AN ESSAY ON ORNAMENTAL ART AS DISPLAYED IN THE INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION IN HYDE PARK, IN WHICH THE DIFFERENT STYLES ARE COMPARED WITH A VIEW TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF TASTE IN HOME MANUFACTURES.*

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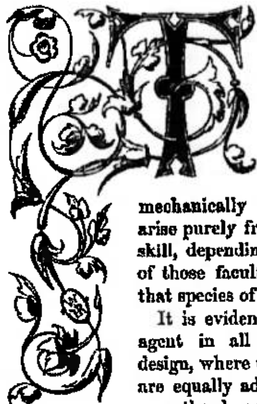
"It is known that the Taste is improved exactly as we improve our judgment; by extending our knowledge, by a steady attention to our object, and by frequent exercise. They who have not taken these methods, if their taste decides quickly, it is always uncertainly; and their quickness is owing to their presumption and rashness, and not to any sudden irradiation." BURKE.

"Consmur tenues Grandia."

I.—*Introduction.*



HERE is perhaps no province of industry, in which the advantages of an intercommunication of ideas are more direct, than in that of Art-manufacture; and this must be more especially the case when the means of production of the various parties are pretty nearly mechanically equal. The differences of results arise purely from differences of degrees of artistic skill, depending on the greater or less cultivation of those faculties of the mind which conduce to that species of judgment termed Taste.

It is evident that Taste must be the paramount agent in all competitions involving ornamental design, where the means or methods of production are equally advanced; but where this is not the case, the chances are still very greatly in the favour of Taste over mere mechanical facility, provided low price be not the primary object.

Thus, the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park is of all things the best calculated to advance our National Taste, by bringing in close contiguity the various productions of nearly all the nations of the earth in any way distinguished for ornamental manufactures. The distinctive characteristics of each are so many elements of novelty of arrangements which every nation may appropriate according to its own views and practice.

Our present subject of consideration is how far British manufacturers may derive advantage from this congress of national peculiarities of design.

Ornament is essentially of the province of the *eye*; it is beautiful appearances that we require, not recondite ideas, in works of Ornamental Art: these may be associated with ornament, but they must be kept perfectly subject to the mere principles of beauty of arrangement of the material forms. Dramatic, allegoric, and ornamental art are totally distinct in their development; they may be combined, but one can never be the substitute of another. If dramatic or allegorical compositions are introduced as portions of an ornamental scheme, they must be treated upon the symmetrical or ornamental principle. Whatever other principle we may associate with the ornamental, must be kept secondary to *effect*, if we are desirous of making a good design: introduce what symbols we will, they must be made subject to the ruling principles of ornament itself, or, however good the symbolism, our design is a mere crudity in Art.

Some general examination of ornament in its characteristic developments of various times and nations, or what are technically called *styles*, must necessarily precede our examination of the modern expressions of ornamental art as now displayed in the Great Industrial Exhibition.

We shall find that the elements of form are constant in all cases; they are but variously treated: this, in fact, must be so, if a Style be founded upon any principles at all; and all those styles which have carried with them the feelings of ages, could not be otherwise than based upon some fixed natural laws. How certain variations of form and colour happen to be so universal a desire, that the varieties of their arrangements have occupied all people from the remotest times, is a question of both material and psychological interest.

Universal efforts show a universal want, and beauty of effect and decoration are no more a luxury in a civilised state of society than warmth or clothing are a luxury to any state: the mind, as the body, makes everything necessary that it is capable of permanently enjoying. Ornament is one of the mind's necessities, which it gratifies by means of the eye. So it has been discovered to be again an essential element in commercial prosperity. This was not so at first, because in a less cultivated state we are quite satisfied with the gratification of our merely physical wants; but in an advanced state, the more extensive wants of the mind demand still more pressingly to be satisfied. Hence ornament is now as material an interest in a commercial community as the raw materials of manufacture themselves.

In early stages of manufactures, it is mechanical fitness that is the object of competition: as society advances, it is necessary to combine elegance with fitness; and those who cannot see this must send their wares to the ruder markets of the world, and resign the great marts of commerce to those of superior taste who deserve a higher reward.

This is no new idea: let us take a lesson from the experience of past ages,—the various coloured glass of Egypt, the figured cups of Sidon, the shawls of Miletus, the terra-cottas of Samos, the bronzes of Corinth—did not command the markets of the ancient world, either for their materials or for their mechanical qualities; not because they were well blown—cleverly chased—finely woven—ingeniously turned—or perfectly cast:—these qualities they had only in common with the similar wares of other nations; but in the gratification of one of the most urgent necessities of the mind in an advanced social state, they were pre-eminent—they were objects of a cultivated refined taste. And it is by this character alone that manufactures will ever establish that renown which will ensure a lasting market in the civilised world. The great object of attainment is Taste, which is not a mere impulse of the fancy, but dependent upon the operations of reason as completely as any other conclusion respecting good or bad, or right or wrong, to which we attain by the mind's experience. To demonstrate this truth is the chief aim of the following Essay, in which the various species of ornamental art exhibited will be examined with respect

* To this Essay has been awarded the prize of one hundred guineas, offered by the Proprietors of the ART-JOURNAL, for "An Essay on the best mode of rendering the Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, to be held in London in 1851, practically useful to the British Manufacturer."—ED. A. J.

to their quality, wholly regardless of magnitude or quantity; for a single good work is worth a whole museum of mediocrity, in an educational point of view, and this is the bourn of our inquiry—How far our manufacturers may improve their taste through the present Great Exhibition of Works of Industry now established in Hyde Park?

It is only by an analysis of the principles and styles of ornament that such an inquiry can be practicable, and only by testing the works exhibited by these principles that any sound or useful conclusions can be drawn.

II.—*The Styles.*

Style in ornament is analogous to hand in writing, and this is its literal signification. As every individual has some peculiarity in his mode of writing, so every age or nation has been distinguished in its ornamental expression by a certain individuality of taste, either original or borrowed. In a review of this kind, however, when we speak of the styles, we can comprise only the broad distinctions of ornament itself, the kinds or genera, not the mere specific varieties. There are, of course, many varieties of every great style; but so long as the chief characteristics remain unchanged, the style is the same. From this point of view, therefore, the styles become comparatively few. We shall find that nine will comprise the whole number of the great characteristic developments which have had any influence on European civilisation: namely—three ancient, the Egyptian, the Greek, and the Roman; three middle-age, the Byzantine, the Saracenic, and the Gothic; and three modern, the Renaissance, the Cinquecento, and the Louis Quatorze.

All styles are only so many different ways of using the same language, that of ornament; some expressing one sentiment, some another: the various expressions do not depend so much upon the details themselves as upon their mode of treatment. In the Egyptian, the earliest historic style, we have the conventional and the symbolic elements paramount, in a simple symmetrical treatment, combined with a very positive expression of colour.

The Egyptian is literally a hieroglyphic style: as a rule the Egyptian elements have a particular meaning, even to the geometrical patterns; few, if any, are arbitrarily chosen for the sake of beauty of effect only; the style is accordingly very simple and limited in comparison with later styles, in which mere symbolism was superseded by the pure principles of Art.

But many Egyptian ornaments are still popular ornaments, and have been so through all times; as the fret or labyrinth, wave-scroll, spiral, zigzag, water-lily, the palm, and the star. The arrangements are almost exclusively a mere symmetrical progression, and always of a very simple order, though of gorgeous character; for precious stones and metals, and the richest materials generally, seem to have been abundantly used. The frieze is the commonest form of these decorations, and the details are generally some of the more important symbols; as the Lotus or water-lily of the Nile, the type of its inundations, from which Egypt derives its fruitfulness; and the zigzag, the type of water itself.* The Winged Globe, however, or the Scarabæus (the Beetle) is the most prominent of all Egyptian ornaments; it was a species of talisman, an invocation of the good spirit, *Agathodæmon*, and was used universally as both architectural and personal ornament, in almost every kind of material, wood, metal, or stone; from the largest block of granite of Syene to the diminutive proportions of the rarest precious stones. The Asp, and the cartouche containing hieroglyphics, are other important materials of Egyptian ornament.

We find mixed up with these more characteristic details almost every natural production of Egypt, conventionally treated; not mere crude imitations from nature, but natural types, selected by symbolism, and fashioned by symmetry into ornamental decorations.

In viewing the character of Egyptian Art, then, besides its conventionalism and symbolism, which are expressions of details, we have a general expression—namely, its grandeur of proportion, simplicity of parts, and splendour or costliness of material: gold, silver, and ivory, precious stones, and colour. Its great prevailing characteristic, like that of all Oriental Art, is sumptuousness.

* This ancient signification of the zigzag is still preserved in the Zodiac sign of the Water-Carrier or, Aquarius.

Jewish and other Asiatic ornament, like the Egyptian, appear to have been purely representative: the only elements mentione in scripture, are the almond, the pomegranate, the palm-tree, th lily or lotus, oxen, lions, and the cherubim.*

It is not till we come to Greece that we find the habitual intr duction of forms for their own sake, purely as ornaments, and th is a very great step in art. The Egyptians produced many beautif useful forms, but the Greeks not only improved these forms, b decorated them with appropriate and beautiful ornaments, designe solely for their effect as delightful objects to the eye; they paid th same attention to architectural and general decoration.

If we consider the Greek as one great historic period of ornamen the following are its chief characteristics, with some of which Egy has already made us acquainted:—the fret, the wave-scroll, som times called the Vitruvian scroll, the echinus, or horse-chesn (vulgarly called the egg and tongue, and egg and dart), th astragal, the anthemion (commonly called the Greek hone suckle, because some examples resemble that flower), the guilloc or plat, and the volute: the ordinary scroll and the acanth are very partially developed in the pure Greek, compar with what they were in later times among the Romans; th both belong, nevertheless, to Greek Art, especially the acanth which distinguishes the last and richest of the Greek orders—t Corinthian. These three orders, as regards their ornamental qua ties, are better described as the Echinus—the Voluted—and t Acanthus—Orders, than by their national designations. They a not so much distinct as successive orders, each adding something that which preceded it; for instance in the Doric, or early Gre order, we have the echinus as the only ornament; in early tim it was painted, in later it was cut on the capital: in the Ionic, second Greek order, we have the addition of the volute, or ram horn, to the echinus; and in the third order, or the Corinthian, have the addition of a row of acanthus leaves below the volut of the second order, but which are here modified into stems, *cauliculi*. How all these various Greek elements were treated it not expedient to explain here; space precludes it, if nothing els but there is always a great simplicity both in the details and the arrangement of the materials of Greek ornament; it is gen rally the various elements arranged in simple horizontal series, o row above another.

In the Roman, the third and last ancient style, we have, as t chief characteristic, a gorgeous magnificence; but this magnifice was accomplished only by an enrichment and a profuse use Greek details; the scroll and the acanthus, however, being pred minant over all others, so much so, that the acanthus scroll alo when in anything approaching magnificence of development, sufficient to stamp a design as Roman in character, and it is t chief distinction between Greek and Roman work.

The Romans used the Greek orders, but they added to the one of their own, which is, however, a simple mixture of t three Greek orders into one—an echino-voluted-acanthus orde the original modification of the volutes in the Corinthi acanthus order being restored to a complete Ionic capital in t Roman. Besides this great richness of detail, the mixture of gr tesques such as human, animal, and vegetable forms combined, is common characteristic of Roman Art, as, for instance, the sphin griffin and others; these elements were likewise Greek, but n of such frequent occurrence in Greek examples: † the Romans, fact, added no element, except perhaps the shell, to the materials Greek ornament.

With the Roman ends what may be technically termed ancie ornament; the change of religion which ensued, through t adoption of Christianity by Constantine, totally revolutionis Ornamental, as well as all other Art.

During the first and second centuries, Christian works of A were limited to symbols, and were then never applied as deco tions, but as exhortations to faith and piety. And all Christia decoration rests upon this foundation; the same spirit of symboli

* See the visions of Ezekiel, 1 and 10, from which are derived the four symbol images of the Evangelists—the angel, the lion, the ox, and the eagle.

† The sphinx was also Egyptian, but there is a great difference between the Gre and Egyptian sphinxes: the first is human-headed, ram-headed, and hawk-headed, a is always male; while the Greek is female, with the head of a woman, and always h wings, which the Egyptian never has. See Sir Gardner Wilkinson's account of t sphinx.—*Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, &c.*

prevailing throughout, until the return to the heathen principle of beauty in the period of the Renaissance.

The early symbols were the monogram of Christ, variously written—the lily—the cross—the serpent—the aureole, or *vesica piscis*—representing the acrostic symbol, the fish, from the common Greek word for fish—*ἰχθύς*, containing the initials of the following sentence—Ιησους χριστος θεου υἱος σωτηρ, Jesus Christ, of God, the son, the Saviour; and the circle or *nimbus*, the glory of the head, as the *vesica* is of the entire body. These are all very important elements in Christian decoration, especially the *nimbus*, which is the element of the trefoil and quatrefoil and analogous forms, so common in Byzantine and Gothic Art; the trefoil having reference to the Trinity; and the quatrefoil to the four evangelists, as the testimony of Christ; and to the cross, at the extremities of which we often find the circle, besides the circle or *nimbus* in the centre, signifying the Lord: the circles of the extremities, which are the *nimbi* of the evangelists, often contain their respective symbolic images, the angel, the lion, the ox, and the eagle; thus making their signification palpable.

Why the beautiful and accomplished styles of the ancients, then, were discarded for such comparatively crude elements of ornament, needs no other explanation than that they were pagan. Paganism consisted, however, solely in forms, not in colours, and therefore in respect of colour there were no restrictions. But ancient forms also, as paganism itself gradually disappeared, were slowly admitted among the elements of Christian decoration; and the scroll, under certain modifications, became eventually a very prominent figure in Byzantine ornaments; and under a similar modification, the anthemion and every other ancient form was gradually adopted after a systematic exclusion of four or five centuries.

But all Byzantine decorations are strictly conventional, a trefoil leaf or a lily form being the ordinary foliation for a scroll: and every form, whether from nature or from earlier styles of Art, was always treated in a peculiar manner; more skill, on the whole, being displayed in the general effects than in the details, and owing to the richness of material used, which was characteristic of Byzantine taste, a very gorgeous style was ultimately developed upon the mere foundation of a rude symbolism.

The leading forms of Byzantine or Romanesque architecture are likewise due to the same influence; the cross, the circle, and the dome pervade everywhere. Both the Lombard and the Norman styles may be considered as mere varieties of the Byzantine. All are comprised in the term Romanesque, which comprehends the round-arch style of Middle-Age Art, as distinguished from the Saracenic and the Gothic, which are pointed-arch species.

Indeed the Byzantine was so widely spread and so thoroughly dentified with all Middle-Age Art, after the first few centuries of the Christian era, that its influence even in Italy did not wholly decline before the fifteenth century, until the establishment of the *Quattrocento*, by Lorenzo Ghiberti. Both the Saracenic and the Gothic proceeded from the Byzantine. The Greek missionaries carried its influence into the extreme north; and while the artists of Syria were accommodating their style to Mohammedan exclusiveness in the south, in the colder regions of Europe the mysteries of Mount Athos were freely mixed up with the fables of Scandinavian mythology. The Scandinavian soldiers, also, of the imperial body-guard at Constantinople, made, on their return, the talismans of Christian mythology almost as familiar in their native homes, as the gods of their forefathers. The cross planted on the serpent is not an uncommon image on Mount Athos; and the cross surrounded by the so-called Runic knot, is only a Scandinavian version of the original Byzantine symbol of the redemption—the crushed snake curling round the stem of the avenging cross. The same mixture of Christian and Northern mythology characterises the portals of Lombardy.

As the peculiarly Norman style, such as it is best known in this country, was originally developed in Sicily, it contains many Saracenic features, of which the pointed arch and the zigzag are the most characteristic. The original Norman was not national, but simply Romanesque or Byzantine; and the decorated or pointed zigzag Norman is, strictly speaking, Siculo-Norman; there is no other peculiar Norman style.

The principles of the Saracenic are soon stated. the conditions of the new Mohammedan law were stringent; there was to be no image of a living thing, vegetable or animal. Such conditions led of course to a very individual style of decoration, for vegetable forms were now excluded for the first time. However, by the eighth century, when the richer works of the Saracens commenced, the Byzantine Greeks who were pressed into the service of the Arabian Caliphs and generals, were already sufficiently skilful to make light of such exclusions, and the exertion of ingenuity which they impelled gave rise to, perhaps, a more beautiful simply ornamental style than any that had preceded it, for there was no division of the artistic mind now, between meaning and effect; and although the religious cycles and other symbolic figures, which had hitherto engrossed so much of the artist's attention were excluded, the mere conventional ornamental symbolism, the ordinary forms borrowed from the Classic period, and geometry, left an abundant field behind, which was further enriched by the peculiarly Saracenic custom of elaborating inscriptions into the designs. Mere curves and angles or interlacings were now to bear the chief burden of a design; the curves, however, very naturally fell into the standard forms and floral shapes; and the lines and angles were soon developed into a very characteristic species of tracery or interlaced strap-work, very agreeably diversified by the ornamental introduction of the inscriptions. The Saracenic was the period of gorgeous diapers; but like the Byzantine, it was more remarkable for its general effects than for any peculiar merit of the detail, or of its combinations—it is made up of an infinite number of minute contrasts of light and shade and colour; something like a formal flower-garden, wanting the simplicity and grandeur of natural scenery. But no details are so applicable for mere *fillings* as the Saracenic, and hence we find them constantly occurring in the designs of the Renaissance.

The last great middle-age style the Gothic, like the Saracenic, grew out of the Byzantine: it flourished chiefly on the Rhine, in the north of France, and in England; it was developed in the thirteenth century, was perfected in the fourteenth, and in the sixteenth became extinct.

