

ORIENTAL
CARPETS
RUNNERS AND RUGS
AND SOME JACQUARD
REPRODUCTIONS



ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
SOHO SQUARE LONDON MCMX

Plate I

PLATE I

ORIENTAL "KING RUG"

"Shot with a thousand hues"

SAPPHO

Wharton's Translation

Size 6-6 × 4-1

WARP—10 knots to the inch

WEFT—10 knots to the inch

100 KNOTS TO THE SQUARE INCH

(See Analysis)



TO MY WIFE

“All the Arts affecting Culture (i.e. the Fine Arts) have a certain common bond, and are connected by a certain blood relationship with one another.”—CICERO.

ALLEGORY



MEDEA AND JASON

By kind permission of the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*

(See Analysis)

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THE MUSJID-I-SHAH, ISPAHAN

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ORIENTAL CARPETS RUNNERS AND RUGS AND SOME JACQUARD REPRODUCTIONS

CHAPTER I

ALLEGORY

Affirmer que la Toison d'or a été dès son origine et est encore aujourd'hui "un des plus illustres ordres de chevalerie," serait avancer une chose banale, mais montrer l'influence considérable et bienfaisante que cette noble institution a exercée dans le domaine religieux, moral, politique et artistique, n'est pas sans offrir un grand intérêt et une réelle utilité.—Baron H. KERVYN DE LETTENHOVE.

Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in 1429, at his marriage, instituted the military order of *Toison d'or* or "Golden Fleece"; it was said on account of the profit he made by wool. . . . At the end of the collar of the order hung a Golden Fleece, with this device, *Pretium non vile laborum*.—*Haydn's Dictionary of Dates*.

ACCORDING to the generally accepted records, a little over a thousand years elapsed after the Deluge before Jason conducted the Argonautic expedition, the first commercial venture by sea of which we have a narrative; and it is my purpose to deal with this in the manner sanctioned by Lord Bacon in the thirteenth chapter of the second book of his *Advancement of Learning*, in which he says:

"Poetry is a kind of learning generally confined to the measure of words, but otherwise extremely licentious, and truly belonging to the imagination, which, being unrestrained by laws, may make what unnatural mixtures and separations it pleases."

After dividing poetry into Narrative, Dramatic, and Allegorical, Lord Bacon proceeds to analyse the divisions, and, turning particular attention to the third, writes: "But allegorical poetry excels the others, and appears a solemn sacred thing, which religion itself generally makes use of, to preserve an intercourse between divine and human things; yet this, also, is corrupted by a levity and indulgence of genius towards allegory. Its use is ambiguous, and made to serve contrary purposes; for it envelops as well as

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illustrates,—the first seeming to endeavour at an art of concealment, and the other at a method of instructing, much used by the ancients. For when the discoveries and conclusions of reason, though now common, were new, and first known, the human capacity could scarce admit them in their subtile state, or till they were brought nearer to sense, by such kind of imagery and examples; whence ancient times are full of their fables, their allegories, and their similes. From this source arise the symbol of Pythagoras, the enigmas of Sphinx, and the fables of Aesop. Nay, the apophthegms of the ancient sages were usually demonstrated by similitudes. And as hieroglyphics preceded letters, so parables preceded arguments; and the force of parables ever was and will be great, as being clearer than arguments, and more apposite than real examples.

“The other use of allegorical poetry is to envelop things, whose dignity deserves a veil; as when the secrets and mysteries of religion, policy, and philosophy, are wrapped up in fables and parables. But though some may doubt whether there be any mystical sense concealed in the ancient fables of the poets, we cannot but think there is a latent mystery intended in some of them: for we do not, therefore, judge contemptibly of them, because they are commonly left to children and grammarians; but as the writings that relate these fables are, next to the sacred ones, the most ancient, and the fables themselves much older still, being not delivered as the inventions of the writers, but as things before believed and received, they appear like a soft whisper from the traditions of more ancient nations, conveyed through the flutes of the Grecians. But all hitherto attempted towards the interpretation of these parables proving unsatisfactory to us, as having proceeded from men of but commonplace learning, we set down the philosophy of ancient fables as the only deficiency in poetry. But lest any person should imagine that any of these deficiencies are rather notional than real, and that we, like augurs, only measure countries in our mind, and know not how to invade them, we will proceed to subjoin examples of the work we recommend. These shall be three in number—one taken from natural philosophy, one from politics, and another from morals.”

This lengthy extract has appeared to me to be permissible not only on account of the interest attaching to all the writings of the great author, but also because the passage quoted has intimate bearing upon the point of view from which I have approached the subject of this book. Absolute proof and fact with regard to any object of human activity in remote ages are unobtainable as far

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as investigation has yet gone ; but reasonable deductions can be made from written records and the survival of articles in common use, particularly such as are of artistic merit, which from their nature and value would naturally call for greater care in their preservation. As Lord Bacon particularly mentions, it is in fables that the very earliest records have to be sought, and it may be taken for granted that the most trifling example of allegory has its counterpart in earlier ages—actual occurrences which in some form or other have drifted down the world of time until seized upon by some curious or intelligent person, and, with mixture of fact and fiction, have become crystallized in permanent literary form.

