

## Miscellaneous.

### THE WEAVING OF THE RENAISSANCE.

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#### BAROQUE AND ROCCO PERIODS.

In the last paper we traced the course of artistic weaving from antiquity to the Middle Ages, and reached the period at which the art of the Renaissance begins to spring up. Hitherto it has been necessary at almost every stage to settle preliminary historical questions, in order to ascertain the influence of the various periods on the special department of the flat-pattern. Our way now becomes far simpler; the movements which complete one another are single, and can be recognised with the help of the general history of civilisation and art. In most cases we no longer need to inquire into the origin of the different forms and elements, but can discover it without further trouble from the numerous portraits of these centuries. There remains only the agreeable task of considering the many splendid patterns which are unrolled before our eyes, and that of gathering out of this infinite bouquet of beautiful and excellent motives a few choice specimens with the purpose of transplanting them to the garden of modern art.

If we look round at the products of weaving in the 15th century, we find ourselves confronted, not as was the case with the first group, with unfamiliar and foreign forms, but with well-known figures, above all with the pomegranate pattern which is used especially for tapestry. We have seen the European art of the Middle Ages turning away more and more from Oriental designs, the fanciful elements of the latter receding into the background, over against the steady development of the leaf ornament. The really important transition, on which I recently laid great stress, is the transition to the so-called pomegranate pattern. This pattern has precursors dating from 1400 A.D., or thereabouts, in which we see now and again a perfectly developed type of it. These are large, leaf-shaped, and flower-shaped figures, which, however, cannot be identified with any particular plant. They usually exhibit a sort of oblique management of the lines, perhaps so that the tendrils grow upwards obliquely, and attached to them is a sort of leaf formation which is substantially circular, and has in the centre a but moderately developed kernel that has approximately the form of a knob of fruit. The large leaves remind us in a certain degree of the ancient palmette, but on closer scrutiny are seen to be very different. We find these peculiar leaf figures on a limited group of Italian patterns about the year 1400. Perhaps their origin must be sought in the East, but this cannot be positively asserted, although it might be maintained that these leaves have a semi-Oriental appearance. By the middle of the fifteenth century the actual pomegranate pattern has almost completely developed. The centre of these patterns is usually occupied by a fruit-like figure, which is designated a pomegranate, and has the form of an apple which bends inwards symmetrically at the top and the bottom. This pomegranate was a symbolic fruit from the earliest times, being regarded in antiquity as a symbol of ensnaring love, and dedicated to Venus. In Assyrian art it was the only fruit which was employed in designs. Like the lotus-flower, it had ornamental and symbolic significance during various periods. This pomegranate-pattern is met with as early as the fifteenth century, tolerably often even in combination with late Oriental motives. In the fifteenth century, and during a large part of the sixteenth, the pomegranate is surrounded with leaves, and not content with that, the designers add points or spikes. Although the figure now bore but slight resemblance to a pomegranate, the process went further still; blossoms were represented as springing from these points at the top, as well as at the sides, so that the field became more and more crowded. Several ways of distributing these pomegranates on the material can be recognised in the specimens

at our disposal. One group of articles simply arranges the patterns side by side, connecting the large blossoms by a small stalk. Another group makes the pattern vary, changing its position. Besides this simple rhythmical arrangement there are other patterns far more elaborately decorated; for instance, large branches which meet in the centre are made to proceed from pomegranate-shaped figures. This variety is of Gothic origin, whilst the rhythmical kind corresponds rather to the form characteristic of the Renaissance.

