

Tap'es-try. (*Fabric.*) A kind of woven hangings of wool or silk, frequently raised and enriched with gold and silver, representing figures of men, animals, historical subjects, etc. The term is of somewhat indefinite meaning, and the purpose equally indeterminate. It was originally intended for hangings, to hide the wall, or make a screen or curtain. Ovid mentions human figures as worked on the curtains of theaters.

For an account of ancient tapestry, see Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," article "Tapes."

Tapestry is described in the Book of Exodus.

"Plato, the comic poet, namesake of the philosopher, says:—

'There the well-dressed guests recline
On couches rich with ivory feet;
And on their purple cushions dine,
Which rich Sardinian carpets meet.'

For the art of weaving embroidered cloths was in great perfection in his time; Acesas and Helicon, natives of Cyprus, being exceedingly eminent for their skill in it, being weavers of very high reputation."—ATHENÆUS (A. D. 220).

The tapestry of Pollux, *τάπητες*, was woven shaggy; the *amphitapeta* was shaggy on both sides; the *tapetta* only on one side; the *ephestris* was shorn.

Tapestry-hangings are said to have been invented by the Pergamians. Attalus III. bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans, and thence, it is said, hangings were introduced into Italy. The Greeks and Latins had embroidered hangings. These hid the bad carpentry or stone walls. The Anglo-Saxons had wall-hangings of silk, embroidered with needlework or plain Tapestry was common in England to the time of Elizabeth.

Tapestry was made in France at a very early date. The oldest and most celebrated specimen in existence is the Bayeux tapestry, containing embroideries representing the conquest of England by William the Conqueror, and supposed to have been worked under the supervision of his queen, Matilda. Tapestry was first made by the loom in Flanders. The manufactory at Fontainebleau was established by Francis I. in the sixteenth century; that at Gobelin's was enlarged under Louis XIV.

The French ascribe the invention to the Saracens, and formerly called the workmen who were employed in its manufacture *sarazins*.

The manufacture was introduced into England by Sheldon, in the reign of Henry VIII. It was encouraged by his successors. Hampton Court Palace yet displays their tapestry on its walls.

These hangings were a very ornamental accession to the bare walls of the buildings of some centuries since. Arras, Brussels, Antwerp, and Valenciennes excelled in the manufacture, but the best known at the present day is the factory at the Gobelin's, near Paris. It is named after Giles Gobelin, a French dyer, of the reign of Francis I., and was established by Henry IV. about 1606, and much enlarged by the renowned Colbert in 1666. It is said to have been conducted by Flemish artists.

Hand tapestry is embroidered by the needle, woolen or silken threads being worked into the meshes of a fabric.

Basse lisse is woven upon a loom. The warp is horizontal, and is stretched above the pattern to be copied. The weft is inserted by a *flute*, which partakes of the characters of a needle and a shuttle. A treadle arrangement depresses some of the threads and forms a parted shed. The face of the work, being downward, cannot be inspected until it is removed from the loom; this inconvenience, probably, led to the substitution of the *haut lisse*, in which a vertical warp is stretched between a warp beam and a cloth beam. The pattern is placed at the back of the warp, through the threads of which it may be seen, and the outlines are copied upon the warp. The weft and pattern are then worked in with needles corresponding in number to the kinds and colors of threads used.