Lord Bacon interprets at some length the fables of “Pan, or Nature. Explained of Natural Philosophy” ; “Perseus, or War. Explained of the Preparation and Conduct necessary to War” ; and “Dionysus, or Bacchus. Explained of the Passions.”

It seems strange that, having in the concluding chapter of the *Advancement of Learning* cited “The History of Arts; or, nature formed and wrought by human industry,” and “The Doctrine of Business; or, books upon all kinds of civil employments, arts, trades, etc.,” as deficiencies of knowledge “pointed out in the preceding work, to be supplied by posterity,” Lord Bacon should not have pursued his subject further, and have added Jason to his interpretations, as the demigod of Commerce, ranking in importance with the best-known types recorded in mythology. He may have considered the application of this fable so obvious that it should be left to the tender mercies of one of “commonplace learning” ; which leaves the field open for the modest effort which follows.

It is to be noted that by the period of the Argonautic expedition the mind of man would have become sufficiently cognizant of the powers with which human intelligence and exceptional physical strength could work wonders such as had previously been attributed to the gods of Olympus, and that in consequence there had arisen a race of demigods in whom supernatural powers were leavened with an air of human reality, which accounts for such types as Hercules, son of Jupiter and Alcmena ; Perseus, son of Jupiter and Danaë ; Theseus, son of Aegeus and Aethra ; Jason, son of Aeson and Alcimede ; and Achilles, son of Peleus and Thetis.

The recent exhibition at Bruges of relics connected with the ancient and noble order of the Golden Fleece has given a prominence to Jason which accords well with my design of following out the natural interpretation of the fable.

Jason’s parentage has already been referred to : so it is only

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necessary to mention that he was born at Iolchos in Thessaly, and that at the time of his birth it was necessary to conceal him from his uncle Pelias, who had usurped his father's kingdom, and had every reason for wishing to destroy one with whom he would have to deal when his legitimate right to the throne became known in course of time. In order to be concealed, and fitted for the position which the chances of time and life might cause him to fill, Jason was placed under the care of the learned Centaur Chiron, who had previously educated Hercules, and was later to educate Achilles.

When time warranted the revelation, Chiron informed Jason of the injustice his parents and himself had suffered from Pelias ; and, with an admonition to reserve vengeance for the wrongs endured, the pupil was sent forth upon the errand which in various forms has become one of the most striking and typical of fables.

After his encounter with Juno in the guise of an old woman—in which Jason, remembering Chiron's injunction to afford all the help he could to the human race, lost one of his golden sandals while carrying her across a stream, after which, as a reward, he received the promise of her protection and support—Jason at length arrived in his native city, and came under the notice of his uncle Pelias, whom he found celebrating a festival in honour of the immortal gods. Pelias recognized Jason from the loss of his sandal, which recalled an oracle warning him of danger to arise from such a stranger. A scheme of ultimate profit, accompanied by the probable removal of a dangerous aspirant to the throne, occurred to him. Concealing alarm, Pelias invited Jason to the banquet prepared for the occasion, and, probably with cajolery and flattery, lulled to sleep the resentment and suspicion with which Jason must have at first approached his uncle and those over whom he ruled.

Forsaking the conventional lines of allegory, we may continue the story with as near an approach to what probably gave rise to the fable as deduction and imagination will permit in dealing with facts which the lapse of over three thousand years has relegated to the region of mythological romance. In regarding what follows from this point of view, it is well to remember that recent discoveries have given some colour of reality to the Trojan War, and to the feats of arms recorded by Homer, which have handed down to us a type of godlike Hero, who, under the names of Achilles, Hector, Ajax, Diomed, Ulysses, and others, has given inspiration to historical personages, of whom Alexander the Great and Napoleon are instantly-occurring examples.

It is probable that in a comparatively small kingdom such as

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Thessaly, facilities for obtaining the raw material of fabrics would be poor ; while it is equally possible that individually there might be some capacity for actually weaving all that was necessary for clothing, and providing floor coverings and hangings for domestic use, and for greater occasions of festivity, such as happened on the arrival of Jason. The possibility of making use of Jason for obtaining the high grade of wool required in fine art work (of which, perhaps, in the shape of presents from neighbouring kingdoms, Pelias was sufficiently familiar), and of causing his death in the event of failure, probably suggested to the usurper the relation of the story of the Golden Fleece, which, under the influence of the romance of the tale and the wine with which he was doubtless lavishly supplied, Jason in full assembly swore to go in quest of.

There is nothing remarkable in the progress of the story from this point, if one considers how the tales of the adventurers of the Elizabethan age, such as the voyages of Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Raleigh, and Humphrey Gilbert, would have read in the mythical age now under consideration, with the full use of the hyperbole which in transmission from pen to pen gathers the embroidery overlapping and almost hiding the plain texture of the fabric.

In plain everyday language, the golden-fleeced ram given to King Athamas by Neptune resolves itself into the capture by sea of a ram of superior breed from some coast kingdom, with the desire of improving the stock of the sheep which experience had proved incapable of yielding wool to bear comparison, in the dyed and woven fabric, with specimens of the product of other nations, which, in the ordinary course of interchange of presents or commodities, would demonstrate the superiority coveted.

