

A
SHORT HISTORY
OF
TAPESTRY
—
EUGÈNE MÜNTZ

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A
SHORT HISTORY
OF
TAPESTRY.

*From the Earliest Times to the End of the
18th Century.*

BY
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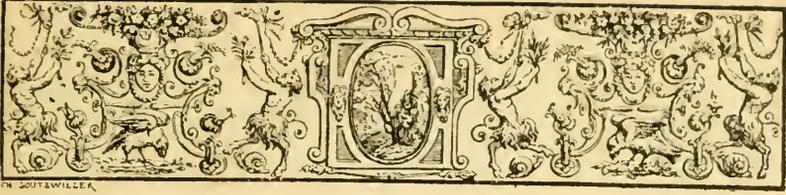
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
INTRODUCTION	xi
—————	
CHAP.	
I. TAPESTRY IN ANCIENT TIMES	1
II. TAPESTRY AMONGST THE GREEKS	15
III. TAPESTRY IN ROME BEFORE THE TRIUMPH OF CHRIS- TIANITY	29
IV. TAPESTRY IN THE EAST FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO THE CRUSADES	42
V. THE LOWER EMPIRE	54
VI. TAPESTRY IN THE WEST, FROM THE NINTH TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY	67
VII. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY	82
VIII. THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY	89
IX. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY	116
X. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY	166
XI. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY (<i>continued</i>)	215
XII. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	242
XIII. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (<i>continued</i>)	285
XIV. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	308
XV. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (<i>continuea</i>)	342
XVI. THE TECHNIQUE OF TAPESTRY	356
APPENDIX	367
INDEXES	387, 389, 391, 393



P R E F A C E .



THE history of tapestry dates but from yesterday. Step by step archives have demonstrated the existence in France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Germany, England, Denmark, and Russia, of numerous workshops, established in even the most obscure localities; while the store-chambers of princes and the treasuries of churches have revealed a large and varied collection of hangings long hidden from view. Admirable lists of tapestries, and of tapestry-workers, moreover, have been drawn up, with all the detail and precision that can be desired.

But the time has now come for completing these learned researches, of the utility of which no one is more sensible than the writer of this essay, by studies of a different kind. Critics, writers on art, amateurs and men of taste ask how tapestry was estimated by the community in the various stages of civilisation; what ideas it expressed, what changes it underwent, and how it affected artistic style. After we have ascertained the date of a hanging, where and how it was woven, and what it represents,

or only succeeds in partly representing, we still want to know its faults or its merits, and whether it is really a work of art, or merely a manufactured production.

We have no longer to struggle with prejudices against decorative art ; but still it must be said that tapestry is not yet in its right position, from this point of view. With the exception of hangings designed from the Raphael cartoons, writers on painting, although they minutely investigate works of the smallest merit, if only they are executed on canvas or panels, do not deign to consider seriously these precious fabrics of gold and silver, which often accurately preserve the conceptions of the greatest masters.

The very abundance of hangings brought to light in these latter days causes this contempt. It is easier to condemn all, than to select the good from the bad amongst thousands of pieces, many of which, it must be admitted, are of but little interest. But the knowledge and artistic enjoyment to be derived from them are too precious to be thus lightly thrown away. If we turn from works which are commonplace or vulgar, and give our attention to those which are of higher merit, innumerable surprises await us. Masterpieces, signed by names famous in painting ; whole schools, traces of which are only to be found in tapestries, pass before our eyes ; inimitable models for vivacity of movement and grandeur

of figure, from the compositions of a Mantegna, a Raphael, a Giulio Romano, to those of a Rubens, a Le Brun, or a Boucher.

The author of this essay will attain his object if he succeed in showing his readers the place held by tapestry—that is, painting by the weaving of coloured threads—in the annals of high art or painting proper.

* * * This translation has been made from the second French Edition, and has received considerable revision at the hands of the Author.

INTRODUCTION.



WHAT IS MEANT BY TAPESTRY? TYPE AND CHARACTER
OF THE ART.

TAPESTRY is a kind of work by means of which coloured threads intertwined on lines stretched vertically or horizontally become one substance, form a web, and produce combinations of lines and tones similar to those obtained by the painter with his brush, by the enameller with his metallic cells and liquid enamels, or by the mosaic-worker with his cubes of marble.

Tapestry is distinguished from embroidery by the fact that in the former the pictures produced are an integral part of the texture, whilst in the latter they are simply worked on the already existing material. It is also distinguished from woven brocaded fabrics by being always hand-work, and not an unlimited mechanical repetition of the same design; so that each production has a distinct individuality.

Tapestry has been termed "Painting in textile fabrics," and justly so, for it is superior to embroidery—which is pre-eminently a work of patience, that may be touched and re-touched—both in boldness of method and in the liberty of interpretation

which it allows. The tapestry worker, except in periods of decline and perversion of taste, interprets and translates the designs—or cartoons, to use the technical term—composed for him by the painter; he is not required to servilely copy a picture or fresco.

Tapestries are not meant to be stretched in a frame, nor to present a smooth, fixed surface, like a panel or canvas. The costly and imperfect illusions enshrined in the piers of the Apollo Gallery at the Louvre have had their day. All the forms of painting—tapestry, mosaic-work, enamelling, pottery—should have free scope to develop the character which distinguishes one from the other. Pliancy and mobility are the distinctive marks of tapestry. It is a great advantage that hangings are so easily portable, and that they adapt themselves so well to architectural decoration. Draped on a wall, they transform a dismal, dilapidated room into a splendid saloon; or they may serve as door-curtains, undulating and yielding easily to the hand that moves them, to fall back at once into their original position.

The ancients used them to add brilliancy to all their festivals, religious ceremonies, royal marriages, funeral obsequies, or triumphal entries. They served equally in the middle ages to deck the streets for processions and festivities, or to decorate the galleries and pavilions that so brilliantly encircled the arenas where tournaments were held. In every age tapestry

has been a most prominent element in decoration, the most highly-esteemed auxiliary of festivals, pomp, and splendour.

We think the style and proper representation of this art should be determined by the two characteristics we have endeavoured to define. It would be unwise to bestow the finish required for painting, properly so called, on the modelling and colouring of draperies made especially for hanging, for each figure depicted is liable to be intersected by folds at the slightest movement; nor, for the same reason, should all the interests of the action be concentrated on a small number of figures. Abundance of detail and many forms should be introduced to give the grouping an appearance of richness, whilst, at the same time, the steadiness, equilibrium, and rhythm of effect must be expressed, without which decorative art is imperfect. To accomplish this, it may, perhaps, be well to place the point of sight very high, as is insisted on by Charles Blanc, in a work too systematic for general use,* so that the figures may be placed one above another, the number of incidents and subjects of interest increased, and that be shown in the upper part of a composition which a painter would place in the distance of his picture.

But we are most struck with the advantages offered by friezes:—The “Triumph of Cæsar,” by

* “Grammaire des Arts décoratifs,” p. 101.

Mantegna, with its fulness of composition and its admirably rhythmical progression; and the "Battle of Ponte Molle," one of the subjects of Rubens' "History of Constantine," a composition in which dash is tempered by due proportion, appear to us perfect models in this respect. The figures in the foreground should be supported by a well filled-in background, and especially by architectural forms when depth is wanted in the composition. The most excellent models for this purpose are, the "Months," in the Trivulce Collection; the "History of St. Aurelius," by Garofalo, in the Cathedral of Ferrara; and parts of the "History of Vulcan," in the National Garde-Meuble, at Paris.*

Brilliance and boldness of colouring should equal clearness and richness of composition. A tapestry designer does not need too learned and complicated tones, nor over-refinement in gradation of colour; nor should he rely too much on light and shade. It is said that the progress of chemistry has increased the number of colours used at the Gobelins to fourteen thousand, but the workman does not require so many to do well.

It is evident from the preceding considerations that tapestry is an essentially sumptuous art, inseparable from the idea of magnificence, and intended to

* The greater part of these hangings have been published in "Tapisseries italiennes" ("Histoire générale de la Tapisserie"), by Eug. Müntz.

charm, captivate, and dazzle far more than to move or instruct. It is not its vocation to depict suffering or abnegation, austerity or high philosophical conceptions. Why should we obstinately seek for dull colouring and the expression of lugubrious ideas, when we have at our disposal the most perfect resources of textile art—all the delicacy of dyes, of silk, of gold and silver thread, of purple and scarlet?

Poverty of material and thinness of composition are repugnant to the art specially fitted for prosperous epochs and joyous nations. "Christ Bearing the Cross," or the "Pietà," although they have furnished such admirable subjects for frescoes and panels to Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Roger van der Weyden, are out of place in tapestry. As a general rule, indeed, the simplicity and familiarity of scenes from the New Testament render them ill-suited for representation in tapestry.

Raphael has experienced this in his "Acts of the Apostles;" compositions which, although so decorative when they contain a great number of figures, varied and brilliant costumes, luxurious accessories, and rich architectural surroundings, as in the "Beautiful Gate of the Temple," the "Sacrifice at Lystra," and even the "Paul Preaching at Athens," are strikingly insufficient, beautiful and eloquent as they are in themselves, when the artist is forced to concentrate attention on a small number of figures, clothed in "divine rags." The "Miraculous Draught

of Fishes," and "The Charge to Peter," would be masterpieces painted as frescoes; in tapestry, they seem to us to violate all the rules of the art.

The stories of the Old Testament, on the contrary, have always, thanks to their epic character, supplied the most brilliant subjects for tapestries. The same may be said of mythology, of scenes from secular history, and of allegorical representations. The best subjects for decorative tapestry—the only real and true tapestry—are the encounters of armies, the pomps of triumphs or apotheoses, or even combats between the virtues and the vices, where all the figures are clothed in rich Gothic dress, and move in picturesque procession.

A SHORT HISTORY OF TAPESTRY.

CHAPTER I.

TAPESTRY IN ANCIENT TIMES.

THE EGYPTIANS. THE ASSYRIANS. THE HEBREWS.
THE FAR EAST.

THE art of representing subjects by means of the loom is almost as old as that of painting them on a wall or panel. It was seen thousands of years before our era on the borders of the Nile, in Western Asia, and in Greece ; we find it, in fact, with the first manifestations of national civilisation. The decorative nature of tapestry shows itself very early in these various regions. It is the great element of ornamentation in the tents of wandering tribes, whilst settled nations use it to complete the appointments and enhance the richness of their temples and palaces.

The eminent architect and theorist Semper, in his remarkable work on "Style," asserts that the first principles of architecture are derived from fabrics. According to him, drapery is the ruling element of the art of building, and underlies all its developments. Each new material in textile art gives birth

to ideas of form and colour, and is the source of perpetual modifications. The first thought of primitive constructors is to envelop and disguise. These ideas pass from architecture to sculpture, from the edifice to the statue; and hence come clothed idols. According to Semper, the examination of the plan of an ancient house proves that it was only rendered habitable by means of curtains, which, in the absence of interior walls, made the necessary partitions. These curtains, suspended from rods by rings, could, no doubt, be put aside at will.*

Without fully endorsing Semper's views, it will readily be admitted that the primary object of drapery applied to architecture—hangings placed vertically, carpets spread on the ground—is to protect alternately from the sun and from the cold. But these practical considerations soon become, in rich and artistic countries, a mere excuse for the wish to please and dazzle the eye. Drapery is soon required to set off by its soft undulation the pure lines of the columns between which it is hung; to subdue the light and increase the mysterious gloom of a sanctuary; or to serve as a background to the rich furniture of gilded bronze and ivory. Hangings are to architecture what embroidered stuffs, dyed in brilliant colours, are to the human figure. Textile art, at first limited to the production of clothing, becomes in monumental decoration the companion of painting and sculpture.

* "Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten." Munich, 2nd edit., 1878—1879, vol. i., p. 258 *et seq.* See also de Ronchaud: "La Tapiserie dans l'antiquité." Paris, 1884.

Doubtless the processes of the handicraft, as well as the character of the decoration, have been infinitely varied. It is not certain, indeed, that all the hangings of which we are about to speak have been woven by hand, or have all contained figures. Probably many embroidered and brocaded fabrics were called tapestries in ancient times, as in the middle ages. But the point to establish is that all these works contributed to one object—the decoration of buildings by means of soft and pliable fabrics.

Pliny, the naturalist, the author who took upon himself to elucidate the origin and to define the application of the various forms of tapestry in antiquity, appears to have merely succeeded in complicating an already difficult problem. I give the result of his researches, not as a solution of the difficulty, but for the sake of information—information needing to be constantly tested:—

“Homer” (Il. iii. 125), the Latin author tells us, “speaks of embroidered garments from which came triumphal fabrics (ix. 60). The Phrygians invented the art of embroidering with the needle; and for this reason these works are called Phrygionian. It was in Asia, too, that King Attalus discovered the means of adding threads of gold to embroideries, hence styled Attalic. Babylon devoted itself to the manufacture of embroideries of various colours, called Babylonian embroidery, while Alexandria invented the art of weaving stuffs with many threads, which were called brocades, and Gaul that of checked fabrics.”*

* As it is impossible to be too precise on such a subject, I repro-

We will now endeavour, by the aid of archæology, to determine and complete the assertions of the Latin author.

The art of ornamenting stuffs by weaving, by embroidering, or by the application of colours, was

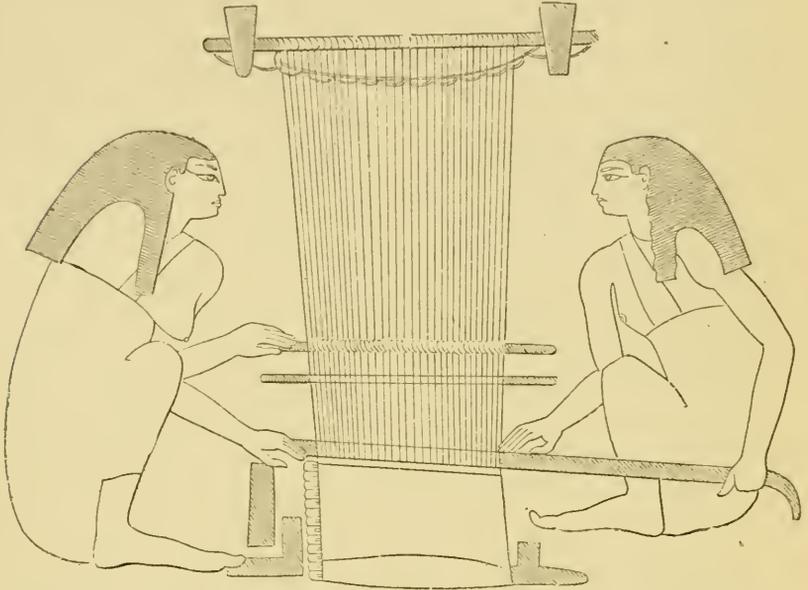


FIG. I.—THE HIGH WARP LOOM OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.
(Picture in the *hypogeum* of Beni-Hassan ; after Rosellini.)

early known in Egypt, the cradle of so many handicrafts. The pictures of the *hypogeum* of Beni-

duce the original text of this translation:—“Pictas vestes apud Homerum fuisse (accipio), unde triumphales natæ. Acu facere id Phryges invenerunt, ideoque Phrygionix appellatæ sunt. Aurum intexere in eadem Asia invenit Attalus rex : unde nomen Attalicis. Colores diversos picturæ intexere Babylon maxime celebravit, et nomen imposuit. Plurimis vero liciis texere, quæ polymita appellant, Alexandria instituit ; scutulis dividere, Gallia.” (“Hist. Nat.,” book viii., § 74.)

Hassan, 3,000 years before our era, represent looms singularly like those used now at the Gobelins; they have the vertical chain, the cross-rods, and the comb to keep the texture even—in fact, none of the essential elements of the high warp are wanting.

For finish, also, the Egyptians had no occasion to envy modern skill. Herodotus, describing the breast-plate sent to the Lacedæmonians by King Amasis, tells us it was made of linen, ornamented with numerous figures of animals woven in gold and cotton. Each slender thread was composed of three hundred and sixty other distinct threads. (Book iii., § xlvi.) The organisation of the workshops was equally advanced. M. Dupont-Auberville has shown how skilfully the work was regulated.*

We have less information concerning the character and style of tapestry during the rule of the Pharaohs. MM. Perrot and Chipiez† publish a painting, containing a hanging of purely ornamental design, formed of circles, triangles, and palm-leaves reversed. Wilkinson describes another Egyptian hanging—an original, not a reproduction—found in an English collection. In the centre, on a green ground, stands a boy in white, with a goose above him; around this centre is a border of red and blue lines; then white figures on a yellow ground; again, blue lines and red ornaments; and lastly, red, white, and blue embroideries.‡

* “L’Ornement des Tissus,” pp. 4, 5.

† “Histoire de l’Art dans l’antiquité,” vol. i., p. 308.

‡ “Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians,” 1st series, vol. iii., p. 142.

In the Museum of the Louvre are to be seen several narrow ornamented bands, the material of which—close, thick, and grained like our reps—possesses all the characteristics of the high warp. The presence of woollen threads in these stuffs compels us to class them amongst the latest productions of the Pharaonic era, perhaps even among those of the succeeding empire of the Lagides.

The Egyptians in ancient times used only linen and cotton. It was but a few centuries before our era that the use of wool and silk—the two materials that are essential to tapestry in order to produce depth of colour and brilliancy—was introduced. We shall show later the advance made from this time in the workshops on the borders of the Nile—one of the good results of the Grecian conquest, which in so many other ways failed to regenerate the ancient world of the Pharaohs.

Limited among the ancient Egyptians in its means of manufacture, as well as in its decorative character, tapestry attained its greatest brilliancy among the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Persians, many centuries before our era. Though no specimens of this celebrated handicraft—which was less popular than mural painting—have reached us, we are yet able to reconstruct its general features by the aid of samples of the other arts. M. Lessing, who appears to have fairly epitomised the opinions of Assyriologists, tells us that the alabaster bas-reliefs, formerly coloured, which cover every part of the palace of Nineveh, and show a great variety of ornament inter-

mixed with fabulous and symbolical beings, are imitations of the magnificent art embroideries of Babylon. The draperies of the figures are ornamented

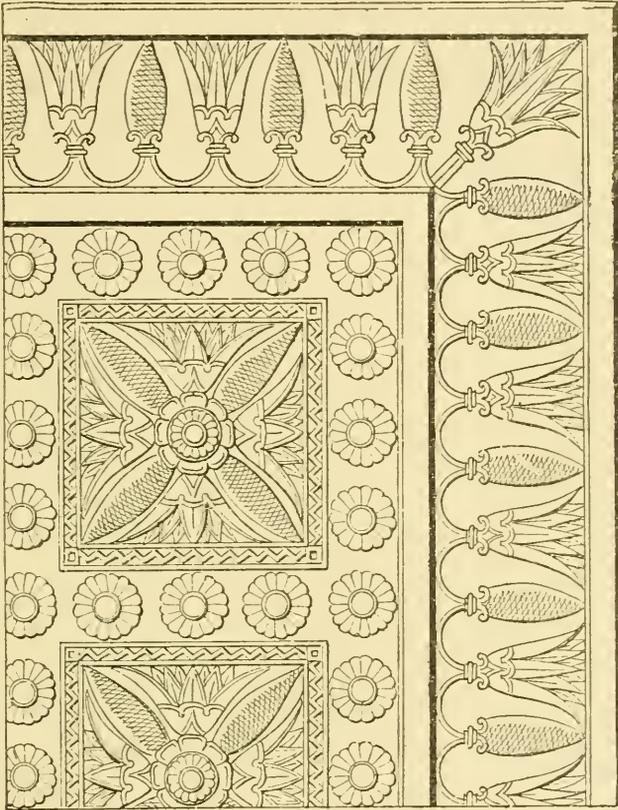


FIG. 2.—ASSYRIAN BAS-RELIEF.
(In imitation of tapestry.)

with the same embroidery, the style is that of the ordinary wall tapestries, while the similarity of the rosettes, borders, etc., is still more striking. These hangings, dating at least from the eighth century before Christ, are the earliest evidences of this style,

and the designs of the most distant period closely resemble both in their composition and detail those of oriental hangings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well as the best Eastern work of the present day.*

Ancient writers are unanimous as to the magnificence displayed by Babylon and Nineveh in this, the most brilliant branch of textile art. The author of the book of Esther (i. 6), describing the feast of Ahasuerus, shows us on all sides hangings—sky-blue, white, and hyacinthine—suspended by flaxen cords dyed purple from ivory rings attached to marble columns. Gold and silver couches set on a floor of emerald green and white marble completed the decoration of the festal hall.

Some centuries later, Apollonius of Tyana (who died A.D. 97), when on a visit to Babylon, found the palace of the kings hung with tapestries in which historical and mythological subjects were depicted. According to his biographer, "the beds, the rooms devoted to the men, and the porticoes, are adorned with silver, with hangings woven of gold, or with massive gold. The subjects represented are taken from Grecian mythology. Here are to be seen illustrated the stories of Andromeda and Amyon, and frequently also that of Orpheus, while Datis dragging the Isle of Naxos from the sea, Artaphernes besieging Eretria, the victories claimed by Xerxes, the taking of Athens, and the battle of Thermopylæ,

* "Modèles de tapis orientaux." Paris, 1879, p. 5.

are favourite subjects, as well as a composition yet more suited to the taste of the Medes—the drying up of the rivers, the bridging of the sea, the piercing of Mount Athos.”*

A third piece of evidence shows us how varied were the subjects represented by the Babylonian tapestries. Side by side with these historical and mythological scenes we find represented fantastic zoological forms, which became later on the chief element of oriental decoration, and which during several centuries fascinated Europe, where it was introduced towards the end of the Roman empire. Philostratus the elder thus describes a picture, real or imaginary, representing the adventures of Themistocles:—“We are amongst the Medes, in Babylon: here is the royal badge, the golden eagle on the indented shield; here, the king himself on his throne of gold, glittering like a peacock. We praise the artist, not for his imitation of the tiara, the robe, and the tunic, and the fantastic animals that barbarians embroider on their stuffs, but for the golden threads so skilfully introduced in the tissue and placed in forms they never lose.”†

The skill of the Babylonian tapestry-workers equalled the splendour of the compositions they transferred to the looms, and the richness of the materials they employed. Pliny, we have seen, claims for them the honour of having made the greatest advance in the art of blending colours in fabrics, and adds that

* Philostratus, “De Tyanensi Apollonio ;” book i., 15.

† *Ibid.*, “Imagines,” p. 433.

it is owing to this superiority that their name is given to this style of work. In fact, the Babylonian tapestries, "Babylonica peristromata," recur constantly to the Latin poets, who cannot sufficiently praise them.* Roman amateurs purchased these hangings for their weight in gold. Metellus Scipio spent 800,000 sesterces (£6,720) on "triclinaria Babylonica." Nero gave even more—four million sesterces (£33,600)—for these fabrics.†

The Hebrews connected tapestry with the decoration of monuments, quite as much as their neighbours the Egyptians and Assyrians did. The chief means of decoration for the tabernacle built by Moses in the desert consisted of hangings, richly coloured, or covered with embroidery. The text in Exodus places this beyond doubt, notwithstanding a debatable expression here and there. The description of the sanctuary taken from the sacred text is as follows:—
 "Thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.‡ The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together

* Lucretius, iv., 1026; Plautus, "Stichus," Act ii., sc. ii., v. 54; Silius Italicus, xiv., 658; Martial, xiv., 150.

† Pliny, *loc. cit.*

‡ The figures to be woven in coloured threads on a white ground. This appears the simplest explanation of the text, which speaks literally of the work of a thinker, that is, an artist, and not of such as was in common use.

one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle. . . . And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: and thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. . . . And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.”*

M. de Saulcy, a distinguished archæologist, considers these hangings to have been “embroideries

* Exodus xxvi.

artistically woven in threads of different colours," and similar to the linen fabrics in which the Egyptians enveloped their mummies;* but we think they were simply embroidered by hand on the blue, red, or yellow ground of the previously-woven fabric. The splendour of the sacerdotal vestments equalled that of the hangings adorning the sanctuary. The materials, says the author of the Exodus, were of gold, of violet and red purple, of crimson, and twined linen. The gold was beaten into thin plates, and cut into wires, to be entwined with the violet and red purple, the crimson and the linen, in cunning devices.

The veil with which Solomon adorned the temple was, like the rest of the edifice, distinguished for its magnificence; the traditional cherubim were depicted on a groundwork of azure, purple, and scarlet.†

The intercourse of the Hebrews with their Asiatic neighbours, and their long captivity on the borders of the Euphrates, developed amongst them a luxuriousness denounced by the prophets, especially when it showed itself in the dress of the ordinary citizen.‡ We know that the veil of the temple,§ rebuilt after the return from Babylon (about the year 536), was made of fine linen and scarlet; this veil became the prize of Antiochus IV. (B.C. 174—164.)||

* "Histoire de l'art judaïque, tirée des textes sacrés et profanes." Paris, 1864, p. 33.

† Paralipomena, book ii., c. iii., v. 14.

‡ See Ezekiel xvi. 8 *et seq.*; xxvi. 7.

§ Τὸ καταπέτασμα. This term is of frequent occurrence in the Septuagint version. See Stephen's "Thesaurus."

|| M. Clermont-Ganneau, in a clever work, has endeavoured to

When Herod the Great rebuilt the temple of Jerusalem, nineteen years before our era, he was careful not to omit in the decoration of the sanctuary the marvels of textile art which had been the chief embellishment of the tabernacle during the long wanderings in the desert. Before the doors of the most sacred place he hung a Babylonian tapestry fifty cubits high by sixteen wide; azure and flax, scarlet and purple, were blended in it with admirable art and rare ingenuity, for these represented the various elements. Scarlet signified fire; linen, the earth; azure, the air; and purple, the sea. These meanings were derived in two instances from similarity of colour; in the other two from their origin, the earth yielding linen and the sea purple. The whole range of the heavens except the signs was wrought upon this veil.* The porticoes were also enriched with many-coloured tapestries, and ornamented with purple flowers.†

We can readily believe that the resources of textile art were early understood in other eastern countries, especially in China. The Chinese, we know, possessed silken fabrics three thousand years before our era. "Nearer our own times Chinese historians show us the Emperor Chun travelling over his vast territories, and receiving at the foot of Mount Tai the homage of his vassals, who brought him presents of

prove that the Seleucian conqueror presented the veil of the temple of Jerusalem to the temple of Jupiter at Olympia. (Palestine Exploration Fund, April 1878, pp. 79—81.)

* Flavius Josephus, "De Bello Judaico," book v, 5.

† *Ibid.*, "Antiq. Jud.," book xv., 11.

silken and linen stuffs, undyed silks, and fabrics of various colours. From this distant period silk weaving progressed considerably; the richest dyes were employed to colour or increase the brilliancy of materials made doubly precious by delicate embroideries. Long afterwards, about twelve centuries before Christ, the Chinese empire being then subdivided into numerous feudal states, the feudatory courts rivalled each other in luxury of dress, and surrounded themselves with artists skilled in the art of weaving and blending threads.* . . .”

When we come to study the modern productions of the extreme East, and those also of India and Persia, we shall consider if the means employed in our own day, the style of ornament and the scale of colour, are not uninterruptedly connected with ages which appear fabulous, but have still, in many ways, a living influence.

* Dupont-Auberville, “L’Ornement des Tissus,” pp. 2, 3. On modern Chinese tapestry see the article by M. Brossard in the “Chronique des Arts,” 1879, pp. 279-80.

CHAPTER II.

TAPESTRY AMONGST THE GREEKS.

PENELOPE'S LOOM. PHIDIAS, AND THE TAPESTRIES OF THE
PARTHENON. ALEXANDER AND THE LAGIDES. MAGNA
GRÆCIA AND ASIA MINOR.

IN the study of tapestry amongst the Greeks, one is immediately struck with the richness of the vocabulary devoted to this art. To describe a hanging or a cloth, they have the expressions "stroma, peristroma, empetasma, peripetasma, parapetasma, katapetasma, epiblema, aulaia, tapes, peplos," to say nothing of their derivatives, to select from. "Polymitos" was applied to a woven stuff; "poikiltes" was the artist, embroiderer, or tapestry-worker.* This varied vocabulary indicates the position occupied in Hellenic civilisation by painting in textile materials.

From the time of Homer all the secrets of textile art were known to the Greeks; they highly prized this branch of luxury, and delighted in richly ornamenting their veils, wrappers, hangings, and carpets,

* See the "Thesaurus" of Henry Stephen under the words *Αὐλαία*, *Ἐπίβλημα*, *Ἐμπέτασμα*, *Καταπέτασμα*, *Παραπέτασμα*, *Περιπέτασμα*, *Περίστροφμα*, *Πέπλος*, *Πολύμιτος*, *Ποικιλτής*, *Στρῶμα*, *Τάπησ*, *Τάπισ*, *Ταπήτιον*.

as well as their dress. In the Iliad and Odyssey we hear constantly of thrones covered with light veils, of mantles of purple wool, and of soft carpets. One of the halls of Priam's palace, richly perfumed, was brilliant with tapestries, the work of the Sidonian slaves whom Paris had carried off.* Hera wears a divine tunic, ornamented with designs, the wondrous work of Athene. One of the suitors offers Penelope a magnificent veil, marvellously ornamented and fastened by twelve golden hooks and rings.†

The splendid art of the embroiderer and tapestry-worker was as highly honoured as their brilliant fabrics were ardently sought after.‡ The wives of the Grecian and Trojan heroes wove the vestments and the hangings destined for the sanctuaries. Helen is represented at work on a grand canvas, depicting the combats around Troy,§ while Andromache embroiders a double purple cloth.|| The Immortals themselves delighted in these delicate works. Calypso, singing the while, throws the golden shuttle across her loom,¶ and in like manner Circe beguiles her leisure.**

Amongst the looms of the heroic age extolled by the Grecian singer, that of Penelope especially claims our attention and reverence: it was by its means that she put off from day to day the decision sought to be forced on her by her lovers. Antinous, the son of

* "Iliad," viii., 288.

† "Odyssey," xviii.

‡ "Iliad," xiv., 178.

** *Ibid.*, x., 220.

§ "Iliad," iii., 125.

|| *Ibid.*, xxii., 440.

¶ "Odyssey," xiv., 61, 62.

Eupithes, narrates :—“ Penelope, bethinking herself of a new artifice, has undertaken to weave an immense canvas, as delicate as it is vast. Young suitors, she says again and again, since the godlike Ulysses is dead, wait, before hastening my nuptials, until I have

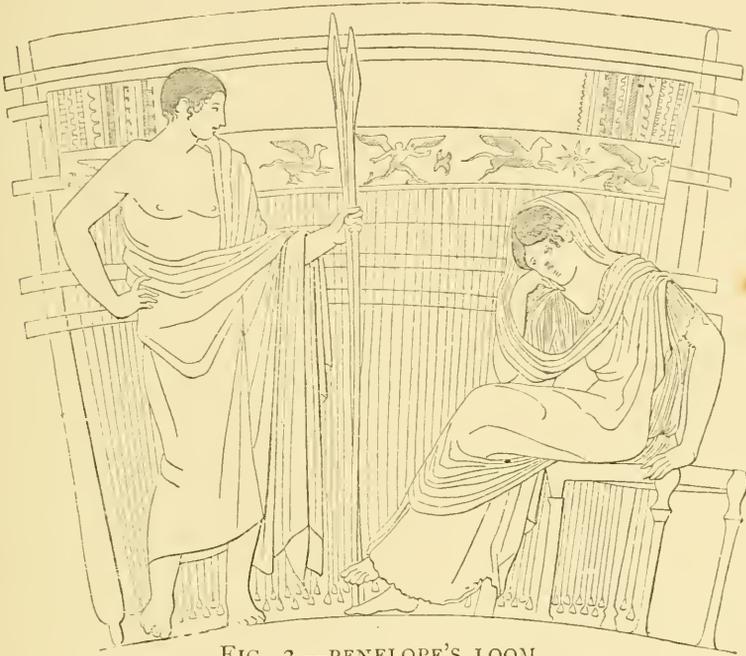


FIG. 3.—PENELOPE'S LOOM.
(From an antique vase.)

finished the web, that my threads be not lost : it is the shroud of the hero Laertes. When the inexorable Parca shall plunge him in the long sleep of death, let not the people, the Achæans, censure me for interring shroudless the king of so many dominions. . . . And so she weaves the web by day, and undoes the work by night.”*

* “Odyssey,” ii., 93 *et seq.*, and xix.

A drawing, which though not contemporaneous, is only of a few hundred years' later date, gives us an idea of Penelope's loom, that "megastost" so celebrated in the poetical history of Greece; it is very clearly represented on a vase found at Chiusi, designed about 400 B.C.* The construction of this loom resembles, with but slight variations, those now used at the Gobelins. Two uprights, connected at the top by a horizontal bar, contain the warps, held vertically by small weights attached to their extremities. Contrary to the custom at the Gobelins, the work commences at the top; the web is rolled by degrees over a cylinder; other cylinders, corresponding to our cross-bars, allow of the introduction from space to space of ivory spindles, charged with coloured threads. The finished part of the work shows us linear ornamentation, forming the border of the shroud—the purpose, we should remember, of Penelope's web. In a lower transverse band we see a winged figure, with wings also on its heels, pursuing a Pegasus; whilst griffins and other fantastic animals betray oriental influence.

In recording the various uses made of tapestry from the commencement of Grecian civilisation, we must take into consideration an ingenious remark of Semper, relating to carpets in particular. The Greeks were long reluctant to place on the ground brilliantly dyed or richly ornamented fabrics; in their eyes such

* Published by M. Conze, in the "Annales de l'Institut de Correspondance archéologique," 1872, pp. 187—190. "Monuments," vol. ix., pl. 42.

luxuries suited only the habitations of the gods.* A passage in the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus shows us Agamemnon, on his return from Troy, refusing to tread on the carpets spread before him by Clytemnestra :—

"A mortal trample on purple, richly embroidered! For me, I dare not. Honour me as a man, not as a god——."

CLYTEMNESTRA : "What would Priam have done had he been conqueror?"

ACAMEMNON : "He, I think, would have trod on the purple. . . . Let, then, these sandals be speedily removed . . . lest the gods above should cast an envious eye on me, stepping on purple fabrics. It were a shame to soil, to trample under foot such treasures, such tissues, bought at a great price."

Art manufactures, including that of tapestry, advanced with the progress of architecture, sculpture, and painting; they not only attained their highest perfection, but made also their grandest display during the golden age that succeeded the Median wars, the glorious period to which Pericles has given his name. In this well-balanced civilisation, all that tapestry could do was required of it for decoration. It was employed everywhere — in temples, theatres, and palaces; in the midst of the triumphs of polychromy under radiant skies, it makes its mark by the sparkling of its golden threads and the soft richness of its mixture of wool and flax.

As time passed on mysterious rites arose from the manufacture, the removal, and the consecration of tapestries. In Athens the peplos of Athene, embroi-

* "Der Stil," vol. i., p. 287.

dered by the virgin hands of the Errephoræ, was renewed and carried in procession every four years at the festival of the Panathenæa; it was a great square of saffron-coloured cloth, on which were depicted in colours the labours of the goddess.*

At the building of the Parthenon—a time most memorable in the annals of Grecian art—Phidias, the great designer of the edifice, had recourse to tapestry to complete its decoration. We are told by Plutarch that tapestry-workers formed part of the army of artists under his orders, and M. de Ronchaud is of opinion that the great master himself furnished subjects and designs for hangings, destined to add to the magnificence of this splendid work.†

In the book to which we have already frequently referred, M. de Ronchaud shows, in numberless conclusive passages, the important part played by tapestry in the decoration of the most perfect masterpieces of Grecian architecture:—"In the first place," he says, "we should remember that the Parthenon was a painted temple. Outwardly, the walls of the cella, the columns of the porticoes and of the peristyle, the cornices, the friezes, the pediments and their statues, were all so coloured as to give to the marble an appearance of life. The temple of Athene, thus decorated, and, like most Grecian temples, turned towards the East, resembled an immense flower expanding in the morning rays. The same style characterised the decoration of the interior. Walls and columns were

* De Ronchaud, "La Tapisserie dans l'antiquité."

† "La Tapisserie dans l'antiquité."

all clothed in brilliant and harmonious tones, the secret of which was revealed to the artists by the Eastern sun. In the midst of the sanctuary stood the magnificent idol of gold and ivory, the masterpiece of the genius of Phidias. Tapestries were the natural completion of the decoration surrounding the statue, and were bound to accord with its splendour."

According to M. de Ronchaud, tapestries, illustrating the battle of Salamis in a series of pictures, each of which represented the contest between a Grecian and Persian vessel, were hung between the pillars of the *Naos*. A second gallery contained hangings ornamented with hunting scenes and monstrous animals.

By the term he uses in describing these tapestries (*Βαρβάρων ὑφάσματα*) Euripides shows that they were either oriental or designed in the fashion of the Orientals, from whom the Greeks learnt the art of tapestry, and who from the earliest times adorned their fabrics with designs of fantastic animals. The door hangings representing the story of Cecrops and his daughters were certainly of Athenian manufacture, and the gift of an Athenian citizen. These various hangings were probably of saffron colour, like the peplos of Athene.*

The porticoes were also, in all probability, adorned with hangings. Possibly even the galleries of the peristyle were curtained, as were those of the cella. Finally a species of pavilion, composed of tapestries

* Euripides, "Hecuba," 468.

depicting the sky and its constellations, was erected above the colossal statue of the goddess, whose head reached beyond the roof. "This ingenious arrangement," says M. de Ronchaud, "increased the number of veils surrounding the deity, mellowed the light falling on her golden helmet and spear, and allowed it to melt at her feet into a transparent shade, suggestive of religious thought."

Alexander's victories, which brought Grecian civilisation in contact with that of Egypt, Persia, and India, became the cause of a fresh departure in the art of painting in textile fabrics. Greece may probably have received more than she gave in this exchange ; it is difficult for the people who have brought an art manufacture to its highest degree of technical perfection not to end by forcing their taste on those distinguished only in æsthetic qualities, such as imagination, grandeur of conception, and purity of drawing. Rightly or wrongly, amateurs invariably prefer richness and delicacy of material and perfection of workmanship, to beauty of design ; and nowhere do we find the science of dyeing and weaving carried farther than in Sidon, Tyre, and Babylon.

The Macedonian conqueror, dazzled by successes almost beyond belief, soon yielded to all the refinement of Asiatic luxury. No ornaments were too costly for his triumphs or daily recurring apotheoses. His common tent, covered with tapestries woven in gold, was supported by fifty gilt pillars, and contained one hundred beds. The tent in which Alexander celebrated his marriage was yet more magnifi-

cent. It was made of purple and scarlet cloths, and golden tissues, suspended from pillars overlaid with gold and silver, and inlaid with precious stones. The walls of the peribolos were adorned with wonderfully decorative tapestries, which were fastened to beams also overlaid with precious metals; a porch, four stadia in circumference, stood before this wonderful construction, decorated, as was the tabernacle of Moses, chiefly by means of textile art.*

The funeral honours paid by Alexander to his friend Hephæstion surpassed even his marriage with the daughter of Darius in pomp. The base of the pyre which he erected measured four stadia (upwards of 700 yards) in circumference, and comprised thirty chambers. The first storey supported 240 gilt prows of quinqueremes, with their *epotides*, on which were placed two kneeling archers four cubits high and other figures five cubits high. The spaces between these groups were filled with purple draperies.† The other storeys were equally magnificent. The whole cost of this amounted to the trifling sum of 12,000 talents (about £2,400,000).

Alexander's successors surpassed even him in a magnificence more Asiatic than Grecian in character. The Court of the Lagides became the chief centre of the revival of textile art, and Alexandria had soon no need to envy Babylon. New scope was given to all branches of tapestry by the luxury displayed in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285 — 247).

* Athenæus, book xii., 54. Cf. Semper, vol. i., pp. 310, 311.

† Diodorus, book xvii., 115.

Splendid hangings, depicting the portraits of kings or the stories of mythology, glistened in his dining-hall, beside a hundred statues, masterpieces of the most celebrated sculptors, and valuable pictures of the school of Sicyon. Long-haired carpets of fine purple-dyed wool were spread before the couches alternately with short-napped Persian rugs, ornamented with animal forms and other designs.*

Admirable scarlet draperies striped with white and Carthaginian hangings also adorned Ptolemy's tent.† Ptolemy Philopator (222—205), one of the successors of Ptolemy Philadelphus, carried luxury to the extent of draping his ships in purple hangings; the linen sail of the chief mast, seventy cubits high, was ornamented with a border of similar colour.‡

Ancient writers are not agreed as to the character of the fabrics introduced under the patronage of the dynasty of the Lagides. Pliny, we have already seen, attributes the invention of weaving with several warps to Alexandria. Martial sets the comb used on the Nile against the needle of Babylon :—

“Victa est
Pectine Niliaco jam Babylonis acus.”§

Lucan, on the other hand, tells us how the needle and comb combined to manufacture the veil of Sidon that

* Athenæus, book v., 26, Edit. Schweighauser, vol. ii., pp. 258, 259.

† *Ibid.*, book v., 25.

§ Book xiv., No. 15c.

‡ *Ibid.*, book v., 39.

draped the form of Cleopatra.* Amidst these differences of opinion we simply affirm the splendour of the tapestries produced in the Alexandrian workshops. As to this there is no dispute.

Representations of animals were the usual decoration of the Alexandrian tapestries, if the significance of a passage in Plautus be not over-estimated. One of the heroes of the Latin comic author says to his slaves, "I will so trim your backs with my whip that they shall be more bedizened with colours than the hangings of Campania, or the scarlet tapestries of Alexandria all bestrewn with animals."† Relying on this evidence, E. Q. Visconti, Professor of Archæology, believed the mosaic work of Palestrina, in which are represented monsters native to Egypt—hippopotami, crocodiles, camels, tortoises, etc.—to be imitations of Alexandrian tapestries. We ourselves add that the same subjects are seen in the border of the "Battle of Arbela," preserved in the Museum of Naples,‡ and in a mosaic kept in the Kircher Museum at Rome. According to M. de Rossi, the inlaid work of a Roman basilica of the fifth century, erected by Junius Bassus, also reproduces its subjects from tapestry; a tiger springing on a heifer is seen on a still existing fragment.§

* Pharsalia, book x., 141. See Jubinal, "Recherches sur l'usage et l'origine des tapisseries à figures dites historiées, depuis l'antiquité jusqu'au XVI^e siècle inclusivement." Paris, 1840, p. 5.

† Pseudolus, Act. I., sc. ii., vv. 12—15.

‡ See description of this work in the "Mosaïque" of M. Gerspach, p. 22. (Bibliothèque de l'Enseignement des Beaux-Arts.)

§ "Bullettino di archeologia Cristiana," 1871, p. 57.

Tapestry seems to have flourished equally in the Grecian colonies, especially in Magna Græcia. Silius Italicus, describing the capital of Sicily at the time of the Punic wars, says, "The sun shone on no town that could then compare with Syracuse. It had no need to send to Corinth for bronzes, nor to seek rivals in the art of manufacturing gold-brocaded fabrics—fabrics in which Babylonian art produced human faces that seemed alive—it needed not the purple of proud Tyre, the splendid tapestries of Attalus, nor the cloths of Memphis."*

At Sybaris, the mantle of Alcisthenes, sold, it is said, by Dionysius the elder to the Carthaginians for the enormous sum of 120 talents (£26,400), was the theme of admiration. This cloth was fifteen cubits long, and was dyed purple; in the upper part are woven the sacred animals of the Susians; in the lower part those of the Persians. In the centre were represented Zeus, Hera, Themis, Athene, Apollo, and Aphrodite; and the likeness of Alcisthenes and the emblem of Sybaris were introduced in the two extremities.†

The town of Pergamum, in Asia Minor, outshone even those already mentioned. The admirable bas-

* ". . . fulvo certaverit auro
Vestis, spirantes referens subtemine vultus
Quæ radio cœlat Babylon, vel murice picto
Læta Tyros, quæque Attalicis variata per artem
Aulæis scribuntur acu, aut Memphitide tela."

—Ch. xiv., vv. 656—660.

† Aristotle, "De mirabilibus auscultationibus," ch. xcvi., edit. Didot, vol. iv., p. 90. Cf. Lenormant, "La Grande Grèce," vol. i., p. 283.

reliefs lately acquired by a great European museum, prove that for a short time it rivalled successfully the schools of Greece itself in the domain of high art. According to Pliny, Attalus, one of its kings, introduced threads of gold in the weaving of fabrics in the eleventh century before our era. It is certain that the tapestries of Attalus, the "attalica aulæa," were very celebrated in Roman antiquity; they were constantly cited as models of richness and high finish.* The tapestries of Miletus, another town in Asia Minor, the "Milesia stromata," were also much sought after. Sardis, in its turn, prided itself on its short-napped carpets (*psilotapis*) on which, at the Persian court, the king alone had the right to tread.† Tauris even produced tapestries remarkable for the delicacy of their material and for their elegance of design. M. Stephani, a Russian archæologist, describes a woollen fabric of the fourth century B.C. as manufactured by a process similar to that of the Gobelins; on this are seen rows of ducks and stags' heads, on a cherry-coloured background. The peculiarity of this material is that the design is the same on both sides.‡

Having reviewed the numerous tributaries of Grecian art, we find tapestry, at the approach of Christianity, taking part in all national exhibitions in the mother-country—the land renowned for the web of Penelope and the hangings of the Parthenon. In

* Propertius, "Eleg.," book ii., xiii. 22, and xxxii. 12; Silius, *loc. cit.*

† Athenæus, xii. 7. Xenophon, "Cyropædia," book viii.

‡ Comptes rendus de la Commission impériale archéologique, 1878, 1879, p. 40 *et seq.*, pl. v., No. 2.

that country, subdivided *ad infinitum*, private individuals were doubtless unable to display luxury equal to that of the Romans, then the masters of the world ; but Grecian patriotism was capable of any sacrifice when the decoration of a public monument was in question.

Still Greece, in the special field of art now engaging our attention, was unable to do without the help of the oriental "barbarians" whom she so despised, even at the very time when her artistic superiority was proclaimed by the Roman conquerors, who asked to be taught by their captives, and who confided to them the decoration of their temples and palaces. Two of the most famous tapestries hung in her temples were of foreign origin ; the Athenians owed to Antiochus IV., King of Syria (B.C. 174—164), the curtain of their theatre, a great golden hanging portraying the shield of Athena with the Gorgon's head,* while the temple of Zeus, at Olympia, was also indebted to him for its woollen veil—its "parapetasma"—partly dyed and partly woven in the Assyrian style.†

* De Ronchaud, "La Tapisserie dans l'antiquité."

† Pausanias, book v., ch. 12.

CHAPTER III.

TAPESTRY IN ROME BEFORE THE TRIUMPH OF
CHRISTIANITY.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF TAPESTRY IN ANCIENT TIMES.

TAPESTRY in Rome bears the stamp of foreign importation. The testimony of historians and poets would suffice to show how much the conquerors owed to the conquered in this respect, even if the technical terms applied to the art were not for the most part of Grecian origin.*

For a considerable time Roman austerity ignored and excluded an art which, above all others, appealed to luxurious and even effeminate tastes. At the most, only the temples of the gods were adorned with precious fabrics, such as the drapery (*prætecta*) with which Servius Tullius clothed the statue of Fortune, and which remained intact till the reign of Tiberius.

It was not until the fall of Carthage, and the conquest of Greece, Egypt, and Asia brought the treasures of the most civilised and refined nations flowing into the Eternal City, that scruples vanished and cupidity increased. Cato the Censor (d. 235), in the third century before our era, considered himself

* Pliny, "Hist. Nat.," book vi.i., § 74.

morally bound to sell at once a Babylonian tapestry inherited by him.* But Plautus (d. 183) tells us that in the second century tapestries of some repute were manufactured in Campania. . . .

Peristromata. . . picta. . . Campaniæ.†

Foreign importation did the rest.

At the first dawn of the Empire, tapestry occupied

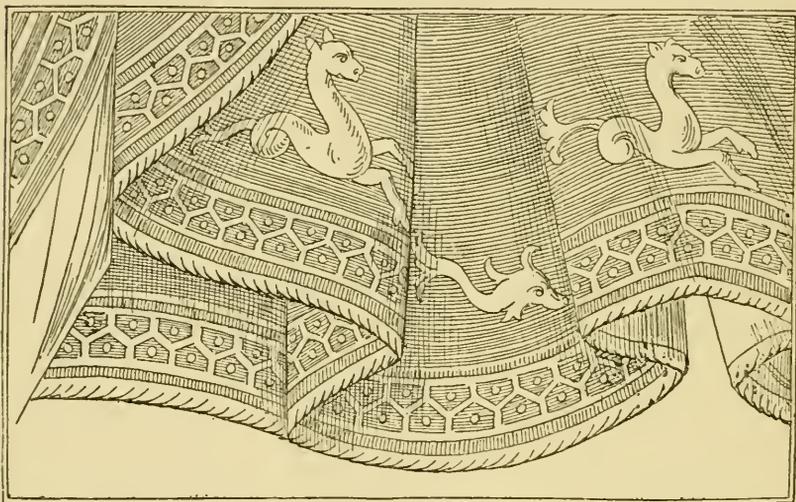


FIG. 4.—ROMAN HANGING.
(After a fresco at Pompeii.)

a conspicuous place in the public edifices, as well as in the palaces and villas of private individuals.‡ We find figures of the conquered Britons woven in the

* Plutarch's "Life of Cato," § 24.

† Pseudolus, act I., sc. ii., v. 12.

‡ In the work of M. de Buchholtz, entitled "De Aulæorum velorumque usu, et in vita veterum cotidiana et in anaglyptis eorum atque picturis" (Göttingen, 1876), some evidence, here intentionally omitted, will be found concerning the use of tapestry amongst the Romans

purple curtain of a theatre;* while rich Attalic draperies hang between the columns of Pompey's portico.† Concealed by a door curtain, Agrippina overheard the deliberations of the senators summoned to the palace of her son.‡ Nero caused a vast "velarium," adorned with designs representing the sky, the stars, and Apollo driving his chariot, to be spread above one of the theatres of Rome.§

At this period tapestry had attained its highest perfection, both in method of manufacture and in design. Ovid's description of the looms of Minerva and Arachne shows the progress made since the days of Homer. The threads forming the warp (in Latin "licium," from which the French word "lisse" is derived) are no longer left loose, as in Penelope's loom, but are attached, probably to a cylinder, so as to allow of their being stretched at pleasure; they are separated by a reed, to facilitate the passage of the shuttle containing the threads used for the design; a comb completes the set of tools, to which nothing essential has been added by modern ingenuity.

But we will leave the description to the poet:—
 "Minerva and Arachne having taken their places
 opposite each other, begin each|| to set the slender

* Virgil, "Georgics," iii., 25. "Purpurea intexti tollant aulæa Britannii."

† Propertius, "Eleg.," ii., xxxii. 12.

‡ Tacitus, "Annals," xiii. 5.

§ De Ronchaud, "La Tapisserie dans l'antiquité."

|| The expression "geminæ telæ," used by Ovid, seems to indicate the work of each of the two rivals, and not a double canvas, as some translators suppose.

threads that form the warp and to fasten them to the loom ; these threads are separated by a reed. The woof, directed by the nimble shuttle, unrolls beneath their fingers, interlaces the warp, and is united with it by the strokes of the sharp-toothed comb. The skilful workers use all speed, and, fastening back their robes, hasten the quick movements of their hands ; their wish to excel making them unconscious of fatigue. In their weaving they employ the purple of Tyre, prepared in brazen vessels, and blend the tints so delicately that the eye cannot separate one from another. . . Under their fingers, flexible gold is mixed with the wool ; while stories derived from antiquity are displayed on the canvas.

“ Pallas depicts the hill of Mars, close to the town of Cecrops, and the dispute that arose of old concerning the name of the land. . . In order to give her rival a warning of the penalty due to her insensate audacity, she pictures four contests in the four corners of the canvas, remarkable both for brilliancy of colouring and for the minuteness of the figures. In one corner are seen Hæmus and his consort Rhodope of Thrace — formerly vain-glorious mortals, who assumed the names of the most mighty gods, now frost-clad mountains. In another part is shown the miserable fate of the mother of the Pigmies. Overcome by Juno, whom she had challenged, she is transformed into a crane, and condemned to make war on her nation. In a third corner was portrayed Antigone, who presumed to compete with the bride of mighty Jupiter ; she also was changed into a bird

by the queen of the gods. Neither the fame of Ilium, her native land, nor that of Laomedon, her father, availed to save her ; feathered as a stork, her harsh cries still extol her beauty. The last corner sets forth Cinyras, bereaved of his children, clasping the steps of the temple, formed of the limbs of his daughters ; he is prostrate on the marble, while tears appear to flow from his eyes. Boughs of the peaceful olive surround the picture. Such is the design ; the goddess completes it with the tree sacred to herself.

“The young Mæonian represents Europa deceived by the similitude of a bull ; a living bull and a real sea seem to be before us. Agenor’s daughter appears looking back towards the shore she has just quitted ; she seems to cry to her companions, to fear the approach of the waves that leap towards her, and shrinkingly to draw back the soles of her feet. She paints Asteria struggling in the clutch of an eagle ; Leda reposing beneath the wings of a swan ; Jupiter disguising himself as a satyr, to make the beautiful Antiopa mother of two children, or assuming the features of Amphitryon to delude Alcmena. Now, to cheat Danae, he becomes a golden shower ; now he turns to fire before the daughter of Asopus ; or he becomes a shepherd to deceive Mnemosyne, and, as a serpent of variable colours, beguiles the daughter of Ceres. She shows Neptune as a raging bull, stooping at the feet of the daughter of Æolus, assuming the form of the river Enipeus to give parentage to the Aloides, or counterfeiting a ram to charm Bisaltis. Under the form of a steed he is loved by Ceres with the golden

hair, the gentle mother of the harvest ; disguised as a bird, he conquers the mother of the winged horse Medusa, whose head bristles with vipers ; and, as a dolphin, he triumphs over Melantho. She endows the characters and the places with the features that belong to them. Apollo is seen in the coarse garb of a herdsman, the plumage of a vulture, the mane of a lion, or disguised as a shepherd, that he may beguile Isse, the daughter of Macareus. Bacchus, under the seductive form of a grape, deceives Erigone ; and Saturn, transformed into a horse, becomes the father of the centaur Chiron. Branches of ivy, wreathed with flowers, encircle the canvas in a flowing border.

“Neither Pallas nor Envy could find fault with this work. The golden-haired goddess, enraged at her rival’s success, tears in pieces the fabric on which the frailties of the gods are represented ; again and again she strikes the canvas of the daughter of Idmon with the box-wood shuttle of Cyrotus, still held in her hand. . . .”*

This accurate and poetical description shows that the Romans looked upon tapestry as a form of painting, and through its medium portrayed subjects of all kinds as freely as in a fresco. But, unless we are mistaken, some definite ideas of symmetry were

* *Metamorphoses*, vi. M. Stephani, in the “*Comptes rendus de la commission impériale archéologique*,” 1878, 1879, pp. 68, 69, 106, has made a clever comparison of Ovid’s description with the sculpture of the eastern pediment of the Parthenon. Ovid, in his narration of the adventures of Philomela, shows us his heroine entwining purple and white threads to depict the crime of Tereus on her canvas. (*Metamorphoses*, vi., 576 *et seq.*)

observed in the framing of each hanging, in order to accentuate its decorative character. Minerva, in the four corners of her composition, depicts scenes remarkable for the minuteness of the figures and the brilliancy of the colouring.* Arachne, on the other hand, surrounds her tapestry with a border of ivy, interlaced with flowers. Here first appear, we believe, those wreaths which, in the fifteenth century, were considered the necessary framework of every ornamental hanging.

In a poem of earlier date than the *Metamorphoses*,† Catullus, like Ovid, describes a piece of tapestry, on which are represented mythical scenes of all kinds. Describing the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, he shows us the nuptial couch of the goddess, supported on ivory feet, and overspread with magnificent purple draperies. The hangings are covered with antique designs, marvels of art, relating the exploits of the hero. From the resounding shores of Naxos, Ariadne—her soul abandoned to the transports of passion—watches Theseus afar off, hastening to escape with sails full set. . .” (Here follows a long account of the adventures of Theseus and Ariadne.) “Such,” says the poet, “were the pictures adorning the splendid fabrics that draped this couch.”

Day by day, however, the general tendency of Roman art to substitute richness for beauty asserted

* The same idea is found, sixteen and a half centuries later, in the lower border of a piece representing the Siege of Donai. (*Histoire du roi Louis XIV.*, preserved in the *Garde-Meuble* at Paris.)

† “*Epithalamium Pelei et Thetidos*,” v. 46-267.

itself more clearly; painting in textile fabrics, like mosaic painting, soon prevailed over fresco and panel painting, which are alone able to reproduce, without intermediate agents, the conceptions of the creative artist. One of the signs of this decline of taste was the increasing extravagance of dress, which manifested itself irresistibly after the reign of the Antonines. Under the influences of similar principles, high finish became more sought after than grandeur; and needlework embroidery, with its microscopic effects, eclipsed monumental tapestry.

One interesting purpose to which decorative hangings were put at the beginning of the third century has still to be mentioned. In order to celebrate worthily the obsequies of Septimus Severus (d. 211), the Romans constructed a kind of gigantic pavilion for a funeral pile. The interior was filled with combustible matter, and the exterior was covered with gold cloth, partitions of ivory, and magnificent paintings. Many similar stages were erected, one above the other, gradually diminishing in size, so as to form a pyramid. The pyre was crowned with a tabernacle, enclosing an eagle, which escaped as the flames burst forth on all sides.*

The emperors, disdaining effeminate ornaments, contented themselves with the purple toga, until about the middle of the third century. Aurelian (A.D. 270-275) was the first to assume a luxury of dress worthy of the Asiatic monarchs. Nothing was

* Herodian, iv. 2.

too sumptuous, not even stuffs brocaded with gold, pearls, and gems, for this savage soldier, who probably hoped by this means to cause the obscurity of his birth to be forgotten, while Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) excelled in a pomp which, from this time, became inseparable from imperial majesty.

This, after all, was but the official recognition of the luxury displayed by private individuals. In the reign of the Emperor Carinus (A.D. 283-284), Junius Messala lavished on the imperial comedians vestments of the finest linen of Egypt, robes of the softest stuffs of Tyre and Sidon, purple in colour and most delicately embroidered, as well as mantles woven by the Atrebatii, and cloaks of Canusian wool.*

The last of the heathen poets has endeavoured, in his "Rape of Proserpine," once more to dazzle our eyes with a description of a hanging similar to those extolled in such glowing verse by Catullus and Ovid. "Proserpine, in solitude," says Claudian, "filled her home with harmonious songs, and all in vain prepared gifts for the return of her mother. With her needle she traced on a cloth the course of the elements and her father's palace; she represented Nature, the mother of the worlds, extracting order from chaos, and sowing the seed of life in ground that should fertilise it. She showed light bodies rising in the air, and heavier substances falling to the centre of space; the ether shining with light, the sky revolving with the stars, the sea covered with waves, and the

* Fl. Vopiscus, "Life of Carinus."

earth floating suspended. A thousand colours gave variety to the picture. Gold lent its fire to the stars, the waters were azure-tinted, pearls gave prominence to the shores, while illusive threads that swelled like waves were woven in with consummate art. One seemed to see the sea-weed dashed to pieces on the rocks, and to hear the hollow-sounding waters break on the sands, whose thirst they quench. Five zones were described by her needle. The centre, the abode of heat, was marked by purple thread. The path is withered beneath the fire of an ever-blazing sun. On either side are two kindly zones, where life expands under a temperate climate; the extremes are numbed with frost—bristling with imperishable ice, their eternal cold casts a gloom on the canvas. The young maid depicted also the dwelling sacred to Pluto and the abode of the shades, where a throne was destined her by fate. Suddenly—oh! fatal omen—a secret presentiment causes her tears to flow. She was now beginning to trace on the edge of the canvas the curves of the ocean and its transparent depths; but the opening door announces the arrival of the goddesses; she leaves her work unfinished.”*

Here we find the champion of dying paganism no longer extolling grandeur of design; the glittering stars, the seaweed dashed to pieces on the rocks, and the swelling waves, are simply the faithful reproduction of a mighty landscape:

*Filaque, mentitos janjam cælantia fluctus,
Arte tument.*

* “*De Raptu Proserpinæ,*” i., 244 *et seq.*

The method of work is no longer the same; the needle has supplanted the shuttle, embroidery has dethroned tapestry.

The evidence which we have produced in the course of this work proves how perfect were the workmanship and knowledge of colour in Athens and



FIG. 5.—TAPESTRY FOUND AT SITTEN.

(From a restoration by Semper.)

in Rome—in colour the Greeks appear to have preferred saffron, and the Romans purple.* As to design—a fragment found at Sitten, in Switzerland, shows what distinctiveness of character and what grandeur marked the productions of the Romans in textile art even to the last days of their supremacy.

* See "La Tapisserie dans l'antiquité," of M. de Ronchaud.

This fragment—not a piece of tapestry, but part of a brocaded fabric repeating the same design indefinitely—represents a goddess seated on a tiger-headed monster, surrounded by broadly-treated foliage.*

To recapitulate: Antiquity possessed all the knowledge of weaving and dyeing requisite for bringing painting in textile fabrics to the highest degree of perfection, and made use of this art in all its forms: for tents, pavilions, or canopies; for screens, door-curtains, or hangings draped along walls; for veils in sanctuaries or curtains in theatres; for furniture covers and for carpets. It excelled in every style of manufacture—in tapestries of linen, of wool, of silk, and of gold—in long or short-napped cloths.

The series of subjects represented in ancient tapestries, be they Oriental, Greek, or Roman, is no less varied. Side by side with purely decorative designs—such as flowers, animals, cherubim, geometrical and other forms—we find depicted the powers of nature, and stories of the gods and heroes; mythological subjects alternate with battles and hunting scenes, pictures of the gods with portraits of kings.

If we study this art in its relation to history, we find it connected with all the manifestations of religious or national life. It was the chief ingredient in the building of the sanctuary amongst the Hebrews, and in the Panathenaic festival amongst the Athe-

* "Der Stil," book i., p. 192. "Les Courses des chars," in the Louvre Museum, published by Cahier et Martin (Melanges, book iv., pp. 20—23), already show a decline in art.

nians. Elsewhere it supplied the conquerors with the trophies with which they decorated their triumphal cars, and which they hung in the porticoes of their capital. It was employed to increase the splendour of every eventful occasion—princely interviews marriages, or obsequies—from the apotheosis of Hephæstion to that of Septimus Severus. Its dominion, at various times, extended even over dress; for the richly ornamented stuffs worn by the sovereigns of the Assyrians and Persians, and also of the Romans in their decline are nothing more than tapestries in miniature.

CHAPTER IV.

TAPESTRY IN THE EAST FROM THE BEGINNING OF
THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO THE CRUSADES.

THERE is no branch of art over which Eastern influence has been more exercised than that of which we are now writing the history. From generation to generation Egypt, Asia Minor, and Persia have intervened in the development of tapestry in the West, have inundated Europe with their productions, and have imposed on her their taste. It is not difficult to find the reason of this sway, sometimes concealed and sometimes cheerfully acknowledged. The East is the native land of silk, the precious material that appears from this time absolutely inseparable from the ornamentation of fabrics ; it is also familiarised with all the delicacies of dyeing by the practice of a thousand years ; and, finally, its workmen, more patient than strong, find in textile art the most natural employment for their dexterity and taste.

The reputation acquired by the Babylonian and Alexandrian tapestries in the Roman world in the latter days of the Republic, was only the prelude to an almost entire preponderance at the time of the triumph of Christianity. We have shown how the

Romans, in their decline, more and more followed the example of the Asiatic provinces in their dress, their ceremonies, and their modes of thought and action. The transfer of the seat of government to Constantinople only increased this tendency; Byzantine agency being, in many ways, simply a form of Oriental influence.

Before continuing the history of tapestry in the West—that is, in the countries that most directly interest us—we ought to cast a glance over this earlier home, whose influence will never cease to be felt.

On examining the condition of textile manufacture in the East, at the period at which we have now arrived (the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century of our era), we find it but little altered from its state in the time of the Ptolemies, some five or six centuries earlier. Compositions in which the human figure played a chief part are anything but proscribed. When Julian the Apostate overran the ancient Assyrian empire, he found pictures in all directions representing warlike or hunting scenes, precisely similar to the bas-reliefs of Khorsabad. The historian, Ammianus Marcellinus (who died about 390) to whom we owe this information, adds that warlike scenes only were depicted in these countries: “*cædes et bella.*”^{*} Similar representations are seen on a hanging described by Sidonius Apollinaris:—

* Book xxiv.