The pictures of the Flemish school shew almost uniformly long winding serpent patterns. If we consider the great quantity of the designs which date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the question arises to what centres of manufacture we are to refer them? In the attempt to answer this question the supposition forces itself upon us that the origin of these articles might possibly have to be sought in Flanders. Flanders was the only country in which at that time the Gothic form and speech were cultivated. This view is, after all, only a supposition, but one in favour of which weighty reasons can be adduced. In addition to what has been already said, note the constant occurrence of these patterns on the Flemish pictures, though this is not an absolute proof, for the motives of these pictures might just as well have been imported from Italy. Also note their frequent occurrence on the garments of Charles the Bold, who, as everyone knows, displayed unexampled magnificence in the 16th century at Bruges and Ghent. When he lost the day and his life in conflict with the Swiss at Nancy, some of his robes of state fell into the hands of the Swiss, and were taken to Rome, and amongst them were some with pomegranate patterns. At the end of the 15th century the Gothicising form dies out, whilst the rhythmical arrangement, of which I have already spoken, passed on into the 16th century. It is very striking that the pure Gothic pomegranate pattern prevailed in Italy during the whole of the 15th century. Italy remained unaffected by all the Greco-Roman palmettes, and even in the time of Raffaele we meet with garments which exhibit late-Gothic design. In the 16th century we can follow the process by which the late-Gothic pattern is translated into a Renaissance pattern, a revolution completed between 1510 and 1550. The way in which the Renaissance changed these things was very simple. The peculiar leaf-shapes, which may be regarded as the type of the late Gothic design, are turned over; every item is changed into an S-shaped volute or scroll; the arch, in order to preserve the circular form, is drawn out rather further, and the figure characteristic of the Renaissance is obtained. The whole lies now inside a circle, in the centre of which remains the pomegranate; leaves are attached, palmettes are developed at the top as well as the bottom, and so we arrive at a Renaissance pattern. But the centre-piece and the tendrils were developed further in course of time. The centre piece consisted during the Gothic period of a fruit with a bushy appendage from which proceed flowers. Sometimes this fruit like figure was provided with scales (shells), and then exhibited close resemblance to an anana or thistle-head, so that it was often called the thistle pattern. Of this centre piece the Renaissance made a vase, a transformation easily effected by curving the centre-piece at the top and the bottom and providing it with two handles. By means of this metamorphosis the mediæval thistle-head had become a Renaissance-vase, from which proceeded blossoms; at a later period the vase contracted a little while the blossoms became larger. The border of the pattern also underwent a change. We have seen that the leaves lay side by side to a large extent, connected only by tendrils, or that large branches wound obliquely upwards. Since the Renaissance, as was previously observed, needs a strictly rhythmical disposition of the parts, lines were traced round the interior pattern, and in this way long fields of a pointed oval shape wherein the blossoms lie were developed out of the branches. The tendrils which constitute the proper division of the field also acquired a Renaissance character. They were altered into splendid spirals or into plain tendrils, with leaves attached, or they

became bands as broad as a hand, which were afterwards resolved into diamonds or scales.

Velvet weaving also produced at that time pomegranate patterns which are incredibly splendid. It is possible that people were familiar with velvet-weaving in the early Middle Ages, but we see it perfectly developed only in the 15th century, and when we examine the products of that period we may well see that the art of weaving has produced nothing more beautiful and splendid even in the most recent times.

By the side of the Flemish and Italian groups we have the Spanish group which is related to both. These Spanish patterns shew the same pointed oval fields, only with this difference, that that which winds round the interior pattern as a band in the Flemish and Italian groups appears here as large leaves which grow together bearing an unmistakable Moorish type. On the whole, we may safely assert that the pomegranate pattern has survived even into modern times, although it has undergone modifications. If, for instance, you examine a pattern from the time of Louis XIV., it will not at first come into your mind to regard it as a pomegranate pattern, and yet it is said in reality to represent one.