With the well-known antipathy of well-bred animals to mate out of their class, the ram sought for with such pains and risk proved useless for the particular purpose for which it was procured ; whereupon it was appropriately housed, and treated with the consideration due to its merits.

The story of the discarded wife Nephele, and the wicked step-mother Ino, who, having children of her own, had the strongest motives for degrading her old rival and maltreating her children, Phryxus and Helle, if not destroying them, is sufficiently familiar. The story runs that Nephele was placed in special charge of the golden-fleeced ram, from whom she received the affection that animals usually bestow upon those who feed them.

The time came when the owner of the ravished ram found his opportunity to recover the valuable animal ; and in doing so, on the

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occasion of a sacrifice to the gods, in which, at the instigation of Ino, the victims were the innocent children of Nephele, he was overcome by pity, and probably touched by the instinctive attachment of the ram to the children, who also were borne off to the waiting ships ; and without delay the return home was begun.

The christening of the Hellespont is too picturesque to be ignored. This probably resolves itself into Helle, in her sadness at being parted from her mother, and overcome by the unaccustomed motion, and the sight of the waves, carrying out a desire felt by many a bad sea-traveller, and casting herself into the sea. Fear of pursuit would prevent any endeavour to save her : so the romance was completed in the only possible way, for a rescue would leave the tale still to be told.

Phryxus, as a young man of superior birth, would naturally be received with consideration by King Aetes on his arrival at Colchis with the ram, the recovery of which would be sufficient cause for jubilation to remove any rancour left from the rape of the ram, especially when the tale of his persecution at the hands of his step-mother became known. What here gives colour to the probability that it was fear of commercial rivalry which induced King Aetes to risk his men and money in endeavouring to recover an animal which might have improved his rival's flocks to the extent of a serious competition, is that in allowing Phryxus to sacrifice the ram as a thank-offering for his safety under such trying conditions he clearly showed that the ram was only one of many, among which careful breeding had resulted in a grade of wool which gave its possessors unlimited advantages over all engaged in the same industry.

King Aetes would probably be shrewd enough (in order to disarm further attempts upon his flocks) to suspend the fleece upon a carved emblematic wooden pillar at the entrance of a defile leading to the plains upon which his sheep pastured, thereby conveying to all beholders the impression that the fleece was unique ; the difficulty of even obtaining a sight of it would emphasize the tales told of the hidden dangers which would accompany any endeavour to obtain possession of it.

We now return to Jason, to whom the tale told the previous day would, in his sober moments, convey a real impression of what he had undertaken, and it is natural enough that he should seek the guidance of the deity whose manifestation to him when crossing the stream probably amounted to his own life, and that of the old woman he carried, being saved from the stream in a manner

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which from its danger savoured of the supernatural. He consulted his divinity, and obtained a supply of timber from her shrine, which included a specially choice piece of wood for the figurehead, in its carving, according to the criticism of to-day, a "speaking likeness"; and, his ship finished, Jason bethought him of the chosen friends and companions upon whom he relied to form the leaders of the crew with whom he would doubtless be readily furnished through the agency of Pelias, who is not likely to have thrown any obstacle in the way of his promptly setting forth upon his dangerous errand.

The readiness with which bold spirits press forward to engage in any adventure giving scope for strength and talents, especially when accompanied by the promise of something tangible in the shape of spoil, or certain results of a business nature, probably left Jason with the necessity of selection, rather than with any doubts as to securing the full support necessary for his enterprise; and it is not surprising to find amongst the names of his chosen friends and companions Hercules, Castor, Pollux, Peleus, Admetus, Theseus, Orpheus, and others whose enumeration has no bearing on the narrative.

The usual prayer was offered up for favourable winds, and the general smoothness of the voyage would naturally lead to the assumption that the prayer had been duly answered, and that the ship was under the direct patronage of Aeolus, god of the winds.

The voyagers had occasion many times to land for the purpose of obtaining food and supplies; and with the nature of their quest obvious from the size and equipment of the ship, and the warlike character of the leading members of the crew, it is not surprising to read in the fable that every stop of the sort was the occasion of some disaster.

On one occasion Hercules landed with his friend Hylas, a beautiful youth, ostensibly to cut wood for new oars; but it is not improbable that Hercules, disgusted with the monotony of the journey and the lack of adventures, had determined to return home if opportunity offered; and the loss of his young friend, perhaps from his finding superior attractions in the maidens of the country they landed in, would be sufficient to make him forsake his companions, and, with little of the hero, turn his footsteps homeward, alone, and with grief and disappointment in his heart.

It is only fair to Hercules to record another version of the circumstances amid which he was deprived of the glory accompanying the eventually successful expedition. In writing of the Super-Men of the period, Aristotle says (Welldon's translation): "It will

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be a wrong to them to treat them as worthy of mere equality when they are so vastly superior in virtue and political capacity, for any person so exceptional may well be compared to a deity upon the earth. And from this it clearly follows that legislation can be applicable to none but those who are equals in race and capacity ; while for persons so exceptional there is no law, as they are a law in themselves. For any attempt to legislate for them would be ridiculous ; they would probably make the same reply as did the lions in Antisthenes's story to the declamation of the hares when they demanded universal equality. It is for the same reason that democratical States make use of Ostracism. As it is these States which are supposed to aspire to equality above all things, the common practice was to ostracize and so remove from the State for definite periods all whose wealth or *clientèle* or other political strength of any kind gave them an air of superior power. Such too according to the fable was the reason why the Argonauts left Heracles in the lurch, as the ship Argo would not convey him with his comrades because he was so much more powerful than the rest of the crew."