“ Bring forth the magnificent cushions, the brilliant purple fabrics of a pure, rich colour, twice dyed in brazen vessels with Melibœan dye. There we see, depicted on foreign tapestries, the summits of Ctesiphon and Niphates, and wild beasts in swift flight over a blank canvas, their fury excited by skilfully counterfeited wounds, from which flows blood, unreal as the arrow that has pierced them. There also, by a miracle of art, we behold the fierce-looking Parthian, with head turned back, on a prancing steed, now escaping, now returning to hurl his javelin, by turns fleeing from and putting to flight the wild animals whose images he pursues.”*

However, from that time, the first place in the arts dependent on painting—especially in tapestry—was held by the purely decorative element; that is, by designs of animals and flowers conventionally treated, by inscriptions, and geometrical subjects. At the same time a desire for uniformity and symmetry outweighed the claims of a free and animated style of decoration. Instead of the monsters—crocodiles, hippopotami, cranes, and pigmies, so hideous but so full of life—that were figured in Alexandrian tapestries and produced in them such picturesque confusion, we find an interminable series of animals, lions, eagles, and ostriches, frozen and petrified in hieratic immobility. It is impossible to say whether this repetition of the same subjects was a consequence of the substitution of a mechanical process of weaving

* Epist., book ix., ep. xiii., ch. 2. See F. Michel, “Recherches,” book ii., p. 146.

for handwork, or was due to that spirit of indolence and love of meditation, which, dreading the slightest intellectual exertion, became absorbed in the contemplation of meaningless designs. However this may be, we now find as designs for tapestries nothing but griffins face to face, leopards inscribed in circles, and eagles settled on their prey ; if, indeed, the artist has not contented himself with simply strewing his canvas with roses, wheels, apples, or even with still less interesting subjects. The reign of the Sassanides (226-652) marked for Persia the success of this sumptuous, if not graceful, style, the uniformity and empty, lifeless magnificence of which exhibited a striking contrast to the freedom and animation that distinguished the tapestries of Athens and Rome. Luxury prevailed in a hitherto unknown degree ; silk and gold no longer appeared sufficiently costly ; precious stones were set in the fabrics. When the Emperor Heraclius conquered Chosroes II. (628), he found in the palace of this prince, at Dastagerd, innumerable silk-brocaded fabrics, as well as rich cloths embroidered by the needle.*

In 637, the period of the Mohammedan conquest, Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sassanides, overflowed with these sumptuous fabrics. Amongst others, the victors found an immense hanging, sixty yards round, composed of silk, silver, gold, and precious stones. This monumental piece, manufactured for Chosroes I. (531-579), portrayed a garden intersected with paths

* Labarte, " Histoire des Arts industriels," vol. ii., p. 420.

and water-courses, and ornamented with trees and spring flowers. In the broad border were parterres, the flowers in which were represented by blue, red, yellow, white and green precious stones. The water-courses and paths were also composed of jewels, whilst golden threads reproduced the yellowish tone of the soil.*

It was long supposed that the Arabian conquest, by enforcing everywhere the narrow æsthetics of the Koran, also limited the character of design in the plastic arts, and banished from them for ever the representation of the human figure. Before discussing this important problem, we may state, with Viollet-le-Duc, that textile art must have held a preponderating position amongst the Arabs, accustomed from time immemorial, like most of the Semitic tribes, to live in tents. "Textile fabrics and arms (says Viollet-le-Duc) were their only luxury. As in the case of the primitive Jews, tents and huts covered with valuable stuffs were their monuments; they could not accustom themselves to the buildings with irregular exteriors, covered with projecting sculpture, which they encountered wherever numerous traces of Greek and Roman civilisation remained. The statues, bas-reliefs, and raised friezes, in which broad scrolls were intermixed with figures and animals, must have appeared the monstrosities of an imagination disordered by pantheism. Even allowing that the Alexandrian school had not, previously to the

* Karabacek, "Die persische Nadelmalerei Susandschird," p. 190. (Leipsic, 1881.)

invasion of the Arabs, introduced a mode of decoration resembling tapestry, there is every reason to admit that the conquerors rendered the adoption of this style necessary, as more nearly resembling that which they had continually before their eyes, and as being the only kind permissible to man in the face of the only God, whose works were not to be imitated by his own creatures.”*

The explanation offered by Viollet-le-Duc is incorrect in one point only ; the eminent architect over-estimated the strictness of a commandment, attacked again and again. The representation of living beings was not prohibited so absolutely as was formerly believed ; we may speak, in the present day, of Arabic paintings without calling forth a smile of incredulity. We cannot do better, in this respect, than support ourselves by the testimony of an acknowledged authority. “In the workshops of Kalmoun, Bahnessa, Dabik, and Damas,” says M. H. Lavoix, “where the richest silks, the most beautiful velvets, and the most magnificent hangings, which formed the extensive and fruitful commerce of the East, were manufactured, the workmen were in the habit of adding to the beauty of their fabrics by delineations familiar to, and accepted by, all. The productions of the great Asiatic manufactories combined the interest of genuine pictures with delicacy of drawing and beauty of colour. These represented sometimes hunting-scenes, festivals, concerts, and dancing ; sometimes

* See Soldi, “Les Arts méconnus,” p. 262.

combats, contests, and banquets; in fact, all the scenes of Mussulman life."*

Thus the success of Mohammedanism rather gave new scope to, than injured, an art so closely connected with Oriental customs. M. Karabacek has shown, in a very learned work, how highly these precious fabrics were esteemed, from the beginning of the Arabian rule, in Persia and the neighbouring countries, where they were paid for literally at their weight in gold, and were rarely possessed by private individuals. Christians themselves sought them eagerly, as the Byzantine dignitary bears witness, who fell into captivity during the reign of the Caliph Musanija (661-680), while attempting to gain possession of a Persian carpet, ornamented with flowers.†

The Caaba of Mecca, like the tabernacle of the Jews, derived its chief elements of decoration from textile art. The faithful rivalled each other in enriching it with the most valuable fabrics. From the year 776 the safety of its walls was threatened by the weight of the hangings suspended on them; these were removed, but, less than half a century later, a fresh displacement became necessary. The Sicilian traveller, Ibn Dschobair, who visited Mecca in 1183, was enraptured with the splendour of this frequently renewed decoration. Outwardly, the gigantic cube was ornamented with thirty-four

* "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" (1875), vol. ii., p. 110. See also Schack, "Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sicilien," vol. ii., p. 166 *et seq.*; pp. 191, 233. (Berlin, 1865.)

† "Die persische Nadelmalerei Susandschird," p. 193.

hangings, sewn together; these fabrics, composed of green silk mixed with cotton, had niches which terminated in triangles, in addition to numberless inscriptions (verses of the Koran, prayers, and names of the donors, &c.), while the background was apparently strewn with flowers. In the interior were numerous admirable silken hangings; and even the columns that supported the edifice were covered with stuffs.*

Such was the part played by tapestry in the sacred city. If we now turn our attention to the innumerable provinces of an empire that quickly extended from India to Spain, we everywhere find painting in textile fabrics equally honoured, and surpassing, beyond question, painting properly so called. Carpets and hangings, containing portraits of the sovereigns, are found side by side with purely decorative designs, in Persia, Arabia, and Asia Minor. The wonderful tapestries in the palace of Bagdad, in the reign of the Abbâsi Caliph, Motawakkel (d. 861), were of this class. †

There was no less luxury at the court of the Fatimite Caliphs. At Kaïrouan, in 964, Mœzzli-din-Allah caused a hanging to be made, representing the earth with its mountains, seas, and rivers, its roads

* Karabacek, pp. 176, 177. We know that to this day a black silk veil, embroidered with verses taken from the Koran, covers the sanctuary. Each year, at the time of the pilgrimage, this veil is replaced by a new one brought from Egypt on a camel specially destined for its transport. The pilgrims carry away, as relics, pieces of the old veil.

† Karabacek, p. 76.

and towns, especially Mecca and Medina. Each place had its name written in threads of silk, silver,



FIG. 6.—EASTERN BROCADED FABRICS—VII. TO IX. CENTURIES.
(Germanic Museum at Nuremberg.)

and gold. This monumental piece of work cost 22,000 dinars, about £10,720.

When the rebels beset Mostanser, at Cairo, in 1067, in order to divide his spoils, some servants found

in a chamber where many closets were constructed, each of which had a separate approach, two thousand unused hangings of damask and other stuffs, embroidered with gold, and portraying all kinds of subjects. Some of these, of red damask enriched with gold, and of the most perfect workmanship, depicted enclosures with elephants assembled in them ; the ground on which the feet of these animals rested was ungilt. They took from one of these store-rooms three thousand pieces of red damask, edged with white ; many complete tents, with their ottomans, floors, cushions, carpets, curtains, and all necessary furniture ; an immense quantity of tapestries, of fabrics of Kalmoun and of Dabik, with silken stuffs of every sort and colour, and of inestimable value ; and mats embroidered in gold and silver, representing elephants, birds, and other animals. Amidst a mass of gold-worked, silken tapestries, of all sizes and colours, about a thousand were found, representing the succession of the various dynasties, with portraits of the kings and celebrated men. Above each figure were inscribed his name, his age, and his principal actions. Fakhr-al-Arab received as his share an immense fabric of silk of Toster, the ground of which was blue, tinted with a great variety of colours, and woven with gold ; it had been manufactured by order of Mœzzli-din-Allah. . . (This is the tapestry described above, page 49.) Tadj-al-Molouk, amidst other precious goods, had a tent of red satin woven with gold, of inestimable value, which had been made for the Caliph Motawakkel. He also received a

carpet of Damas, for which he refused one thousand dinars.*

Textile manufactures flourished in Algeria from the time of Haroun-al-Raschid (786-809). Stuffs, similar to those made at Tunis, were manufactured at Tounch, a country-town forming part of the domain of Tunis. Even the veil of the Caaba was sometimes made there. "I saw," says Fakehy, "a carpet, presented by Haroun-al-Raschid: it was of the material called 'kabaty,' and on it were inscribed these words, 'In the name of God, may the blessing of God be on the Caliph Raschid-Abdallah-Haroun, Prince of the faithful (may God bestow his favour on him!)' This carpet was made in the manufactory of Tounch, by order of Fadl-ben-Retz, in the year 190."†

In Spain also, thanks to the Moorish conquest, textile art was not slow in its brilliant advance. The manufactures of Almeria rapidly acquired a European reputation; these, it is true, were not tapestries, but brocades, damasks, and such fabrics; abroad, therefore, they only influenced the domain of ornamentation. ‡

It is probable that Arabian manufactures also found a home in Sicily. We know, at least, that Adda, daughter of the Fatimist Caliph Moez (who died in

* Quatremère de Quincy, "Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte et sur quelques contrées voisines," vol. ii., pp. 376—378. (Paris, 1811.)

† Quatremère de Quincy, vol. i., pp. 336, 339.

‡ See "Les Recherches" of M. F. Michel, vol. i., p. 284 *et seq.*

Egypt at the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century), was possessed of an immense quantity of Sicilian silken stuffs.*

Thus we find that, all along the Mediterranean, the Mussulman broke in on the Grecian, Latin, and Germanic civilisations.

* Labarte, "Histoire des Arts industriels," vol. ii., p. 433. See also, concerning the Arabian fabrics of Sicily, Bock, "Liturgische Gewaender," vol. i., pp. 34, 35 ; and Kleinodien, p. 29.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOWER EMPIRE.

THE progress of tapestry in Europe can be more easily followed after our attempt, in the preceding pages, to explain the development of Oriental tapestry from the last days of the Roman dominion to the Crusades ; that is, to the fresh contact, not less fertile than previous ones, between two civilisations. In fact, having once in a general way established the Eastern influence, we need no longer turn from our chief aim to ask if the indication of this or that modification came from Alexandria, Smyrna, or Bagdad, from the banks of the Nile or of the Euphrates.

Let us in the first place state that the invasion of the Barbarians, while arresting the progress of Græco-Roman civilisation, by no means stopped that over refinement of luxury, that pursuit of colour and brilliancy, to which the old masters of the world had more and more surrendered. Only, in proportion as Oriental influence predominated, richness of raw material and high finish of workmanship prevailed over strength of imagination and beauty of composition. The change of taste was manifested not only in textile art ; mosaic work eclipsed painting, and ivory-carving and goldsmiths' work superseded sculpture.

A lowering of thought, a kind of cramping of the feeling for plastic art, was seen everywhere. Even tapestry came to be considered too strong and bold an art, and had to give way to embroidery.

We have described, in a preceding chapter, the change that took place in costume ; the new fashions attained complete success at the very time that Constantine secured the triumph of Christianity. Instead of the plain white toga, ornamented at the most with a purple or gold stripe, or "clavus ;" instead of the ample, harmonious draperies—so inexhaustible a source of inspiration for sculpture—we find only heavy, silken apparel, overladen with ornamentation, like the ostentatious dress of the Assyrian monarchs. In the consular diptychs, in the miniatures of the philoclean calendar of 354, or in any of the memorials of that time that have reached us, we can hardly distinguish the general lines of the human figure under the mass of embroidery. The toga of one Christian senator had no less than six hundred figures, representing every event of the life of Christ, worked upon it.* Asterius, bishop of Amasia, an author of the fourth century, very wittily derided these exaggerations. "When men appear in the streets," says he, "thus dressed, the passers-by look at them as at painted walls. Their clothes are pictures, which the little children point out to each other. Here are lions, panthers, and bears ; there, rocks, woods, and huntsmen. The most saintly wear

* Em. David, "Histoire de la Peinture au moyen-âge," edit. 1843, p. 41.

likenesses of Christ, his disciples, and his miracles. Here we see the marriage of Galilee, and the pots of wine; there, the paralytic carrying his bed, the sinner at the feet of Jesus, or Lazarus raised from the dead."*

A mosaic of the sixth century, representing the Empress Theodora offering rich gifts to the church of St. Vital at Ravenna, has preserved for us the picture of one of these ornamented costumes: the adoration of the Magi is depicted, in the form of a frieze, on the lower part of the robe of the too famous wife of Justinian. This style of ornament was employed, in succeeding ages, for all show costumes, either religious or civil; it is sufficient here to mention the cope of Leo III. at Aix-la-Chapelle; the cloak of St. Henri (972-1024) in the cathedral at Bamberg; and the imperial dalmatic, in the treasury of St. Peter's, at Rome.

These ornamentations were certainly embroidered with the needle, not woven. We mention them here in order to show how textile ornament extended during the Lower Empire; and we have authority for stating that the luxury of dress re-acted on the higher forms of textile art, especially on tapestry used for the decoration of edifices.

Thanks to the encouragement of the triumphant Church, tapestry soon rivalled mosaic and goldsmith's work, the two arts to which the Lower Empire entrusted by preference the decoration of its sanctuaries;

* Mongez, "Recherches sur les vêtements," p. 265.

in the basilicas devoted to the new creed it obtained the same distinguished place which it had held in the temples of the gods. We know that the curtains veiling the ciborium, in the church of Saint Sophia, at Constantinople, were remarkable for their richness; Christ was represented on one of them, standing between St. Peter and St. Paul, holding the Gospels in one hand and giving the benediction with the other. In Palestine, Epiphanius, in 394, speaks of a veil, hung at the entrance of a church, and ornamented with a picture of Christ, or of some saint.* No basilica in Rome was without its ornamented hangings, more or less sumptuous. A veil was to be seen at Ravenna, about 565, on which was represented Christ, and the likenesses of five archbishops, amongst them that of Victor, the donor of the precious fabric. St. Athanasius presented the church of Stephanie, at Naples, with thirteen hangings, ornamented with subjects taken from the Gospels. †

From Italy this luxury spread rapidly over Gaul and Great Britain. We find Clotilda, at the christening of her first-born, lavishing the most precious "cortinæ" and "pallia" for the decoration of the church; and Dagobert decking the walls, columns, and arches of St. Denis with golden fabrics, sparkling with pearls. ‡ Further on it will be seen that the part

* Bingham, "Origines sive antiquitates ecclesiasticæ." Halle, 1727, vol. iii., p. 215.

† Muratori, "Scriptores," book ii., second part.

‡ "Per totam ecclesiam auro textas vestes, margaritarum varietatibus multipliciter exornatas, in parietibus et columnis atque arcibus suspendi devotissime jussit." (F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. i., p. 7.)

played by tapestries in religious ceremonies becomes widely extended, and a matter of special regulation.

The position held by tapestry in civil edifices was quite as important. We are able to judge of this from a mosaic at Ravenna, representing the palace of Theodoric, the great king of the Goths: the hangings, draped between the columns of the portico, wonderfully relieve and brighten a style of architecture, which already shows but too many traces of decline.

The rôle played by tapestry being thus ascertained, let us consider the class of representation and the style held in esteem during these barbarous ages.

That which first strikes us is the predominance of the zoological and floral elements in fabrics, whether imported from the East or manufactured in Europe. We see nothing but griffins mingled with great and small wheels, basilisks, unicorns, peacocks (sometimes alone and sometimes ridden by men), eagles, pheasants, swallows, ducks, elephants, lions, tigers, leopards, and other animals of Persia and India; golden apples and oranges, big and little roses and other flowers, trees and shrubs, palaces, and other similar subjects.* Caligraphic ornamentation also held a considerable position: it is impossible to ignore the imitation of Oriental models, when reviewing the numerous inscriptions traced, in more or less elegant characters, either on vestments or on carpets and

* See the learned work of M. F. Michel, "Recherches sur le commerce, la fabrication et l'usage des étoffes de soie, d'or et d'argent, et autres tissus précieux en Occident, principalement en France, pendant le moyen-âge." Vol. i., pp. 15—19, Paris, 1852.

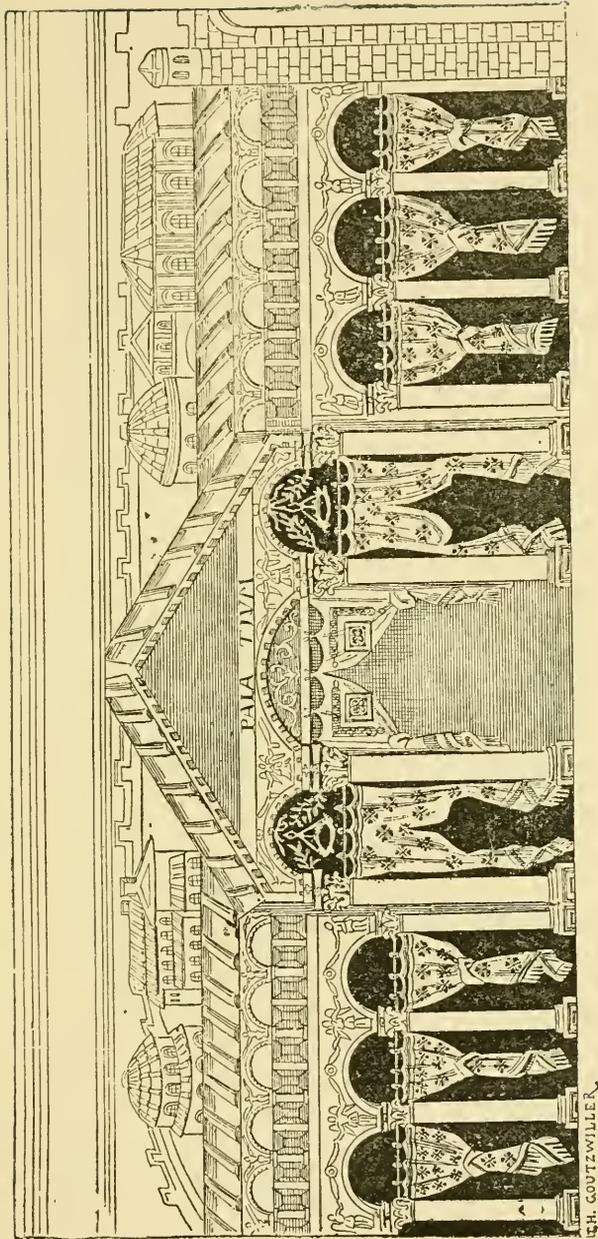


FIG. 7.—PALACE OF THEODORIC, AT RAVENNA.
(From a mosaic in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo.)

hangings.* The scarcity, on the other hand, of a religious style of ornament—such as crosses and stars—is also observable.

In these various respects we find tapestry, as in the works of the time of Adrian, forcing its rules on an art which, both in its methods and purpose, was in complete contrast with it. The mosaics of the temple of Fortuna, at Palestrina, and those of the Kircher Museum reproduce, with some little exaggeration of spirit and colour, the chief subjects of the Alexandrian hangings; the convolutions lavished on the pavements of Italy, Gaul, Germany, Britain, Spain, and Africa recall, in the most obvious way, the mats used in Africa and Asia; and in like manner the essential elements of Persian textile art, as it appeared under the dynasty of the Sassanides, are seen in the pavements of the third to the twelfth century. In these pavements are represented men riding on peacocks, lions, and fish, absolutely like those seen on the brocaded or damask stuffs, which have been described by chroniclers, and have come down to us; elsewhere are dragons vomiting flames, winged horses, two-headed dogs, quadrupeds with human heads, sea monsters, tigers, panthers, elephants, camels, three-headed sphinxes, capricorns, basilisks, sirens, and centaurs. In the arrangement of these mosaics, with their figures generally placed face to face, or at least in a strictly symmetrical position, the influence of the models designed by the skilful Byzantine or Oriental weavers

* F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. ii., p. 112 *et seq.*

is no less felt. How can we, in handwork, otherwise account for that precise repetition of the same design, and that severe symmetry, which are the special



FIG. 8.—FRAGMENT OF THE SHROUD OF ST. POTENTIAN—
(TENTH CENTURY.)

(A brocaded fabric in the Treasury of the Cathedral of Sens.)

characteristics of woven fabrics? Even the foliage surrounding the chief figures, and the framework so lovingly designed, strikingly recall the traditions of textile art.

Although these representations were of an essentially secular character, the Church received them without hesitation; the richness of the raw material and the splendour of the colouring caused the singularity of the subjects to be overlooked. In the hangings exhibited in the Roman basilicas, nothing was more frequently seen than figures of eagles, griffins, men mounted on peacocks, and lions face to face. We find this fantastic ornamentation even in Great Britain; in the eighth century, Eybert, Bishop of York, adorned several churches with silken stuffs, covered with strange figures:—

Serica suspendens peregrinis vela figuris.

Later, in 984, fabrics, also of silk, were found in the collection of another English prelate, Abbot Engelricus.

The hangings adorned with original compositions are, from their narrow symbolism and strictly confessional character, a complete contrast to those we have just described, in which the ornament has no special signification. The subjects of compositions—whether for veils, altar-cloths, or door-curtains—are commonly taken from the New Testament, more rarely from the Old; they represent Daniel in the Lions' Den, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Baptism of Jesus, the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Lord's Supper, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Ascension; also the Annunciation, the

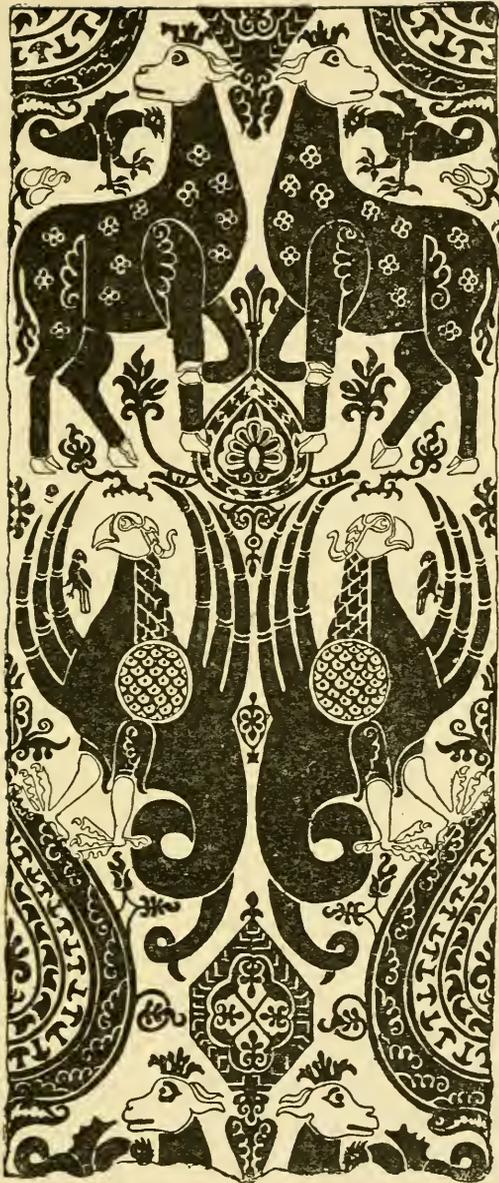


FIG. 9.—FRAGMENT OF THE SHROUD OF ST. SAVINIAN—
(TENTH CENTURY.)

(A brocaded fabric in the Treasury of the Cathedral of Sens.)
(The above engraving is taken from the work of M. H. Havard, "L'Art à
travers les Mœurs.")

Death, and the Assumption of the Virgin. The acts of the Apostles and the martyrology are constantly laid under contribution ; scenes from the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul alternate with innumerable representations of the Greek and Latin martyrs.

The iconographical element occupies an important position by the side of the compositions inspired by the Scriptures and the acts of the martyrs. But these portraits of popes, emperors, prelates, and great personages belong almost exclusively to the endowment or decoration of churches ; they are therefore equally religious in character. I especially cite the portraits of the Archbishops of Ravenna, and those of Pope Leo IV.

Compositions derived from secular history, from philosophy, or even from everyday life, are few and far between. Amongst these are the Burning of Troy, represented on the golden veil presented to the convent of Croyland, in 833, by Withlaf, King of Mercia* ; and the "Orbis terrarum" (a kind of map of the world, similar to those Charlemagne caused to be engraved on tables of silver) given to the abbey of St. Denis, by Charles the Bald.†

It would be rash, with the uncertain information at our command, to seek to decide the nature of the materials manufactured in the East during the early part of the Middle Ages. It is a question, at one time, of needlework, evidently of embroideries ; ‡ at

* F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. i., p. 182.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 56.

‡ "Velum acupictile, habens hominis effigiem super pavonem unum." (Liber pontificalis, Life of Leo IV.)

another, of woven fabrics; and again, of stuffs on which ornaments were laid and sewn.*

It is probable that the purely ornamental figured stuffs were generally brocaded or damasked; the slow and costly process of the high warp was only had recourse to in exceptional cases, to reproduce designs which the weaver's loom can repeat with infinitely greater regularity. It is in this sense that a passage quoted by M. Labarte, from a Byzantine writer, is to be understood: "This ornamentation is not produced by means of a needle, thrust through the fabric by painstaking hands, but with a shuttle changing from time to time the colour and the thickness of threads supplied by the wild ant (the silk-worm)."[†]

Amongst these various processes, one only was known and made use of all over Europe: namely, embroidery. And even in this, Byzantium still retained for many centuries the power of producing the richest and most perfect compositions.

We have proof of her superiority in the following fact. Previous to the quarrel of the Iconoclasts, the Italian chronicles—especially the "Liber Pontificalis," the chronicle of the popes—rarely mention em-

* "Pallia suspendenda in parietibus ad altaria sanctorum in festis, quorum plurima de serico erant, aureis volucris quædam insuta, quædam intexta, quædam plana." This expression "insuere" (to sew into a thing) recurs in the text to which we have just referred relating to the "History of Troy," presented in 883 to the convent of Croyland: "Offero etiam velum meum aureum quo insuitur excidium Trojæ."

† "Histoire des arts industriels," 2nd edit., vol. ii., p. 420.

broideries of silk and gold. After the immigration of the numerous Byzantine artists, driven away by the intolerance of the Iconoclasts, we suddenly find embroidery developing most brilliantly on the banks of the Tiber : nothing is now seen but stuffs adorned with religious subjects, or with portraits of the sovereign pontiffs.*

The manufacture of brocaded stuffs, at least of such as contained silk, was far more limited. Till the sixth century, the Byzantines themselves were obliged to procure their silk from the Persians. Justinian I. succeeded in introducing silk culture into his dominions ; and henceforth the manufactures of Constantinople had no need to envy those of Asia. Until the twelfth century, the period of the formation of the Sicilian manufactories, they provided these precious fabrics for the whole of Christian Europe.

As for the high warp—the process that most interests us, as it best suits the requirements of decorative tapestry—it appears, during the first part of the Middle Ages, to have been only used in Persia and its neighbouring states. The somewhat numerous specimens of Byzantine, Italian, French, English, or German fabrics which have reached us are invariably either embroidered or figured.

* ‘ Histoire des arts industriels,’ vol. ii., p. 420.

CHAPTER VI.

TAPESTRY IN THE WEST, FROM THE NINTH TO
THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

 THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

THE darkest period of modern history is that comprised between the end of the ninth and the end of the eleventh century.

Frightful anarchy succeeded the civilising influences of the reign of Charlemagne ; the incursions of the Normans—the common enemy—far from arresting intestine feuds, served only to revive them ; the laborious structure of the Gallic-Roman civilisation fell to pieces on all sides ; the last traces of culture disappeared, and unspeakable barbarity overran the whole of Europe.

The few works produced in the midst of such chaos could but reflect the coarseness of the times and the ignorance of the workmen, we dare not say artists ; conception, style, and workmanship, all show a decline that seemed almost irremediable. We shall therefore, not stop to examine the productions which have reached us from these inauspicious times : with the exception of those manufactured in Constantinople, they are not worthy of the name of works of

art. But we must not disregard the efforts made to reinstate the former condition of things, which was everywhere disappearing. These efforts, though little interesting in their immediate results, deserve to be carefully studied, because of their important effect on the future.

The isolation of the newly-constituted nations—an inevitable result of the obstruction of means of communication, the want of security, and the general state of misery—necessarily brought about the formation of fresh centres of production. As importation from the East became more and more difficult, the various states of Western Europe sought to turn local resources to account. It was from the monasteries, whose initiatory energy during the first half of the Middle Ages cannot be sufficiently extolled, that the first indications of this spirit emanated.*

Authorities record that St. Angelm of Norway, Bishop of Auxerre, caused a great number of hangings to be made for his church, about the year 840. But the document on which this statement is based is unfortunately not sufficiently conclusive, and we think it advisable to dismiss it from discussion. In the tenth century, about 985—and in this case the information is absolutely certain—Abbot Robert, the third of the name, of the monastery of St. Florent of Saumur, acquired or gave commissions for a quantity of dossers, cushions, curtains, carpets, and

* See in "Recherches" of M. F. Michel (vol. ii., pp. 344, 349) the very extensive list of embroidered or woven works produced in the convents.

wall hangings, all of wool. He had two grand pieces of tapestry executed, in the manufacture of which silk was introduced, and on which elephants were represented; on others were seen lions, standing out from a red background. The first of these works was a sacerdotal vestment, and not a hanging, in spite of the expression "aulæa" made use of by the chronicler; the abbot, indeed, is said to have worn it on great festivals. That these various fabrics were woven, not embroidered, the word "texere" places beyond doubt.*

The "Orbis terrarum," or representation of the terrestrial globe, presented to the Abbey of St. Denis by Queen Adelaide, wife of Hugh Capet (987—996), appears also to have been woven, and not embroidered.†

In the eleventh century we find, without leaving France, a manufactory of tapestries at Poitiers, the productions of which appear to have been highly prized. We know at least that, in 1025, an Italian bishop, named Leo, commissioned William V., Count of Poitou, to send him a "tapetum mirabile," of which the latter required the dimensions. These fabrics were decorated with portraits of kings and emperors, animals, and subjects taken from the Scriptures.‡

About the middle of the same century, Jervin,

* The text of this curious document has been published by M. Jubinal in his "Recherches," p. 13.

† F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. ii., p. 347.

‡ Jubinal, "Recherches," pp. 15, 16. For the tapestries of the Abbey of Fleury, in the eleventh century, see Pertz, "Neues Archiv," vol. iii. pp. 363, 373.

Abbot of St. Riquier (d. 1075), bought or ordered hangings for the decoration of his monastery, his zeal manifesting itself "tam in palliis acquirendis, quam in tapetibus faciendis."*

In the next century Matthew of Loudun, created Abbot of St. Florent, at Saumur, in 1133, had two dossers made, destined to be hung in the choir at solemn festivals: one of these represented the four and twenty elders of the Apocalypse, with citharas and viols, and other subjects taken from the same book. He also adorned the nave with hangings, on which centaurs, lions, and other animals were portrayed.†

Limoges also appears, in the twelfth century, to have possessed a carpet manufactory; at least, such productions are spoken of in the romance of "Erec et Enide":—

" Puis s'en monta en unes loges
 Et fist un tapi de Limoges
 Devant lui à la tere estendre . . .
 Erec s'asist de l'autre part
 Desus l'ymage d'un lupart (léopard)
 Qui el tapis estait portraite."‡

In England, also, textile art did not cease to be the object of assiduous attention. In the tenth century, a pious lady, wishing to embroider a sacerdotal vestment, begged Dunstan, then in his youth,

* F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. i., p. 71.

† Jubinal, "Recherches," p. 14. Cf. Lacordaire, "Notice historique sur les manufactures impériales de tapisseries des Gobelins, et de tapis de la Savonnerie," Paris, 1853, p. 6.

‡ F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. ii., p. 405.

(he died in 988), to draw her a design, which she copied with golden threads. Thus, at that time, cartoons were expressly designed for embroidery or tapestry. During the same century the widow of the Duke of Northumberland presented Ely cathedral with a hanging, on which the acts of her husband were depicted.* Later on, in the reign of Henry I. (1100—1135), we find Abbot Geoffrey offering to the monastery of St. Alban a grand dossier, in which were woven (*intexitur*) the "Discovery of the body of St. Alban," and two other pictures, representing the "Good Samaritan" and the "Prodigal Son."†

In the twelfth century, Germany, with which we have hitherto had no occasion to occupy ourselves, also took an active part in the development of tapestry. Between 1164 and 1200, Meginwart of Weltinburch, styled "tapetiarius," and his two "fratueles," Gerwich and Chounrad, appear amongst the witnesses of a deed concerning the convent of Schefftlar, in Bavaria. In 1177, the name of "Fredericus tapifex, de familia ecclesiæ," is found at the convent of Chiemsee; and that of "Aschwin tapeciarius" at the convent of Weihestephan, between 1182 and 1197. The names of these masters are the only records we possess concerning them.‡

In this, as in the preceding period, the chief

* See F. Michel, "Recherches," vol. ii., pp. 339 *et seq.*, for the fame of English embroideries in the Middle Ages.

† Rock, "South Kensington Museum. Textile Fabrics." London, 1870, p. 111.

‡ See "L'Art," June, 1882, for article on German tapestry in the Middle Ages.

concern of tapestry was to contribute to the decoration of sanctuaries. The subjects preferred by the artists could not but be affected by this circumstance ; they are almost invariably scenes from the Scriptures and the Martyrology (*e.g.* the history of the Virgin and the saints, embroidered for the church of Notre Dame of Rouen, by the duchess Gonnor, wife of Richard I.).*

Amidst the historical compositions of this epoch, and of the Middle Ages generally, the palm undoubtedly belongs to the celebrated hanging representing the conquest of England by the Normans, and known as "the Bayeux Tapestry," or the tapestry of Queen Matilda. From a technical point of view, this work ought not to figure here, it being an embroidery and not a tapestry.† But its dimensions, for it is upwards of 70 yards in length by more than half a yard in height ; the importance of its composition—it comprises no less than 530 figures ; the purpose for which it was intended, *viz.*, to be hung along a wall ; its decorative character ; and especially its value as a history of the manners, costume, armament, and style during the eleventh century, the date at which it was embroidered—combine to justify us in making an exception in its favour, and in assigning it a place in this treatise.

* Jubinal, "Recherches," p. 16.

† The following are a few details concerning the execution of this gigantic embroidery. The outlines of the figures and objects represented were first traced on the canvas ; the embroiderer then filled in the spaces, outlined by the drawing, with threads laid in parallel lines, which she proceeded to cross with another row of lines, and finally to fasten with needle stitches. See the interesting work of M. J. Comte : "La Tapisserie de Bayeux," 79 photo. plates. Paris, 1878, p. 6.

The Bayeux Tapestry is above all an historical document: the clearness of its story, the precision of its types, costumes, and armour, are interesting in the highest degree. Nothing is more curious than to study the way in which the fierce warriors of the eleventh century went to work to embark, to set sail, to trans-ship arms and ammunition, to reconnoitre

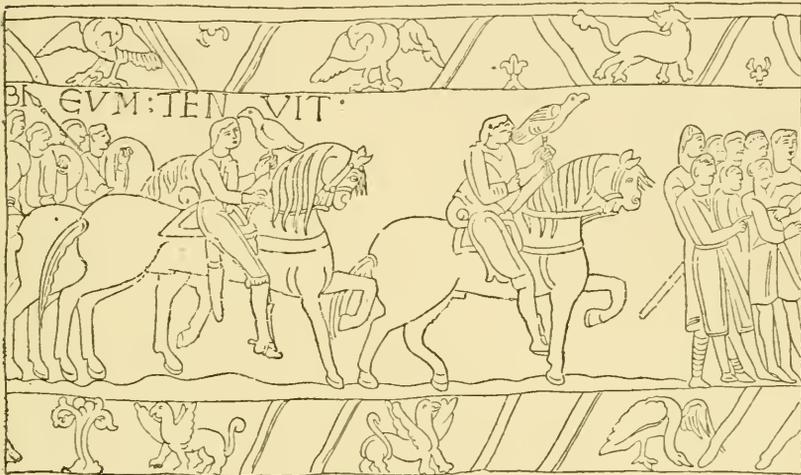


FIG. 10.—“FRAGMENT OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.”

the ground, to fight, &c. But if we regard the merits of the artistic arrangement, we find lamentable ignorance of the laws of composition, of proportion, and of perspective. Masses without balance, figures ten heads high, personages of the second plane bigger than those in the foreground, trees represented by rods with half-a-dozen aces of spades for leaves; these are defects that would be severely criticised, were they not common to all the productions of the period.

Various other hangings may be cited, as well as the Bayeux Tapestry, to show that, if the religious principle was still all-powerful, the secular element had acquired an importance it had not previously possessed. We have already mentioned the "Orbis terrarum" presented to the monastery of St. Denis by Queen Adelaide. About the same time, in the latter half of the tenth century, Hedwige of Suabia embroidered an alb for the Abbey of St. Gall, representing the "Marriage of Mercury and Philology," after Marcianus Capella. A hundred, or a hundred and fifty years later, we find, among the tapestries of the principal church at Halberstadt, other classical reminiscences, no less curious: side by side with the portrait of Charlemagne are found those of Cato and Seneca. (See p. 80).

A poem, composed by Baudri de Bourgueil prior to his nomination to the bishopric of Dol, and dedicated to the daughter of William the Conqueror, in 1107, has preserved for us the description of a princely apartment of the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century, such at least as the author saw it in imagination. It was a vast, elongated hall, the walls of which were covered with tapestries of silk, silver, and gold.* On one of the walls were represented Chaos, the Creation, the Fall, the Death of Abel, and the Deluge. A second con-

* Aurea præcedunt, argentea fila sequuntur,
Tercia fila quidem serica semper erant.

—V. 211, 212.

It is evident that the author was familiar with the contest of Pallas and Arachne as Ovid has described it in the *Metamorphoses*.

tained Biblical scenes, from Noah to the kings of Judæa. On a third were subjects taken from Grecian mythology (such as the Siege of Troy), and from Roman history. A hanging representing the Conquest of England (with ideas forcibly recalling the style of the Bayeux Tapestry) adorned the alcove in which the princess's bed stood. The canopy counterfeited the sky and the constellations, special places being reserved for the seven planets. An immense map of the world in mosaic, with the seas, the rivers, the mountains, and the chief cities of the globe, covered the floor. The bed, finally, was ornamented with three groups of statues: Philosophy, accompanied by Music, Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Geometry; Rhetoric, with Logic and Grammar; and Medicine, with Galen and Hippocrates.*

We believe we may also attribute to the twelfth century a hanging (*cortina seu tapecium*) formerly preserved at the Abbey of Murbach, in Alsace, and already declared very ancient and most valuable in a document of 1464. On it were depicted the emperors granting privileges to the abbots of this monastery, with the corresponding inscriptions. The figures were woven (*intexta pannis*). It is attributed to the twelfth century from the fact that the series of emperors stopped at Henry V. (1106—1125.)

The dominant characteristics of tapestry about the middle of the twelfth century were gravity, a desire for weight and solemnity, and a tendency

* L. Delisle, "Poème adressé à Adèle, fille de Guillaume le Conquérant, par Baudri, Abbé de Bourgueil," pp. 4, 5, Caen, 1871.

towards abstraction ; these, it is seen, were the distinguishing traits of the Roman style itself, which had then attained its complete development. It cost sculptors, painters, and decorators—who so completely ignored nature and so well knew how to restrain their feelings and to subdue their imagination—but little to submit themselves to the exigencies of architecture, the pre-eminently conventional art. They had nothing to sacrifice in order to endow their figures either with regularity of feature or hieratic immobility, without which the solemn, vast, and majestic buildings they were called upon to decorate would have failed to produce their full effect. In this respect, nothing is more decorative than the “Benediction of Christ” in the Cathedral of Halberstadt : the rigidity of attitude, the poised gesture, and the simplicity of the draperies, harmonise perfectly with the edifice that serves as its frame. It is impossible not to appreciate the advance already made on the hangings of the preceding age, especially on that of Bayeux, in which the artist devotes himself entirely to his story, and does not trouble himself with the balancing of his masses, the arrangement of his groups, or, in a word, with the composition.

The twelfth century shows an equal advance from a technical point of view. The first crusade (1096—1099) had once more familiarised Europe with the masterpieces of Byzantine-Eastern tapestry, when in 1146, on the eve of a new crusade, Roger of Sicily, after a successful expedition against Corinth, Thebes, and Athens, carried away into captivity the silk-workers



FIG. II.—BENEDICTION OF CHRIST.
(Cathedral of Halberstadt.)

he there found. These he installed in Palermo, his capital, where they soon trained a school of pupils. Henceforth this art, which the Greeks alone amongst Christians had known and cultivated, ceased to be a secret to the inhabitants of Latin Europe. The fabrics of the Sicilian manufactories were only, it is true, brocades, damasks, satins, and other similar stuffs, made by machinery; still, the introduction of silk into countries which had only known this precious product by reputation, is an event too important to be overlooked in a history of tapestry.

The reader has hitherto often found us hesitate to interpret in one sense rather than in another the terms relating to textile art in which the chronicles or inventories of the Middle Ages are so profuse. Were they tapestries worked by hand, brocades and similar tissues, or embroidered? Hesitation is allowable, especially in the presence of the important hanging of the "Conquest of England," a work certainly embroidered, not woven. From the twelfth century—and in this respect we are forced to differ from the great majority of modern archæologists*—the specimens preserved in the churches and museums, especially in Germany, prove beyond a doubt that the high warp process was universally known. We may cite in the first place a tapestry from the church of Saint Géréon at Cologne, fragments of which, sold by Canon Bock, are preserved in the museums of Lyons, South Kensington, and Nuremberg. M.

* See specially "L'histoire générale de la Tapissierie," French section, p. 7.

Darcel, the manager of the Gobelins manufactory,

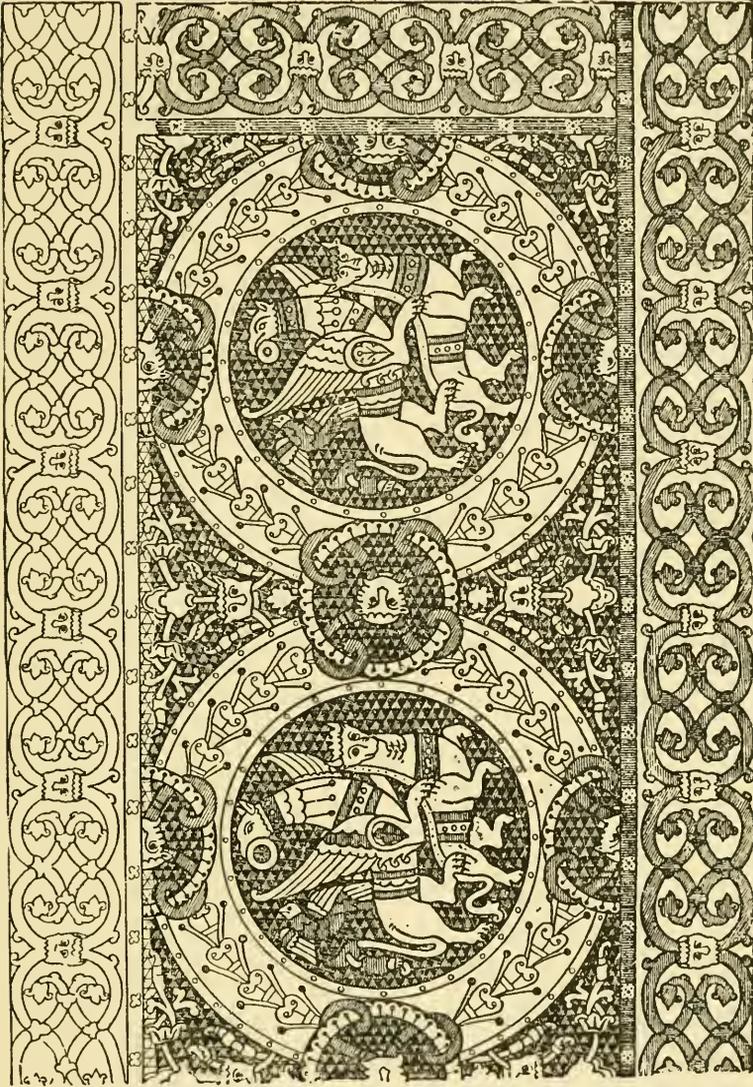


FIG. 12.—HIGH WARP TAPESTRY, OF THE ELEVENTH—TWELFTH CENTURY.
(Lyons Museum.)

and the most competent judge, expresses himself on this subject in the following terms: "This tapestry

cannot be of later date than the twelfth century. . . . Far from sharing the opinion of M. Essenwein, who considers it to come from a Byzantine workshop, we readily believe it to have been manufactured nearer us, but under the inspiration of some Oriental fabric. Its web is loose, and its colours are confined to green and brown, red and blue, on a background which was perhaps once coloured."*

The tapestries of the cathedral of Halberstadt can apparently claim an almost equally great antiquity. This series, hung above the stalls of the choir, consists of two parts, each measuring forty-three feet in length by three and a half in height. On it are seen by the side of scenes from the Old Testament (the Life of Abraham and Jacob's Dream), the figures of Christ and the twelve Apostles, St. George slaying the Dragon, Cato (with a scroll bearing the inscription : *Denigrat . meritum . dantis . mora*), and Seneca (with the inscription *Qui . cito . dat . bis . dat*) ; and finally a king or emperor, designated by the words *Karolus . rex*, doubtless Charlemagne. The outlines are marked with rather broad dark brown lines. Light and shade are produced by the diminution or strengthening of the chief tone. The general effect is one of dignity without stiffness. Kugler, to whom we are indebted for the preceding information, attributes the tapestries of Halberstadt Cathedral to the end of the twelfth century. According to Canon Bock, this series is still more ancient, for he considers it to belong to the eleventh century.

* "Gazette des Beaux Arts," 1877, vol. ii., p. 273.

In the face of such convincing testimony, it seems impossible any longer to suppose that high warp tapestry only arose at the end of the thirteenth century, and that the earliest mention made of it is to be found in the "Livre des Métiers" of Etienne Boileau. The high warp was known to the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans, and held in unflagging favour, during fifteen centuries, in Western Asia, especially in Persia. It may have been momentarily sacrificed to other methods, but its secret was never lost. Still less can the invention of this ingenious process be attributed to so late a period as the thirteenth century. The Crusades, which revived so many other branches of decorative art, may well have made their fertilising influence felt in this branch also.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

RENAISSANCE OF TAPESTRY.

WITH the thirteenth century a spirit of life and poetry overran Europe from end to end. The narrowness and aridity of theological tradition were shattered; the era of restoration, of reconciliation between man and nature, succeeded to the long period of separation; hope blossomed anew; young and generous blood flowed in the veins of the generation that recognised Frederick II. and St. Louis as leaders. Gothic architecture now recorded her grandest triumphs, and statuary saw the great sculptors of the French cathedrals arise on one side, and Nicholas and John of Pisa on the other; Giotto, the immortal founder of the Tuscan school, awoke painting from its lethargy; manners softened and became more chivalrous; a genial luxury replaced the cold sumptuousness of the Romance period; the Western world at length recovered its equilibrium and once more spread its wings.

Tapestry—like fresco, enamelling, miniature and glass painting—took part in the re-awakening of art; it serves to interpret new aspirations; the age had

no more devoted auxiliary in its ardent pursuit of magnificence.

Amongst cathedrals, there was not one, however humble, that did not derive its festal decoration from the masterpieces of textile art. Curtains (*cortinæ*), veils (*vela*) and *aulæa*, were destined to serve either as hangings, or as door-curtains; *pallia* generally draped the altars; whilst *bancalia*, *spalericæ*, and *dossalia*, covered the seats and the backs of the benches. The ecclesiastical furniture comprised also *substratoria*, *tapetes*, *tapeta*, or *tapeccii*—the terms by which foot-carpets were ordinarily designated—and finally baldachins or canopies, covered with tapestries.

In a treatise long considered an authority, Guillaume Durand, bishop of Mende, an author who lived at the end of the thirteenth century, has most clearly defined the rôle of these various kinds of tapestries; and further tells us that each had its special significance, the symbolism extending even to the colours. "White curtains represented purity of morals; red ones, charity; green, meditation; black, mortification of the flesh; and 'lividæ,' tribulation."* We seem to hear the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, discoursing on the mystic signification of the hangings of the Temple of Jerusalem.

In mansions also, tapestries soon came into general use as hangings. Many halls, of the fourteenth century especially, still retain the tenter-hooks from which these tapestries, secured only at the head, hung

* "Rationale divinatorum officiorum," book i., ch. iii., §§ 23, 39.

to the ground and concealed the doors. "It should be observed," says Viollet-le-Duc, from whom we quote this account, "that the doors of the interior were not four or five feet wide—such as were made about the middle of the sixteenth century—but only bays three feet wide at the utmost, and six high, without folding doors. A vertical slit made in the tapestry permitted entrance and exit by raising one of the flaps of the hanging. It was easy to conceal oneself behind these tapestries; therefore, those who wished at any time to be alone were careful to examine the hangings around the room. In Shakespeare's tragedy, perceiving that some one behind the hanging listens to his conference with his mother, Hamlet draws his sword and pierces Polonius through the tapestry. If we imagine the scene in a hall entirely draped with tapestries, of which the fringes sweep the ground, Hamlet's action is terrible in effect; but if Polonius were only hidden behind a door-curtain, like a child playing at hide and seek, then he was merely a simpleton, and the sword-thrust the act of a madman."*

The sphere of tapestry, however, was not confined to interior decoration; as in antiquity, it was introduced wherever a festival was held—in the public squares, in the tournament lists, and in the camps. At the coronation of Pope Gregory IX., at Rome, in 1227, carpets woven in Egypt, or dyed in India or in Gaul, covered the court of the Lateran; in Genoa, at

* "Dictionnaire du Mobilier."

the entries of Innocent IV., in 1244 and 1251, the streets were adorned with draperies of cloth of gold and of silk, with purple fabrics, and with painted hangings ("pictis tapetibus"). Then there were the banners, which floated in the midst of religious and military processions;* the saddle-cloths of horses, with rich armorial bearings; the scarlet pavilions "embroidered with rich work," such as St. Louis sent, in 1248, to the Khan of Tartary, which contained the Adoration of the Magi and Scenes from the Passion. The uses of tapestries became so numerous and so varied, that at last special names were given to them, according to the position assigned. Those that formed the interior of tents, or served as foot-carpets, and table or bed covers, were called "aucubes"; those that covered the frame-work and the exterior canvases were "trefs" (from *trifolium*), because tents were originally composed of three pieces of triangular material, of different colours. The song of Auberi of Burgundy describes one of these tents for us:—

" Du tref sont large li giron,
 Bestes sauvages i ot à grant fuison :
 Li très fu riches ; nul meillor ne vit-on,
 Vermaus et indes, et de mainte faison.
 Sor le pomel ont assis le dragon,
 Dont li oil liusent ausi que d'un charbon.
 Pierres i ot qui sunt d'un gran renon ;
 Par nuit obscure tout cler y véoit-on
 Plus d'une archie entor et environ.

* See "Recherches" of M. F. Michel, vol. ii., pp. 347, 348, 359, on the use of woven or embroidered banners.

La mer i fut pourtraicte e li poisson,
 Et tuit li oir de France le roion,
 Dès Cloevis qui tant fut loiaus hom.
 Seoir y puent bien quatre cent baron.*

If we consider the subjects represented on the hangings of this period—whether high warp tapestries, or decorative embroideries imitating tapestries—we find further evidence of the development of our art. Religious compositions were still undoubtedly very numerous; amongst these we may cite the great hangings (*panni magni*) forming part of the treasure of the Church under Boniface VIII. (1295); one, with the Lord's Supper, framed in golden vine-leaves; another, with Christ having St. Peter and St. Paul on either side, in a halo encircled by angels; a third with figures of the bishops; and also the "dossierets" given to the cathedral of Anagni, by the same Pope; the story of Samson, Christ on the Cross, with the Virgin and saints, &c.

Still, the secular element, from that time, acquired an importance which increased year by year. The German poet, Heinrich von dem Turlin, in his poem entitled "Der Aventiure Krone," composed about 1220, described hangings representing the stories of Paris and Helen, of Troy, and of Æneas. The hanging of Quedlimburg, the "Marriage of Mercury and Philology," was also made about this time.

As a general fact, we cannot too often repeat that it is difficult, even in the thirteenth century, to distinguish embroideries, brocades, damasks, and velvets,

* Jubinal, "La Moyen Age et la Renaissance," vol. ii.

from tapestries properly so called. The multitude of expressions by which ornamented fabrics were designated contribute much to complicate matters; the terms varied with the composition, the production, and sometimes even with the minutest details of the manufacture. Hitherto, no one has succeeded in determining the character of these "works" so different from each other — Cyprus work (*opus ciprense*), English work, and that of Germany, France, Paris, &c.



FIG. 13. — FIGURE TAKEN FROM
"THE MARRIAGE OF MERCURY
AND PHILOLOGY."

(Cathedral of Quedlimburg.)

Nevertheless, we are able to prove the existence of real tapestries in the thirteenth as in the twelfth century, by means of information from a foreign source, of which the historians of textile art have hitherto had no knowledge. About the year 1200, Agnes Abbess of Quedlimburg, assisted by her nuns,

worked a hanging destined for the decoration of the choir of her church. She chose for her subject the "Marriage of Mercury and Philology," after Marcianus Capella, the subject we have already seen on an alb embroidered for the convent of St. Gall. Kugler thus estimates this still existing work, which he expressly declares to be woven (in Wolle gewirkt): "The style is unequal, the cartoons being evidently by two different artists: sometimes it approaches the ordinary mode of the period, whilst in other parts—in spite of some Byzantine reminiscences—it rises to such perfection of form, such harmony of proportion, such grandeur, and such knowledge of drapery, that one looks on it as the manifestation of an art at its zenith."

A few years later (after 1220) Abbot Albert, in the Convent of Wessobrunn, had two hangings made (*tapetes . . . picturæ mirabilis et variæ texturæ*), one of which represented the Visions of St. John.

The carpets made in the second half of the thirteenth century by Jeanne, Abbess of the convent of Lothen, near Minden in Westphalia, were embroidered (*acu artificiose depicta*), not woven. They represented the foundation of the convent of Lothen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

THE COURT OF CHARLES V. AND NICHOLAS BATAILLE. THE APOCALYPSE OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ANGERS. THE WORKSHOPS OF PARIS AND OF ARRAS.

IN his admirable study of the history of the arts in France during the fourteenth century, M. Renan has formed an estimate of this epoch which affords abundant material for reflection. After showing that the progress made in the fourteenth century cannot be compared either with that which marked the thirteenth, or with that which in Italy gave to the fifteenth century the name of Renaissance, he adds that the art of the fourteenth century was, in the main, simply that of the preceding one perfected in detail in all that required patience and practice, but debased as regards general inspiration and originality. This century effected in extent and in variety that which it could not accomplish in elevation of tone and in grandeur. Forms, formerly neglected, now acquired importance; society, which had hitherto remained without taste for the beautiful, began to take appreciative interest in it; and secular art, until now consigned to a secondary rank, made a remarkable advance. "Royalty," he continues, "does not

suffice to uphold a great movement of spontaneous art. Municipal republics are needed for this, or small courts corresponding to natural divisions. The House of Burgundy realised some of these conditions: but bad Flemish taste kept it in a state of vulgar ponderous luxury without ideals. Louis of Orleans was already a disciple of the Renaissance, it is true; but he lacked stability of purpose. Italian history has no one to compare with Charles V. for integrity and good sense, but this excellent sovereign, it must be admitted, always retained a somewhat heavy, vulgar, and bourgeois taste. High art is neither the result of honest effort, nor of the frivolous trifling of amiable blunderers. Genius is essential to it. It should not be forgotten that Italy, which revived the arts, introduced at the same time the Renaissance of literature and of philosophical thought, in short the great awakening, which, too soon counteracted amongst us, set humanity once more on the road to great things, from which it had been driven by ignorance and depravity of mind."

Having defined the general intellectual movement of the fourteenth century, we will now endeavour to trace the development of tapestry during this period, and to show to what extent it submitted to contemporaneous taste, and served as its medium of expression.

It is not without reason that we have opened this chapter by a reference to French art. In the last years of the thirteenth century and the first years of the fourteenth, the manufacture of tapestry was

centred in the midland and northern provinces of France, and in Flanders. Paris, Arras, and Brussels, long possessed supremacy, more in consequence of the skill of their workmen than because of any new inventions. The rest of Europe by degrees became accustomed to have recourse to these great and excellently organised centres, and thus lost the technique which had been so familiar. A hundred and fifty or two hundred years later, when Italy, Spain, England, and Germany, wished to free themselves from a tribute that had become too burdensome, they were obliged to ask the Franco-Flemish high-warp workers to re-instruct them in secrets which the latter had made their own by the practice of a century.

These facts singularly restrict the interest of the discussion lately engaged in by the respective champions of Paris and of Arras. It is certain that neither of these towns can claim the glory of inventing the art of the high warp: they only applied themselves, in all probability at about the same time, to improving in a remarkable degree the manufacture of decorative tapestries.

From the second half of the thirteenth century, Paris was the centre of important textile trades. The "Livre des Métiers" of Etienne Boileau enumerates double-quilters, silk-spinners, alms-purse makers, and male, or rather female embroiderers (for these formed the majority in a corporation which then numbered nearly ninety members), side by side with "tapissiers sarrazinois" (1277), and, finally, the "tapissiers nostrez" (1295).

The "tapissiers sarrazinois," who made the shaggy and thick carpets similar to modern "moquettes," were only allowed to use woollen threads for their carpets, and flax and hemp for the canvas and borders. The employment of tow was rigorously forbidden them. The dyeing of the wool, which required special care, could be done by the workers themselves.* The rules for the "tapissiers nostrez" (a term the meaning of which has been much discussed)† were infinitely less strict; the apprenticeship was for four years instead of eight; and if they were only allowed two apprentices at a time, the number of their companions (vallés) was unlimited; in short, everything tends to prove that this corporation only manufactured ordinary stuffs, which had nothing to do with the art of tapestry.

In 1302, the Provost Pierre le Jumeau incorporated with the freedom of the "tapissiers sarrazinois" another class of tapestry-workers, called "high-warp workmen," who neither might nor should "work in the town of Paris until they were charged on oath and sworn in, as they were, to hold and keep all the points of the ordinance of the said handicraft."‡ The new-comers were ten in number.

* Lespinasse et Bonnardot, "Le Livre des métiers d'Etienne Boileau," Paris, 1879, § lxxvii. See also Depping, "Règlement sur les arts et métiers de Paris, rédigés au XIII^e siècle et connus sous le nom de 'Livre des métiers d'Etienne Boileau.'" pp. 126, 404, 410. Paris, 1837.

† Laborde, "Glossaire," p. 512.

‡ Depping, p. 410. For the subsequent vicissitudes of the corporation of tapestry-workers, M. Deville may be consulted ("Recueil de statuts et de documents relatifs à la corporation des tapissiers, de 1258 à 1875." Paris, 1875.)

This important text contains the earliest mention known of the expression "high warp." But it does not follow that because the term was new, or because the corporation did not previously exist in Paris, that the "high warp" was, till then, unknown in Europe. The term "low warp" appeared much later still—about the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century—yet it is now universally admitted that, from the fourteenth century, tapestries were manufactured by this process; only they were called treadle tapestries, because they were made by means of a loom set in motion by a treadle. Our argument has been very inadequate if, in the preceding pages, we have not succeeded in proving that warps were used to fabricate the fragment of tapestry in the Lyons Museum, the hangings of Halberstadt Cathedral, and those of the Abbey of Quedlimburg, all of them works of far earlier date than the year 1302. The last Crusades, by placing Europe in closer contact with the East, favoured the development of this art, and everything tends to prove that it has never ceased to be held in honour among the Orientals. The latest investigations of Jules Quicherat show that the ogee, and the ogee arch also, were brought from the East by the Crusaders.

But it is by no means established, so far as Arras is concerned, that Paris preceded that town by half a century in the production of high-warp hangings, as has lately been asserted. The researches of Canon Dehaisnes prove indeed that Machaut, Countess of Artois, in 1311, paid for "a woollen cloth, worked

with various figures, bought at Arras," and that in 1313, she ordered in the same town "V dras ouvrés en haute lisse."* Thus the capital of Artois—whose name was given to the marvellous fabrics the manufacture of which was there brought to such a high state of perfection,† very closely followed Paris, even if it did not precede it.

The elevation of Count Baldwin of Flanders (1204) to the imperial throne may have helped to familiarise the Flemish with this art of the high warp, which we know had never ceased to flourish in the East. We are inclined to agree, as to this, with the clever hypothesis of a modern writer on tapestry. The Byzantine hangings brought into the Netherlands may have served as models for the "pictured cloths of gold," which soon made a brilliant advance; it is also possible that the Flemish artists went to Constantinople to find out the secrets of this manufacture, or that they may have learnt them from the Byzantine artists sent by the new emperors to their native country. It is certain that the Flemish put aside dull and pale colouring in their tapestries, to adopt more vigorous and brilliant tones, reflections of the Eastern sky. It is no less certain that, from the first years of the thirteenth century—in 1213—Dam, then the port of Bruges, contained, amongst treasures collected from all parts of the world, Syrian

* "La Tapisserie de haute lisse à Arras avant le XV^e siècle, d'après des documents inédits," p. 2. Paris, 1879.

† It is known that the Italians use the word "arazzo," and the English the word "arras," to designate high warp tapestry.

stuffs, Sericeous silks, fabrics from the Grecian isles, and seeds producing the scarlet dye.*

We must beware, on the other hand, of over-estimating the help the dawning art may have derived from the other branches of textile manufacture then flourishing in the Netherlands. What does it signify that the weavers of Ghent occupied twenty-seven streets, that they numbered 200,000 in Ypres, in 1342, and 50,000 in Louvain, in 1382, previous to their emigration to England? What matters it that the spinning and dyeing of wools should have attained such a high degree of perfection in those regions? The scope of an art is independent of purely technical resources, and the history of tapestry continually proclaims this. We find the high-warp workshops developing most brilliantly in towns that were obliged to procure all the raw materials from foreign lands; whilst they sometimes merely vegetated in the most celebrated centres of textile productions, Palermo, Lyons, and Lucca. Taste, in such matters, is of more value than manufacturing perfection. This or that hanging of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, for which the tapestry worker may only have employed some twenty tones, will compel our admiration by its grand simplicity of drawing, whereas the profusion of tints (upwards of fourteen thousand) at the disposal of the Gobelins manufactory have not preserved it, during many years, from the most disheartening sterility.

* See Castel, "Les Tapisseries" (Bibliothèque des Merveilles), pp. 53, 54. Paris, 1876.

