

## Swedish Textiles

### THE TEXTILE ARTS IN SWEDEN. BY AXEL TALLBERG.

THE present-day textile arts of Sweden may justly boast of a very imposing and highly interesting pedigree—not so much, perhaps, if we compare their history with that of the similar arts flourishing in the Continental art-centres in times gone by. Grand artistic design and laborious composition are in the arts of Ultima Thule admirably substituted by the now properly recognised and equally important qualities of noble simplicity in form and colour.

The textile home arts of Sweden are, indeed, of very great antiquity, and that the past was capable of turning out charming works is made eminently manifest by the examples still existing in our public and private collections.

The evolution of design and creative ideas seems, however, to have been remarkably slow during many centuries. The old time honoured patterns have been used over and over



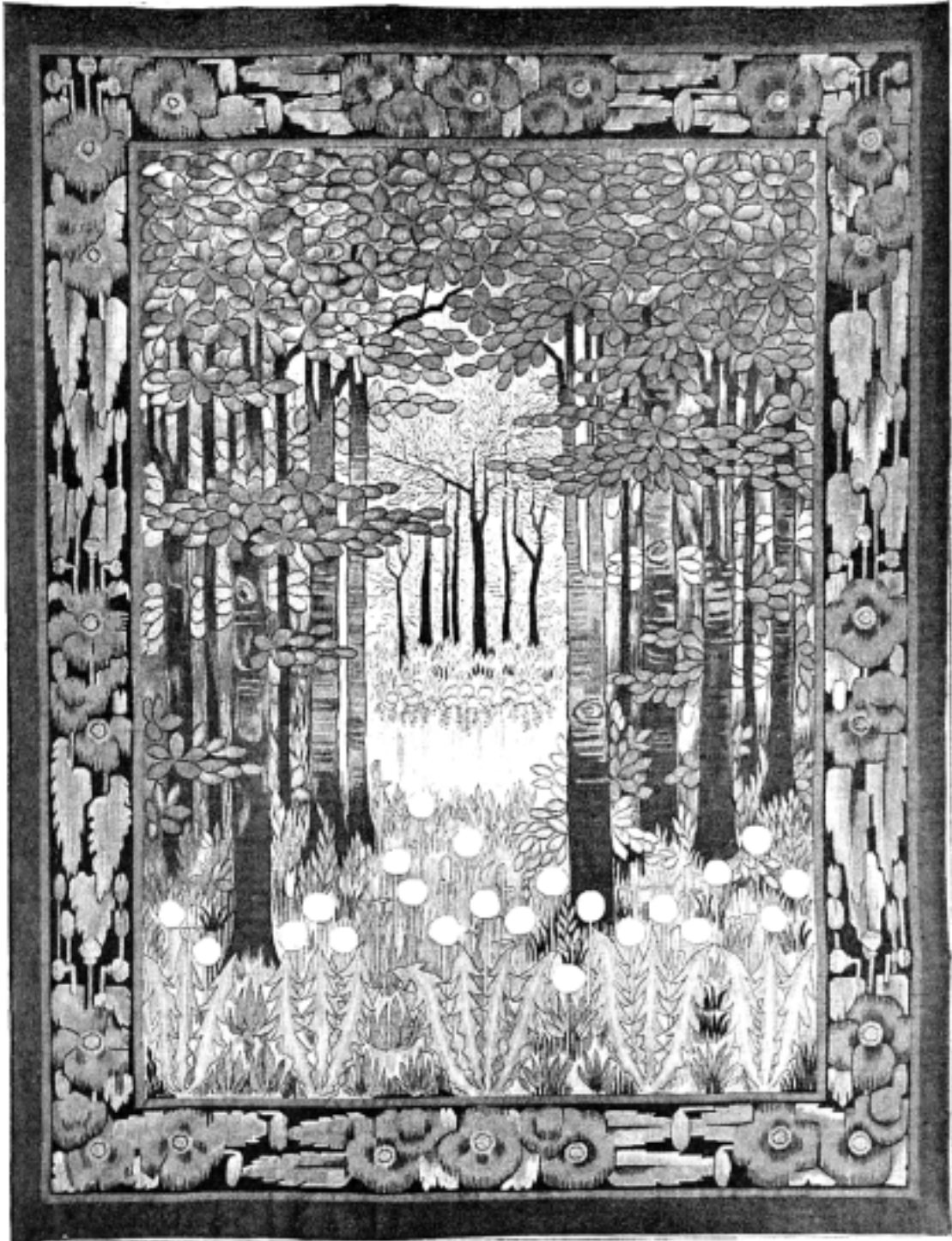
COVER

BY H. STARCK



TABLE-COVER

BY ANNIE FRYKHOLM



TAPESTRY. BY  
MARIA SJÖSTROM

## Swedish Textiles



SOFA AND TAPESTRY  
GOBELIN WEB

DESIGNED BY F. LONNGREN  
EXECUTED BY GJOBELS CO

again without much variation. The different counties of Sweden have in this respect, as well as in many others, stubbornly held to their ancestors' ideas in regard to form, colours, and composition—all greatly cherished and venerated heirlooms, inherited through many generations. But this, in some respects, unfortunate circumstance is compensated for by the enormous wealth of types and

forms that constitute these heirlooms. Not only every county, but every parish, may quite truthfully be said to offer the student decided differences in artistic conceptions and ideas of rendering, a difference that is made distinctly prominent by textile patterns from various parts of the country.

