household Arts Department,
 Stillwater,
 Oklahoma,
 U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

There are no publications by this Museum which deal with bags or purses. I can supply, however, photographs of Scottish Highland sporrans, at (2/) \$.28 each; and the National Portrait Gallery have prints of portraits in their possession showing how they were worn in the 17 and 18th centuries. Their prints cost 2/6d. (\$.35)

The sporran is a survival of the normal European medieval purse or reticule and repeats the development of the medieval purse from a single leather bag to a bag suspended from a metal (cast brass, or rarely, silver) frame. The change seems to have taken place before 1700, though frameless bags were used after that date. The frame is found in three forms, semi-circular, rectangular and semi-octagonal. They often have engraved decoration and many are locked by an elaborate system of snibs and catches. The bag is small, usually deer-skin, sometimes seal, otter or badger. The large horse-hair monstrosities came in about 1800 and have unfortunately been popularised by the Highland regiments of the Army. At the end of the 18th century also, the sporran was removed from the waist belt and hung on a separate strap.

Illustrations of the notes on sporrans may be found in James Drummond's "Ancient Scottish Weapons etc." published by Waterston & Waterston, London and Edinburgh, 1881. There is also an excellent summary of the medieval purse in the London Museum Catalogue (No. 7) of 1940.

I shall be pleased to supply photographs and any more details desired.

Yours faithfully,

S. Maxwell

Assistant Keeper.

NORDISKA MUSEET

STOCKHOLM

November 17th, 1952.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt,
Division of Home Economics,
Oklahoma A. & M. College,
Stillwater, Oklahoma,
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs Klingstedt,

On account of your letter of November 9th I wish to tell you that there are in Nordiska museet a great collection of bags and purses. Sorry to say they have not been worked through so we cannot give you any list of them. If you want photographs of them we will of course make some for you. A new photographing costs at the moment 15 sw. crowns. If only you tell us the type of bags and from what time they should be we are sure to find something for you.

Sincerely

Elisabet Stavenow
fil. kand.

GOTEBORGS MUSEUM

GOTEBORG,

November 29, 1952.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt
Division of Home Economics
Oklahoma. A. & M. College
Stillwater, Oklahoma
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

We thank you for your letter of November 9, 1952, but are sorry to say that none of our staff has written anything about the things you are interested in. Those are of course represented in our collections. To give a fair judgement of the similar objects as well as description is rather difficult in a letter. We think this can only be settled by yourself if you intend to visit Sweden and Gothenburg.

We would suggest that you address your question to the Nordiska Museet and the Kungliga Biblioteket (The Royal Library) both in Stockholm, from which you might get better information. If it is unknown to you, though we have all reason to believe the contrary, we like to put your attention upon Hilaire and Meyer Hiler, Bibliography of Costume, ed. New York 1939.

Yours truly,

Arvid Flygare,

Goteborgs Museum

Historiska Avd.

STATENS HISTORISKA MUSEUM

OCH

KUNGL. MYNTKABINETTET

Stockholm 3rd December 1952.

ARCHMENT
S.A.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt
Division of Home Economics
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Stillwater, Oklahoma.
U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

In reply to your inquiry I take pleasure in forwarding to you two off-prints of articles on money bags from Wiking times. The subject has not been treated in Swedish literature, and our collection is very poor in objects of this type.

Yours sincerely

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT
100% RAG U.S.A.

Wilhelm Holmqvist.

Dear Sir:

Below, you will find some information and sources about the subjects you ask for.

In Turkey, among the Turks, although, generally purses and bags serve for the same purpose, some of them differ according to the shape and kind of the object they contain.

Purses are made with various materials and technique according to the value of their contents. The classification of workmanship would be as follows

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| a- Knitting | c- Leather |
| b- cloth | d- Plant tissue |

On the other hand, the classification according to the contents would be

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| a- Money | e- Pipe |
| b- Seal | f- Knife |
| c- Watch | g- Lighter |
| d- Tobacco | |

These kinds are used and are usually carried by men on their suits and in their pockets.

The ones used by women have different types with special knots and are tied on their waists. The same size and a little bigger ones are used to preserve books, ink pots, salt, spoons, coffee sets, etc. and are among the properties of the house.

The person, who has taken up this subject for the first time in Turkey is Kenan Ozbel, a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul. He has a small book on this subject, and a rich collection which has been bought and is being exposed by the Ankara Etnografya Muzesi. In the same museum there is also another collection as there is one in the embroidery section of the Topkapi Sarayi Muzesi.

For the pictures of the designs and plates, concerning the subject, you can refer to the museums mentioned above.

If you have any other wishes I would be glad to fulfill them.

Sincerely yours,
 Muzaffer Batur
 Assistant of the Topkap
 Sardy Museum
 Suctanaluyet
 Istanbul, Turkey

NORSK FOLKEMUSEUM

OSLO

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
Division of Home Economics,
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College,
Stillwater - Oklahoma.
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt,

Norsk Folkemuseum has received your letter of November 9th, and regret to tell you that any special literature on bags and purses do not exist in Norway.

All over the country there are plenty of bags from the last 200 years. Most of them were worn by the women in their belts and are woven and embroidered in many colours. I send you a photo of one of these purses. It derives from Kongsvoild, Dovre, Oppland, owner Mrs. Berte Ouren. Dated last half of 18th century.