The want of reciprocal interest between kindred industries also explains, to some extent, why the greater number of the Flemish towns, in spite of their skill in the manufacture of cloths and other products, were so tardy in following the example set by Arras. Brussels, destined later to eclipse not only Arras, but also Paris—the definite triumph of which dates only from the creation of the Gobelins—played in the fourteenth century but a slight part in the history of tapestry. We only know that it possessed in 1340 one corporation of tapestry-workers (*tapitewevvers*: carpet-weavers*). We find high-warp workers at Tournay in 1352, at Valenciennes in 1364, and at Lille and Douay still later.†

A hanging, presented to the Gobelins Museum by M. Léon y Escosura, shows us what high-warp tapestry was in the first half of the fourteenth century. On the right, an old white-bearded man with bare feet extends his arms to the Virgin, approaching and supporting the divine child, who, standing on a table, blesses with his right hand; in his left is seen an apple. Another aged man and a young woman, carrying lighted tapers, complete the composition, which stands out from a purple background diapered with vine-leaves. The material is composed of wool and silk; and only nineteen colours were employed in it.

* Wauters, "Les Tapisseries bruxelloises," p. 31. Brussels, 1878.

† The history of the workshops in these different towns has been most carefully studied by M. Alexandre Pinchart, in the "Histoire générale de la Tapisserie : tapisseries flamandes." Paris, Dalloz.

In examining this venerable piece, the oldest specimen of the Franco-Flemish high warp hitherto known, it is impossible not to be struck by its essentially decorative character. Whatever the building for which the "Presentation in the Temple" was destined, its architectural lines could but be emphasised by its harmony and clearness of

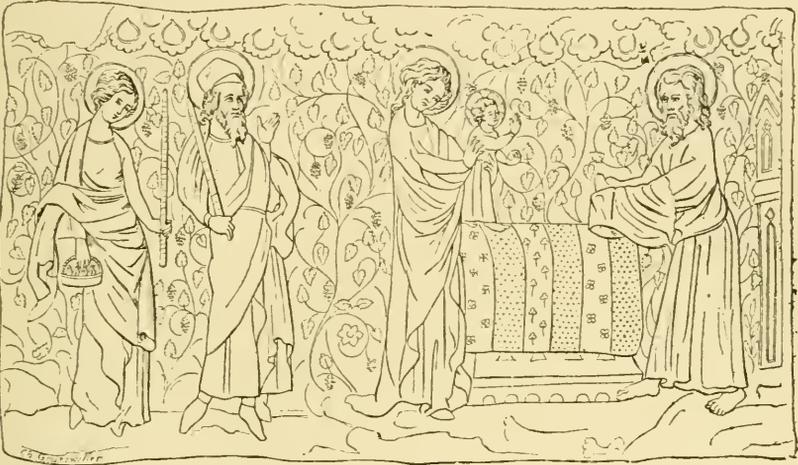


FIG. 14.—THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.
(Collection of M. Escosura.)

composition, and its inexpressible tone of calmness and dignity, very rarely found in the more ambitious hangings of the succeeding period.

Granting that the existence of high-warp workshops, from the first half of the fourteenth century, is authentically established in Paris, Arras, Brussels, or Tournay, still the history of this art does not really present much interest until the reign of Charles V. (1364—1380); it is only from this time that we are

able to trace the works of the artists attached to the service of the king and his followers, and to study, either in the original fabrics, or in the inventories which have come down to us, the treasures preserved in the store-chambers of the Court of France.

The inventory drawn up towards the end of the reign of Charles V., in 1379—1380, shows how eagerly this king, surnamed the Wise, collected the precious fabrics of the French and Flemish workshops. Together with innumerable shaggy carpets, and upwards of one hundred and thirty armorial tapestries, we find the description of thirty-three important hangings (preserved at the Louvre), some of which were composed of several pieces, and which, under the title of "tapis à images," served for the decoration of walls.*

"The Dukes of Anjou, of Berry, and of Orleans formed a kind of splendid aureole at the court of France, and also at the Ducal Court of Burgundy, from which it is not easy to take our eyes." These words of the Marquis de Laborde are most appropriate, if we turn from the history of the arts in general to that of tapestry. The Duke of Anjou distinguished himself by commissioning the tapestry of the Apocalypse, destined for the Cathedral of Angers, as well as many other very valuable sets. Philip the Hardy, Duke of Burgundy, also filled his store-chamber with the richest hangings, acquired either in Paris or in Arras, and thus introduced a style of luxury which became hereditary in his race. As to their nephew, Louis of

* Labarte, "Inventaire du mobilier de Charles V., roi de France," p. 378 *et seq.* Paris, 1879.

Orleans, we shall have occasion further on to show the inestimable collection he succeeded in acquiring.

Charles VI. (1366—1422), although he did not inherit the refined taste of his father or of his uncles, at least shared their passion for magnificence. Between 1387 and 1400, he purchased from one tapestry-maker alone, Nicolas Bataille, upwards of two hundred and fifty hangings.* Amongst the sets he ordered, one in particular deserves attention: it is that by which he sought to perpetuate the memory of the Joust of St. Denis (1389). This hanging was the joint production of Nicolas Bataille and Jacques Dourdin, the two most celebrated tapestry-workers of the time; it was woven of gold and of the fine thread of Arras.

The King, Charles VI., found a rival in his brother, the Duke of Orleans, husband of Valentine Visconti. This prince left nothing undone, in order that his store-chamber should be furnished as brilliantly as the king's. His wealth may be gauged by the list of hangings preserved, in 1403, in the apartments occupied by the Duke in Paris.†

The prosperity of the Parisian workshops was closely connected with the predilections of the reigning house. They were the first to profit by these numberless purchases and commissions, by which Flanders also benefited, though in a less degree.

Two eminent artists, whose biography has only

* Guiffrey — "Histoire générale de la Tapisserie; Tapisseries françaises," p. 14.

† Champollion Figeac, "Louis et Charles, Ducs d'Orléans," part i., pp. 248-250. Paris, 1844.

recently been cleared up,* represent the development of Parisian tapestry in the last third of the fourteenth century, that is, during the whole of the reign of Charles V. and part of that of his successor Charles VI. The first of these, Nicolas or Colin Bataille, citizen of Paris, made his appearance in 1363, and died between 1402 and 1406; in the interval (he was both manufacturer and merchant) he provided innumerable hangings, as interesting in subject as they were precious in workmanship, for the king, his brothers, or his uncles, Philip the Hardy, Duke of Burgundy, and Louis I. Duke of Anjou, for the court, and even for foreign sovereigns, such as Amadeus VI., Count of Savoy.

One of these hangings, the Apocalypse of the Cathedral of Angers, is still extant, in part at least. Commenced in 1376 for Louis of Anjou, this celebrated series was continued, subsequently to 1417, by direction of Yolande of Arragon; René of Anjou caused it to be proceeded with during the period from 1431 to 1453; and the last piece was added to it in 1490 by Anne of France, daughter of Louis XI.

This immense composition, says M. de Farcy in his interesting work devoted to it,† was woven entirely of various coloured wools on a white wool warp, and originally comprised a considerable number of

* See the work of M. Guiffrey entitled "Nicolas Bataille, tapissier parisien du XIV^e siècle, auteur de la tapisserie de l'Apocalypse d'Angers," Paris, 1877; and "Les Tapisseries françaises," published by the same author in "L'Histoire générale de la Tapisserie."

† "Notices archéologiques sur les tentures et les tapisseries de la cathédrale d'Angers," pp. 21, 23. Angers, 1875.



FIG. 15.—FIGURE FROM THE APOCALYPSE OF THE CATHEDRAL OF
ANGERS.
(Beginning of the fifteenth century.)

pictures, divided into seven parts or pieces of texture, each of which was upwards of five yards high by about twenty-four yards long. . . . Each piece was composed of one great figure seated in a Gothic niche and meditating on the Apocalypse, and of two sets of seven pictures placed above—with alternate red and blue backgrounds arranged like a draught-board—of the same height as the niche. The composition runs from left to right, beginning at the upper series and being continued in the lower in like order. Between the two series is a brown band, strongly contrasting with the greyish framework of the pictures, and containing verses, in white or red Gothic lettering about two and a-half inches high, corresponding to each scene in the upper row. A similar band is placed under the lower series. Above the whole the artist has depicted the sky sprinkled with stars and peopled with angels, some singing and playing on musical instruments, and others bearing escutcheons. Below is spread the earth, bright with grass and flowers, and enlivened with conies and other small animals.

The artist to whom the execution of the cartoons, or as they were then called “*pourtraitures et patrons*,” was intrusted, was no other than Hennequin or Jean de Bruges, painter-in-ordinary and valet of Charles V. He drew his inspirations for his compositions from miniatures in a manuscript belonging to the Royal library, which Charles V. lent, for this purpose, to his brother the Duke of Anjou.*

* See the article of M. Giry in “*L’Art*,” 24th December, 1876.

Jean de Bruges was not the only celebrated master who, in the fourteenth century, used his brush in the service of decorative art. In 1399, Colart de Laon painted designs for four rooms, which the queen desired to decorate, on four great canvases, in tapestry style. We may add that these cartoons were not executed "à la plaisance de la dame," and that she ordered another set. The master even descended so far as to sketch borders ornamented with leaves of pimpernel and broom.*

In spite both of his activity and his signal successes, Nicolas Bataille was forced to contend with one of his brotherhood, whose reputation, at times, equalled his own. From the last quarter of the fourteenth century until his death in 1407, Jacques Dourdin—to whom we now turn our attention—wove or caused to be woven numerous hangings, destined for the greatest personages, and remarkable for their richness. From 1386, we find him delivering to the Duke of Burgundy a "History of the Romance of the Rose,"—in gold of Cyprus and Arras thread—the "Story of Marimet," the "Conquest of the King of Friesland by Aubri the Burgundian," "Ladies Setting out for the Chase," the "Wishes of Love," the "Nine Amazons," the "History of Bertrand du Guesclin," and many other hangings, the greater part of which were of cloth of gold. Queen Isabeau also obtained from him innumerable ornamented tapestries: the "History of Dourdon, Duke of Beauvais," the "Story of the Destruction of Troy," "Charle-

* Guiffrey, "Tapisseries françaises," pp. 16, 21.

magne succouring King Jourdain," "Ladies and Gentlemen Fishing," &c.*

It would be a task beyond the limits of this work to enumerate the hangings manufactured in Paris in the latter half of the fourteenth century, from the commonest green fabrics at sixteen sous the ell, to the pictorial tapestries woven with gold, worth nine livres twelve sous the ell (£28 8s. in English money): we confine ourselves to referring the reader to "L'Histoire générale de la Tapisserie" (French section), in which much information may be found.

From the middle of the fourteenth century the Flemish workshops quite equalled in activity those of Paris. The marriage of Philip the Hardy, Duke of Burgundy, with the daughter and heiress of the Count of Flanders, in 1369, gave an extraordinary impetus to these manufactures, especially in Arras. This Prince did not limit himself to placing important supplies at the disposal of the high-warp workers of that town; he offered the highest inducements to their endeavours, as when he gave one of them, Michel Bernard, a commission for the magnificent and colossal "Battle of Rosbeck," which measured upwards of two hundred and eighty-five square yards, and cost two thousand six hundred francs d'or, an enormous sum at that epoch.†

During upwards of thirty years, Philip the Hardy unceasingly lavished the greatest encouragement on

* "Histoire générale de la Tapisserie; Tapisseries françaises," pp. 16, 18.

† See "L'Histoire générale de la Tapisserie," Flemish section, by M. Pinchart, p. 6 *et seq.* We borrow the accompanying information on the history of the manufactures at Arras from this excellent work.

the Artesian manufactures. He ordered or purchased a "Pastoral," the "History of Froimont de Bordeaux," the "History of William of Orange," the "Story of St. George," the "Virtues and Vices," the "History of King Alexander and of Robert the Fusileer," the "Story of Doon de la Roche," the "Coronation of Our Lady," a "Story of Shepherds and Shepherdesses," the "Life of St. Margaret," the "Seven Ages," the "Life of St. Anne," the "History of Octavius of Rome," the "Story of Percival the Gaul," the "History of King Clovis," the "Hunt of Guy of Romany," the "Story of St. Anthony," the "History of King Pharaoh and the people of Moses," the "History of Amis and Amic," &c.

The most flattering testimony that the high-warp workers of Arras can have desired, was accorded them by Bajazet, one of the fiercest conquerors known in history. The son of Philip the Hardy being made prisoner at the battle of Nicopolis, in 1396, the envoy sent to treat for his ransom reported that the Sultan "would be pleased to see some high-warp tapestries worked in Arras, in Picardy, but that they should represent good old stories." Philip the Hardy acted on this advice; he sent off two pack-horses laden with "high-warp cloths, collected and made at Arras, the finest that could be found on this side the mountains." The subject of these hangings was the "History of Alexander."

We do not think the tapestry workers of Arras owed this European reputation to the employment of any special process, or to the exclusive usage of this

high-warp manufacture, which appears for some time to have been considered a secret. We fully agree, in this respect, with the judicious remarks of M. Pinchart : "The superiority of the texture and of the dyes is the sole cause of the reputation of the 'Arazzi.'" The mention, so frequently made in documents of the period, of the "work of Arras," of the "fine thread of Arras," shows that contemporaries intended to designate the richest, the most perfect, and the most valuable tapestries that were then made, and not any special style of tapestry.

Community of traditions and aspirations justifies us in believing that the public in the Walloon and Flemish provinces, as well as in the French provinces properly so called, appreciated the same representations, and that the artists treated them in much the same style. It would be difficult for us to form a conclusive judgment, as to the last point, on any comparison of observations, by reason of the scarcity of tapestries of that epoch. But the inventories of the time give us the minutest details of the subjects in fashion. From them we learn that the Holy Scriptures, the romances of chivalry, contemporaneous scenes, and allegory shared, by turns, the predilections of Franco-Flemish amateurs. From among the tapestries inspired by the Old or the New Testament and the acts of the Martyrs, I shall only cite the "Story of Esau and Jacob," the "History of Judas Maccabeus," the "Life of Jesus Christ," the "Passion," the "Coronation of the Virgin," the "Story of St. George," and the "History of the Creed."

The representations derived from secular literature—from that half-mystic, half-historical cycle which had become an integral part of the intellectual life of the Middle Ages—were far more numerous. We note the “History of Charlemagne,” the “History of the King of France and his twelve Peers,” the “History of Renaud de Montauban,” the “History of Doon de la Roche,” the “History of Beudouin de Sebourg,” the “History of Percival the Gaul,” the “Story of the Son of the King of Cyprus in search of Adventures,” the “History of William Prince of Orange,” the “History of the King of Friesland,” &c. Antiquity, which had a great share in this class of representations (the “Story of Jason,” the “Story of Hector,” the “Destruction of Troy,” the “Story of Theseus and the Golden Eagle,” the “Story of Queen Penthesilea,” the “Conquest of Babylon by Alexander the Great,” &c.), was naturally only seen through the romances of chivalry.

Among the compositions whose subjects were taken from contemporaneous events or from everyday life, we should mention the “Battle of the Thirty,” the “History of Bertrand Duguesclin,” the “Battle of Rosbeck,” the “Battle of Liège,” the “Jousts of St. Denis,” “Hunting Scenes,” “Cavaliers and Ladies,” and “Shepherds and Shepherdesses.”

Finally, allegory—destined to attain its greatest triumphs in the fifteenth century—began from the fourteenth to make its place in tapestry. Side by side with the “Romance of the Rose,” the “Castles of Truth, High Renown, Plaisance, and Merriment,”

we find the "Virtues and Vices,"—a subject very frequently interpreted by the high-warp loom—the "Seven cardinal Sins," the "Seven Temperaments," the "Tree of Life," and the "Fountain of Youth."

We see that, from this time, tapestry-painting surpassed tempera, fresco, and glass painting in the variety of subjects of which it made use, and, it may be added—at all events as regards the countries on the French side of the mountains—in the importance of its compositions. Miniature painting, even if it comprehended an equally extensive domain, by no means exercised the same influence. Its productions, confined to the "libraries" of sovereigns or the treasuries of churches, were rarely seen by amateurs, still less by the ordinary public.

Germany, in the fourteenth century, had no workshops comparable with those of France or of Flanders; its hangings were not remarkable either for richness of material or high finish of workmanship. But they had originality and taste. Worked in convents or in castles far from the great manufacturing centres, if they have not the perfection of the splendid "draps historiés" of Paris, of Arras, and of Brussels, neither have they the commonplace feeling inseparable from productions fabricated in masses in a centre industrial as well as artistic. In Germany, as on the west of the Rhine, the artists, without giving up religious subjects—(see the illustration from a tapestry worked in Nuremberg, about 1375)—seek inspiration in fiction or in reminiscences peculiar to the Middle Ages.

In a hanging belonging to the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and exhibited at the Castle of Wartburg, we see an encounter of naked men, some attacking and others defending a fortress; but notwithstanding the



FIG. 16.—TWO APOSTLES.
(Church of Saint Laurent, at Nuremberg.)

spirit of the struggle, the arms of besiegers and besieged are not murderous: they are flowers. Nor does the appearance of the battle-field arouse one saddening thought; birds, rabbits, and squirrels, untroubled by the cries of the combatants, sport and frolic on a sward strewn with flowers. A banquet, on the left,

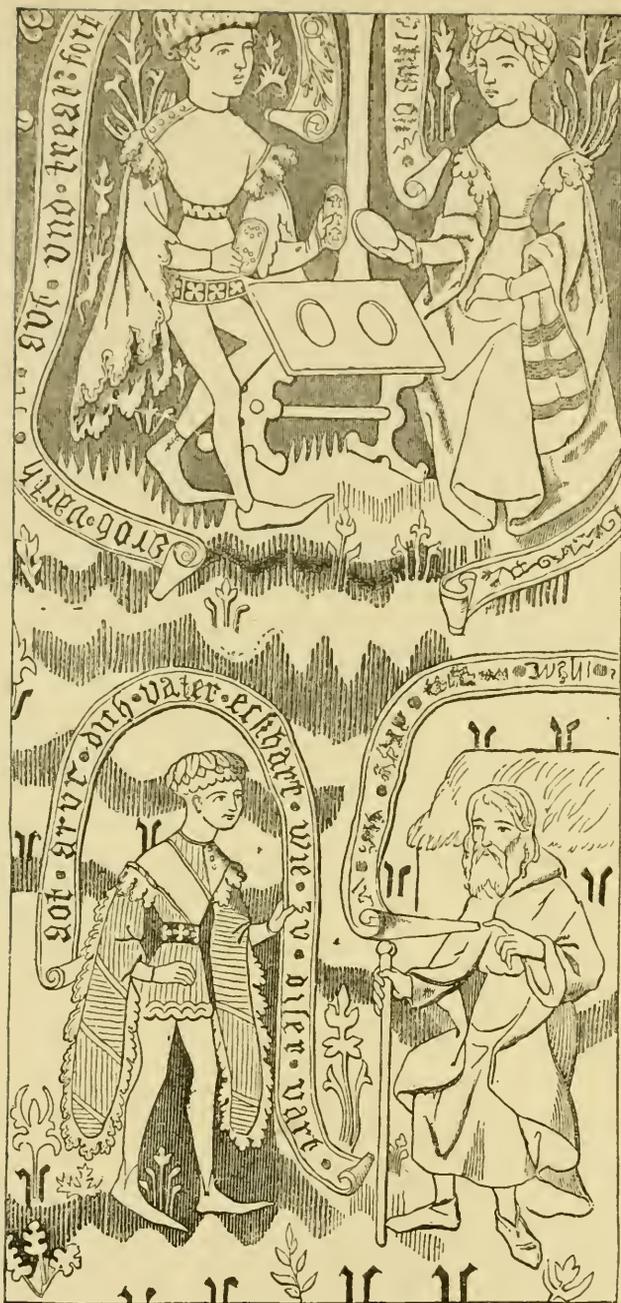


FIG. 17.—LORD AND LADY AT CARDS.
(National Museum of Munich.)

completes the composition. Streamers bearing inscriptions in German, float in the air. In this hanging, attributed to the early period of the Gothic style, everything denotes grace and poetry.

Another tapestry, belonging to the Prince of Hohenzollern, and exhibited at Brussels in 1880, has its origin in a romance of chivalry. The story opens with a scene in which the young hero of the legend sees, probably for the first time, the lady of his thoughts coming out of her manor-house; further on we see a woman lying on a bed, behind which stand her relations; a doctor, near them, shows a phial. The adventures, thus continued, and guessed at rather than understood, lead the two lovers through all kinds of episodes. Like almost all the compositions of this style, the tapestry of the Prince of Hohenzollern is ornamented with streamers, having German inscriptions. *

We recognise the same spirit in a tapestry ("Lord and Lady at Cards") formerly preserved in the town-hall of Ratisbon, now at the National Museum of Munich, as well as in other hangings in the Ratisbon town-hall, which show us wild men and women diverting themselves with various amusements. This last series, supposed to have been executed between the years 1350 and 1400, bears the coats-of-arms of the Ruederers of Kolmberg and the Stains of Rechtenstain, families existing to this day in Suabia: it is composed of twelve pieces, having a red background.

* Wauters, "Les Tapisseries historiées," in "L' Art ancien à l'Exposition nationale belge," p. 212.

We have not been able to find, in Italy, the slightest trace of native manufacture, during the time that

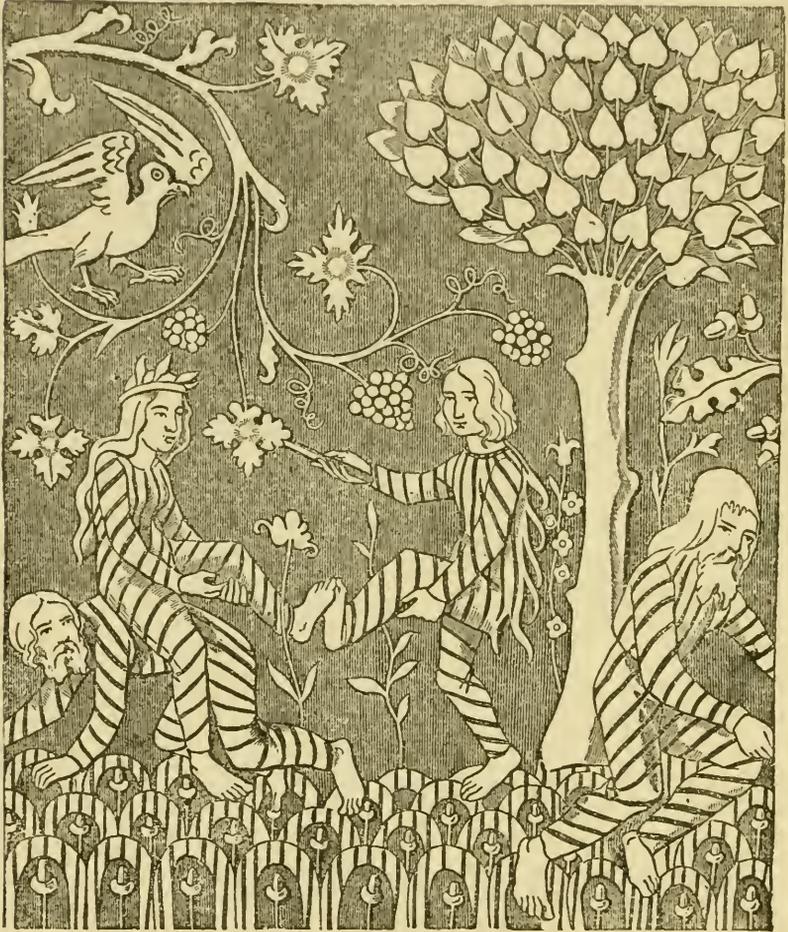


FIG. 18.—QUINTAIN.
(Town-hall of Ratisbon.)

now occupies our attention. The Italians apparently contented themselves with having the tapestries of

Paris, or of the Flemish manufacturing centres, brought to them at enormous cost. Thus it is that, in 1376, we find Count Amadeus of Savoy intrusting an important commission to Nicolas Bataille; in 1389, the chronicler Jean de Mussis upbraids the inhabitants of Placentia on account of their taste for "banderiæ de Arassa;" in 1399, Francesco Gonzaga, commander of Mantua, sends a hanging to Paris—where a similar work had already been done for him—in order to have the armorial bearings of Bohemia substituted for those of the Visconti. It is important to collate these confessions of inability; they account for the excessive ardour with which the Italians sought, in the succeeding century, to attract amongst them the tapestry-workers of France or of Flanders, in order to steal from them the secret of their art.

This intercourse once established, we find Italy, on its side, making use of its superiority in painting to thrust its cartoons on the French and Flemish workshops, and to effect a radical change, in the course of the sixteenth century, in the traditional style of tapestry.

During the Middle Ages the renown of English embroiderers spread from one end of Europe to the other. Chroniclers and poets take pleasure in showing us great ladies, and even queens, trying their skill at descriptive pictures, in which the needle or shuttle supplanted the brush, and coloured threads liquid paints. The expression "Opus anglicanum" not only indicated a particular style of work, but was synonymous also with high technical perfection.* A simple

* See "Recherches" of M. Michel, vol. ii., pp. 341—345.

alteration in the process is, however, sometimes sufficient to open perfectly new centres of production, or to ruin irrevocably those that possessed a well-established reputation. About the thirteenth century high-warp weaving entered the lists against embroidery, properly so called, and succeeded in driving painting in textile fabrics out of the country. The English tapestry weavers remained as obscure as the English embroiderers had been distinguished; if, indeed, before the Renaissance, there were any native tapestry makers in England, for the greater part of the workshops established there appear to have been directed by Flemings. The name of "Arras," given by the English to woven tapestries (the Italians, it will be remembered, call them "Arazzi," and the Spaniards "Panos de raz"), proves that these were a foreign importation. Thus it was that the name "Gobelin" became synonymous in Germany with an ornamented hanging when the reputation of the Parisian tapestries had eclipsed that of the Flemish hangings; it is still to this day ordinarily used.

When was the "high-warp" introduced into England? A document dating from the reign of Edward I. (1272—1307) has been referred to, in order to prove that from this time the employment of the new style of hangings was widespread. We find from the laws of this prince that it was the duty of the chamberlain to see that the apartments were adorned with hangings and *banquiers*: "ut cameræ tapetis et banqueriis ornetur."* But it may be

* Jubinal, in "Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance."

doubted if these were not brocaded fabrics, rather than tapestries, properly so called.

Some more precise information is found in a document, unfortunately much mutilated, of the time of Edward III. (1327—1377). In the eighteenth year of his reign this prince ordered an inquiry to be made concerning the manufacture of tapestries in London: “de inquirendo mistera (*sic*) tapiciariorum Lond.”* About the same period, at the time of the triumphal entry into London of the Black Prince, bringing in his train his prisoner King John, the houses of London were hung with tapestries representing battles.†

About the end of the same century, we find at Warwick Castle a set considered so valuable, that King Richard II. (d. 1399) made especial mention of it in the charter bestowing on the Earl of Kent the confiscated property of the Warwick family. In the same way, King Henry IV., in 1399, was careful to include this hanging, which represented the History of Guy of Warwick, in the restitution made to its original possessor.‡

* “Calendarium rotulorum patentium in turri Londinensi,” p. 148. London, 1802.

† Countess of Wilton, “The Art of Needlework,” p. 166. London, 1842.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

PROGRESS OF FLEMISH INFLUENCE.

THE fifteenth century was the golden age of tapestry. The workshops of Northern France and of Flanders made an advance and attained a perfection previously unknown. The whole of Europe testified its admiration, either by lavishing commissions on them, or by endeavouring to carry off their cleverest masters, in order to avoid a tax which had grown too burdensome. Henceforth there was no festival in which the tapestries of Arras did not occupy the place of honour; these soft and silky, brilliant coloured fabrics, were everywhere used in profusion when a pope, an emperor, or a king was crowned, a saint was canonised, a triumphal entry, a tournament, a procession a marriage, or even a simple banquet took place. Powerful monarchs, having exhausted the treasures of their store-chambers, were not ashamed to borrow supplementary pieces from their neighbours to do honour to a distinguished guest. They took them with them on journeys, and even to the wars—witness the tapestries of Charles the Bold, which were found

on the battle-field, and supplied the Swiss conquerors with the richest trophy of their victory.

England, Spain, and Italy, in this respect, were not slow in rivalling the kings of France and the dukes of

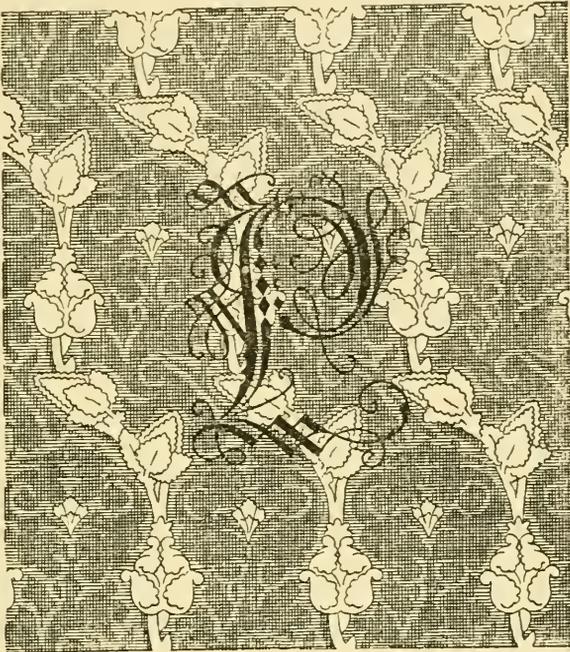


FIG. 19.—ORNAMENTED TAPESTRY OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Burgundy. At Rome, the grand procession, with which the newly-elected pope inaugurated his reign, derived its greatest brilliancy from the tapestries displayed in its course, from the Vatican to the Lateran. Ferrara and Venice were adorned with the most precious fabrics, representing colossal bucentaurs. At Mantua hangings of gold and "verdures" were placed on the

stage of the theatre near the admirable cartoons of Mantegna—the “Triumph of Cæsar.” Everywhere, from north to south, we see the lowliest cities decking themselves, as by enchantment, with storied tapestries, to receive a conquering general or an allied prince. The reason of this is that no other decoration served so many purposes as these mobile, flowing, and almost animated hangings.

We have seen that there was no display in religious, military, or civil life in which tapestry was not introduced in the fifteenth century; similarly it would be difficult to find any sentiment or idea of which it has not sought to make use: devotion, patriotism, desire for magnificence, curiosity, contemplation, even scepticism, came within its province; it brings before us all possible styles of representation, from the highest philosophical conceptions to the scenes of daily life. To it, and not to painting in oils or fresco, we are indebted for the most trustworthy and complete picture of society during this period; we know no art that equalled it in its universality. We may judge of this by the following few titles, taken from the first inventory at hand—that of the very restricted collection of a very petty prince (1406-1407): “History of King Pepin,” “History of the God of Love,” “Story of Pyramus and Thisbe,” “A Stag in a Wood,” “Hawking,” “A Lord and Lady playing at Chess,” “A Trapped Hare,” “Castles,” “Monkeys,” “Parrots,” “Verdures.” What may we expect when we review the secular and religious compositions preserved in the store-chambers of the potentates of the period

—the dukes of Burgundy, the kings of France, and the popes!

The advance of luxury was on a par with the emancipation of ideas and the increasing thirst for enjoyment. The effect of these factors on the material development of the art, of which we are now sketching the history, cannot be doubted. Their influence on style is still to be estimated. It is worth while to consider how far the triumph of naturalism, or in other words the deeper acquaintance with—one is inclined to say the unveiling of—man and nature, disturbs the majestic order of the compositions of the middle ages renders the artist liable to sacrifice breadth of style to detail, and, in short, breaks the bond that connects the decorative arts with architecture, the most abstract of the arts.

It is certain that, on the French side of the mountains, a false tendency prevailed in the numerous compositions which have chivalrous or legendary incidents as their subjects. Most of the artists, abandoning selection, classification, and grouping, sought to excite admiration by the accumulation of figures and extravagant accessories. An artificial richness, which was in effect only sterility, replaced the method of composition of the preceding period; all actors and episodes appeared equally good. The middle age had expressed its ideas by means of a few figures, arranged with taste; the fifteenth century, pressing the spirit of analysis to its extreme limits, sought to bestow the utmost prolixity on its compositions. Critics, unacquainted, until of late years,

with the admirable specimens of tapestry hidden in the store-chambers of princes and in private collections, have passed a too indulgent judgment upon sets, no less extended than wearisome, in which there is neither strength of imagination, dramatic feeling, nor capacity of interpretation. Against this tendency we must here protest.

The tendency which has just been indicated had yet another result. Most of the artists of France and Flanders, becoming more and more realistic, contented themselves with the imperfect forms amidst which they lived ; hence the common types and ungraceful costumes which disfigure so many tapestries.

We hasten to add that although the deeper study of nature robbed sacred personages, heroes and heroines of the romances of chivalry, and allegorical figures of the ideal character given them by the middle ages, it exercised in return a most happy influence on other forms of composition. Thanks to the love with which the Flemish masters of the fifteenth century, Van Eyck, Roger, Memling, Bouts, &c., depicted vegetation, we find from this time a new framework to the figures : landscape becomes possible, and lyrical poetry takes its place side by side with narrative. It is impossible to imagine anything fresher or more brilliant than the flowers which adorned the foreground of the hangings, especially in scenes taken from the Scriptures ; they are simply flower-beds of daisies, violets, and strawberries. At other times beds of campanula, jasmine, and primrose, exquisitely arranged, serve as backgrounds to

the figures, whilst fruits alternate with flowers in the

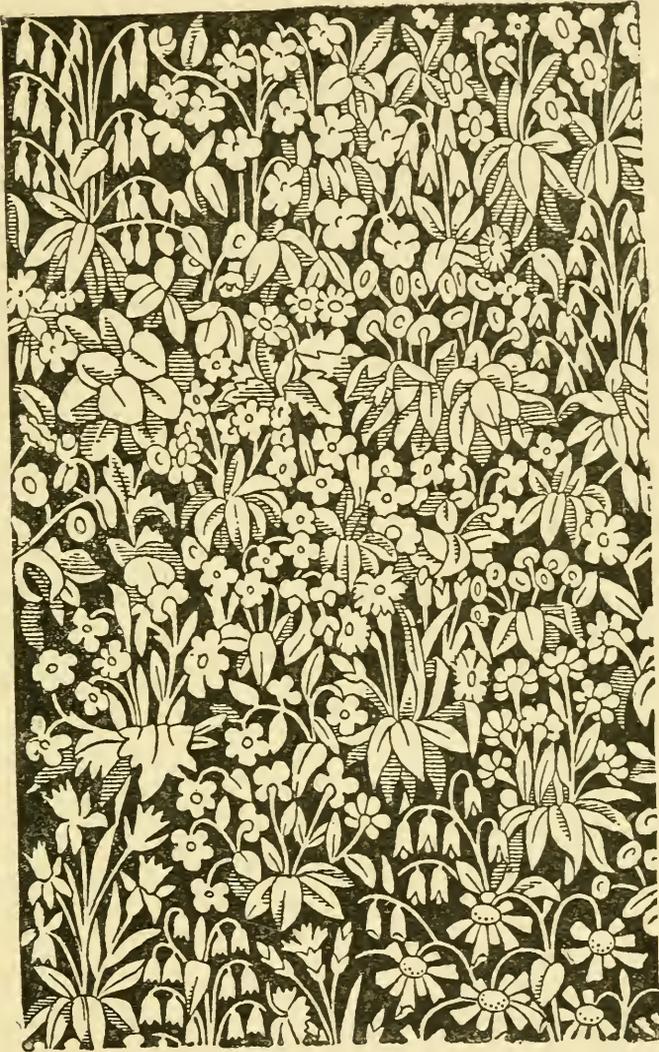


FIG. 20.—VERDURE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

borders, and bunches of grapes and clusters of cherries

form, with hyacinths and myosotis, garlands of dazzling beauty.

This class of representation, of which specimens are only now being brought to light, is remarkable both for the richness of the raw material (they are invariably woven of gold and silk), the high finish of the workmanship, brilliancy of colouring, and freshness of interest. The composition is generally very simple: Mary, seated, smiles on the divine Child; birds sing around her, and flowers expand on the turf at her feet awakening dreams of the eternal spring of the poets.

The examination of a few hangings, preserved in a celebrated Parisian collection, will inspire interest in these qualities, which appeared in the fifteenth century for the first time in the history of tapestry, and have yielded so many excellent productions. In one of these, the "Nativity," the infant Jesus lies extended on the ground, having near him on the left the Virgin fervently adoring him, and St. Joseph and an aged woman, who contemplate him with delight; on the right are three angels of charming, though somewhat irregular type. If the artist has accurately followed the model of sacred iconography in this portion of the picture, he has shown more independence in the arrangement of the middle ground: here two women, in the dress of the fifteenth century, stand in the opening of a doorway; further on is a shepherd playing on a pipe; in the background is a herdsman, to whom an angel comes to announce the glad tidings. It might perhaps have been better to have suppressed these accessory

figures, and to have concentrated attention on the group in the foreground; the composition would have gained by this both in expression and from a



FIG. 21.—HOLY FAMILY.
(M. Spitzer's Collection.)

decorative point of view. But we have little right to dictate modern æsthetics to these simple masters, who, if they were not versed in the rule of the three unities, possessed instead a sincerity that redeemed

many faults, and an inexhaustible love of nature. We need no further proof of this than that afforded by the admirable garland of fruit and flowers, standing out from a golden background, which serves as a border to the "Nativity." It is impossible to tire of admiring the delicacy of the interpretation and the brilliancy of the colouring.

The same qualities are shown in a hanging which represents the child Jesus sitting between his mother and his grandmother, and taking a bunch of grapes which the latter offers him in a golden chalice sparkling with precious stones. The three figures stand out from the back of a richly-carved throne, and are accompanied by two angels, one of whom plays the harp, whilst the other sings a song noted on a roll of parchment. In the foreground are flowers, and in the background, at each corner, a vista of landscape. The border is composed of vine branches. It is evident that nothing can be more simple than this composition, and yet how harmonious is the grouping and how beautiful are the types. The figures of the Virgin and of the angel playing the harp are specially remarkable for their pure form and sweet expression.

In a third hanging, the "Repose during the Flight into Egypt," we are perfectly dazzled. No words can express the splendour of the work, in which gold alternates with crimson, or the richness of the landscape, in which the artist—a thorough Fleming—has massed the brightest tones and the most picturesque subjects. Nothing can be sweeter than the picture of the young mother, folding to her heart her son, before

whom Joseph bends with touching admiration, offering him a pear, whilst angels, in the branches of the tree at the foot of which the holy family rests, fill the air



FIG. 22.—SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN.
(M. Spitzer's Collection.)

with celestial harmony. Details, no less simple than touching, complete the picture, which would be admirable in every respect but for the lack of beauty in the child Jesus. The ass quietly browses near the tree,

ducks sport in a spring that rises amidst irises and wild mulberry trees, the most brilliant plants spring up on all sides as in a fairy scene ; by the side of blossoming strawberry plants are others full of fruit, the bright red of which mingles admirably with the golden green tones of the luxuriant vegetation. The background of the picture is treated with equal tenderness and poetry : pleasant habitations alternate with steep rocks ; on one side are corn-fields in which a reaper bends respectfully before soldiers sent in pursuit of fugitives ; on the other a river winds with numberless turnings until it loses itself in the haze of the horizon. The same freshness of thought and worship of nature appear in the border, which, with its innumerable birds, some chaffinches or goldfinches disporting themselves among the vine leaves and anemones, and others gravely deliberating, as though following the example of the owl which has strayed in amongst them, is absolutely worthy of the masterpieces it surrounds, and is indeed a poem in itself.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the period to which these various hangings belong, Italy, of which we have for some time but seldom had to speak, began to undertake the composition of cartoons for tapestry. She introduced into them the clearness of grouping, the grandeur of drawing, and the dramatic feeling which are the distinguishing traits of her genius. The tapestries she created, of which more will be said further on, the "Presentation of the Head of Pompey to Cæsar," and the "Annunciation," are in themselves works of the highest merit. But what is more

important is the influence she exercised over Flemish productions. This is undeniable in the hangings of the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XII., the "Story of David and Bathsheba" (at the Hotel Cluny), and especially the "Triumph of Beatrice" (in Sir Richard Wallace's collection). Instead of overcrowding the canvas and distracting the eye with a multiplicity of figures, the Italians sought to throw light into the composition, to form groups, and to make the chief characters conspicuous. The progress made in perspective—that science which was simultaneously perfected in the Netherlands by Van Eyck, and in Italy by the Florentine school—enabled the depth which it had previously lacked to be given to the composition. Ere long action was displayed on several planes, and was framed either in an extended landscape, or in a rich architectural background. A new art, in fact, came into being.

Before resuming the study of tapestry in the various centres of its production, it is important to make a few observations, applicable to all the hangings of the fifteenth century, whatever their origin. We will first of all show the progress made in material execution. Between the "Presentation in the Temple" (see p. 97), or the "Apocalypse" at the Cathedral of Angers, and the tapestries of the fifteenth century, there is a difference akin to that which distinguishes satin from velvet. The threads became finer and finer, the proportions of silk and of gold increased visibly, the dyers invented numberless tints, and finally tapestry workers learnt to blend

their colours with a dexterity that was never surpassed.

In the fifteenth century, indeed all through the middle ages, the execution of cartoons was reserved for painters, except, perhaps, in the case of a nun herself sketching, in some German convent, the figures she proposed to represent on the loom. Sometimes the worker had these designed at his own cost, at others his clients supplied them. Thus it was that, long before Leo X., the Medicis had cartoons painted in Florence which they sent to Flanders to be reproduced in tapestry. These models usually became the property of the tapestry maker, who was free to copy them as often as he chose. About the year 1450 Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, had to give the considerable sum of three hundred golden crowns to obtain from his makers the cartoons of the "History of Gideon," or of the "Golden Fleece," which Baudouin de Bailleul had painted for them.* Thus it happened that each tapestry workshop possessed its assortment of cartoons. Most probably the strolling tapestry workers, who were so numerous in the fifteenth century, carried with them at least such compositions as represented current events.

From this time, let us add, a desire to vie with painters and to produce real pictures animated the tapestry workers. The marvellous tapestry of the late Baron Davillier (dated 1485), now in the Louvre, representing the Virgin and Child in the centre, on the

* Pinchart: "Histoire générale de la Tapisserie; Tapisseries flamandes," pp. 74-75.

left Moses striking the rock, and on the right an angel stirring the *piscina probatica*, is the reproduction of a

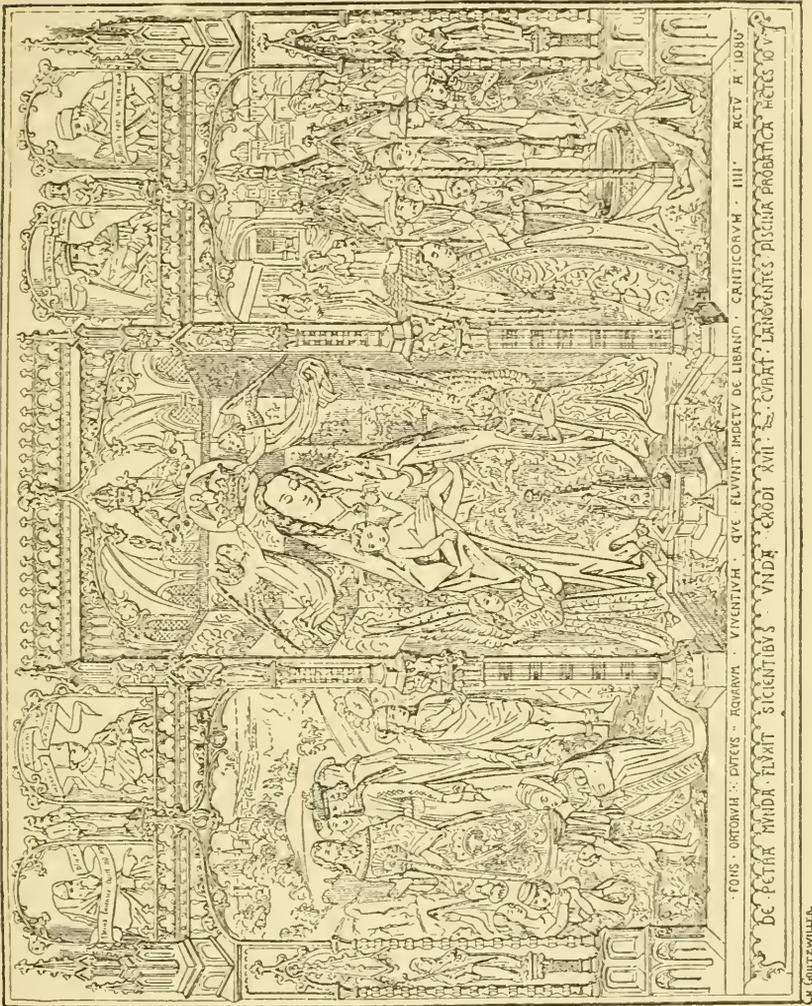


FIG. 23.—THE VIRGIN GLORIFIED.
(Louvre.)

triptych of the School of Bruges ; the tapestry worker has copied even the golden rods which frame the com-

position, and the small steeple-like columns that divide the central panel from the folding leaves. We also find, towards the end of the fifteenth century, some Madonnas and Holy Families, generally half-length figures, which are in no way inferior to the compositions of Memling for delicacy of modelling and harmony of tints. Special mention may be made of the "Adoration of the Magi" in the Fulgence collection. Still, these grand efforts were then exceptional, whereas later they became the rule.

Some documents, extending from 1425 to 1430, give us in detail the proceedings attending the manufacture of high-warp tapestries at that period. Their contents relate to a series, the "Story of St. Magdalen," destined for the church of that name at Troyes. The Jacobin brother Didier having abridged and set down in writing the history of the saint, Jaquet, the painter, made a small sketch of the narrative on paper. Then Poinsette the sempstress and her maid joined large bed-sheets together for the designs, which were to be painted by Jaquet, assisted by Symon the illuminator. The tapestry workers, Thibaut Clément and his nephew, agreed with the churchwardens and with Didier to execute the high-warp work. Didier then revised his bills, the accountant not forgetting on this occasion to note the wine "drunk by the said brother and Thibaut Clément, who consulted together concerning the life of the saint in question." When once the tapestries were delivered, Poinsette, the sempstress, lined them with coarse linen, and provided them with cords. After these various

operations, the hanging was suspended from the cramp-irons which Bertram the locksmith had fastened to the wooden bars set up in the choir by Odot the coffer-maker.*

In accordance with the programme we have drawn out for ourselves, we will now consider the vicissitudes of tapestry in the different parts of Europe.

In the fourteenth century we found Paris competing advantageously with Arras; in the fifteenth, the capital of Artois completely eclipsed its rival, to succumb, in its turn, to Brussels. Too many circumstances account for the inferiority of the Parisian workshops during this unhappy time: the progress of the invasion, and the general poverty in which it resulted; the intellectual lassitude, its graver sequel, which prevented the people of France, even to the last years of the century, from joining in the great movement of regeneration instigated by the revival of classical learning; and, finally, the removal of the Court, which, for upwards of a century, made but short and infrequent appearances on the banks of the Seine.

No doubt several other towns in the west, the centre, and the east—Rennes, Bourges, Troyes, Rheims, &c.—numbered in the fifteenth century some more or less skilful tapestry workers, but this was a

* Guignard: "Mémoires fournis aux peintres chargés d'exécuter les cartons d'une tapisserie destinée à la collégiale de Saint-Urbain de Troyes, représentant les légendes de saint Urbain et de sainte Cécile," pp. 9-10. Troyes, 1851.

very different thing from the steady production and the wide scope of the northern provinces then incorporated with the states of the dukes of

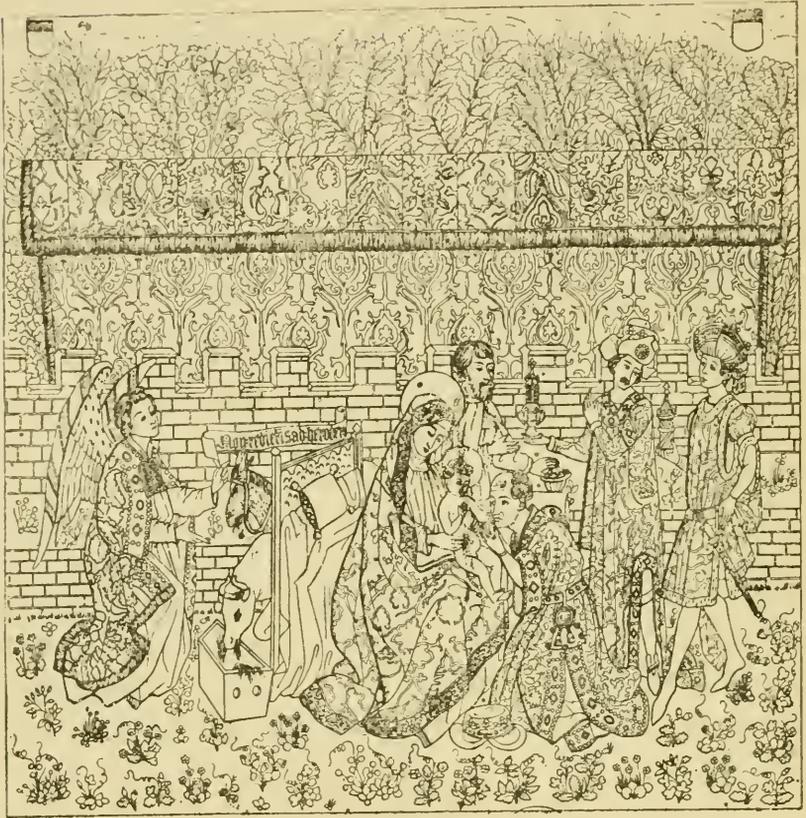


FIG. 24.—THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI,

(A Tapestry of the Tent of Charles the Bold, Berne Cathedral.) From
 "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiées" of M. Jubinal.

Burgundy. It was to these latter that preference was given, whenever the execution of an important series was in question; it is, in fact, by no means proved

that the tapestries of the fifteenth century preserved at Rheims and at Sens, such as the "Story of Esther" at the Chateau des Aygalades and many other pieces, were manufactured in the locality in which they are now found; the workshops of Arras, Lille, Tournay, Brussels, Bruges, and their environs have far better claims to them.

As a set-off we may, till the contrary is proved, attribute to a French workshop, possibly to a workshop of La Marche, the enigmatical tapestries of Boussac, compositions of great excellence and charm. This valuable series—composed of six pieces with red backgrounds, on each of which is a young lady of faultless beauty, having a unicorn at her side—has lately been purchased for the Cluny Museum.

The towns of the south of France, where, indeed, tapestry at no time appears to have taken deep root, were visited from time to time by the Flemish masters, who executed on the spot the orders they received. Amongst these is Avignon, where, in 1430, we find Jean Hosemant, a tapestry worker of Tournay. The Pope's chamberlain, the Archbishop of Narbonne, entrusted this master with the execution of a tapestried chamber, on the hangings of which were to be represented foliage, trees, meadows, rivers, and clouds, as well as birds and quadrupeds.

In Navarre, in 1413, we find two high-warp workers of unknown nationality, Lucian Bartholomew, or Bartolomeo, and Juan Noyon; the first of these manufactured a hanging adorned with portraits of

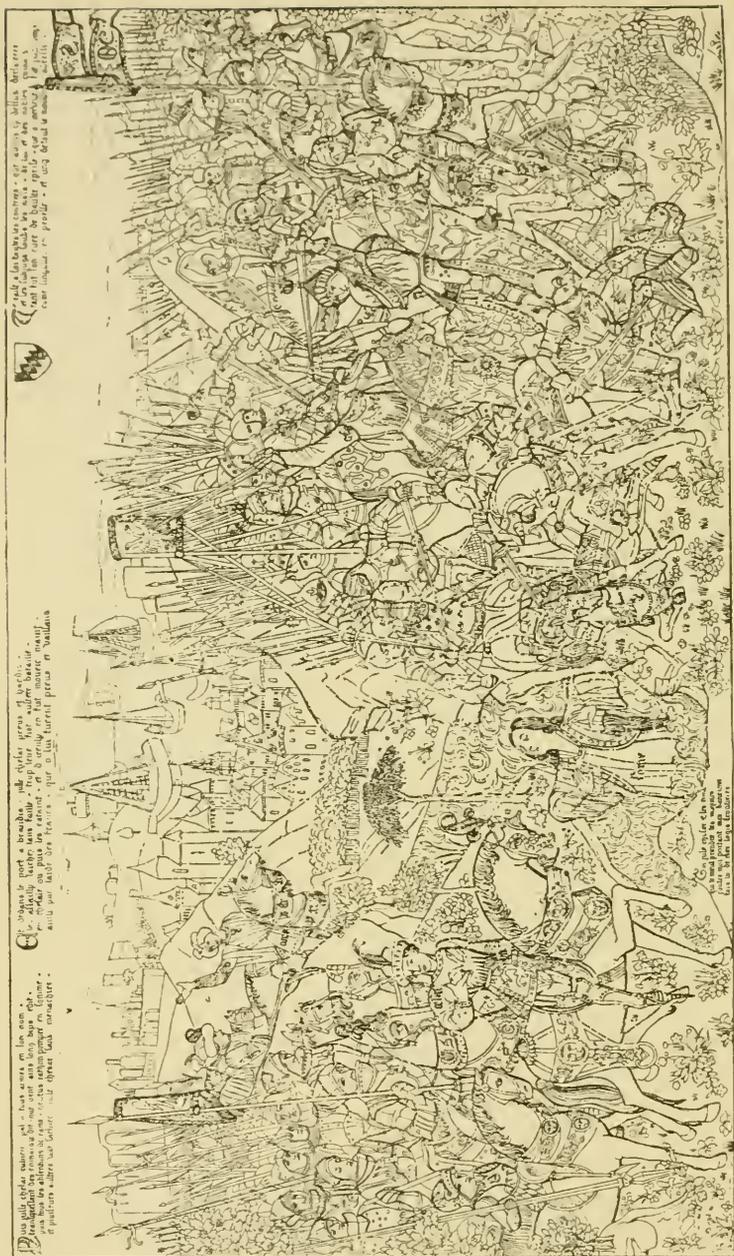


FIG. 25.—THE JUDGMENT OF TRAJAN.
 (Berne Cathedral.) From "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiques," of M. Jubinal.

St. Louis and St. Nicaise for the Queen's chapel in the palace of Tafalla.*

During the prolonged feebleness of the royal authority, it was the mission of the dukes of Burgundy to maintain the traditions of taste and magnificence which had formerly distinguished the court of France. They assumed the part of Mæcenas with Philip the Bold in the fourteenth century (1363—1404), but it was not till the fifteenth century that the partly French and partly Flemish school, to which they gave their name, developed at once its good qualities and its defects. Setting aside John the Fearless (1404—1419), who had no leisure for pacific enterprises, and giving our attention only to the long and glorious reign of Philip the Good (1410—1467), we have an immense series of marvellous works to register.

No doubt, as an illustrious scholar has said, the surface is amazing, but on penetrating more deeply, we are surprised at the shallowness of so grand a structure, pomp prevailing over taste, and profusion over excellence.† But if this inversion of character is excusable in any art, it is undoubtedly so in that of tapestry.

We know, from an inventory drawn up at Dijon, that, from 1420, the store-chambers of Philip were full of splendid hangings, constituting a collection then unique. The first thing to attract notice

* The writer is indebted to the kindness of the late Baron Davillier for this communication.

† De Laborde : "Les Ducs de Bourgogne," vol. i., p. 47.

was "a red room of high-warp tapestry woven with gold, on which were represented ladies, pheasants, persons of distinction and rank, nobles, simple folk, and others, with a canopy ornamented with falcons." Then came a rich chamber "with high-warp tapestry of Arras thread, called the room of the little children, furnished with the canopy, head-board, and coverlet of a bed, worked with gold and silk, the head-board and coverlet being strewn with trees, grasses, and little children, and the canopy representing trails of flowering rose-trees on a red background."

Another rich room "of high-warp tapestry, worked in Arras thread and gold," was called the Chamber of the Coronation of Our Lady; "it was furnished with a canopy, a head-board, a bed coverlet, and six curtains, two of which were worked with gold, and the remaining four without gold. On each of these were two figures, the late Duke Anthony of Brabant and his wife, and their children, screened with a small dossier; the whole was of Brabant work."

To these sumptuous "chambers" succeeded about sixty "saloon tapestries," almost all woven with gold. Amongst these we select the hangings of "Fama" (meaning, probably, the "Triumph of Renown"), the "Twelve Peers of France," the "Nine Knights and the Nine Amazons,"* the "Seven Wise Men," the "History of the Church Militant," the "Apocalypse," the "Battle of Liège," the "Battle

* See the "Note sur une tapisserie représentant Godefroy de Bouillon, et sur les représentations des Preux et des Preuses au XV^e siècle," by M. J. Guiffrey, Paris, 1880.

of Rosbeck," the "Story of Jason," the "History of



FIG. 26.—THE STORY OF HERKENBALD.
(Bern Cathedral.)

From the "Anciennes Tapisseries historiées," of M. Jubinal.

William of Normandy, Conqueror of England," a

“Stag Hunt,” the “History of Du Guesclin,” the “Story of Semiramis of Babylon,” the “Story of Godefroi de Bouillon,” the “Castle of Truth,” the “Shepherds,” &c. The dossers, *bancquiers*, hassocks, and such pieces are thirty-six in number, and there are nineteen long-pile carpets. Finally came thirteen hangings ornamented with religious subjects and serving for religious ceremonies, from which they derived their name of “chapel hangings.” We note amongst these an altar-cloth “entirely of gold and silk,” together with high-warp tapestries “of gold and Arras thread.”*

In spite of the broils which marked his reign, Charles the Bold (1467—1477), the son of Philip, continued to extend to the decorative arts the protection afforded them by his father. Several valuable hangings were, by his care, added to the immense collections gathered together in his castles in Burgundy and Flanders. Tapestry, we know, was even connected with the history of his reverses. The conquerors at Granson, Morat, and Nancy, found on the battle-field standards in high-warp work, and curtains and hangings of the greatest value.†

* De Laborde : “Les Ducs de Bourgogne,” vol. ii., pp. 267 to 275. This last remark shows, conjointly with numerous other testimonies, that the presence of silk in these hangings was in no wise an indication of Italian origin, as was long believed.

† For the tapestries of Charles the Bold preserved at Bern see the learned work of M. A. Jubinal, “Les anciennes Tapisseries historiées ;” “Roger van der Weyden et les Tapisseries de Berne,” by M. Pinchart, Brussels, 1864 ; “Die Burgunder Tapeten in Bern,” by M. Stantz, Bern, 1865 ; and “Mosaik zur Kunst-geschichte,” by G. Kinkel, pp. 302—362, Berlin, 1876.

In the fifteenth, as in the fourteenth century, Arras was the centre from which the store-chambers of the House of Burgundy were chiefly recruited. The list of tapestries brought from this town by Philip the Good and Charles the Bold is too lengthy to be reproduced here; we must refer our readers to works on the subject, particularly that of M. Pinchart. It is enough for us to state that from 1423 to 1467 there were no fewer than fifty-nine master tapestry workers established in the capital of Artois.

The capture of the town by Louis XI. in 1477, and the expulsion of its inhabitants in 1479, struck a blow at its workshops from which they did not recover. The honour of weaving the Raphael cartoons has been most erroneously attributed to them: the fall of Arras was already a thing of the past. When the designer of the "Acts of the Apostles" composed this unrivalled series the town had still perhaps a few tapestry workers, but certainly no longer a school of tapestry worthy of the name.

But few facts are known of the history of tapestry in Brussels during the fifteenth century. We learn only that about 1448 the corporation of carpet weavers was reorganised, and that it took the name of "Legwerckers Ambacht" (tapestry workers' trade). The following were the general stipulations of its statutes:—To be admitted master it is necessary to be a citizen of Brussels and to have learnt the handicraft. Each master may only have one apprentice, not including his children; these latter are bound like

other apprentices for a period of three years, but they are only compelled to work three days a week. A foreigner may work as a master in Brussels if he prove that he has learnt the craft during three years in another town, and if he pay the fixed fines. The most rigorous measures are adopted to insure the proper execution of the work. No tapestry may be sold that has not been examined, approved, and sealed. A subsequent provision settled the terms between the tapestry workers and the painters. The workmen were allowed to draw, one for another, the stuffs, trees, animals, boats, grasses, &c., for their "verdures," that is to say, the tapestries representing landscapes; they have also the right to complete or to correct their cartoons with charcoal or chalk, or with a pen. For every other style of work, they are bound, under pain of fine, to apply to professional painters.*

The earliest mention of the purchase of tapestries, made in Brussels, by the House of Burgundy, dates from 1466. At that time Philip the Good bought a series, the "History of Hannibal," in six pieces, and a set of eight landscapes.† Nevertheless it is certain that, from this time, the workshops of Brussels rivalled those of Arras, until at length they supplanted them.

The workshops of Tournay, which, as we have already seen, dated from the fourteenth century, also developed considerably about the middle of the suc-

* Wauters: "Les Tapisseries bruxelloises," p. 31 *et seq.*

† *Ibid.*, p. 50.

ceeding century. Philip the Good (1449 to 1453) entrusted the high-warp workers of this town with the execution of the celebrated "History of Gideon," or "Story of the Golden Fleece," in eight pieces, which cost 8,960 crowns. This series, woven in silk, and in silver and gold of Venice, reproduced the cartoons of Baudouin de Bailleul, which cartoons the duke repurchased for three hundred crowns; it still existed in 1794, but all trace of it has since been lost. A hanging representing the "Destruction of Troy," and another of the "History of Alexander," came from the same workshops.*

Bruges competed successfully, in importance of production and superiority of taste, with the towns we have just reviewed. The Dukes of Burgundy there made many acquisitions; two chambers of tapestry were bought in 1440, by Philip the Good, and the "History of the Sacrament" was purchased about the same time. Even foreigners, the Medicis in particular, ordered thence some important sets. There is no doubt that the superiority of its school of painting greatly contributed to the reputation of the workshops of Bruges; a reputation which, however, did not survive the fifteenth century.

We must mention, finally, the workshops of Ypres, Middleburg, Alost, Lille,† Valenciennes, and Douay, all of which developed some activity during the fifteenth century.

* Pinchart : "Tapisseries flamandes," p. 75.

† D. van de Castele : "Documents concernant la corporation des tapisseries à Alost." Bruges, 1873, pp. 6—10.

To describe, or even simply to classify, the Franco-Flemish hangings of the fifteenth century, would be



FIG. 27.—THE CONDEMNATION OF SUPPERS AND BANQUETS.
(Nancy Museum.)

From "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiées" of M. Jubinal.

a task calculated to frighten the most determined worker, so great is the mass of productions of that

period which has descended to us. The history of tapestry is not even sufficiently advanced to enable us to ascertain the distinctive characteristics of the various great centres, and to show how the Brussels manufacture differed from that of Arras; how Lille surpassed Bruges; Bruges, Tournay; Tournay, Valenciennes, Middleburg, or Oudenarde.

Still greater reason have we for refraining from inquiry into the aims of the different masters of tapestry in the States of the King of France, or in those of the Duke of Burgundy. All that can be asserted is that, towards the end of the century, or, more accurately, during the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. (1483—1515), tapestry attained a degree of perfection which has never since been surpassed. After examining the "Mass of St. Gregory" (in the Germanic Museum of Nuremberg), the "Triumph and Marriage of Beatrice" (Sir Richard Wallace's collection), and the various religious compositions in the Spitzer collection, we become convinced that technical skill cannot be carried further.

With regard to precision of drawing, and brilliancy and harmony of colouring—which is always so clear that no detail is lost—the high-warp workers had absolutely nothing to learn from their successors. If the planes were a little more clearly defined, I should not hesitate to rank the "Marriage of Beatrice"—the most beautiful of these pieces—by the side of the "Marriage of Louis XIV.," one of Le Brun's masterpieces. The principles of composition are similar. In the centre, before the altar, are the

happy arrangement of the figures add another charm to this beautiful picture of ceremonial.

That the tapestry workers of this period did not attempt a greater number of picturesque combinations, was entirely the fault of the contemporaneous painters, who persisted in constantly reproducing cartoons of the same character. But when cartoons, conceived in a different spirit, were entrusted to them, the "Acts of the Apostles" of Raphael, for instance, or the "Triumph of Scipio" of Giulio Romano, they interpreted them with an accuracy which is, to this day, the admiration of the severest critics.

We cannot too often repeat that the composition of the cartoons was really the most important element in the development of tapestry. The political and financial condition of this or that town, and the efforts of the masters set over the workshops, may have influenced the material state of the art; but the schools of painting alone, entrusted with supplying it with designs, were in a position to give it the direction which formed its strength or its weakness, and to determine its success or its failure.