It is hard to understand how these distinct types could have been so guardedly preserved from any particular influence upon each other century after century, and it is surprising to find that at least the rural parts of Sweden still maintain them in pure state and use them in their daily textile labours.

The modern textile art workers of Sweden have turned this perhaps quite unique circumstance to good by a skilful and observant use of the textile material that is now collected from all

corners of the country, and upon this basis they have managed to turn out work in which, notwithstanding the great variety of forms and colours which have had to be selected and put together, the national type has been eminently preserved.

From this grand national type our textile workers have, during these latter years, and with great



TAPESTRY

BY GUNNAR WENNERBERG



EMBROIDERIES BY NILS  
LUNDSTROM AND A. FRYKHOLM

## Swedish Textiles



EMBROIDERED CUSHION

DESIGNED BY F. LONNGREN  
EXECUTED BY GJOBELS CO.

the country, all with the common object of furthering these charming arts, which always brighten and gladden our homes.

The chief factor in regard to the above-mentioned national type of modern Swedish textiles, still much practised nearly everywhere in the country, is doubtless the existence of the now world-famed Northern Museum at Stockholm, which possesses by far the most extensive collection of patterns and materials of antique Swedish and Norwegian textiles in the world. This collection may safely be said to have given motives to the greater part of the new designs belonging

to the national types in our modern textiles. success, directed their attention to modern conceptions and new ideas. Our technical schools have all eagerly taken up this highly important matter, and many artists of repute have devoted their splendid ability to the recent movements which have brought the world's textile arts to the magnificent standard of the present day.