A few purses are knitted, and I send you a photo of one from the 19th century. Owner Mrs. Matea Lunde, Follebu, S.Gudbrandsdal.

Bags were in former days not as common as purses. The one on the photo is dated c. 1860. The locomotive is embroidered in pearls. Owner Norsk Folkemuseum.

Bags and purses like these are no longer made today, but some places they still make part of the women's festival costume.

Bygdoy/Oslo, November 20th, 1952.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Blindheim

Curator

MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Stranmillis

Belfast

Mrs. P. T. Klingstedt,
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Household Arts Dept.
Stillwater, Okla., U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

Your inquiry has been referred to me by the Director. Unfortunately we have little material of the type you specify. The only relevant specimens consist of paymaster's money bags dating from the middle ages. They are of white sheep skin and have Latin inscriptions on the front panel.

I shall prepare a detailed description of them as soon as I return to work. At present I am on sick leave and I must apologize for the resulting delay in replying to your letter. I hope it is of no inconvenience to you.

Yours faithfully,

G. B. Thompson
Keeper, Antiquities Division.

STRATHMORE PARCHMENT

100 % RAG U.S.A.

125

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND,
KILDARE STREET,
DUBLIN, C.17.

12th January, 1953.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt,
Division of Home Economics,
Oklahoma A. & M. College,
Stillwater,
Oklahoma,
U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

Your letter of 9th November, 1952, relative to bags and purses has now been referred to me. I am to apologise for the delay in replying after our first formal acknowledgement and hope that this will not have caused you undue inconvenience.

As to your query. You state: "I am interested in securing any information you have concerning bags and purses." Naturally, we shall be pleased to give you any help that lies in our power, but in order to do so we would require to have from you fuller information as to your requirements. I should like to know whether you want particulars of leather objects only, or of bags and purses made, say, of string, basketry, or bark. Further, it would be well to know whether you are interested in Irish objects alone, or whether you require information about non-Irish and non-European specimens that we may have.

The amount of Irish material available to us is extremely limited for the early periods, but we could let you have, at a later stage and if you required them, some photographs. Perhaps, in this connection, you would let me know the chronological range of the bags and purses you are studying?

With renewed apologies for the delay,

Faithfully yours,

/s/ Joseph Raftery

Keeper of Irish Antiquities.

MUSEU NACIONAL DOS COCHES

Lisboa, 25 November, 1952.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt
Oklahoma A. & M. College
Division of Home Economics

Dear Mrs. Klingstedt

The "Museu do Carmo" remitted me a copy of your letter of the 9th. inst. you have adressed to them. In this Museum only exist some bags of the end of the XVIIIth century and beginning of the XIXth., but there are no photos of them.

With my best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Augusto Cardoso Pinto
Director

NATIONAL MUSEET
ILL. AFDELING
DANSK FOLKEMUSEUM
KOBENHAVN

19th November 1952.

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt,
Division of Home Economics,
Oklahoma A. & M. College,
Stillwater, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

Unfortunately we have no books on bags or purses. We have quite a lot of them, especially from the 18th century. If you could give me more special information (which types etc. you want) I could have some photographs taken for you. A photo 13 x 18 costs Danish crowns 17.00.

Perhaps you might be able to get photos of 17th century bags and purses from the Royal Collection at Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen K.

Yours sincerely,

Ellen Andersen
Keeper.

ARKEOLOGISKA KOMMISSIONEN
HISTORISKA AVDELNINGEN
Kansallismuseo, Nationalmuseumet
Helsinki, Helsingfors
25th of November 1952

Mrs. Paul T. Klingstedt,
Division of Home Economics,
Oklahoma A. & M. College,
Stillwater, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

We are in receipt of your letter of the 9th inst concerning bags and purses.

In the National Museum of Finland there are several hundred bags and purses. We however doubt, whether a list of them would be useful to you. Instead we are sending you two photographs, one showing embroidered silk bags (pocket books) which were most common in the end of the 18th century and in the beginning of the 19th century, and the other showing a coin purse of the 19th century.

Yours faithfully,

/s/ Marta Hirn

ARKEOLOGISKA KOMMISSIONEN
HISTORISKA AVDELNINGEN
Kansallismuseo, Nationalmuseum
Helsinki, Helsingfors
23th January 1953.

Mrs. Paul I. Klingstedt,

Dear Mrs. Paul I. Klingstedt,

In answer to your letter of the 31st December 1952
I inform you that you have every right to publish the
photos sent by me.

As to the ancient bags the oldest ones in our
museum originate in the end of 17th century or about
in year 1700, so that unfortunately not even we do
know bags from earlier period.

Yours faithfully

/s/ Marta Hirn

MORE PARCHMENT
100% RAG U.S.A.

THESIS TITLE: PURSES THROUGH THE AGES

AUTHOR: MARY ESTILL YATES KLINGSTEDT

THESIS ADVISER: DR. WATHENA TEMPLE

The content and form have been checked and approved by the author and thesis adviser. The Graduate School Office assumes no responsibility for errors either in form or content. The copies are sent to the bindery just as they are approved by the author and faculty adviser.

TYPIST: GORDON F. CULVER

STRATHMORE P
100% RAG U