In order properly to appreciate the advance made by the Flemish painters, and by their interpreters the tapestry workers, in the fifteenth century, we should compare the "Legend of St. Piat" (Tournay Cathedral), executed at Arras in 1402,* with the hangings we have already so often cited—the "Story of Beatrice," and the "History of David and Bath-

* Published by M. Pinchart, in his "Tapisseries flamandes."

sheba." The comparison is crushing. The ugliness of the figures in the work of 1402 is only to be equalled by the rudeness of the composition. The revolution brought about by the renovators, or rather the creators, of Flemish painting, the Van Eycks, found its natural rebound in tapestry; the influence of the two brothers was, however, indirect, not immediate. We are only able to mention the reproduction of one of their works—the figures of Adam and Eve in the "Life of the Virgin," at Madrid.* It fell to their pupil, Roger van der Weyden, to exercise the deepest influence in this respect. His compositions in the town-hall of Brussels, the "Legend of Trajan" and the "Story of Herkenbald," executed before 1441, have been copied, almost thread for thread, in the famous Bern tapestries. The "History of Julius Cæsar," in the same collection, and the "Story of Christ," in the Madrid Museum, just as closely follow the style of this great master.† The half dramatic and half heroic compositions of Vander Weyden were followed by the essentially lyrical compositions of Memling and his school.

We have endeavoured to show, in the beginning of this chapter, the chief qualities and defects of the Flemish schools of the fifteenth century; on one side, that ardent love of nature to which we owe so many

* "L'Art," 26th November, 1876.

† Wauters, pp. 54—64: "The Apocalypse" at Madrid—it has lately been attempted to restore this to Vander Weyden—is a work of the sixteenth century, for which engravings of Dürer were employed. See "Les Tapisseries de Liège à Madrid.—Notes sur l'Apocalypse d'Albert Dürer ou de Roger Vander Weyden." Liège, 1876.

exquisite idyls, of which the Madonnas in the meadow



FIG. 29.—PRIAM IN THE MIDST OF HIS COURT.
(Palais de Justice of Issoire.)

From "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiées" of M. Jubinal.

are the most perfect example ; on the other side, the incapacity—the word is no exaggeration—for grand

historical compositions. To enable the Flemish tapestry workers to overcome this difficulty, it was necessary that Italy should teach them, by the rules of grouping the art of increasing or moderating the feelings that animated the characters portrayed—that art of dramatic composition which is so wanting in the great sets of the time, unless, indeed, the sweet disorder which characterised them is looked upon as an effect of art.

An account of the influence exercised by the Franco-Flemish tapestry workers in the fifteenth century would be incomplete if the establishments they founded in foreign lands were not taken into consideration. We repeatedly see real emigrations, caused either by political events or by economic complications.

Italy, especially, had the advantage of attracting these emigrants. From 1420 to 1500 swarms of tapestry workers, natives of Arras, Lille, Bruges, Tournay, and Brussels, swooped down on the territories of the Marquis of Mantua, the Duke of Ferrara, the Duke of Urbino, on Venetia, Tuscany, and Umbria. At Rome, even, a Parisian was found.

The baggage of the new-comers was usually tolerably light, for the setting up of a high-warp loom does not require a very complicated stock of tools; Italy, too, yielded the raw textile material in abundance, and at most they brought with them a few cartoons. If orders flowed in, they called in the aid of their wives. We have, in fact, noted during the time now occupying our attention a certain number of female tapestry workers. The claims of the emi-

grants were generally very modest : they were content with a small subsidy, "una provisioncella," given by the princes or the municipalities. Wherever they went they offered both to execute commissions and to teach pupils. Their task finished and the metallic vein exhausted, they sought their fortune elsewhere. A few privileged ones, such as Rinaldo Boteram, returned from time to time to their native country, to make purchases or entice away companions.

Italy, which had hitherto had a very indirect share in the development of tapestry, became from this time an essential factor. The Italians did not content themselves with encouraging the establishment of Flemish tapestry workers in their own country, and thus struggling, with native workshops, against the monopoly which the Netherlands had secured for themselves; neither were they satisfied with producing hangings which, for richness of the raw material, for science, and for delicacy of execution, compared favourably with the masterpieces of Arras and of Brussels. In addition to this they sent to the other side of the mountains cartoons which the French and Flemish tapestry workers were entrusted to reproduce on their looms, and which prepared the way for the Renaissance. We know that from the middle of the fifteenth century the cartoons sent to Bruges by the Medicis obtained such success, that the workers had to execute several replicas. But this mark of favour will cease to excite surprise when it is known that the designers of these cartoons were Cosimo Tura or Mantegna, and that the great Leonardo da Vinci himself com-

posed the design of a door curtain which had for its subject "Original Sin."

It is now known that about twenty high-warp workshops were established in Italy during the fifteenth century. It may be added that many of these workshops had but an ephemeral existence, and that some of them were only supplied with one loom. A complete account of them will be found in the author's "*Histoire de la Tapisserie italienne*;" he must here confine himself to a slight sketch.

The oldest Italian workshop hitherto known is that of Mantua.* From 1419 a French tapestry worker, Johannes Thomæ de Francia, worked there for the Gonzagas, in whose service he remained till about 1442. He was closely followed by Nicolas of France, and then by Guidone and Adamante, also Frenchmen. The painter Giovanni dei Corradi, of Cremona, was commissioned to supply them with cartoons.

About the middle of the fifteenth century the manufacture of tapestries made brilliant progress in Mantua, owing to the influence of the Marchioness Barbara of Brandenburg. An eminent artist of Brussels, Rinaldo Boteram, directed the pleiad of skilful tapestry workers in the workshop of the Gonzagas. The painter engaged to design the cartoons bore the glorious name of Andrea Mantegna. It is to be regretted that we have so few details concerning the sets executed from the drawings of the

* The history of this workshop has been written by the late M. W. Braghirolli: "*Sulle Manifatture di Arazzi in Mantova*;" Svo. Mantua, 1879.

founder of the school of Mantua. All we know is that the tapestries of the Marquis of Mantua, manufactured from designs by Mantegna, were held in the highest reputation till the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The school of Mantua began to languish in the last third of the fifteenth century, although the manufacture of tapestries was not entirely broken off. It would be of little interest to study the history of its long dying struggle.

The workshops of Venice were almost as old as those of Mantua; from 1421 we find Jehan de Bruges and Valentin d'Arras at their head. But they had neither the importance nor the spirit of continuity peculiar to the establishment created by the Gonzagas; they appeared and disappeared with equal facility, according to the convenience or requirements of the artists who directed them. From them probably came the numerous dossers, or altar-cloths, preserved in the Venetian churches, and adorned with portraits of the patron saints of these churches. We know, particularly, that the painter Alvise, in 1450, designed the cartoons of a "History of St. Theodorus" for his native town.

Ferrara, which had allowed itself to be distanced by Mantua and Venice (the earliest mention of a tapestry worker established in this town is of the date 1436), soon made up for lost time. Giacomo d'Angelo, the Fleming, who was at first only charged with the restoration of the tapestries of the Marquis Nicolas III. d'Este, had associated with him, in 1441,

one of his compatriots, Pietro di Andrea. Next, under the Marquis Lionel, came Liévin de Bruges (Livino di Giglio), Renaud or Rinaldo di Gualtieri Boteram, and lastly one Bernardino. Borso d'Este (1450—1471), the successor of Lionel, aided the further development of the school—one is tempted to say the factory—established by his family. While buying or ordering tapestries from without, especially from Flanders, he employed a host of tapestry workers, either Italian or Franco-Flemish. He attached so much importance to their work, that he commissioned the best painters of his court—Cosimo Tura, Gerardo de Vicenza, and Ugolino—to supply them with cartoons. There was no form of tapestry which he did not take pleasure in bringing to light—mule-cloths or hangings for the decoration of a bucentaur, dossers, door-curtains, bed-hangings, sacred representations, such as “Solomon Enthroned in the midst of his Court,” the “Story of Ahab,” or secular subjects, such as “An ancient Festival,” &c. His successor, Hercules I. (1471—1505), evinced no less ardour, but the wars which desolated Italy from the end of the fifteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century struck a mortal blow at the manufacture of Ferrara and at all the tapestry workshops of the Peninsula. In about 1490 there remained but one tapestry worker at the Court of the d'Estes, and even he was about to expatriate himself, when the town, learning his resolution, offered him a subsidy to retain him. *

* We are indebted to the Marchese G. Campori for an excellent

The interest taken in tapestry by the Republic of Sienna deserves special notice. In 1438 Rinaldo di Gualtieri Boteram, who played later such an important part in the Courts of the d'Estes and Gonzagas, solicited a small subsidy from the chief magistrate, in return for which he offered to teach his craft to two or more pupils. Encouraged by the reception accorded to his request, he, two years later, begged for a renewal of the contract made with the Republic. The reasons he brought forward were most characteristic. He had already executed several hangings, as well as furniture adornments; and he was at that time manufacturing a very handsome piece; all his works contained, in the upper part, a mark intended both to make the production known, and to show that the town of Sienna possessed a "bello et honorato mistero." The magistrate, beguiled, granted an indemnity of twenty golden florins for a period of six years, on condition that the artist employed at least two citizens continually, and that he should teach his secrets gratuitously to all pupils who presented themselves.

Whether Rinaldo abandoned these advantages, or the magistrate thought it well to provide him with a competitor, is a doubtful question, but it is certain that in 1442 Sienna accepted the offers of another Arras master, styled "egregius vir et famosus magister," Jacquet, son of Benoit, Giacchetto di Benedetto. The new-comer undertook, for an annual indemnity of forty-five florins, to set up and work monograph of the Ferrara manufacture: "L'Arazzeria estense." Modena, 1876.

two large looms, and also to teach the art of weaving and that of dyeing gratuitously.

During ten years Jacquet d'Arras, without giving up working for distant patrons (in 1451 he manufactured a hanging, the "History of St. Peter," for Pope Nicholas V.), accumulated in the public palace of Sienna *bancquiers*, *espalliers*, and bed-coverlets, of which a few specimens still existed at the beginning of this century. A large number of these were adorned with the arms of the city. But this Artesian master disappeared in 1456, and with him, apparently, ended a trade which, during many years, had thrown such radiance over Sienna.

The art workshops of Rome and Florence had but an ephemeral existence in the fifteenth century, the Governments of these two cities having apparently made no efforts to increase the high-warp manufacture. The school of the Eternal City was founded by Pope Nicholas V. in 1455; it was directed by the Parisian Renaud de Maincourt, and produced a series, the "History of the Creation," which was cited as a marvel by contemporaries. Calixtus III., the successor of Nicholas, hurriedly dismissed the workers as soon as this piece was completed.

In Florence the Government ordered from Liévin de Bruges, for the decoration of its palace, an important set, 1,300 cubits square, of which the cartoons appear to have been painted by Neri de Bicci and Victor Ghiberti, the son of the sculptor; but after 1457 Liévin left the banks of the Arno to establish himself at Ferrara. A little later, between 1476 and

1480, the cathedral chapter had some *espalliers* manufactured by Giovanni di Allemagna at the rate of six lire per yard.

The school of Perugia was founded in 1463 by Jacques or Jaquemin Birgières, his son Nicholas, and their wives Jeanne and Michelette, from Lille. These artists had a double mission: to decorate the chapel of the priors and to train up pupils. They lived for several years in the capital of Umbria (they were still there in 1466), where, however, the high-warp art does not appear to have taken deep root.

In the lordship of Correggio, the native country of the illustrious painter, some high-warp looms were also set up in the second half of the fifteenth century. The Fleming Rinaldo Duro worked there without intermission from 1466 till the first years of the sixteenth century, in company with several other masters, either Flemish or Italian. Twelve hangings, now exhibited at the Town Hall of Correggio, are considered the product of the local manufacture of the fifteenth century; they represent rural and hunting scenes.

A high-warp loom was found even in the town of Todi, where, in 1468, a "maestra di panni de razza," that is, a female weaver of Arras hangings, worked, under the name of Giovanna Francesa, or Jeanne of France.

The small town of Urbino, renowned from that time for the enterprises of Duke Frederick till the creations of Bramante and Raphael secured for it imperishable glory, gave its protection in the last third of the fifteenth century to an important school.

The reader will readily accept some information respecting this establishment, which at least possesses the merit of being unpublished. The tapestry workers attached to the court of Frederick were five in number; Master Francesco of Ferrara, the Fleming Nichetto, with one associate, and finally Ruggiero and Lorenzo. Their chief work was the

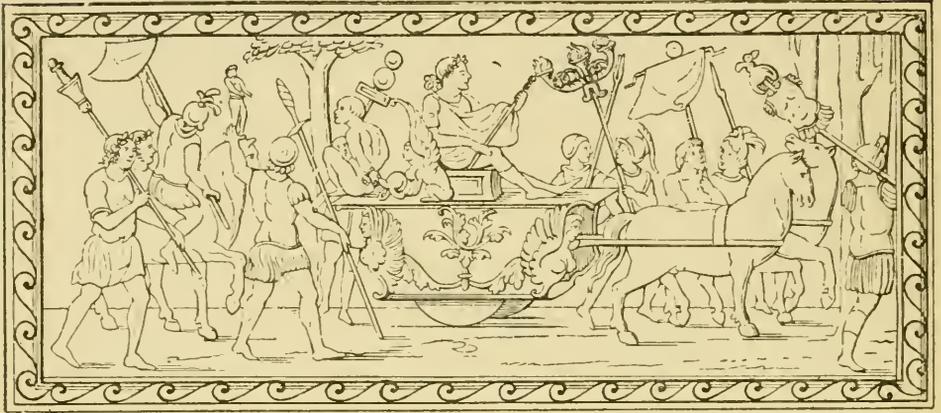


FIG. 30.—BORDER OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE HEAD OF POMPEY TO CÆSAR.

“History of Troy;” and contemporaries extolled the beauty of this series, which cost no less than ten thousand ducats (nearly twenty thousand pounds) and was one of the chief adornments of the Urbino Palace till the sixteenth century.

At Milan, also, French or Flemish tapestry workers were employed for the Sforza family throughout the second half of the fifteenth century.*

* See the “*Courrier de l’Art*,” May, 1883.

However worthy of consideration the tapestries produced in the fifteenth century on the other side of the Alps may have been, there are but few Italian hangings of that period yet existing. One of these, the "Presentation of the Head of Pompey to Cæsar," now belonging to the antiquary Bauer of Florence, is distinguished for harmony of colour and for the

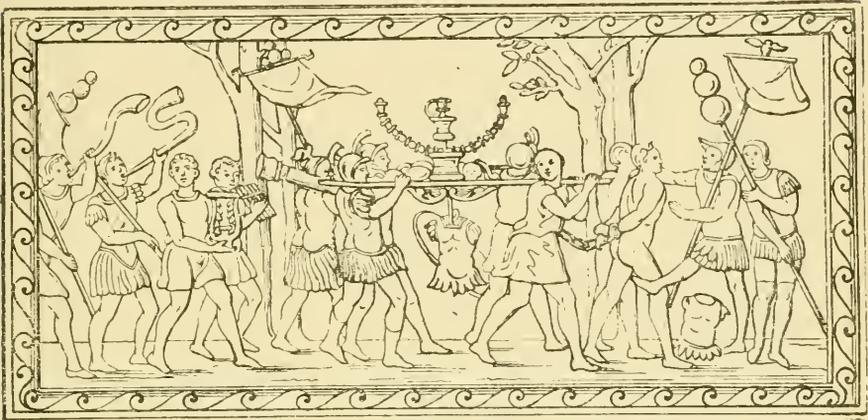


FIG. 31.—BORDER OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE HEAD OF POMPEY TO CÆSAR.

beauty of the figures, which call to mind the most perfect types of the Milanese School ; and, above all, for its superb border in cameo, the oldest of the storied borders which have reached us.

It will be observed that the Italians of this epoch, agreeing in this respect with the Flemings, delighted in subjects which had no connection with the chief design, but, by charming the eye, fulfilled the first mission of decorative art. Amongst these are the

birds, beasts, and flowers which occupy the foreground, and, as it were, the place of honour, in so great a number of hangings. In the "Presentation of Pompey's Head" we find a peacock; the same bird is seen in the "Annunciation," in the Spitzer collection, and in the "Descent of the Holy Spirit," in the church Santa-Maria della Salute at Venice; whilst in Raphael's "Miraculous Draught of Fishes," and in the "Bark of Venus" (in the collection of the Baron Worms) are gigantic cranes, &c., &c. This healthy tradition was long maintained: even in the seventeenth century, in the "Royal Residences" woven at the Gobelins, we find such essentially decorative subjects as birds, cats, or vases of flowers.

Next to Italy, Spain—also a tributary of the Flemish workshops—must be cited. The royal residences overflowed with these precious fabrics, which, to this day, are numbered by hundreds at Madrid or at the Escorial. Amidst the presents sent by the King of Castile to Tamerlane (d. 1405), were tapestries in which the portraits were so delicately worked that a Persian chronicler said that if one compared them with the marvellous works formerly executed by the painter Mani on the canvas of Ardena, Mani would be overwhelmed with shame and his works would appear to be deformities.

At the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century the Spaniards attempted to establish a few high-warp ateliers in their country. Several tapestry makers (*maestros de tapices*) formed part of the Grand Council at Barcelona in 1391 and



L. K. GOUTZWILLER.

FIG. 32.—THE ANNUNCIATION.
(Italian tapestry of the fifteenth century. In M. Spitzer's collection.)

1433. But these attempts do not appear to have had durable results. It was more convenient to have recourse to the Flemish manufactories, which were so admirably organised, and perhaps more economical. Does not the extreme East, to this day, for the sake of economy, procure the ordinary fabrics it requires from the factories of Manchester and Birmingham ?

The Flemish influence was felt at this time as far as Hungary. Bertrandon de la Brocquière, a French traveller who visited Buda in 1432-1433, has left us, on this subject, the following curious testimony:—“This town is governed by Germans in all callings, as much as regards jurisdiction and merchandise, as also the trades, such as seamsters, carpenters, masons, and goldsmiths, as was told me by a merchant of Arras, named Clays Davion, whom I found there, and who had been brought there by the Emperor Sigismond, together with several other tradesmen of the kingdom of France: the said Clays was a high-warp tapestry worker. There are many Jews in this town who speak good French, and of these some were expelled from France.”*

In England the liberality of the Dukes of Burgundy, the lords of the country of tapestry *par excellence*, greatly contributed to fill the *garde-meubles* of the Crown and of the nobility with brilliantly adorned hangings. In 1395 Duke Philip the Hardy ordered of the celebrated Parisian tapestry-maker, Jacques Dourdin, a “Crucifixion,” a “Calvary,” and a “Death of

* Bibliothèque nationale. Manuscrits. “Fonds français.” No. 5,593, vol. 240.

the Virgin," to present to King Richard II.* In the preceding year (1394) he had given the same king a "History of Clinthe." About the same time, the Dukes of Lancaster, of Gloucester, and of York, received from him a series of valuable tapestries, amidst which were the "History of Clovis," the "History of Our Lady," and the "Story of Amusement and Pleasure."† A little later, John the Fearless, the successor to Philip the Hardy, bestowed on the Earl of Pembroke, one of the ambassadors of Henry IV., three important hangings, one of which was remarkable for several "images de belles filles."‡ In 1414, another present was made to Robert, Duke of Albany, who then governed Scotland; the "chambre de tapisserie" offered to him contained pictures of tall women and little children. In 1416, the Earl of Warwick, ambassador of Henry V., in his turn received a rich hanging covered with various figures and numerous birds.§ And what priceless hangings must have been swallowed up in the English castles after the victories of the hundred years' war!

Ere long, struck by this display of luxury, and dazzled by the figures of kings, heroes, and gods, moving on pliant and undulating surfaces, and glittering in the richest colours, poets vied with each other in celebrating the triumph of the new art, or rather of the old art so happily revived, just as the Ovids and Claudians of a former age had done. Chaucer

* Guiffrey, "Tapisseries françaises," p. 17.

† Pinchart, "Tapisseries flamandes," pp. 11, 12.

‡ Ibid., p. 18.

§ Ibid., p. 19

(1338-1400), refers several times to tapestry and its portrayers.* But in the life of St. Werburgh especially, by Henry Bradshaw (d. 1513), tapestry is mentioned as an important element of decoration. Ely Cathedral, on the occasion of the saint taking the veil, was adorned with "cloths of gold and arras," representing the whole history of the Old and the New Testament. Then came "noble auntyent stories," such as the stories of Samson, of Hector the Trojan, and of King Arthur.

A few isolated efforts may have been made from this time to introduce the secret of the high and low warp into the British Isles. We know that this last method was not a new invention, as has been lately asserted; but that it was known in the Middle Ages, under the name of treadle tapestry. We are in a measure authorised in supporting this hypothesis, by the fact that, in 1392, the Earl of Arundel disposed, by will, of his blue hangings, with red flowers, "recently made in London." The question would be settled definitely in the affirmative if it were proved that these hangings were real tapestries, and not embroideries or brocaded fabrics.

Be this as it may, the Flemish importation con-

* He once mentions a tapestry worker amongst the pilgrims coming to Canterbury :

" An haberdasher and a carpenter,
A webbe, a dyer, and a tapiser."

At another time he speaks of tapestry :

" I wol give him all that falles,
To his chambre and to his halles,
I will painte him with pure gold,
And tapite them ful many a fold."



FIG. 33.—ADORATION OF THE MAGI.
(German tapestry of the end of the Fifteenth Century. National Museum of Munich.)

tinued. We notice in particular an order made in 1477 by John Pasmer, a merchant of London, to Gilles van de Putte, of Brussels, for a tapestry 22 ells long by $5\frac{1}{4}$ ells high, representing the four evangelists in the centre, and other teachers or bishops, as well as a richly-adorned tabernacle.*

Germany perhaps alone escaped the influence of the Flemings. But there was no cause for congratulation on this point, as we shall show. The Germans did not possess a single high-warp workshop worthy of the name, such as could be compared with those of Arras or of Brussels, although they, at that time, reckoned in the domain of painting such masters as Stephan Lochner, Martin Schongauer, Zeitblom, Schaffner, Holbein the Elder, Burgmair, and Wolgemut, and although they carried many branches of the decorative arts to a high degree of perfection. The hangings, ordinarily of small dimensions, with which the Museums of Munich and of Nuremberg at this day overflow, were worked in the convents, and sometimes in the castles of Germany. We have not sufficient space to review these productions, which are not remarkable either for power of imagination, richness of raw material, or high finish of workmanship.† We confine ourselves to reproducing here an "Adoration of the Magi," executed in a convent of Bamberg or its neighbourhood, in which the

* Wauters, "Bernard van Orley," pp. 20 21, 73-74.

† In "L'Art," 4th June, 1882, will be found an extended article on the history of tapestry in Germany, at the time of the Renaissance. See also "l'Histoire générale de la Tapisserie."

“tapisserie”—a nun of the convent—represented her-



FIG. 34.—A WEAVING WORKSHOP OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. Facsimile of a miniature in the Museum of Prague. (Collection of the Lyons Art and Industry Museum.)

self sitting at her loom. This piece is reputed to have been worked from cartoons by Wolgemut.

CHAPTER X.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

SUPREMACY OF THE BRUSSELS ATELIERS—INFLUENCE OF ITALY ON THE COMPOSITION OF CARTOONS—RAPHAEL'S "ACTS OF THE APOSTLES."

THE sixteenth century sanctioned the *rôle* assigned to tapestry by the Middle Ages, introducing, however, some modifications in it. Tapestry continued to hold the first place in public festivals as well as in interior decoration ; it would, indeed, be difficult to mention any striking solemnity in which it did not play an important part. The court of France, with which we shall commence this section of our review, lost no opportunity of exhibiting the marvels collected in its store-chambers. The "Victories of Scipio Africanus," at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, eclipsed even the other masterpieces of textile art which gave its name to this celebrated interview. The tapestries displayed by Francis I., at the interview of Bayonne, excited no less admiration.

"This king," says Brantôme, "was also very magnificent in regard to furniture ; the two beautiful tapestries which may still be seen prove this. One of these, the "Triumph of Scipio," which has frequently been seen in grand halls on high festival

days, cost 22,000 crowns, at that time a large sum. At this day, as I have been told, it could not be had for 50,000, for it is all raised in gold and silk, and its subjects are better, and its figures better drawn, than on any that may be seen elsewhere. At the Bayonne interview the Spanish lords and ladies admired them immensely, and had never seen such in the possession of their king. It was, in fact, a Flemish masterpiece, offered to the king rather than to the emperor by the master, because he had heard tell of his liberality, his magnificence, and his desire for objects of interest, and thought he would derive greater advantage from him than from the emperor, his sovereign. As for myself, I may say it is the most beautiful tapestry I have ever seen."*

The Imperial Court displayed equal magnificence. We know especially that in 1558, at the time of the coronation of Ferdinand at Aix-la-Chapelle, the platform was hidden beneath the carpets and hangings, woven of gold and silver.

The Italy of the Renaissance, so eager for animation, colour, and magnificence, placed tapestry on the same level as painting; it was by its means that Leo X. completed the decoration of the Sistine Chapel, and the halls of the Consistory; and that the Doges of Venice concluded the ornamentation of the ducal palace. The Medicis of Florence, the d'Estes, and the Gonzagas, sought the precious fabrics with at least equal ardour; the hangings exhibited in their

* "Vies des grands Capitaines," edit. of the "Panthéon littéraire," vol. i., p. 255.

palaces or villas may be reckoned by hundreds ; and yet they barely succeeded in distancing the municipalities, or the ecclesiastical chapters, in this often



FIG. 35.—ST. REMY BAPTISING KING CLOVIS.

(Church of St. Remy, at Rheims.)

From "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiées" of M. Jubinal.

heedless pursuit. It was seen in 1571, at the time of the triumphal entry into Rome of Marc Antony Colonna, one of the conquerors of Lepanto, how tastefully the Italians availed themselves of these

eminently decorative productions. On the summit of the Capitol—the scene of so many pomps—the front of the church of the Ara-Cœli was resplendent



FIG. 36.—FUNERAL OF ST. REMY.

(Church of St. Remy, at Rheims.)

From "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiées" of M. Jubinal.

with landscape tapestries, which enhanced the splendour of the mosaics inlaid in the upper part; in the nave, beneath garlands of natural flowers, alternating with the heraldic shields of the mem-

bers of the College of Cardinals, was spread the magnificent series of the "History of Scipio," designed by Giulio Romano. If we add to these the splendour of thousands of costumes, vicing with each other in beauty, the trophies of victories displayed on all sides, with the prows of ships and standards, and the lighted tapers on the altars, we may imagine the enthusiasm awakened by the fairy spectacle.

When we consider the choice of subjects, we find that here also tapestry was connected by manifold bonds with public life, with the religious, political, and intellectual sentiments of the epoch. Mythology and ancient history were reinstated in the position they had occupied, whilst subjects were still taken from the Scriptures or the martyrology.* The sub-

* Flanders : the "Descent from the Cross," at the Museum of the Porte de Hal, at Brussels ; the "Queen of Sheba before Solomon," Lille Museum ; the "Baptism of Christ," the "Story of the Statue of Our Lady of Sablon," M. Spitzer's collection ; the "Garden of Olives," the "Bearing of the Cross," the "Crucifixion," the "Entombment," the "Creation," "Christ appearing to Saint Thomas," in the Alva collection ; the "History of Moses," at the Chartres Museum, and in M. Cuau's collection ; the "Passion," the "History of the Virgin," the "History of St. John the Baptist," the "History of St. Paul," and the "Apocalypse," at Madrid ; the "Temptation of St. Anthony," after Jérôme Bosch (see "Report by Señor Juan F. Riano on a collection of photographs from tapestries of the royal palace of Madrid," p. 5, London, 1875).

France : the "History of the Virgin," at Rheims Cathedral ; the "History of St. Remy," in the Church of St. Remy, at Rheims ; the "Emblems of the Passion," at the Cathedral of Angers ; the "History of Christ," at St. Merri (destroyed) ; the "Story of Christ," with "Scenes from the Old Testament," at the Chaise-Dieu.

Italy : "Acts of the Apostles," and "Scenes from the Life of Christ," at the Vatican ; the "Story of Joseph," and the "History of

jects derived from this duplicate source consign the reminiscences of the Middle Ages and the romances of chivalry to the background. The many hangings in which the new spirit made its way will be enumerated further on. Allegory still flourished, but assumed more and more the antique form.* The scientific aspirations of the century expressed themselves on one side in the "Spheres," at Madrid, and on the other in the famous "Plan of Paris,"† in the plans of four counties of England, executed through the instrumentality of Sheldon, and in the "Course of the Scheldt," ordered for the Town Hall of Antwerp.

Finally—and this point seems to be most worthy of notice—princes, on the one hand, and municipalities on the other, made use of tapestry to perpetuate the memory of their victories; the struggles of this great epoch, so powerful and so disturbed, are in no other way reproduced with equal splendour.‡

the Passion," at the Uffizi Museum; the "Story of St. George," and the "Story of St. Aurelius," at the Cathedral of Ferrara; the "History of St. Mark," at the basilica of St. Mark, at Venice; the "Story of Moses," at the Milan Cathedral; the "Story of the Virgin," at the Cathedral of Como.

Germany: The Germanic Museum of Nuremberg, the Church of St. Lawrence and St. Siebald, in the same town, and the National Museum of Munich, have innumerable hangings depicting religious subjects.

* "Scenes from the Romance of the Rose," belonging to Sir Richard Wallace; "Combat of the Virtues and the Vices," several series, belonging to M. de Farcy, at Angers, and to the Duke of Alva, in the Museum at Madrid; the "Seven Cardinal Sins," at Madrid.

† See the interesting work of M. A. Franklin: "Étude historique et topographique sur le plan de Paris de 1540, dit Plan de tapisserie," Paris, 1869. This plan is now only known through old drawings.

‡ Flanders: "Genealogy of the Kings of Spain," about 1510 (Wauters, p. 98); the "Hunts of Maximilian," in the Garde Meuble;

From this time, however, that tendency towards abstraction began to appear, which, in the end, brought about the triumph of the academic style. "The History of Artemisia," ordered by Catherine de Medici, proves this. Instead of recording without circumlocution the valiant deeds of her husband, and openly expressing her grief at his premature death, the widow of Henry II. preferred to assume the part of the inconsolable widow of Mausolus: hence the lack of interest in this interminable series.

Even popular aspirations in the old Gallic spirit were manifested in tapestry. The fantastical pastoral, the "Loves of Gombaud and Macée," is an example of the fashion of which they were proud in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*

The sixteenth century has left us yet other evidence of the importance then attached to tapestry; the "Battle of Pavia," belonging to the Marquis of Avalos, at Naples; the "Conquest of Tunis by Charles V.," at Madrid; the "Victories of the Duke of Alva," in the Alva collection; the "Destruction of the Armada," formerly at the House of Lords; the "Deliverance of Leyden in 1574" (Delft); the "Defeat of the Spaniards by the Zeelanders" (Middleburg); the "Genealogy of the Princes of Nassau," after B. van Orley (Wauters, p. 92).

France: the "Siege of Dijon in 1513," in the Dijon Museum; the "Festivities of Henri II. and Catherine de Medici," at the Egyptian Museum of Florence; the "History of Henri III." (destroyed); the "Battles of St. Denis and of Jarnac," at the Hotel Cluny.

Italy: the "History of the Medicis," at the Uffizi Museum; the "Cities," and "Horses," formerly in the collection of the Dukes of Ferrara.

Germany: the "Ancestors of the House of Bavaria," at the National Museum of Munich.

* See M. Guiffrey's work, "Les Amours de Gombaut et de Macée." Paris, 1882.

for during the best period of the Renaissance the most illustrious painters composed cartoons intended to be



FIG. 37.—PROCESSION OF THE PEOPLE OF DIJON DURING THE SIEGE OF 1512.

(Dijon Museum.) From "Les anciennes Tapisseries historiques," by M. Jubinal.

reproduced on the high, or low, warp. Amongst those who fulfilled this mission in Italy may be cited

Raphael, Giulio Romano, Francesco Penni, Giovanni da Udine, Perino del Vaga, A. del Sarto, Bronzino, Pontormo, Bachiacca, Salviati, Stradano, F. Sustris, Garofalo, the Dossi, Titian, Pordenone, and Paul Veronese. The narrowness of the old official æsthetics has alone prevented a just appreciation of the compositions of these masters. In Flanders, Bernard van Orley, Michel Coxcie, and Peter of Campana, endowed textile art with no less interesting designs; they were rivalled in France by Primaticcio, Matteo del Nassaro, Caron, Lerambert, and many other distinguished painters.

The intervention of Raphael could not but weigh very heavily on the destinies of tapestry. Was his influence genial or inauspicious? This question has often been asked of late. It cannot be concealed that, in spite of the importance bestowed on the decorative element in the borders of his compositions, Raphael treated them as simple frescoes, not as designs for hangings. His favourite pupil, Giulio Romano, even exaggerated this tendency, which prevailed, in the end, in Italy as well as in Flanders. In the preceding century, we were obliged to note the confusion which arose in the minds of some tapestry workers concerning the rules of painting proper and those of tapestry, and in many cases we found hangings designed on the same principles as frescoes or oil pictures. In the sixteenth century, however, we must acknowledge that the number of frescoes and pictures transferred unconditionally to the loom increased from day to day, *e.g.*, the "Descent

from the Cross," in the Museum of the Porte de Hal, at Brussels, copied, as M. Michiels has demonstrated, from a triptych of Jan de Mabuse; the "Entombment," in the Alva collection, reproducing line for line a picture by Bernard van Orley; the "Holy Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci, imitated in the hanging presented by Francis I. to Clement VII., &c.

Regarded from the point of view which now occupies our attention, let us consider the consequences of the revolution brought about under the auspices of Italy. "Tapestry"—we cite the opinion of both an artist and a connoisseur—"like architecture, assumed a more elegant character; it became broader and more refined in style; bolder, lighter, and less restrained in composition, and entirely lost its rigidity; the nude was treated with great power; planes were multiplied; while atmosphere and light penetrated into tapestry as they did into dwellings." *

The first effect of the new principles was to cause the point of sight, which had hitherto been placed very high, to be set very low. From this time forward the figures, instead of being ranged one above the other, were properly distributed, and grouped so as to form perfectly clear scenes. These modifications have been censured, but wrongly. "The artist," it has been said, "by reserving only a narrow strip of sky, crossed with clouds or broken by clusters of trees, avoided leaving a large empty space in the

* Denuelle, "Rapport au nom de la Commission de la Manufacture nationale des Gobelins," p. 17. Paris, 1877.

upper part of the composition, which was always unfortunate and misunderstood, as it caused the hanging to resemble an open window, through which the figures went and came, whereas it ought to present the idea of a covered pier, or of a wall clothed in woollen."*

There were like changes in colouring; shades began to be substituted for the thickly laid, full, brilliant colours of the Gothic period.† These extravagances would no doubt have been mitigated if the Venetians, the leaders of the Italian school of colouring, had been oftener called upon to design cartoons for tapestry; but, by an unfortunate circumstance, it was the Roman and Florentine schools—the schools of over-design—which exercised preponderating influence in this direction.

It is, however, of consequence to establish that, even under these new conditions, the tapestry workers retained a certain right of initiative. They might, at their pleasure, introduce gold in the draperies (they even took upon themselves to strew golden stars over the white toga of the Christ in one of the Raphael tapestries), and deepen or diminish the scale

* Charles Blanc, "Catalogue de la Collection de S. A. le Duc de Berwick et d'Albe," p. 21.

† The "Presentation in the Temple," in M. Escosura's collection, was woven in nineteen colours; the "Apocalypse" of Angers had twenty-four; for the "Virgin Glorified," in the Davillier collection, forty-one colours, including the gold, were required; for the "Story of Vulcan," fifty; and for the "Hunting of Maximilian," eighty-three. (Darcel: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," pp. 428—430, vol. ii., 1876.)

of colours. If proof of this be needed, the cherry reds and the lemon yellows lavished on so great a number of tapestries may be examined. It is difficult, perhaps, to believe that Giulio Romano, the designer of the cartoons of the "History of Romulus," lavished on them the vivid colours seen in the hanging. Moreover, the same method, the same reds and yellows, are again found in the "History of Moses" in the Chartres Museum, and in the "Festivities of Henry II." in the Egyptian Museum at Florence. Here, then, are three sets, of different origin, which exhibit similar tendencies. More than this is not required to show how great was the latitude left to the tapestry workers.

The principles which directed this work of reproduction may be formulated as follows:—"The lights must rarely be of the same colour as the shade; yellow should dominate, especially in foliage and flowers, so as to impress the stamp of unity on the whole. The lights which are not yellow should generally be uncoloured; half-tones being, so to speak, merely a modified extension of light, it is by means of shade that the objects obtain their colour."*

The changes which took place in the composition of borders at the period which now occupies us deserve, we think, profound study. We have seen, in the preceding chapters, that until the end of the fifteenth century the borders, generally very narrow, were invariably adorned with white and black grapes,

* Darcel : "Les Tapisseries décoratives du Garde Meuble.

pears, apples, and different fruits, alternating with flowers of all sorts—roses, lilies, anemones—to which they were usually fastened with ribbons. The first advance was the introduction into these garlands of birds of many-coloured plumage; then nude children were added to the birds, and sometimes also emblems (as in the "Baptism of Christ" and "Entombment," in the Alva collection), without, however, altering the general composition.

The Italians were the first who saw the necessity for giving more importance to that which was in reality the framework of the composition. The revolution which was attempted in the fifteenth century by the designer of the hanging which represents Cæsar receiving the head of Pompey, was consummated by Raphael, who, in the borders of the "Acts of the Apostles," has displayed all his animation, all the richness of his imagination, united with the most perfect feeling of decorative fitness. These borders are a whole world in themselves, the subjects sometimes displaying the calm grandeur of an antique bas-relief, and sometimes springing forth and multiplying like sparks of fireworks. The master has crowded them with the noblest figures—the Fates, the Hours, the Seasons, Hercules supporting the terrestrial globe—as well as with designs of exquisite grace: terminals, satyrs, grotesques, a lion reposing under a laurel branch, vases of flowers of admirable outline, streamers, coats of arms, the loveliest productions of nature, and the most beautiful inventions of art.

How numerous are the marvels which we owe to

the initiative of Sanzio! The introduction of grotesques into tapestry doubled the domain of this art; the border given up to the imagination of the painter re-established the decorative element in its proper place, which was too often disputed by historical painting. But for the example of Raphael the admirable decorative tapestries of the Fontainebleau school, and the no less beautiful arabesques of the Audrans and Bérains, those unrivalled masters of decoration, would probably never have been created.

The Italians at once understood the scope of this invention; they attached so much importance to it that they generally entrusted the drawing of the borders to special artists. Unfortunately the intelligence of these artists did not always equal the good intentions of their patrons. In the borders of "The History of Joseph" the figures project into the chief hanging; and the effect is as unpleasant as that produced by the modelling of Primaticcio, intended to serve as a frame to the frescoes of Rosso, in the gallery of Francis I. at Fontainebleau. In many other sets the painters of borders selected the most common subjects, such as fishes, crustaceans, or vegetables. Nevertheless, in the hands of men of taste, the new element was bound to produce, and did produce, innumerable masterpieces.

The Flemings adopted these borders with figures or grotesques from the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The border of the beautiful series ordered, in 1518, for the decoration of the chapel of Our Lady of Sablon at Brussels, by François de Taxis,

is adorned with streamers, medallions, nude sprites, and cornucopias. The "Susannah and the Elders," in the South Kensington Museum, is surrounded with escutcheons and scrolls, amidst which are large birds on the wing. In the "History of the Virgin," in Rheims Cathedral (finished in 1530), cherubim alternate with fleurs-de-lis. Ere long no workshop in Brussels of any importance was without a more or less extensive selection of cartoons for borders. Fragments about a foot high, each containing some allegorical figure, were frequently made use of; and by putting these fragments tastefully together immense variety could be obtained. In this manner the same subject could supply two, or even four, figures for each side of a hanging. Some of the tapestry workers, jealous of their reputation, reproduced these fragments of cartoons as counterparts, so that the figures formed pairs, instead of all turning in the same direction (see the figure of Hope in the "Acts of the Apostles" at Madrid). We have examples of these in the "Story of Romulus," to which we shall refer later, and in the "Gathering of Manna," in the Chartres Museum: each contains a heifer and a serpent with the inscription, "pro lacte venenum." The "Fates" and the "Hours" of Raphael were utilised in their turn in the border of a hanging of the second half of the sixteenth century, representing the chief festivities of Henry II. and Catherine de Medici (Egyptian Museum at Florence).

In France the most elegant borders, adorned with genii, stags' heads, quivers, masks, and various

emblems, are seen in the "History of Diana," executed in the Fontainebleau workshop in the reign of Henry II.

The manufacture, which now remains to be considered, naturally felt the reaction of the revolution effected in style. With a few exceptions, we have hitherto found the execution of the cartoons and that of the tapestries carried on in the same district. But in the sixteenth century all became changed : Leo X., by having the cartoons painted at Rome by Raphael and woven in Flanders, set an example that had but too many followers. From this time, with the exception of the tapestries manufactured at Fontainebleau, at La Trinité, and at a few second-rate French workshops, and with the further exception of those worked in Ferrara, Florence, and a few other Italian cities, it was Brussels that executed all the grand sets famous in the estimation of contemporaries ; Italy held the monopoly of design, and Brussels that of manufacture.

This omnipotence being admitted, it is fitting that we should begin our review of the chief workshops of the tapestry of this period with the old Flemish capital.

We can, however, only establish in a general way the prosperity of the Brussels workshops ; we are unfortunately acquainted with but few details as to their number and organisation. But the following facts conclusively prove their numerical importance :—In 1521, eighteen tapestry workers bore torches in the procession which went to receive Christian II., King of Denmark ; and in 1544, thirty-six were numbered in the cortège sent to receive the Queen of France,

Eleanor of Austria : the corporations of the butchers and the mercers alone were more numerously represented.*

During the whole of the sixteenth century the municipality sought to secure by wise regulations the prosperity of a trade which contributed in so great a degree to the national wealth. Thus it was that in 1525, in consequence of numerous complaints, an edict was promulgated forbidding the manufacturers of tapestries worth upwards of twelve pence an ell, to add the heads, noses, eyes, mouths, &c., by means of liquid substances. Another article in the same edict perpetuated the ownership of the cartoons, and stipulated that no person should copy or imitate the models, "either of historical or other subjects," which had already been executed by another master.

A few years later, in 1528, the corporation issued a still more important edict, one which marks an epoch in the history of Brussels manufacture. It ordained that thenceforth every piece of more than six ells manufactured in the town should have in the lower part the name of the maker or that of the person who had ordered it on one side, and an escutcheon flanked by two B's on the other. This explains the origin of this latter mark, so frequently seen, which has given rise to so many suppositions. M. Wauters, from whose work we borrow these details, adds that the figure 4 reversed, accompanied by letters, which is found on the selvage of so many

* Wauters, p. 132.

tapestries, indicates that the piece was made either for a dealer, or by a weaver who traded in tapestries.*

In 1544, a celebrated edict of Charles V. perpetuated and generalised these measures. The following regulations may be noticed in it: "It is forbidden to manufacture tapestries outside of Brussels, Louvain, Anvers, Bruges, Oudenarde, Alost, Enghien, Binche, Ath, Lille, Tournay, and other free towns where the craft is organised and regulated by ordinances. In pieces worth more than twenty-four sous an ell, the warp should be of the worsted thread of Lyons, of Spain, or of Arragon, of spun thread, or of similar material, thoroughly cleaned and dyed in fast colours. Each cloth should be in one single piece." The clause continued, "The master-worker making, or causing to be made, such a tapestry, is bound to have his mark or ensign worked in one of the corners at the base of the said tapestry; and, near to this, such ensigns as the town shall order, so that, by means of these ensigns and marks, the work shall be known to be of that town and made by that master, and to be worth twenty-four patards, or more, the ell."

During the first quarter of the sixteenth century, Brussels, and the workshops of the neighbourhood, which, at this period, it is impossible to distinguish from those of the metropolis—(the celebrated Brussels mark, the double B, only arose, as we have seen, in 1528)—continued to produce a long series of hangings, which

* Wauters, p. 150.



CH. COUTZILLER. OEL

FIG. 38.—COMBAT OF THE VIRTUES AND VICES.
Flemish Tapestry of the beginning of the Sixteenth Century. (In the collection of Baron Erlanger.)

are reckoned amongst the most perfect masterpieces of textile art, one is tempted to say of painting. The warmth of colouring and skill of grouping equal the dazzling richness of the material; melancholy and quiet, qualities that occasionally recall Quentin Matsys, alternate in them with a thoroughly French vivacity, as in the delightful hanging of Rheims Cathedral, so full of surprises, which relates in seventeen pieces the life of the Virgin, and brings the most graceful and spiritual-looking women before our eyes. The ingenious and picturesque allegories, the "Triumphs of Petrarch," and the "Combat of the Virtues and the Vices," succeed Crucifixions, Descents from the Cross, and the Entombments, as full of pathos as the pictures of Roger van der Weyden. Then, woven with the same perfection, we have hangings, religious in subject, but thoroughly secular in the sentiment which inspired them: St. John, surrounded by the prettiest women of Brussels or of Bruges, whom he teaches; Salome, daintily receiving the head of the martyr. . . . Fifty, sixty, eighty, even a hundred figures move (says Charles Blanc, speaking of the tapestries in the Duke of Alva's collection) in the sets, in which, even in the scene of the Last Judgment, the elegant ladies have donned their prettiest dresses, their jewels, and their most beautiful ornaments, in order, doubtless, to beguile the Supreme Judge, or His young seraphim.*

* M. A. Michiels attributes to Jan de Mabuse such of these hangings as were preserved in the Alva collection, the "Creation of the

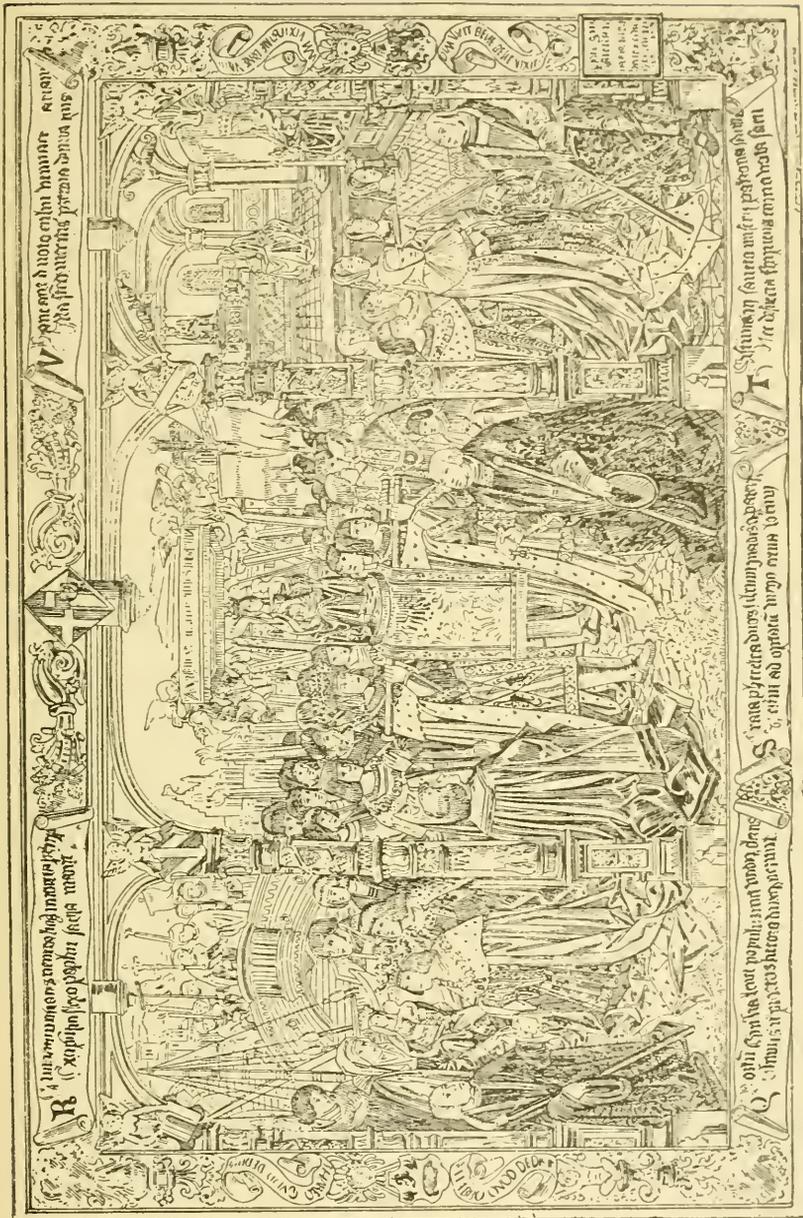


FIG. 39. — HISTORY OF THE MIRACULOUS STATUE OF OUR LADY OF SABLON, AT BRUSSELS.
 Brussels Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (Spitzer Collection.)

The iconographical element, to which the painters of the Brussels cartoons from time to time had recourse, could but add another charm to these still half Gothic suites. One of the most curious hangings in this style is the "History of the Miraculous Statue of Our Lady of Sablon," ordered in 1518 by François de Taxis, postmaster of the Empire, now exhibited in the collection of M. Spitzer;* in it clearness of style and exuberance of life vie with richness of costume, variety of ornament, and vividness of colouring. Nothing can be more full of vitality than the heroes of this pious legend, chiefly portraits of irreproachable accuracy, such as the Emperor Maximilian, Charles V., and François de Taxis; nothing more brilliant or more harmonious than its tone, in which reds mingled with gold, blues fading to white, and greens crossed with yellowish lights, predominate. One forgets the prolixity of the narration under the charm of these true and natural figures, introduced without effort in a composition inspired by legend far more than by history.

It was at this time, however, that Brussels received the order for the celebrated series which would alone

World," the "Combat of the Virtues and the Vices," the "Scenes from the Scriptures," and the "Last Judgment." He adds that they were manufactured before 1508, and that they long adorned the Chateau of Duerstede, the property of Philip of Burgundy, illegitimate son of Philip the Good, and Bishop of Utrecht. ("Le Constitutionnel," 4th April, 1877.)

* See "La Gazette des Beaux-Arts," 2nd period. vol. xxiii., pp. 389 *et seq.*

suffice to immortalise its workshops, and which exercised so great an influence on the development of tapestry. This series was ordered about 1515 by the refined and magnificent Mæcenas, who gave his name to the sixteenth century; we speak of Leo X. and the "Acts of the Apostles." My researches show* that the tapestry worker to whom the Pope entrusted this memorable work was one Peter van Aelst. The choice of an artist so little known seems at first surprising; but if we collect the hitherto scattered information, we obtain the assurance that Master, or rather Messire Peter van Aelst was unquestionably, during upwards of thirty years, the prince of Flemish tapestry workers. From 1504 he bore the envied title of *valet-de-chambre* and weaver to the Archduke Philippe le Beau, which functions were retained under his son, Charles V. Leo X., in his turn, nominated him Pontifical tapestry weaver, in which post he was confirmed by Clement VII.

The cartoons entrusted to Van Aelst were ten in number: the "Miraculous Draught of Fishes," "Christ's Charge to Peter," "Peter and Paul at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple," the "Death of Ananias," the "Stoning of Stephen," the "Conversion of Paul," "Elymas the Sorcerer struck Blind," the "Sacrifice at Lystra," "Paul in his Dungeon at Philippi," "Paul Preaching at Athens"; they measure, including the borders, about five yards high, by over forty-two long.

* See "Tapisseries italiennes," pp. 19-30, 87-88, and "Raphaël, sa vie, son œuvre et son temps," pp. 475 *et seq.* By Eng. Müntz.

The weaving of the "Acts of the Apostles" does not appear to have occupied more than from three to four years. Begun about 1515, the series was completed at the end of the year 1519. This remarkable promptitude shows that the Brussels workshops in the sixteenth century were better organised than the Gobelins in the seventeenth; indeed, upwards of ten years were needed to execute the splendid hanging known as the "History of the King," the dimensions of which do not differ much from those of the "Acts of the Apostles." The Pope, moreover, spared no expense; the interpretation of the cartoons into tapestry cost him no less than 15,000 golden ducats (that is, 1,500 ducats each), about £30,000 at the present rate of money. The purchase of gold thread probably absorbed the largest share of this sum. Raphael had received 100 ducats (£200) for each cartoon.

The work manufactured under the direction of Peter van Aelst shows the progress made by the Brussels tapestry weavers in the art of reproducing designs executed in a style diametrically opposed to that of the Flemish school. Though using their liberty to substitute one shade for another, to transpose, to transform, and to interpret, they strove to respect the character of the originals, to bring to light the grand simplicity of the drawing of Sanzio, the eloquence of his gestures and the suavity of his expressions; only at great intervals do we detect Flemish reminiscences. No doubt the precaution taken by Leo X. to associate Bernard

van Orley, a disciple of the Raphael school, with



FIG. 40. — PETER AND JOHN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE.
After Raphael. Brussels Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (At the Vatican.)

GEORGE LAMUCK.

Van Aelst contributed largely towards this result.

When the "Acts of the Apostles" were exhibited for the first time in the Sistine Chapel, on the 26th December, 1519, they called forth inexpressible admiration. All in the chapel, says a contemporary, were astonished at the sight of these hangings, the unanimous opinion being that nothing more beautiful existed in the universe. Thirty years later the father of the history of art, Vasari—a connoisseur of accurate and refined taste—lavished no less ardent and sincere praise on the work of Peter van Aelst. "One is astonished," says he, "at the sight of this series; its execution is marvellous. One can hardly imagine how it was possible, with simple threads, to produce such delicacy in the hair and beards, and to express the suppleness of flesh. It is a work more God-like than human; the waters, the animals, and the habitations, are so perfectly represented, that they appear painted with a brush, and not woven."

We often speak of the destinies reserved for books: *habent sua fata libelli*. The tapestries of Leo X. have also experienced strange adventures. On the death of the Pope, in 1521, they were pawned for the sum of 5,000 ducats; in 1527, at the time of the execrable sack of Rome, several of them were stolen, one of them even cut to pieces. These wrecks, two of which were stranded in Constantinople, only re-entered the Vatican through the efforts of the Constable de Montmorency. After the entry of the French troops into Rome, at the end of the last century, the whole series was bought by a com-

pany of brokers, and exhibited in the Louvre in 1798.



Pro. M. G. G. G.

FIG. 41.—CHILDREN AT PLAY.

After Giovanni da Udine. (The drawing is preserved in the Rennes Museum.)

In the first years of this century Pope Pius VII.

succeeded in regaining the tapestries for the Vatican, where they resumed their place in 1808. They have not since quitted it.

With the exception of three, the original cartoons remained at Brussels, until in 1630 Charles I. of England, thanks to the initiative of Rubens, acquired them. They were used by Van Aelst, or by his associates, to execute new sets, urgently demanded by the chief sovereigns of Europe. Several of these sets still exist; those of the Royal Palace of Madrid, of the Berlin Museum, and of the Palace of Mantua (now at Vienna) and the Cathedral of Lorette, are cited as being amongst the most perfect.

The "Acts of the Apostles" are not the only tapestries manufactured for the Pontifical court by Peter van Aelst. The "Scenes in the Life of Christ," exhibited near them in the Vatican, are also from his workshop. We lay no stress on this hanging, which is not remarkable either for beauty of composition or for delicacy of weaving; it is enough to say that it was ordered by Leo X., who commissioned the pupils of Raphael to design the cartoons, with the help of a few sketches left by the master, and that it was completed under the reign of Clement VII., about 1530.

It was possibly also from Van Aelst that Leo X. ordered two other sets of tapestry that were famous for a long time—"Children at Play," from the cartoons of Giovanni da Udine, or more probably of Giulio Romano and of Francesco Penni, and "Grotesques." Eight pieces of the series of "Children at Play"

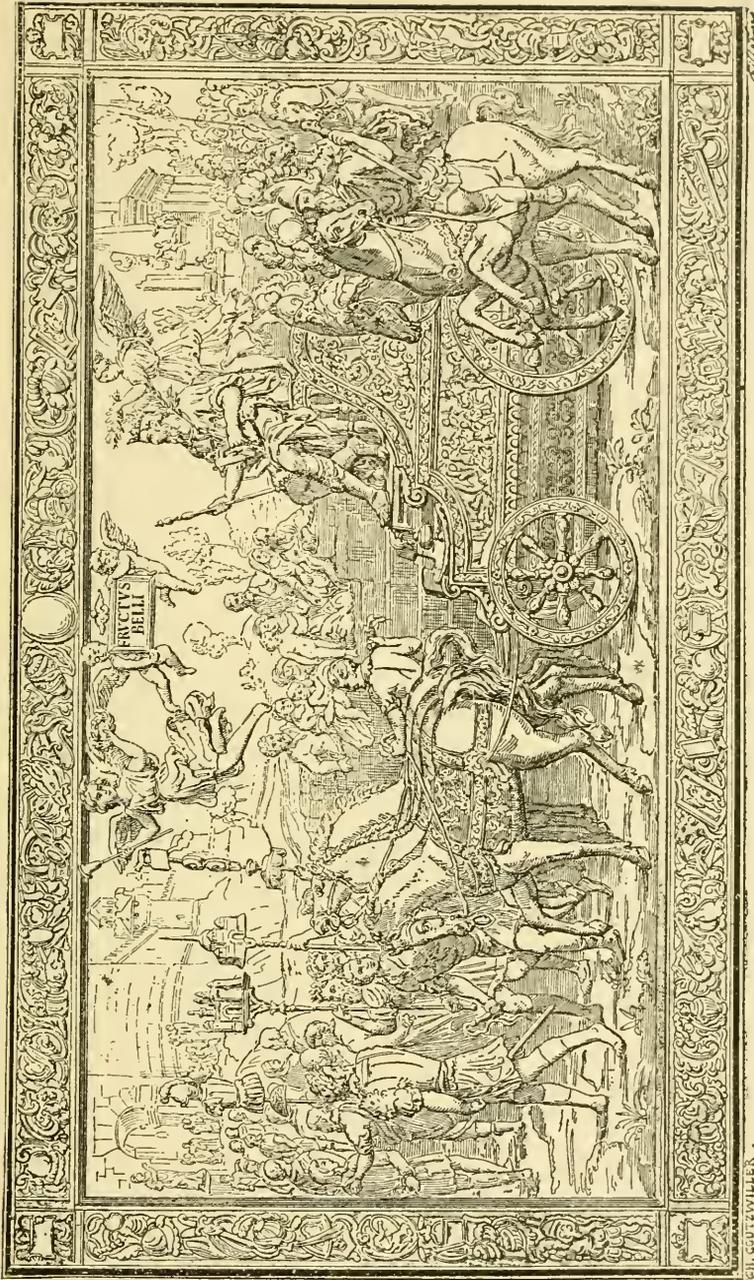


FIG. 42.—FRUCTUS BELLI: THE TRIUMPH.
After Giulio Romano (in the Garde Meuble.)

(copies of the seventeenth century) are now in Paris, in the possession of the Princess Mathilde. As for the "Grotesques," all our efforts to find them have hitherto proved vain.

The initiative taken by Leo X., and the success of Van Aelst's undertaking, exercised a decisive influence on Brussels manufacture. The traditional style disappeared more and more, and the Renaissance spirit effected a visible transformation in the domain of tapestry, in which the principles of the Middle Ages had, until now, dominated. It is to be regretted that this revolution was not effected under the auspices of Raphael, who on so many occasions showed how strongly decorative feeling was developed within him, but under those of his harsh and violent pupil, Giulio Romano. The number of cartoons for tapestry composed by Giulio Romano and his pupils is prodigious. We cite, to begin with, the "Great History of Scipio," in twenty-two pieces, the "Little History of Scipio," in ten pieces, the "Fructus Belli," in eight pieces, the "Story of Lucretia," the "Triumphs of Bacchus," the "Story of Orpheus," the "Grotesques," in ten pieces, the "Grotesque Months," in twelve pieces (with mythological figures in the centre), the "Rape of the Sabines," the "Combat of the Titans and the Gods," the "History of Romulus and Remus,"* the "Story of Moses," &c.

In spite of many defects, several of these composi-

* This hanging, composed of four pieces, was bought in Flanders, in 1543, by Cardinal Hippolyte d'Este, Archbishop of Milan. It now belongs to M. Léon Gauchez.

tions, especially the "History of Scipio," compel our admiration by the grand outlines of their figures and

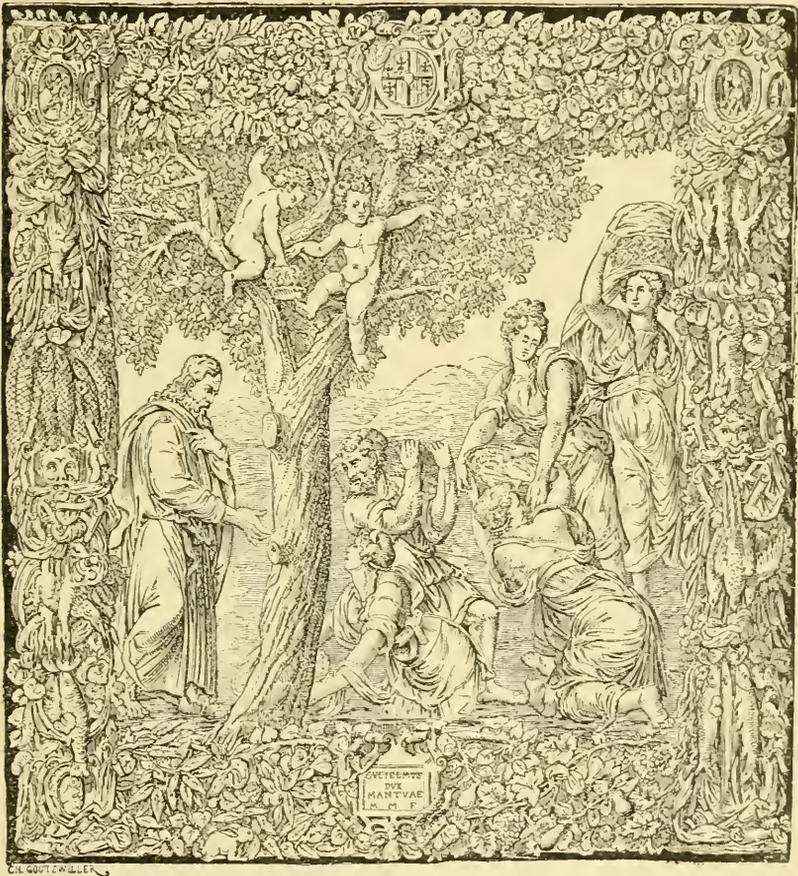


FIG. 43.—THE ISRAELITES GATHERING MANNA.
Giulio Romano School.
Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (Milan Cathedral.)