The first important event in the voyage which gave Jason an opportunity of exercising his power in behalf of humanity occurred on the occasion of his visit to the blind King of Thrace, with whom, probably, he wished and expected to have business negotiations. He found the poor old man's life embittered by the Harpies, or monopolist contractors, to whom he had most likely farmed out the principal products of his kingdom, with the usual result that abuses arose in controlling the small producers, and that the proceeds of harsh and unjust measures against the inhabitants (to squeeze the uttermost farthing out of their bargain) caused an impoverishment and bitterness of feeling among his subjects which at last arrived at such a pitch that, with the loss of general revenues, even his own household was pinched, and the exactions of the monopolists, and the constant murmuring and open complaints of the outraged populace, left the poor king no peace.

Jason undoubtedly placed matters upon a proper business footing, with the permission of King Phineus, and with the advice and assistance of the business heads in his company ; and, the two sons of Boreas being allowed to take strong measures in reforming the abuses on all sides, the monopolists were eventually driven away, and, as a small compensation for their losses, permitted to settle in the Strophades Islands, where they undertook to remain.

In the meantime Jason proceeded on his way, which would lead to the assumption that he recognized the necessity of leaving Zetes

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and Calais in charge of the blind king's affairs, with the wise prevision that it is of no use introducing reforms if steps are not taken to ensure their continuance. Soon after leaving Thrace, the Argonauts were attacked by brazen-feathered birds, which rained sharp plumage on them and wounded several. This is a suggestive way of conveying the probable fact that in crushing the monopolists and effecting reforms Jason had incurred the hatred and animosity of the smaller men who had battered on the remains of the carcass from which the stronger men had first taken their full share. A reformer is seldom popular, and it is impossible to sweep away an old and bad order of things without putting a stop to minor practices with the major, which, while perhaps only the fringes of a bad system, must nevertheless go if the greater reform is to be effectually carried out. Unfortunately, the innocent must often suffer with the guilty, who very often are made use of in conveying an impression of injustice and oppression which readily takes the ears of those who, not having suffered themselves, are officious in making the best use of what may by chance eventually touch their own interests.

Thus the brazen feathers of malicious accusation and garbled fact, freely mixed with fiction, pursued the reformers, some of whom had perhaps in their zeal given an excuse for the assaults, and were in consequence wounded. Jason, recognizing that ordinary weapons were of no avail against such insidious attacks, retaliated in kind. Magnifying the commercial influence he had already gained, and had prospects of speedily adding to, by means of inducements of some countenance from his own stronger organization, and more likely still by threats of unbridled competition, he at last stifled the attacks, and sailed onwards to further dangers and triumphs.

The next difficulty the adventurers had to overcome had a more perilous aspect. To arrive at their destination, their ship had to pass what might well be described as "Hell's Gates," opposing islands called the Symplegades, which, in the pleasantly suggestive language of fable, continually clashed together, crushing all objects which attempted to pass between them.

This allegory instantly suggests a guarded route of the sea, formed by nature, to be passed in order to avoid a much longer way round, which would ruin the results of any commercial expedition. The Suez Canal, or such a work as the Panama Canal, will illustrate the power which two neighbouring and independent petty island kingdoms could exercise if they worked with the harmony of "pooled interests," in which it would be to the benefit of both

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parties to exercise in the fullest measure the advantages given them by their isolation and natural position. Port dues ; the extremest limits of a specially designed protective system ; and the compulsory purchase of provisions and supplies at extortionate prices—these would sufficiently cripple the resources of any ordinary expedition, and one can well imagine the joy with which the conspiring throttlers of trade would behold the approach of such a promising object of plunder as the good ship *Argo*.

It is probable that before undertaking his journey Jason made inquiries into all matters likely to affect his undertaking, and willing victims would be ready not only to afford information as to what was likely to result from the necessary passage through the strait, but also to suggest the best means of accomplishing it successfully.

Shrewd heads would not be wanting among the voyagers, warned in time by those in the best position to guess at the remedy, to plan a device securing their own exemption from illegal taxation and extortion, and also to prevent the abuse from arising in future ; for it must not be forgotten that Jason's revered tutor Chiron had, while bidding him remember his vengeance against Pelias, exhorted him to use his best efforts in behalf of the human race at large ; this part of Jason's operations well illustrates the adage, "Live and let live," which in the long run Chiron was wise enough to foresee as the best means of securing fortune for himself, while retaining the goodwill of friends and even competitors.

By means of a trifling but designedly attractive preliminary negotiation, Jason brought the two island pirates together, and, taking the opportunity of interviewing each of them separately, while the several important members of his company flattered the other and distracted attention from what was progressing, he, with counter propositions, and an undertaking to pay the full exactions due to both, to each one separately, finally, at the expense of a small percentage of the expected charges, equivalent to the "tail-feathers" of the fabled experimental dove, sent both the partners off to their respective islands, probably on the best of terms with each other, and the voyagers especially ; each, moreover, be it noted, persuaded that the other would receive the wished-for dues before the vessel proceeded on its way.