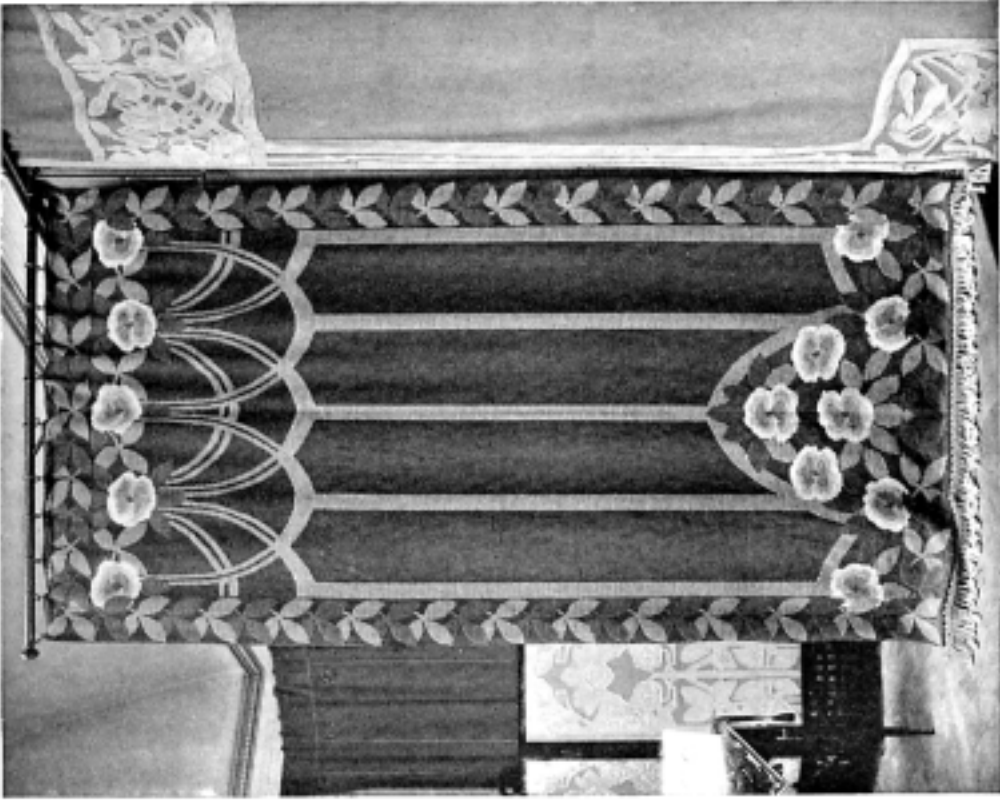
The result of these encouraging exertions has, indeed, been very interesting. We have now in Sweden every year a great number of exhibitions of the textile and other art-industrial branches of our craft-and home-*"slöjd"* not only in Stockholm and the larger towns, but even in the smaller ones, and not seldom in out-of-the-way country villages. The women of Sweden, old and young, are making intelligent and skilful use of the modern designs provided by our artists and our schools, and a great number of societies have, in addition to the many that already before existed, constituted themselves in all parts of

The most important of the societies working to the benefit of textile-*"slöjds"* are, among the older ones, Svenska Slöjdföreningen and Handarbetets vänner. Svenska Slöjdföreningen has now been in active work for forty-five years, and counts about