The Gothic is essentially a pointed and geometrical style in its general forms, though all the symbolic elements of the Byzantine are preserved in it; its details appear to be an infinite repetition of its greater architectural features, by which it is distinguished; as the spire in the place of the dome, and the pointed, in the place of the round arch, compared with the Byzantine or Romanesque. The pointed arch, however, it has only in common with the Saracenic and the Siculo-Norman.

As an ornamental style, it is an excessive elaboration of the pointed and geometric element, vertical and diagonal lines prevailing over the others. It is further peculiar in its combinations of details, at first the conventional and symbolic prevailing, and afterwards these combined with the elaboration of natural objects proper to its localities. We find in Gothic examples, not only the traditional conventional types, but also in the later periods, mixed with them, exact imitations of the plants and flowers growing in the neighbourhood. This is a great feature, but still always secondary to its elaboration of geometrical tracery—vesicas, trefoils, quatrefoils, &c., with many other geometrical combinations, —which always remains the main characteristic of the style, whether the so-called early English, the decorated or the perpendicular, French or German.

In ornament, therefore, as in architecture, it is the geometrical tracery which stamps a design with a Gothic character; mixed with natural flowers only, it is still Gothic; but the example is more characteristic when it contains also the historic ornaments of the style—as the Tudor-flower, the fleur-de-lis, the crocket-leaf, trefoil-leaf, vine-scroll, and other familiar details. The Gothic scroll always preserves the character of its early Byzantine type, namely that of a foliated serpentine rather than a succession of spirals.

The *Rinascimento* or *Renaissance*, as the ultimate revival of classical art in Italy is termed, dates from about the Venetian conquest of Constantinople, in the year 1204. This revival, best known under its French name of the Renaissance, was long strictly but a revival of the classical orders of architecture; there was no revival of classical ornament itself in its completeness before the

sixteenth century, until the style known as the *Cinquecento*,* the real goal of the Renaissance. There are four distinct varieties of the Renaissance, independent of the Cinquecento. In its earliest character, the *Trecento*,† in the fourteenth century, it is chiefly a mixture of Venetian and Siculo-Norman ornament, the Venetian being purely Byzantine in its origin, consisting for the most part of conventional foliage and scroll forms, such as the decorations by Giotto in the church of San Francesco at Assisi, or the mosaics of the Baptistery of San Giovanni at Florence.

In the fifteenth century, or in the *Quattrocento*, the influence of tradition was wholly superseded by selection, and a gradual recurrence to ancient examples; with a mixture of original arbitrary forms and natural imitations. The introduction of exact natural imitations was the great feature of this new stage of the Renaissance, as displayed by Lorenzo Ghiberti at Florence, in his magnificent gates of the Baptistery of San Giovanni.‡ Still all details were ornamentally treated, strictly in accordance with the laws of symmetry in their arrangement. It was in this period that were gradually introduced also those peculiar arbitrary forms, pierced and scrolled shields, or cartouches, and tracery, or strap-work, which eventually became the most characteristic details of the styles of the Renaissance, except during the short period of the prevalence of the Cinquecento in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, when they were very generally discarded, as was every element not found in ancient examples.

A design containing all the elements indiscriminately, can be designated only by the vague term Renaissance; and such a design may contain the classical orders and ornaments combined with conventional Byzantine scroll-work, Moorish tracery and interlacings, scrolled shields, fiddle-shapes, and strap-work, natural imitations of animal or vegetable forms of every description, and the grotesque arabesques. Such is the mixture we find in the works of Benvenuto Cellini, and also in the great majority of the foreign cabinet and silver-work in the Exhibition.

This peculiar style flourished in the sixteenth century, simultaneously with the more definite Cinquecento, which was, in fact, an attempt at purification of style by the great artists of that period, who excluded every element not warranted by ancient examples, and accordingly in this style, which must be considered as distinct from the ordinary Renaissance, we have an endeavour to restore ancient ornament to its original purity and splendour, and even to develop it to a still greater degree of variety, and a more chaste magnificence, than is exhibited by ancient examples.

The Cinquecento, therefore, in a critical distinction of styles, does not imply merely sixteenth century Art, but a particular art of the sixteenth century. The term Renaissance is sufficiently definite for the mixed style, more especially as this style belongs to several ages and countries, though more peculiarly to France, where it has prevailed almost to the exclusion of every other style; but it is of strict Italian origin. There are, accordingly, four Italian styles of the revival—the Trecento, the Quattrocento, the pure Cinquecento, and the mixed Cinquecento, or Renaissance; there is one French style of the period—the Renaissance, the same as the mixed cinquecento of Italy; and there is one English style—the Elizabethan, which is the English Renaissance: minor modifications it is unnecessary to notice here. We have made this cursory enumeration for the sake of defining the Cinquecento itself, as practised by Agustino Busti, and others, more particularly in the north of Italy, towards the middle of the sixteenth century; the school of Julio Romano, at Mantua, developed it in painting.

The prevailing spirit of this style, aiming at a revival of the gorgeous decorations of Rome, naturally threw out all those peculiar arbitrary forms, which are never found in ancient examples, as the scrolled shields and tracery; and, on the other hand, elaborated to the utmost the most conspicuous characteristics of Greek and Roman Art, especially the acanthus scroll, a[…] grotesque arabesques, abounding with monstrous combinati[…] human, animal, and vegetable forms, in the same figure or […] work; but always characterised, whatever the materials, […] extreme beauty of line: every natural form, and every c[…] tional or ornamental form of antiquity, is admissible in th[…] Cinquecento; it has also this feature, a beautiful variat[…] ancient standard types, as the Anthemion, &c., which occ[…] only as we find them in ancient examples, but as Italian […] also, treated in the order of the ancient examples.

The Cinquecento is considered the culminating style in […] mental Art, as presenting the most perfect forms, and th[…] pleasing varieties; Nature and Art vieing with each other i[…] efforts to attract and gratify the eye. It appeals only to th[…] of beauty; all its efforts are directly made to attain th[…] attractive effects, without any intent to lead the mind […] ulterior end, as is the case with the Byzantine and other sy[…] styles. The Cinquecento forms are supposed to be syml[…] beauty only, and it is a remarkable concession to the ancien[…] the moderns, to attain this result, were compelled to recur t[…] works. And it is only now, in the contemplation of this c[…] mate style, that the term "Renaissance" becomes quite intel[…] The Renaissance, or Re-birth, of ornament is accomplished […] Cinquecento; still the term is not altogether ill-appropri[…] the earlier styles, as these were really the stepping-stones […] Cinquecento. We now come to the consideration of the last […] historic styles—the Louis Quatorze with its variety, the […] Quinze, and its final debasement, the Rococo.

The great medium of the Louis Quatorze was gilt stucc[…] which for a while seems to have almost wholly supersed[…] corative painting; and this absence of colour in the p[…] decorations of the period seems to have led to its more s[…] characteristic, infinite play of light and shade. Such bei[…] aim of the style, exact symmetry in the parts was no longe[…] tial, and accordingly in the Louis Quatorze varieties, we, […] first time, occasionally find symmetry systematically avoide[…] feature was gradually more and more developed until it […] characteristic in the Louis Quinze, and ultimately led t[…] debased style, or rather variety, the Rococo, in which sy[…] either in the balance of the whole, or in the details of the […] seems to have been quite out of place.

The characteristic details of this style are the scroll and […] the anthemion treated as a shell by being made concave […] small acanthus scroll; it is a variation of the most commo[…] ration of the ancient funeral tiles; all classical orname[…] admitted in the Louis Quatorze, but they are confined to th[…] accessory details: all elements of the Cinquecento also from […] the Louis Quatorze proceeded, are admissible under peculia[…] ment, or as accessories to the scroll and shell as principal fe[…] the very panels are formed by chains of scrolls, the conc[…] convex alternately, some clothed with an acanthus foliation […] plain. A fiddle-shape combination of such scrolls is very […] teristic even for various purposes; a legacy probably […] ordinary Renaissance.

The broad acanthus foliations of the scroll in the […] Quatorze, became much elongated, resembling more co[…] the flag-leaf, in the Louis Quinze.

As long as these various elements were treated symme[…] and with attention to the masses, good effects were not unc[…] but when, in the time of Louis Quinze, symmetry was wh[…] regarded, and the acanthus scrolls degenerated into the co[…] a species of crimped conventional shell-work, the designs b[…] mere mass of vagaries of indescribable forms, and the Roc[…] displayed in the perfection of the bizarre in ornament. The […] light and shade is so essentially the element of the Louis Q[…] styles, that every other motive yields to it; and it is car[…] to such an extent that they scarcely admit of a flat surface […] details; all are either convex or concave, and hence also […] valence of the wave-line in their general forms. This c[…] varying of the surface gives every point of view its high lig[…] contrasts, and for this reason stucco has superseded decora[…] the flat and gold colour in all characteristic Louis Quato[…] Louis Quinze designs. But the mere general aim of these

* From its time, that is after the year 1500, or in the sixteenth century; the word *mille* is understood, the full expression being *mille cinquecento*, one thousand five hundred, contracted by custom into Cinquecento, or five hundred. The expressions Trecento and Quattrocento admit of a similar explanation, referring to fourteenth and fifteenth century Art respectively.

† The German interlacing of stems and leaves, so prevalent of late, and known as the Knüttel style, is perfectly analogous in principle with many examples of the trecento, though it rarely introduces conventional foliage.

‡ There are small bronze copies of these gates in the Exhibition, exhibited by M. Barbédienne, of Paris.

gradually led to so great a neglect of the details, that eventually all individuality was lost, and with it all study: hence, in the absurd Rococo, the very natural result of this general neglect, we have designs made up of details so without meaning and individuality as to defy description.

Such is a review of the great Historic styles of ornament, and, having thus defined the peculiar distinctions of the styles, we may now examine in detail the various objects exposed in the Exhibition, with a view—by critical comparison—to draw what lessons we may from this great industrial competition of nations.

III.—*The Exhibition.*

Once the overwhelming impression of admiration and wonder at the unparalleled collection, and the admirable arrangement of the whole, subsided, the inquisitive mind naturally turns its attention to the details in the mass, and in classes more or less definite according to its own objects and pursuit. In our instance, the mind intent on Art-manufacture, naturally turned its attention only upon such objects as were of an ornamental character. The first general impression is one of bewildering magnificence and endless wealth; as the particular classes are gradually separated in the mind, a process of comparison commences between the objects before the eyes and the vague anticipations of the mind previous to entering the building, with results more or less satisfactory according to individual knowledge and experience.

Definite ideas now arise in the mind, of dissatisfaction or approval as it may be, at the various impressions from the different departments, and then the operation of criticism in detail commences, followed by individual comparisons of the relative display of the various countries.

In examining minutely the results of these two last operations, the following are the conclusions we must draw from them:—

That there is nothing new in the Exhibition in ornamental design; not a scheme, not a detail that has not been treated over and over again in ages that are gone; that the taste of the producers generally is uneducated, and that in nearly all cases where this is not so, the influence of France is paramount in the European productions; bearing exclusively in the two most popular traditional styles of that country—the Renaissance and the Louis Quinze—with more or less variation in the treatment and detail. There are few designs of any country that do not come within the range of these two styles—from the Italian Renaissance to the French Rococo, or debased Louis Quinze. The few Greek, or so-called Etruscan specimens, and the Gothic examples, in the singularly styled Medieval Court, are almost the only exceptions as regards European design. The best understood style is that which we have been obliged to designate the mixed Cinquecento or Renaissance; the apparently most able designers of Italy, France, Austria, Belgium, and England, have selected this style for the exhibition of their skill; if, therefore, the Exhibition can be considered as a test of the favourite style of the day, it is evidently the Cinquecento Renaissance, or the style which was developed in the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy. The Louis Quatorze varieties perhaps prevail in quantity, the Louis Quinze, and the Rococo: the Gothic is evidently in little requisition in foreign countries, and is only very partially cultivated in this, as is evident from the very small number of exhibitors who have contributed to what is very strangely misnamed the Medieval Court, as if the Gothic were the only medieval style, or even the medieval style *par excellence*. The Romanesque, Byzantine, and Saracenic, and several Italian varieties, were infinitely more extensive in their influence in the middle ages than the Gothic, which was almost limited to the neighbourhood of the Rhine and bordering countries, and it endured only for a comparatively short period, and in point of time scarcely belongs to the middle ages at all, as it was not completely developed until the fourteenth century, and was contemporary only with the Renaissance styles of Italy, which, however, nearly everywhere superseded it in the sixteenth century.

With regard to classical or Greek and Roman ornament, it is astonishing to find so little of it. The taste so active fifty years ago, in this country at least, appears to have spread no further than its original promoters could extend it; in furniture it is scarcely represented, and in pottery it is still seemingly the great prerogative of Messrs. Wedgwood to exhibit pure specimens of the Greek style; and still for the most part in the exquisite productions of Flaxman, which appear more beautiful than ever, surrounded as they are by such endless specimens of the prevailing gorgeous taste of the present day, which gives the eye no resting-place, and presents no idea to the mind, from the want of individuality in its gorged designs.

The stall of Messrs. Battam* is devoted to the, so-termed, Etruscan taste, but so exclusively in one class of fabric, uniform in character and material, that it conveys only the notion of copying a design, not the revival of a simple and pure taste. The mere red and black are not essentials of the taste, but accidents of material; the materials further might be applied to modern uses, and the ancient forms and ideas expressed in other materials; this would be adopting a taste, a very different thing from merely copying designs.

The Medieval Court is open to much the same objection, though not so entirely so. We have in this collection not an evidence of the application of a peculiar taste to modern and ordinary wants or purposes, but simply the copy of an old idea; old things in an old taste. Byzantine or Gothic symbolism, in as far as they generate beautiful forms, may claim our admiration, and Mr. Crace's table in inlaid wood shows that such a result is quite possible out of such materials. But where the thing is made not for its own sake or the use it may be of, but purely as an embodiment of the old bygone idea that originally caused it, it is only a cowl to smother all independent original thought or ingenuity, and by preserving symbolism as principal in all efforts would reduce Art much to what we find it in India, or rather China. Indeed, except in the most obvious forms of superstition, this court already presents a striking similarity of taste to that of the Indian works, in its rude undefined details, and in richness of material; as in the stuffs and carpet exhibited by Mr. Crace; in the wood-carving of Mr. Myers; and in the ecclesiastical vessels and robes exhibited by Mr. Hardman: all showing the strong analogy with the Oriental types, and the Byzantine origin of the style. This is the fact however which explains the similarity of the two developments, their common source, the Byzantine symbolism; the triangles, trefoils, squares, and quatrefoils and various Romanesque adaptations of the old Byzantine Greeks: spread on one side by the Christians of the west, the Latins, and on the other by the Mohammedans of the east, the Arabs. Much scroll-work in Indian and Gothic is identical; and the Byzantine standard, the horns of plenty, have given rise to a very similar treatment on both sides. As individual designs, however, this court offers some very fine samples of Gothic, as the mantelpiece by Myers, with the clever adaptation of the dove and olive as a crocket.†

Such being the relative proportion of the styles, what is the general conclusion that we are to draw from this evidence? We have ventured to assert, that the best specimens of ornamental design as a class, are of the Renaissance, but that the great bulk of the specimens are of the Louis Quatorze varieties; that Classical Art is scarcely represented, and that the Gothic, is only very partially so. Setting aside the Gothic, which owes what we have of it to sentiments distinct from ornament, we have only three decided expressions of taste, the Greek, the Italian, and the French; or the Classical, the Renaissance, and the Louis Quinze. These three tastes are very distinct; we have in the first a thoroughly well understood detail, with a highly systematic and symmetrical disposition of these details, always arranging them upon such forms and at such intervals as shall fairly display the article and its ornaments in due proportion; in fact a faultless taste: in the second, in the Renaissance, we have also a well understood detail, but a prevalence of the bizarre, and a love of profusion of parts; great skill of execution, but upon the whole a bewildering and fantastic effect, still one more agreeable to the generality than the simple purity of the Greeks: in the third taste, that best illustrated by the Louis Quinze, in every variety, we have a total disregard of detail, therefore exclusively a general effect; individuality of parts, beauty of execution, anything that can possibly display any merit in itself as interfering with a purely general effect, is not only

* See Cat., p. 247.

† See specimens eng. pp. 317—320.

superfluous but detrimental to the design, which aims only at a gorgeous effect as a whole. We have in this last essentially a superficial style aiming at a glittering or attractive display; hence it is best exhibited in gilt-work or silver, or where there is at least a uniformity of colour; reflection, or mere play of light and shade being its element. The very nature of this style offers a premium to the neglect of detail; those practising it therefore soon neglect everything of the kind, and thus the whole province of ornament is degraded, and where such a style prevails the paramount impression conveyed to the critical mind must be a general want of education in taste, just such an impression as the Great Exhibition gives at this moment.

Now it is not a desirable thing that we should find the best talent of Europe devoted to the taste, having profusion of detail and mere skilfulness of execution as its great characteristics; yet if one style is to be chosen, considering its general nature, no more pleasing one could be adopted: we have both an understood detail, and a general effect at the same time, free from the prevalence of any particular kind of forms or lines, which gives the Renaissance an infinite superiority as an ornamental style over the Gothic, in which the profusion of vertical and diagonal lines, in the same relation, is fatiguing and palling to the mind, as is well illustrated by the peculiar assemblage in the so-called medieval court, which stands there as a warning to us against making this style familiar in our dwelling-houses. It is essentially an architectural style, and is applicable only when it can be applied on a great scale, so that the eye does not at once comprise in a small compass its peculiar angularity and formality.