This pattern undergoes a thorough transformation in the middle of the 16th century, when the transformation takes place from large patterns to small ones. This important move is connected with Spanish costume, which comes up about this time. The man's dress contracts, it becomes a doublet, with short puffed-out sleeves, very short puffed-out hose, and a short cloak. The dress of women also assumes a similar form. As the large patterns could not be used for these closely-folded stuffs, efforts were now made to produce smaller patterns, and this change was effected by degrees. At first we still see the pomegranate, or the vase with the bunch of flowers occupying the centre of the pattern, but the broad bands lying between have been altered into small stars. The proportion of the old patterns is also preserved, although in a diminished degree. But even this reduced pattern proved too large for the Spanish costume, and so, towards the end of the 16th century, another pattern was developed which was better adapted to the altered fashion, and exhibits the following arrangement. A series of winding branches lying at equal distances from one another goes obliquely upwards, and has opposite to it a second series of branches in the opposite direction, also oblique. By this pattern a new principle of form was created in that here for the first time the attempt to emphasise a definite direction in a pattern was abandoned and the effort was made to lift it up to the right and the left so that the stuff could be laid without detriment on both sides, because obliquely placed patterns of this sort can have no strict rule of proportion. The large patterns, however, do not disappear completely, for a rather larger pattern was demanded by the fashion which prevailed in the 17th century of wide dresses for women. Larger designs were in request also for the decoration of churches. Above all the large pomegranate was necessary for stuffs used in upholstery.

Down to the 15th century no distinction can be found between fabrics intended for the decoration of walls and those used for articles of dress; even patterns which our modern taste would consider too large for tapestry were used for the tight-fitting costume of men. A real separation between dress patterns and tapestry patterns is found only when clothes shrink, that is in the age of the Renaissance. It is characteristic of the Renaissance that it absolutely scorned the application of the forms of architecture to weaving. And yet in the former department it achieved wonders. If we stroll through a museum we are amazed by the extraordinary inventiveness which enable the artists of those days to vary the themes of decoration in the filling up of pilasters and in sculpture. And yet not one of these variations has been utilised for textile art. The latter has created its patterns from its own resources. It has succeeded in avoiding plastic art with marvellous good taste, rightly perceiving that the flat-pattern which must be used for weaving, demands a wholly different style of treatment. As

to the use of the tapestry produced in the Renaissance period, I may add that the individual pieces were partly used in the churches to dress the pilasters. If it was desired to adorn a wall exceptionally with these fabrics the separate stripes were not placed side by side, but were distributed so that a smooth vase of, perhaps, red colour, which was at least twice as broad as the tapestry alternated with it. Of course, rooms like ours were not suitable for such decorations; great palaces were necessary. In the 17th century these fabrics were also used as coverings for furniture, such pieces as were suitable for the arms of chairs, for instance, being cut out of the material.

In the course of the 17th century the great divergence between dress-patterns and wall-patterns widened more and more; and this largely because, as we see from the pictures of Rubens and Rembrandt, men and women in the Netherlands took suddenly to black attire. Only on exceptional occasions, such as marriages and other festivities, were dresses of gay colours donned. The same development was witnessed in Venice. If we look at Titian's portraits from that period we see that the men were uniformly dressed in black, only the splendid senatorial costume had been retained. In Spain we find the same phenomenon. The women there are also in black, and only a small residuum of holiday attire has survived.