His plans having thus been carefully laid, Jason would lose no time next morning in getting well under weigh before any suggestion of trickery could arouse the suspicions of either party, the separating sea obviously preventing ease of communication without the cognizance of the ship's crew. It is quite possible that the early start of the

Plate II

PLATE II
SHAH ABBAS DEVICE

JACQUARD CARPET DESIGN

Displaying the Shah Abbas device, resting
upon a background of the characteristic
“Herati” design

(See Analysis)



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Argo would at first be with the satisfied and friendly goodwill of the highwaymen, who, having taken full toll, are politely ready to restore some trifle of personal remembrance, and even on occasion invite their victims to a parting feast, or to the pleasures of an impromptu dance.

The unstudied speed with which the *Argo* would at last endeavour to get free to the open sea would doubtless cause sudden suspicion; the full power at the command of both islands would be used to meet the ship at the most advantageous point, and without doubt the combined forces would strain every nerve, which defeated purpose had set on edge, to intercept the *Argo* and share the plunder between them.

Explanations after the event are seldom satisfactory, and the obvious interest which both parties would have to conceal any financial benefit which might be supposed to have arisen from their separate negotiations would permanently sow the seeds of doubt, and thenceforward the staunch friends, in their mutual robberies, the "Protective Trust," would be transformed into two separate concerns, in which, with a desire on either side to exact what could be obtained from each passing ship, the necessity of not throwing the whole results into the hands of whichever would offer the best terms would effect what straightforward competition does nowadays—that is to say, reduce the dues to a minimum, which naturally acts in the direction of the greatest good to the greatest number.

Fable relates that the Symplegades, accustomed to crush passing ships, after the failure to treat the *Argo* similarly, lost their capacity for doing harm, and remained anchored by the entrance to the Bosphorus; this clearly means that, their "teeth having been drawn," and any possibility of their again acting in harmony being out of the question, the operations of the late allies in future would not be such as to interfere with the free interchange of commercial products between friendly ports; in fact, a species of Free Trade supplanted the old system of Prohibitive Tariffs.

The adventure of the Symplegades, and its successful issue, left Jason and his companions free to go on with the more important purpose of their voyage. Although they had innumerable other adventures, great and small, nothing worth recording happened to disturb them, or to delay further their arrival at the kingdom of Colchis. There at last Jason came face to face with King Aetes, who, with his son Absyrtus and his daughter Medea—warned of the approach of the *Argo*, and doubtless also of its importance, as shown

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by its unusual size—had awaited their arrival surrounded with the state appertaining to the extent of his domain.

Jason, in the knowledge of his royal birth, and probably flushed by the success which had attended his voyage, made himself known to Aetes, who received him with the consideration due to his rank, and extended welcome and hospitality to his noble companions and the ship's crew ; while it is probable that, knowing the circumstances connected with his recapture of the golden-fleeced ram, and the fate of the son of King Athamas, he awaited the announcement of Jason's errand with the trepidation always present in a guilty conscience.

Without wasting time or words, Jason boldly proclaimed his quest of the Golden Fleece, and taxed King Aetes with the murder of Phryxus, whom, indeed, upon his obtaining a position of some importance in the kingdom, Aetes had foully caused to be murdered, with the intention not only of removing a possible rival, but also of getting rid of the sole alien witness of the recaptured ram, and the fact of its forming one only of a flock, the wool from which had raised his kingdom to the high position due to the excellence of its products, resulting from the grade of wool used in their manufacture.

Concealing his fear and alarm, the King called upon his daughter Medea to explain to Jason what he would have to accomplish in order to obtain possession of the Fleece. This she did with her heart already aroused by love for the youth, whose grace of form and feature, bold demeanour, and firmness of purpose had instantly touched her affections. The tale of love at first sight has often led to success in similar enterprises, and the effect produced upon Medea promised a happy issue to the adventure, which presumably at once occurred to the older heads in the party, and probably was not slow to inspire Jason with the double aim of securing the treasure he had come so far to seek, and to carry with him on his return the handsome wife whose knowledge of all the methods of rearing the sheep and dressing the wool would enable him to introduce improvements into his own manufactures, without the waste of time otherwise required in experiment before he could successfully handle the much finer material which was the first object of the expedition.

Displaying the chased gold and jewelled cups, armour, dye-stuffs, woven fabrics, and other produce of Thessaly which formed his cargo, and had been brought for the purpose of barter, Jason offered the whole contents of the ship, if need be, in exchange for selected rams and ewes from King Aetes' choicest stock, together with freemen and slaves whose familiarity with the processes of treatment

Allegory

would facilitate his reaping the benefits of his enterprise. Bargaining thus, Jason claimed friendship; adding, with the bold impetuosity of youth, and confidence in his own strength and the prestige and renown of his companions, that if his request did not meet with the compliance of the King he would strive to attain his ends by force.