To bring the reader to a more exact comprehension of this prevailing style of the Renaissance, we will instance a few of the principal works exhibited, and which are its best exponents. To commence with Italy, the original arena of the style, there are the plaster mantel-piece by G. Bottinelli, of Milan, and the painted ceiling in the same room by A. Montanari, of Milan; and also the walnut cabinet exhibited by Angelo Barbetti of Florence, but this borders on the pure Cinquecento: among French works, the Fontaine à Thé, silver, exhibited by M. Durand, of Paris;* the specimen of room decoration by Cruchet, wood and carton-pierre combined, in the nave †; and the magnificent side-board exhibited by Fourdinois.‡ From Austria, the bedstead exhibited by M. Leistler, of Vienna.§ From Stuttgard, a dressing table, and wardrobe by J. F. Wirth, in mahogany, in exquisite taste. From Belgium, a large marble mantel-piece by J. Leclercq of Brussels.|| Of English specimens may be mentioned her Majesty's cradle by Rogers,¶ though this specimen also borders closely on the pure Cinquecento; and the table of gold and silver electro-plate, exhibited by Elkington: also the large silver centre-piece in the nave, exhibited by Hunt & Roskell; the walnut bedstead by Rogers and Dear;** a drawing-room fire-place by Yates, Haywood & Co., of Rotherham;†† and a parian chimney-piece exhibited by Minton and Co.

These works are not mentioned as of extraordinary merit, but as combining with general excellence the most decided expression of this particular style, which, at the present moment, appears to engross the chief attention of the more able designers, whether English or foreign: and many of them are of a character approaching the best Cinquecento taste.

It will be observed, on examination, that cartouches or scrolled shields, and tracery, prevail more or less in all the above-mentioned works; except for these features several of them would be admirable specimens of the Cinquecento in its purity, of which however the Exhibition also affords a few fine specimens, some of which we may mention here for the sake of clearly separating these two styles. Her Majesty's cradle, as already observed, for the general character of its ornaments belongs to this style; as does also the book-case exhibited by Holland & Sons,‡‡ and the sideboards by Levien, and by Johnstone & Jeanes,§§ and likewise the bold sideboard in the south gallery, by Henry Hoyles, of the Sheffield School of Design,|||| also a grate by Baily & Sons, and

* Engraved in Cat., p. 105.
† Engraved in Cat., p. 60.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 285.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 178.
|| Engraved in Cat., p. 227.
¶ Engraved in Cat., p. 10.
** Engraved in Cat., p. 325.
†† Engraved in Cat., p. 205.
‡‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 22.
§§ Engraved in Cat., p. 16.
|||| Engraved in Cat., p. 309.

some decoration by Morant. Of more delicate work m mentioned the crystal vase and dish belonging to Mr. ' exhibited by Morel & Co.; a vase in silver, gilt, and enan Hunt & Roskell; a large gilt bronze vase and dish,* adaptec the shield and helmet of Francis I., in the Louvre (both exh likewise in bronze), by Villemsens of Paris, the last an exc and genuine example; and a very beautiful specimen, a ewe dish, in parian, exhibited by Minton & Co.; also a carved in walnut by Pietro Giusti, of Siena; and a frieze, an adm specimen of one development of the mere scroll-work, exhibit J. Harmer, jun., in sculptured plaster.†

The above specimens are noticed for mere distinction's sal they are rather exceptions to, than examples of, a prevailing It remains yet to point out specimens of the third taste alluc the Louis Quinze. As a general reference, English silver- and carving and gilding, as a whole, will represent this tast exhibit it often in its worst shape. The bad effect of the Quinze, however, as mostly displayed, is not so much an inl defect in the style as it is the fault of treatment of the ele by the designer. Hence we find a wide difference in the m two designs of the same style, where the same materials are without descending to the Rococo, of which a large mirror in Dresden porcelain,‡ exhibited by the Royal Factory at M is a sufficiently characteristic specimen. Some of the Au furniture is Louis Quinze, as are also some of the handsomest in the Exhibition, Austrian, Belgian, and English; and the some pianos in the same style, as, for instance, one in the B department, heavy Rococo scrolls, with large bulrushes, belong to the worst examples of ornamental design exhibite

The Russian malachite doors are of an intermediate between these two extremes. On the English side the st well illustrated by the sideboards by Gillow,§ or Rivett & or the glass frame by T. Ponsonby; or, in its best developme Louis Quatorze, by the gilt beadstead, by Faudel & Phillip silver work, by the testimonial to the Marquis of Tweed exhibited by Hunt & Roskell, from a design by A. Brown.

The wide-spread influence of France, therefore, in spite most debased taste in design ever tolerated, is one curious p presented to the mind by this assemblage of the world's ind and this influence, as the American examples show, is not limited to Europe, or the Old World. Another great fa played, perhaps unavoidable where true education is absent, very general mistake that quantity of ornament implies b many objects being so overloaded with details as to utterly d the general individuality of expression of the object, and e render it at first doubtful what the object can be.

In the Oriental works, where quantity of detail also is th characteristic, it is of a kind so generally unassuming in its c and harmonious in its effect and treatment, that the impres quantity itself is the last that is conveyed, though the who face may be covered with ornament. The general form or e the design is never interfered with; and by the uniform deli the detail, though it may often have no other merit, a vagu for the most part, it allows only of a general expression, a have the happy combination of simplicity and richness at o

In comparing the Indian shawls with their European copi how purely they are copies is very satisfactorily shown, remarkable phenomenon developes itself; that is, that the and educated designer of Europe should devote some of hi elaborate efforts in design to the imitation of the crude patte the hereditary weaver of the East. The skilful designer of London, or Vienna, could produce patterns infinitely more be than the most gorgeous specimens of the East, with half the t it costs him to make his spurious Cashmeres; but as they then be no longer mistaken for Cashmeres, their highest would be lost.

Often in the best of Indian specimens the details will n looking at; much of the design is put in to fill a space, the being generally only an infinite combination of minute port different colours, aiming at a purely general effect. The m

* Engraved in Cat., p. 19.
† Engraved in Cat., p. 201.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 30.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 203.
|| Engraved in Cat., p. 41.
¶ Engraved in Cat., p. 58.

the best are negative, rather than positive; there is an absence of glaring faults, but no one feature of beauty; if we except the general harmonious colouring and uniform unobtrusiveness of detail, which last, however, is in itself a great quality.

To return to Europe. It is a fact well worthy of being pointed out to the attention of designers and manufacturers, that they should still suffer themselves to be so much under the influence of the French taste at the period of the first revolution. The fashionable popularity of Watteau seems to have first established this taste, and the vast amount of emigration which was the consequence of the revolution, particularly to this country, seems to have firmly planted it here, and here in silver-work it is still paramount, though it has been long discarded by the French themselves, as a school, for the earlier style of the Renaissance, which superseded the Gothic in the time of Francis I.

But why this popular style should be so invariably characterised by the incessant shields or cartouches, it will be very difficult upon any reasons of taste to explain. In wood, marble, and in silver, we constantly find graceful curves and forms suddenly interrupted by a large pierced shield, with its projecting edges and angles, and which, so far from performing a service to the design, or of being in any way necessary to it, is in direct antagonism to the whole spirit of the forms with which it is united, except in our own Elizabethan, where it is, on the contrary, valuable, being in perfect sympathy with the ruling features of the design: of the flat strap-work of which it is a simple aggrandisement.

By the separation of the Renaissance as developed in the examples we have pointed out, into its two distinct elements of curved and angular forms, we do actually resolve it into two distinct and popular styles, the Cinquecento and the Elizabethan, for it amounts in nearly all its great examples to a mixture of these two, although generally neither style is well expressed in the combination, one necessarily neutralising and supplanting the other. As an illustration, this value of the individuality of expression in design is very well shown, in the variety of papier mâché specimens exhibited by Walton & Co., of Wolverhampton;* or in some of the papers by W. Woollams & Co., of London.†

Abstaining from further details at present, having explained the general impressions, as regards ornament, of the most prominent classes of manufacture, we may venture upon some comparison between English and foreign specimens in the respective classes.

First, generally, the English side does not betray that great inferiority of taste which has been so long prognosticated of it; on the contrary, in some respects, there is a palpable pre-eminence, on the part of this country, in many articles of general use; but on a more careful investigation, turning our attention to abstract taste in design, a very decided inferiority must be admitted.

This is not in the application of design, but in ornamental design itself; nor is it so much in the absolute work as in the taste which guides this work. However, in the more magnificent foreign productions, especially those of France, besides the excessive mannerism of working only in one style, however cleverly, there is a disregard to usefulness, or the general wants and means, which essentially detracts from that high credit which the mere design or artistic execution of the work would otherwise ensure. It is very much easier to produce a successful result with ample than with contracted means, and infinitely more meritorious in the manufacturer to produce a simple beautiful work, which shall be within the reach of the world of taste in general, than the accomplishment by an extraordinary effort of an extraordinary work, which he cannot easily repeat, and which it is beyond the pale of all but regal or princely means to derive gratification or benefit from. It would be no distinctive feature of an age to work well for princes; princely means have secured princely works in all ages, of different quality at different times, and according to the varieties of taste; some being gratified by rare and exquisite Art, others by minute elaboration and expenditure of labour, and others again by an ostentatious display of precious metals.

The Exhibition will do nothing for the age if it only induce a vast outlay of time and treasure, for the enjoyment of the extreme few who command vast means.

This we take to be no object of the Exhibition; and although

* Engraved in Cat., p. 98.

† Engraved in Cat., p. 129

we must admire for themselves such productions as the great French sideboard, or some of the Gobelins carpets, or the larger Sèvres specimens,* or the Austrian furniture,† these are not the fruits which will bring about the great results which should accrue from this unexampled event, though they may aid them negatively by rather warning us that beautiful effects may arise from infinitely less outlay of either time or substance. And one great source of congratulation to ourselves is, that by the evidence of the Exhibition, this is a result far more likely to be accomplished first in this country than in any other. While England has been devoting nearly all its efforts to the mere comfort of the million, France has expended its energies, for the most part, over luxuries for the few; it is an amalgamation of the two that we require, fitness and elegance combined; recreation for the mind as well as comfort for the body. It is perfectly right that there should be single works of great cost and magnificence, both because there is a demand for them, though limited, and as a means of inducing the utmost efforts of Art, and to serve likewise as a key or standard by which mere ordinary works may be tested, and artists stimulated to legitimate rivalry commensurate with a humbler class of production. However, when a costly work is distinguished by exquisite taste, it is something more than a specimen of costliness, which is sufficiently distinct from taste or beauty, and a skilful work will be beautiful, not by virtue, but in spite, of its materials. Good taste is a positive quality, however acquired, and can impart such quality in perfection to even the rudest materials; it is taste, therefore, that must ever be the producer's most valuable capital; and this, in our opinion, is the capital which the English manufacturer may acquire in the Exhibition from a careful study of many foreign productions.

In silver-work, for instance, the inferiority of the English manufacturer to the French is very striking; though, perhaps, the most beautiful work of this class in the Exhibition is German,—namely, the table ornament in oxidised silver, by Albert Wagner, of Berlin.‡ But the stalls of Froment-Meurice, Durand, Rudolphi and Gueyton, display many examples of exquisite taste, and at the same time of a simple character.

In wood-carving, but more particularly in its treatment, there is an equal superiority of French and German work over English; and, indeed, foreign carving and modelling generally are of a better quality than the home specimens.

The same superiority is evident in the printed cottons and muslins, though the Scotch dispute pretty equally with the French prints from Mulhouse. In silks and satins, ribbons, and in shawls, there does not appear any very evident disparity, but it is notable that many of the best Lyons specimens are manufactured expressly for English houses.

The British, French, and Austrian Cashmere shawls seem of nearly equal merit; the houses of Morgan, and Kerr, of Paisley; of Blakeley, of Norwich; of Duché ainé, and Deneirouse, and Boisglavy, of Paris; and of Martinek, and Berger & Son, of Vienna, exhibit many magnificent specimens of this class, which it would be difficult to distinguish in point of merit.

In lace the finest specimens of design are English, Mrs. Treadwin's Flounce § being, perhaps, unrivalled in this respect, though Vanderkelen-Bresson, of Brussels, is superior to all competitors in delicacy of fabric. The specimens from Ireland are likewise conspicuous, and considerable taste is displayed in some of the Swiss, Scotch, and Irish embroidered muslins, and in the damasks of Dunfermline and Belfast,‖ many of which are excellent.

In general hardware—especially grates—England has no competitors, and the Exhibition seems to indicate more unusual efforts in this manufacture than in any other: some of the specimens in burnished steel and ormolu, from Sheffield, Rotherham, Birmingham, and Coalbrookdale, and of London, indicate a great advance in the appreciation of Taste, and are a certain evidence of its soon very materially influencing the more ordinary classes of grates in common demand.

In ornamental bronzes no country shines: candlesticks are not creditably represented, and candle-lamps are much in the same obscurity; the larger candelabra also are confused and tasteless:

* Engraved in Cat., pp. 169-72. † Partly engraved in Cat., pp. 177-80.
‡ Engraved on a small scale in Cat., p. 149.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 145. ‖ Specimens engraved in Cat. pp. 62 4, and 165 69.

the chandeliers and other works by Potts,* and by Messenger † of Birmingham (which town shows altogether with surprising force in the general quality and in the variety of its contributions), are perhaps the chief exceptions to the comparative inferiority of this department of manufacture.

In other respects, in works of a more purely ornamental character, in metal work, MM. Falloise of Liège, André of Paris, Jacquet of Brabant, Barbédienne, Matifat, Vittoz, Villemsens, Mène, Elkington, Winfield, Hatfield, and the Coalbrookdale Company, exhibit much beautiful work.

In carpets, there is a decided superiority on the side of home productions; notwithstanding much that is staring and inconsistent. The carpet is, however, an article of comfort that is scarcely yet in general use on the continent of Europe. Hence the French specimens are of that impracticable costliness which betrays at once that they are made for show rather than use; although the mere pattern carpets are anything but successful in this respect even: the French designer's skill in a paper-hanging seems to forsake him when he transfers his labour to a carpet pattern. Impracticable costliness appears to hang also over Sèvres porcelain, for in the adaptation of the beautiful to the useful in this department, as well as in that of glass, the English manufacturers are pre-eminent. The English ornamental works in pottery or porcelain do not yield to the French either in elegance of shape or in decoration, while at the same time they are far less costly. The specimens exhibited by Messrs. Copeland, Minton, and Wedgwood, place England in the highest rank in this manufacture, in spite of the fostering patronage of royal factories abroad. In glass, England appears to be almost unrivalled, not only in the purity of its crystal, but in the manufacture and application of this invaluable material; to instance only the matchless specimens of Messrs. Osler ‡ and Apsley Pellatt,§ and the magnificent slabs of coloured glass of Swinburne & Co., of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, or the ornamental panes of Chance Brothers, of Birmingham.

We will now proceed to review *seriatim* the principal classes of ornamental manufacture in detail, always limiting our remarks in accordance with the prescribed object of this essay, to the development of Taste, in order, by this analysis of designs, to endeavour to draw the attention of our manufacturers and designers to the source of all beauty of effect—the elements of design itself.

IV.—*The precious Metals.*

We commence with gold and silver-work,—not as the most important branch ot manufacture, but, as being purely ornamental, it is the most prominent object for ornamental criticism, and that to which perhaps the greatest skill has been devoted from the earliest times. Though the Exhibition affords a vast display in amount, there is no great variety or choice of taste; the Louis Quinze, prevailing, and in every phase of its development, from the symmetrical variety proceeding immediately from the Louis Quatorze, to the most bizarre vagaries of the Rococo; which last very much predominate.

Though the English silver-work exceeds in quantity, by several times, all that is exhibited by other nations, it displays far less variety of taste; it is clearly under the absolute control of trade conventionalities, which, from the character of the prevailing style, appear to have been imported with it, in the latter part of the last century. Besides, the interminable coquillage of the Rococo, the constant contrast of dead and burnished silver, making up the chief feature of so many works, is absolutely fatiguing to the mind that seeks, or can receive, any impression of delight from an ornamental composition.

The system of *boiling out*, to produce the whitest possible appearance of the silver, seems to be one essentially opposed to the display of excellence of design; and when the dead white thus produced is combined only with burnished portions, the sole effect of a work is a mere play of light without even the contrast of shadow. The result is a dazzling whiteness; pure flashiness, in fact, such as precludes the very idea of modelling—for this can only be displayed by a contrast of light and shade, which, in so uniform a dazzling mass as an ordinary piece of dead and burnished silver pl
impossible.

Flashiness may be a natural refuge for vague undefined f
to the deformities of which it is an effective cloak; and so lo
our silversmiths adhere to their Rococo scrolls, and other ina
of the Louis Quinze, its aid will be indispensable. Immediate
details of design, however, are substantially reformed, frostin
burnishing, except as occasional incidental aids, must go tog
with the preposterous forms to which alone they owe their pr
popular development. If we turn from the English to the fo
silver-work, the contrast in this respect is surprising; frostin
burnishing seem to be unanimously banished from all high
design, whether French or German, and oxidising substitut
their places; and the consequence is, that in many foreign exa
we have specimens of the most elaborate modelling, most effect
displayed as works of Art; the minutest detail fully asse
its own merits, and at the same time, contributing its porti
the general expression of the whole, in all the oxidised speci
The process of oxidation, as it is termed, not only protects
silver from further tarnishing, but can convey every varie
tint from white to black, so that it is particularly well calcu
to display fine modelling or chasing, which would be ut
thrown away in a dazzling white material. The merits, there
of the two methods depend on the object of the silversmith, wh
it be his desire to display silver as a mere noble metal, o
exhibit a work of Art in a noble metal; whether the met
paramount in his estimation, or only a noble tribute to a
Art—doubtless, many can only look at a silver ornament as a
in precious metal, just as they value precious stones for their ste
worth, not for their beauty. But there is an extreme distin
between the sentiments with which we ought to view a dia
and a piece of plate; the first we admire for its refractive po
and as a rare mineral, that is, as a natural curiosity; the sec
on the other hand, is to be looked at purely as a piece of hu
ingenuity; their only common field is that both delight us thr
the sense of vision.