In the designing of these holiday garments we perceive a tendency to the further development of the floral pattern. The proportion is the same as in the pomegranate patterns. Flowers, which cannot be identified with any definite species, grow out of the apple or the later vase of the Renaissance. Only in the second half of the 16th century, an alteration begins that takes place owing to Oriental influence. People began now to imitate the carnations, tulips, and hyacinths imported from the East and not previously known in the West. If we follow the movements of flower-weaving at the close of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th, we find that the flowers are exceedingly thin and slender, and exhibit the distinctive type of the Asiatic field flower. In the 17th century began the culture of these flowers, principally through the mania for tulip bulbs, which seized Holland at that time. This change asserted itself gradually in design. Towards the end of the 17th century we find, instead of the small thin blossoms, thick knobs of tulips, carnations, and hyacinths. Gradually taste extended to other original plants; hot-houses were erected in France to promote the cultivation of them, and this movement produced floral patterns of the peculiarly fanciful kind which are seen in the age of Louis XIV. These flowers can be recognised with effort, but there is no real imitation of nature. At the beginning of the 18th century the taste which prevailed at the court of Louis XIV. obtained absolute sway, and, therefore, we have to look at France only in order to trace the further development of designs. In the days of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. we have to distinguish in textile art between three sharply-defined departments: men's dress, women's dress, and upholstery. For men's dress the large pattern is completely extinct. There remains either smooth material covered with embroideries, or designed with narrow stripes, with which small flowers are interwoven. In women's dress, on the contrary, there is a sudden revival of the former love of display, promoted by the enormous hooped petticoat which came into fashion under Louis XIV. The patterns used for female attire are now produced, on a larger scale, for upholstery and tapestry, and it becomes the custom to decorate the room completely with coloured patterned fabrics, the alternation of patterns and plain stripes being now abandoned. Our castles, for instance, the castle of Potsdam and the royal palace in Berlin, contain not a few rooms adorned in this way with tapestry. The materials used for walls were applied also to curtains and furniture. These fabrics are extremely splendid; gold and silver brocade are lavished on them with colossal extravagance. When we examine the textiles of the age of Louis XIV., we are surprised by the extraordinary delicacy with which the weavers of that

day managed to produce the richest and most splendid effects.

The age of Louis XV. is distinguished from all preceding ages principally by strenuous opposition to regularity of design and the attempt to introduce an apparent irregularity into patterns. Already in the *Streamuster* pattern the endeavour had been made to remove in some measure strict proportion, for now, in opposition to the Renaissance, a pattern was produced in which this regularity was apparently got rid of by a special effort. In this way extreme grace and elegance was aimed at during the Rococo period. A characteristic of this period is the great advance in the representation of flowers, although it was reserved for our own century to completely naturalise them in textile art. Apart from the still somewhat defective treatment of flowers, the fabrics of the 18th century are models of beauty. So far as their colour is concerned, a gradual transition from strong colours to fainter ones can be noticed even during the previous century. The splendid, brilliant colours of the age of Louis XIV. were succeeded by the graceful, rather languid, colours of the Rococo. This period delights in the affectation of age in powder, and that explains the preference for faint colours: best known from this period is the "dying blue" and the "bleu mourant." The transition into the time of Louis XVI. is effected by the patterns becoming smaller and more graceful.

In the Rococo period the influence of China, and later that of India and Persia, are important facts. Chinese influence takes a very prominent place in the culture of the previous century, and it was with its help that the Rococo period was developed more and more. Chinese landscapes were amazingly popular for hangings intended to decorate walls. In the time of Louis XVI., when the taste for classical forms began to prevail, the Chinese had to retire into the background, and their place was taken by the Persians and the Indians. The Indian shawls more than anything else, exerted a controlling influence on the weaving industry, and attempts were therefore made to imitate them, but without any particular result.

Into this period falls an exceedingly important department, at which we must at least glance, the printing of fabrics. The production of printed stuffs was known in the early Middle Ages, but so far as we can trace it, for hangings only, not for garments. Only in the 16th and 17th centuries are printed fabrics used also for the production of articles of dress, and in the 18th century this application is considerably extended. This is evidently connected with the rise of the cotton industry, for wool is not very suitable for printing, as it does not take the printing-colour, whilst cotton, which consists of exceedingly fine threads, is very well adapted for it. The Asiatic cotton industry, which had hitherto kept within moderate limits, had widened out through American influence, so as to assume colossal proportions, and towards the end of last century a considerable quantity of printed cotton goods was imported Europe, the designs of which had been considerably influenced by Persia and India. These peculiar Persian designs exhibit fabulous durability. Every 20 or 30 years they come to the front, and ten years ago the printing establishments of Alsace began to resuscitate them. The printed fabrics tended, in some measure, to counterwork the want of colour which prevailed in designs towards the close of the last century.