Dissembling his wrath, and hoping to obtain more by diplomacy than it seemed worth while to risk by force, Aetes, confirming the terms set forth at his request by Medea, spoke fair words, and invited Jason and his companions to rest and refresh themselves, accompanying them to his palace, hard by. On entering the palace, Jason and his companions were astonished at the magnificence with which every detail of building and furnishing had been carried out. The lavishness of gold and silver inlaying; the pictured tapestry hangings; the rich floor-coverings, yielding softly to the feet—all spoke eloquently as to the wealth at the King's command, and the weighty nature of the secret which had conduced so largely to his prosperity, for it may be assumed that the generally diffused prosperity and accruing wealth which in 1429 induced the Good King Philip of Burgundy to do honour to the Hero of the Golden Fleece was equally manifest in the kingdom of Aetes, who could not fail to appreciate the importance of his staple industry, while he was equally determined to preserve the source of his wealth and power at all costs.

It is quite according to the methods of diplomacy that, before the King reminded Jason of what he would have to accomplish if he were to attain his end, a banquet should have been served, in which the best that he, the Sovereign, could command was placed before his guests, the wine-cup being assiduously plied, until the time came to explain more fully to Jason the nature of the conditions he had to fulfil before he could reconcile the various conflicting interests which surrounded the industry with a ring of vested complications—which, without doubt, were made the most of.

Medea—again at the King's request, which seems to imply his confidence in her complete mastery of the details to be explained—in the language of fable spoke of two brazen bulls, which had to be yoked together, and made to plough a barren stretch of land; after which the furrows had to be sown with serpents' fangs, and the resulting dragons overcome; all this had to be accomplished before access could be had to the dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece, the difficulties in the securing of which even exceeded what had already been pictured in the preliminary encounters. Translated

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into plain prose, the truth was that King Aeetes had farmed the entire industry—not only the supply of the wool, but also the actual manufacture in all its processes for all purposes—to two hard-headed business men, who, from the lucrative nature of the monopoly, had the best of reasons for not allowing any interloper to share their profits. The task of reconciling these interests was sufficiently dismaying. Besides, our hero had on his own initiative to persuade the freemen and slaves required for his purpose to forsake their homes, and, venturing upon the voyage with all its dangers, settle down in a strange land and practically begin life over again.

Approaching Jason at the dead of night with fear and trembling, Medea promised her help in the undertaking; whereupon Jason, with the gratitude for her assistance born of the love he already felt, promised to make her his wife, and carry her safely to his home in the event of their now mutual venture proving successful. This being arranged, and with urgent instructions to Jason that he should not make any move until he had heard that Medea had concluded the preliminary negotiations, Medea lost no time in adopting measures for securing the agreement of the two Trust magnates, and paving the way to securing the shepherds and artisans, without whom the difficulties of the undertaking far away from the facilities of accumulated experience would render the expedition abortive. Before leaving her promised husband she adjured him on his sacred word, and with the fear of their joint deaths, not to draw sword in his first trial, but to rely entirely upon his eloquence.

The trial was made next day in full audience, the King probably having fears of secret negotiation. Their agreement partly secured by the promises and blandishments of the King's daughter, the "Fermiers généraux" were already half-persuaded; and it may be assumed that by a judicious reference to the remoteness of the kingdom in which the industry would be practised, and the promise of interchange of commodities, and even perhaps some equivalent to the "royalties" of the present day, Jason contrived to persuade the rivals to join in permitting him to select a certain number of the choicest animals in the flock, and that, on the understanding that he was to exercise his own persuasions in dealing with the shepherds and weavers, they proceeded amicably with him to the quarters in which the body of men he had to deal with had been assembled to hear the propositions Jason had to make.

It is probable that the sight of their two tyrannical masters acting in harmony with Jason prepared the men for what was to follow; in addition to which, Medea, with her intimate knowledge

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of their weak spots, had primed them with assurances as to the advantages to be derived by listening to what the rich and powerful stranger had to say. The trial was doubtless severe for Jason, and exceeded in difficulty the effort he had already made, in which his own reputation and that of his chief companions would have full weight with men flattered by royal attention and solicitation.

The discussion was long, and wavered from side to side, weak and cunning men delaying the issue with the desire to have something more tangible than mere promises, before committing themselves to support their already half-convinced fellows. Jason without doubt exercised to the full his powers of persuasion, all the arts of the born orator, all the diplomacies of the trained politician. The issue would have been doubtful had not Medea been aware of the weaknesses of those standing in the way of his attaining his ends, and, seeing how things were going, taken means to put Jason in possession of facts intimately concerning the recalcitrant men, which up till then she had probably withheld in the hope of avoiding action repugnant to her feelings; it is possible that, though in the background while negotiations were proceeding, she heard sufficient from her own personal attendants to gather that Jason's difficulties arose more from misleading suggestions purposely made by Aetes, or those in his confidence and inspired by him, than from any real objection on the part of the workmen to transfer their allegiance. In fact, Medea detected subtle suggestion—perhaps the raking up of some old feud between the different classes of workmen—upon which King Aetes relied for thwarting Jason.

With this idea in her mind, she would have no scruples in making use of her knowledge; and it is probable that the fear of traitors in their midst, and ignorance as to what the results would be if further difficulties were caused, at length brought the last objector to terms; and Jason finally achieved the second step which led towards the bourne of his hopes.