If we exhibit silver-work for the reflective power of the mat
we should treat it exactly as we do glass, display it for its phy
properties only, and shape it accordingly; but even the
inveterate froster and burnisher would hardly admit that
labours had no other end in view than a display of catacaustic
a friendly, though hopeless, rivalry, with the diacaustics of
lapidary—for such effects every material must yield to the silv
glass of Messrs. Varnish, of Berners Street.

We hold it to be proved by the Exhibition, that all frosting
burnishing, except for occasional relief or variety among
minor details of a design, are fatal to silver-work as Art, how
they may enhance its effects as specimens of a noble metal.

The most striking piece of silver-work in the Exhibition is
large Vase or table ornament, by Albert Wagner, exhibite
Wagner & Son, of Berlin*; it is in oxidised silver, and is al
four feet six inches high. The design is an allegory of the gra
civilisation of man; the allegory, however, be it ever so good w
be quite out of place, were not the whole composition admirabl
a work of formative Art, both in design and execution; in
disposition of the whole, in the treatment of the figures, and in
elaboration of the ornamental details. As regards ornament,
style is a mixture of natural and conventional forms in the s
of the *Quattrocento*, as represented in the gates of Ghiberti.
the lowest position, we have the Lion and the Serpent, indica
man's victory over the animal world, ingeniously combined int
elegant and masterly tripod support of the circular base, whic
decorated with a rich moulding of fruit arranged in a run
vortical around it; above this we have at the lower portion of
stem, man in the nomadic state, represented by the huntsman,
fisher, and the shepherd, with their attributes, both means
results; and immediately above these, decorating the upper
of the stem are, Pomona, Ceres, and Flora, in reference to
second stage of civilisation; over their heads are hanging
clusters of grapes: the Vase itself is ornamented on the under
with a conventional treatment of the acanthus, and a chased fr
in bold relief, representing the cultivation of the liberal arts

* See Cat., pp. 23-5.
† See Cat., pp. 184, 185.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 206.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 174-5.

* Engraved in Cat., p. 149.

sciences, indicating the third stage of civilisation; on the upper edge is a rich border of foliage in high relief, likewise arranged in a running vertical, with an anthemion series as the decoration of the edge itself. From the centre of the Vase proceeds a palm, on which is a winged genius, having reference to man's triumph over evil, and consequent final victory over himself. All the details of this beautiful work are executed with strict attention to natural truth, and at the same time disposed with the closest adherence to ornamental symmetry. But, we notice it far more for its value as an example of how the most comprehensive notions may be made perfectly subordinate to the principles of ornamental design, than for the ideas themselves, or as a mere specimen of silver-work, admirable though it be as such; its highest merit is its excellent *ensemble* as a specimen of Ornamental Art, irrespective of material, whether for its general effect or its treatment of detail. Yet had this fine work been in dead and burnished silver, it might have been entirely overlooked, for its exquisite details of modelling would have been indiscernible, and its style is such, that its catacaustics would have been of a very unpretending character compared with those of the rampant Rococo.

Turning now to the French department, we find very many exquisite specimens of silver-work, and in different tastes, but those of the highest class invariably oxidised, as the admirable *Milieu de Table* exhibited by Froment-Meurice, belonging to the Duke de Luynes; a table in extremely delicate Renaissance work, with a prevalence of natural details, altogether admirable in execution and tasteful in design, by Rudolphi;* and some equally good specimens by Gueyton, where the effect of oxidation is very well illustrated, as it is so variously applied†—in boxes, cups, coffres, swords, statuettes, and in the fine group of the "Horse and Slave." There is not one specimen of frosted or burnished silver on either of these two stalls, and the advantage of the effect of the oxidised may be well seen by comparing the Table, or a Covered Dish by Rudolphi, or the Slave and Horse by Gueyton with the frosted and burnished examples exhibited by M. Odiot, of Paris, of which the magnificent Louis Quatorze dinner service is the finest of its class in the Exhibition.‡

The modelling of the details and animals in this service is excellent, but their value is lost through the merely dazzling effect of the combination of matting and polishing, which transcends every other consideration. There is something positively vulgar in such a mere metallic blaze as a service of this kind displays; had the various pieces been only slightly oxidised, as the equestrian statue of Napoleon, by Nieuwerkerk, in the same stall, or the centre-pieces by Wagner and Froment-Meurice, or the group of Queen Elizabeth and Leicester, by Jeannest, exhibited by Messrs. Elkington, the effect would have been most imposing in comparison: the impression of the nobility of the metal would have still been there, and every group and object, whether natural or ornamental, would have attracted its due share of admiration; for the modelling of the various natural types is excellent, and the treatment of the mere ornamental elements of the style is as tasteful, and as skilful, perhaps, as the elements themselves admit; superior, probably, to any genuine elaboration of the style in its own period; and this set is, perhaps, on the whole, the most complete representative of the prevailing modern taste in silver-work exhibited, for it has all its merits of design and characteristic conventionalisms of execution combined at once.

There are several other specimens on a similar scale, and in the same style, which equally suffer from the fashion of frosting and burnishing. The pure colour of the silver, unaided by boiling out or burnishing, provided a difference of texture be observed in different objects, would have an infinitely more artistic effect, without having recourse to oxidising, if the dulness thus produced should be an insurmountable barrier to a public taste too far compromised with frosting and burnishing. Still that oxidising does not altogether destroy a certain metallic brilliancy, those specimens more delicately oxidised, already pointed out, are sufficient proof; and the group of Queen Elizabeth and Leicester, by Jeannest, is of that excellent intermediate character, that it may safely be referred to as a model for the mere treatment of the silver as a material of Art; it is not sufficiently oxidised to

* Engraved in Cat., p. 244. † See p. 263 of Cat. ‡ See specimens in p. 267.

suggest dirt or dulness, but quite enough so to admit of any display of the most elaborate execution, and it at the same time is a fine example of variety of texture, in accordance with variety of substance represented.

Before leaving the French department there are a few objects to be pointed out, and yet one or two general impressions to be recorded. All the works of the greatest pretensions of design are oxidised; the prevailing style is the mixed Renaissance that we have already had occasion to explain, and it is evident that still the great model of the French silversmiths is Benvenuto Cellini, notwithstanding several important specimens of the Louis Quatorze.

One of the most striking examples of the influence of Benvenuto is the very magnificent Fontaine à Thé, exhibited by M. Durand, of Paris;* it is entirely of silver, but by recourse to gilding, burnishing, oxidising, and niellos, a most beautiful variety of effects is produced; the varieties of effect aiding the design. Though a complete tea-service, it is designed to constitute a *Milieu de Table;* the general effect is that of a vase and pedestal, the vase being the urn, and the tea-pots, cream-jugs, sugar-basins, bread-baskets, &c., being placed on four several stages on the pedestal below. The design represents admirably the mixed Renaissance of the sixteenth century, and is beautifully executed. The various elements of the style are very well expressed,—the cinquecento grotesque scroll-work, the scrolled and pierced shields, and the conventional Saracenic foliage in relief, illustrating the origin of Elizabethan strap-work, and at the same time by the beauty of its effect, the value of the Saracenic element. This work is further a good example of the mixed Renaissance being virtually a combination of the Cinquecento and the Elizabethan.

In the stall of Froment-Meurice, of Paris, are likewise many prominent specimens of exquisite taste, in jewellery and in oxidised silver, in various styles, comprising some animal groups (for salts) of surprising effect, in oxidised silver. The most important, though not the most beautiful, work is, however, the magnificent toilet-table and glass, with ewer and basin, candlesticks (girandoles), and jewel caskets, in silver-gilt and enamelled, a present from the legitimists of France to the Duchess of Parma.† Silver-works of such magnitude, even though presentation pieces, belong rather to the province of the ostentatious than the beautiful, and the general style of this service certainly makes it no exception: it is another of those examples of somewhat impractical costliness for which the French have distinguished themselves in the Exhibition. In style it is mixed, of the natural school, but a Gothic character prevailing, as shown in the pointed arches of the glass frame and of the jewel caskets, in the ivy stem and leaf, and in the general vertical treatment of the lily and fleur-de-lis elaborated as emblems, but rather in the German than the French taste. The ewer and basin and the caskets contain much admirable work in the details, but as a whole it is rather a display of magnificence than of that exquisite artistic taste which characterises nearly all the other works exhibited by M. Froment-Meurice; the legs of the table particularly are wholly objectionable to criticism.

The *Milieu de Table*, belonging to the Duke de Luynes, is a noble example of *repoussé* work or embossing with the hammer, and it displays some fine modelling of the figure by M. J. Feucheres; it is an allegory of the world—four giants or Titans support the globe, above which are Bacchus, Ceres, and Venus, with other symbolisms: it is in oxidised silver. Another beautiful object is a vase, also in oxidised silver, offered by the City of Paris to the engineer, H. C. Emmery, in exquisite Cinquecento taste in spite of its Renaissance cartouches. Here are likewise a magnificent shield in oxidised silver and iron; a Gothic chalice, silver gilt and enamelled, designed as a present for the Pope: on the foot are figures, in oxidised silver, of Faith, Hope, and Charity; also a Cinquecento tea-service of very good effect; and a hunting-knife, of great beauty, with the handle composed of game, and which, contrary to the general rule of such devices, is well adapted to the hand. M. Gueyton also exhibits several swords of this character, which, though good as designs, are of very doubtful propriety considering their ostensible destination, even though they be really made for show rather than the hand.

* Engraved in Cat., p. 105. Engraved in Cat. p. 130.

M. Marrel also exhibits many minute objects of taste. In German silver-work there is little beyond the large vase, by Wagner, if we except, perhaps, the hunting-cup in the Cinquecento style, by Jacobi, of Brunswick, and a vase of flowers more curious than beautiful,* in the octagon room, by Strube & Son, of Leipsic; the same must be said of the gilt and enamelled chessmen, in the same compartment, by Wieshaupt & Sons, of Hanau.†

The Russian is in a similar taste with the English, the Louis Quinze being its archetype; but nearly all the specimens exhibited are as good samples of the style as any in the Exhibition; they never descend to the Rococo. There are, besides these, some copies of old works, as a hanap, of the seventeenth century, and a Cellini vase, silver-gilt; and several specimens of the natural school of ornament, some of humorous character—as the Bear candelabra. But the principal effort is the large centre-piece, consisting of an historical group under a fir-tree; the composition and modelling are highly effective, and wholly without the aid of either frosting or burnishing, but by the pure naturalism of the design, we have the anomaly of a dish placed on the top of a tree; a trifling inconsistency, however, compared with what we have on the English side of the Exhibition.

Spain, faithful to its historically ecclesiastical taste, exhibits a magnificent gilt Gothic tabernacle, by Moratilla, of Madrid. And the Italian contributions are nearly all comprised in the filagree work of Loleo, of Genoa.

In passing from the foreign to the English silver-work, the general change of taste is very decided, and though there are some exceptions, the general inferiority is not to be overlooked. The first work which attracts our attention is the large centre-piece, a candelabrum, and flower-vase, designed and executed by A. Brown, in dead and burnished silver, in the nave, exhibited by Hunt & Roskell. This piece, though displaying the characteristic flashiness of the prevailing home taste of the present day, possesses also many merits of design, which are conspicuous in spite of boiling out and burnishing, though the modelling of the high reliefs in dead silver, in the centre, displays only half its merit, through the want of shadow in detail.

The design is somewhat complicated, and in two distinct parts, Candelabrum and Plateau; the candelabrum is decorated, at its base, with groups of the four quarters of the Globe, with an alto-relievo of Apollo and the Hours, or Day and Night, as a frieze, around the stem; on the plateau below are groups of the Four Seasons. The style is of the mixed Renaissance, with rather a prominence of the more characteristic Cinquecento details, as griffins terminating in vegetable forms, and mere conventional scrolls; but sufficiently mixed with the ordinary details of the Renaissance. The want of variety of texture, a characteristic defect of English silver-work, is much felt in this great piece, though its large size renders many delicacies of detail, which would be otherwise desirable, comparatively unimportant, and it has altogether a magnificent effect, and is, doubtless, the finest centre piece exhibited on the English side. Still, if the figures, especially the groups, had been only slightly oxidised, instead of dead white, the effect would have been immensely enhanced, in our opinion. No better evidence of the value of oxidation need be pointed out, than the shield and the vase, by Antoine Vechte, though, perhaps, overdone, exhibited also by this firm, in their stall in the gallery; the vase with the Battle of Jupiter and the Titans; and the unfinished shield, with Shakspere, Milton, and Newton, and the genius of the Arts in the centre. The shield exhibits some chasing of unequalled beauty and delicacy, and owing to the oxidised surface shows with all the vigour of a fine proof engraving. There is, in this stall, also a Cinquecento vase in silver, gilt, and enamel, which is conspicuous among so many others in a very different taste, chiefly the Rococo, of which Mr. Brown's candelabrum for the Marquis of Tweeddale,‡ is a fair example. The general want of the variety of texture, is further well illustrated by the two small gilt equestrian statues of Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington, which though well modelled, are wholly wanting in effect.

In the stall of Morel & Co. a superior taste prevails.§ There are here several good specimens of the Cinquecento, but some of them appear to be injured by the enamels, which are too varied and too strong in colour for such objects; otherwise the following are excellent—a vase and dish in crystal of exquisite form, an oriental agate cup, a lapis-lazuli cup, and a gilt vase, with a frieze in relief in oxidised silver, representing a boar-hunt in German Cinquecento; also a gilt sugar-basin, and a few other objects insignificant but tasteful, as a stork and a marabout paper-weight.

A toilet-glass* on this stall, in silver, from its tasteful and symmetrical arrangement shows that even the Louis Quinze is capable of agreeable effects; its shape is such that the details used are in exact sympathy with the form of the whole.

The large equestrian statue of Queen Elizabeth, exhibited by this house, by Cavalier, is another fine example of *repoussé*, or hammer-work; and in colour is another good illustration of how wholly superfluous is the process of frosting. We have in this group the simple colour of the metal, and it shows that, saving the prevention of tarnishing, there is no real necessity for oxidising, though it indisputably enhances the effect of the forms.

Mr. Joseph Angell also exhibits several specimens of delicate taste, chiefly in the style of the Renaissance, but with a sufficient mixture of Rococo: a claret jug, in Etruscan or early Greek taste, is a notable exception,† as in a style hitherto very rare in modern silver-work. Of more modern taste is conspicuous a jug with vine-twig twisted round it, which, with its frosted leaves and burnished fruit, gives a rich variety to the vessel; and this application to distinct minute details, as mere accessories, is a legitimate mode of introducing frosting and burnishing.

Mr. George Angell also exhibits some extremely beautiful classical jugs, and some good Renaissance specimens, and also a very superior candelabrum, with a lioness defending her cubs against a boa-constrictor.

Messrs. Watherston & Brogden exhibit a very effective design by Mr. A. Brown, a gold vase in the Renaissance taste, with scrolled and jewelled base, surmounted by an emblematical design of Great Britain.‡

Messrs. Garrard have two stalls; amongst the most conspicuous objects in the smaller, containing several good specimens of modern taste, is a large Moorish candelabrum of some pretensions, but indistinct in the details owing to the brightness of the metal; and also a good Renaissance tea-set of a Moorish character; there is no Rococo on this stall.

Lambert & Rawlings exhibit a handsome pair of wine flagons § of unusual shape.

Mr. Hancock exhibits two race cups — the Warwick and the Goodwood — distinguished for the fine modelling of the dogs and horses, &c., from designs by Mr. M'Carthy; the effect, however, is very materially injured by the bright scratching of the figures, and the attempt at rendering the hair of the horses, not here and there, but uniformly; the object is in itself puerile, for the hair is not so conspicuous upon a horse that it need be prominently elaborated in a small silver model; we see the shape of a horse not his hair, and on the small scale of these models a much more delicate indication is required.

In this respect the horse of M. Jeannest, in the Elkington Group, or that of M. Gueyton, may serve as a model of treatment; the animal's coat is sufficiently represented without the artifice of a palpable elaboration of hair coarse enough for an animal of the natural size.

A Greek vase and ebony table, with an anthemion inlaid in silver, and also an ebony and silver cigar box, on this stall, are worthy of attention as out of the ordinary taste.

Mr. Thomas Sharp also exhibits a candelabrum in electro-plate, with a group of St. George and the Dragon, which is in very superior style to the average of such designs.

Payne & Sons, of Bath, exhibit a beautiful vase from an old Roman marble.‖

Smith, Nicholson, & Co. appear as the most decided representatives of the "naturalist school," as we must term this taste; but there are evidences besides in this stall of an appreciation of classical ornament. This firm exhibit a very striking dessert service, designed by Mr. J. S. Archer, and made for the Duke of

* Engraved in Cat., p. 47. † Engraved in Cat., p. 301.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 58. § Engraved in Cat., pp. 112-13.