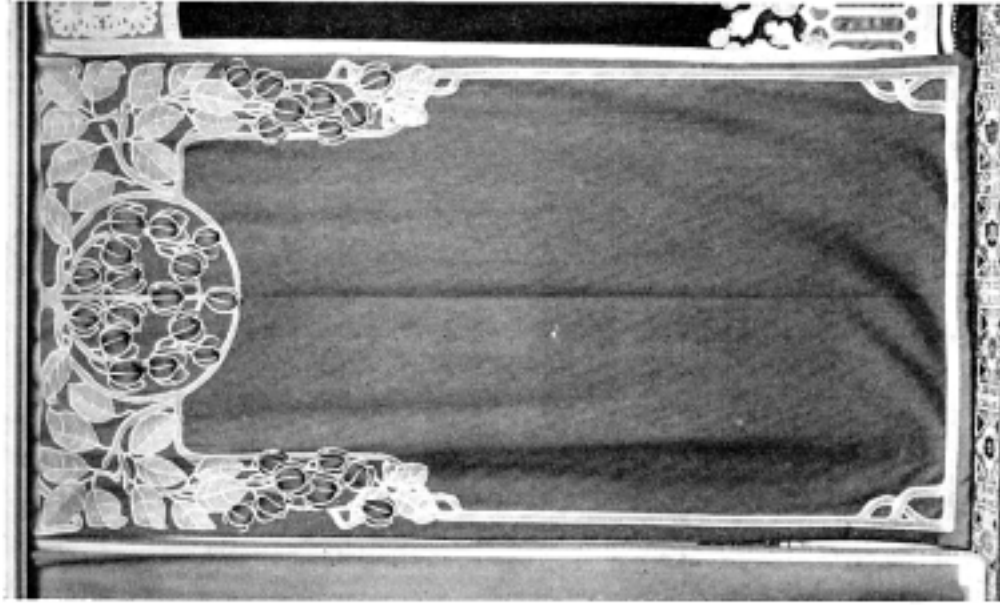
CUSHION

BY MRS. WESTMAN



PORTIÈRE

DESIGNED BY THYRA MATTON



PORTIÈRE

BY NILS LUNDSTROM



## Swedish Textiles



CUSHION

BY A. FRYKHOLM

one thousand paying members. The society enjoys a substantial and well-deserved support from the Government, and his Majesty the King of Sweden and Norway is its foremost honorary member and patron. This society has not exclusively devoted its efforts to the encouragement of home arts; it has very successfully endeavoured to bring refinement and artistic taste into handiwork and crafts. The very frequent exhibitions of the society are as interesting as they are instructive. Each of these exhibitions comprises generally but one branch, and often only one section of a branch or subject belonging to the sphere of art that forms the object of the society's exertions. They are now and then varied by excellent shows of antique works in suitable lines, either retrospective or else dealing with some particular period in the history of artistic handicrafts.

But perhaps the greatest and most important work done by this society towards progressive refinement in home arts and crafts is to be found in the many instructive publications it continually issues. These publications consist of books, pamphlets, designs, and drawings which are given away and forwarded to all those who apply for them. The society has in this matter even gone so far as to keep a register of

past into the safe and desirable channels that lead to future perfection.

The present energetic manager and secretary of the society, Dr. Folcker, is one of our very best authorities upon the subject of home arts and industries, a fact which is made quite evident by the splendid manner in which he manages the editing of the society's interesting and instructive publications.

The second society, Handarbetets vänner, became incorporated in 1874, chiefly under the initiative of some ladies who had become greatly impressed by the outspoken opinion of the famous art connoisseur Jakob Falke at the Vienna Exhibition in 1872. After having absolutely condemned the home-arts as then practised by European women, he said that "The only works of the



WALLHANGING

BY NILS LUNDSTROM

kind in question that possessed some tendency to true artistic vitality and independence were some Swedish domestic embroideries, the designs of which were based upon native patterns and executed in the time-honoured national manner."

This was encouragement enough, and the society was accordingly started. During the thirty years now passed since then, it has done a very great deal of good in the proper direction. The society has exclusively devoted itself and its exertions towards a desirable development of women's art-work and home-handicraft. It has nearly one thousand paying members, mostly women, who have a right to the free loan of the society's patterns and designs, and free admission to all exhibitions held by the society. Even this society is partly supported by Government grants.

The most important of the younger societies of this class is doubtless Föreningen för Svensk Hemslöjd, which was established in 1899, and has for its chief object to support and encourage the home-industries, particularly the art-slöjds, of the home against the exterminating influence of modern machine-made goods. It has now nearly seven hundred paying members, and is supported not only by the Government, but also by nearly all county councils in the kingdom. The chairman of its council is the clever painter, H.R.H. Prince Eugen.

The most important concern of this description

in Stockholm is probably Nordiska Kompaniets Textil-Afdelning Thyra Grafström, which was started in 1897; and it may justly be said that it has since then, under the clever direction of Mrs. Grafström, turned out a great number of most charming works.

Another large firm is Gjöbel's, founded in 1885. The artistic adviser of this concern is Mr. A. Wallander, who has during many years worked in that responsible capacity, and always with admirable results. A great number of the works executed by this firm have been designed by him.

In addition to these business concerns, it may be mentioned that two of the great societies spoken of have extensive showrooms of their own, where excellent textile works, executed in the homes or in the schools, may be inspected by intending buyers. The profits of the sales effected by these naturally go, at least in part, to the funds of the respective societies.