Fable mentions that the brazen bulls were under the direct patronage of King Aetes himself, and that he saw that they were fed on the most succulent grasses, mixed with subtle herbs, which doubtless made them still more amenable to the wishes of their sovereign master; this can only mean that, having transferred the indirect source of his profits, the King nevertheless took care that too much power did not pass out of his hands, and that in all essentials it remained fast in his own possession. Thus, although the way was now apparently open for the final grasping of the treasure which seemed almost within Jason's reach, the hardest task

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of all had still to be undertaken—of which Medea was well aware.

The royal flocks were probably herded upon a vast plain, access to which, as already suggested, was by a winding labyrinth of paths to a narrow defile, between high enclosing rocks, the defence of which single-handed by a resolute and powerful man would be sufficient protection, the impassable nature of the ground considered. The guardian of this secret pass would undoubtedly be one to whom natural and other strong reasons of personal attachment and interest would ensure absolute freedom from the general sources of corruption which the experience of King Aetes would enable him to guard against. The sleepless dragon which had charge of the trophy marking the entrance to the defile would probably be a half-witted and sexless man of gigantic stature and strength, with his animal senses sharpened by the loss of some part of his natural powers; a being half-man, half-animal can be imagined, with the ferocity and keenness of vision of the vulture and the cruelty and cunning of the fabled dragon or giant serpent.

Amid ordinary circumstances such a guardian would be subject to no lapses from vigilance and duty, and be inviolable; but it is certain that, from frequently accompanying her father when periodically testing the safety of the measures adopted to guard his secret, Medea would have many opportunities of showing small kindnesses, which in a man of simple mind would be exaggerated far beyond their merits; a dog-like affection would result, as history has frequently shown. With an absence of scruple which her passion for Jason would dictate, Medea would not hesitate to make use of her influence to dispel suspicion from the mind of the dread guardian. Taking advantage of a weak moment, she would put a potion in his wine, which would ensure complete unconsciousness for as long a period as would suffice to bring Jason to the spot; she could rely upon his strength and courage to do the rest.

With a forethought born of full consciousness of the danger involved, Medea caused Jason to have the *Argo* in readiness, and all his companions and their crew at their posts, in order to start without delay on receiving into the hold the treasured animals which were the main object of his undertaking. Assured that this part of their plans could not go amiss, the two conspirators set forth on their dangerous errand under cover of the night. Medea reminding Jason of what she was risking in trusting to him and leaving her own home, and receiving his lover-like answers, the quest was begun in earnest. After travelling over broken ground abounding

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in pitfalls of every description, with the utmost caution they at last arrived at the path leading to the defile, near by which King Aetes had fixed a tall pillar of choice wood, elaborately carved and surmounted by a winged Sphinx, which, doubtless with ironical intent, symbolized the secret so close at hand. A ram's head portrayed in living likeness the golden-fleeced victim sacrificed by Phryxus, while strings of pearls encircling the horns and a richly chased hanging chain, with emblematical figures carved in ivory, bore witness to the wealth of the King whose sign of authority it was. Legends attached to scrolls twining round the curiously carved column would relate the history of the fleece, and convey to any chance passers-by, or deliberate seekers, the penalties to be incurred in penetrating beyond the point at which the trophy served as a warning.

Medea would be well aware of the danger of allowing the effects of the potion to wear off before dispatching the monster guardian, and so would urge Jason to strike quickly and strike hard.

The javelin of the hero was without remorse plunged into the most vulnerable part of the shaggy and exposed neck. Aroused to a brief frenzy by the blow, and with the tenacity of life common to his class, the betrayed guardian of the secret, in his frantic efforts to reach his foe, broke off short the head of the long javelin which with a wise precaution Jason had used, and, at last dying with hatred in his eyes, left the way open towards the path he had so long and faithfully kept.

The rest was easy. The uncouth shepherds, who had probably suffered long from the tyranny of their savage oppressor, would have little hesitation in responding to the invitations of the royal pair, and on learning that their dread overseer was dead, would probably vie with one another in officious zeal to select the best-bred animals from the flock; and with these, and a sufficient band of shepherds to tend them on the journey home, Medea leading the way, the party and their spoil would lose no time in hastening to the *Argo*.

Arriving at the vessel's side just as the dawn was breaking, Jason lifted his tired and exhausted bride into the *Argo*, and, with the goodwill and prompt assistance of his friends and the ship's crew, the vessel was speedily under weigh, and all haste was made for the mouth of the harbour, Medea sparing no words of warning to urge the ready exertions of all concerned, who were fully aware of the danger.

It is probable that with advancing age, and the remorse occasioned by his murder of the nobly-born Phryxus, and his dread of retribution,

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Aeetes had in his later years become tyrannical and suspicious towards his children, and that Medea had had little difficulty in inspiring her brother Absyrtus with the love of adventure, and, with such a noble company as the Argonauts, to cast in his lot with hers, and take charge of the company of weavers, assistants, and the few women who were of their family, and necessary for the prosecution of the industry to be transferred to their new home. Under the instructions of his sister Medea, Absyrtus would have timed his arrival at the *Argo's* side to be simultaneous with the arrival of the more important company conducting the stolen flock. There would therefore be no delay on any side, and the *Argo* would be well on the voyage home before suspicion could arise.