* Engraved in Cat., p. 113. † Engraved in Cat., pp. 162-3.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 281. § Engraved in Cat., p. 140. ‖ Engraved in Cat., p. 104

Roxburgh,* which, though possessing great beauty of general arrangement or grouping of the forms, is open to the theoretical objection that we have natural objects performing impossibilities; the fuchsia, the lily, the thistle, and the vine, are, respectively, without any artificial or mechanical aid, made to support dishes upon their delicate flowers or tendrils; the simple contrivance of a central support to these dishes, would, with an imperceptible alteration of the several groups to render them accessory instead of principal, have most certainly added to the beauty of effect, and obviated a very great offence to sound criticism. There are several other similar designs, graceful in their general forms, but open to the same objection; and here, too, the inveterate frosting and burnishing everywhere obtrude themselves.

Collis & Co., of Birmingham, exhibit two services, for Mehmed Pacha, and for the Prince of Nepaul, in very appropriate styles of design; and also a tea-urn, with dragon handles, of an Elizabethan character, in good style.

Dixon & Sons, of Sheffield, exhibit a chaste classical soup tureen.†

Harvey & Co. exhibit some graceful forms, several of which are from classical models; and also some Renaissance and Gothic specimens. The classical forms of this stall, as well as those of the Messrs. Wedgwood, George Angell, and a few others, show that beauty can never really be antiquated, or old fashioned, whatever the conventionalities of the day may be. An essentially ephemeral taste, which has owed its popularity to some incidental circumstances or caprice of the moment, can never be a subject of revival, however it may itself interfere with the establishment of a purer taste. What is inherently beautiful is for all time, and the repeated attempts at the revival of classical forms, with a steadily increasing interest on the part of the public in spite of fashions or conventionalisms the most opposite, is at least one sure test of the inherent beauty of form of these vessels of the ancients, and an earnest of their eventual triumph, and, it is to be hoped, the banishment of all others from the market that cannot boast an approximate, if not equal merit, whether in a different or a similar taste. It is a morbid taste to hunt after variety purely for variety's sake; and it is perfectly legitimate to preserve all that is beautiful, however we may continue to prosecute the search of the beautiful in other provinces; it is doubtless in itself inexhaustible.

The stall of Messrs. Elkington is another justification of our adhering to what is beautiful for its own sake, independent of all other considerations; the reproductions of Pompeian and other ancient forms in this stall, and other repetitions in bronze and silver from the Cinquecento treasures, (the table in electroplate, by G. Stanton, of the Birmingham School of Design, is a beautiful adaptation of the Cinquecento,) old as they are, strike the eye with an extraordinary degree of freshness after the vast collection of Baroque and Rococo varieties of the novelties of the day, displayed by English silversmiths in the aggregate.

Efforts at variety, unless founded on the sincerest study of what has already been done, not by our own immediate rivals in our own time, but by all people at all times, are at most but assumed novelties; but, if such, the chances are that it is their only recommendation, as their novelty represents the exclusion of all the beauty of the past; which will leave little enough behind; and he must be indeed fortunate who alights upon a valuable system of forms or combinations which have escaped all the eager searchers after beauty of the last 3000 years.

The very vague taste displayed generally in modern silver work, is the pure result of this injudicious hankering after something new, without the justification of a sound study of the old to warrant it. Each beautiful form will of itself admit of a thousand variations of detail without interfering with its essential form or properties; as, for instance, the common pitcher: nearly all countries, from the time of Abraham, have used the same species of vessel for carrying water—the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Etruscans, the Romans, the Chinese, the Hindoos, all down to the present day, have preserved in constant use a pitcher form of jug identical in its essential shape; it is, in fact, the most convenient adaptation of form or capacity to use—a curved, narrow neck, and comparatively broad body, the foot and handle varying according to circumstances. All are absolutely mere varieties of the pitcher of the *Nepenthes distillatoria*. Many of the most beautiful ancient jugs or vases are nearly fac-similes of this form, with the mere addition of a foot; but nothing will ever make such a form old-fashioned or distasteful, if for no other reason, simply because it is a form essentially adapted to its use. What is recommended by use never grows old; it is only what is fostered by fashion that will be superseded as a new fashion arises. So it is with the terms of the styles; some are characterised by mere local peculiarities or special objects, others by abstract principles. Local peculiarities, and all specialities, when their causes cease, must die out, and cannot be revived except by a revival of the cause; and so, if their causes cannot be recalled, it will be impossible to revive several of the historic styles; but where the causes of styles still exist, the styles themselves are as much of this age as of the past. The Classical and Renaissance styles are founded on abstract principles, and therefore may and will be revived when their motives are once understood, and their restoration will then not be a copy, but a genuine revival of the taste itself. It is not so much the business of criticism to create taste, as to destroy what is vicious in it; the critic judges, and he fulfils his functions if he only condemn the bad, without lauding the good; to laud the good and pass over the bad in silence may be more generous, but it is certainly less sure; and if the critic be not allowed to freely criticise what is exposed to public criticism, better that his functions cease altogether; for of all evil genii, the most mischievous are those who only flatter or bepraise our follies and our vices. Our observations on this department of Art-manufacture have been restricted rather to principles, or general expressions, than devoted to individual details; and it would be utterly impracticable to review the Exhibition otherwise, especially in an essay of this character, which attempts to be suggestive, by comparing and making prominent the ruling ideas which influence a taste.

V.—*Carving and Modelling, &c.*

One of the most important branches of ornamental manufacture in the Exhibition is that of carving and inlaying in wood. This branch of industry, as more generally accessible and applicable, and accordingly in far more extensive demand, than manufactures in the precious metals ever can be, is one of the best fields for the spread of taste, and although nobly represented in the Exhibition, perhaps better than any other branch of Art-manufacture whatever, is still capable of a much more widely extended use than we find here displayed.

The good specimens are mostly of a very costly kind, and the others are generally rather distinguished for quantity of detail than propriety of application. This is a feature to which we wish particularly to call the attention of our manufacturers, whose productions, with only few exceptions, are generally very inferior to those of the French and German carvers, and, in some cases, the Flemish and Italian.

As the very essence of this essay is the expression of opinion, without assuming any special value for our opinion, we find three great objections to the character of English carving in several of its specimens of most pretensions; such as are exceptions we shall presently specify. These objections imply every want but those of mere mechanical skill and means:—in the first place, there is a want of definite design, and disregard of utility; in the second, an overloading of detail; and, in the third, a disagreeable inequality of execution, one part destroying the effect of the other. For example, in some instances, where the human figure or animals are mixed up with mere conventional ornament, as strap or shield-work, the last is perfectly well designed and executed, while the former are absolutely barbarous in conception and in execution, effectively betraying the weakness in design and the absence of taste. Other specimens found their pretensions solely on abundance of detail, every other quality being overlooked; and there are others again that are conspicuous only for their bad style, or their ill conceived mixture of styles. We lay prominent stress upon these defects, as they are really the sum of the causes of all those various faulty results which so infinitely disfigure the majority of the specimens of this beautiful Art.

The general superiority of the French in wood-carving (at once

* Engraved in Cat., p. 176. † Engraved in Cat., p. 272.

the most mannered, and at the same time the cleverest artists), is as decided as it is in silver-work; but there are also some exquisite German, Flemish, and Italian specimens. Of these, the Austrian, though the most conspicuous, are far from being the best; but as having attracted more general attention than any others, we may as well turn our attention also first to the magnificent furniture exhibited by M. Leistler & Son, of Vienna, from designs by the architect Bernardo de Bernardis.* We have here the furniture for four rooms, but in three styles, mixed and distinct, Renaissance, Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze. The Gothic bookcase does not belong to the suite.

In the Ladies' Library, we have besides the Gothic oak bookcase of the "Decorated" taste,† with some illustrative figures beautifully treated, also a Renaissance bookcase of novel and simple character,‡ but somewhat mixed with the Louis Quinze, like most of the designs by M. de Bernardis here exhibited: also a table in inlaid wood, Louis Quatorze.

In the drawing-room we have some very massive specimens of furniture, the taste of the Louis Quinze prevailing, as in a sofa, but it is symmetrically treated, with an agreeable prominence of natural flowers and great freedom of execution and general fulness of curves, the elongated acanthus foliations of the Louis Quinze. In the large sofa, and in the fauteuils, we have the Louis Quatorze. The chairs are more developed, perfectly symmetrical, and have a broader treatment of the acanthus; the arm chairs, enriched with bouquet centres, are altogether excellent. The miniature stand, also,§ displays an exraordinary fulness of style, Cinquecento scrolls and monsters being mixed with the Louis Quatorze; the frames are Louis Quinze. There are also Louis Quinze and Rococo side tables, which, however, through their positive symmetry, are not disagreeable. A small table with Elizabethan marquetry and Rococo feet is the only objectionable piece of furniture in the room; the large and small round tables in Louis Quinze have a good effect.|| The furniture of the dining-room is in similar taste; the sideboard, a marble slab, has some extremely massive carving, and the festoons of fruit are elaborately and boldly treated at the same time.¶ The legs of the dining table are a magnificent example of the Louis Quatorze. But perhaps of the whole of this suite of furniture, the finest designs are the chairs of the bed-room, which are very beautiful specimens of the purest Louis Quatorze, the shell as a centre, rich acanthus scrolls combined with fiddle-shape members, a Renaissance feature. The sofa and looking-glass frame are similar in taste, a Louis Quatorze treatment of Renaissance scrolls and shields, the various parts being rounded instead of flat. The sofa has more of the Cinquecento character of design, though still with Louis Quatorze treatment; the boys holding the acanthus scroll have a rich effect, and are admirably treated. Some of our upholsterers would do well to take a lesson from the furniture of this room, which, with the exception of the gorgeous Renaissance bedstead,** it would be difficult to surpass in any sense; it combines both utility and beauty in this style, in the highest degree.

Such praise may seem inconsistent with the mixture of style described; but there is no mixture of incongruous elements; the Renaissance and the Louis Quatorze varieties are closely connected in their elements, though they have their own proper treatments. But the Louis Quatorze can appropriate any curves, provided they have given them the characteristic roundness of members of this style; the introduction of the shell, and the rounding of the details of the Renaissance, comprise almost the whole process of transition from the Renaissance to the Louis Quatorze, which originally sprang from it. Of course, there is no impropriety in Louis Quinze and Louis Quatorze mixture, for the former is but an inferior variety of the latter, and where the treatment becomes masterly, there is not the slightest symptom of incongruity. The whole originality of this furniture, however, consists purely in these limited mixtures of style; but in some instances, as in the chairs and sofa of the bed-room, we have a more beautiful development of the Louis Quatorze than perhaps could be shown in any original example of the style in its own period. The various woods used are tulip-wood, walnut, and lime-tree.

* Engraved in Cat., pp. 178-80, 262, 286, 296.
† Engraved in Cat., p. 280.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 160.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 262.
|| Engraved in Cat. pp. 178-9, 206.
¶ Engraved in Cat. p. 286.
** Engraved in Cat. p. 178.

The Austrian furniture is the chief contribution of German wood-carving; but there are some other specimens of the higl merit, of which a dressing and writing table, and a wardrobe mahogany, by J. F. Wirth, of Stuttgard, literally in the styl the Renaissance, but in a decided Cinquecento taste, the wl exquisitely disposed and executed, are altogether of the utn elegance as pieces of furniture, and of the highest class as sp mens of wood-carving. This is the style and taste which commanded the greatest ability throughout every branch of or mental manufacture; as we found in silver generally, and as shall find in other departments as we proceed; but by our manufacturers it has been comparatively seldom had recourse

Belgium also contributes some fine specimens of this Art to Exhibition; and well applied: but here, again, the Louis Quinz the prevalent taste, with little, however, of the coquillage in best examples, and they are symmetrically treated; as some ch by J. T. Colfs, of Antwerp, in which some delicate natural scr work is ingeniously mixed; but the masses are very slender c pared with the Austrian. Compare also these chairs with suc work as the piano by Deffaux, with the coquillage scrolls and rushes, and you see the two extremes of this style; and this c parison will show how very much more a work depends upon treatment of elements than upon the mere elements themselves.

Two other Belgian works—an oak gun-press, by A. Beernaer Brussels, and a wardrobe by Hooghstoel, of Ghent, are good il trations of the pleasing variety of effects attained by a cultivat of the styles—the former Cinquecento, the latter Romanesque sentiment they are opposites, and contrast well: the delicate ri ness and gracefulness of the Cinquecento also here compare w great advantage with the formal geometrical figures of the angu Gothic.

There is something quite refreshing, from its rarity, in Romanesque oak cabinet by Hooghstoel, with its round arch simple grandeur of style relieved by a mere contrast of zigzags what appears to be a somewhat original plum or apple mouldi the whole moderately enriched by statues and high reliefs in pan

The press, by Beernaert, is enriched with panels, contain hunting scenes; a stag's head and boys make a very appropr top; and the scrolled frieze and the capitals of the acanthus or are in genuine taste. The capitals are novel: they are decora with goat's heads, instead of the cauliculi or spiral stems of plant, in the original Corinthian, or the volutes of the Roman co posite, to which order the echinus ornament between the he shows that it belongs. All is in good taste, with the exceptio the introduction of boys as the supports of the pillars, which t carry on their heads; though these things occur in old examp they are the blemishes—not the beauties, of the style.

The samples of wood-carving from Italy are very few; but th are distinguished for delicate workmanship, and are in the ordin Italian Renaissance in their general character; the large elaborate Louis Quatorze frame in the Milanese room is an except The most exquisite Italian specimen is perhaps the small fram pure Cinquecento taste by Pietro Giusti of Siena, in walnut: more important specimens, however, are those by Angelo Barb of Florence; but these are distinguished more for their abunda of minute detail, especially of the Cinquecento arabesque, than general taste or effect; the minutiæ are overdone, while some the most conspicuous portions of the design are worse than or nary—as the lions in the cabinet or writing-table, which are wh unworthy of the design and execution of the minor ornamen details. This work, otherwise, would be one of the most beaut specimens of wood-carving in the Exhibition, and, but for delicate shield-work introduced, would be also one of the b examples of the Cinquecento; it is pure in style, with this except

In passing to the French wood-carving, we first meet with Art in all its multiform bearings, and displaying its own pro capabilities. All the French works of merit would be far numerous to mention here; but there are several which may taken as types of classes and models of treatment, not to dv upon laborious trifles that stand entirely upon their own merit such—as the, what we may term, landscape carving of M. Lien in pear-tree, representing sporting scenes* and a boar hunt,†

* Engraved in Cat., p. 74.
† Engraved in Cat., p. 73.

exquisite finish. This is a class, as unapplied to any direct use, and therefore quite secondary in our present object, which we must, with a few exceptions, generally pass over,—though such works are quite suitable for the ornamentation of mantelpieces or even clock-stands. But this is certainly not the class of labour that will either improve manufactures or advance taste, and may perhaps be not inaptly termed laborious idleness. The English side exhibits its share of such things; but we do not include among them Mr. T. W. Wallis's two groups of birds, notwithstanding in tasteful and elaborate finish, they may rival anything in the Exhibition.

A very prominent feature in French wood-carving is the skilful adjustment of the relief to the situation or use of the object decorated; and, further, the generally very careful grouping of the details, so as to enable them, as it were, by their position, to provide their own protection against injury: both qualities, in fact, tend to one and the same end—the preservation of the work. This is beautifully illustrated in a large frame, in the nave, carved in pear-tree by M. Lechesne, in the Cinquecento taste; though the relief in this work is comparatively low, all the numerous details are sufficiently detached and prominent; but, notwithstanding the delicacy and number of these details—vine-tendrils, foliage, snakes, birds' nest, &c., the artist has never once lost sight of the durability of his work: this frame will bear dusting without danger—an assertion which we would not hazard with respect to many similar works of English manufacture. There is the same judicious degree of relief in the magnificent sideboard by Fourdinois—all the various groups of fruit, fish, or implements, are so arranged as to be of mutual protection to each other, and are tolerably secure against any ordinary accident, which is a virtue the more estimable in proportion to the value of the article.

This great French sideboard* is in every respect one of the noblest works in the Exhibition: its decorations are completely typical of the relations of the uses of the object. The entire food of man, both meat and drink, and the means and localities by and from which it is procured, are all charmingly expressed, and disposed in exquisite ornamental symmetry.

The style is Renaissance, of noble design, and of a strong Cinquecento feeling: in the upper part, agreeably interspersed with architectural features, is Ceres, with the inexhaustible horns of Amalthæa, one on either side, as the centre group; the side groups of boys and fruits have reference respectively, one on the right to the harvest, and the other, on the left of the centre, to the vintage. Below, on the right hand, is a terminal figure representing fishing, with a group still lower, showing the locality, or source of the operation implied; on the other side is a corresponding figure, representing the chase, with its illustrative group below indicating the woods as the seat of game. In the front of the sideboard are allegorical figures of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, with characteristic attributes in the province of food and drink, and further, each figure is illustrated by panels containing the fruits or products of the four quarters, with the implements of their acquisition grouped with them. All these panels are exceedingly effective: and just above the board itself is a magnificent group of game and fish, &c., of several kinds, most admirable in its arrangement, and masterly in its execution; beneath the board in front are four large staghounds, in couples, reposing, arranged symmetrically and formally before four bracket-trusses: the mouldings, and other details, are all valuable specimens of the Cinquecento Renaissance. The dogs, by their formal position immediately under and before the trusses, appear, on a careless view, to support the sideboard on their heads; but this is done by the pierced trusses above and behind them; were it not so, this would be a capital error of material consequence in so magnificent a work; the very formal position of these dogs, however, is, perhaps, the only weak portion of the design.

On the whole, this work must be admitted to be an extraordinary masterpiece of wood-carving; and the idea of making a sideboard express at once in so palpable a manner, the fruits of the four quarters of the Globe, and of the four seasons, with the means and manner of their gathering, is as happy and intellectual as comprehensive. The picture, however, in the centre, is much too light

* Engraved in Cat., p. 285.

and clear in colour for the tone of the wood, to which it gives a dirty appearance.