The decay of weaving in the department of dress materials in the course of the last century, was so serious that at last weaving entirely ceased, and only embroidery was left. This rapid decline was principally owing to the passion for Greek statuary, and the assumption that the human exterior must be modelled after this ideal of ancient beauty. Whilst, therefore, weaving passes more and more into the background in the department of costume, it shews its dexterity in a high degree in the production of tapestry; the faintness of the colours is due to the taste of the age. France had until then taken the lead in this matter, and only Frederick the Great succeeded in in-

roducing the weaving into Prussia; the weaving establishment of Crefeld was founded by French refugees, and our weaving factory of Hesse also goes back to the beginning of this century. The embroidery of silk too, supported by native silk-culture, was more and more developed. How weaving has fared in the course of the present century I may assume to be well-known. You are aware that its activity, so far as female attire was concerned, was very limited from 1830 to 1850. The patterns employed always moved within modest limits; scattered flowers, squares, or stripes, were the utmost that was ventured on; cotton goods, however, were covered with larger patterns. Certainly the rich patterns of previous centuries had been retained for the production of certain national costumes. Only during the last twenty years have rich floral patterns begun again to appear in garments, and for them the previous century provides the best and most abundant selection. Those who visited the Paris Exhibition of 1878, and the great Centennial Exhibition of 1889 will have observed a large supply of the richest and most splendid floral patterns which have been lately manufactured for female costume. Richly designed woollen stuffs are now again produced in Elberfeld and through the whole of Saxony.

#### WEAVING IN KENDAL.

In Domesday Boke there is mention of a church at Kirkby Candale, whereby we know that Kendal, as we call it now, was a centre to which the Saxon inhabitants of the Westmoreland Moors came for worship and religious comforts: and perhaps for other comforts too, for by the church dwelt monks, who in those days fed the helpless and gave out the little knowledge that was free to the many.

According to tradition, there lived the hermit, in a hut shaped like a beehive, and almost hidden by a double fence; and here and there, among the heathery hills which slope up from the river Kent on either side, were scattered the cottages of that time—thatched with reeds, and fit to yield only the rudest shelter to the shepherds, whose flocks were all abroad over the fells, and on the green margins of the nearer lakes. This church was to serve the whole population, from the foot of Helvellyn to the borders of Lancashire; and it probably served well enough, for though there were a good many sheep, there were very few people.

How came it that from these sheep being on these particular hills, we have seen in our own time upwards of half a million of people employed on the woollen manufactures of our island? It happened thus—for two or three hundred years after the church of Candale was entered in Domesday Boke the Flemings were the greatest woollen manufacturers in the world, and, indeed, almost the only considerable manufacturers. History states that in the city of Louvain there were, in the times of the insurrection against Spain, one hundred and fifty thousand weavers and four thousand woollen drapers; and that when the operatives were going home from work, a great bell was rung to warn mothers to gather their little children within doors, lest they should be trodden down by the crowd in the streets.

When political troubles broke up this mass of people, our English kings invited some of them over—or, at least, permitted them to come. Henry the First settled a few of them in Wales; but the first who settled in England opened his manufacture in the reign of Edward the Third. His name was John Kempe. Of all places in the island he chose that little valley in Westmoreland, and that bend of the river on which stood Kirkby Candale, for his abiding place. Of course he had reasons, and it is pretty clear what they were. The sheep were one reason; and another was, no doubt, the abundance of the broom, called by the country people "woodas," which grew on the neighbouring wilds. At this time, and for long after, wool made thirteen-fourteenths of our exports; and foreigners sent us in return woollen cloth, dyed and dressed, and a dyeing material wherewith to dye the small quantity of woollen that was woven at home. This dye was woad. Indigo was not then known as a dye, and woad was the only blue. Now, blue is one-half of green; and in the broom which grew near Kendal, Mr. John Kempe and his successors had the other half—the yellow; hence arose the famous Kendal green, which was renowned for centuries, even to within a hundred years, when it was driven out by the Saxon green. This Kendal green was the first celebrated English colour. The cloth, of the colour of the wool, was first boiled in alum water,