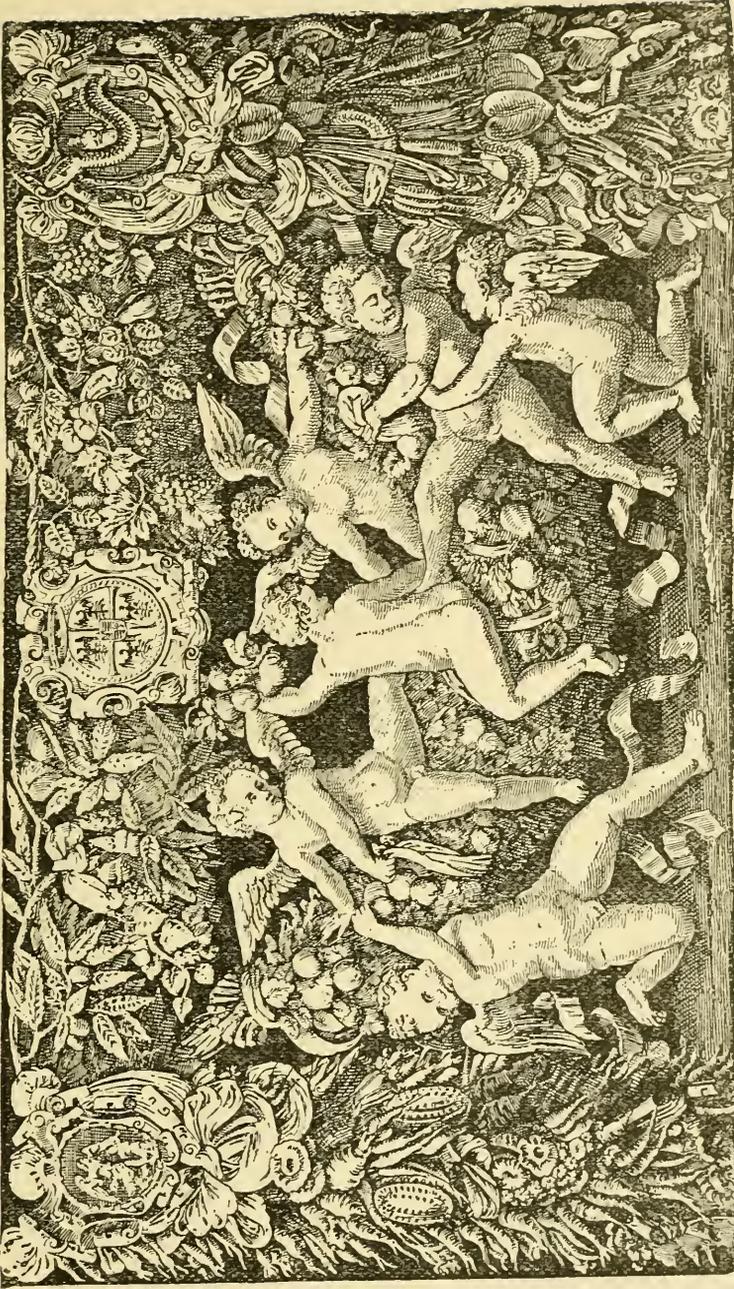
by the richness of the accessories. That which represents a conqueror in his chariot, though not to be compared with the celebrated cartoons of Mantegna

portraying the "Triumph of Julius Cæsar," combines a feeling for rhythm with stately breadth. The two women in the middle plane of the "Israelites gathering Manna" move us by their exquisite grace. And how animated is the band of nude children! (See fig. 43.) If indeed the severe historians of painting had condescended to inspect these compositions, so long condemned to obscurity and considered unworthy the attention of connoisseurs as works of decorative art, they would have found in them many beauties that may be vainly looked for in the celebrated frescoes of the master at the Palace du Té.

The "Loves of Vertumnus and Pomona" (a subject which has also been reproduced in the Ferrara workshop) are, like the preceding hangings, the product of the united work of an Italian painter and Flemish weavers. Bought at Antwerp by Charles V. before the year 1546, this superb set now adorns the royal palace of Madrid. In it we admire the happy mingling of the human figure and ornaments with the landscape, a balance which leaves nothing to be desired, as well as a just feeling for decoration.

The "History of Vulcan" (in five pieces, exhibited at the Palais de l'Industrie, in 1876, by the Central Union*) may vie, in charm of colouring and in supreme distinction, with the "Loves of Vertumnus and Pomona." Like these, it bears in the highest degree the stamp of Italian genius (it offers most

* Engraved in "L'Art," 1881, vol. iii., p. 241, vol. iv., p. 26.



CH. SOUTHWILLE

FIG. 44.—A BAND OF CHILDREN.
Giulio Romano School, Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (Milan Cathedral.)

resemblance to the Ferrara school), and like these it yields a large space to landscape. The designer, in his wish to secure for his heroes a frame worthy of them, may not perhaps have sufficiently massed his composition, may not have given enough depth to his groups; when studying the divinities that fill the scene—the Three Graces dancing to the sound of Pan's pipe, Jupiter preparing to hurl his thunder, Cupid and Neptune interceding with Vulcan in favour of Mars and Venus—we regret that the painter did not increase the number of these admirable figures.

The "Story of Psyche," formerly composed of twenty-six pieces, but now much reduced, is worthy in all respects to be ranked with the masterpieces we have just enumerated. It appears, at first sight, to be connected with the sketches of Raphael, arranged and completed by Michael Coxcie, and engraved by him; thus the scene in which the old woman tells the story of the ass to Psyche is almost identical in the engraving and in the tapestry.* But on examining more closely, we find that the artist charged with the execution of the cartoons soon abandoned a too literal imitation to give scope to his own powers. Though respecting the spirit of his model, and preserving the half serious, half playful character of the

* Amongst the six pieces of the "Story of Psyche," preserved at the Château de Pau, there is one which also reproduces line for line one of the engravings of the master: "Psyche in the Temple of Ceres." See Rahlenbeck: "Les Tapisseries des Rois de Navarre," p. 41, Ghent, 1868; and A. Gorse: "Etude sur les Tapisseries du Château de Pau," p. 10. (Pau, 1881.)



FIG. 45.—HISTORY OF VULCAN: THE THREE GRACES.
 Brussels Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (M. Jourdain's Collection.)

narrative, he undertook to create an individual work, and in this he succeeded. Honest Félibien, nearly two hundred years ago, asked, and with good reason, what pictures could compare with the "Story of Psyche." On discovering this hanging at the palace of Fontainebleau, on which no one appears to have cast a glance since the seventeenth century, I stood astonished before so much grace and delicacy. One does not know which to admire most, the perfect beauty of the youth standing, a lyre in his hand, in the picture which represents Venus sitting at table; the skilfully balanced arrangement of the bearers and players of fifes in the scene of the unveiling of Psyche; or the touching attitude of the latter, a ewer in her hand, as she approaches Venus, whom she cannot succeed in moving.

The tapestry weavers entrusted with the interpretation of the cartoons of the "Story of Psyche" performed their task with extraordinary care and devotion. The faces beam with freshness and beauty; the costumes reproduce the rich brocades and satins of the epoch; gold is lavishly bestowed, and the colouring unites vividness with softness. The blue and green tones, yellowish in the lights, and the crimson red tones, as warm as they are luminous, will be especially noticed.

Our own epoch, in consequence of one of those sudden changes so frequent in the history of fashion, has set itself to bring to light, often by most costly processes of reproduction, a mass of mediocre or insignificant tapestries, which it would, perhaps, have

better to have been left in oblivion. We point out the "History of Psyche" to enterprising publishers. Let us hope that it may not have long to wait for the reinstatement it deserves!

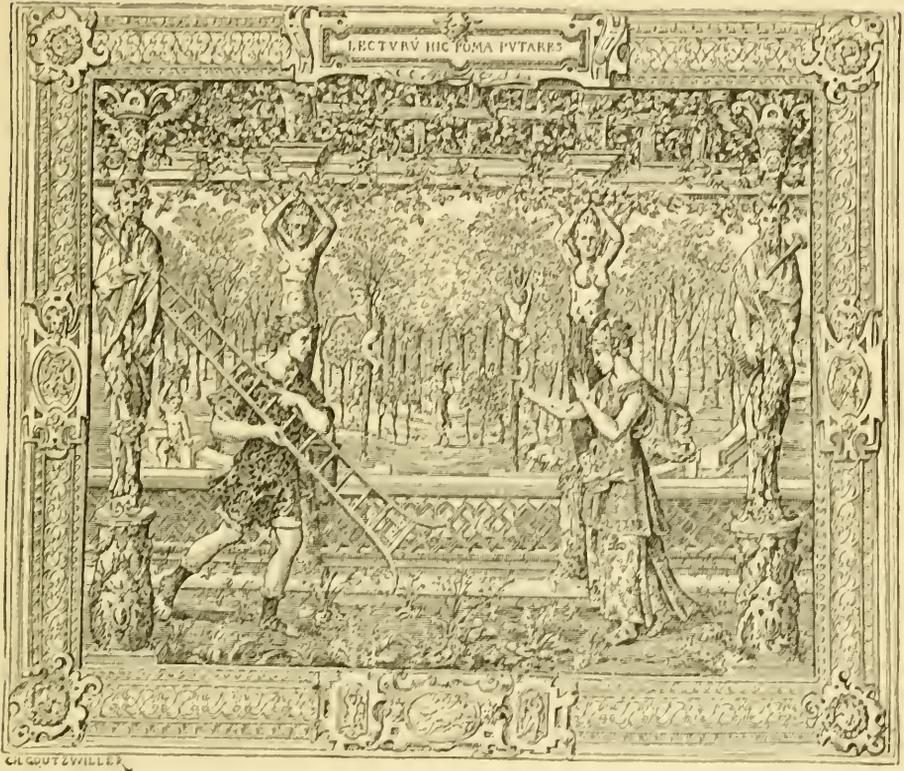


FIG. 46.—VERTUMNUS AND POMONA.
Brussels Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (Madrid Museum.)

So much cannot be said for a piece manufactured at Brussels, the "Story of Moses," now preserved in the Chartres Museum. This hanging, which, according to Félibien, was executed from drawings designed

by Raphael for the Loggia, is not remarkable either for interest of composition or for beauty of colouring, as might be seen in 1876, when the piece was exhibited at the Palais de l'Industrie. Since that time it has been frequently shown.

Among the sets manufactured in Brussels from Italian cartoons, we may also mention the "Triumphs of the Gods," woven by François Geubels (three pieces preserved in the National Garde Meuble*), the "Arabesques" or "Grotesque Months," after Giulio Romano, having mythological figures in the centre (in the National Garde Meuble), and a hanging entitled the "Poesies," but really representing scenes from mythology or from Grecian history; also, the "Sacrifice of Polyxena," "Apollo and Marsyas," "Icarus," "Perseus and Andromeda," &c. This last series, worthy to vie with the most beautiful pieces of the "History of Vertumnus and Pomona," is at Madrid. It has been photographed by M. Laurent.

Side by side with hangings executed from Italian cartoons, a few must be cited which are wholly Flemish in design as well in manufacture. The composer of the most celebrated of these sets, the "Grand Hunts of Guise or of Maximilian," formerly attributed to Albert Dürer, was Bernard van Orley,† that

* Published by MM. Darcel and Guichard in "Les Tapisseries décoratives du Garde Meuble." The composition of this series has frequently been attributed to Mantegna, and some of the distinctive characteristics of his school are certainly displayed in it.

† See the interesting work of M. A. Wauters: "Bernard van Orley, sa Famille et son Œuvre," Brussels, 1881.

pupil of Raphael's who was engaged to superintend the reproduction in tapestry of his teacher's masterpiece. But what a change since then! "Quantum mutatus ab illo!"

This clever Flemish artist unlearnt the style with which he had so laboriously familiarised himself, and returned to his ancient gods. There is no longer a trace of lofty historical or philosophical thoughts, or of the pursuit of grand art; he reproduces the types, the costumes, and the landscape of his native land, such as they appear before him, without dreaming of placing his characters amid more ideal surroundings, or making the slightest effort to develop a feeling of abstraction. His "Hunts" are historical documents, topographical abstracts of marvellous exactitude. We are indebted to a happy chance if we here and there encounter a few sympathetic figures or a picturesque arrangement, as in the "Outlet on the Pool." The artist, we may be quite sure, was innocent of that which he would have considered a betrayal of his art. His disdain of the art of grouping—that science which dominated all others in the studio of Raphael—makes him even forget the laws of perspective. Close to the hunters in the foreground, who are ordinarily of colossal dimensions, are seen personages almost microscopic in size. The composition of the figures is thoroughly improbable. In a hanging five or six yards long, the foreground is only occupied by one single figure, often that of a common huntsman, while the chief actors are banished to the background. I do not speak of the exaggera-

tion of action, of the hideousness of the monstrous dogs and deformed horses ; a word will suffice to exhaust the discussion. Let the "Grand Hunts of Maximilian" at the Fontainebleau Palace be compared with the admirable "Hunts of Louis XV.," by Oudry, exhibited in a neighbouring room. Nothing further is needed to emphasise the faults of Van Orley's work.

It must be added that the tapestry weaver had nothing to do with this ; he reproduced with consummate art the cartoons presented to him. "The hanging (says a competent judge) is very compact in pattern and admirable in execution. . . Its colouring is composed of eighty-three different tints, which are divided into twenty-two series, each of them comprising from two to five tones ; that is, there are only five modulations of the same blue or of the same yellowish-green—the first used in the costumes and harness, the second in the same costumes and the foliage—and two shades of normal yellow and red, the first for the light parts of the whole composition, and the second for the coloured parts of the dresses. The few colours, mixed one with the other by the weaver so as to produce light and shade, are distributed everywhere, giving unity to the whole piece, in which indeed the light is almost entirely yellow. In short, the colours, being the lightest in the chromatic scale, are not only the most durable, but give greater brilliancy to the whole."*

* Darcel : "Les Tapisseries décoratives du Garde Meuble."

Contempt of the heroic style and a tendency towards precision predominate in another celebrated hanging, also designed in a spirit of opposition to the principles of the Renaissance: we refer to the "Conquest of Tunis" (at Madrid), executed for Charles V. from cartoons by Jan Vermay or Vermeyen, of Beverwyck, near Haarlem.* The details of the manufacture of this gigantic work have been preserved, and are worth placing before our readers. The tapestry worker, William de Pannemaker, who was entrusted with its manufacture in 1549, undertook to make use of the silks of Granada only and the very finest wools, and to employ, for the woof, the thread of Lyons alone, the best and the most carefully selected that could be found, without regard to cost. The emperor himself was to supply the gold and silver thread. In accordance with the terms of the contract, Pannemaker received five hundred and fifty-nine pounds one ounce of silks, dyed and spun at Granada, where an agent of Charles V. lived during two years, seven months, and twenty-five days, in order to superintend the operation. The silks supplied cost 6,637 florins, without including the cost of maintaining the agent; they comprised nineteen colours, each of which had from three to seven shades; one hundred and sixty pounds of fine silk were spoilt in endeavouring to obtain one especial blue colour. Pannemaker, on his side, as soon as this delivery was completed, employed

* A replica of this hanging, woven at Brussels in the eighteenth century by Josse de Vos, is now at the Imperial Palace of Schoenbrunn, near Vienna. (*Kunstchronik*, 1874, Nos. 20, 21, article by M. Ilg.)

without intermission seven workmen on each of the pieces of the "Conquest of Tunis," that is, eighty-four workers in all. As soon as a piece was finished, he submitted it for the approval of the jurors or seniors of the craft, who were empowered to point out the alterations to be made. The execution of the work occupied a little more than five years, and was completed in 1554; the entire hanging measured 1,246 ells, which, at the price of 12 florins an ell, made a total of 14,952 florins. The artist was to have in addition a life annuity of 100 florins, if the emperor were satisfied with his work.*

Another hanging of Pannemaker's, the "Victories of the Duke of Alva,"† proves that the style of composition we have lately alluded to was long held in high esteem in Flanders. This style—we state the fact without hazarding either approbation or censure—is to the heroic what chronicles are to history; it interests by the minuteness of the details, not by superiority of design or grandeur of sentiment. Charles Blanc, an eminent art theorist of the time, has very well elucidated that which is living and interesting in these narratives derived from nature:—

* See "Les Tapisseries représentant la Conquête du Royaume de Thunes par l'Empereur Charles Quint," of M. Houdoy, Lille, 1873, and "Les Tapisseries bruxelloises," of M. Wauters, pp. 76, 77.

† We preserve the name by which this hanging is generally known, but warn the reader that M. A. Michiels has claimed it, with great appearance of truth, for Ferdinand I., King of the Romans. It represents, according to the historian of Flemish painting, the Expedition of Charles V. against Frederick the Magnanimous. See "Le Constitutionnel" for April 4, 1877.

“One may spend hours,” says he, “looking at the



GR. GOUTZWILLER.

FIG. 47.—THE LUCAS MONTHS : THE MONTH OF JANUARY.

Tapestry manufactured at the Gobelins during the Seventeenth Century,
from a Cartoon of the Sixteenth Century.

(Collection of Madame Masselin.)

numberless details in the tapestries woven in honour
of the Duke of Alba : the encampment and the man-

œuvres of the troops, the cavalry and the standards, the batteries of cannon and the ground strewn with dead, foot-soldiers in flight, squadrons routed, the passage of a river defended by artillery, the picturesque disorder of the vanquished in contrast with the regularity of the battalions under arms which have not yet engaged, with here and there incidental groups, reiters who interrogate the country women, and officers who admire them. Even the borders are interesting, more so, for example, than the engravings of La Belle and of Callot, because in them are represented in colour all that follows or accompanies the march of an army; baggage-waggons, provisions, pack-horses yoked to carts or dragging the gun-carriages, prisoners, peasants forced to carry the booty, and women who travel in company with the crippled soldiers and the waggon-drivers. This train of figures and of carts, however, only fills the lower frieze of the tapestry. The vertical part of the border is enlivened with pictures intended to divert the attention for a moment. These consist of winged animals, quadrupeds, serpents, landscapes with bridges and turrets, villages, and woodland."

Another celebrated hanging, the honour of which is assigned to a Flemish painter, is the "Lucas Months," long incorrectly believed to be by Lucas van Leyden, and frequently copied at the Gobelins.

The Brussels manufacture declined visibly during the second half of the sixteenth century; deterioration of taste was a consequence of the intestine

troubles and bloody persecutions of the time. The familiarity and honesty of intention which had lent

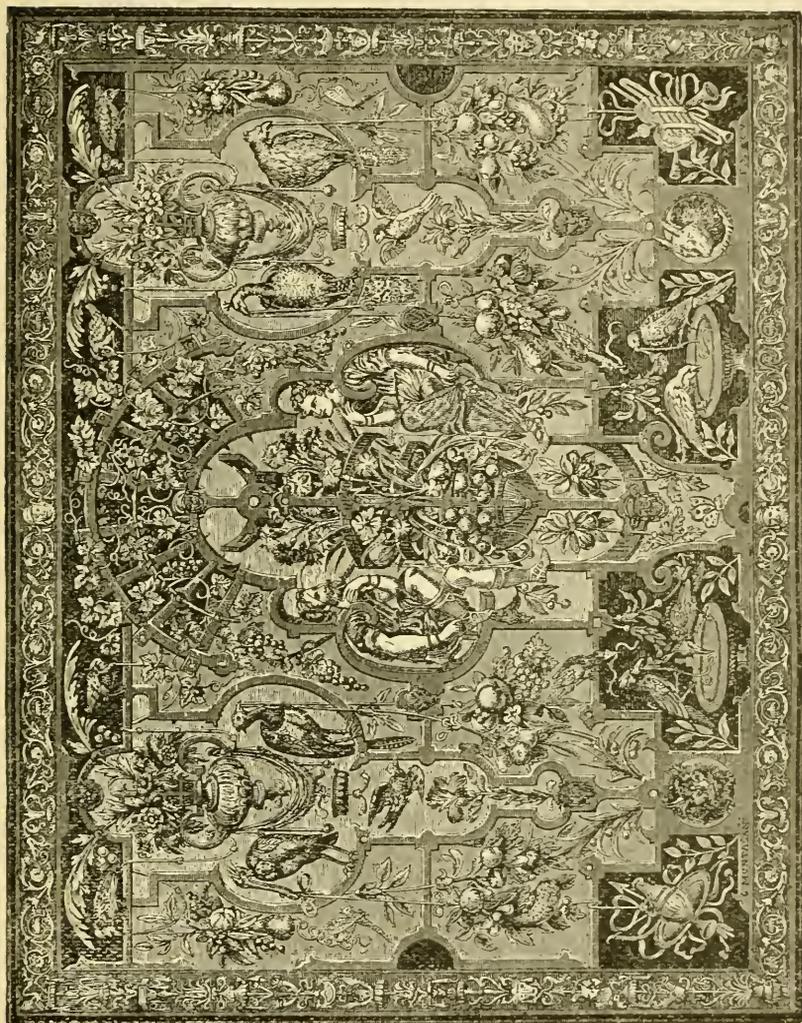


FIG. 48.—GROTESQUES.
Tapestry of the middle of the Sixteenth Century. (Baron Rothschild's collection.)

such charm to the Flemish tapestries of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance disappeared for ever ;

and were not replaced, as might have been expected, by that distinction, that loftiness and exquisite grace, which, thanks to the teaching of Italy, characterised the French Renaissance. Heaviness and vulgarity were the distinctive traits of the cartoons of this epoch; and these defects were increased by a more and more hasty execution, more and more expeditious processes. The extended use made at this time of the method styled "low-warp" is undeniably established.* Instead of the delightful garlands of flowers and fruit of the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, we find only borders of pumpkins, turnips, and onions, intermixed with allegorical figures, as commonplace as they are incorrect. The fabric lost its delicacy, the colouring its vividness and its harmony. Brussels tapestry continued to vegetate for a considerable time, but from this moment it lost its superiority.

It is but imperfectly known what share Ghent and Antwerp had in the development of tapestry. We can only form conjectures as to the success maintained by the first of these towns, where tapestry workers are made mention of as early as 1302. Antwerp was a great commercial warehouse rather than a centre of important production. We find the Antwerp merchants, from the fifteenth century onwards, exporting tapestries in all directions, and this commerce became so extensive in the sixteenth cen-

* We shall see later that this style of work was executed one-third quicker than that of the "high-warp," and was paid for at about half price at the Gobelins, under Louis XIV.

tury that a special gallery was devoted to tapes-



FIG. 49.—THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

Flemish Tapestry of the end of the Sixteenth Century. (Belonging to M. Levy.)

tries on sale. M. Wauters, from whom we have borrowed these details, adds that the tapestries

manufactured in Antwerp long affected a somewhat unfortunate tone of yellowish colouring.*

In the face of the extraordinary career of the Brussels workshops, one does not feel much tempted to study the history of those established at the same time in the other Flemish cities, Valenciennes, Lille, Douay, or Bruges. Their manufacture was, as it were, crushed by the competition of the metropolis. A few names of weavers, and a few titles of tapestries, would comprise all the advantage to be derived from such an inquiry; we therefore avoid the task of undertaking it.

The same considerations compel us to omit the workshops of Holland. It is sufficient to state that tapestry looms were set up in Middleburg in 1562, and that Delft, a little later, numbered the skilful tapestry maker, Francis Spierinck, amongst its inhabitants.†

* "L'Art ancien à l'Exposition nationale belge," p. 215, Brussels, 1881.

† See J. van de Graft: "De Tapijt fabrieken der XVI. en XVII. eeuw," pp. 69 *et seq.*, 102 *et seq.* Middleburg, 1869.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY (*continued*).

 TAPESTRY IN ITALY, FRANCE, GERMANY, AND ENGLAND.

IT was in Italy, after Flanders, that the manufacture of tapestries attained the highest position during the sixteenth century. As if the Renaissance had endowed her with the double faculty of working and of inventing, she did not confine herself to providing cartoons for the rest of Europe, but was ambitious of producing tapestries of her own; and in this she succeeded, with the single limitation that from time to time she sent for Flemish artists to revive the traditions of the past.

The tapestry workers distributed throughout the Italian peninsula were probably too few in number, and their enterprises subject to too many fluctuations, for them to think of adopting the powerful organisation which belonged to the Flemish industry. There were in Italy no corporations and no regulations intended either to ensure good workmanship, or to guarantee the rights of the producers. The masters were paid now by the month and now by the year, when they did not work on their own account, and did not make a contract with their customers. Precarious as the

conditions of the existence of tapestry were, the Italian workshops were probably those which most resembled modern manufactories. Even as the work was divided in the free towns of Flanders, so in Italy the princes who governed the greater part of the peninsula liked to assemble around them a nucleus of artists capable of promptly executing their commissions.

The wars which desolated Italy at the beginning of the sixteenth century for a long time paralysed the development of the art of tapestry. At this time we can only point to the workshop of Vigevano, directed by Benedetto da Milano ; in it was manufactured the fine series of the "Mois Trivulce," commissioned by the Marshal of that name, and preserved to this day in his family palace at Milan. The honour of having designed the cartoons of this set is accorded to Bartolomeo Suardi, called Bramantino, one of the most skilful masters of the Lombard school.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, Duke Hercules II. (1534-1559), the head of the House of d'Este, which had so powerfully contributed to the development of Italian tapestry, undertook to restore an industry which, if it had not absolutely disappeared from his States, had now almost reached the last stage of decay. From the second year of his reign, he numbered amongst the artists attached to his court two Flemish tapestry weavers of consummate ability, Nicholas and John Karcher, or Carcher. The latter, with whom the Ferrara manufacture was identified for many years, produced numerous sets of rare technical finish.

The painter in ordinary to this manufactory was Battista Dosso of Ferrara; it is to him that we are indebted for the cartoons of the "Metamorphoses," one piece of which was secured for the Gobelins Museum



FIG. 50.—THE "MOÏSE TRIVULCE."—After Bramantino Suardi. Tapestry of Vigevano. (Trivulce collection at Milan.)

a few years ago, through the efforts of M. Darcel. Of other suites, the "Story of Hercules," some green arbours, with terminals, &c., have unfortunately disappeared.

Side by side with Battista Dosso is found the

Flemish painter, Lucas Cornelisz, who designed the cartoons for the "Townes of the House of d'Este," for the "Grotesques," and also for the "Horses" (that is, the favourite horses of the reigning prince). Guglielmo

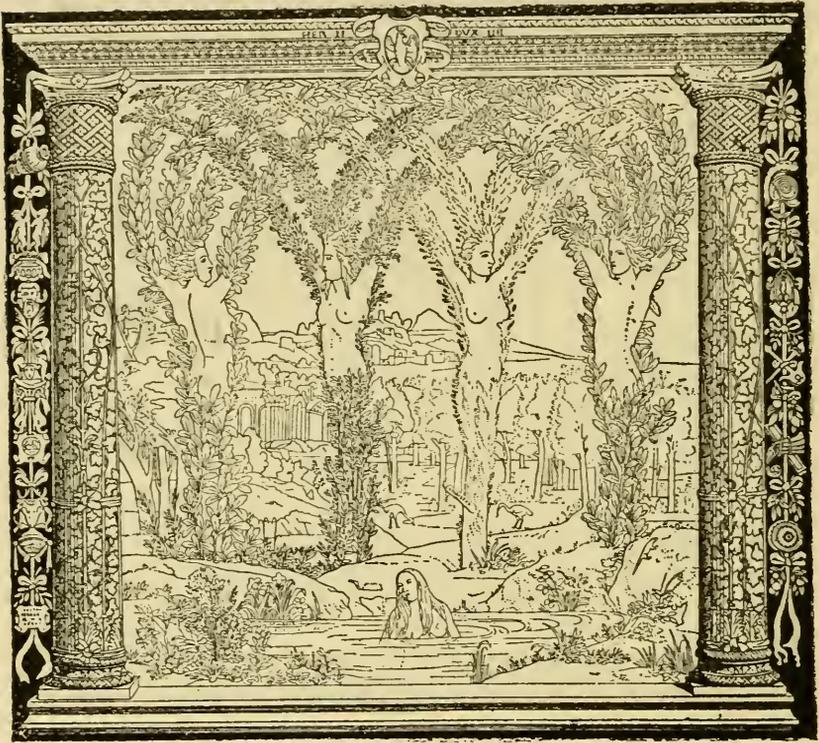


FIG. 51.—THE METAMORPHOSES.—After B. Dosso.
Tapestry of Ferrara of the Sixteenth Century. (In the collection of M. le Comte de Briges.)

Boides, of Mechlin, one of his countrymen, also designed for tapestry workers.

The manufactory of Ferrara, like the other princely workshops of the period, was allowed to accept orders

from abroad. John Karcher took advantage of this



FIG. 52.—CHILDREN PLAYING.—Venus' Bark.
Ferrarese tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (Collection of Baron Worms.)

to execute, from cartoons by Garofalo and Camillo Filippi, for which Lucas Cornelisz designed the bor-

ders, the "History of St. George and St. Aurelius," which has since, on the occasion of great festivals, adorned the cathedral of Ferrara. The cathedral of Como entrusted him with the weaving of the "Story of the Virgin," from cartoons by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, the Milanese.

The beautiful series of "Children Playing," part of which is reproduced in the accompanying plate, is also attributed to the workshop of John Karcher.

The manufacture visibly declined in the reign of Alphonso II., the successor to Hercules II. (1559-1597), and the growing reputation of the Cordovan leathers appears to have hastened its fall. The Ferrarese high-warp looms did not survive this prince.

The productions of Ferrarese manufacture are remarkable for the importance bestowed on the decorative element, in which grotesques, vegetation, and landscape play a principal part. Grace, lightness, and imagination supersede pretensions to style, and the chief mission of the decorator, according to the views of the Princes of the house of d'Este, was to refresh the mind and to charm the eye; and these extravagant and fastidious judges were not wrong. Roused by their example, Cosmo I., Duke and afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany (1537-1574), resolved to endow Florence with a manufactory worthy to vie with that of Ferrara, and had the happiness of seeing his work prosper. The "Arazzeria Medicea," by which name his establishment is known, lasted as long as the

Medicis themselves, that is, to the commencement of the eighteenth century.*

The two masters entrusted with the direction of the new manufactory were Flemings—John Rost, or Rostel, of Brussels, and Nicholas Karcher. The duke undertook to provide them with suitable premises, to pay each of them 600 golden crowns a year, allowing them still to work for persons abroad, and, finally, to pay in addition for all works executed for his house. Rost and Karcher, on their side, were bound to set up twenty-four looms, twelve of which were to work regularly; they also undertook to train apprentices gratuitously. The contract, concluded at first for a period of three years, was renewed up to 1552. From this time the Florentine manufacture did not stand still for an instant, in spite of all kinds of fluctuations.

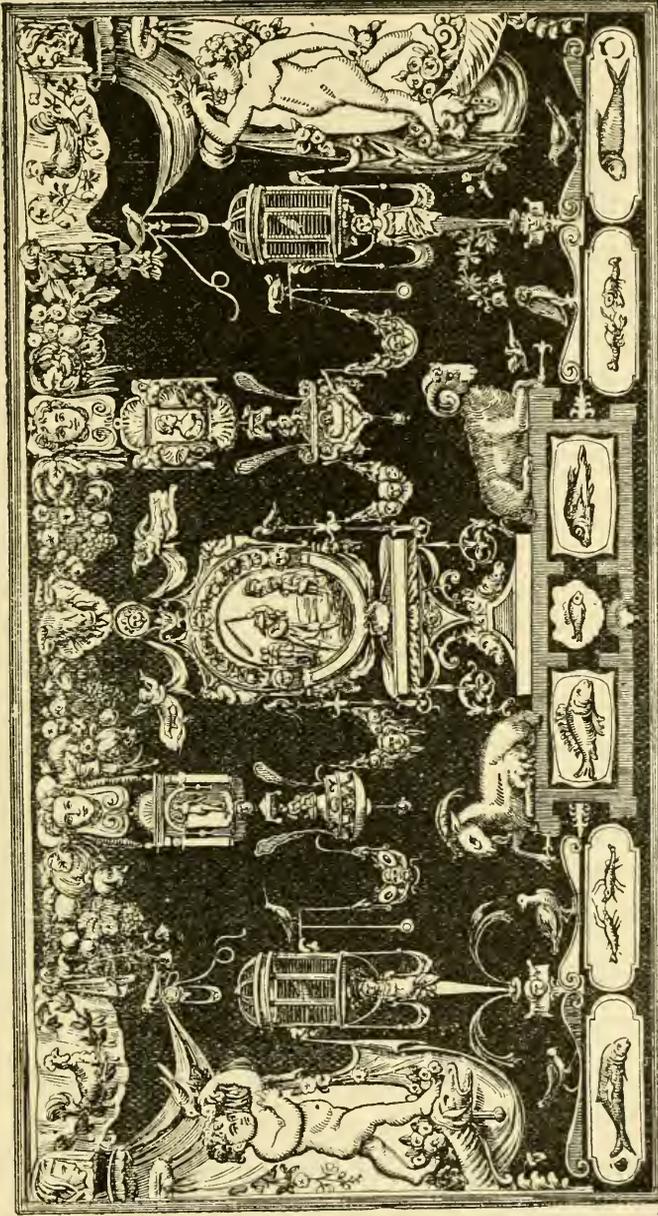
Among the painters connected with the ducal manufactory by Cosmo I., Bronzino stands in the first rank (1502—1572). We owe to him the greater part of the cartoons of the "Story of Joseph," now exhibited in the rooms of the Palais Vieux; those of "Parnassus" and of the "Hippocrene" (1556), and of "Marsyas" (1556). After him came Francesco Salviati (1510—1563), the designer of another cartoon of the "Story of Joseph: Pharaoh's Dream." Salviati also

* The history of tapestry in Florence is the subject of M. Conti's work: "*Ricerche storiche sull' arte degli arazzi in Firenze*," Florence, 1875. We have summed up and completed the work of this learned Florentine in our "*Tapisseries italiennes*" (*Histoire générale de la Tapisserie*).

executed the cartoons of a "History of Alexander the Great," woven in Flanders for Pietro Luigi



FIG. 53.—THE STORY OF JOSEPH : PHARAOH'S FEAST.
After Bronzino. Florentine Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (In the
Palazzo Vecchio of Florence.)



CH. GOUTEWILLEN

FIG. 54.—GROTESQUES, after Bacchiaca.
Florentine Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (Florence : Egyptian Museum.)

Farnese, and of a "History of Lucretia," of the beauty of which Vasari speaks very highly. A third famous master, Francesco d'Albertino, surnamed il Bachiacca (d. 1577), supplied the cartoons of "The Twelve Months," exhibited in the Egyptian Museum at Florence, and those of the "Grotesques" forming part of the same collection.

The sets due to the assistance of Bronzino, Salviati, and Bachiacca, on the one side, and of John Rost and Nicholas Karcher on the other, are worthy of the admiration they inspired among contemporaries. Though the Florentine painters in their cartoons occasionally overlooked decorative fitness in order to show their knowledge of drawing, to try their hands at those feats of strength in which Michael Angelo excelled; though, especially in the "Story of Joseph,"* they violated that balance and art of grouping of which they ought, apparently, to have been the champions; Rost and Karcher, on the other hand, brought to their work of reproduction a conscientiousness and a taste which can hardly be sufficiently admired. These masters excelled in representing, here the boldness of the profiles of Bronzino, there the delicacy of the arabesques of Bachiacca, and still kept their colouring rich, affecting, and harmonious. Their tapestries are yet a feast for the eyes.

We have not space to study the numerous suites

* See, amongst others, parts of this series published by M. Wauters in "Les Tapisseries historiées à l'Exposition nationale belge de 1880."

produced in the Florentine workshop about the middle of the sixteenth century, and must confine

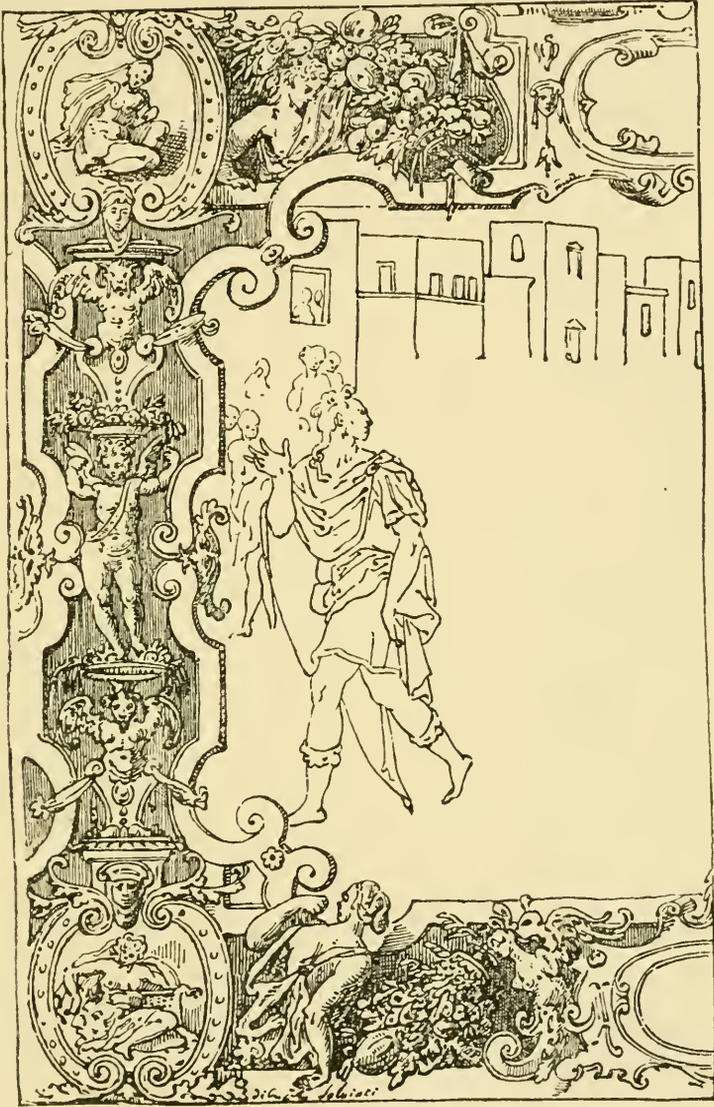


FIG. 55.—SKETCH FOR TAPESTRY.
Fac-simile of a Drawing by F. Salviati. (Uffizi Museum.)

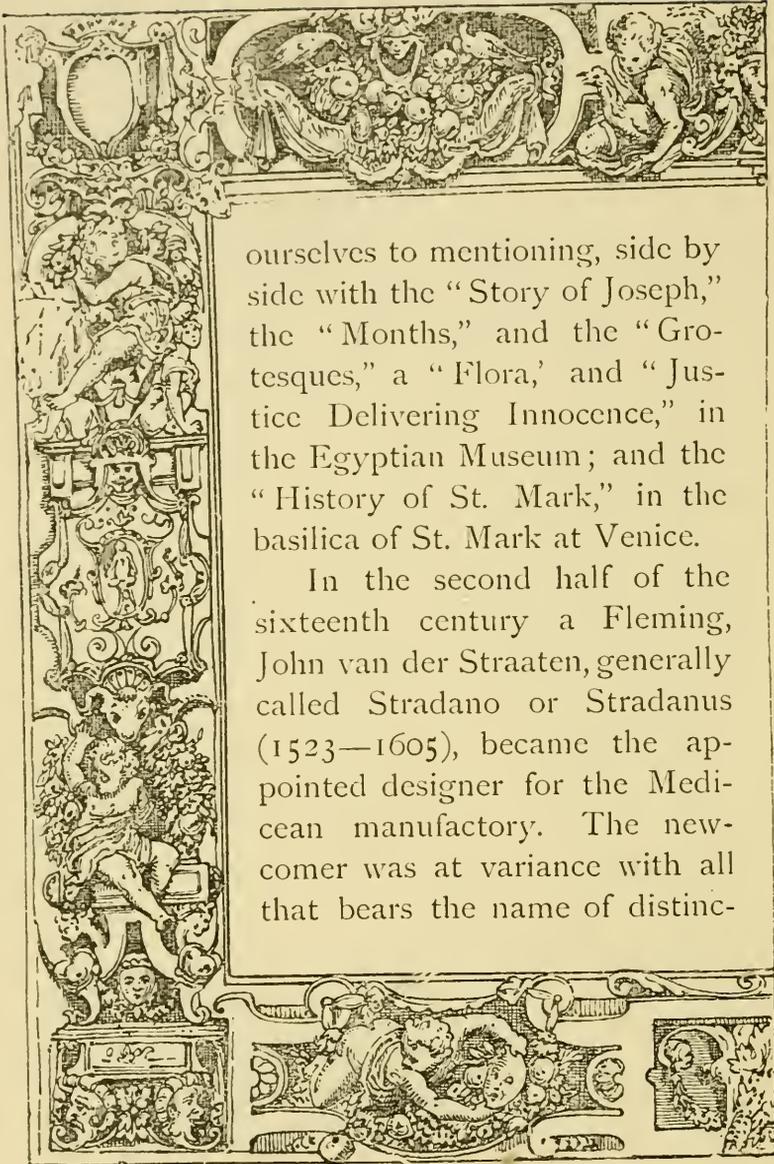


FIG. 56. —SKETCH FOR TAPESTRY.
Fac-simile of a Drawing by F. Salviati. (Uffizi Museum.)

tion, elegance, and decorative feeling. He became inspired by contemporary Italian models, and fixed

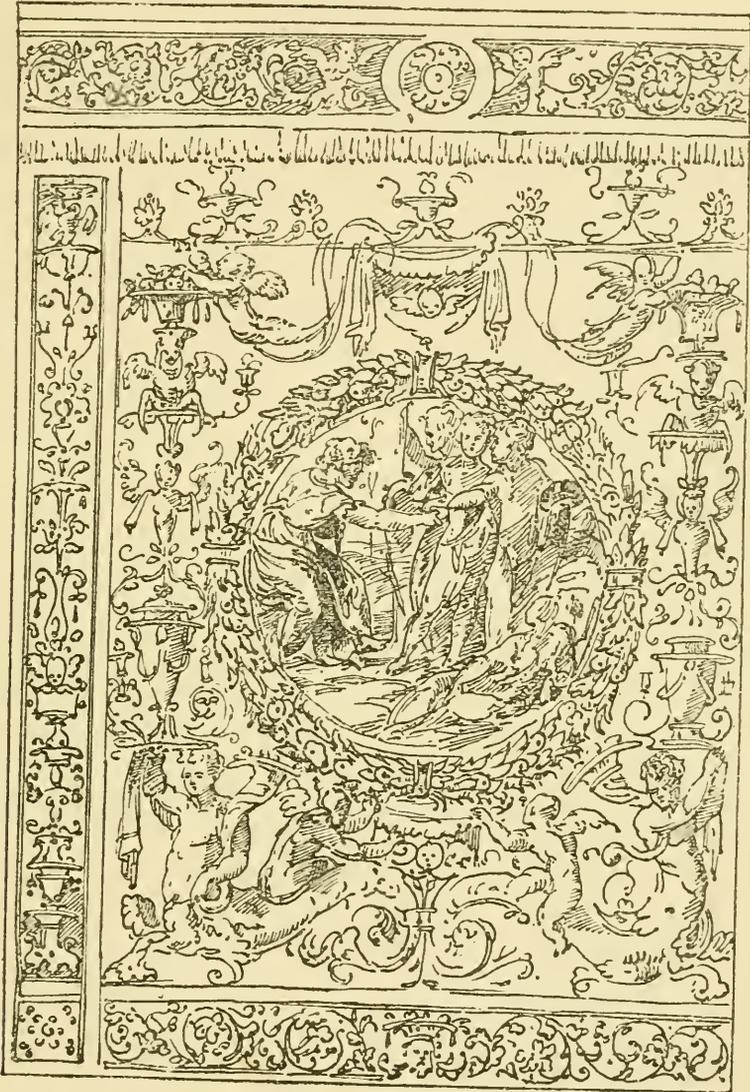


FIG. 57.—SKETCH FOR TAPESTRY.
Fac-simile of a Drawing by A. Aspertini. (Uffizi Museum.)

his attention on the most defective of them—those of the declining Florentines.

The number of cartoons designed by Stradano is prodigious, but we dare not style this unbridled production facility. Nothing could be poorer than his compositions, nothing more barren and blank. The tapestry weavers of the ducal manufactory would have been powerless to resist this tendency even if they had preserved unblemished the traditions of the Rosts and Karchers; the more readily, therefore, did they yield without scruple to the current in the presence of the more and more rapid processes which, on the banks of the Arno, as on those of the Scheldt, had replaced the old critical exactness. The decline of the Florentine manufacture during the last third of the sixteenth century may be gauged by the "Hunts" which disgrace many of the Tuscan royal palaces.

Considered as a whole, Florentine tapestry is marked by its pretensions to style, and by its want of freedom and imagination. Responsibility for these results rests entirely with the painters charged with the execution of the cartoons. With the exception of the "Months" and the "Grotesques" of Bachiacca, it is difficult to find any hangings designed in a really decorative spirit. Grand historical compositions were adhered to above all, scenes from sacred history and from mythology, and records of the House of Medici. It would appear that there was no place in the learned despotism inaugurated by Cosmo I. for the qualities which had long been the glory of the Florentine school—grace, gaiety, and reflectiveness.

We need only glance at the other Italian workshops of the sixteenth century. Those that arose at this time in Venice and Genoa were of but secondary



FIG. 58.—PART OF THE HISTORY OF DIANA.
Fontainebleau Tapestry. (At the Chateau d'Anct.)

importance, these two towns being chiefly marts, as Antwerp was for Flanders, not centres of production. We accordingly find high-warp looms set up and disappearing with equal readiness. That which was

needed above all things, seeing the immense accumulation of Flemish tapestries, was the repairer to preserve and restore them, not the weaver to manufacture new ones. The warehouses of Venice enjoyed so great a reputation, even in the beginning of the seventeenth century, that the princes and great lords on this side the Alps (amongst others the Elector of Bavaria) made important purchases there. The Venetians themselves, moreover, were very eager to acquire these precious fabrics. At the time of the Renaissance there was not a palace that was not abundantly supplied with them.

In France, tapestry revived under the influence of the Renaissance. Though its workshops did not succeed in equalling the prosperity of their predecessors of the fourteenth century, they distinguished themselves, as a set-off, by perfection of workmanship and purity of taste.

Francis I. exerted himself to extend the art which had shed so much lustre over the reigns of Charles V., Charles VI., Charles VIII., and Louis XII. About 1535, Francis established a manufactory at Fontainebleau which employed fifteen master tapestry-workers. Placed under the direction of Philibert Babou, *Sieur de la Bourdaizière*, superintendent of royal buildings, and of Sebastian Serlio, the celebrated Italian architect, the royal manufactory was commissioned to reproduce the cartoons of Primaticcio, who appears to have painted a short series of the "History of Scipio;" of Matteo del Nassaro, designer of the "Story of Actæon and Orpheus;" and of Claude Baudouin.



FIG. 59.—GROTESQUES: A BACCHANAL.
Fontainebleau Tapestry in the cabinets of Catherine de Medici.
(Museum of the Gobelins.)

Under Henry II., Philibert Delorme was appointed



FIG. 60.—GROTESQUES.
Fontainebleau workshops. (Gobelins Museum.)

director of the Fontainebleau manufactory, the ultimate fate of which is unknown. There is reason to believe

that it disappeared at the time of the death of this prince.

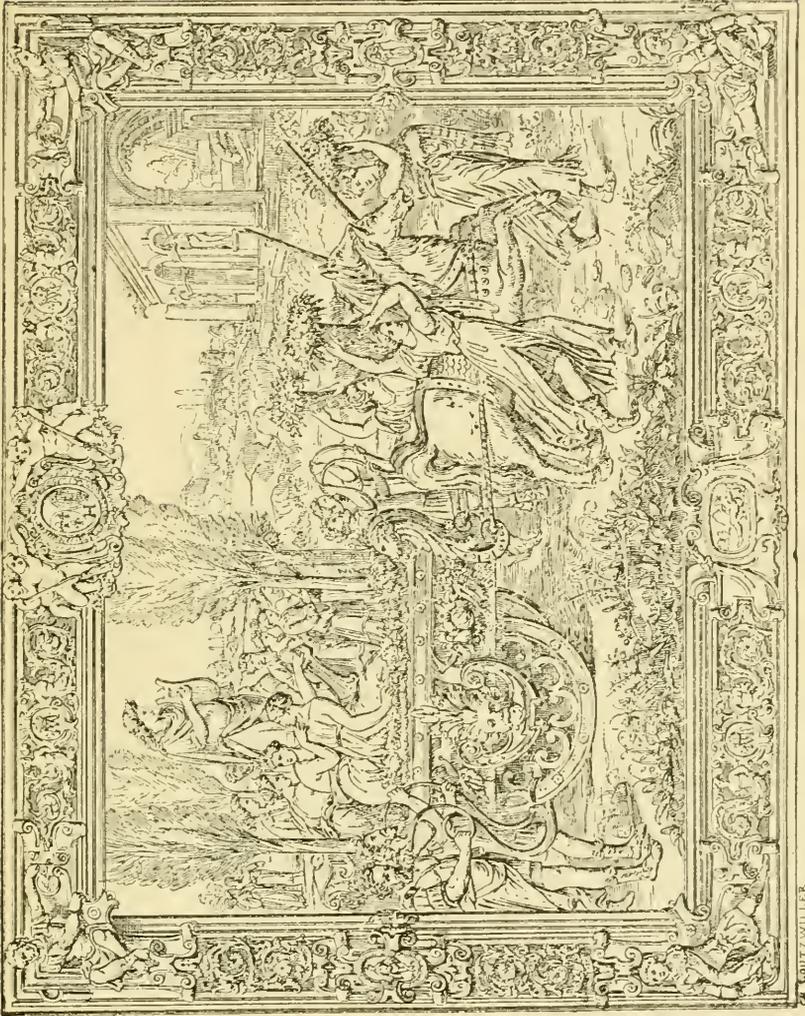


FIG. 61.—HISTORY OF ARTEMISIA: APOLLO AND THE MUSES.
Parisian Tapestry of the Sixteenth Century. (National Garde-Meuble.)

The three tapestries here reproduced are attributed by competent judges to the manufactory we have just been studying, and do it great credit.

Henry II., although he encouraged the manufactory of Fontainebleau, gave it a rival in Paris, and selected the Hôpital de la Trinité in which to establish a certain number of high-warp looms. The new institution succeeded admirably, and continued to exist well into the seventeenth century.

Antoine Caron (d. 1598) and Henri Lerambert are the painters whose names are connected with the Trinité manufactory. They designed for it the cartoons of a series which became rapidly popular, the "History of Mausolus and Artemisia," with the most transparent allusions to Catherine de Médici, the Artemisia of the sixteenth century. From 1570 to 1660 there were no fewer than ten hangings of this series, some of which consisted of ten or fifteen pieces, forming altogether a superficies of 1,900 square yards.* The influence of Giulio Romano is constantly seen in this long succession of half historical and half allegorical pictures, the interest of which is unfortunately not sustained.

Lerambert executed alone the cartoons of the "History of Coriolanus," and those of the "Story of Christ," destined for the church of St. Merri. His chief interpreter, the most distinguished representative of the Trinité manufactory, was the tapestry weaver Maurice Dubourg.

The Hôtel Cluny possesses three tapestries of the same epoch, but their manufacture is too coarse to be attributed to Dubourg; we refer to the "Battles of Jarnac and of St. Denis" (Nos. 6,332—6,334).

* Lacordaire : pp. 25, 26.

Of the history of the Fontainebleau and Trinité manufactories but little is known ; and of that of the

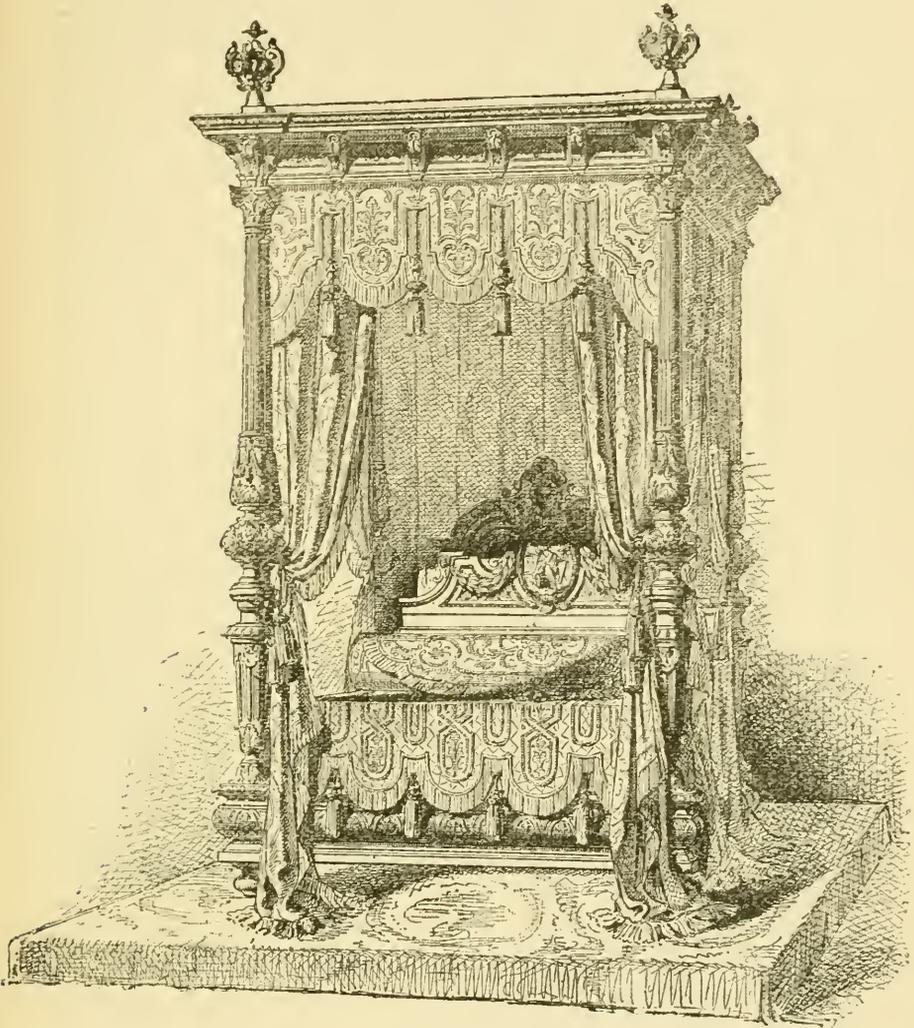


FIG. 62.—RENAISSANCE BEDSTEAD.
(Chateau de Fontainebleau.)

provincial workshops still less. We have only the

information that Tours and Felletin (probably also Aubusson) displayed some activity at this period.

The history of tapestry in the other parts of Europe is of but slight interest during the period that now occupies our attention.

In Germany the workshop of Lauingen alone deserves notice; it produced a few hangings, some heraldic, and others topographic, now mostly preserved in the National Museum at Munich; *e.g.*, the "Ancestors of the House of Bavaria," the "Holy Cities of Palestine," and "A Camp."

A revival of luxury marked the first years of the sixteenth century in England. In 1503, on the occasion of the marriage of the daughter of Henry VII. with James, King of Scotland, Holyrood Palace was hung with the richest tapestries. Amongst these, the "History of Troy" and the "Story of Hercules" were especially admired.* A few years later, at the death of Henry VII. (1509), the queen's store-room contained the following hangings: the "History of Nebuchadnezzar" (four pieces), the "Story of Hercules" (four pieces), the "Story of Paris and Helen" (three pieces), the "History of King Saul" (four pieces), the "History of Samson and Solomon" (five pieces), and also three hangings and a carpet "du roi Robert de Sicile."†

We can positively affirm that Henry VIII., Wolsey, and most of the English lords, procured from

* Countess of Wilton, p. 173.

† "First Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts," p. 75.

abroad, in the sixteenth century, the hangings of which they were so proud. Still, from this time, England made some serious efforts, we will not say to vie with Flanders, but at least to reproduce on the loom the attempts of the native painters, without being obliged to have recourse to foreigners. A small tapestry of gold and silk, in the collection of M. le Baron de Schickler,* has been attributed, with great appearance of truth, to an English workshop (high-warp looms, we know, were easily improvised); it belongs, apparently, to that interesting epoch when Western Europe hesitated between the mediæval traditions, so linked with religious sentiment, and the secular charm of the Renaissance. The subject of M. de Schickler's tapestry is derived from the creeds of times past; we see on it St. George, the patron saint of England, on his fiery horse, thrusting his lance down the throat of a monstrous dragon. The architecture, however, and the ornaments, show signs of the new ideas; the depressed arch, and the columns encrusted with gems, indicate the approach of a new era. The St. George is, we must repeat, only presumably attributed to England, but the arguments for its English origin—the character of the heads and of the architecture—are not to be despised.

Towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII., a more important effort was made. William Sheldon placed his manor of Burcheston, in Warwickshire, at the disposal of the tapestry weaver, Robert Hicks,

* Union centrale, cinquième Exposition, 1876. Catalogue No. 341.

and commissioned him to execute, on a large scale, maps of the counties of Oxford, Worcester, Warwick, and Gloucester.* Three of these maps are still amongst the curiosities of the Philosophic Society of York. In his will, dated 1570, Sheldon calls Hicks the introducer of the art of tapestry into England: "The only auter and beginner of tapestry and arras within this realm."†

From time to time, also, Flemish weavers tried their fortunes in England. In 1567-1568, after the persecutions of the Duke of Alva, colonies, more or less important, settled in Canterbury, Norwich, Sandwich, Colchester, and Maidstone.‡ Later on we find in the British Isles one Planck, said by the authorities of Bruges, in 1621, "to have left for the above kingdom about fifteen years before," and Jacques Lyons, of the same town, who left "eight years previously,"§ and also De Maegt, of Middleburg, who settled in England from 1617 to 1621.||

The Very Rev. Dr. Rock ¶ considers the celebrated suite now preserved at Aix, in Provence, "Scenes from the Life of Christ," to be English work.

* Walpole: "Anecdotes of Painting," edit. Wornum, vol. i., p. 235.

† Boyer de Sainte-Suzanne: "Notes d'un curieux sur les tapisseries tissées de haute ou basse lisse," p. 51, Paris, 1876. This author, unfortunately, never cites his authorities.

‡ Dugdale: "The Antiquities of Warwickshire," 2nd edit., 1730.

§ Van de Graft, p. 98.

|| Ibid., p. 99.

¶ Article by M. Pinchart in *The Chronicle*, London, p. 110, February 1st, 1868.

This hanging, presented to Canterbury Cathedral in 1595, was, according to him, woven in England. But the date inscribed on one piece (1511) and the style of the whole absolutely contradict this idea: the cartoons were probably designed by Quentin Matsys.

Imitations of tapestries, "counterfeit arras,"* are frequently mentioned at this time. We are not, we admit, qualified to decide whether these were painted canvases, or some particular style of embroidery.

Elizabeth does not appear to have made any especial efforts to develop in her realms an art industry the economic importance of which seems to have long impressed so many foreign sovereigns—the Kings of France, the Dukes of Tuscany, of Ferrara and of Mantua, and the Dukes of Bavaria. But her reign was marked by the execution of at least one important suite commemorating the chief event of the end of the sixteenth century, the "Destruction of the Armada."

This celebrated suite, a veritable page of history, was ordered by Admiral Howard from the painter H. Cornelis de Vroom, of Haarlem, and the tapestry maker Franz Spierinx. More interested in historical accuracy than in the requirements of decoration, the admiral caused the Spanish fleet to be represented struggling with the fury of the waves, or against the enemy eager in pursuit; the build of the vessels, their number, and the order of battle, all

* A. Michiels: "L'Art flamand dans l'Est et le Midi de la France," pp. 491 *et seq.* Paris, 1877.

demonstrate the scrupulous efforts made. But the human element which, more than anything else, gives life and interest to a composition, was too completely sacrificed to these enormous engines of war, which only present to view their sides bristling with cannon. Almost banished from the chief scene, the human figure reappears in the borders adorned with medallions of the principal English captains. We may say in exoneration of the admiral and of his artist, that they had the example of the tapestries of Middleburg, designed on similar principles; and that one hundred years later the naval battle of Messina was executed at the Gobelins, under Louis XIV., in exactly the same style. The six tapestries which represented the Defeat of the Armada adorned the House of Lords until the fatal fire of 1834. They are now only known by the engravings of John Pine,* and from fragments described by the Countess of Wilton in the possession of the Corporation of Plymouth.†

During this century also, poetry took possession of the marvels of textile art. Spenser (1550-1599) introduced it more than once in his charming descriptions of decoration.‡ As for Shakespeare, he not only assigned it an essential part in the famous scene

* "First Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts," p. 76.

† The "Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords," 2nd edition, London.

‡ "Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight."

"Faerie Queen," Book I., cant. iv., st. 6.

of the death of Polonius, but also minutely described a set representing the History of Cleopatra.*

* *Cymbeline*, Act ii., sc. 4:—

“ First, her bedchamber
 (Where, I confess, I slept not ; but profess
 Had that was well worth watching), it was hang'd
 With tapestry of silk and silver ; the story
 Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman,
 And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for
 The press of boats, or pride : a piece of work
 So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive
 In workmanship and value ; which I wonder'd
 Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,
 Since the true life on't was.”

See also *King Henry IV.*, Part II., Act ii., sc. 2.

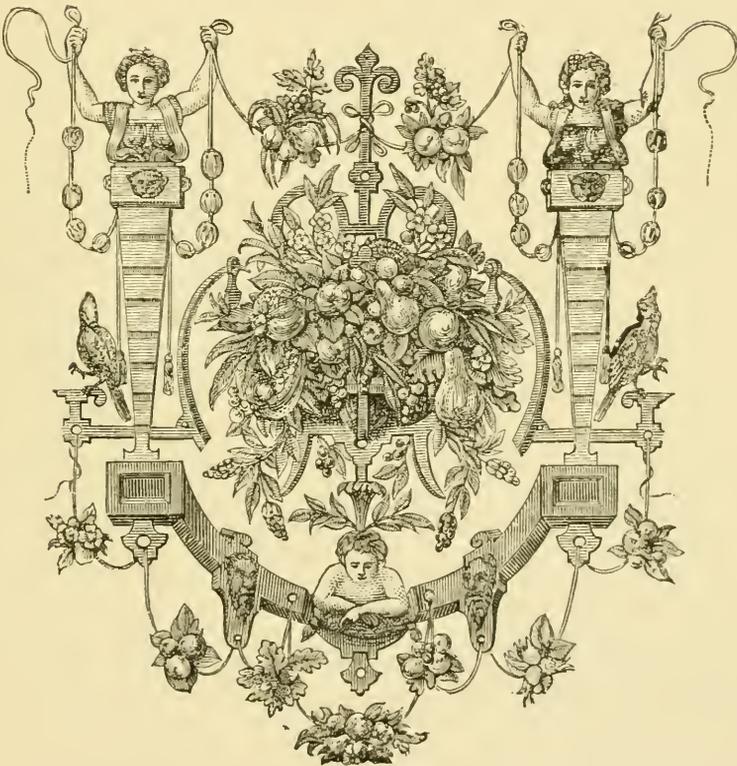


FIG. 63.—FRAGMENT OF A TAPESTRY OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.
 (Baron Rothschild's Collection.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOBELINS MANUFACTORY.

THE signs of dulness and depression which had manifested themselves towards the end of the sixteenth century might well occasion fears for the future of tapestry, the career of which had been so brilliant throughout the whole period of the Renaissance: inflation on the one hand, and barrenness on the other, appeared the only alternatives of the weavers. This, however—thanks to the initiative of two celebrated artists, one a Fleming, and the other a Frenchman, who succeeded in reinstating decorative art in its proper place—did not continue long. Composition soon recovered its grace; the art of harmoniously uniting figures one with another, of distributing groups over the surface of the hanging in accordance with the rules of decoration, and of stamping a fixed style on the whole, was revived; qualities which imply great facility of invention, as well as rich and brilliant imagination.

The Venetians, the representatives of the Italian school of colourists, had not successfully influenced the development of tapestry. This mission fell to

their inheritor, a son of the North, in whom poetic



FIG. 64.—HISTORY OF CONSTANTINE: A BATTLE, after Rubens.
(Parisian Tapestry, beginning of the Seventeenth Century, at the Garde-Meuble.)

fire was allied to a vivid feeling for rhythm, and who

understood how to reconcile dramatic power with exuberance of detail—the great Rubens, who has set his mark for ever on the art of which we are studying the history. Had he only composed the “History of Marie de Médici,” the most splendid model that a tapestry worker could dream of reproducing on a loom,* he would even then have deserved well of the art that had been the glory of Flanders for three centuries past. But the master painted with his own hand the cartoons of several suites, one of which at least, the “History of Constantine,” has been frequently reproduced, in Paris as well as in Brussels; for the compositions of Rubens, like those of Raphael, had the good fortune to be adopted immediately in all countries, and to become the common property of the whole of Europe. The “History of Achilles,” and the “History of Decius,” were no less successful, as were also the “Triumph of the Church,” and “Scenes from the Old Testament,” of which seventeen pieces are now preserved in the convent of the Barefooted Carmelites, at Madrid.†

Setting aside the painters who have more or less accidentally provided designs for tapestry—Jordaens and Teniers in Flanders; Lerambert, Guyot, Dumée, Simon Vouet, Philippe de Champagne, Poussin, Lesueur, Van der Meulen, Noël Coypel, and Sébas-

* The “History of Marie de Médici” has been executed in tapestry only in this century. This work, commenced at the Gobelins under the Restoration, was completed during the reign of Louis Philippe.

† “Descripcion de los tapices de Rubens que se colocan en el claustro del monastero de las señoras religiosas descalzas reales.” Madrid, 1881.

tien Bourdon, in France ; * Romanelli, and the pupils of Pietro da Cortona, in Italy ; Candido, or De Witte, in Germany ; and Francis Cleyne in England—one name, together with that of Rubens, prevails over the whole of the seventeenth century, and almost equals the glory of the head of the Antwerp school, the name of Charles Le Brun. The rival, or rather the successor of Rubens, is not numbered amongst the greatest artists, even when compared only with his contemporaries. The renown of Poussin, of Lesueur and of Rigaud eclipses his, and yet this universal genius did more for the decorative arts than all his contemporaries put together. His feeling for decoration was so strong that his pictures were transfigured in passing from the canvas to the warp ; their translation into another form increased their brilliancy, and endowed them with richer and more masculine harmony. The same may be said of the grand pictures of ceremonies which form the incomparable suite known as the "History of the King." When these dazzling hangings move, we experience a sort of religious tremor ; Alexander, the god-king, and Louis XIV., the sun-king, appear to descend from their triumphal car, or their throne, to mix with us.