There are many other first-class cabinets, book-cases, and others, exhibited by French manufacturers, but almost exclusively in the styles of the Renaissance, which it is high time for the French to vary; to the English eye they are fresher; among these are conspicuous the medal cabinet of M. Ringuet-Leprince in ebony and pear-tree, ornamented with stones;* a somewhat similar case by M. Tahan,† in a fine Cinquecento taste; and several elegant book-cases by Messrs. Durand,‡ Krieger, Leclerc, and Cordonnier, in oak, rosewood, and mahogany: besides several billiard-tables of a magnificent character, as one enriched with buhl-work by M. Bouhardet; and some fine chairs, Cinquecento, Louis Quatorze, and Louis Quinze, by MM. Rivart and Andrieux, and M. Verge.

M. Cruchet exhibits some remarkable specimens of carving for room decoration, but displays the same mannerism in taste, which detracts seriously from the merit of the French contributions to the Exhibition; and this artist shows far greater skill in the execution of his work, than in its distribution; the specimen exhibited is excessively overloaded with detail,§ but it contains, perhaps, the best example of mere wood-carving in the Exhibition, in the two groups of fruit and game hanging from the brackets of the lower portion; the upper part is chiefly in carton-pierre, which, with some specimens exhibited by M. Hardouin, are good examples of the application of this material to something more than mere picture-frames or mouldings. M. Hardouin exhibits a very excellent frieze-scroll, containing a boar-hunt and other sport, in the Cinquecento taste.

Of the more delicate French work we must not omit to mention a group of the "Virgin and Child," by M. Knecht, of Paris; it is placed in a niche, which is adorned with a canopy of a rich Gothic character of design, but composed of the vine, treated after the manner of the German stump, or knüttel tracery,‖ a taste not much expressed in the Exhibition,¶ though of this class there are two magnificent specimens in inlaid metal-work, a cabinet and chair, in the German octagon room, exhibited by F. X. Fortner, of Munich.

Before passing to the English furniture, there are some specimens of general decoration in carving, or analogous work, in the Nave and in the Fine Arts Court, which demand our notice; in this court are also some of the most delicate specimens of English carving, as the Birds by T. W. Wallis, of Louth; and the Cradle exhibited by Her Majesty, carved by Mr. Rogers, from a design by his son; and a case containing some elegant Renaissance specimens by the same carver.**

The cradle in Turkey boxwood contains much admirable carving, and the scrolls are in the taste of the best Cinquecento scroll-work; this is altogether the best specimen of Mr. Rogers's carving. Many of the others, more particularly the large frames, are over-crowded, and have a mere general effect that might be produced with very much less labour, and in a more durable form, as in the works of Grinling Gibbons. That practical quality of relief which we had occasion to praise in some of the French works, is here absent. However, much of the superiority of the cradle, as also of a Cinquecento bracket and canopy, is owing purely to the excellence of the design, and it is another illustration of the paramount value of taste, with which no mere mechanical skill can ever come into competition. There are some good specimens here also by J. Mitchell, and by C. De Groot, of Dublin. The so-called Kenilworth buffet,†† by Cookes & Sons of Warwick, is a massive and handsome piece of furniture, but it suffers materially in effect by the purely dramatic treatment of the figures, and the consequent sacrifice of symmetry; for which we have only a very feeble expression of a doubtful idea:—Ornamental Art, to be perfect, must engross the whole ability of the designer, it admits of no division of attention.

The leather flowers, and relievo hangings,‡‡ by Esquilant, and Leake & Co., are very excellent examples of a style of ornament or decoration which might be infinitely more developed than it has

* Engraved in Cat., p. 297. † Engraved in Cat., p. 228. ‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 251.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 60. ‖ Engraved in Cat., p. 73.
¶ The Coalbrookdale garden-house is a striking exception.
** Engraved in Cat., pp. 8—10. †† Engraved in Cat., p. 123.
‡‡ See specimens in pp. 33 and 74 of Cat.

and durable designs, we may hope to see a comparatively new order of decorative furniture; and if produced at a moderate price, a widely extended one, which might be the means of effectively multiplying and publishing the various master-pieces of past ages: and of this valuable application of the process a very fine example is here exhibited in the reduced copy of the Theseus by Mr. Cheverton, for the Arundel Society. A cast from an original by Fiammingo is another instance of this application; its sphere is boundless if not negatived by costliness—however this may be for a time, the galvano-plastic art is destined eventually to perform a great part in the dissemination of taste, and in general education.

J. A. Hatfield also exhibits some tasteful bronzes; and Wertheimer two very elegant caskets in ormolu*.

The Coalbrookdale company also are distinguished contributors, and are evidently making great efforts to render their name and productions a sufficient guarantee for good taste; they exhibit several good designs by John Bell, C. Crookes, and B. W. Hawkins. But we could wish to see much more attention paid to the production of ordinary articles of use, as candle-sticks, ink-stands, and such works, embodying beautiful designs, than to deer, and dogs, or vases, or mere Art-groups, made simply to be gazed at. This is too much the fault of the French bronzes, and our ordinary grates are not of that beauty that we can afford to give all our extra efforts to burnished steel and electro-gilt, lacquered brass, or ormolu. This company exhibits a magnificent grate in these materials, somewhat in the taste of the Cinquecento; but we have seen no good design applied to a simple cast in iron for this purpose; and here, in exception to the general rule, a French manufacturer, M. André of Paris, the exhibitor of the large Cinquecento fountain in the East nave, sets us a fine example, in his Louis Quatorze chimney-piece as a simple iron casting.† Ornamental grates of this character are quite within the capabilites of iron and the province of good taste, and though London, Sheffield, Rotherham, and Coalbrookdale, shine conspicuously in ornamental specimens of a costly description, indicating an immense advance of taste of late years, the idea of applying the finest design to a simple iron casting does not appear to have occurred to any manufacturer. One of the noblest specimens of this class is the grand Elizabethan grate, manufactured by Pierce of London, for the Earl of Ellesmere.‡ Evans of London exhibits also an elegant grate in the Cinquecento taste; and Baily & Sons also of London, another in the same style, of very elegant character, besides a beautiful piece of iron railing, in the Fine Arts Court.§

The proportion of Cinquecento design in stove-work is unusually great; but the Renaissance and the Louis Quatorze are likewise sufficiently represented, and some of the latter style with its imperfections abounding. Jobson, of Sheffield, exhibits, with other good specimens, an elegant grate of this style. A stove, somewhat of Romanesque or Byzantine taste, is exhibited by Jeakes, of London; ‖ W. S. Burton exhibits a fender with a good adaptation of a natural type, the snake, by J. W. Walton; ¶ and several good common-sense grates are exhibited by Mapplebeck & Low, of Birmingham. Hoole, Robson, & Hoole, of the Green Lane Works, also exhibit some very good examples of the ornamental and practical combined.** Gorton, of Birmingham, and Deane, exhibit some elegant forms, also Glenton & Co; Yates, Haywood, & Co.; and Stuart & Smith, of Sheffield, who make by far the greatest display in this class of manufacture, comprising several good expressions of various styles—Cinquecento, Renaissance, and Gothic, besides some good simple specimens; †† showing altogether great efforts at effect, and not unsuccessful ones: the combination of burnished steel, ormolu, and porcelain is very effective.‡‡

Of more purely ornamental iron-work, some of the Coalbrookdale specimens are very beautiful, not to mention the noble set of park gates, or the very elegant but somewhat large garden-house; and a very elegant iron vase in a Byzantine or Norman Romanesque taste, is exhibited by Mr. Handyside, of Derby; §§ another beautiful work, of a similar class, but more of a Fine Art character,

* See specimens in Cat., p. 64. † Engraved in Cat., p. 75.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 194. § Engraved in Cat., p. 233.
‖ Engraved in Cat., p. 198. ¶ Engraved in Cat., p. 77.
** Engraved in Cat., p. 71, and a fender, p. 55.
†† See two examples in Cat., p. 35. ‡‡ See Cat., p. 35. §§ Eng. in Cat., p. 6.

is sent by the Berlin foundry, remarkable for the beautiful exec tion of a small copy of Thorwaldsen's celebrated "Triumpl Entry of Alexander into Babylon." And among the most taste works in the Exhibition, are the contributions in damascened ir by M. Falloise, of Liege,* consisting of a shield, vases, and otl articles in iron with Renaissance tracery, somewhat of the Cinq cento scroll-work and Henry II. tracery combined, with Moori arabesque inlaid in silver: the mixture itself of the two met so combined, and the whole feeling of the designs, produce delightful effect, strongly recommending by its own merit this style of decoration, which modern Europe has hitherto seem disposed to resign to the East. The display of "Bedry worl from India comprises many beautiful vessels of this class, thou not to be compared in workmanship with the contributions of Falloise. The Moorish details in these works, though superi resemble the Indian, and the whole stall presents another capi example of the value of the Moorish element in Cinquecento Renaissance design.

There is also some excellent French iron-work exhibited by Potonié, of Paris; and a very interesting, though fanciful, i bedstead by M. Dupont, of Paris; † and some others of more c ventional character by M. Leonard, of Paris, in good Renaissa and Cinquecento taste. This is evidently a branch of manufact to which iron castings are very applicable; it is an applicatio Art scarcely represented on the English side, except in the cos brass specimens of Winfield, of Birmingham, who exhibits magnificent bedstead of this description.‡

VII.—*Pottery, Porcelain, and Glass.*

In this department of industry, more especially in the provi of uses, the contributions of British manufacturers show an mense improvement in design upon the ordinary standards former years; the very long unrivalled preeminence of the Mes Wedgwood in classical taste only proves how difficult it was impress the mass of the master potters with even the belief in real existence of such a quality as Taste. The material prosper however, of those who have taken the lead in cultivating tardily-acknowledged essential element of manufacture, m establish now and for ages the absolute necessity for its cu vation as one indispensable foundation of success.

To limit fine taste or design to such works as the more mag cent productions of Sèvres, which from practice we may assum have been a rule, is a now admitted folly, which individual pe niary interest, if no higher motive, is likely effectually to cor for the future. If in expensive productions the relative high p may be said to secure a return for the extra outlay consequent employing higher talent, the same cause restricts the manufact and where the same high talent is employed over the low-pri article, the remuneration is secured by the increased attractive and consequent greater demand. This was formerly discredi but the general movement of late years in this direction, en raged by the increased facilities of education offered by the Sch of Design, have proved its practical reality; and we can but h that nothing will deter our manufacturers from pursuing enlightened course.

Form is the great element of pottery, porcelain, and glass applied to domestic uses, and should command the first consid tion; a vessel, even should it have no other attraction than agreeable shape, or, in other words, be wholly without decorat may still be a beautiful and delightful object to the cultivated and will itself eventually educate the uncultivated. Shape is element of beauty; decoration may enhance it, if judicio applied, and may do much towards destroying it if had reco to in too great proportion; but it is this more or less, which t the quality of taste. We cannot illustrate better what we m than by referring to the stall of Messrs. Wedgwood, where we only exquisite shapes just sufficiently decorated to enhance t effect.§ Though the designs of Flaxman for the most part, t are the revival of an old taste, or rather the utmost developn of taste, after an uninterrupted education of many centuries; parallel opportunity has ever offered itself to Christian Eur

* Engraved in Cat., p. 82, 83. † Engraved in Cat., p. 18. ‡ Engraved in Cat., p
§ See specimens in pp. 14, 15, of Cat.

mere symbolism and religious dissensions have rendered it hitherto impossible. In comparing, therefore, the modern with the old, we compare the crude and unfinished productions of a divided attention, constantly interrupted by one whimsy or another wholly irrelative to the purpose, with the last and crowning efforts of the most cultivated people of the ancient world, after the successive and undivided attention of whole generations of educated designers in the attainment of beauty.

Repudiate the idea of copying as we will, all our vagaries end in a recurrence to Greek shapes. All the most beautiful forms in the Exhibition, whether in silver, in bronze, in earthenware, or in glass, are Greek shapes; it is true, often disfigured by the accessory decorations of the modern styles, but still Greek in their essential form.

In adopting Greek shapes, we are not restricted to either Greek materials or Greek colours, nor are we limited to their details; but if their principles are true, we can but work upon them, and whatever variations we adopt there is sure to be a beautiful effect in the arrangement. If reproductions in the Greek taste have hitherto had a general monotony of effect, it is because the materials themselves have been imitated, rather than the taste of form and decoration; let the materials and colours be properly varied, and all that sameness of effect which too often characterises these reproductions will disappear; this is sufficiently evident by a mere reference to silver, bronze, or glass, where the shape is the same, but where the idea of mere imitation or monotonous repetition never occurs.

Though the Sèvres porcelain* takes the lead in point of pretensions, it is not superior in taste, and is certainly inferior in matters of utility, to the specimens of Alderman Copeland,† of Stoke-upon-Trent. We have in this stall much of that variation of classical models which appears to us to constitute the true use of these ancient remains, and the best evidence of a refined taste. There is besides on this stall much handsome porcelain of modern design, rich in decoration, without being gaudy; and in several styles, all well expressed, as the Indian, Moorish, Cinquecento, and the Louis Quatorze, and Louis Quinze; but the Greek justly prevails over all the others.

Minton & Co., also, of the Staffordshire Potteries, make likewise a magnificent display, especially in a dessert service in Parian and Porcelain mixed, in turquoise, white and gold, purchased by Her Majesty.‡ The designs comprise many statuettes of an allegorical character, but in the ornamental details the Louis Quinze has been allowed too conspicuous a part; the centre piece, a wine-cooler,§ is a good example of general skilfulness of treatment of relief, and of that class of design of which the ornamental details illustrate the uses, or ideas and customs, associated with the object of the design. On this stall is a beautiful Cinquecento ewer and basin, in Parian, which is one of the most tasteful specimens of this class of design in the Exhibition; and in much the same style is a magnificent mantelpiece of exquisite design, but of more ordinary Renaissance character: many of its details, however, are admirable, as the scrolls and centre of the frieze; and the general style of the terminal pilasters, a nymph and faun so adapted, is perfect in character, except that the lintel or architrave is made to rest on the flowers which these figures carry in baskets on their heads, which, though not without a precedent, is an outrageous idea; the wreath round the heads of the figures would have made a better capital, and would have obviated this anomaly.

This firm exhibits also a pair of magnificent vases, of which the handles, in metal, are extremely beautiful; a ram's head, scrolls, cornucopia, and infant boys, ingeniously grouped into a convenient and ornamental handle-shape; and there are also some clever imitations in Parian of the delicate trifles of old Dresden china, in flowers and fancy figures, of the school of Watteau. The colours generally, and the ordinary services of this firm, are extremely good; and its encaustic tiles are a very important contribution towards the general cultivation of Taste.

The Louis Quinze is still the prevailing style in porcelain, as in many other manufactures; and, generally speaking, profusion of

* Engraved in Cat., pp. 162, 179.
† Several fine specimens engraved in Cat., pp. 1--4.
‡ Engraved with other specimens, in Cat., p. 114. § Engraved in Cat., p. 110.

ornament is the rule. Much beautiful work, however, rich and simple, is exhibited by Ridgway & Co.,* whose conservatory fountains and stair rails are very agreeable novelties: also by Alcock and Co., Burslem; Messrs. Boote, of Burslem;† Meigh & Sons, of Hanley;‡ Dimmock, of Shelton; Rose & Co.,§ of Coalbrookdale; Bell & Co.,‖ of Glasgow; and Grainger & Co., of Worcester,¶ who contribute in their semiporcelain some minor works in excellent taste.

The famed Dresden porcelain seems to exhibit the atrophy which not seldom is induced by a just consciousness of superiority at one time, ending in an assumed incontestable pre-eminence for all time: thus while other fabrics have steadily progressed, that of Meissen has unconsciously remained stationary, and its specimens are in the Exhibition merely to astonish us how it ever attained its former notoriety.**

There is, indeed, very little in German pottery or porcelain to attract attention. The Berlin specimens take the highest position; the Austrian is of a very ordinary character, and the beer-mugs of Neureuther, of Munich porcelain,†† or the terra-cottas of E. March, of Charlottenburg,‡‡ or the stone-china of Villeroy and Boch, are among the most prominent German efforts in this class of industry.

England holds, perhaps, a still higher position in glass than it does in pottery or porcelain. Though the English manufacturers may yet find some difficulty in competing in cheapness with Bohemia, the Islington glass-works of Rice, Harris, & Son, of Birmingham,§§ seem to have surpassed this famed manufacture in every other respect; they exhibit an equal beauty of colour with the Bohemian, a general superiority of taste, and uniformly superior workmanship; and this notwithstanding Bohemia displays some very beautiful examples, for they often owe more of their beauty to their decoration than to their shape or colour. Many beautiful specimens also in coloured glass are exhibited by Bacchus and Sons;‖‖ by Davis, Greathead, & Green; and by Lloyd and Summerfield, of Birmingham.¶¶ It is, however, in pure white crystal glass that this fabric, now as of old, displays its highest sphere of beauty and usefulness, and in this department Messrs. Osler, of Birmingham, and Apsley Pellatt & Co., of London, besides numerous articles of ornament and domestic utility, exhibit some candelabra chandeliers and lustres of unexampled magnificence, as displaying the refractive beauties of the metal; the world-celebrated crystal fountain in the centre of the building, and the very elegant candelabra in the gallery, belonging to Her Majesty,*** by Mr. Osler; and many chandeliers, some of extraordinary size and magnificence, by Mr. Pellatt.††† Mr. Osler exhibits also some beautiful lustres, and some griffins, in dead glass, which have an excellent effect.

Mr. Pellatt exhibits a great variety of articles, both of use and ornament, in cut, engraved, and frosted glass, and curious imitations of Venetian frosted and gilt glass. The frosted glass, though it may be a revival of an old taste, is now not only a novelty, but has a unique and beautiful effect.

There are here, also, some lustres of great beauty, and by the partial hollowing of the drops, a very rich and uncommon effect is produced; the exquisite purity of the metal used is shown by some very interesting models of diamonds, among which is the Koh-i-noor itself, and nothing inferior in brilliancy to the original below. This stall contains likewise many beautifully engraved jugs and glasses, and many specimens of simply cut wine-glasses, of solid character and admirable design.

Messrs. Richardson, of Stourbridge, likewise make a magnificent display, comprising many wine-glasses and decanters of beautiful shapes, most tastefully cut and engraved,‡‡‡ but the introduction of the painted or enamelled glass, appears to be an attempt at combining two antagonistic elements, the opaque and the transparent; the best of colours, not viewed as transparencies, must appear dull, and even dirty, when compared with the brilliant refractions which constitute the chief charm of glass; and the specimens of

* Engraved in Cat., pp. 86, 87. † Engraved in Cat., pp. 218-19.
‡ Engraved in Cat., pp. 240, 241. § Engraved in Cat., p. 258.
‖ Engraved in Cat., p. 236. ¶ Engraved in Cat., p. 76.
** Specimens engraved in Cat., pp. 30, 31. †† Engraved in Cat., pp. 84, 95.
‡‡ Engraved in Cat., pp. 46, 47. §§ Various specimens engraved in Cat., pp. 182-83.
‖‖ Engraved in Cat., p. 32. ¶¶ See specimens, p. 270. *** Engraved in Cat., p. 206.
††† Engraved in Cat., pp. 174-75. ‡‡‡ See specimens in Cat., pp. 186-89.

this new application of enamel here exhibited, are sufficiently dull in effect to be a warning against its repetition or imitation, except upon opal or opaque glass; and then it will always require great delicacy, and it is, to say the least, an aid that glass does not require. Of this, no stall is a better proof than Messrs. Richardsons' own, which is conspicuous for its very beautiful crystal metal, delicate colours, and variety and general skilfulness of design. Stourbridge is further distinguished by the contributions of J. Webb, of Platts' Glass Works.

The stall of J. G. Green, London, displays, perhaps, the most delicate engraving in the Exhibition, and upon some of the most exquisite shapes; constituting another illustration of the accomplished finish of Greek forms. This judicious choice has resulted in the production of several jugs on this stall, which are exquisite works of Art;* and the Greek details of the engraving of a portion of them has rendered these very adequate illustrations of Greek taste equally interesting with the Wedgwood specimens in earthenware, and of some value in showing the very different general effect produced by a simple change of material.

Much admirable work, also, is exhibited by Molineaux, Webb and Co., of Manchester,† Powells, Conne,‡ Rose & Co., Naylor,§ Sharpus & Cullum, and others, all showing the high condition of this manufacture in England. Sharpus & Cullum exhibit some extremely handsome shapes for wine-glasses, white and coloured, plain and cut; some of them after the taste of the old Dutch glass; with green and purple bowls and white stems, and exhibiting the comparative novelty of plain bowls and cut stems, the bowls being tulip and chalice shaped, and the stems straight, polygonal, plain, and cut—altogether displaying a novel and noble effect. Of purely ornamental glass, coloured or etched, for windows or general decoration, there is also much that is new and of a high class, as the magnificent coloured slabs by Swinburne & Co., of Newcastle, with some admirable imitations of marbles; and the etched and painted glass of Cogan & Co., and the enamelled glass of Chance & Co., of Birmingham.

Some very tasteful and historical ornament is displayed among the stained and painted glass by the Royal Patent Decorative Glass Works, S. K. Bland, Jackson, Hetley, and some very good Norman patterns by Wailes of Newcastle; and some similar ornament‖ and other tasteful details in the lower frames of a figure window by Gibson of Newcastle.

Some curious Venetian glass is exhibited by P. Bigaglia; and, in other styles, by Hall & Sons of Bristol, and by the St. Helens Glass Company.

But in painted glass generally, the display is unaccountably small and insignificant, considering the character and capabilities of the Art; the too prevalent notion that glass-painting is peculiarly an ecclesiastical province of decoration, unless shortly exploded, promises to be fatal to the Art, under the very restricted development which ecclesiological prejudices are disposed to allow it in this country. The fine window by Bertini, of Milan, is a wholesome innovation upon such morbid pretence.

VIII.—*Woven and Printed Fabrics.*

This department of ornamental manufactures, though perhaps less generally attractive than many others, is of greater commercial importance than any, owing to its universal extent; and probably there is no class of manufactures which good design is better calculated to encourage than the infinite variety of pattern goods of this description, which, when the quality of the fabric itself is decided upon, must be in nearly all cases chosen for the pattern.

When, therefore, a general standard as regards the substance and texture of a fabric has been attained, which is pretty well the case with the woven goods of Europe at the present day, design becomes the sole field of competition. Even in this respect also one general average of merit is now pretty well attained, the excellence of French designs has at last forced other countries to turn their energies to the same province, and the vast strides of England in the last few years aided much by Schools of Design,

* Engraved in Cat., p. 91.
† Engraved in Cat., p. 290.
‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 62.
§ Engraved in Cat., p. 70.
Engraved in Cat., p. 72.

have been not without their rewards. In shawls, silks, damasks, lace, carpets, &c., it would be difficult to pronounce any decided opinion as to respective superiorities; we venture to assert, however, that Spitalfields silks are not inferior to those of Lyons; that no ribbon in the Exhibition can compare with the "Coventry ribbon," * from a design by Mr. Clack of the Coventry School of Design; and that if the lace, damasks and carpets, of British manufacturers are not decidedly superior to the similar productions of the Continent, they betray, certainly, no shadow of inferiority: in printed muslins, however, and in chintzes, and in shawls, we do not venture to claim that equality which we believe to be established in other branches.

The printed goods of Glasgow, or of Dalgleish, Falconer & Co., of Stirling, may compare with those of Mulhouse; and of the English prints generally, those of Thomson, of Clitheroe, come, perhaps, nearest to their foreign rivals; the similar goods of Manchester, with some few exceptions by Hargreaves & Co., and Nelson, Knowles & Co., are heavy and stiff, and display too many browns and greys or lilacs; the trails are too close, and there is a want of flow in the curves; they are like the chopping sea of the Nore compared with the waves of the Atlantic. In damask, brocaded, and embroidered silk, Manchester is far more successful; the contributions of Messrs. Houldsworth, and of Winkworth and Procters, are equal to anything in the Exhibition; and may, with the silks of Campbell, Harrison & Lloyd,† of Spitalfields, compare even with the admirable specimens from Lyons, exhibited by Candy & Co., which to surpass would be almost impossible.

As a spur to our manufacturers it may be worth pointing out that the best of the Mulhouse prints exhibited, as well as other goods, are manufactured for London houses; a circumstance that can only possibly be accounted for by the superiority of design, and it shows that English ladies are judges of what is tasteful, if English manufacturers are not. Some of the most beautiful specimens exhibited by Koechlin, of Mulhouse, Gros Odier, Roman & Co., of Wesserling, and several others, have been expressly manufactured for Howell & James, Sewell & Co., Williams & Sowerby, Swan & Edgar, Lewis & Allenby, or Hitchcock & Co., of London. The Mulhouse prints are nearly all trails, no one colour particularly prevailing, as in the greys or browns of Manchester; there are some extremely small trails in pink and lilac, of great elegance; they are mostly on white grounds, but there are also blue, brown, green, pink, and drab grounds. The tints are generally delicate, and all large masses of colour seem to be systematically avoided; entirely opposite in fact to chintz patterns in their character, between which and these prints for dresses, the French manufacturers observe a very wide and very proper distinction. To fully particularise, however, in this vast range of fabrics, would occupy more space than has been allowed for the whole of this essay. The gauze tissues of Vatin, of Paris, and similar fabrics of Bertrand, Gayet, and Dumontat, of Lyons, seem to leave little to be desired; and the same may be said of the cashmere prints of Depoully, Boiraux & Co., Choqueel, Damiron, and others.

The prints of Depoully, Boiraux & Co., for Candy & Co., are extremely beautiful, and as swerving somewhat from the conventional Cashmere patterns, deserve more than a mere mention; they consist of light patterns of tropical foliage, and flowers in various colours, and in several of them the conventional shawl pine is wholly dispensed with, in others it is treated with great freedom. Similar patterns are exhibited by English manufacturers, and some of the prints of Messrs. Swaisland of Crayford, fully rival the French,‡ but they are in the same conventional style of Cashmere pattern, which it would seem our manufacturers, or rather the whole body of the manufacturers of the west of Europe, dare not deviate from. The introduction of the palm is nearly the extent of the variation of even the best French designs. Doubtless, gracefully grouped tropical plants or flowers, have an extremely beautiful effect, and may be most applicable for the shawl, which is more characteristic of Oriental than of European costume; but this much cannot be said in favour of that very peculiar figure which so very decidedly disfigures so many of these magnificent examples of manufacturing skill; it cannot be excused, for it

* Engraved in Cat., p. 13.
† See engraved specimen in Cat., p. 125.
‡ Engraved in Cat., pp. 157, 308.

cannot be explained, and, certainly, it does not recommend itself by any inherent beauty of shape. There are several Spitalfields patterns in the Exhibition, of tropical and European flowers,* which, if skillfully followed out, and enlarged in style, might, without any very extraordinary effort, be adapted into an appropriate filling for shawls, by scrolling in masses, and still allowing the corners to preserve some of their conventional character, as has been very well done in a shawl † exhibited by Mr. Blakely, of Norwich, without giving any prominence to the offensive pine; European and Indian details are combined, and the same has been done with good effect, by Towler, Campin, & Co., of Norwich.‡ Many of the Indian specimens themselves, however, are wholly free from the pine, and have little of that conventionality which seems to be an indispensable characteristic in the west.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact, but the Exhibition clearly shows that the whole European shawl trade of the highest class, is engrossed in the manufacture of a spurious article, the imitation of an Oriental fabric, so that European skill and taste are virtually withdrawn from this branch of manufacture; and this is the result of the love of ostentation, the reputation of possessing something rare and costly, without any reference to taste.

The whole onus of this state of matters is accredited to public prejudice, but it originated in the primary attempt at counterfeit, and the result is, as the Exhibition shows, that there is now no choice, that Europe has not yet produced a genuine sample of one of the most important and at the same time most ordinary articles of female costume—it has yet to make its shawl. What is remarkable, however, there is much more variety of pattern in the genuine Oriental fabrics than in the European imitations, which aim almost exclusively at the counterfeit of the most elaborate specimens from Cashmere or Lahore, but these they leave far behind them as mere designs, though they are often inferior in colour, and generally of a much coarser texture. The oriental fabrics indeed, more especially from the British colonies, make a display in draperies which seems to gain rather than suffer by comparison with the similar productions of Europe; and this appears to be chiefly from the minute nature of Indian ornamental detail which precludes all possibility of those outrageous exhibitions which the fabrics of the west so incessantly display. The Indian shawls have two conditions at least, which are demanded by criticism, namely a general harmonious effect of the whole, and such a choice and disposition of detail that the part never interferes with the whole by attracting any particular attention to itself. Some Indian specimens are actually covered with the so-called pine, and yet it is so unobtrusive in its treatment that many or most people even would overlook its presence. And the simple and charming effect of the woven fabrics of India, shows how much may be accomplished with the simplest materials, that is of ornament, if only this one point, that the detail must be entirely subservient to the general effect, be attended to. These manufactures have a value which their mere materials could never give them, and yet as works of ornamental design themselves they belong in all other respects to the humblest class; the details are either diapers or scrolls of the rudest kind, or a simple trail, or the interminable pine, as we must call it, in which the original type is neither approached nor even intelligibly expressed; and it is far too irregular in its treatment to be admitted as a recognised conventional type.

Many of these pines remind us of the horns of plenty of the Romans and Byzantines; we have a treatment much resembling what we find also in the mosques of Cairo, a pair being arranged in symmetrical contrast; others again are so much elongated that they resemble the flag leaf, or the leaf of Indian corn. Mixed with this figure we occasionally find the palm or aloe, and even the anthemion and fleur-de-lis, but executed in the oriental manner of an infinite combination of minute portions of different colours, aiming at a purely general effect. There are however patterns from which it is wholly absent, as scarfs in silver and gold, and in colour; sometimes a simple diaper of a conventional bush or tree, or a mere geometrical figure with a scroll border; sometimes an alternation of stripes and scrolls arranged diagonally, with a much larger scroll for the borders; the scrolls being invariably of a Byzantine character, such as we find them in the manuscripts of the middle ages; and like the decorations of Cairo, most probably having their source in Damascus, the common nursery of Mahometan art: the zigzag too is a common element in these Indian works.

The embroidered cloths of Ahmedabad offer some of the most varied examples of Indian design; one of these, a magnificent scarf, a blue centre with a red border, embroidered in gold, is a characteristic specimen of its class. The centre pattern is a diagonal succession of a flower in a wave-scroll, alternated with a mere succession of flowers in a uniform line; the broad border at the ends consists of three rows of pines one above another. In these pines is foliage interspersed with an animal and two birds; the birds look like the peacock or dodo, and the vulture; the animal is something between a bull and a stag. The space around the pines is likewise covered with a trail of foliage, among which are an elephant, a lion, and the same two birds that are within the pines: the whole is surrounded by a border of a foliated serpentine. The same details spread over various kinds of manufactures;* the silver decorations of the iron vessels, the so-called "Biddur or Bedry work" are identical with the diapers and other details of the scarfs of Ahmedabad, or the Kincobs or Brocades of Benares.

By far the finest specimens as works of Art are the large shawls from Cashmere and Lahore; though they are very much less showy, by the absence of the gold and silver embroidery or tissue, which constitute the chief attraction of the majority, or even the pearls and tinsel which constitute the only merits of others.

The details of the Cashmere patterns are generally light pines, dispersed with considerable freedom, and a figure resembling the aloe or the tuft of leaves which grows from the top of the pineapple; it may be supposed also to represent the palm-tree, and it sometimes looks like a vase of flowers, or like the Greek anthemion. The pines are rarely solid, but generally contain scroll-work, and all the figures are made up of infinitely small conventional flower forms, such as we see on a large scale in Turkey carpets, and certain colours are constant, and always of a clean pure character, even bright in themselves, but being dispersed in small quantities they have a very good effect, and it is worth noting that the red is generally embedded in green, a point which, in their imitations, our shawl-makers have overlooked.

The chief variety of effect produced in these shawls is by varying the predominant colours; for in all some colours prevail, and they further observe a good practice of following the great outlines of the pattern with white; that is, a delicate white fringe separates the details from the ground, which obviates a heaviness, which so much work would otherwise involve, without the white relief; this, too, is neglected in many imitations.

The saddles, howdahs, parasols, and such fabrics from India, are more decided in their details than the shawls; they show also a more decided European influence, and have much similarity with the specimens from Constantinople, many of the details of which are pure Byzantine ornaments, and it would be very remarkable were it not so.

On a gold embroidered saddle-cloth from Madras, and on a large parasol of similar character, we have an anthemion such as we have on the vases, and also a simple floral arabesque on the latter Byzantine scroll-work is also the common feature of decoration of howdah and elephant cloths, as it is of the horse-cloths of Constantinople; on one of these last a rich wave-scroll, with a bunch of flowers proceeding from the eyes of the scroll, in the reverse direction of the scroll, embroidered in gold on blue cloth, is a good design and a very elegant decoration.

The great features of Indian work are shown to be, by this exhibition, general richness of material and unobtrusiveness of detail: deprived of their richness many of the embroidered fabrics would have nothing left but their unobtrusiveness, for absolute merits of design are in most cases altogether out of the question: we often hear of the love of finery in Europe, but it is quite evident that it is only in the East where this taste is carried out in perfection.

* See specimen by Stone & Kemp, p. 149, and another by the committee of the School of Design, p. 100, and another by Redmayne & Son, p. 202 of Cat.

† Engraved in Cat., p. 109.

‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 151.

* See specimens in Cat., p. 28.

In comparing the spurious with the genuine Cashmeres, we find the genuine more minute and delicate, more general, less showy, and inferior in design, yet by no means inferior in effect. The European Cashmeres have often staring grounds, and sometimes, which has a very bad effect, a different coloured ground for each corner of the shawl; this, though it occurs, is rare in genuine work, but must be bad everywhere. We have also in the European shawls the same pattern without the slightest alteration, worked upon different coloured grounds; this exhibits a fundamental error in design: for instance, if a pattern be elaborated for a red ground, the pattern should display a predominence of green in the details, and the effect would be good; but if this same pattern be simply transferred to a blue or a yellow ground, the effect would be destroyed; yet this has been done in several instances by the most eminent manufacturers of France and Great Britain; the complementary colours must be observed in these matters if we desire beautiful and tasteful effects. In European shawls the pine is elaborated *ad nauseam*, while other Indian details are neglected. Our manufacturers further seem to have selected their colours from the sombre class of Turkey carpets; but to apply such colours to shawls, in which the details are so extremely minute, amounts to a total annihilation of colour in the finished work; the most brilliant hues when dispersed in such minute portions as Cashmere patterns display will scarcely attain a secondary degree of colour when worked up, and this choice of colour may in a measure account for the very great superiority of the shawls exhibited by Duché ainé, and Deneirouse and Boisglavy, which are of Indian workmanship, the workman probably using his own wools; but the patterns of these shawls are also superior, especially the contributions of M. Duché, though the French shawls generally are poorer in effect than the English; but their imitation is closer, their details are very good, and they are free from that stariness which ours too often exhibit. The Austrian shawls are quite on a general equality with French or British.