* Lerambert : the "History of Artemisia." Vouet : the "Sacrifice of Abraham," the "Loves of Rinaldo and Armida." Corneille : "Children's Games," "History of the Old and the New Testament." Philippe de Champagne : the "Life of the Virgin," and three pieces of the "Story of St. Gervais and St. Protais." Lesueur : two pieces of the same suite. Sébastien Bourdon : one piece of the same series. Poussin : "The Sacraments." Noël Coypel : "The Triumphs of the Gods," &c.

These heroic figures, some covered with glittering armour, others with stuffs brocaded with gold and silk, with precious stones, and with lace, become re-animated on the supple and undulating surfaces. The one indispensable tone, the need of pomp and splendour, inherent to the grand age, wearisome when introduced into an oil painting or a fresco, is naturally and happily represented in these fabrics, of which gold and silk are the natural elements.

Yielding to a spirit of tolerance which did it honour, the age of Louis XIV. associated with the new compositions, which were delicately shaded, *spirituel*, and in the highest degree learned, the grand decorative pictures created by the Renaissance. These, with their intense vitality, their freedom and boldness of style, were scarcely in harmony with white and gold saloons, rich mouldings, looking-glasses, and chandeliers artistically arranged, or with a condition of society polished and formal to a degree; but they possessed such principles of beauty, that they impressed themselves even on Louis XIV. and on the courtiers of the Palace of Versailles. In France, in Flanders, in England, and in Italy, the "Acts of the Apostles," the "Fructus Belli," the "History of Scipio," the "Story of Vulcan," and the "Children Playing," by Giovanni da Udine, were still copied, and copied with the most scrupulous accuracy. In the first years of the eighteenth century a set of the "Hunts of Maximilian" was woven at the Gobelins with such skill that the most discerning connoisseurs have

difficulty in distinguishing it from the suite of the sixteenth century. It was a less happy idea of Louis XIV. to cause the "Pictures" of the Vatican, the creation of the Renaissance which excelled all others,

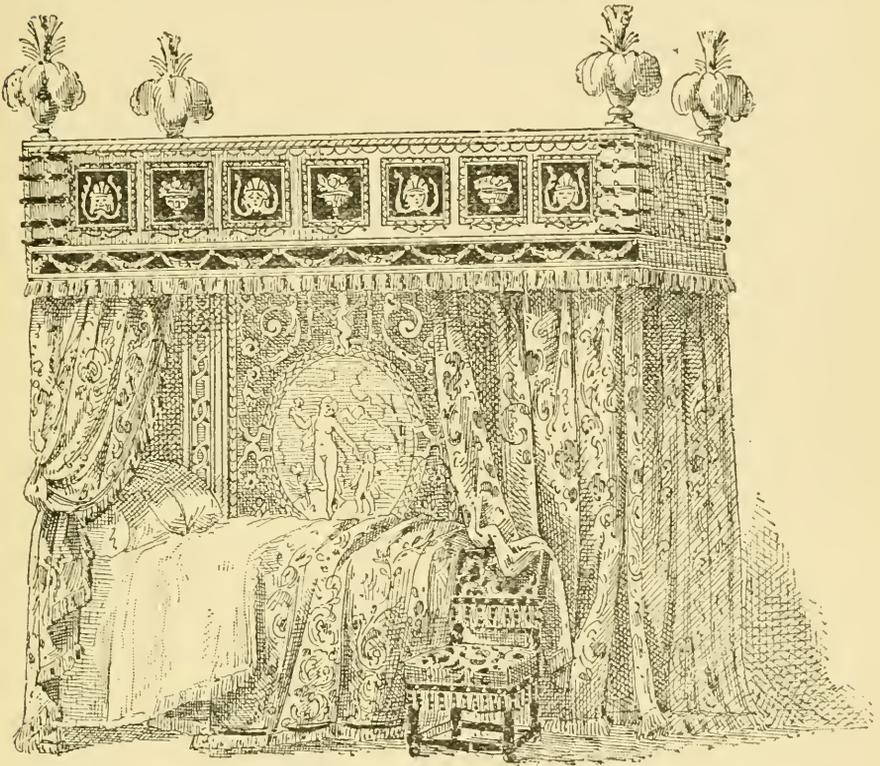


FIG. 65.—A BED, TEMP. LOUIS XIII.

to be reproduced on the looms. But we must repeat that fresco-painting and tapestry proceed on different—nay, on almost opposite—principles; and in spite of the genius of a Raphael, it is possible to imagine compositions better adapted to the exigencies of textile art than these masterpieces.

With regard to what may be called its social position, tapestry, during the seventeenth century, retained all its privileges, although the enthusiasm of the preceding period had yielded to a calmer and more reflective judgment. As in times past, the task of perpetuating the remembrance of the most striking events was entrusted to it. Side by side with the religious, mythological, and allegorical compositions which were in vogue at this time, are found numbers of subjects derived from contemporary history.*

As in former times, municipalities or princes desirous of offering a souvenir to an ally or an illustrious guest, had recourse to tapestry. We find Brussels on various occasions presenting her governors-general with "chambres" of the value of 12,000 florins.† Louis XIV., in order to bestow on the Duke of Lorraine, who had just rendered him homage, a mark of his munificence, offered him a hanging of the "History of Alexander" worth 25,000 crowns. The king even made use of tapestry to engrave certain lessons on the minds of those of his allies who were somewhat hard of understanding. Who could be angry on receiving "memoranda" in the

* France : "History of the King."

Flanders : "Battles of the Archduke Albert ;" "History of the Count de Moncade ;" "Victories of King William III." (Battle of Bresgate, Descent on Torbay, Battle of the Boyne).

Italy : "History of Urban VIII."

Germany : "History of the House of Bavaria ;" "History of the Great Elector."

Denmark : The "War of Scania."

† Wauters, p. 201.

form of magnificent fabrics of silk and gold? Amongst these was a tapestry which the French king sent to the Pope, representing the "Audience donnée par le Roy Louis XIV. à l'ambassadeur d'Espagne pour déclarer au nom du Roy son maistre qu'à l'avenir les ambassadeurs d'Espagne n'entreront plus en concurrence avec les ambassadeurs de France."*

Side by side with this act of arrogance, we may mention a touching evidence of gratitude. Having arrived in France, King James of England knew no better way of showing his thankfulness to King Louis XIV., for the generous manner in which the latter had received him in his misfortune, than by presenting him with his rich and magnificent hangings. These were the "Acts of the Apostles," the masterpiece of the Mortlake workshop, now one of the gems of the national *Garde Meuble*.

Tapestry lost none of its importance in religious ceremonies, public rejoicings, and solemnities of all sorts. The following fact may serve as an example. The Corporation of Tapestry Workers in Paris, in 1656, was bound to decorate the houses of the Protestants in the town and its environs on the octave day of the Holy Sacrament, in consideration of an indemnity of 300 livres. This work was so extensive, that the weavers complained of the insufficiency of the remuneration, which did not cover a third of

* Barbier de Montault, "Inventaire descriptif des Tapisseries de haute lisse conservées à Rome," p. 110. Arras, 1879.

the expense ; they had, indeed, upwards of 800 pieces to supply and to hang.*

Although tapestry, regarded from these different points of view, was still in the seventeenth century very much what it had been in the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, we find that changes of the highest importance occurred with regard to production. Centralisation made rapid progress, official manufactories began to be substituted for private workshops in France, England, Germany, Italy, and even in the North ; government agency replaced individual initiative. The most striking result of the new efforts was the displacement in favour of France of the supremacy hitherto exercised by the Netherlands : in creating the Gobelins, that school of lofty and ardent study, Colbert secured for France a preponderance which it has never since lost. Henceforth the whole of Europe drew its inspiration and borrowed its workmen from this source of national manufacture, and tapestry became again, as it was in the fourteenth century, a French art.

At this stage of our review, in which France now stands foremost, it is important to study with special attention the numerous efforts which insured the triumph of the Parisian workshops over those of Brussels, and led to the establishment of the Gobelins manufactory.

The economic importance of such an art-industry

* Boyer de Sainte-Suzanne, "Notes d'un Curieux sur les Tapisseries tissées de haute ou basse lisse," p. 58. Monaco, 1876.

as tapestry did not escape the clear-sightedness of Henry IV. This great king omitted nothing in order, on the one side, to develop the high and low warp in France, and also the manufacture of carpets in the Levant fashion; and, on the other, to protect the national workshops from foreign competition.

His first act was the installation, in 1597, of several high-warp looms, which he placed under the direction of a renowned tapestry-worker, Laurent, in the house of the Jesuits in the Faubourg St. Antoine; later on he associated with Laurent, Dubourg, the composer of the St. Merri tapestries. In 1603 the workshop of the Faubourg St. Antoine was transferred to the Louvre.

A subsequent establishment, a manufactory of tapestries "*façon des Flandres*," was of far greater importance. From 1601 we find Flemish tapestry-workers settled in Paris, in the king's service, under the direction of the *Sieur de Fourcy*, steward and overseer of the royal buildings. In 1607 Henry IV. made a new levy on Flanders; *François de la Planche* and *Marc Comans* (or *Coomans*) were the masters to whom he confided the management of the low-warp looms, installed first at *Tournelles*, and afterwards at the *Faubourg St. Marceau*. Patents of nobility, considerable subsidies, the most extensive privileges, stimulated the zeal of *De la Planche* and of *Comans*. We may judge of this from the following orders: "No person may imitate their manufactures for five-and-twenty years; the king will provide, at his own cost, habitations for them and their workmen,

these latter to be naturalised and declared citizens, and, on production of their letters patent, free of taxation and of all other burdens during the said twenty-five years; the masters after three years, and the apprentices after six, may have shops, without producing works, during the same period. The king shall place with them twenty-five children the first year, and twenty the second and third years, all French, to learn the craft, for whom he will pay the cost of instruction, and the parents that of maintenance; the contractors shall have at least eighty looms, sixty of them in Paris; they shall each have an annuity of fifteen hundred livres, and one hundred thousand livres to commence the work; all the materials they employ, except gold and silk, shall be free of taxes; they may establish breweries and sell beer everywhere. The admission of foreign tapestries shall be forbidden; and their own shall be sold at the price realised by the others in the Netherlands.*

Henry IV. also established at the Louvre a manufactory of carpets "à la façon de Perse ou de Turquie," which was the origin of the Savonnerie manufactory. He placed at the head of this establishment Pierre Dupont, the author of the singular treatise entitled "La Stromatourgie."

In order to complete the picture of activity which then prevailed in Paris, we must mention the atelier of La Trinité, whose looms did not cease working, in

* Lacordaire, "Notices historiques sur les Manufactures impériales de Tapisseries des Gobelins et de Tapis de la Savonnerie," edit. 1853, p. 32.

spite of the competition of those more especially patronised by the king.

The painters Lerambert (d. 1610), Dubreuil,



FIG. 66.—ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE, after Simon Vouet.
Comans' Workshop. (Gobelins Museum.)

Laurent Guyot, and Dumée were the masters specially charged with the execution of the cartoons for the various royal workshops. Dubreuil designed the

“Story of Diana;” Guyot the “Hunts of Francis I.” and the “Story of Gombaud and Macée,” a subject which had already been treated in the sixteenth century; this master also executed, in conjunction with Dumée, the cartoons of the “Faithful Shepherd.”*

Sully, in this respect differing greatly from Colbert, ranked the concerns of agriculture above those of industry; he looked unfavourably on the establishment of manufactories which appeared to him only conducive to the increase of luxury, and lost no opportunity of manifesting his antagonism towards their directors, who had frequently to struggle with serious financial difficulties.

The death of Henry IV. struck the heaviest blow at the undertaking of Comans and De la Planche, as well as at most of the great establishments founded under the auspices of the king. “They cost large sums to his Majesty, and loss and ruin to his subjects,” says a contemporary writer: “witness the Brussels tapestries at St. Marcel, the Flemish linens at Mantes, and the cloths of silk and gold of Milan . . . at the Parc Royal, of which there now remains neither trace nor vestige.”†

This last assertion is exaggerated. After many vicissitudes, in 1630 Comans and De la Planche established themselves at the Gobelins. The heirs of

* We borrow this information from the work of M. Lacordaire on the Gobelins.

† Document of 1611, published by M. F. Michel, “Recherches,” vol. ii., p. 296.

the first of these masters took up their residence there definitely, while the heirs of the second ere long betook themselves to the Faubourg St. Germain.

We will here bring to a close our notice of these



FIG. 67.—THE HUNT OF MELEAGER.
Comans' Atelier. (Gobelins Museum.)

two workshops, which survived the setting up of the Gobelins, but only for a few years.

Several pieces from Comans' loom have reached us. In 1876, at the Exhibition of the Union Centrale, the "Hunt of Meleager," signed with a double C,

the initials of Charles de Comans ; “ Abraham’s Sacrifice,” signed A. C. (Alexandre de Comans) ; and the “ Metamorphosis of Arethusa,” bearing the same mark, were at the Palais de l’Industrie. Another tapestry from the same workshops, which has hitherto escaped all investigation, is in the National Museum at Munich ; it represents the “ Marriage of the Emperor Otho ” (marks : a lily between two P’s, an M surmounted by an F, and a monogram in which the letters P. D. M. can be deciphered). These hangings are all noticeable for their close design, and for their learned rather than rich character.

The tapestries of the atelier directed by the De la Planches appear to have possessed equally great qualities. A report of the year 1718 passes a most favourable judgment on their productions. “ The manufactory of M. de la Planche, which has met with the same fate—that is, has also died out—comes next in order ; and it is to be regretted, seeing the beautiful pieces that remain from this workshop, that so worthy a master should not have left any successors. The beauty and regularity of his designs have ever been admired ; his lovely *verdures* with birds, and his magnificent landscapes, have always earned him high praise ; his taste in tints was delicate ; his fine colouring strongly resembled the flesh tints of Raphael and Rubens ; and his draperies, artistically shaded, were natural in workmanship and good in arrangement. His work was fine, even, delicate, and easy to distinguish from others, on account of its extreme beauty ; it was always refined in

design, even when somewhat rough in workmanship. Its mark was a lily with a P."*

The looms established at the Louvre and in the gardens of the Tuileries continued to hold their position worthily, side by side with the workshops of Comans and the De la Planche; with the carpet manufactory of the Louvre, under the direction of Pierre Dupont,† and that of the Savonnerie, managed by Simon Lourdet, the pupil and rival of Dupont, a manufactory that developed greatly during the reign of Louis XIII.; and with the workshop of La Trinité, which had yet sufficient vitality to produce, in 1634—1635, the "History of St. Crispin and of St. Crispinian."‡

About the middle of the century they were the object of especial care on the part of the Government, which, in 1647, sent for Pierre Lefèvre, the chief of the Florentine manufactory, and his son Jean, to come to Paris. The latter appears to have never quitted France; he had the signal honour, on the establishment of the Gobelins, of directing with Jans the high-warp looms. His father, after returning to Florence in 1650, came back to Paris about 1655, and again left it in the course of three or four years.

* Deville, "Recueil des Statuts," p. III.

† The Gobelins Museum has lately added to its stores a velvety carpet, which is probably from the manufactory of Pierre Dupont. It represents Louis XIII. (as Hercules), Anne of Austria, and their two children; the style of the figures reminds one of Simon Vouet. See the account placed by M. Darcel at the commencement of the reprint of Pierre Dupont's "Stromatourgie," p. 45. Paris, 1882.

‡ Union centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l'Industrie. Exhibition of 1876. No. 209.

Some trace of the Louvre workshop, and of the first manufactures of Jean Lefèvre, yet remains. The collection of M. Spitzer contains a set of four pieces, three of which represent "Bacchanalia," and the fourth the "Toilet of a Princess." A few critics, relying on the similarity of certain types (especially those of the satyrs) to the types created by Giulio Romano, have considered the work Italian; some have suggested the school of Fontainebleau, and others that of Brussels. The style and make of the hanging account, to a certain degree, for these differences of opinion; but they also enable us to dispel the hypotheses we have mentioned. In the first place, the workmanship only being considered, it is certain that Paris, the inheritor of the traditions peculiar to the great Flemish workshops of the Renaissance, was alone capable, in the seventeenth century, of such skill in blending tones, and of bestowing on the colouring so much harmony and distinction. The style argues equally in favour of a Parisian origin; if the three first pieces seem to be taken from cartoons of an earlier date, the fourth, representing attendants busying themselves around a young lady, shows the closest analogy with the productions of the French school of painting about the middle of the seventeenth century. By comparing the border, which stands out from a background of yellow silk of dazzling richness, with that of the "Toilet of Flora," woven at the Gobelins by Jean Lefèvre, and preserved at the Garde-Meuble, we obtain almost palpable proof of this relationship; in both, Diana of Ephesus,

dogs squatting, and scrolls of rare elegance are seen. In short, Jean Lefèvre was the author of the "Bacchanalia," and the "Toilet of a Princess"; indeed, this is shown by his name inscribed on the



FIG. 68.—TOILET OF A PRINCESS.

J. Lefèvre's workshop. (M. Spitzer's collection.)

selvage of two pieces belonging to the same series as those of M. Spitzer; the four tapestries we have just studied are a product of the workshop established at the Louvre, and of earlier date than the Gobelins.*

* See article on this hanging in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, loc. cit.

But for a certain lack of decision, nothing but praise could be applied to the work of Jean Lefèvre. Believing that the eyes should be charmed before striving to impress the mind, the weaver, as well as the designer of the cartoons, above all sought a happy combination of colours, and delighted in opposing the bronzed torsos of the satyrs to the flesh-colour of the nymphs, which was of a dazzling whiteness. In this case action—and we question if the artist was to be blamed for this—was merely an accessory.

Besides the efforts made in the capital, we must notice those by which the provinces distinguished themselves.

About 1630, the workshops of Tours appear to have acquired some importance. A document found in the archives of the Barberini Palace* shows us that Cardinal Richelieu was at that time having tapestries of great splendour executed in that town by Parisian workmen.

In the following century (in 1718) the jurors of the Paris Corporation of Tapestry-weavers, when reviewing the chief tapestry manufactories of France, stated that the Tours establishment was “noticeable for a taste in workmanship so uncommon and so uniform as to have been always highly esteemed, as much for its patterns as for its figures, which were always done with great care. Its texture was even and well wrought, and its mark was a double tower. The hangings on which foliage and animals were

* “Revue des Sociétés savantes des Départements,” 5th Series, vol. viii., p. 511 (1874).

woven were very accurate, and of good design. Only high-warp looms were there employed."

Rheims, where tapestry had always played an important part, also possessed, in the first half of the seventeenth century, a workshop of undoubted importance. In 1633 a skilful tapestry-weaver of Charleville, Daniel Peppersack by name, from whom the Chapter of the Church St. Pierre-le-Vieux, of Rheims, had ordered some tapestries a few years earlier (in 1629), settled in this city, which he never again quitted. He was attracted there by an important work, the manufacture of twelve large and seventeen small tapestries, which the Archbishop, Henry of Lorraine, intended to offer to the Cathedral. Several of these are still in the building for which they were destined; they represent the "Story of Christ," from the cartoons of Murgalet of Troyes. A private individual ordered another set from Peppersack, the "Story of Theagenes and Chariclea," from cartoons which were to be executed at the weaver's own cost.*

The workshop founded at Maincy, near Vaux, by the superintendent Foucquet, in 1658, also deserves notice. Composed of Flemish workmen, under the direction of a Frenchman, Louis Blamard, this workshop executed five pieces of the "History of Constantine" and of the "Hunt of Meleager." The designer of the cartoons for these suites was no other

* Loriguet: "Les Tapisseries de Notre-Dame de Reims," pp. 25 *et seq.*, and 139; Reims, 1876; and "Tapisseries de la Cathédrale de Reims," pp. 22 *et seq.* Fol. Paris and Reims, 1882.

than Le Brun, the future director of the Gobelins.* The De Vaux workshop did not survive the downfall of the superintendent.

Considered as a whole, the French tapestries of the first half of the seventeenth century, or, more precisely, the French tapestries anterior to the foundation of the Gobelins, were distinguished for all the qualities that were so wanting in the Flemish tapestries from the end of the preceding century. Under the influence of a school of painting more learned than inspired, drawing re-acquired the precision and accuracy in which it had long been deficient; and harmonious colouring, with some tendency towards sobriety, as was shown in the use of numerous greyish tints, came once more into fashion. The designers of cartoons above all cannot be too much congratulated on having impressed themselves anew with the true principles of decoration, and on having balanced the masses and made the laws of rhythm agree with those of action. In this respect the "Sacrifice of Abraham" (p. 253) is a masterpiece that one never wearies of admiring. The composition of the borders also showed superior taste; they are unsurpassed in the art of connecting the human figure with every variety of ornament—festoons, medallions, trophies, and grotesques. The naked sprites who, in the "Hunt of Meleager," "Abraham's Sacrifice," and the "Toilet of a Princess," sport amidst foliage, or support, one a medallion,

See the interesting book of M. Bonnaffé, "Le Surintendant Fouquet," p. 25. Paris, 1882.

another scrolls which unroll on his head, take us back to the triumphant designs of Raphael in the "Acts of the Apostles," and in the Loggia. The borders of the Mortlake tapestries, composed at the same period, show no less high qualities in a branch of the history of ornamentation which has hitherto remained in the background.

The year 1662 marks an event memorable in the annals of tapestry—the foundation of the "Manufacture royale des Meubles de la Couronne," or, to call it by its modern name, the Gobelins Manufactory.

At a period when so many praiseworthy efforts are made to re-elevate our imperilled art-industries, it is important to consider the great lessons which may be evolved from the establishment of the Gobelins, as well as from that of the manufactory of Beauvais. In the accounts which precede the statutes of the Gobelins it is stated that "the manufacture of tapestries has always appeared of such great use and such considerable profit, that the most flourishing States have continually improved their manufactories, and have attracted thereto the most skilful workmen by the indulgences conferred on them. The desire to make commerce and the industries flourish in our kingdom has induced us to turn our chief attention, at the conclusion of general peace, to their re-establishment, and to rendering the position more secure by appointing them a convenient and assured locality. We have purchased with our own funds the Hôtel des Gobelins and several adjacent houses, and have sought out artists of the highest reputation—tapestry-

weavers, sculptors, goldsmiths, cabinet-makers, and other workmen skilful in all sorts of arts and trades, whom we have there lodged, giving rooms to each of them, and according them privileges and advantages."

The remarks which serve as a preamble to "l'edict du Roy pour l'establissement des manufactures royales de tapisseries de haute et basse lice en la ville de Beauvais et autres lieux de Picardie" show no less elevation of sentiment:—"One of the most important results of the peace which it has pleased God to give us is the establishment of commerce of every sort in this kingdom in a position which may render it independent of foreigners for things necessary for the use and convenience of our subjects. We have hitherto neglected nothing that could procure them this advantage by every means which appeared to us suitable for the success of so great a matter . . ."

One of the first acts of Louis XIV. was to place at the head of the manufacture, under the title of superintendent (subject to the chief directorship of Colbert), "a person skilful and intelligent in the art of painting, to compose the designs for tapestry, sculpture, and other works, to see that they were correctly executed, and to direct and generally supervise all the workmen who should be employed in the manufactories." He selected Le Brun, who, as we have seen, had already given many proofs of talent in the tapestries workshop established at Vaux by the superintendent Foucquet.

Numerous privileges aided the recruiting of the

staff, at the head of which we find, amongst others, Jans, a skilful tapestry-worker of Oudenarde, settled in Paris in 1650 with a number of Flemish workmen, and Jean Lefèvre, the former director of the Louvre workshop. The king placed at the disposal of the manufactory sixty children, who were to be "in the seminary of the director, under whom an art master should be appointed to see after their education and direction, and who should eventually be distributed and apprenticed by the director to the masters of various arts and trades, accordingly as he considered them suitable and qualified."

Thus we see that, in the opinion of the king and of his ministers, instruction in drawing should precede purely professional education.

We must not forget that the mission of the new manufactory was not only to provide the hangings needed for the decoration of the royal palaces; the aim of Louis XIV. and of his minister was more vast. The Gobelins were to be a manufactory of decorative art in the highest and most complete sense; embroidery, jewellery, mosaic-work, wood-carving, and bronze work were there regarded as on the same level with the high and low warp.

The Gobelins, at the time when Louis XIV. and Colbert determined to there set up the new manufactory, had possessed a great industrial reputation for about two centuries. The family from which they derive their name came originally from Rheims, as we learn from M. Lacordaire. Taking advantage, from the beginning of the fifteenth century, of their pro-

fessional knowledge and of the qualities of the water of the Bièvre,* its members gave a great impetus to the art of dyeing, and rapidly made their fortune. The Marquis de Brinvilliers, husband of the celebrated poisoner, was one of its descendants. This family was succeeded by that of Canaye, which appears to have added the manufacture of tapestries to the dyeing business. It is possible that, for this purpose, it connected itself with the Comans, who, we know, established themselves at the Gobelins in 1630, and perhaps also with Jans.

The material organisation of the manufactory had yet to be arranged : Colbert had to choose between two systems equally in use during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, that of fixed salaries and of piece-work. He decided in favour of the latter. Contractors acted as intermediaries between the workmen and the central administration, which undertook to supply the men with cartoons, and to sell them the necessary raw materials ; they, on their side, were bound to deliver each year tapestries at a fixed scale of

* The author of a report addressed in 1631 to Cardinal Barberini declared that the waters of the Gobelins were considered the best that could be used for dyeing, and he attributed this property to the vegetable refuse they contained.

We may add that the use of the water of the Bièvre, which became more and more turbid and impure, has long ago been given up at the Gobelins. The advance of chemistry has supplied the qualities it possessed. We say the qualities it possessed, and not those that were attributed to it, because it has been proved that certain waters are more or less favourable to dyeing, according to the amount of mineral matter they contain.

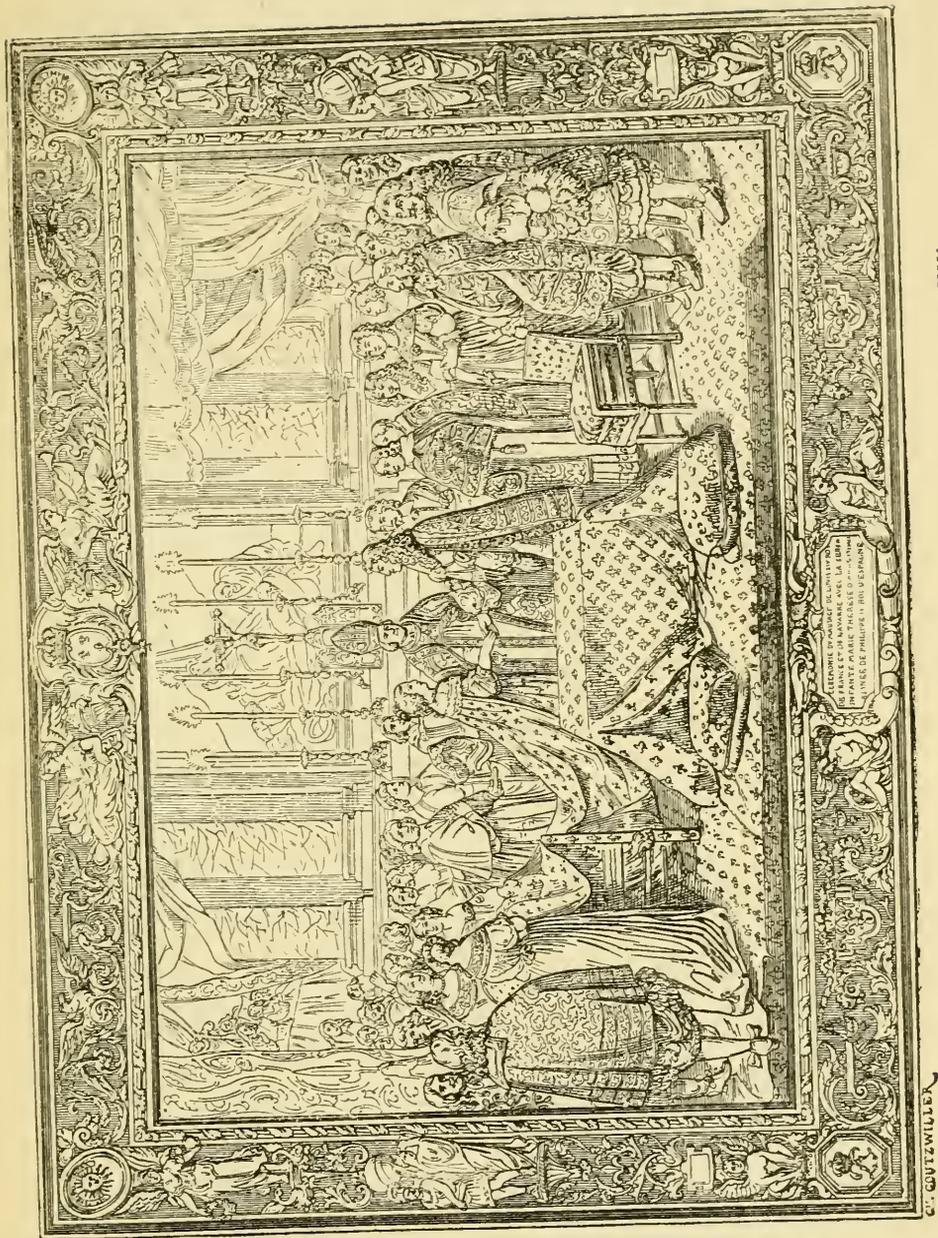


FIG. 69.—HISTORY OF THE KING: MARRIAGE OF LOUIS XIV.
 After Le Brun. Gobelins Tapestry. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

prices (from 360 to 450 livres* for the high-warp work and about half as much for the low-warp). These contractors were five in number : Jans (1662—1691), Jean Lefèvre (1663—1700), Girard Laurent (1663—1670), Jean Delacroix (1663—1714), and Mosin (1663—1693). The workmen numbered 250, 67 of whom were under the direction of Jans. The first three contractors directed the high-warp works, and the last two the low-warp.

The new manufactory displayed extraordinary activity ; in twenty-eight years, from 1663 to 1690, the date of Le Brun's death, it produced nineteen complete hangings, in high warp, covering a surface of 4,110 square ells, and representing a cost of 1,106,275 livres, not including the cartoons ; also thirty-four low-warp hangings, measuring 4,294 square ells, and costing 623,601 livres.

The chief of these hangings are, the "Acts of the Apostles," and the "Pictures of the Vatican," after Raphael ; the "Story of Moses," after Poussin and Le Brun ; the "History of the King," after Le Brun and Van der Meulen ; the "Months, or the Royal Palaces," by the same ; the "History of Alexander," the "Elements," and the "Seasons," after Le Brun ; the pictures of the gallery of St. Cloud, after Mignard ; the "Triumphs of the Gods," a free imitation of Noël Coypel, from ancient hangings attributed to Mantegna ; the "Triumph of

* A sum which would now be worth five or six times its amount ; 450 livres an ell would be equivalent to 1,925 francs the square yard.

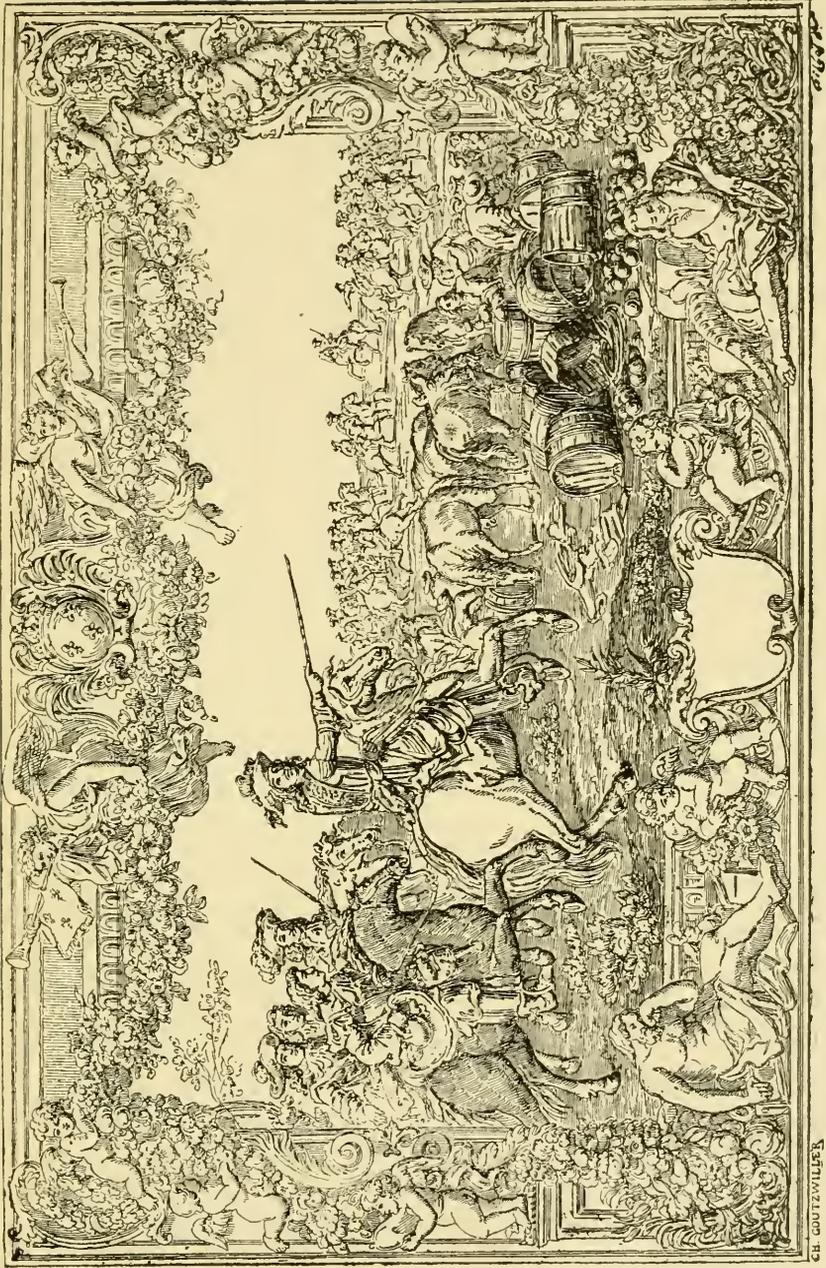


FIG. 70.—THE GREAT CONDÉ IN FLANDERS.
School of Le Brun. Silk-painting. (In the Gard-Meuble).

CH. GOUTZWILLER

Philosophy" and the "Triumph of Faith," also from Coypel. Many of these pieces were reproduced even five or six times. Towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV., the "Indian Hanging,"* in eight pieces, and the "Arabesques" of Raphael, also in eight pieces (arranged by Noel Coypel), were added to the preceding hangings.

We endeavoured at the beginning of this chapter to define the influence exercised by the director of the Gobelins, Le Brun, over tapestry, taken as a whole; we have now to ascertain what were the essential elements of the style personified in this master, who, we should remember, had a regular army of painters under his orders, for no less than forty-nine were employed for the royal manufactures alone, from 1663 to 1690.

If we examine the most beautiful of his hangings, the "History of the King," we are struck both by the accuracy and the abundance of the portraits, which give to the whole of this set such a stamp of truth; by the splendour of the costumes and of the furniture, by the skill in grouping, and by a certain gravity which is, nevertheless, true to nature. They are pages of history, presenting, together with accurate information, the grandeur of sentiment proper to the official painter of Louis XIV.; they are wrongly judged if looked upon only as pictures of ceremony, or show-pieces. Whilst, in the pieces representing the

* A copy of the "Indian Hanging" (anterior to 1725) is in the palace at Malta. See Darcel, "Rapport à Son Excellence le Gouverneur de l'île de Malte," Malta, 1881.



CH. GUTZWILLER

FIG. 71.—MARSHAL TURENNE.

After Van der Meulen. Gobelins Tapestry. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

coronation and marriage of Louis XIV., the majesty of the great king and the awe which he inspired in the Court exceed all other expression, there is also a kind of rustic grandeur about the honest ambassadors of the thirteen cantons coming to renew the oath of alliance between France and Switzerland ; and, in the visit of the king to the Gobelins, the simple eagerness of the artists bringing, one a silver vase, another a mosaic, a third a roll of tapestry, is admirable. These qualities are especially manifest on comparing the pieces of the "History of the King," which are the work of Le Brun, with those manufactured from the cartoons of Van der Meulen, that is to say, in a general way, battles. These latter are of inferior composition ; the art of balancing, that great secret recovered by Le Brun, is often wanting in them ; the groups are less solid, and the portraits less interesting.

In setting about the "History of Alexander," Le Brun was obliged to forego some of his advantages. Face to face with an ideal world, he could not depend on his skill in drawing portraits, and thus securing the memory of a contemporaneous ceremony by giving it the importance of a historical event. Imagination and grandeur of style were the qualities needed to outweigh all others. Let us at once add that this particular set is remarkable for a richness and an animation, not to say warmth of fancy, which frequently recall Rubens to mind.

I say nothing of the wonderful knowledge of decorative effect here displayed ; in order fairly to appreciate the work of Le Brun, it should be

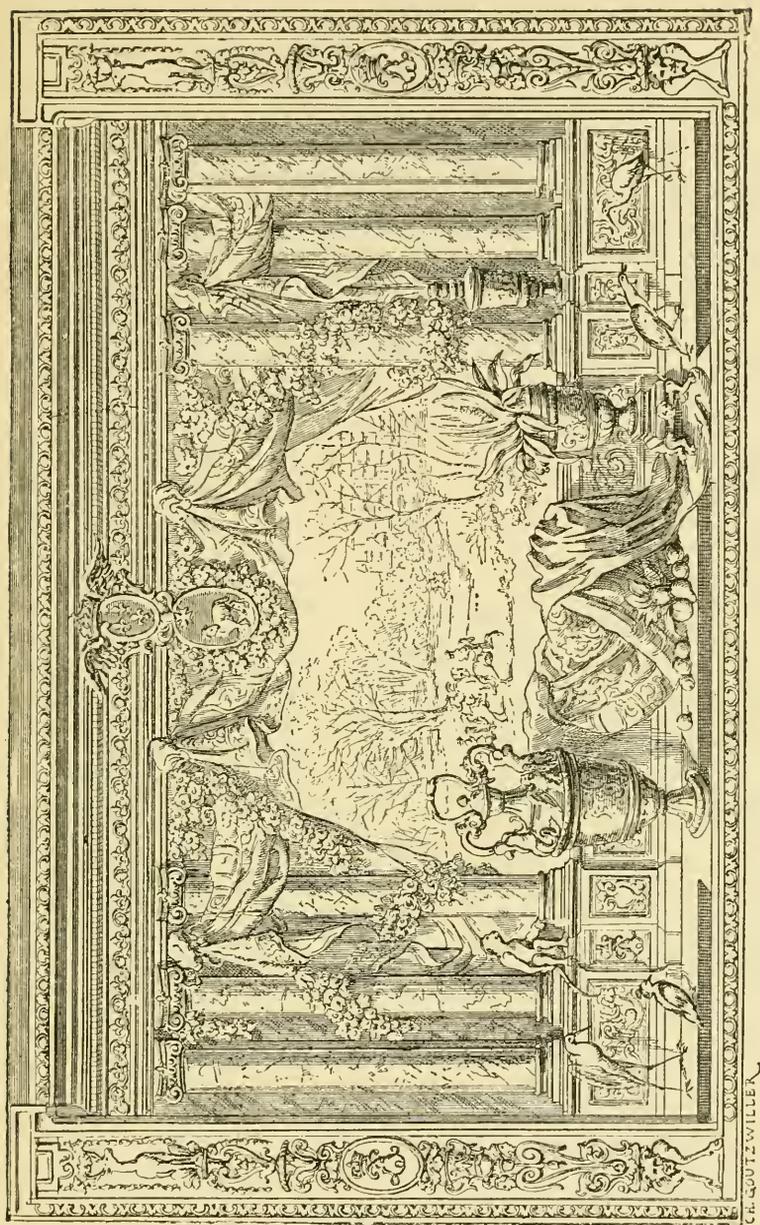


FIG. 72.—ROYAL PALACES: THE CHATEAU DE MADRID.
After Le Brun and Van der Meulen. Gobelins Tapestry. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

compared with "Moses exposed on the Waters," and the "Adoration of the Golden Calf," by Poussin, or with "Latona turning the Peasants into Frogs," by Mignard, which have frequently been exhibited at the "Palais de l'Industrie" at Paris.

In purely decorative hangings, or, as they are called by a contemporary, "sujets indifférents," Le Brun evinced a freedom of mind, a love of nature, and an imagination really surprising in an age of etiquette and pomp. He did not hesitate to consign the chief subject to the background when means presented themselves of adorning the foreground of the composition with more interesting objects. In the "Résidences royales," he placed a grimacing monkey in the first plane, with a cat assuming airs of dignity, another softly creeping towards a hedgehog, which bristles up at its approach, a spaniel springing on a bunch of flowers, and a woodcock attacking a crane; next comes a sort of portico, adorned with Savonnerie carpets, gold and silver vases, and garlands, intended simply to please the eye; whilst the king and queen are reduced to microscopic figures on horseback in the background of the picture. As for the Royal Palace, towards which the king and his suite direct their course, its form is guessed at rather than seen, in the haze of the horizon.

Le Brun had assiduously studied ancient hangings: the characteristics we have just noted authorise this statement, even if the fact were not proved by the imitation, in the borders of the "History of the

King," of certain forms in Raphael's "Acts of the Apostles."



FIG. 73.—MEDALLION IN THE BORDER OF "THE FOUR SEASONS."
After Le Brun. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

This profound knowledge of the laws of tapestry appeared in the manufacture of the cartoons, as well

as in their composition. According to M. Denuelle,* Le Brun only employed three planes; perspective was marked by the scale of details alone, which was always strictly observed. The first planes stood out in bold colouring from the background; and the painter's palette, more gorgeous than that of his predecessors, served to give greater brilliance to the compositions, without perverting their character. For the flesh-colours he had three scales only, one for men, another for women, and a third for children; this repetition of similar tones gave great harmony to the whole composition, and was balanced by the freedom of colours, each of which comprised six shades.

It is not to be denied, however, that Le Brun, in spite of his regard for the general principles of tapestry, sought to lessen the distance which separates that art from painting; it was with this view that he substituted designs in oils for the water-colour cartoons used by his predecessors. Those critics, indeed, who consider the strict imitation of a picture or a fresco as the first duty of tapestry, look upon the advent of this master as the ruin of that which they call "tapisserie industrielle." Need we say that there is still a great distance between this more literal reproduction and the servile copying of our day? By merely retaining gold for the draperies and the ornaments, Le Brun and his contemporaries asserted their wish to allow tapestry-workers their right of free will.

* "Rapport . . . au nom de la Commission de la Manufacture nationale des Gobelins," p. 24.

The last years of the seventeenth century had numerous trials in store for the favourite manufactory of Louis XIV. In 1690 it lost the eminent artist whose taste and zeal had so greatly contributed to

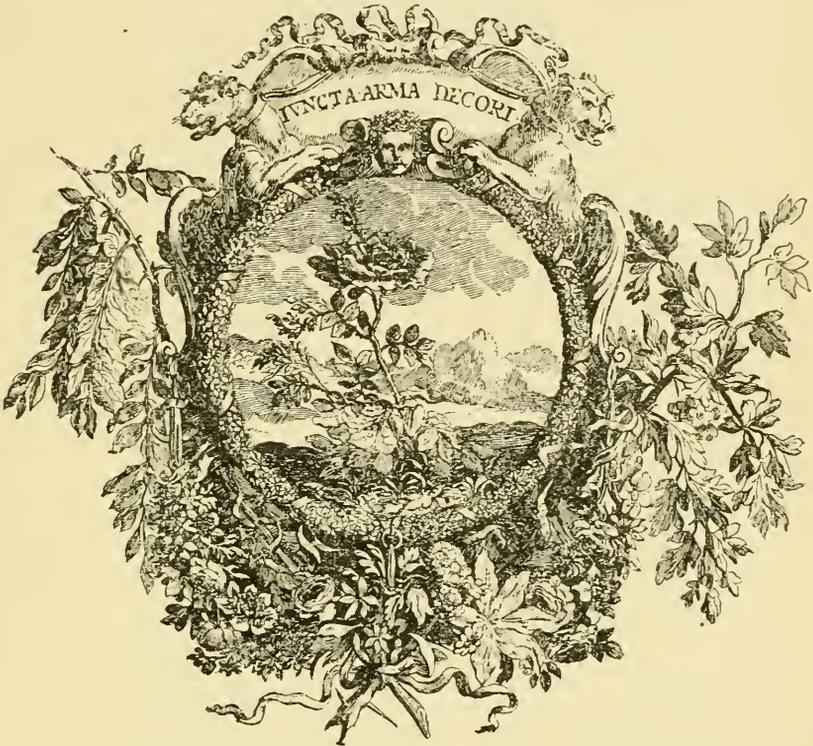


FIG. 74.—MEDALLION IN THE BORDER OF "THE FOUR SEASONS."
After Le Brun. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

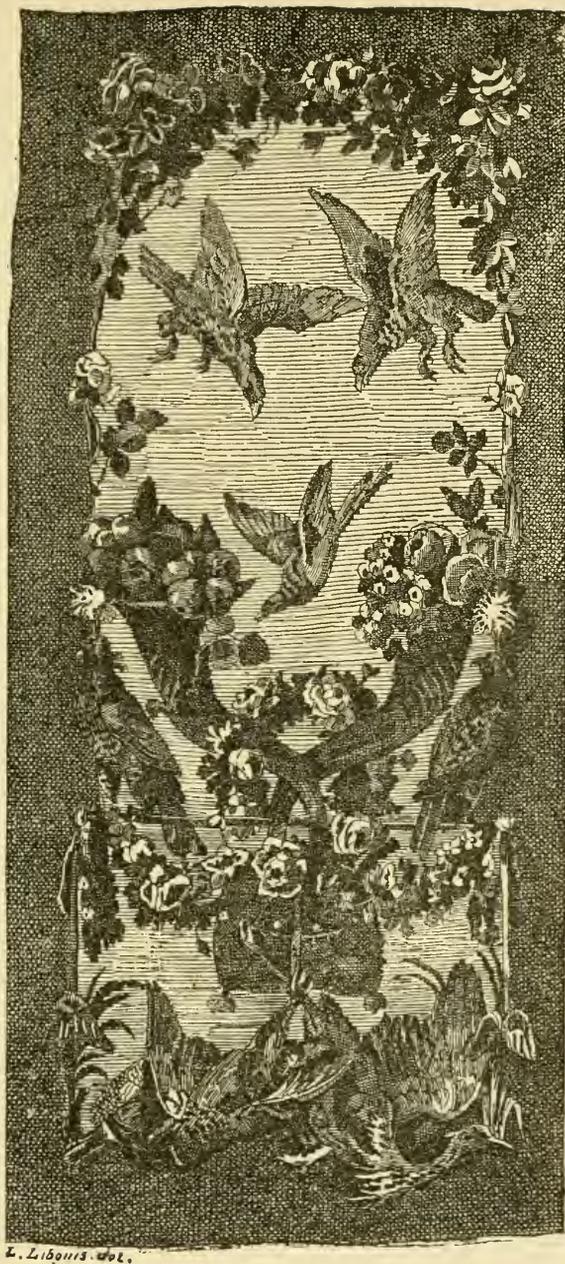
its prosperity. Le Brun was succeeded by Pierre Mignard (1690—1695), who was already very old, and who only marked his tenure of office by the formation of a school of drawing. The indifference of the new director would not perhaps have sufficed to

slacken the work, had not the expenses of war obliged the king to practise the strictest economy. In 1691, and even in 1693, several new contractors were nominated—Jans fils (high-warp, 1691—1731), De la Croix fils (low-warp, 1693—1737), Souette (low-warp, 1693—1724), and De la Fraye (low-warp, 1693—1729); but in 1694 the king was forced to take a decided step, and close the establishment: twenty-one workmen entered the army, twenty-three returned to Flanders, and others sought occupation at Beauvais. The Peace of Ryswick, in 1697, enabled Louis XIV. to re-open the workshops, and the same year the king gave a contractor's post to Lefèvre fils, who held it till 1736.

The appointment of J. H. Mansart as superintendent of the royal buildings, arts and manufactures of the kingdom (1699), gave renewed importance to the manufactory, and restored, in part, at least, its prosperity. It appears, however, to have restricted itself during his administration, and under the special direction of Robert de Cotte (1699—1735), to the reproduction of old sets, without thinking of ordering fresh cartoons. Le Blond (low-warp, 1701—1751), and De la Tour (high-warp, 1703—1734), were added to the preceding contractors.*

At the same time that Louis XIV. founded the Gobelins, he re-organised the carpet workshops, both that of the Louvre, directed by the descendants of

* We take these various accounts from the work of M. Lacordaire, and from the "Notice historique sur la manufacture nationale de Tapisseries des Gobelins et de Tapis de la Savonnerie." Paris, 1873.



L. Ligois del.

FIG 75.— A SCREEN—TEMP. LOUIS XIV.
Savonnerie Manufactory. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

Pierre Dupont, and that of the Savonnerie, managed by the heirs of Simon Lourdet. The painters appointed to supply designs for these workshops were Baptiste Monnoyer, the skilful painter of flowers and fruit, Francart, De Blain de Fontenay, Le Moyne, and Baudrin Yvart. A few of their carpets, among which that intended for the Apollo Gallery at the Louvre is specially noticeable, are still extant in the Garde-Meuble. Their ornamentation consists of large scrolls of acanthus-leaf, combined with flowers and mouldings encircling either groundwork of various colours, or medallions representing figures in cameo or landscapes.* Notwithstanding the title of "Tapis à la façon de Turquie," given to their productions, the Duponts and the Lourdets occasionally attempted to reproduce historical pictures. Amongst these is "The Everlasting Father," exhibited at Paris in 1876 by the Union Centrale.

The foundation of the royal manufactory of Beauvais very closely followed that of the Gobelins. A Parisian tapestry-worker, Louis Hinart, having formed the project of establishing some tapestry workshops, "de la manière de celles de Flandres," obtained from the king, in 1664, a subsidy of 10,000 livres, intended for the first purchases, and a second of 30,000 livres, for the purchase or the construction of a habitation, besides numerous privileges. Hinart undertook on his part to employ one hundred work-

* See the work of M. Darcel at the commencement of the reprint of "La Stromatourgie," by Pierre Dupont, p. 44. Paris, 1882.

men the first year, two hundred the second, and so on till in the sixth year he numbered six hundred.

In spite of the encouragement of Louis XIV., the new Beauvais manufactory had difficulty in prospering, owing chiefly to the negligence of Hinart and his son. Its career only became successful in 1684, under the skilful direction of Philippe Behacle, a weaver of Tours. In 1694, when the Gobelins closed, his position was sufficiently flourishing to allow of his receiving and employing some of the workmen discharged from the Parisian establishment. In 1698 the Beauvais workshop produced a series of tapestries relieved with gold for the King of Sweden; it then employed eighty workmen. In 1704 the manufactory lost, in Behacle, the artist who had laid the foundation of its reputation.

The chief hanging made in the workshop of Beauvais was a set of the "Acts of the Apostles," now preserved in the Cathedral of Beauvais. The memorandum drawn up in 1718 by the tapestry-weavers of Paris also mentioned among its productions the "Conquests of Louis the Great," the "Adventures of Telemachus," after cartoons by Arnault, and some "Verdures." We shall recur to this establishment when we speak of the eighteenth century.

The tapestry workshops of the "Marche," of which

* See the "Notice historique sur la Manufacture royale de Tapisseries de Beauvais," by Dubos, Beauvais, 1834; the "Notes d'un Curieux: l'Atelier de Beauvais," par M. de Boyer de Sainte-Suzanne-Monaco, 1876; and the article of M. Gerspach in the "Revue des Arts décoratifs," vol. i., pp. 513—523; vol. ii., pp. 37—47.

the origin is lost in the obscurity of the past, attracted for a time, but did not fix, the attention of the king and his all-powerful minister. By letters patent of the month of July, 1665, Louis XIV. authorised the manufactory of Aubusson to assume the title of Royal Manufactory of Tapestries. He further decided that, "as the perfection of the said tapestries depends especially on good designs and the dyeing of the wools, in order to improve the said works and to treat favourably the workmen that should apply themselves to them . . . a good painter, selected by the sieur Colbert, should be maintained at his cost to make designs for the tapestries manufactured in the said town; and there should also be established in it a master dyer to colour the wools employed in the said manufactory."*

These wise regulations, unfortunately, remained a mere dead-letter. For upwards of half a century Aubusson waited for the painter and the dyer promised by the king. Taste, therefore, continued perverted, and, further, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes carried off from the town a part of its best workmen.

If we consider this unfortunate state of things, we cannot be surprised at the severity with which the Parisian tapestry-workers in 1718 judged the productions of Aubusson. "The beginning was tolerably good, but this was not lasting, so that this

* Perathon, "Notice sur les Manufactures de Tapisseries d'Aubusson, de Felletin et de Bellegarde," p. 59. Limoges, 1862.

manufactory is now the least esteemed in all Europe. The low-warp is alone worked there, and that in a flat, harsh, and cold style, resembling nothing in nature; the figures are intolerable for the want of drawing, and the employment of bad wool and bad dyes utterly disgraces them.”*

Felletin, the neighbour and rival of Aubusson, fares no better. “We were inclined not to speak of a species of manufacture styled ‘de Feuilletin,’ which is a suitable name for it; but, as our intention is to take all these manufactories in their order, we will here say two words concerning it. It is even worse than that of Aubusson. Its wools are bad and generally mixed with bristles, and its designs are confused and badly arranged. Such tapestries, in fact, are more suitable as attractions for worms than for the admiration of men.”

Tapestry at Lille, after vegetating during many long years, took a new start in the period which succeeded the French conquest (1667). In 1677 Georges Blommart founded there a low-warp workshop, in which he undertook to employ constantly at least three looms. When Blommart, attracted by the special advantages offered him by the manufactory of Beauvais, left Lille in 1684, he was at once replaced by François Pannemaker and his son André, descendants of the family that had so distinguished itself in the high-warp art in the fifteenth century.

* Deville, “Recueil de Statuts et de Documents relatifs à la Corporation des Tapissiers,” p. 115.

For half a century the new-comers supplied (chiefly with "verdures") all the mansions of Lille and its environs, though they had to strive with a serious competitor, Jean de Melter of Brussels, who settled in Lille in 1688. Several tapestries from this workshop have come down to us, including the "Virgin and Child," after Rubens, and some compositions in the style of Teniers—"Tenières," as they were then called.*

In order to complete the list of French productions at this period of unequalled activity, we must also mention the looms set up at Nancy in the early part of the seventeenth century, first under the direction of Germain Labbé (1604), then under that of Isaac de Hamela, of Bernard, and Melchior van der Hamciden. These workshops were in operation until about 1625.†

* Houdoy, "Les Tapisseries de haute lisse. Histoire de la Fabrication lilloise du XIV^e au XVIII^e siècle," pp. 86—97. Lille and Paris, 1871.

† See "Les Tapisseries de Nancy," by E. Müntz, pp. 7—9: Nancy, 1883. (Extract from "Mémoires de la Société d'Archéologie Lorraine.")

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (*continued*).

 TAPESTRY IN FLANDERS, ITALY, GERMANY, ENGLAND,
DENMARK, AND RUSSIA.

IN the latter half of the sixteenth century, when the star of the Renaissance was paling, Brussels, as we have seen, embarked on the deplorable road of cheapness and excessive production, and did not pause on the fatal incline. Innumerable hangings certainly issued from its workshops, but the taste and technical perfection which had insured the great reputation of the Flemish capital were at an end. The fabric lost more and more its delicacy, the colouring its harmony and brilliancy; the scale of tones was alternately violent or dull, especially dull, as is stated, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, by the Parisian tapestry-weavers: "Since the formation of the Gobelins, Brussels has adopted a sombre and brown style for the flesh-colours, and has frequently employed bad dyes." The extension of the low-warp, which at one time entirely superseded the high-warp, appears to have greatly contributed to this decline.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the corporation of tapestry-workers included upwards of

a hundred masters, and from fourteen to fifteen hundred workmen. The manufacture tended, indeed, more and more to become concentrated in the hands of a few families, who formed positive dynasties. We cite amongst these the Leyniers, the Raës, the Van den Heckes, the Auwerx, the Van der Borchts or De Castros, and the De Vos. In 1613, to mention only one example, nine masters alone employed six hundred workmen, wives and children not included.*

As this industrial aristocracy made great efforts to keep up the manufacturing superiority which was slipping away (in six years several masters spent 30,000 florins for cartoons alone), so the municipality omitted nothing that could serve to protect the local industry. Above all it placed the greatest obstacles in the way of the expatriation of the workmen, lest they should establish rival workshops in foreign lands.

The Brussels workshops, after having had for a time the good fortune to interpret the cartoons of Rubens, were soon reduced to the productions of obscure painters, now justly forgotten. About the middle of the century David Teniers gave them once more a certain impetus by means of his rustic compositions, "les Tenières"; but the remedy was worse than the disease. In this respect the judicious reflections of Charles Blanc cannot be over-praised: "My companion and I were shocked, on visiting the Escorial, at the Flemish hangings there exhibited in

* Wauters, "Tapisseries bruxelloises," pp. 207, 224.

the apartments of the Queen and the Infantas. The peasant scenes of Teniers, the point of which lies in



FIG. 76.—RUSTIC SCENE, in the style of Teniers.
 (Museum of Madrid.)

the touch, so exquisitely delicate, of the artist who painted them in miniature, appear revoltingly vulgar

when reproduced on a large scale in tapestry. Rustics and awkward women, apparently fashioned with bill-hooks, clowns who lift their glasses too high when they drink, and their feet when they dance, clash with the austere magnificence of a palace filled with the terrible memory of Philip II. ; while the eye is positively afflicted by the unfortunate enlargement of their misshapen figures !” *

Amongst the most interesting hangings of the Brussels workshops in the seventeenth century, we cite the “Stag Hunt,” a series of six pieces, exhibited in 1876 by the “Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l’Industrie” (from the workshop of Evrard Leyniers, 1597—1680); the “History of Count Moncada” (in the same exhibition, from the workshop of Albert Auwerx); † and the “History of Alexander,” after Le Brun (same exhibition, from the workshop of J. F. van den Hecke).

In addition to these, they continued, during the whole of the seventeenth century, to reproduce the cartoons of the preceding period. It was thus that Jean Raës wove, in 1620, the “Acts of the Apostles,” by Raphael, for the Bare-footed Carmelites of Brussels. ‡ This suite is noticeable for its strong and severe colouring.

* “Grammaire des Arts décoratifs,” p. 96.

† One piece of this series has been published in “Les Tapisseries,” by M. Castel, p. 142.

‡ See E. About and F. Bauer, “Tapisseries du XVIII^e siècle exécutées d’après les Cartons de Raphaël, par Jean Raës, de Bruxelles.” Paris, 1875.

In Italy, where the manufacture of tapestries had so flourished [at the time of the Renaissance,



FIG. 77.—STAG HUNT.

Brussels Tapestry of the Seventeenth Century. (In the collection of M. Delpech-Buytet, at Agen.)

only two manufactories, those of Florence and of Rome, existed in the seventeenth century, with the

exception of a few looms set up from time to time in Venice.

The Florentine manufactory, after languishing for a long time, made a fresh start under the reign of Ferdinand II. (1621—1670); innumerable hangings, lately exhibited in the galleries of the Egyptian Museum of Florence, testify to its productiveness, we cannot say its taste. The workshops re-organised by Ferdinand were indeed conspicuous for feverish productiveness, not for purity of drawing or harmony of colouring. Decorative feeling was absolutely wanting in the pretentious cartoons expressly designed for reproduction in tapestry, when they did not content themselves with unconditionally copying oil pictures (*e.g.* two "Pietàs," one after Cigoli, the other after a picture attributed to Michael Angelo, both framed; the "Madonna, with the Child and Saints," after Raphael; the "Holy Family," after Andrea del Sarto, &c.).

During the seventeenth century the Florentine manufactory identified itself in some degree with a master-artist worthy of a better fate, the Parisian Pierre Fèvre, or Le Fèvre, for whom the Court of France sent on several occasions to re-organise the tapestry workshops of the capital. Having settled in Florence about 1620, Pierre Fèvre died there in 1669. In the present author's "Tapisseries Italiennes" will be found a long list of the tapestries to which Fèvre put his name, and also one of those of his no less indefatigable colleague, Bernardin van Hasselt.

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century



FIG. 78.—ELECTION OF URBAN VIII.
Roman Tapestry of the Seventeenth Century. (In the Barberini Palace at Rome.)

the low-warp manufacture replaced in the Florentine workshop the high-warp method, which had hitherto been exclusively employed; this substitution continued until the first years of the succeeding century.

The manufactory founded at Rome between 1630 and 1635, by the all-powerful Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew of the reigning Pope Urban VIII., did not display an activity equal to that of the Medicean establishment, but distinguished itself by a judicious selection of cartoons, of which the execution was entrusted to the pupils of Pietro da Cortona, and to the famous Giovanni Francesco Romanelli. The director of the Pontifical manufactory was Giacomo della Riviera; two tapestry-weavers worked under his orders—one, Antoine, a native of France; the other, Michel, of the Netherlands.

The "Mysteries of the Life and Death of Christ," after Romanelli, still preserved in the Barberini palace, is the chief hanging produced by the manufactory directed by Giacomo della Riviera. With these should be mentioned the "Children Playing," a reproduction of the hangings composed for Leo X.

The death of Urban VIII. (1644) and the expulsion of his nephews arrested the career of the manufacture, which, however, resumed some activity after 1660. At that time the tapestry-weavers of the Barberini were engaged on a "History of Urban VIII.," which is still to be seen at the Barberini Palace. They also accepted orders from without; the D'Este family in particular entrusted the execution of several pieces to them.

In Germany, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a great effort was assuredly made; but it had not the extensive range of those to which Henry IV. was devoting himself at the same period. In fact, Duke Maximilian I. of Bavaria (1573—1651), surnamed the Great, in calling around him foreign tapestry-workers, had no intention of introducing either the high or the low-warp art into his States; he merely desired to have a certain number of hangings executed for the decoration of the palace. After some negotiations with the weavers established at Frankenthal, in the Palatinate, he had recourse to the home, above all others, of tapestry, *i.e.*, Flanders. In 1604 he persuaded John van der Biest, of Enghien, and six other masters, to establish themselves in Munich. The new manufactory developed rapidly; at one time it numbered twenty workmen. Amongst the tapestry-workers who successively placed themselves under the direction of John van der Biest, we notice Germain Labbé, the future director of the Nancy workshop, and Paul van Neuenhoven, the designer of the "Story of Noah," preserved at Madrid.

The suites made at Munich from 1604 till the suppression of the manufactory, in 1615, still exist. Amongst them are the "History of the House of Bavaria," the "Months," the "Seasons," and "Night and Day." If these hangings proclaim the magnificence of the duke, they do not, unfortunately, do equal credit to his taste. The painter to whom he entrusted the designing of the chief cartoons, Peter de Witte, or Pietro Candido, the Fleming, possessed

none of the qualities needed in a decorator ; heaviness, vulgarity, and want of balance were the characteristics of the tapestries woven from his compositions.

After a long pause, the manufacture of tapestries recovered some importance subsequent to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In 1686 a refugee from Aubusson, Pierre Mercier, obtained a patent from the great Elector authorising him to manufacture tapestries of all qualities ; the most delicate ones in gold, silver, silk, and wool, extending to 200 ells ; others of an inferior quality, without gold or silver, also of 200 ells ; and again others, in the composition of which there was less silk, of 320 ells. For the execution of this extensive work, the Elector provided Pierre Mercier with all the gold and silver thread he might require, and gave him, besides, a sum of 2,400 crowns to cover the salary of nine workmen. The cartoons were ordered of the brothers Casteel, who were specially sent for from Brabant.

The manufacture acquired particular celebrity during the reign of Frederick I. (1688—1713). The decoration of the palaces of Berlin, Potsdam, and other towns offered great scope for its operations.

Tapestries from this manufactory are still to be seen at the palace of Berlin, those in particular in the queen's audience hall. These pieces, which date from 1693, represent the chief exploits of the great Elector : the "Descent on the Island of Rugen," the "Battle of Warsaw," the "Taking of Wolgart," the "Winter Expedition into Prussia," the "Battle of Fehrbellin," and the "Taking of Stralsund."

During the Middle Ages, and also during the Renaissance, England had shown but slight interest in tapestry. In the seventeenth century she suddenly appeared on the scene with a splendid enterprise, which now claims our attention.

The creation of the manufactory at Mortlake is not only a notable event in the history of English art, but also in the annals of European manufacture. The names of two illustrious painters, Rubens and Van Dyck, are connected with this establishment, which also distinguished itself by weaving the "Acts of the Apostles" and the "History of Vulcan." The technical perfection equalled the beauty of the models. During the whole of the seventeenth century it may safely be said that the work of Mortlake had no rivalry to fear except that of the Gobelins.

The manufactory of Mortlake was established by James I. (1603—1625). In 1619 this king sent for a number of skilful tapestry-workers from Flanders, settled them at Mortlake, a few miles from London, and placed them under the direction of Sir Francis Crane, Chancellor of the Order of the Garter. A yearly subsidy of £2,000, and the encouragement of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Buckingham, and other members of the aristocracy, enabled the new establishment to develop rapidly.*

In the month of November, 1620, the Secretary of the Embassy of the Archdukes in London notified

* "Calendar of State Papers : " Domestic Series, p. 71. 1619.

to his masters this enterprise, calculated to inspire the most serious fears in the Netherlands, and estimated at upwards of fifty the number of workmen recruited from the other side of the Channel. The inquiry set on foot by the archdukes showed the cleverness with which the English Government had accomplished the engagement of these workmen; it also furnishes us with the names of some of the emigrants: Josse Ampe, of Bruges; Josse Inghels, Jacques Hendricx, Pierre Foquentin, and Simon Heyns, of Oudenarde. The Van Quickelberghes, of Oudenarde, who came to England about 1630,* probably also contributed to the works of the new manufactory.

It is difficult now to understand the real state of the manufactory, its resources, and its prosperity. Sir Francis, by his own account, devoted upwards of £16,000 to the undertaking; and in a letter to King James he expressly declared that he had exhausted his resources.† On the other hand, the author of a report presented to King Charles about 1630, cites the enormous profit realised by the director of Mortlake; he estimates it at upwards of £12,000 for four copies of the "History of Vulcan," and other suites, without considering the advantage he derived

* Wauters, "Les Tapisseries bruxelloises," p. 194.

† "I am out already above £16,000 in this busynes, and never made returne of more than £2,500, so that my estate is wholly exhausted, and my credit so spent besides the debts that lye upon me, that I protest unto your Majestie (before Almightye God) I knowe not how to give continuance to the busynes one month longer. . . ." —(*The European Magazine*, October, 1786, p. 285.)

from the sale of tapestries to private individuals.* It



FIG. 79—THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.
After Raphael. (Tapestry of the Mortlake Manufactory.)

is, however, certain that whilst Sir Francis was extremely zealous in his pursuit of the work, Charles I.

* (1630?) "Discovery of the great gain made by the manufacture of the tapestry. By four copies of the tapestry of Vulcan and Venus, manufactured for the king, together with other allowances also made by the king, the patentee had made a gain of £12,255, besides his gain on other copies, some sold here and others exported." ("Calendar of State Papers : " Domestic Series, 1629—1631, p. 441.)

lavished gold on him without hesitation,* although the payments were not always as regular as might have been desired. Thus, in 1630, the king owed the contractor £7,500, for guarantee of which sum he proposed to mortgage to him the demesne of Grafton in Northamptonshire, where at one time it was proposed to establish the manufactory.†

The aim set before the manufactory by James I. and Charles I. was twofold : on the one hand, it was to reproduce old classical suites ; and, on the other, to interpret the new compositions, amidst which, as we shall see, portraits of the sovereigns were included. The first of these aspirations was satisfied by the purchase of the cartoons of the " Acts of the Apostles," and probably also of those of the " History of Vulcan." A laborious and skilful painter, Francis Cleyn, or Klein, of Rostock in Mecklenburg (d. 1658), was at the same time commissioned both to adapt the old suites and to compose new ones.‡ On copies from the cartoons of Raphael, the inscription " J. (?) Clein fec: anno 1646," § was seen. It is probable that Jean Gaspard Baptist (d. 1691) also worked for Mortlake. We know, at least, that this artist excelled in the drawing of tapestries.||

But other and more illustrious masters were soon

* "Calendar of State Papers:" Domestic Series, 1623—1625, pp. 364, 445, 623; 1631—1633, p. 110; 1633—1634, p. 474.

† *Ibid.*, 1629—1631, p. 442.

‡ Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting," vol. ii., p. 26.

§ Fiorillo, "Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste," vol. v., p. 339.

|| Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters," edit. 1810.

connected with the destinies of the royal manufactory. Rubens painted for it six sketches of the "Story of Achilles,"* and Van Dyck composed for it, according to one of his latest biographers, the cartoons of the borders of the "Acts of the Apostles," which are marvels of imagination and elegance. With regard to the connection of the favourite painter of Charles I. with the director of Mortlake, we possess a document of the highest interest, a tapestry containing the portraits of Van Dyck and of Sir Francis Crane (see below).

The illustrious pupil of Rubens, according to one of his biographers, also conceived the idea of a series of tapestries intended to eclipse all others, past, present, and to come. He proposed to Charles I. to design, for the great saloon of Whitehall, cartoons representing the Election of the King, the Institution of the Order of the Garter, the Procession of Knights, and various other military and civil ceremonies. Their dimensions were to be double those of the "Acts of the Apostles." Unhappily the artist, at the height of his glory and fortune, made such exaggerated claims that they caused even Charles I. to hesitate; he demanded, for the paintings alone, 300,000 crowns, a sum now equal to several millions, and which would certainly have been doubled or trebled by the cost of the tapestry-work.† The only

* Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting," vol. i., p. 308, note; and vol. ii., p. 26, note.

† Bellori, "Vite dei Pittori, scultori ed architetti moderni," edit. 1821, vol. i., p. 268.

relic of this gigantic project is a sketch of the "Procession of Knights," a rich and spirited composition in the style of Veronese, with a magnificent architectural background.*

The death of the founder of the manufactory caused the work to slacken for a time. The historians of tapestry have represented Sir Francis Crane as living till 1703, and thus prolonging his existence far beyond that of the establishment with which his name is connected, but this is incorrect. Some papers published by the Record Office show us that Sir Francis Crane went to Paris in 1636 to undergo an operation, from the effects of which he died on the 26th of June in the same year.†

The king at this time owed Crane a considerable sum, £5,811 3s. 8d., for the "History of Hero and Leander," the "Acts of the Apostles," the "History of Diana and Calisto," a suite of "Horses," and several other pieces, eight of which were yet on the loom. This debt passed on to Richard Crane, the brother of Sir Francis.‡ He, in his turn, owed the workmen £545 3s. 8d. A petition from these latter to the king

* Engraved in "Van Dyck," published by M. Quantin, p. 213.

† "Calendar of State Papers:" Domestic Series, 1635—1636, pp. 274, 321, 372; 1636—1637, pp. 25, 56; 1637—1638, p. 256.

‡ "1636, 9th March. Warrant to pay to Sir Francis Crane, £2,872 for three pieces of tapestry, one of the History of Hero and Leander, containing 284 Flemish ells, at £6 the ell, which amounts to £1,704; a piece of St. Paul and Elymas the sorcerer, containing 83 ells, at £8 the ell, which amounts to £664; and one other piece of Diana and Calisto, containing 63 ells, which, at £8 the ell, amounts to £504." ("Calendar of State Papers:" Domestic Series, 1635—1636, p. 280. Cf. 1637, p. 197.)

reveals their distress, and shows that the manufactory at that time employed 140 persons, including probably women and children.*

According to an agreement made in 1637, the king granted the workmen an annual subsidy of £2,000, and they, on their side, undertook to deliver 600 ells a year, and to burden themselves with the apprenticeship of foundlings. Francis Cleyn, the painter attached to the manufactory, was to receive a separate salary of £250 a year on condition of employing an assistant.† The following year a suite of the "Story of St. Paul," of 306½ Flemish ells, was sold for the sum of £804 11s. 3d. in order to cover the expenses.‡

During this first period Mortlake displayed unparalleled activity. In looking over the inventories of the time, one is surprised at the multiplicity of hangings produced in the comparatively short space of twenty-five or thirty years. First, the "Acts of the Apostles," now preserved in the National Garde-Meuble.§ Then came the "History of Vulcan," a repetition of the suite woven in Brussels in the sixteenth century, but with different borders.|| A copy of this hanging is also to be seen in the National Garde-Meuble.¶ There were besides three pieces of it in

* "Calendar of State Papers:" Domestic Series, 1636—1637, p. 278.

† *Ibid.*, 1636—1637, p. 567.

‡ *Ibid.*, 1637—1638, p. 173.

§ Mazarin possessed a copy in four pieces, with a different border.

|| See Union Centrale, Exhibition of 1876. Catalogue, Nos. 228, 229, 298, 302.

¶ Amongst the tapestries taken by Louis XIV. in the collection of

the Mazarin collection. The cardinal also possessed the "Five Senses," in wool and silk, with grotesques on a blue background, each piece having in the centre a medallion representing one of the said "Senses" surrounded by a golden-coloured border containing terminals, medallions, cartouches, and shells, and at the top, in the midst of this border, a shield with the arms of England. This tapestry was $2\frac{3}{4}$ ells high, and 18 long. Another copy, sold in 1649 for £270 sterling, was formerly at Oatlands; some of the cartoons are said to be still at Hampton Court.* The "Twelve Months," in wool and silk, raised with gold and silver, was another acquisition from the English made by the fortunate Italian. This series consisted of six pieces, each representing two months, with a border of festoons, cartouches, amorini, and medallions, in bas-relief, on a gold and brown background; there were scrolls in the cartouches, and the cipher of the King of England in the centre of the lower border. (The height was $2\frac{2}{3}$ ells.)† According to M. de Boyer de Sainte-Suzanne, there is another

Fouquet was that of the "Fable of Vulcan;" eight pieces, valued at 11,789 livres; height, $3\frac{2}{3}$ ells; length, 37 ells. This copy is evidently similar to that in the National Garde-Meuble. See Bonnaffé, "Le Surintendant Fouquet," pp. 47, 84.

* Walpole, "Anecdotes of Painting," vol. i., pp. 235-237.

† "The Prince (of Wales) gave me order to go in hande with a rich suit of the months, and to send to Genua for certayne drawings of Raphaell of Urbin, which were dessignes for tapestries, made for Pope Leo X., and for which there is £300 to be payed, besides their charge of bringing home." (Letter of Crane's, *The European Magazine*, 1786, *loc. cit.*)

copy, without gold, in the National Garde-Meuble.* Many other suites are noted in the inventory of Mazarin, under the title of "English Manufacture," but the author of whom we have just spoken throws doubts on their production which seem to us well-founded. On the other hand, we find in the inventory of Fouquet a piece of English high-warp tapestry, on which were represented the "Pilgrims of Emmaus."† We may also mention the full-length portraits of James I. and Charles I., and those of their wives, and of the King of Denmark, with medallions of the royal children in the borders (in the collection of Lord Orford, at Houghton);‡ the portraits of Van Dyck and of Sir Francis Crane, at Knole; another half-length portrait of Sir Francis, with the collar of St. George, in the possession of Mrs. Markham, whose maiden name was Crane; a "St. George killing the Dragon," belonging to the same lady (probably identical with the copy of Raphael's "St. George," preserved at Lord Clifford's, at Irnham, Lincolnshire); § the "Four Seasons," ordered by the Archbishop William of York, for the sum of £2,500; || and finally, the "History of Hero

* In the second edition of the "Anecdotes of Painting," a hanging, representing the "Twelve Months," in separate compartments, is also spoken of; it was formerly preserved by Lord Ilchester, at Redlinch, in Somersetshire. Walpole states that he saw several other copies of the same suite; the cartoons, he adds, were of the time of Francis I.

† Bonnaffé, *ibid.*

‡ Walpole, *loc. cit.*

§ Passavant, "Raphael," ii., p. 44.

|| Deville, "Recueil des Statuts et Documents relatifs à la Corporation des Tapissiers."

and Leander," that of "Diana and Calisto," and a suite of "Horses."

The Parisian jurors, in their report of 1718, judged the tapestries of Mortlake very well. After speaking of the excellent choice of models, taken from Raphael and Giulio Romano, and noting the even and soft texture resulting from the employment of the beautiful English wools, they criticise the colouring, which, they say, was not first-rate.* The hangings of Mortlake, indeed, have not the transparency and brilliancy of those of the Gobelins; their general aspect is somewhat dull and muddy, whether it was that they darkened afterwards, or were defective in tone from the beginning. This defect is particularly striking if we compare the copy of the "History of Vulcan," woven in the sixteenth century at Brussels, with that of the manufactory established by James I. We must at the same time add that the Flemish workshops had already shown signs of this degeneration.

The death of Sir Francis greatly compromised the scope of the manufactory of Mortlake; whilst the poverty of the Treasury, and, especially, the civil troubles, menaced its very existence. After the execution of Charles I., Cromwell caused the valuable collections formed by the unfortunate king to be sold by auction. The tapestries and pictures found a home in France. As for the manufactory which had produced so many marvels, it lingered miserably, only too thankful not to be utterly wrecked in the

* Lysons, "Environs of London."

awful tempest. It appears, from an inquiry ordered by Parliament, that at this time the establishment comprised one hall, 80 feet long by 20 feet broad, with twelve looms; another, half the size, with six looms, and a painting or "limning room."*

After the restoration of the Stuarts, in 1661, Sir Sackville Crow called the attention of Charles II. to the decline of the manufactory which had thrown so much lustre over the reigns of his father and grandfather, and offered to undertake its restoration. The "Council for Trade" issued a vote favourable to this demand, and especially mentioned the necessity for placing a heavy tax on foreign tapestries, and for forming a corporation, which should at first be under the control of the king, but should eventually be thrown open to all candidates.† In 1662 Sir Sackville Crow was appointed director of the manufactory, with, apparently, an annual subsidy of £1,000. He filled this office till 1667, at which time the Earl of Craven and other lords undertook, at their own risk and peril, the maintenance of the establishment, once again much compromised. There is a lack of detail concerning this new phase of English tapestry. We only know that Charles II. entrusted the composition of the cartoons needed by the manufactory to the painter Verrio. The naval "Battle of Solebay," ordered by Charles II. subsequent to the year 1672, and now preserved at Hampton Court,‡ does not

* Calendars : Domestic Series, 1661—1662, pp. 110, 111, 277, 611.

† *Ibid.*, 1667, pp. 46, 417, 597.

‡ Countess of Wilton, "The Art of Needlework," p. 341.

appear to be connected with these very fragmentary efforts.

It is improbable that the manufactory of Mortlake survived the Revolution of 1688. The founder of the Orange dynasty called on the Flemings to perpetuate the memory of his victories. The painter Jean Lottin, and the tapestry-workers Clerck, Vander Borcht, De Vos, and Cobus, were commissioned by William III. to execute the "Battle of Bresgate," the "Descent on Torbay," and the "Battle of the Boyne."*

At the time that now occupies our attention, Denmark also possessed high-warp workshops. A letter from the Duke of Bavaria, dated 1604, informs us that, a little previously, twenty-six Flemish tapestry-workers had come to that country to ply their craft, probably at the request of the king, Christian IV. (1588—1648).

About the end of the century, the brothers Van der Ecken directed, in the same country, the manufacture of Kiôge, founded by Christian V. (1670—1699). The walls of the Hall of the Knights, at the Castle of Rosenborg, are covered with twelve beautiful tapestries produced by this manufactory. These tapestries, executed from cartoons by the painter Peter Andersen, are inferior, from an artistic point of view, to the older tapestries of the Elsinor Castle (Kronberg), now preserved in the Prinzen Palace, but the colours are much more brilliant; they represent various episodes in the Scania war. We may mention, among the best executed subjects, the "Battle of Oland," which took place

* Wauters, "Les Tapisseries bruxelloises," p. 271.

on the 1st of June, 1676. All the figures of important personages are actual portraits, and an inscription in German, placed above these tapestries, describes their subjects. These hangings are 16 feet long by 13 high.*

In the seventeenth century, tapestry penetrated even into the depths of Russia. In 1607, Martin Stuerbout, from Antwerp, directed a high-warp workshop in Moscow. †

* Casati, "Notice sur le Musée du Château de Rosenborg, en Danemark," p. 17, Paris, 1879.

† "Almanak de Sante-Lucas Gilde voor " 1855, p. 51.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

TAPESTRY IN FRANCE.
THE GOBELINS AND BEAUVAIS.—OUDRY AND BOUCHER.

IN the eighteenth century tapestry submitted with perfect docility to the requirements and taste of the period—a period as lively, intellectual, and frivolous as that of the age of Louis XIV. had been grave and solemn. The pursuit of elegance and grace caused that of greatness to be forgotten; boudoirs replaced the vast and sumptuous saloons of the preceding age; minor art dethroned grand art. Historical compositions and memorial hangings were thrown aside; henceforth to be short and smart was the chief merit of a story, even as the market value of a work of art, whatever it might be, was in inverse ratio to its dimensions. Louis XIV. had sought to perpetuate, in a series beyond compare, the great acts of his reign; battles won, provinces conquered, alliances contracted, and encouragements lavished on industry. Louis XV. considered he had fulfilled his duty to posterity by bequeathing it the memory of his hunting exploits. The mock-heroic adventures of Don Quixote succeeded the pomps of the triumph of

Alexander; the wolf and the lamb, the hound and its consort, occupied the looms which lately wove the emblems of the four elements; the execution of the covering of an arm-chair supplanted that of an ornamented suite; in a word, Oudry and Boucher succeeded to Le Brun. Nevertheless tapestry, with its inexhaustible readiness, accepted every change, and submitted to all the caprices of fashion.

Amidst surroundings so refined and selfish as were those of the eighteenth century, tapestry necessarily lost that which remained of its popular character. Although only in the possession of Fortune's favourites, it should not be forgotten that ornamented hangings formerly figured frequently in public, and at all times impressed the minds of the people; in processions and in various festivals, the sufferings of Christ and the exploits of knights, represented on these vast, mobile surfaces, excited alternately piety or patriotism. The Renaissance, by restoring antiquity, of which the masses had lost the recollection, to honour, struck the first and heaviest blow at popular art; the seventeenth century sought still further to accentuate the division between the artist and the people; and finally, the eighteenth century utterly dissolved an alliance, without which art, as has been proved, cannot produce really bold, life-like, and enduring works. In the preceding period hangings intended to illustrate national struggles were still met with in abundance; in the eighteenth century only a few great foreign lords educated in the customs of the reign of Louis XIV.,

the Duke of Lorraine, Prince Eugene, and the Duke of Marlborough, sought thus to perpetuate the memory of their victories. As to the history of France during this very disturbed time, it appeared entirely concentrated in the famous "Hunts of Louis XV." We must not, however, forget the "Turkish Embassy," that is, the entry into Paris of Mehemet Effendi, sent, in 1721, to congratulate "le roy sur son avènement au trône," a hanging in two pieces from cartoons by Charles Parrocel.

There was equal indifference with regard to religious art. Here, at least, the artists might urge their utter incapacity; from the point of view of expression, the few sets produced at this epoch were calculated to create scandal rather than meditation. In the most celebrated of these, the "Story of Esther," by De Troy, one feels transported to a theatre; and to one, moreover, which in no wise resembles that in which the pupils of St. Cyr represented the tragedies of the gentle Racine.

This disdain of the noble and generous sentiments that survived in a few hearts was supplemented by a craving for totally artificial diversions; the painters delighted in transporting their contemporaries, or rather the dandies of the court and town, into ideal regions, far from the pre-occupations of the world, frequently into Olympus, and sometimes also to Bohemia, Turkey, India, or China. The gardens of Armida especially attracted them. The "Indian Hanging," after Desportes; the "Chinese Hanging," after Fontenay, Vernansaal, and Dumont; the



CH. GOUTZWILLER.

FIG. 80.—HUNT OF LOUIS XV.

After Oudry. Gobelins, Eighteenth Century. (In the Château de Fontainebleau.)

“Bohemians,” after Le Prince; the “Sultanas,” after Amédée van Loo; and “Rustic Festivals” after

Casanova, were produced at this time, as well as innumerable mythological representations.

This tendency to view things through a prism, this remarkable power of abstraction, increased in strength when the artists of the day returned to the fields of Normandy and the banks of the Seine. But who can have the courage to criticise these landscapes, so delightfully false, these shepherds, who appear to have walked straight out of the Versailles ante-chambers, and these shepherdesses, whose toilettes might be envied by a duchess?

We will now descend a step, and study the history of our art from the decorative point of view in particular. It cannot be denied that, in this respect, the eighteenth century opened new horizons to tapestry. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance had unquestionably applied both high and low warp fabrics to the most diverse uses. They had especially connected them with furniture by covering the benches and stalls of the churches and mansions with "bancquiers" and "espaliers," stuffs intended to conceal their nakedness. But, if the eighteenth century did not originate this employment, it at least exerted itself to extend and improve on it. Seats and backs of arm-chairs and sofas, cushions, and screens, were adorned with delicate pictures artistically framed; sometimes with clusters of flowers, with landscapes, or with scenes taken from the fables of animals, and sometimes with pastorals or even mythological compositions. The new fashion made the fortune of the Beauvais manufactory, but it may be questioned

whether it also deserved the approbation of criticism. "By a manifest error of taste," says M. Burty, "Boucher and his pupils brought down from the walls the adventurous shepherds and the sheep with lilac-coloured ribbons, and placed them on the horizontal seats of sofas and arm-chairs. So that, the idea having been only too readily followed in our day, we sit down on a dove-cot, and rest our feet on a sea-port. It was certainly a great error to represent too literally figures or trees on a surface liable to be deranged by a breath of wind or cut in half by a fold, but there still remained a certain conventionality which the mind could favour. But what an aberration to strew the ground with bunches of flowers and panopies! One is afraid, when walking on the grand carpets of the Savonnerie or of Aubusson, of striking against a roll of leather or of crushing a basket of cherries."*

It is hardly necessary to add that, taken by themselves, the adornments of furniture left us by the eighteenth century are charming, and well adapted to disarm the severest critics.

The advance made by the eighteenth century in a still more special vein of thought—that of technical skill—was only equalled by its errors; but the improvements introduced in low-warp weaving must be reckoned to its credit. Thanks to the efforts of Neilson and De Vaucanson, the looms of the low-warp weavers had no need to envy those of their

* "Chefs-d'œuvre des Arts industriels," pp. 583-585.

high-warp rivals. The dyeing was also considerably improved, but the series of colours was augmented at the cost of their durability.

Encouraged by these successes, the importance of which must not be exaggerated, the eighteenth century undertook to fill up the abyss which separated tapestry from painting, and to make tapestry-workers simply copyists instead of interpreters. The reproduction of oil pictures by a more expensive and more imperfect process was the problem it sought to solve. We shall show farther on the different vicissitudes of the struggle between the champions of the new ideas and the representatives of the old, of the sound education of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It is sufficient for us to state here that the innovators carried the day; an ominous victory, the consequences of which are still felt.

Having effected so many changes from the traditions of the preceding age, the eighteenth century, in order to complete its task, had now only to alter the organisation of the manufactory which had confirmed the supremacy of France in the domain of decorative art. On this point, at least, the work of Louis XIV. and of Colbert was respected; the Gobelins continued, as heretofore, the model for the rest of Europe. It is with them that we commence our recapitulation, as in duty bound.

The end of the reign of Louis XIV., and the beginning of that of Louis XV., correspond to a period of stagnation, not to say decline. During the administration of the Duke of Antin (1708—1736),

who had under him the architect Robert de Cotte,

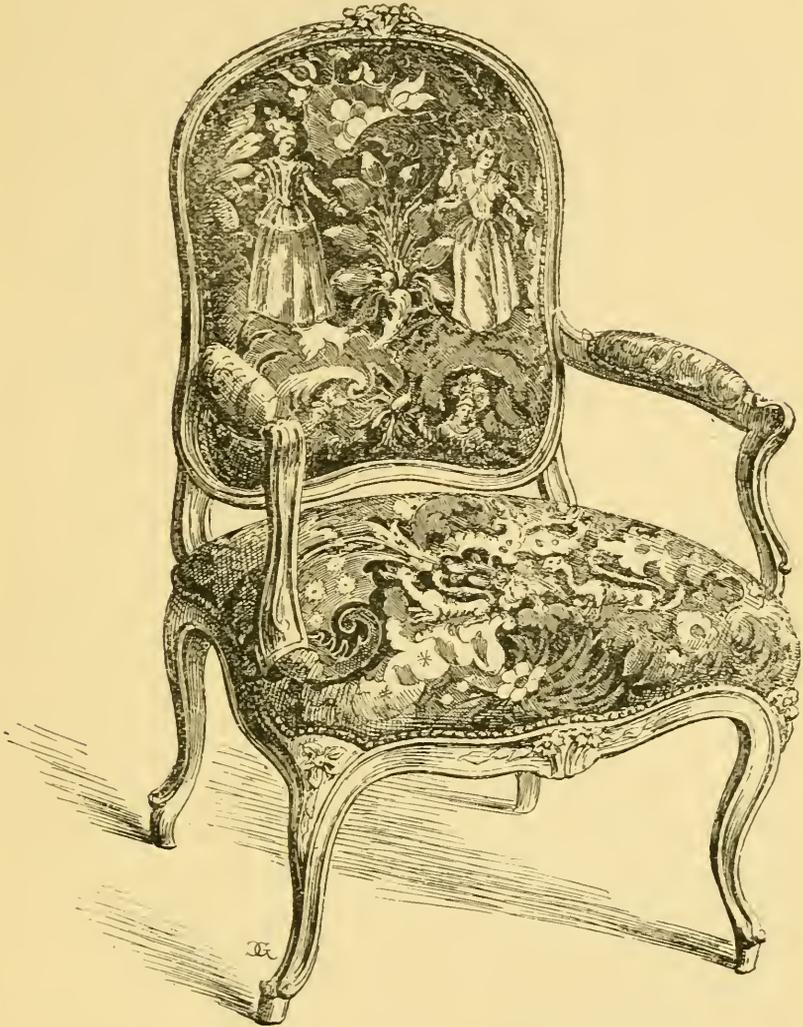


FIG. 81.—LOUIS XV. FAUTEUIL, COVERED IN TAPESTRY.
(In the Collection of M. P. Jourde.)

as special director of the manufactory (1699—1735), only one new series was produced, the "Hunt of

Louis XV.," after Oudry (1733 and succeeding years). This hanging, in which the artist had depicted himself drawing, bears the inscription, "Peint par J. B. Oudry, 1738." The remaining manufactures consisted only of reproductions of old cartoons, the "Fructus Belli," the "Chasses de Maximilien," and also of various sets designed by Le Brun and his school. But the presence of fellow-workers or of pupils of Jans and Lefèvre at the head of the workshops helped to maintain the work in the ideas of the "grand regne."

The "Hunts of Louis XV.," of which one copy is preserved at the Château of Fontainebleau, and another, far richer, in the National Museum of Florence, are worthy, in harmony and vigour of colouring, to rank by the side of the most perfect models left us by the art of the tapestry-weaver. The painter has given the performance the distinctness and vivacity which characterise his compositions, and has established the most happy interdependence between the figures and the landscape; but we do not hesitate to state that, but for the exceptional intelligence and the wonderful handicraft of his interpreters, his compositions would now only attract the attention of a few spectators. In this case painting in textile fabrics has eclipsed painting in oils.

In 1735, the son of Robert de Cotte replaced his father in the direction of the Gobelins; and in the following year, Orry, Controller-General of Finance, succeeded in his turn to the Duke of Antin (1736—1745). Thanks to the energy of this administrator, the works received the most lively impetus. The first

acts of his ministry were the re-establishment of the school of drawing and the ordering of new cartoons. The "Story of Esther," of which the best copy is at Rome, in the saloon of the Academy of France—(another is preserved at the Egyptian Museum at Florence, and a third at the Garde-Meuble; the cartoons were painted at Rome, between 1737 and 1740)—and the "History of Jason," each in seven pieces, after De Troy, soon equalled the reputation of the great sets composed by Le Brun. If the "Story of Christ," by Restout and Jouvenet, and the "History of Mark Antony" did not obtain the same success—the "Indian Hanging," by Desportes, a free imitation of an older set, the "History of Rinaldo and Armida," and especially the "Story of Don Quixote," both by Charles Coypel, rapidly became popular. We may also mention the "Elements," the "Seasons," and the "Grotesque Months," executed with great elegance from drawings by Claude Audran the younger, and the "Triumphs of the Gods," after Bérain (Union Centrale, exhibition of 1876, Nos. 369—375).

The successors of Orry, Lenormant de Tournehem, uncle of Madame de Pompadour (1745—1751), and M. de Vandières, or, to give him the name by which he is known in history, the Marquis de Marigny (1751—1773), brother of the too celebrated favourite, neglected nothing that could insure the prosperity of the great national manufactory. They were seconded by the directors, the architects D'Isle (1747—1755) and Soufflot (1755—1780), and especially by three contractors, whose earnestness

was beyond all praise; Audran père, whom we have met with already (in 1733), and who remained in office till 1771; Cozette (1736—1792), and the Scotchman James Neilson (1749—1788). Owing to the poverty of the Treasury, the tardiness, and sometimes even the dishonesty of the administration, which repudiated debts and the most formal agreements, the post of contractor at the Gobelins rendered the holder liable to almost certain ruin.* No one, however, lost courage. James Neilson, above all, gave proof of admirable spirit; not content with maintaining with his private means the workshop he directed, he introduced improvements in the low warp which enabled him to compete with high warp, and completely re-organised the dyeing establishment.†

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century administrative difficulties became complicated by artistic perplexities. The painters had long striven to promote the abandonment of the old process of interpretation, and the year 1748 marked the culminating point in a struggle on which the whole future of tapestry depended. At that time Oudry, the champion of painting, launched a regular public-prosecutor's address at the tapestry-weavers; he bitterly reproached them with persisting in using

* In 1772 the administration owed the three contractors, Cozette, Audran, and Neilson, about 220,000 livres. To make up this deficit a certain number of tapestries were sold at reduced prices.

† See the work of M. A. Curmer, "Notice sur Jacques Neilson, entrepreneur et directeur des teintures de la manufacture royale des tapisseries des Gobelins au XVIII. siècle." Paris, 1878.

“coloris de tapisserie,” and with baffling the designers



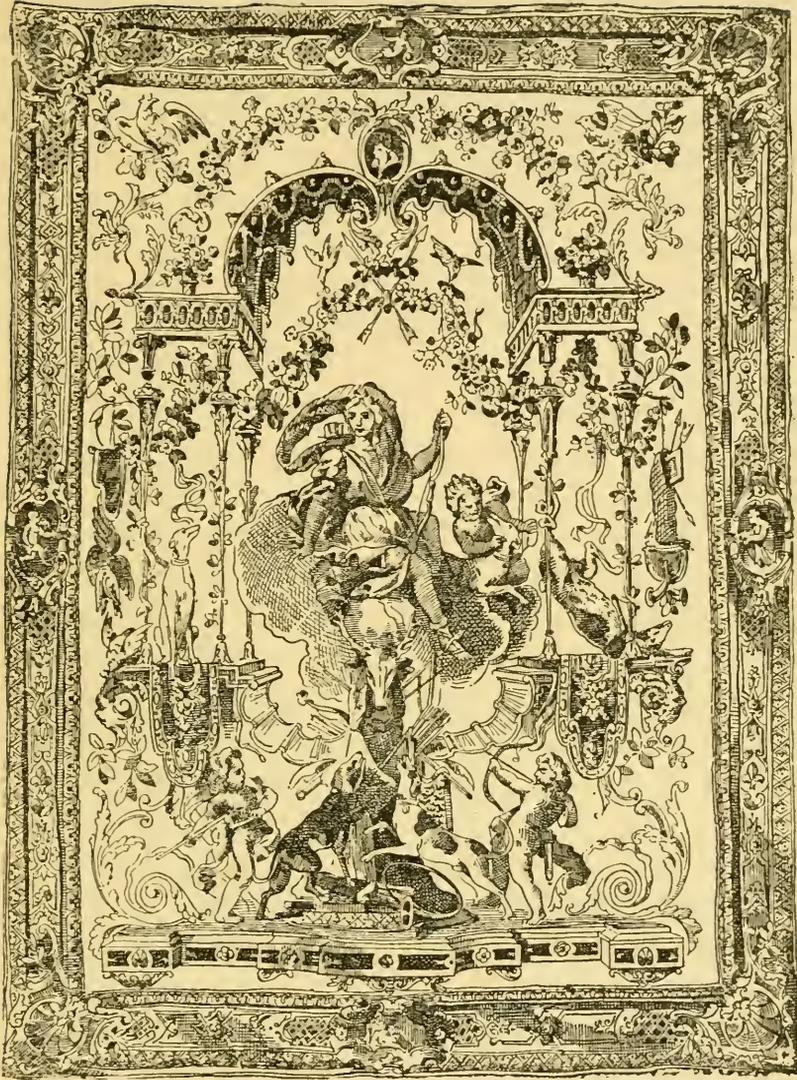
FIG. 82.—THE INDIAN HANGING.
After Desportes. Gobelin, Eighteenth Century. (In the Gard-Meuble.)

of cartoons by means of “prétendues raisons de fabrique.” But he vainly sought to persuade them

that they should give their work "all the spirit and intelligence of the picture, in which alone the secret of producing the most beautiful tapestries consisted ;" in vain he stigmatised "this work of pure routine, which represented neither the tone nor the correctness of the pictures supplied for execution." The weavers, with true instinct, after yielding for a moment, soon returned to the traditions which had been the pride of the Renaissance and of the age of Louis XIV. The hostility between Oudry and the tapestry-workers, supported by the contractors, became so great that the latter made up their minds to dispense with attending the meetings at which Oudry, as inspector of the manufactory, was to indicate the alterations to be made in the works in course of execution. A formal order from the director-general was required to compel them to attend.

While comparing, at the Château de Fontainebleau, the smooth and monotonous pictures of Oudry with the wonderful interpretations, so stirring and so full of life, of the tapestry-workers of the last century we can only regret that this eminent artist should have so utterly misunderstood the interests of his renown.

In spite of the opposition of the weavers, the painters gained the day. The contractor James Neilson himself contributed to their success, by enormously increasing the number of tints. Thanks to the advice of the chemist Macquer, and the help of the chemist Quemiset, he succeeded in producing upwards of a thousand tints, each of which was



L. L. Ribouin del.

FIG. 83.--THE GODS OR THE ELEMENTS; DIANA OR THE EARTH.
After C. Audran. Gobelins, Eighteenth Century. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

sub-divided into twelve shades, deepening from light to dark. The temptation to compete with painting, to produce by means of threads of wool and of silk, compositions presenting the appearance of an oil-picture, became henceforth too great; the Gobelins artists accustomed themselves imperceptibly to these costly deceptions.

In order to increase the resemblance, bands imitating carved and gilded frames were generally substituted for the ornamental borders in which the old decorators had achieved so many marvels (*e.g.*, "Indian Hanging," the "Story of Esther," the "History of Jason," &c.). From this time there existed nothing to distinguish tapestries from oil pictures.

One can hardly refrain from a smile of commiseration when studying, in the collection of statutes printed in 1756 by order of the corporation, the description of the perfect tapestry-worker, such as the Parisian high and low warpers, in their simple ambition, imagined him. "All professions, it is said, presuppose in those exercising them relative and proportional talents; some even require somewhat distinguished powers. But how many are needed to make a skilful tapestry-weaver. In whatever style he may work, in 'sarrazinois' carpets, in high or low warp, or even only in restoration, he should be master of all the rules of proportion, especially those of architecture and of perspective, of some knowledge of anatomy, of taste and accuracy in drawing, in colouring, and in shading, of grace in arrangement and grandeur in expression of all styles and classes, figures, animals, landscapes,

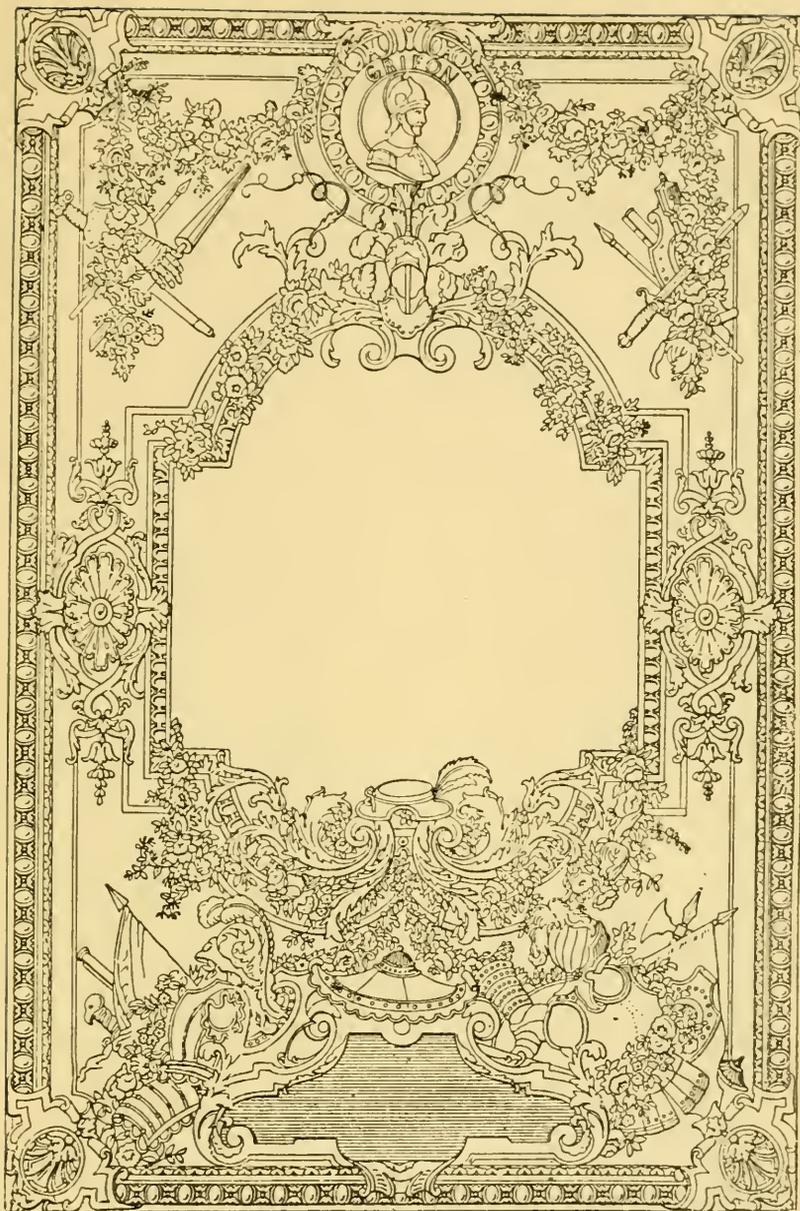


FIG. 84.—FIRST BORDER OF LON QUIXOTE.
Tapestry of the Eighteenth Century. (In the Collection of Count de
Venneville.)

palaces, rustic buildings, statues, vases, woods, plants,

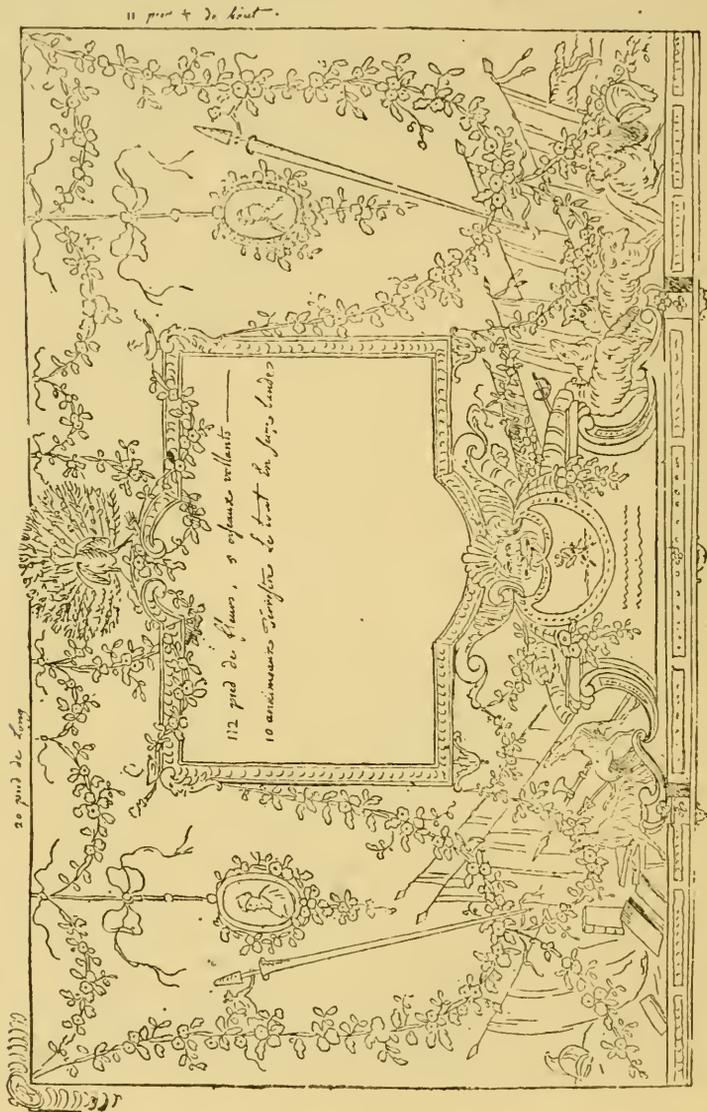


FIG. 85.—SECOND BORDER OF DON QUINOTE, 1753.
(Facsimile of the Drawing by Le Maire.)

and flowers, of all kinds. He should add to these

attainments a knowledge of sacred and secular history, and should be able to apply properly the



FIG. 86.—ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE.

After Charles Coypel. Gobelins, Eighteenth Century. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

rules of good manufacture, and to discern that which produces beauty of texture and of colouring, that is, the different qualities of silks, wools, and hangings,

which frequently require to be turned under, or raised, or altered to the eye, for which reason they themselves have always been permitted to dye the materials they employ. . . .”* The influence of Oudry had plainly borne fruit, in spite of everything.

His successor had so much taste and intelligence that the fatal incline was for a long time trodden on without being perceived. The contractors loudly applauded the appointment of François Boucher as inspector of the Gobelins (1755). If the new comer shared the ideas of Oudry as to the affinity of tapestry with painting, still the nature of his easy, graceful talent, so suited to decoration, countenanced many illusions. The tapestry-makers were not checked by the difficulty experienced in the translation of his pearly flesh, and his grey tints so strangely removed from the traditional scale. Led away by an art as false as it was beautiful, the weavers no longer hesitated to use fugitive colours, placed with more zeal than prudence at their disposal by the indefatigable Neilson. From this it followed that the harmonious accord of the newly-made tapestries soon dissolved: while some parts retained their primitive brilliancy, others gradually faded, and thus the most beautiful pieces became rapidly disfigured by the marked alterations in the colouring.

In those days the morrow was not thought of.

* W. Chocqueel: “Essai sur l’histoire et la situation actuelle de l’industrie des Tapisseries et Tapis,” pp. 46, 47. Paris, 1863.



FIG. 87.—THE SWING.

After Boucher. Beauvais Manufactory, Eighteenth Century. (In the
Garde-Meuble.)

Contemporaries were enchanted with the immediate results ; what more was needed ? The cartoons with which Boucher enriched the manufactory were rapidly successful. These were "Neptune and Amymone," "Venus at the Forge of Vulcan," "Vertumnus and Pomona," "Aurora and Cephalus," and "Venus on the Waters," all oval in form and decked with a frame of flowers or other ornaments. After these came "Fishing," "Fortune Tellers," "Psyche and Cupid," "Aminta and Sylvia," and "Confidences," as well as numerous representations of "Loves," "Children Playing," and the "Genii of the Arts."*

Amongst the artists working on similar principles, Ch.-Amédée van Loo, a portrait and historical painter, the composer of the hanging called the "Sultanas," should be mentioned.

The depth of the abyss formed by the new theories was only perceived when pedantic historical pictures succeeded graceful mythological or allegorical compositions, the alternately pathetic and intellectual pastorals of Boucher and of his school. Brought face to face with the cold, stiff, and empty compositions he was required to imitate, the tapestry-worker could no longer have recourse, as formerly, to his deep royal blue, his brilliant crimson red, and his gold and silver threads, which at least appealed to the eyes, even if the subject produced little effect on the mind ; he found himself condemned to copy with offensive

*"Notice historique sur les Manufactures nationales de Tapisseries des Gobelins et de Tapis de la Savonnerie," p. 43, edit. 1873.



FIG. 88. — A PASTORAL.
After Boucher. Eighteenth Century. (In the *Garde-Meuble*.)

minuteness colourings which were dull when they were not livid. We leave it to be imagined what the following must have been: . The "Loves of the Gods," after Pierre; the "History of Henry IV.," after Vincent; the "Siege of Calais," the "Taking of Paris under Charles VII.," and the "Death of Stephen Marcel," after Barthélemy; the "Massacre of the Huguenots," also after Barthélemy (Palais du Quirinal, signed Barthélemy, 1783); the "Death of Coligny," after Juvée; the "Honours paid to Duguesclin by the Enemy," after Brenet; the "Chastity of Bayard," after Du Rameau; and the "Death of Leonardo da Vinci," after Ménageot (in the Palais du Quirinal, signed F. Ménageot, 1781).

The Revolution spared the establishment which had been for so many years the admiration and envy of Europe. We cannot sufficiently congratulate the Government of the time on having refused to listen to the objurgations of Marat, who, in 1790, accused the Gobelins of "costing 100,000 crowns annually for one knows not what, unless it be for enriching swindlers and plotters. Five-and-twenty workmen," he added, "are generally employed, who use, at the most, twelve pounds of silk in a tapestry that is sometimes fifteen years on the loom." In order to show the emptiness of these assertions, it will be sufficient to place opposite the figures of Marat those supplied by the official documents. We there find that in 1791 the manufactory employed 116 masters and 18 workmen, without including the administrative staff. The total expenditure during that year was

165,927 francs, of which 108,000 were spent on the workmanship.* Two years previously, in 1789, M.

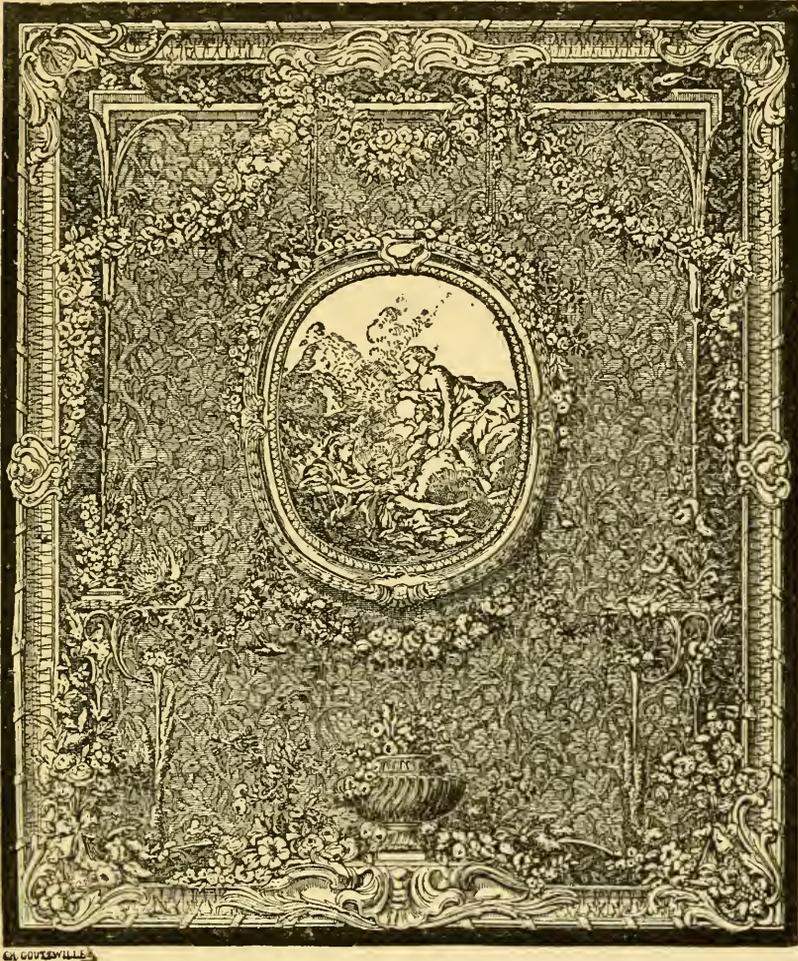


FIG. 89.—ENDYMION.

After Boucher. Tapestry of the Eighteenth Century. (In the Garde-Meuble.)

* Guillaumot, "Notices sur l'origine et les travaux de la manufacture impériale des Gobelins," p. 20, 2nd edit.

de Tolosan valued at 800,000 francs the tapestries annually manufactured at the Gobelins.* This estimate was certainly exaggerated, but it is no less certain that the produce of the manufactory created by Colbert added considerably to the national riches. The economic importance of the industrial arts has since then been too much forgotten.

The advent of the new form of Government was the signal for a useful reform. In 1790 the system of fixed salaries, at this very time still in force, was substituted for that of contracts, so open to abuses.† Production became less hurried and the execution more perfect. Unfortunately the Gobelins were from that time on a wrong road—devoted to the accurate imitation of painting; and, in spite of the numerous changes of management which occurred from 1789 to 1795,‡ this tendency became confirmed.

* Choqueel, "Essai sur l'histoire des Tapisseries et Tapis," p. 97.

† In 1882 the total budget of the Gobelins rose to 234,520 francs, subdivided as follows:—

Administrative staff	27,750 francs.
Dyeing establishment	15,300 ,,
School of drawing and of tapestry	6,550 ,,
Workshops: Two masters, two under- masters, sixty workmen, workwomen, and children, and various indemnities	28,700 ,,
Materials	34,000 ,,

‡ The painter Pierre, who had replaced Soufflot in 1781, was succeeded in 1789 by the architect Guillaumot. After Guillaumot came Audran (1792—1793), the former contractor of the manufactory; after Audran the painter Belle (1793—1795). Audran, replaced for a short time (in 1795), at the head of the establishment, disappeared the same year, leaving his post to Guillaumot, who retained it till 1807.

In this century the manufactory has been successively directed by



FIG. 90.—TORNATURA. After M. Lechevallier-Chevignard.
Gobelins Tapestry, Nineteenth Century.

The manufactory of Savonnerie carpets, which, in 1790, numbered twenty workmen and six apprentices, and produced annually a little over a hundred square ells, which were delivered to the king at the rate of 600 livres a square ell, was subjected to the same rules as the Gobelins—piecework was replaced by fixed salaries. In 1825 this establishment was combined with that of the Gobelins.

The first quarter of the eighteenth century was marked, both at Beauvais and at the Gobelins, by the slackening of the works, by a want of initiative, and by a lack of resources. From the death of Behaële, in 1704, to the appointment of Jean-Baptiste Oudry, in 1726, the manufactory continually declined. It was left to Oudry, the artist and administrator, to restore their former activity to the works, and to establish their reputation in an enduring manner. He began by reinstating the school of drawing and increasing the number of workmen, and sought at the same time to secure public favour by substituting for the old and generally severe designs new compositions full of grace and imagination, such as the "Fables of La Fontaine," "Rural Amusements," "Hunts," and "Molière's Comedies," from his own cartoons; the "Chinese Hanging," after Dumont;

MM. Canal, the head of a department in the administration of the Emperor's household, and provisional director (1807—1810); Lemonnier, painter (1810—1816); Baron des Rotours, a retired artillery officer (1816—1833); Lavocat (1833—1848); Badin, painter (1848—1850); Lacordaire, architect and engineer (1850—1860); Badin, reinstated (1860—1871); Chevreul, chemist, provisional director (1871); Alfred Darcel, civil engineer (1871); Gerspach (1885).

the "Russian Festivals" and the "Bohemians," after Casanova: these were the titles of sets which effected a positive transformation of taste. Occasionally a

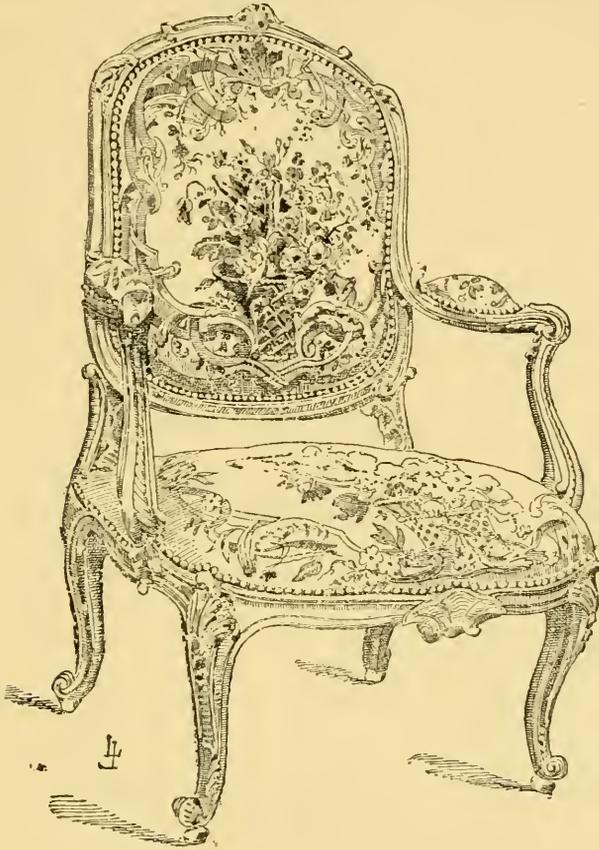


FIG. 91.—LOUIS XV. FAUTEUIL, COVERED IN BEAUVAIS TAPESTRY.
(From the Hamilton Collection.)

more serious subject was introduced, as when the "Iliad," by Delhais, was executed.

The prosperity of the manufactory of Beauvais was maintained under the direction of A. C. Charron, the successor of Oudry. At the time of his retirement,

in the year 1780, the establishment employed fifty workmen.

The successor of Charron, a tapestry merchant of Aubusson, De Menou, added the manufacture of carpets to that of tapestries; in 1790 he employed a hundred and twenty workmen.

The Revolution arrested the advance of the Beauvais establishment, which, however, did not founder in the midst of its overwhelming struggles; we know that even now it still maintains its unquestionable superiority in the traditions of decorative tapestry.*

We saw in the preceding chapter that at Lille the

* About 1835 the Beauvais manufacture employed 45 workmen, 11 pupils, and 4 supernumeraries; it used yearly 140 pounds of raw silk, 130 of dyed wool, 120 of warp wool, and 20 of white thread. The annual produce amounted to 109 square mètres, each costing 690 francs. [Dubos, p. 40.]

In 1882 the budget of the manufactory was 116,350 francs, divided as follows:—

Administrative staff	11,550 francs.
Workshop: 1 master, 4 under-masters, 45 artists, workmen, workwomen, and pupils	82,600 „
Indemnities	7,200 „
Materials	15,000 „

Since the Revolution the directors of the manufactory have been:—

Camousse, year III.—d. year VIII.

Huet père, year VIII.—d. 1814.

Huet fils aîné, 1814—d. 1819.

Huet jeune, 1819—resigned the same year.

Guillaumot père, 1819—1828.

Marquis d'Ourches, 1829—1851.

Jules Guillaumot, 1831—d. 1832.

Grand Saint-Vincent, 1832—1848.

Bodin 1848—1876.

Dieterle, 1872—1882.

Bodin (Jules) fils, 1882.

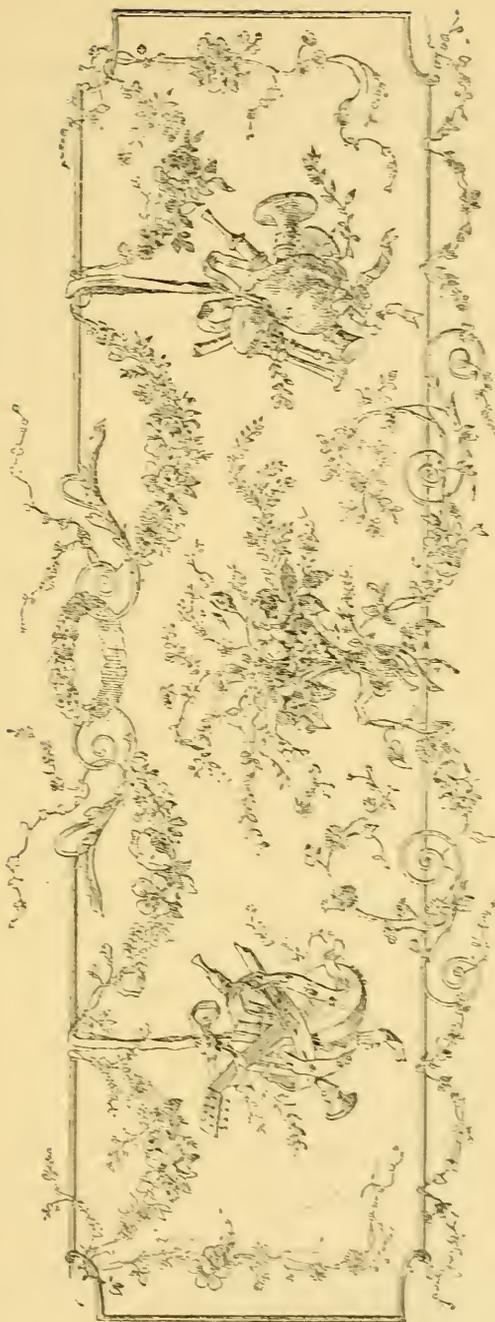


FIG. 92.—SEAT OF A SOFA. After M. Chabal Dussergy.
(Beauvais, Nineteenth Century.)

end of the seventeenth century was marked by a real renaissance of the art of tapestry. Guillaume Wernier, of Brussels, in the first years of the eighteenth century, continued that which had been so well commenced by his father-in-law, Jean de Melter, and Pannemaker. His workshop, in 1709, employed upwards of fifty workmen; and he continued to produce hangings that, to this day, hold their own very honourably in our museums.

In 1876, four mythological compositions after Albani, bearing the signature of the artist, were admired at the Union Centrale Exhibition. There were also mentioned several suites of the "Story of Don Quixote"; some "Ténières," of a somewhat too vivid blue tone; a series of six pieces, intended for the church of St. Sauveur, one of which, the "Marriage at Cana," was exhibited at the Champ de Mars in 1867; and finally, at the St. Sauveur hospital, the portraits of Baldwin of Flanders, with his wife and daughter, and of Jeanne of Constantinople, placed between her two husbands, after Arnould de Wuez.

Wernier died in 1738, and was succeeded by François Boucher, who upheld the great and legitimate reputation of the factory of Lille till the last third of the eighteenth century. The "Story of Psyche," in five pieces, exhibited in 1867 at the Champ de Mars, is especially attributed to Boucher.*

We find a workshop, or rather a loom, at Cambrai,

* Houdoy: "Les Tapisseries de haute lisse; Histoire de la fabrication lilloise," p. 97 *et seq.*; and Pinchart: "Histoire générale de la Tapisserie; Tapisseries flamandes," pp. 51—53.

established in 1724, by Jean Baert and his son, subsidised by the municipal council. The chief work produced by the Cambrai workshop was the hanging of flowers and landscapes, executed in 1752—1754 for the Town Hall, where it still is to be found. Chairs and arm-chairs were also manufactured here. After passing from the hands of Jean Baert into those of his son, and eventually of his grandson, the Cambrai workshop, which does not appear to have ever enjoyed great prosperity, disappeared at the time of the Revolution. In 1796 a municipal order appointed, but only provisionally, the citizen Baert, “a former manufacturer of tapestry in the Gobelins style,” chief collector at one of the barriers of the town.*

A high-warp loom was also established at Gisors, but apparently for a few years only. In 1703 a former workman of the Beauvais manufactory, Adrien Neusse, of Oudenarde, obtained permission of the municipality to set up a high-warp manufactory there, “for the public good.” In 1708 the artist offered to the town the portrait of Louis XIV., which now adorns the Museum of Gisors. From this time all trace of him is lost.†

At Nancy Duke Leopold (d. 1729) established a workshop close to his palace, composed of artists from the Gobelins, whose chief mission was to weave the “Battles of Duke Charles V.,” after cartoons by Charles Herbel (d. 1703), and the “Months,” in

* A. Durieux : “Les Tapisseries de Cambrai.” Cambrai, 1879.

† Baron Davillier : “Une Manufacture de Tapisseries de haute lisse à Gisors sous le règne de Louis XIV.” Paris, 1876.

twelve pieces. These tapestries were transferred to Florence in 1737, when the Lorraine dynasty succeeded that of the Medicis.* It is quite possible that the workshop of Nancy may still have existed at that epoch; we know indeed that the Duke Francis III., soon after he ascended the throne of Tuscany, established some Lorraine tapestry-weavers at Poggio Imperiale.†

By the side of the workshops we have just enumerated it is right to mention those of La Marche. These did not certainly represent the high traditions of the art. In a memorial of 1717 the weavers of Aubusson and of Felletin themselves admitted that the greater part of their production consisted of ordinary and coarse works, "bought by the trade of the kingdom, and by the provincial churches, which will not exceed a fixed price." But this production numbered thousands of pieces annually, and might well exercise considerable influence on provincial taste.

In consequence of reiterated entreaties, the Government consented not only to give new statutes to the manufactories of Aubusson, but also to send them a talented artist, Jean-Joseph Dumons, who from 1731 to 1751 supplied them with numerous cartoons.‡ The painters Juliard, Ranson, and Huet had an equal share in the revival of the manufacture.

* Marquis de Chennevières : "Recherches sur la vie et les ouvrages de quelques peintres provinciaux de l'ancienne France," vol. ii., p. 337.

† See my "Fabriques de Tapisseries de Nancy," p. 11.

‡ Fage, "Jean-Joseph Dumons peintre d'histoire, 1687-1779," p. 8. Tulle, 1881.

They also drew inspiration from the compositions of Watteau, of Coypel, of Oudry, and of Boucher; and numerous replicas of their designs were executed during the whole of the eighteenth century. In 1876, at the Union Centrale Exhibition, the "Adolescence" was remarked (part of a suite of the "Four Ages"), after Lancret, with the signature "Vitra : M. R. d'Aubusson."

CHAPTER XV.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (*continued*).

ITALY, SPAIN, ENGLAND, GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND FLANDERS.
DECLINE OF TAPESTRY.

IN Italy, in the first half of the eighteenth century, the manufactory which had so long been the glory of Florence, the oldest of the then existing establishments, disappeared. Founded by Cosmo I., who was the first to assume the title of Grand-Duke, the Medicean establishment died out with the last representative of that illustrious family (1737). The beautiful hanging of the "Four Quarters of the World," from the cartoons of Giovanni Sagrestani, in the National Museum of Florence, is also the artistic bequest of that workshop which, at its beginning, had been headed by masters of the rank of Jan Rost and Nicholas Carcher.

On the other hand, three important manufactories, two of which have continued well into the nineteenth century, were set up about the same period in the capitals of the three chief sovereigns of the Peninsula, the Pope, the King of the Two Sicilies, and the King of Sardinia.

The manufactory established at the Hospital San Michele, in Rome, dates from 1710; at that time

Pope Clement XI. (Albani) sent for the tapestry-worker Jean Simonet from Paris, and commissioned him to organise, in conjunction with the painter Andrea Procaccini, a workshop, a very modest one at first, since it only numbered three workmen besides the two directors. Shortly afterwards, in 1714, piece-work was substituted for fixed salaries, and the Roman workshop quickly developed, especially under the direction of Pietro Ferloni, who ruled its destinies for more than half a century (1717—1770). We find numerous hangings produced by it, most of which now adorn the Roman palaces: the "Spiritual and Temporal Power of the Pope," in ten pieces, the "Four Seasons," various religious compositions, landscapes, and trophies. Carpets were also manufactured there, in the style of those of the Savonnerie.

The prosperity of the Roman manufactory increased throughout the second half of the eighteenth century; this may be ascertained from the long list of its tapestries, amongst which we especially notice the "Scenes from the History of Rome," now exhibited in the Palace of the Conservators at the Capitol. Unfortunately advance of taste did not keep pace with material prosperity, and this was far more the fault of the painters than of the weavers, for there is no heresy in decoration of which the pontifical manufactory was not guilty.