In lace and embroidery, and analogous work, the Exhibition makes no such display as to demand any detailed examination. A vast improvement has of late years been made in the character of English lace, especially that of Nottingham; but as yet it may safely be asserted, that high class design has been little identified with the manufacture of lace in any country.

The specimens exhibited by Mrs. Treadwin, of Exeter, and Mr. Gill, of Colyton, from designs by Messrs. Slocombe & Rawlings,* of the School of Design, Somerset House, are of a far higher order of taste than any others exhibited. Videcoq & Simon exhibit some good specimens of French; but viewed with reference to design, the Exhibition really contains very little that is good.

In embroidered or sewed muslin, the case is very similar. A rich dress is exhibited by Brown, Sharps & Co., of Paisley;† and there are several good specimens of curtains exhibited by J. J. Sutter, of Buhler, in Switzerland.

The damasks of Dunfermline and Belfast make a more gratifying display; some of these exhibit a high class of design, as several manufactured by Mr. Andrews, of Belfast;‡ and here again we find the value of the School of Design, in the patterns of Mr. Mackensie and Mr. Blain.§ The coloured cloths and damasks of Mr. Beveridge, of Dunfermline,‖ display skilful and well-studied design.

Milligan's patent embroidered Alpaca is another class of manufacture displaying much beautiful design.

In another important fabric, carpets, English manufacturers make a very distinguished display, though the most essential feature, æsthetically, is uniformly disregarded, namely, that a carpet is made to be trodden upon. This is the great point from which every carpet designer should view his subject; let him put nothing down that a man would object to, or could not, tread upon. What does it serve us to study the theory of design, if we make no distinction between ceilings and carpets? We find here water-lilies floating in pretty pools, shady recesses, and overhanging branches, with pleasant little peeps of blue sky, or hillocks of flowers, and basket-loads of fruits, Rococo scrolls, or a spread of hippopotamus tusks; all strewed before us to be trodden upon. As well might a man counterfeit the bottomless pit, and expect people to walk into it, as think to attain the approval of men of taste by such designs as these. But neither is a pot-pourri from Italian ceilings the kind of thing that is required; what is good for a ceiling cannot be good for a floor, where a decoration is made with the slightest reference to the use of the two structures.

These discriminations may be considered as mere æsthetical niceties; they, are, however, important essentials of design, and may be made a valuable element in the cultivation of the mind, as well as the taste, if properly attended to.

The great feature required of a carpet is, that it express flatness; this was well done very generally by the ancient and middle-age mosaic or marquetry designs; and it is really not imposing any material limits to the subject if we exact this as a primary condition. Every species of foliage, or floriage, or even of fruit, may be rendered suitable by choosing the form only of the natural type, without any attempt at imitation of its actual appearance; its shadow rather than itself; in fact, a skiagram: all natural design that goes beyond the imitation of a natural floor is inadmissible for a carpet; these, however, we should soon exhaust, but conventional design never can be exhausted. There is besides something puerile in imitating a floor for a floor; we have a good floor already in our wooden boards, and our object is to decorate this in so tasteful a manner, that it shall suggest comfort and elegance, without giving offence to the sense or perception.

The oil-cloths exhibited by Hare & Co., of Bristol; and Barnes,* and Smith, and Baber, of London, show a far better perception of what is required for a floor than the carpets; there are, however, happily, some carpets which are of a very different character from those we have been referring to—as some of those manufactured by Gregory, Thomsons & Co., Kilmarnock; Henderson & Widnell, Lasswade;† Lapworth & Co., London; Blackmore Brothers, Wilton; Templeton & Co., Glasgow;‡ Crossley & Sons, Halifax; White, Son & Co., London;§ Dove & Co., Leeds; and Humphries and Sons; Kiteley; and Brinton & Sons, of Kidderminster; still many of these are on thoroughly wrong principles of design; the majority of them being mere reiterations of ceilings or walls, and crowded with flowers and scroll-work in high relief. Some are, of course, less objectionable than others, and compared with the average of this class of patterns, the following are distinguished for beauty of design:—An Axminster carpet, with interlaced tracery and scroll work, and flowers, by Lapworth and Co.;‖ the worked carpet, from a design by J. W. Papworth, exhibited by Her Majesty; two tracery and Louis Quatorze scroll patterns, by Watson, Bell¶ & Co.; a tasteful panel carpet, with Roman and Cinquecento scrolls and natural flowers, by Morant; another, somewhat similar, red in red and black, with Roman scroll-work of a magnificent character, by Templeton and Co.; and a more simple specimen, by Gregory, Thomsons and Co., from a design by J. Lawson; a magnificent Louis Quatorze pattern, by Jackson & Graham;** and a somewhat similar design, by Crossley & Sons. An extremely rich carpet of the same class is exhibited by the Royal Factory at Tournay; and the chief contribution of the Gobelins is likewise of the same description, containing much delicate work, but very much better fitted for a ceiling than for a floor, a judgment that might be justly passed upon most of these carpets, including also the large Windsor carpet, from Mr. Gruner's design.

There are designs of another character which appear to us more appropriate: as the beautiful carpet manufactured by Lapworth and Co. for Buckingham Palace;†† or the carpets in an Oriental taste manufactured by Blackmore Brothers, for Watson, Bell & Co., from designs by Messrs. Arbuthnot & Crabb; and if natural foliage or flowers are essential to some tastes, they should perhaps be rather dispersed with a mere studied carelessness, than in systematised groups, as in a diaper or trail, or spread over the surface as in the fern-pattern‡‡ manufactured by Henderson & Widnell, for Turberville, Smith & Co., from a design by Mr. E. T. Parris. The colouring of this last carpet is extremely good, the tints being the three tertiaries—russet, citrine, and olive; and no colours

* Engraved in Cat., p. 143. † Engraved in Cat., p. 44. ‡ Engraved in Cat., pp. 166-8. § Engraved in Cat., pp. 109, and 168. ‖ Engraved in Cat., pp. 62, 63.

* Engraved in Cat., p. 214. † Engraved in Cat., p. 107. ‡ Engraved in Cat., pp. 60, 163. § Engraved in Cat., p. 101. ‖ Engraved in Cat., p. 101. ¶ Engraved in Cat., pp. 70, 213. ** Engraved in Cat., p. 187. †† Engraved in Cat., p. 146. ‡‡ Engraved in Cat., p. 125.

could be more agreeable in themselves or more appropriate for a carpet, which should always be an accessory decoration, and aid in displaying the general furniture, rather than rival it, or, what is worse, destroy its effect by its own attractions. It would require gold and white, or something extremely rich and delicate as the prevailing tones of the furniture, to enable it to tolerate even some of the best of these carpets. If they are merely designed to be associated with crimson and gold, well and good; but this would amount to an admission that our upholsterers and manufacturers ignore the public and devote all their energies to the wealthy few, which would be both bad taste and bad policy at once. The real cause of their anomaly is simply and solely want of taste, the utter absence of propriety of design and critical judgment; making no distinction between a ceiling, a wall, or a floor. The convulsive movements of the fingers under a fit of epilepsy, have as much title to the credit of intelligent design as the pencillings of the hand that wanders over the paper uncontrolled by a cultivated taste.

IX.—*Ornament.*

Having now taken a general and, to some extent, detailed view of all the various branches of manufacture which more essentially depend upon ornamental design, we have yet a few remarks to make on the nature of ornament itself. Ornament is not a luxury, but, in a certain stage of the mind, an absolute necessity. When manufactures have attained a high mechanical perfection, or have completely met the necessities of the body, the energy that brought them to that perfection must either stagnate or be continued in a higher province—that of Taste; for there is a stage of cultivation when the mind must revolt at a mere crude utility. So it is a natural propensity to decorate or embellish whatever is useful or agreeable to us. But, just as there are mechanical laws which regulate all our efforts in pure uses, so there are laws of the mind which must regulate those æsthetical efforts expressed in the attempt at decoration or ornamental design.

There are two provinces of ornament, the *flat* and the *round;* in the flat we have a contrast of light and dark, in the round a contrast of light and shade; in both a variety of effect for the pure gratification of the sense of vision. In the first case a play of line is the main feature, in the second a play of masses; and colour may be an auxiliary to both, but it acts with far greater power in the flat, as it is entirely dependent upon light.

Ornament, therefore, is a system of contrasts; the object of study is the order of contrasts; the individual orders may vary to infinity, though the classes are limited; as right-line, or curved-line series, series of simple curves or clustered curves; series of mere lines or natural objects, as flowers, arranged in the orders of these different series. For example, the common scroll is a series of spirals to the right and left alternately; the Roman scroll is the acanthus plant, or brank-ursine, treated in this order of curved series.

Such a treatment of a plant is termed *conventional*, because it is not the natural order of the growth or development of the plant; where the exact imitation of the details and its own order of development are both observed, the treatment is *natural*, and an object so treated, independent of any application, is only a picture or model, not an ornament; to be an ornament it must be applied as an accessory decoration to something else.

The production and application of ornament are distinct processes, though they cannot be separated in applied design. A proper distinction between a picture or model and an ornament, is of the utmost importance to the designer, for the mere power of imitation of natural objects, and even their exact imitation, is perfectly compatible with the total ignorance of Ornamental Art; the great art of the designer is the selection and arrangement of his materials, not in their execution; there is a distinct *study of ornament*, wholly independent of the merely preliminary exercises of drawing, colouring, or modelling. A designer might produce a perfect arrangement of forms and colours, and yet show the grossest stupidity in its application.

Any picture, whatever the subject, which is composed upon principles of symmetry and contrast, becomes an ornament; and any ornamental design in which these two principles have been made subservient to imitation or natural arrangement, has departed from the province of ornament to that of mere imitative Art. And in all designs of this latter kind, where we have strict natural imitations applied to purposes of active use, to which the natural types can have no affinity whatever, notwithstanding our adherence to nature in little matters, we have committed a gross outrage upon her in great matters. What merit can we claim for our elaboration of fuchsias and tulips, if the only appropriation we can make of their delicate forms is to load them with heavy dishes of fruit or of trifle, burdens one hundred times more than enough to crush them in their natural state?

The artistic fault here committed, and the Exhibition affords many examples of it, is the using our imitations from nature as *principals* in the design, instead of mere accessory decorations, substituting the ornament itself for the thing to be ornamented: ornament is essentially the accessory to, and not the substitute of, the useful. Of course there are many natural objects which at once suggest certain uses, and we cannot be wrong if we elaborate these into such implements or vessels as their own very forms or natures may have spontaneously presented to the mind.

Every article of use has a certain size and character defined for it, by the very use it is destined for, and this may never be disregarded by the designer. It is in fact the indispensable skeleton of his design, and is wholly independent of ornament in its primary condition of a mere form of use. But it is upon this skeleton that the designer must bring his ornamental skill to bear, whether he use conventional ornament or natural, or both; and he is a poor designer if he can do nothing more than imitate a few sprigs or leaves wherewith to decorate it; he must give it character as well as beauty, and make it suggestive of something more than a cluster of weeds or flowers from the field, or this is mannerism indeed.

This naturalist, or, we may call it, horticultural school of ornament, has made rather inordinate progress of late, and unless at once contested by other styles, bids fair to constitute the characteristic mannerism of the Ornamental Art of the age; it seems alone to share the favour with Rococo in silver-work.

Natural floral ornament is a very beautiful kind of ornament, but it is but one kind; and an infinite variety of floral details, especially in the round, would have but a monotonous effect on the mind unless aided by Art,—by conventionality of arrangement. In no popular style of ornament have natural details ever yet prevailed; the details of all great styles are largely derived from nature, but for the most part conventionally treated, and theory as well as experience seems to indicate this as the true system.

In Egyptian, Greek, and Roman ornament, it is extremely rare to find any natural treatment of the details, that is, any mere imitation. The case is the same with Byzantine and Saracenic Art, and with the great styles of Italy in which all the most perfect schemes are purely conventional, or upon a strict geometrical basis.

Lorenzo Ghiberti has introduced exact natural imitations in his celebrated gates of the Baptistery of San Giovanni, at Florence, of which copies are exhibited by M. Barbédienne, but they are strictly accessory to a general plan, and symmetrically arranged, being neither negligently nor naturally disposed. They are bound in bunches or groups of various shapes and sizes, and disposed in harmony with the main compartments of the gate of which they are ornaments.

There can be no question that the motive of ornament is not the presentation of natural images to the mind, but the rendering the object ornamented as agreeable as possible to it; the details of decoration, therefore, should have no independent character of their own, but be kept purely subservient to beauty of effect. This technical limitation is quite compatible with the most complete symbolic or allegoric expression. Our symbols must be as amenable to the laws of symmetry and the general scheme of our design, as completely as the simplest detail derived from nature.

Symmetry is so important an element of decoration that there is no form or combination of forms whatever, that, when symmetrically contrasted or repeated, cannot be made subservient to beauty. We still use as our principal standards, the very details

adopted by the artists of Greece or Egypt three thousand years ago; not from their speciality of detail, but because it would be extremely difficult, if possible, to select others of a less decided individuality which would so well illustrate the principles of ornament—series and contrast: contrast of masses and contrast or harmony of lines.

There are few ordinary decorations for mouldings or borders, of which these ancient ornaments do not thoroughly express the principles, and there are no examples of them more happy in effect than such varieties as we find on the ancient monuments themselves; the moderns, even the best artists of the Renaissance, have never improved upon their Greek or Roman types, and all the most beautiful ornaments of the Cinquecento are but varieties of Roman standards—as the guilloche, the scroll, the anthemion, the echinus, the astragal, the fret or labyrinth, and the zigzag.

To examine these several ornaments as to their principles, we have in the zigzag the simplest example of a right line series; in the fret or labyrinth we have a more complicated example of right line variations; in the guilloche* varieties we have simple curved line series; in the scrolls, successions or alternations of complete curves in the place of a mere running curved line; and in the anthemions, or the varieties of what is commonly called the honeysuckle ornament, we have a third order of curved line series, namely successions or alternations of regular clusters of curves, the unit in this case being itself a succession of curves in a certain order of repetition; and lastly in the echinus or horse-chesnut,† and in the astragal and their variations, we have an alternation of round and sharp forms, giving a powerful contrast of light and shade, independent of a certain play of line.

Examining these ornaments, therefore, with reference to their principles, it is clear that, provided we keep these principles in sight, we may change the details at pleasure, whether symbolic or sensuous only, and thus produce that variety of effect so essential to the steady gratification of the eye: one ornament, in fact, suggests many. On the contrary, if we appreciate only the individual details of an ornament, a whole class or genus is represented by a single specimen, and our resources are reduced to the extremest poverty of expression. This has been actually the case as regards the genus of which the honeysuckle specimen is only a variety; instead of seizing the principle of this ornament, and treating almost any floral or vegetable, or even symbolic, form in that order of curved series, our architects have been engrossed by the details of an individual, and have acquired only one ornament in the place of thousands which must have suggested themselves, had the principle itself been grasped in the first instance instead of the details of only one of its illustrations. There is scarcely a weed in England that might not be treated, on the principle of the Greek anthemion, with nearly equal effect with the honeysuckle, which is only the nearest corresponding type of the ornament in Nature. The eye, however, does not admire the anthemion, the echinus, or the astragal, because they may be taken from the honeysuckle, the horse-chesnut, or the hucklebone, but because they are admirable details for the illustration of those symmetries and contrasts which, by the very nature of vision, must, by the gratification of this one of its senses, be delightful to the mind—just as harmonies and melodies delight it through another of its senses.

Where the mind views something more than the surface, or where the eyes are ancillary only to the mind, every natural object may be suggestive of some new essential form or combination of forms. The lotus, the lily, and the tulip, are but flowers to the many, but to the designer they must be something more; every individual is but an illustration of a principle, and it is to the constructive pr ciples of his natural models that the designer should give his att tion: by separating the minutiæ of individual development fr the essential strength and elegance of the construction, he becon a creator of new forms, and by this simple exercise of the natu faculty of contrivance, he combines with the beauty of nature ingenuity of Art.

All established styles of ornament are founded upon the sa principles, their differences are differences only of the materiali either the natural types or the artificial forms, the details of several standards which each taste more or less partially develop —some for one reason, some for another; all arising from sc one predominant sentiment. The peculiarity of Byzantine or ment, for instance, is owing to its prevailing Christian symbolis the peculiarity of the Saracenic, equally decided though oppo in its sentiment, is owing to its rigid exclusion of all imitatio natural types, whence its striking artificial character.

The time has perhaps now gone by, at least in Europe, for development of any particular or national style, and for this rea it is necessary to distinguish the various tastes that have prevai throughout past ages, and preserve them as distinct expressio or otherwise, by using indiscriminately all materials, we sho lose all expression, and the very essence of ornament, the convey of a distinct æsthetic expression, be utterly destroyed. For i objects in a room were of the same shape and details, howe beautiful these details might be, the mind would soon be utt disgusted. This is, however, exactly what must happen on a la scale; if all our decoration is to degenerate into a uniform mixt of all elements, nothing will be beautiful, for nothing will pres a new or varied image to the mind.

It is under this impression that we have undertaken to ana the various ornamental expressions, in this unexampled collec of the world's industry, to place them distinctly before our ma facturers, in order that they may make their own uses of th towards the cultivation of pure and rational individualitie design, which will not only add to their own material prospe but will also largely contribute towards the general elevatio the social standard.

* Called by the Greeks Speira, signifying, literally, a plat or coil, which all the early guilloches are.

† The echinus, commonly called the egg and tongue, or the egg and dart, or sometimes the ovolo; it is derived from the horse-chesnut, called echinus by the Greeks.

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