Checked by the Revolution, the manufacture of figure tapestries regained some importance in the reign of Gregory XVI. (1831—1846), and continued

till the entry of the Italians into Rome. The looms were then under the direction of Signor Pietro Gentili, the author of an essay on the art of tapestry.

In 1738, the very year in which the Medicean manufactory died out, the head of the House of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel III., took into his service its most skilful workman, Victor Demignot, who was a native of Turin, and entrusted him with the direction of a low-warp workshop, at the same time that he commissioned Antonio Dini to establish high-warp looms. A talented painter, the Chevalier de Beaumont, was engaged to supply, with a few assistants, the cartoons required by both workshops, which, from the beginning, employed a staff of seventeen weavers.

The first productions of the manufactory were the "History of Alexander," the "History of Julius Cæsar," the "History of Hannibal," the "History of Cyrus," and possibly also the "History of Marc Antony" (exhibited at Milan in 1874), some landscapes, marine pieces, and sketches of low life.

In 1754 the high-warp workshop was suppressed, and low-warp weaving was alone continued, chiefly from the cartoons of a French painter, Laurent Pécheux, of Lyons, who, in 1766, replaced the Chevalier de Beaumont as painter to the manufactory. In 1784, François, son of Victor Demignot, was in his turn replaced, as director, by Antonio Bruno, who continued at the head of the manufactory until it was suppressed in 1832. The study of the productions of this second period offers but little

interest : the tapestries which adorn the royal palace at Turin are, indeed, only remarkable for their sombre tone, which meets but indifferently the requirements of decoration.

The manufactory of Naples was, like that of Turin, an offshoot of the establishment of Florence. It received some of the workmen when the latter was suppressed in 1737, and, thanks to their skill and ardour, rapidly extended its operations. A Roman tapestry-worker, Pietro Duranti, perfected the reputation of the Neapolitan establishment, which appears to have existed until the conquest of the Two Sicilies by the French, in 1799.

If we may judge by the high and low-warp hangings preserved in the royal residences at Naples, the manufactory of this town sought first of all to imitate the works of the Gobelins. We, in fact, see amongst these hangings the "Four Elements," and the "Story of Don Quixote." We also mention the "Rape of Proserpine," "Love and Chastity," "Royal Bounty," and the "Apotheosis of Charles III."

At Venice several private workshops displayed some activity ; two of the chief of these had at their head Pietro Davanzo and Antonio Dini, the former director of the manufactory of Turin.*

Spain, which was opposed to the introduction of tapestry looms in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, numbered in the eighteenth several important manufactories. The oldest of these was that of

* See, concerning all these establishments, the "Histoire de la Tapisserie en Italie," by E. Müntz.

Santa Barbara, in the Casa del Abreviador at Madrid. Founded in 1720 by King Philip V., grandson of Louis XIV., its first director was Jacques Van der Goten, a tapestry-weaver of Antwerp. In the first three years it produced "A Rustic Festival," in the style of Teniers, and "Hawking." Later, when, thanks to the co-operation of a French weaver, Antoine Lenger, high-warp looms were set up by the side of the low-warp, the only looms at first used, the manufactory executed with great success a copy of the *Vierge à la Perle*, by Raphael (1730).

The manufactory of Seville, founded in 1730 under the direction of Andrea Procaccini, the former director of the manufactory of San Michele at Rome, with the assistance of Van der Goten, only lasted a few years. A reproduction of the "Conquest of Tunis," woven by Pannemaker in the sixteenth century, and another of the "History of Telemachus," were commenced in it. When the Seville manufactory was suppressed, that of Santa Isabel at Madrid inherited its remains.

We cannot here discuss in detail the works of these different establishments. It is sufficient to say that, owing to the activity of the Van der Goten family, with which the history of Spanish tapestry was long identified, the "Story of Don Quixote," after Procaccini, a series that was repeated three times, quickly followed the "Conquest of Tunis," and the "History of Telemachus."*

In the last third of the eighteenth century, the

* D. G. Cruzada Villaamil, "Los tapices de Goya," p. 76, *et seq.* Madrid, 1870.

manufactory of Santa Barbara obtained a certain reputation by the execution of the cartoons of Goya, the series of forty-five pieces known by the name of "Los Tapices."* "Breaking entirely away from traditions, and setting aside all the old mythological paraphernalia, Goya," says M. Paul Lefort, "only painted scenes derived from national life for the cartoons; dances, games, and joyous assemblies. All these were intellectual, lively, and picturesque; full of action, well-grouped, and standing out from rustic backgrounds, or brightly bathed in full light."†

Closed in 1808, on the entry of the French into Madrid, the manufactory of Santa Barbara was re-established in 1815.

Germany, in the eighteenth century, numbered several high and low-warp workshops, most of which were directed by French artists, chiefly refugees.

The manufactory of Munich, which was re-established about 1718, continued till the commencement of this century. We mention amongst its tapestry-workers two masters whose names reveal a French origin, Chédeville and Santigny. The "History of the Dukes of Bavaria" (1732—1746), the "Triumph of Bacchus" (1769), the "Triumph of Flora," after Christian Winck (1774), and the "Banquet of the Gods" (1802), all exhibited at the National Museum, give a most unfavourable impression of the talent of the painters, and of the skill of the workmen belonging to the establishment.

* See Ch. Yriarte, "Goya," pp. 97—99.

† "Histoire des Peintres, Ecole espagnole," p. 4

At Berlin Pierre Mercier, the founder of the royal manufactory, was replaced at the beginning of the eighteenth century by his brother-in-law, Jean Barrobon, who was in his turn succeeded by his son Pierre Barrobon. We find later at the head of the manufactory Charles Vignes, who worked chiefly on the low-warp system, and who supplied all the Northern Courts with hangings. At one time, in 1736, Vignes is said to have employed 250 workmen. The establishment still existed in 1769.

Dresden also appears to have possessed a tapestry workshop. In the Palace of Courland we find the "Parting of Prince Frederick Augustus with his father, the King of Saxony," bearing the signature, "P. Mercier, Dresden, 1716," and the "Reception of Prince Frederick-Augustus by Louis XIV. at Versailles," with the same signature and the date 1719.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century the high-warp art was still sufficiently popular in Germany to admit of the successful working of a workshop in the small town of Heidelberg (1786).

The influence of the French great national manufactory was at that period so powerful on the other side of the Rhine, that the word Gobelins became synonymous for high or low-warp tapestry, and it bears this signification to this day.

The English workshops of the eighteenth century surpass in number those of the preceding century, but none of them will bear any comparison with the manufactory of Mortlake.

We may first dismiss the manufactory established by the engraver Jacques Christophe le Blon (1670—1741). Hand-tapestries were not made in it, but only imitations produced by a mechanism resembling that used for brocades.*

About the middle of the century, an unfrocked Capuchin friar, Norbert-Parisot, established a manufactory of carpets in the Savonnerie style. In a special pamphlet this individual gives us the history of the establishment founded by him, and informs us of his schemes. He relates that in 1750 two workmen from Chaillot engaged with him, and commenced making a carpet intended for a hall at Westminster. These workmen having quarrelled with their master, he sent for others, with whom he finally settled at Fulham, which offered him exceptional facilities on account of the proximity of the river. He declared that at the time at which he was writing his manufactory had acquired importance enough to employ a hundred workmen. But Parisot, ruined by his prodigality, soon took to flight. His successor, Passavant, transferred the establishment to Exeter, but was unable to restore its prosperity.

We have the evidence of an archæological authority, the Very Rev. Dr. Rock, concerning another contemporaneous English manufactory. He says that Northumberland House contained a room entirely

* (1731) "Account of his principles in printing in imitation of painting, and of weaving tapestry in the same manner as brocades."—"Phil. Trans.," Abr. VII., 477. (Watt, "Bibliotheca Britannica," *sub verbo* Blon.)

hung with great tapestries specially worked for it in Soho in 1758. These represent landscapes with heights wooded or crowned with temples in ruins, and with groups of peasants, from compositions by Francesco Zuccharelli. We may add that Dr. Rock also attributes to a workshop established in Soho in the seventeenth century, the "Giving of the Keys to St. Peter," after Raphael, a tapestry preserved in South Kensington Museum.

According to information communicated by M. Dautzenberg - Braquenié, a workshop established in London by P. Saunders wove the following four pieces from the cartoons of *Le Prince*: 1, a camel laden with baggage led by a man armed with a lance; 2, a horse caparisoned in pink drapery and held by a turbaned man; 3, two women playing with dice, and various other personages (signed, P. Saunders, London); 4, children.

The tapestry manufactory of St. Petersburg was created by Peter the Great. The artists of the Gobelins were, as usual in these cases, the auxiliaries to whom this autocrat had recourse (1716).* In 1755 the administration of this manufactory, until then subject to the control of the Court, was entrusted to the Senate. In 1766 a special office was formed to direct it, and in 1777 and 1778 several high-warp weavers from Brussels reinforced its staff.†

The Museum of the Imperial Carriages at St.

* "Le Cabinet historique," p. 188 (1856), and Dussieux, "Les Artistes français à l'Étranger," p. 121 (edit. 1876).

† Communicated by M. Pinchart.

Petersburg contains thirteen tapestries produced by the Imperial manufactory. We mention, amongst these, some mythological compositions after Guido, and figures representing Asia and America.

M. Dautzenberg-Braquenié has given the author a description of two other tapestries produced by the same manufactory, and preserved in a private collection. One of these represents a king borne by two Moors (the same composition as that of the corresponding piece of the Gobelins in the "Indian Hanging"), and probably symbolical of Africa. The border is a gilded frame, and the signature (in Russian): "At St. Petersburg, the year 1741," and a shield with the letters P. E. B. entwined. The second piece bears the word Europe (in Russian) in a cartouche placed in the middle of the lower border. The two pieces, therefore, are part of the suite of the "Four Quarters of the Globe," of which the other two pieces, as we have already said, are exhibited in the Museum of the Imperial Carriages at St. Petersburg.

We have reserved until the end of this chapter an account of the Flemish workshops, which formerly eclipsed all others, and for a space of three hundred years were the living personification of tapestry expressed in the grandest and most elevated style.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century—it is M. Wauters, who is so solicitous about the renown of his native town, who makes this painful disclosure—Brussels had only eight manufacturers, who employed 53 looms, and about 150 workmen; thus the work

regarded from an economist's standpoint, had fallen far below that of Felletin, which, in 1742, employed no less than 233 looms. In 1764 the Brussels manufacturers were reduced to two, employing from 12 to 18 workmen. In 1768 one only remained, the representative of a family celebrated in the annals of tapestry, Jacques van der Borght. With him the last Brussels workshop died out in 1794.

The chief productions of the Brussels manufactories during their long death-agony were the "Campaigns of the Duke of Marlborough," now at Blenheim House; the "Victories of Prince Eugene"; the "Palaces of the Mérode Family"; the "Loves of Venus and Adonis," after Jan van Orley; the "Story of Psyche," after the same artist; the "Four Seasons"; the "Pleasures of the World"; the "Festivals of the Peasants," after Teniers; the "Story of Don Quixote"; the "History of the Duchy of Brabant," after V. H. Janssens, now in the Town Hall at Brussels; the "Triumphs of the Gods"; the "Story of Moses"; the "History of Gavre"; and the "Story of Daphne and Chloe."*

In their distress the weavers accepted with eagerness commissions of the humblest nature. They appear to have manufactured in great numbers "tabliers," as used by the Romans, that is, bands of tapestry or damask, long and narrow, intended to be fastened to balconies and window-sills on public

* Reproductions of several of these hangings may be found in "Les Tapisseries historiques à l'Exposition nationale belge de 1880," by MM. Wauters and Keuller. (Brussels, 1880.)

festivals, for processions, or at the carnival. Prince Torlonia possesses an interesting series of pieces of this description; the subject, confined to a great medallion, fills the centre; and the background, blue in colour, is sprinkled with graceful arabesques. The medallions are ornamented with Cupids, or mythological scenes. These pieces are from the Brussels workshops, as is proved by the shield flanked by the double B, and sometimes accompanied by the initials of the weaver, U. L. (Urbain Leyniers).*

The other Flemish manufactories were no better off than those of Brussels; that of Oudenarde disappeared in 1772, and that of Ghent shared a similar fate about the same epoch.†

The history of tapestry in the eighteenth century ends in a sad key. The downfall of the Flemish workshops was only the prelude to other disasters, in which, we must say, political troubles had but a small share. On the one hand fashion, with its innovations and its inconsistency; and on the other, the loss of large fortunes, and the demand for cheapness, were the chief causes of a revolution which led to nothing less than the disappearance of the art of the weaver. Painted papers and figured stuffs took the place occupied, during a long succession of centuries, by ornamented hangings. In 1782 Sébastien Mercier, the author of the paradoxical picture of Paris, wrote: "The tapestries with large figures, which the furniture

* Mgr. Barbier de Montault, "Inventaire descriptif des Tapisseries de haute lisse conservées à Rome," p. 113.

† Wauters, "Les Tapisseries bruxelloises," p. 419.

used to divide in an unpleasant manner, are banished from the saloons, and relegated to the ante-chambers. Damasks in three colours, equally distributed, have replaced these massive, harsh, and colourless figures, which did not please the feminine imagination. These tapestries are brought down from the garrets for the festival of the 'Fête-Dieu,' and are also sent into the country to furnish the attics."

This time, unfortunately, the lover of paradoxes was simply the interpreter of the general sentiment. The most beautiful suites were banished into lofts—(I could name one, woven by Jan Rost, now still abandoned to the worms and dust under the rafters of a celebrated Italian basilica)—when indeed they were not made use of as foot carpets. At one time a positive mania for destruction was added to contempt, and the vandalism assumed the most peculiar forms. Thus, at Milan, towards the end of the last century, young people of rank amused themselves at their social meetings with unravelling the hangings of silk and silver, which their ancestors had collected at so great an expense. This style of amusement, it appears, became very popular.

It is in our time only, thanks to the efforts of a few men of taste, that the old tapestries, from those of Nicolas Bataille to those of Neilson, of Cozette, and of Audran, begin to resume the place that is their due in public collections, in the saloons of the aristocracy and of the moneyed classes, and in the studios of artists. The stir made in their favour does not seem likely to be soon arrested ; it may be said that

in ten years the market value of these pieces, so lately thrown aside, has increased tenfold.

We will not continue the history of the vicissitudes of tapestry beyond the eighteenth century. One may be captivated and enraptured by the contemplation of contemporaneous efforts—efforts that are made in so many quarters at once, at the Gobelins, at Beauvais, at Aubusson, and at Mechlin—by the discussion of errors committed, and by the proofs of progresses realised ; but we are still too close to these struggles to be able to judge them with the necessary impartiality, and to derive from them a clear and enduring impression.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TECHNIQUE OF TAPESTRY.

WE endeavoured, in our Introduction, to define the meaning of the word tapestry, and the character of the art. In the last chapter the process of manufacture remains to be considered, which, with the exception of a few secondary modifications, has not changed for so many centuries.

Tapestries are divided, according to the mode of working, into high or low-warp tapestries. We will study these two methods separately.

The high-warp loom, now the only one used at the Gobelins, is composed of two uprights in wood or in cast-iron, which support two moveable cylinders, the "ensouples," placed in the upper and lower portions. These cylinders have a double purpose, they hold the ends of the "chaine," or warp, and enable it to be stretched at will. The warp, that is the range of white threads on which the tapestry-worker weaves the coloured threads, is formed of cotton (it was formerly of wool, and sometimes of silk); the threads are laid alternately on either side of glass tubes, which are called crossing staves, the even threads on one side and the odd threads on the

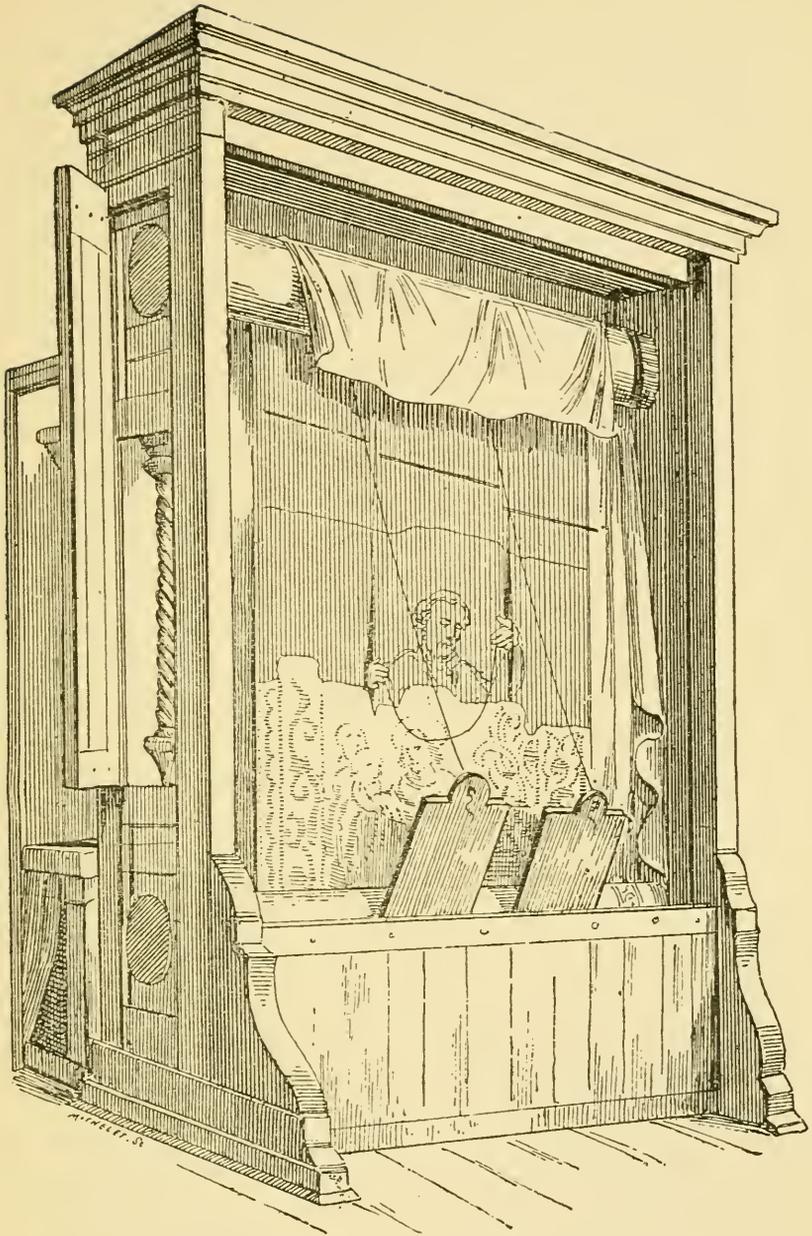


FIG. 93.—THE HIGH-WARP LOOM.

other, so as to produce at a given time a sort of double cloth. Rings of small cord, called "lices" or "lisses," are fastened to each thread of the front cloth at one end, and to a pole placed above the weaver's head at the other end; these rings enable the worker to draw the threads towards him, and to lap them over with the threads of the cloth behind, when he passes the spindle; this crossing, which is absolutely necessary in order to form the material admits of the complete covering of the warp with the coloured threads. The warping, that is, the preparing of the chaine, is a somewhat complicated operation, the detail of which would but slightly interest our readers.

This part of the business being completed, and the warp fixed in the loom, the weaver marks on it, in ink or with a black ball, the chief lines of his cartoon; he uses for this a tracing, which he fastens on the warp. This second operation is called the "décalquage."

To these processes succeeds the weaving, properly so called. The tapestry-worker begins by selecting from the stores, where the wools and the silks are wound on spindles, the needful assortment of colours. From thousands of tints those must be chosen which will enable him to reproduce the model. He then takes his stand, not before, but behind his loom, for high-warp work is done on the wrong side, and the weaver must pass round to the front in order to judge of the result attained. The model is placed not only behind the loom, but even be-

hind the worker, who has to turn round to look at it.

The weaving commences at the bottom. Following the lines traced on the warp, the weaver takes a spindle charged with the suitable colour and fastens the end of the coloured thread to one of the threads of the warp. At this stage the threads in the lower portion all lie in the same plane; they are only parted higher up by the cross-staves, so as to enable the worker alternately to grasp from the left a handful of threads, and draw back one half (A), which forms the right side, or the other half (B), which is the wrong side of the cloth. From the right the weaver passes, behind the threads A, a spindle of coloured thread; the warp, next moment, owing to the elasticity of the threads, re-assumes its original position, and becomes again one single sheet. Thus every alternate thread is covered with colour; and this is called a half-pass. Now, drawing to him by means of the lisses a handful of threads in the series B, the worker repeats the operation, passing the spindle in a contrary direction. This second move, which effects the complete covering of the warp with coloured thread, is called a woof. The weaver carefully presses these coloured threads together with the point of the spindle, and strikes the woofs with a heavy ivory comb, so as completely to insure the solidity of the work. The woofs lie side by side, or above each other, according to the length required of the tint with which the spindle is laden. When the worker desires another tint, he drops and leaves hanging the spindle, on which the wool or

silk is kept by a half hitch ; he then recommences the passes or the woofs with the fresh spindle, and so on.

It should be mentioned that several weavers can work simultaneously at the same piece. Sometimes as many as eight or ten workers may be seen at the Gobelins employed at one loom.

We may judge of the minuteness required in high-warp work—a single pass sometimes extending no farther than two or three threads—when we consider that a high-warp worker at the Gobelins only produces on an average twenty-eight square centimètres a day, about four-fifths of a square mètre (in other words, rather less than a square yard) in a year of 300 working days, and that each square mètre costs the State, on an average, a little over 2,000 francs for the workmanship alone.*

The most difficult part of the work—we mean here the work of interpretation in every sense of the word—lies in passing from one tone to another, and in the transition from light to shade. For these purposes the weaver employs approximate colours,

* The last replica of "Land and Water," after Le Brun, cost from 2,000 to 2,100 francs the square mètre, for the workmanship alone. The "Conqueror," after M. Ehrmann, cost 1,546 francs the square mètre for the workmanship, and 51½ francs for the raw materials. The price of these latter has diminished enormously since gold and silver thread is no longer used. To these sums must be added the general expenses, which come to about 120 per cent., and comprise the staff, the expenses of the school, firing, &c. We owe these details, and many others concerning the work, to the kindness of M. Alfred Darcel, late administrator of the manufactory.

which he arranges in a hatching style, in order to avoid the mosaic effect which would result from simply

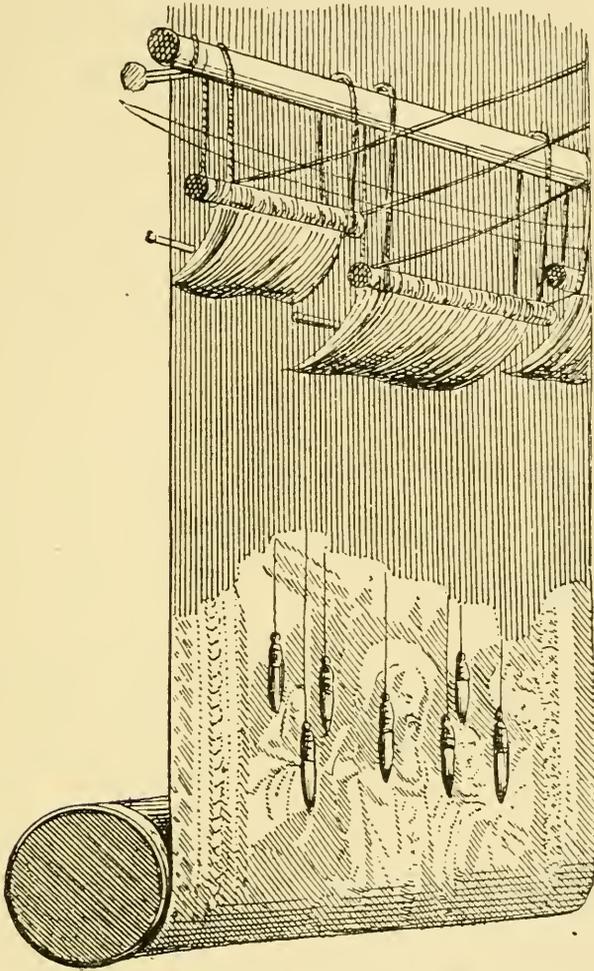


FIG. 94.—DRAWING SHOWING THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE WARPS IN A HIGH-WARP LOOM.

placing the colours in juxtaposition: we know, for instance, how unpleasant this effect is in embroidery.

We will imagine a space of fifteen threads coloured by this system: the worker first makes one woof with the colour A along the whole space, then a second taking in only ten threads, and finally a third on five threads; with the colour B he now makes a woof over the whole space of fifteen threads, then a second of ten threads where the colour A has already made five, and a third woof of five where ten have been made by A. By means of this kind of reciprocal penetration, the colours are sufficiently blended to hide from inexperienced eyes the spot where one begins and the other leaves off.

The old tapestry-makers only made hatchings with one tint, and that was really quite sufficient. The system of hatching in two tints, invented by Deyrolle under the First Empire, is now the only one in use.* It produces more fluctuation in the intermediate tones.

The low-warp loom differs in many points from the high-warp. The warp is stretched horizontally instead of vertically, and the threads are moved by means of two treadles or steps. The cartoon is fastened under

* The chromatic circle planned by M. Chevreul, the director of the dyeing establishment since 1824, comprehends ten circles of full colours, subdivided into seventy-two equi-distant scales, each composed of twenty tones, making thus a total of 14,400 tones. (See the work entitled "Des arts qui parlent aux yeux au moyen de solides colorés d'une étendue sensible et en particulier des arts du tapissier des Gobelins et du tapissier de la Savonnerie," by M. Chevreul, Paris, 1867; and the "Rapport sur les progrès réalisés dans la fabrication des tapisseries et tapis des manufactures des Gobelins et de Beauvais," by M. S. Cloez, Paris, p. 11.)

the warp. This arrangement has its advantages as well as its inconveniences. The chief advantage is the relative quickness of the workmanship. The saving of time is about one-third of that required for high-warp work, in which, owing to the upright position of the looms, the weaver can only work with his right hand, using his left solely for obtaining, separating, and crossing the threads. The low-warp worker, on the contrary, has both his hands free for passing the "flûtes" charged with coloured threads through the warp, the treadles being used, as in weavers' looms, for crossing the threads, thus considerably increasing the rapidity of the work. The high-warp workman has also to copy his picture at sight, aided by the outlines he has himself traced on the warp, and is continually obliged to measure the cartoon with his compass, so that much time is lost without advancing the work.

In the low-warp, on the other hand, the workman, either not seeing, or seeing very imperfectly, that which he is doing, is not able to judge of the ensemble and result of his work until the tapestry is completed, that is, when it is too late to remedy his mistakes. Another inconvenience is that of the cartoon being placed under the warp, and so receiving the light only through the threads of the warp. The tapestry thus becomes a spiritless copy of the picture, and is weak and less effective.

The improvements introduced into the manufacture by Vaucanson, at the entreaty and according to the instructions of Neilson, in 1757, remedied some of

these defects, without, however, entirely removing them. At that time the high-warp might have been considered vanquished. At a competition set up at his instigation, the productions of Neilson, the low-warp champion, were judged superior to those of the elder Cozette, and of Audran, the high-warp representatives. But in these cases we must beware of the impulses to which contemporaries yield.

From what we have now said, it is evident that the low-warp system costs considerably less than the high-warp, but is also generally inferior to it in style. This inferiority is, however, only perceptible to experienced eyes. We must not suppose that there are any material differences by which the one work may be easily distinguished from the other. The inversion of the model, reproduced in counterpart, is the only means by which we can prove a hanging to be low-warp work, for it is rarely possible to compare a hanging with the cartoon. If we find an inscription reversed, we may know the hanging to be a low-warp one. The tapestry-workers themselves, M. Darcel tells us, sometimes perceive slight differences at the back of a piece in the "liure" of the threads of various and contiguous colours; but this is a mere detail of workmanship, and in no wise affects the result or the appearance—the skill of the weavers being left out of consideration.* We may add that low-warp looms are now exclusively used at Beauvais

* "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," Vol. ii., p. 203, 1876.

and at Aubusson, just as the Gobelins only employ the high-warp system.

The manufacture of the velvety carpets, known by the name of Savonnerie carpets, in some ways resembles that of the high-warp tapestries. It differs from it in this, that the worker, placed below the model, part of which he has traced on the warp, reproduces it by means of a series of knots, each fastened to two consecutive threads of the warp, one before and one behind. These knots form rings in the front, the diameter of which equals the height of the pile, which are divided by a thread-cutter, and then levelled with scissors, so as to produce a velvety surface.

We will close this chapter with a description of the loom used for the manufacture of the carpets of Smyrna. "A loom primitively constructed of trunks of trees, as nature made them, is inclined against a wall; a trunk so arranged as to turn round holds the threads of coarse wool or of goats' hair, and a second supports the completed work. Balls of coloured wools hang from a string, from which the women (the men do not work at the looms) take detached threads to form the knots, each of which ties two threads of the warp. After making a series of knots and consolidating them by means of a comb, they insert from right and left one or two threads of woof, and then pass on to the next series. The tufts which result from this work are combed and levelled with scissors. These carpets are called "chalis." They are worked from old models, which have descended

in the family—at Gordes, for instance, only four or five very simple patterns exist—or from designs received with orders from Smyrna, such as the Armenian women draw for the head-pieces worn by Turkish women. They have also received of late direct orders from European agents.”*

* Lessing, “Modèles de tapis orientaux,” p. 3.

APPENDIX.

A GUIDE FOR THE AMATEUR OF TAPESTRIES.



LIST OF THE MARKS AND CHIEF MONOGRAMS.

NO ONE has hitherto attempted to arrange a general table of the marks and monograms used in the various tapestry-workshops of Europe ; the only work of this kind that we possess, that of M. Wauters, relates only to the workshops of Brussels.* We therefore entreat the indulgence of the reader of the list, necessarily very incomplete, which we have endeavoured to compile. We are indebted to M. Alfred Darcel for a series of important monograms.

I.

MARKS OF WORKSHOPS.

AMIENS.—According to a memorandum drawn up in 1718 by the corporation of the tapestry-makers of Paris, the mark of the Amiens manufactories was a double S entwined.

We believe that the appended mark, which may be seen on the "Translation of Elias" (in the National Garde-Meuble) may also be attributed to Amiens. We are justified in this belief by the fact that this piece has the same border as "Abraham's Sacrifice," signed A. C. (Alexander Comans). We know that, in Henry IV.'s time, de la Planche and Comans

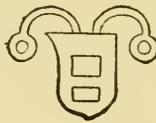
* "L'Art," vol. xxvi. p. 241, and vol. xxvii. pp. 25, 108, 221, 241.

undertook to establish eighty looms, sixty of which were to be in Paris and twenty at Amiens or elsewhere, and also that their hangings were to bear the fleur-de-lis, accompanied by the initial of the town in which they were manufactured.



ANVERS.—A kind of confused ornament, in the monogram style. (Mem. of 1718.)

AUDENARDE.—An ornament with a species of cross, and a second mark resembling a heart, with spectacles above it. (*Ibid.*)

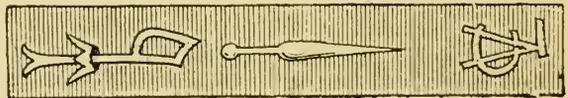


BEAUVAIS.—A red heart with a white pale in the centre and two B's (Mem. of 1718). Later, the crown-piece of France and the name of the master. These masters were :

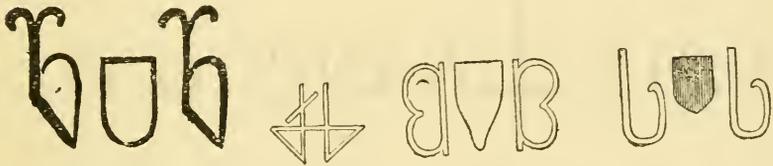
Hinard, Louis, 1664—1684.
 Béhacle, or Béhagle, 1684, d. 1704.
 Béhacle (the heirs), 1704—1711.
 Filleul Brothers, 1711—1722.
 De Meroux, 1723, discharged.

Duplessis, painter at the Opera, resigned.
 Oudry and Besnier, 1726—1755.
 Charron and Damon, painter, 1754
 1780.
 De Menou, 1780—1793.

BRUGES.—



BRUSSELS.—The mark, a shield between two B's (Brussels in Brabant), became obligatory in 1528.



LILLE.—A silver lily on a field of gules, with the letters L F, and the names of Delatombe, of Pannemaker, or of G. Werniers. A suite of "Ténières" exhibited in 1882 at the Palais de l'Industrie (in the collection of M. Tollin), shows also the signature of "la Veuve de G. Werniers."



G. WERNIERS

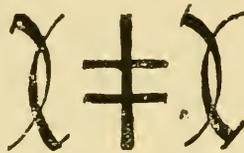
MORTLAKE.—Carolo rege regnante. Mortlake.

CAR. RE. REG.
MORTL:



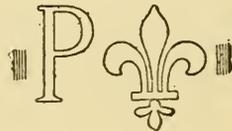
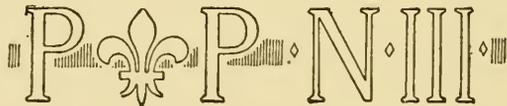
MUNICH.—A shield with a child standing with outstretched arms on a white background.

NANCY.—The "Battles of Duke Charles V." (Garde-Meuble of Vienna), with the mark of Charles Mitté.



C.M.E. † NANCI. 1705

PARIS.—A. The workshops of the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. (The N followed by III is an order number, not a mark.)



B. The Gobelins in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The Gobelins tapestries generally bear the names of the contractors in whose workshops they were executed. In order to facilitate investigations we here give a list of these contractors,

with the date of their entrance into office and that of their retirement or disappearance.

Jean Jans (high warp), 1662—1668.	L. O. de la Tour (H. W.), 1703—1734.
Henri Laurent (H. W.), 1663—1670.	J. J. Jans (H. W.), 1723—1731.
Jean Lefèvre, père (H. W.), 1663—1700.	E. Claude Le Blond (L. W.), 1727—1751
Jean de la Croix (L. W.), 1663—1712.	Mathieu Monmerqué (L. W.), 1730 to
J. B. Mosin (L. W.), 1663—1693.	1736, (H. W.), 1736 to 1749.
Jean Jans, fils (H. W.), 1668—1723.	Michel Audran (H. W.), 1733—1771.
Dominique de la Croix, fils (L. W.),	P. F. Cozette (L. W.), 1736—1749,
1693—1737.	(H. W.), 1746—1792.
Souette (L. W.), 1693—1724.	Jacques Neilson (L. W.), 1749—1788.
Jean de la Fraye (L. W.), 1691—1729.	D. M. Neilson, fils (L. W.), 1775—1779.
Lefèvre fils (H. W.), 1697—1736.	Joseph Audran (H. W.), 1772—1792.
Etienne Le Blond (L. W.), 1701—1727.	M. H. Cozette (L. W.), 1788—1792.

The Gobelins have only of late years adopted a special mark, a G crossed by a spindle.

ROME.—According to M. Barbier de Montault, the Roman workshops successively employed the four following marks:—Seventeenth century: bees, and coat-of-arms of Pope Urban VIII. (Barberini). Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: 1st, a tiara (possibly a free workshop, under the protection of the Holy See); 2nd, the wolf with Romulus and Remus in cameo (free workshop); 3rd, the archangel St. Michael, a medallion in cameo; the pontifical manufacture of San Michele.

TOURNAI.—



TOURS.—A double tower. (Mem. of 1718.)

II.

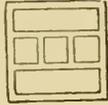
MARKS OF TAPESTRY-WORKERS, OR OF CONTRACTORS.

Auwercx (Albert).—Brussels, seventeenth century.*

A. A.

* Ritter von Birck, in the "Jahrbuch," published under the direction of the Imperial Museum of Austria.

Biest (Hans van der).—Munich, seventeenth century.



Borghet (Jan van der).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

I. V. D. B.

Boteram (Rinaldo).—Mantua and Ferrara. fifteenth century.



Bruggen (Jan van).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

I. V. B.

De Comans.—Paris, seventeenth century.



Crane (Sir Francis).—Master of the manufactory of Mortlake, seventeenth century.



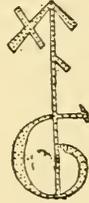
Dries (Andreas van).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

A. V. D.

Fèvre (Pierre).—Florence and Paris, seventeenth century.

P. F. F.

Geubels (François).—Brussels, sixteenth century.



Geubels (Wilhelm).—Brussels, sixteenth century.



François van den Hecke.—Brussels, seventeenth century.

F. V. H.

Jans (junior).—Gobelins, seventeenth century.

I. L. F.

Karcher (Hans).—Ferrara, sixteenth century.

WK

Leyniers (Antoine).—Brussels, sixteenth century.

JA AL NL

Leyniers (Everard).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

E. L.

Leyniers (Urban).—Brussels, eighteenth century.

U. L.

Maelsaek (F. V.).—Brussels, commencement of the
seventeenth century.

FMK

Mangin (Sigisbert).—Nancy, eighteenth century.

S. M.

Pannemaker (Wilhelm de).—Brussels, sixteenth century.



Peemans (Gerhard).—Brussels, eighteenth century.



Raës (Jean).—Brussels, seventeenth century.*



Reymbouts (Martin).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

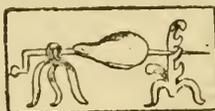


Reydams (Henry).—Brussels, seventeenth century.



* This mark, which is found in the "Four Cardinal Virtues," appears in the "Acts of the Apostles," in the Palace at Madrid. (Wauters, "L'Art," vol. xxvii., p. 32.)

Rost (Jean).—Florence, sixteenth century.



Roelants (Matthias).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

M⁴R
S

Segers (Wilhelm).—Brussels, seventeenth century. "Scenes of the Passion." (Garde-Meuble of Vienna.)*

W S W

Segers (Jan).—Brussels, seventeenth century. "Landscape." (Garde-Meuble of Vienna.)

S

Wauters (M.).—Seventeenth century.

M. W.

Zevnen (Jacob van).—Brussels, seventeenth century.

I. V. Z.

* "Jahrbuch," published under the direction of the Imperial Museum of Austria.

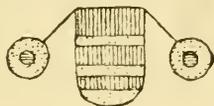
III.

INDETERMINATE MARKS.

ALSACE.—End of the sixteenth century. “Scenes from the Life of Christ.” (Collection Müller, at Mulhouse.)



AUDENARDE.—Sixteenth century. “Story of Hercules.” (Garde-Meuble of Vienna.)



Sixteenth century. “History of David.” The same.



BRUSSELS.—Sixteenth century. “History of Vulcan.”

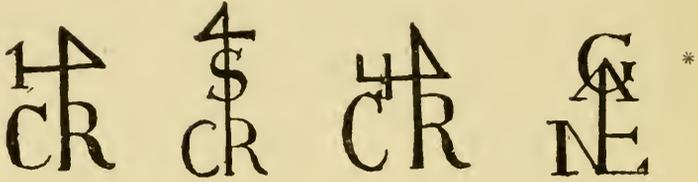


“History of Romulus and Remus.” (Garde-Meuble of Vienna.*)

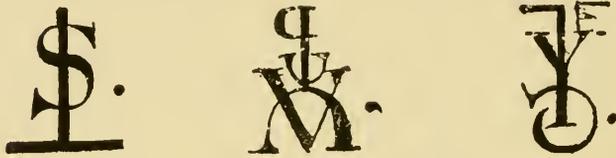


* See the “Jahrbuch,” lately published under the direction of the Imperial Museum of Austria.

“The Twelve Months.” (Garde-Meuble of Vienna.)



“History of Tobias.” Same collection.



“History of Pomona and Vertumnus.” Same collection.



“History of Abraham.” Same collection. (It appears, from M. Wauters, to be the mark of W. de Pannemaker.)



“History of Jean de Castro.” Same collection.



* Perhaps Nicolas Lequiers. (Wauters, “L’Art,” vol. xxvii. p. 32.)

“Moses striking the Rock.” Private collection.



“History of Joshua.” (Garde-Meuble of Vienna. Mark similar to that which M. Wauters attributes to Martin Reymbouts.)



“Verdure.” The same.



“Hercules and the Centaur.” The same.



“Esther before Ahasuerus.”(?) The same.



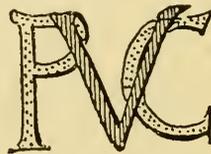
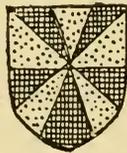
“A Woman Kneeling before a General.” The same.



“History of Cyrus.” Borders in the style of Etienne de l’Aulne. The same.



“Diana at the Chase” (verdure). The same.



“History of the Apostles.” The same.



“History of the Apostles.” The same.



“The Six Ages of the World.” The same.



“Fructus belli.” The same.



“History of the Genesis.” The same.



“History of Jacob.” The same.



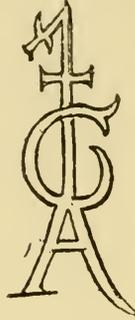
“History of Abraham.” The same.



“History of Zenoby.” The same.



“History of Moses and Joshua.” Collection of M. J. Le Breton.



BRUSSELS.—Seventeenth century. “History of Gombaut and Macée.” Private collection.



“History of Diana” (with the signatures of Jean Raes and Jacques Geubels). The same. Very similar to the mark on the “History of Moses,” belonging to M. Le Breton. M. Wauters attributes a similar mark to Jacques Geubels. (“L’Art,” vol. xxvii., p. 30.)



“Landscape.” (Garde-Meuble of Vienna.)



“Landscape.” The same.



FLANDERS.—End of the sixteenth century. Sale by auction.
Paris, 23rd July, 1878.

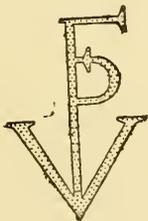


MORTLAKE.—“Acts of the Apostles,” in the Garde-Meuble.



PARIS.

End of the sixteenth, and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. A monogram accompanied by a fleur-de-lis and a P.
“Story of Artemisia,” in the Garde-Meuble.



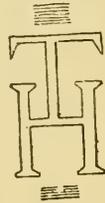
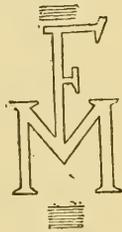
Seventeenth century. The workshop of Comans: "Arethusa metamorphosed into a fountain." (Exhibition of the Union Centrale, 1876. No. 208).



The same workshop: "Abraham's Sacrifice," in the Garde-Meuble.

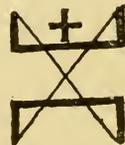


Seventeenth century. An unknown Parisian workshop. This mark is accompanied by a P and a fleur-de-lis. The "History of Constantine," in the Garde-Meuble of Paris, and in that of Vienna; "History of Diana," in the Garde-Meuble of Vienna.



UNKNOWN WORKSHOP.

"History of Moses," sixteenth century (with the cross of Lorraine). Garde-Meuble of Vienna.



“History of the Exodus,” sixteenth century. The same.



“History of the Kings,” sixteenth century. The same.



“History of Alexander,” sixteenth century. The same.



“Arabesques,” seventeenth century. The same.



THE END.

LIST OF THE CHIEF CENTRES OF MANUFACTURE.

	PAGE		PAGE
Alexandria	4, 23, 24	Egypt	4, 6
Algeria	52	Enghien	183
Alost	141	Exeter	350
Alsace	375	Felletin	236, 283, 340
Amiens	367, 368	Ferrara	151, 218, 372
Antwerp	183, 212, 368	Florence, 154, 220—228, 289, 342,	369, 372
Arras, 93, 94, 104, 105, 131, 139, 145		Fontainebleau	230, 232
Ath	183	Frankenthal	293
Athens	19	Fulham	350
Aubusson	282, 283, 340	Genoa	229
Audenarde, <i>see</i> Oudenarde.		Ghent	212, 353
Auxerre	68	Gisors	339
Avignon	133	Greece	15—28
Babylon	3, 7, 8, 9, 12, 24	Halberstadt	74, 76
Barcelona	158	Heidelberg	348
Beauvais	263, 280, 334, 368	Kiôge	306
Berlin	294, 348	Lauingen	236
Binche	183	Lille, 96, 141, 183, 214, 283, 338, 369	
Bourges	131	Limoges	70
Bruges	143, 183, 214, 368	London	115, 162, 350
Brussels, 96, 139, 179, 181, 182, 183,		Louvain	183
285, 288, 339, 352, 353, 369,		Madrid	346, 347
373, 379		Maincy, near Vaux	261
Buda	160	Mantua	150, 151, 372
Burcheston	237	Middleburg	141, 214
Cambrai	338	Milan	156
Campania	30	Miletus	27
China	13, 14	Mortlake, 295—306, 370, 372, 379	
Correggio	155		
Delft	214		
Douay	96, 141, 214		
Dresden	348		

	PAGE		PAGE
Moscow	307	St. Petersburg.	350, 351
Munich	293, 347, 370, 371	St. Riquier	70
Nancy	284, 340, 370	Sardis	27
Naples	345	Saumur	68, 70
Navarre	133	Seville	347
Nineveh	8	Sicily	52
Nuremberg.	108, 164	Sienna	153
Oudenarde	183, 339, 353, 368	Soho	350
Palestine	10—13	Spain	52
Paris, 91—93, 99—104, 113, 250		Sybaris	26
—260, 370, 372, 380		Syracuse	26
—The Gobelins, xiv, 210, 254,		Tauris	27
263—270, 314, 332, 370—371		Todi	155
—The Louvre, 251, 257, 259, 278		Touneh	52
—The Savonnerie, 257, 280, 335		Tournay	96, 140, 371
—The Trinité	234, 252, 257	Tours	236, 260, 371
Persia	42—46	Troyes	130, 131
Perugia	155	Tunis.	52
Phrygia	3	Turin.	344—345
Poitiers	69	Urbino	155
Quedlimburg	86, 87	Valenciennes	96, 141, 214
Rheims	131, 261	Venice	151, 229, 290, 345
Rennes	131	Vigevano	216
Rome, 29—31, 154, 292, 342—344,		Ypres	141
371			

LIST OF PAINTERS

WHO DESIGNED CARTOONS FOR TAPESTRY, OR WHOSE
PICTURES WERE REPRODUCED IN TAPESTRY.



	PAGE		PAGE
Alvise	151	Corradi (Giovanni dei).	150
Andersen	306	Coxcie (Michel)	174, 200
Arcimboldo	220	Coypel (Charles).	317, 326, 342
Arnault	281	Coypel (Noël)	244, 268
Audran	179, 318, 321		
Bachiacca	174, 224, 228	Delhais	336
Bailleul (Baudouin de).	128, 141	Desportes	311, 317, 319
Barthélemy	330	De Troy	310, 317
Baudouin (Claude)	230	Dosso	174, 217, 218
Beaumont (le Chevalier de)	344	Dubreuil	253
Bérain	179, 318	Dumée	244, 253, 254
Blain de Fontenay (De)	280	Dumont (J. J.)	311, 334, 340
Boides (Guglielmo)	218	Du Rameau	330
Boucher	309, 313, 326, 328, 340	Dürer (Albert)	204
Bourdon (Sébastien)	245	Dyck (Van)	295, 299, 303
Bramantino	216, 217		
Brenet	330	Ehrmann	360
Bronzino	174, 224		
Campana	174	Filippi (Camillo).	219
Candido (<i>see</i> Witte, Peter de).		Fontenay	311
Caron (Antoine)	174, 234	Fraucart	280
Casanova	312, 334		
Casteel	294	Garofalo	xiv, 174, 219
Chabal-Dussergey	337	Gerardo de Vicenza	152
Champagne (Philippe de)	244	Ghiberti (Victor).	154
Cigoli	290	Giovanni da Udine	174, 194, 246
Cleyn	245, 298, 301	Giulio Romano, 145, 170, 174, 177, 194, 196, 204, 234, 258	
Colart de Laon	103	Goya	347
Corneille	245	Guido	351
Cornelisz (Lucas)	218	Guyot.	244, 253

	PAGE		PAGE
Hennequin (<i>see</i> Jean de Bruges).		Pontormo	174
Herbel (Charles)	339	Pordenone	174
Huet	340	Poussin	245, 268, 274
Jan de Mabuse	175, 186	Primaticcio	174, 230
Janssens	352	Ranson	340
Jaquet	130	Raphael, xv, 139, 145, 158, 174, 176, 178, 181, 189, 196, 200, 204, 205, 244, 247, 249, 256, 263, 268, 275, 288, 290, 297, 346	
Jean de Bruges	102, 103	Restout	317
Jordaens	244	Romanelli	245, 292
Jouvenet	317	Rubens, xiv, 194, 243, 245, 256, 272, 284, 286, 295	
Juliard	340	Sagrastani	342
Le Brun (Charles), 245, 262, 268, 270, 272, 274, 277, 288, 316		Salviati	174, 221, 224, 226
Le Chevalier-Chevignard	333	Sarto (Andrea del)	174, 290
Le Maire	325	Strada	174, 226, 228
Le Moyne	280	Suardi (<i>see</i> Bramantino).	
Le Prince	311, 350	Sustris (F.)	174
Lerambert 174, 234, 244, 245, 253		Symon	130
Lesueur	245	Teniers, 244, 284, 286, 287, 339, 352	
Loo (Amedée van)	311, 328	Titian	174
Lucas van Leyden	210	Tura (Cosimo)	149, 152
Mantegna, xiv, 149, 150, 197, 204, 268		Ugolino	152
Ménageot	330	Vaga (Perino del)	174
Metsys (Quentin)	186	Vernay (Jan)	207
Meulen (Van der) 244, 268, 272, 273		Vernansaal	311
Michael Angelo	290	Veronese (Paul)	174
Mignard	268, 274, 277	Vincent	330
Momnoyer	280	Vinci (Leonardo da)	149, 175
Murgalet	261	Vouet (Simon)	244, 253, 257
Nassaro (Matteo del)	174, 230	Watteau	340
Neri de Bicci	154	Weyden (Roger van der)	146
Orley (Bernard van) 174, 175, 191, 204, 206		Winck (Christian)	348
Orley (Jan van)	352	Witte (Peter de)	245, 293
Oudry, 206, 309, 310, 316, 318, 326, 334, 340, 368		Wolgemut	165
Parrocel (Charles)	310	Wuez (Arnould de)	338
Pécheux (Laurent)	344	Yvart	280
Penni (Francesco)	174, 194		
Pierre	330, 334		
Pietro da Cortona	245, 292		

LIST OF TAPESTRY WORKERS MENTIONED.

	PAGE		PAGE
Adamante	150	Comans (Marc) 251, 254, 255, 257,	266, 372, 380
Aelst (Peter van)	189, 192, 194	Cozette (M. H.)	371
Agnes, Abbess of Quedlimberg	87	Cozette (P. F.)	318, 364, 371
Antoine	292	Davanzo (Pietro)	345
Audran (Joseph).	371	Delacroix (Jean)	268, 371
Audran (Michel).	318, 354, 371	Delacroix (fils)	278, 371
Auwerx	288	Delatour	371
Baert (Jean)	339	Delatombe	369
Barrobon (Jean).	348	Demignot (François)	344
Barrobon (Pierre)	349	Demignot (Victor)	344
Bartolomeo (Lucian)	133	Dini (Antonio)	344, 345
Bataille (Nicolas) 99, 100, 103,	113	Dourdin (Jacques)	99, 103
Béhacle (Philippe)	281, 334, 368	Dubourg (Maurice).	234, 251
Benedetto da Milano	216	Dupont (Pierre)	252, 257, 280
Bernardino	152	Duranti (Pietro)	346
Biest (John van der)	293, 371	Duro (Rinaldo)	155
Birgières (Jacques)	155	Ecken (Van der)	308
Birgières (Nicolas)	155	Ferloni	343
Blamard (Louis).	261	Fèvre (<i>see</i> l'efèvre).	
Blommart (Georges)	283	Francesco of Ferrara	156
Borcht, or Borghht (Van der),	286,	Gentili (Pietro)	345
	352	Geubels (François)	204, 206, 373
Boteram (Rinaldo) . 149, 150, 152,	153, 372	Geubels (Jacques)	379
Boucher	338	Geubels (Wilhelm)	373
Bruno (Antonio)	344	Giacomo d'Angelo	151
Carcher (<i>see</i> Karcher).		Giovanni di Allemagna	155
Castro (<i>see</i> Borcht).		Goten (Van der)	346
Chédeville	347	Guidone	150
Clément	130		
Comans (Alexandre de) . 256, 367			
Comans (Charles de)	256		

	PAGE		PAGE
Hasselt (Bernardin van)	290	Mercier (Pierre)	294, 348
Hecke (Van den)	286	Michel	292
Hecke (J. F. van den)	288, 373	Mitté (Charles)	370
Hicks (Robert)	237	Monmerqué (Mathieu)	371
Hosemant (Jean)	133	Mosin (J. B.)	268, 371
Jacquet d'Arras	154	Neilson (John) 313, 318, 326, 364.	371
Jans (Jean)	265, 268, 316, 371	Neilson (fils)	371
Jans (Jean, fils)	278, 371	Neuenhoven (Paul van)	293
Jans (J. J.)	371	Neusse (Adrien)	339
Jean d'Allemagne (<i>see</i> Giovanni di Alle magna).		Nichetto	156
Jean de Bruges	151	Nicolas de France	150
Jeanne of France	155	Noyon (Juan)	133
Johannes Thomæ de Francia	150	Pannemaker (André)	283
Karcher (John)	216, 219, 373	Pannemaker (François) 283, 338,	369
Karcher (Nicholas) 216, 221, 224,	228	Pannemaker (Wilhelm) 207, 208,	347, 374, 376
Labbé (Germain)	293	Pepersack	261
La Fraye (De)	278, 371	Pietro di Andrea	152
La Planche (François de) 251, 254,	256, 367	Quedlimberg, Agnes, Abbess of	87
La Tour (De)	278	Raës	286
Laurent	251	Raës (Jean)	288, 374, 379
Laurent (Girard)	268	Reymbouts (Martin)	374, 377
Laurent (H.)	371	Riviera (Giacomo della)	292
Le Blond (Claude)	371	Rost (Jean)	221, 224, 228, 374
Le Blond (Etienne)	278, 371	Ruggiero	156
Lefèvre (Jean) 257, 258, 259, 265,	268, 316, 371	Santigny	347
Lefèvre (Pierre)	257, 290, 372	Saunders (P.)	350
Lefèvre (fils)	278, 371	Segers (Wilhelm)	374
Lenger (Antoine)	346	Simonet (Jean)	343
Lequiers (Nicolas)	375	Souette	278, 371
Leyniers	286	Spierinck (Francis)	214
Leyniers (Antoine)	373	Stuerbout (Martin)	307
Leyniers (Evrard)	288	Valentin d'Arras	151
Leyniers (Urbain)	353	Vignes (Charles)	348
Liévin de Bruges	152, 154	Vos (De)	286
Lorenzo	156	Vos (Josse de)	207
Lourdét (Simon)	257, 280	Wernier (Guillaume)	338, 369
Maelsaek (F. V.)	373		
Maincourt (Renaud de)	154		
Melter (Jean de)	284, 338		

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface	vii
Introduction : What is meant by Tapestry	xi
Type and Character of the Art	xiii

CHAPTER I.

Tapestry in Ancient Times	1
Testimony of Pliny, the Naturalist	3
The Egyptians	4
Antiquity of the High-Warp Loom	5
The Assyrians	6
Babylonica Peristromata	10
The Hebrews : Tabernacle of Moses	10
The Vail of the Jewish Temple	11
Chinese Tapestry	14

CHAPTER II.

Tapestry amongst the Greeks in the Time of Homer	15
Penelope's Loom	16
Agamemnon and the Carpets of Purple	19
The Peplos of Athene	19
Phidias, and the Tapestries of the Parthenon	20
The Tent of Alexander the Great	22
Hephaestion's Pyre	23
Tapestries at the Court of the Lagides	23
Alexandrian Tapestries	25
Tapestries of Sybaris, of Pergamum, of Miletus, of Sardis, and of Tauris... .. .	26, 27

CHAPTER III.

	PAGE
Tapestry in Rome... ..	29
Tapestries Manufactured in Campania ..	30
Ovid's Description of the Looms of Minerva and Arachne ...	31
The Nuptial Couch of the Goddess Thetis, according to Catullus ...	35
The Funeral Pile of Septimus Severus	36
Proserpine's Tapestry, described by Claudian	37
General Character of Tapestry in Ancient Times	40

CHAPTER IV.

Tapestry in the East from the beginning of the Christian Era to the Crusades	42
The place held in Tapestry by the purely Decorative Element ...	44
The Sassanides	45
The Koran and Tapestry... ..	46
The Caaba of Mecca	48
The Fatimite Caliphs	49
Spain and Sicily	52

CHAPTER V.

The Lower Empire	54
The Church and Tapestry	56
The Hangings in the Palace of Theodoric, King of the Goths ...	58
Oriental Influence... ..	58
Justinian I. and Silk Culture	66

CHAPTER VI.

Tapestry in the West, from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century ...	67
Tapestries of the Monastery of St. Florent of Saumur	68
Manufactory of Tapestries at Poitiers	69
Carpet Manufactory of Limoges... ..	70
Textile Art in England	70
Textile Art in Germany	71
The "Bayeux Tapestry"	72
Description of Tapestry by Baudry de Bourgueil	74

	PAGE
Hangings preserved at the Abbey of Murbach	75
Hangings preserved at the Cathedral of Halberstadt	76
Sicilian Manufactories of Silken Fabrics	78
Specimens of High-warp Tapestries, from the Twelfth Century	78
Antiquity of the Tapestries of the Cathedral of Halberstadt	80

CHAPTER VII.

The Thirteenth Century	82
Textile Art used for the Festal Decoration of Churches	83
Textile Hangings in Mansions	83
Textile Adornment of Streets for Festivals and Public Ceremonies	84
The Hangings forming part of the Treasure of the Church, under Boniface VIII.	86
Importance acquired by the Secular Element in Tapestries	86
Hangings worked in the Convent of Quedlinburg about the year 1200	87

CHAPTER VIII.

The Fourteenth Century	89
Tapestry Workers of Paris, Arras, and Brussels	91
The "Livre des Métiers" of Etienne Boileau	91
The "Tapissiers Sarrazinois" and the "Tapissiers Nostrez"	92
The Presentation to the Temple (Gobelins Museum)	97
Tapestries of Charles V., King of France	98
Tapestries of Charles VI. and of the Duke of Orleans	99
Nicolas or Colin Bataille and the Apocalypse of the Cathedral of Angers	100
Hennequin or Jean de Bruges	102
Jacques Dourdin	103
Philip the Hardy and the Workshops of Arras	105
Inventory of Subjects represented in Tapestry in the Fourteenth Century	106
Tapestry in Germany in the Fourteenth Century	108
Tapestry in Italy in the Fourteenth Century	112

CHAPTER IX.

The Fifteenth Century	116
Influence of Luxury and Emancipation of Ideas on Style	119

	PAGE
Italy and the Composition of Cartoons for Tapestry	126
Progress made in Material Execution	127
Tapestry in France	131
Tapestries of Boussac	133
The Dukes of Burgundy and the Flemish Workshops	135
Arras; Brussels	139
Tournay; Bruges	141
General Character of the Franco-Flemish Hangings	142
Italian Workshops	149
Mantua; Venice; Ferrara	151
Sienna; Rome and Florence	154
Perugia; Correggio; Todi and Urbino	155
General Character of Italian Tapestry	157
Tapestry in Spain; Hungary	160
England	162
Germany... ..	164

CHAPTER X.

The Sixteenth Century	166
The Italy of the Renaissance and Tapestry	167
Influence of Raphael on Tapestry	174
Changes in the Composition of Borders	177
Prosperity of the Brussels Workshops	181
Peter van Aelst and the "Acts of the Apostles," after Raphael ...	189
The "Scenes in the Life of Christ," designed by the Pupils of Raphael, aided by a few of the Master's Sketches	194
Cartoons for Tapestry of Giulio Romano	196
The "Loves of Vertumnus and Pomona"; the "History of Vulcan"	198
The "Story of Psyche"	200
Bernard van Orley	204
The "Grand Hunts of Maximilian"	206
The "Conquest of Tunis," manufactured by Pannemaker	207
The "Victories of the Duke of Alva"	208
The "Lucas Months"	210
Decline of the Brussels Manufacture	210
Ghent and Antwerp with regard to the Development of Tapestry ...	212
Tapestry Looms of Middleburg and Delft	214

CHAPTER XI.

The Sixteenth Century (<i>continued</i>)	215.
Tapestry in Italy	215

	PAGE
Workshop of Vivegano	216
John Karcher and the Ferrara Manufacture	216
John Rost and the Manufactory of Florence	221
Bronzino and Francesco Salviati	221
Florentine Tapestry considered as a whole	228
Workshops of Venice and Genoa	229
Tapestry in France	230
The Fontainebleau Manufactory (about 1535)	230
The "Trinité" Manufactory and the History of Mausolus and Artemisia	234
Germany—the Workshop of Lauingen	236
Tapestry in England	236
William Sheldon and Robert Hicks	237
Spenser and Shakespeare and Textile Art	240

CHAPTER XII.

The Seventeenth Century	242
Rubens—The "History of Marie de Medici," &c.	244
Charles Le Brun	245
Reproduction of Old Cartoons	246
Social Position of Tapestry	248
Tapestry Workshops established by Henry IV.	251
François de la Planche and Marc Comaus	251
Pierre Dupont, author of "La Stromatourgie"	252
The Painters Lerambert, Dubreuil, Guyot, and Dumée	253
Looms at the Louvre, and Pierre and Jean Lefèvre	257
Workshops of Tours	260
Workshops of Rheims and Maincy	261
General Character of French Tapestry during the first half of the Seventeenth Century	262
Foundation of the Gobelins Manufactory (1662)	263
Le Brun made Superintendent of the Manufactory (under Colbert, Chief Director) by Louis XIV.	264
The Hanging, the "History of the King"	270
The Hanging, the "History of Alexander"	272
Reorganisation of the Carpet Workshops of the Louvre and the Savonnerie	278
The Beauvais Manufactory	280
Tapestry Workshops of La Marche, Aubusson	282
Tapestry at Lille	283
Looms set up at Nancy	284

CHAPTER XIII.

	PAGE
The Seventeenth Century (<i>continued</i>)	285
Tapestry in Flanders : Brussels	285
“ Les Tenières ”	286
Italy : Manufactories of Florence and Rome	289
Tapestry in Germany—Manufactory established at Munich	293
Tapestries at the Palace of Berlin	294
Tapestry in England : the creation of the Manufactory at Mortlake	295
Rubens and Van Dyck with regard to this Manufactory	295
The Parisian Jurors’ Judgment of the Tapestries of Mortlake	304
Death of Sir Francis Crane (1636)	304
High-warp Workshops in Denmark	306
Tapestry in Russia	307

CHAPTER XIV.

The Eighteenth Century ; change in the Choice of Subjects and in Style of Tapestry	308
Tapestry loses its Popular Character	309
Tapestry from a Decorative point of view	312
The Gobelins, the model for the rest of Europe	314
Oudry, and the “ Hunts of Louis XV.”	316
Struggles between the Painters and the Tapestry Weavers	319
Hostility between Oudry and the Tapestry Workers	321
The perfect Tapestry Worker, according to the Parisian High and Low Warpers	322
François Boucher, Inspector of the Gobelins (1755)	326
The Revolution and the Gobelins	330
Manufactory of Beauvois	334
Workshops of Lille ; of Cambrai	338
Workshops of Gisors ; of Nancy	339
Workshops of Aubusson and of Felletin	340

CHAPTER XV.

The Eighteenth Century (<i>continued</i>)	342
Italy ; the Manufactory of San Michele, in Rome	342
Manufactories of Turin	344
Manufactory of Naples ; Workshops of Venice	345

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS.

399

	PAGE
Spain	345
The " Los Tapices " of Goya	347
Germany : the Manufactory of Munich... ..	347
Manufactories of Berlin, Dresden, and Heidelberg	348
England	348
Manufactories of London, Fulham, and Exeter	349
Manufactory of St. Petersburg	350
Flanders ; Brussels	351
Decline of Tapestry towards the end of the Eighteenth Century	353
Mania for Destruction added to Disdain	354

CHAPTER XVI.

Technique of Tapestry	356
High-warp Loom	356
Low-warp Loom	362
Manufacture of Savonnerie Carpets	365
Loom used for the Manufacture of the Carpets of Smyrna	365

APPENDIX.

Guide for the Amateur of Tapestries ; List of Marks and Chief Monograms	367
Marks of Workshops	367
Marks of Tapestry Workers, or of Contractors	371
Indeterminate Marks	375

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