With the knowledge of the prize at stake, it is not likely that King Aeetes would run any risks, and it would not be long before he would be advised of the departure of the *Argo*, which his watchers would discern on its way homewards. Aeetes would soon hear from the palace attendants of the absence of his son and daughter, and, with a double cause for vengeance, take immediate steps to overtake the ship. Good as the rowers under Jason's command were, the Colchians, urged on by the vindictive King, who pursued in person, were fast overhauling the *Argo*. Seeing this, Medea resorted to the only course likely to deter her father from pursuit. She caused her brother, King Aeetes' only son and heir, to be thrown overboard. The delay caused to the heart-stricken King in searching for the body gave the *Argo* much advantage ; and at last realizing the hopelessness of pursuit, and by the death of his son deprived of any desire to recover the stolen treasure, and still less desirous of again seeing his faithless daughter, Aeetes gave the command to return home ; with grief and rage in his heart he abandoned the chase.

The rest of the story calls for less fullness of treatment. The voyage home was but a repetition of the voyage out—with the difference that it was comparatively uneventful. Owing to the exigencies of the winter season, and to avoid dangers from hidden enemies, the *Argo* cut off some portion of the sea-journey by being hauled overland. On her taking to the water again, the Pillars of Hercules were passed ; the lures of the Syrens, and the Garden of the Hesperides with its golden fruit and dreaded guardians, were avoided ; and at last the *Argo* was steered into harbour. Medea, the only stranger, with sufficient information from Jason, and still better armed by her own natural shrewdness, amounting to second sight, left her lover and his companions. Advising that the ship should leave for other shores if she did not return within seven days,

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she set out on her dangerous errand of spying the land, to see how matters stood after the lengthy absence of Jason and his band of heroes.

Finding the ex-King Aeson old and infirm, and the usurper Pelias in possession of the kingdom (leaving to Aeson only a few faithful adherents, who still believed in the safety of Jason), Medea, with full knowledge of what was before them all, returned to the *Argo*, and undertook to make use of her wiles to save what might be from the grasp of Pelias, who was so strong that the worn and weary adventurers could not hope to make headway against him by force.

Jason, with assurances of goodwill, and with the professed intention of not disputing his uncle's seat on the throne, was allowed to approach the palace, where, with the prestige of his accomplished errand, and with the promise of increased prosperity to the kingdom in consequence of the successful issue of his journey, he was welcomed by the populace, and apparently by his uncle and his daughters, who in his absence had taken charge of the most important branches of the art industries of the country, which, as is usual in Eastern lands, were housed in the palace itself. Jason found Alcestis, the King's eldest daughter, weaving at the loom, perhaps with studied intention; while her sister Eradne kept a close eye upon the maids who carded the wool. Amphione had charge of the dyeing, and had ready for use, as required by her sister Alcestis, the skeins of soft woollen thread, dyed with the deep rich indigo blue for which Iolchos was famous, and the red of dove's blood hue, and the green, rivalling the richest tones of grassy sward. The colours of the rainbow were shown in the bundles of ready-dyed yarn, deftly selected according to the design, which, partly from memory, with the aid of slight indications traced upon the sanded floor, Alcestis was swiftly transferring to the growing fabric.

What need to lengthen the narrative? The old and neglected industry still remaining to King Aeson was speedily revived under the direction of Medea, with all the resources derived from the expedition, which were concealed as far as might be from the hated rivals. On the other hand, by guile, and misrepresentation of the new methods of working, Medea gradually destroyed the stolen excellencies of the old methods. These ceasing to bring the revenues of old, the industry was killed; which left the field open to Jason, and his friends and attendants, all inspired by the ever-present person and activity of Medea. It was a tale of the new and up-to-date supplanting the old. Before long Jason came to the throne on the death of his father Aeson, and the murder of Pelias by those who,

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having lost their all under his waning rule, hoped to ingratiate themselves with the youthful survivor, heir to Aeson's throne—a common case of “The King is dead, long live the King !”

It would be pleasant to end the tale here ; but truth must be told, and it is again the old tale of ingratitude bringing its own Nemesis. Having, to his mind, exhausted the possibilities of the newly-introduced methods, which he owed to Medea's devotion and continual supervision, Jason was attracted by the hopes of increased revenue offered by a still more beautiful and promising fabric. Failing to get rid of the old love before taking on the new—in other words, wasting his strength over a new and untried method before having fully established the old—he fell between two stools. Grasping at the shadow, he lost the substance. In so doing he lost the love and confidence of Medea, who, cursing her folly in putting her trust in man and forsaking her old home, after destroying the two children she had had by Jason, mysteriously left her home, passed from the knowledge of her husband and his subjects, and was received into a neighbouring kingdom, where the rumour of her talents would procure her a welcome.

The end of the story is the sad one of shattered hopes, lost ties, and the missing comforts which should have accompanied advancing age. With remorse at having so heedlessly and fruitlessly thrown down the ladder which had been his main way to fortune and glory, Jason at last found life a burden, in spite of the strong belief and confidence of his subjects. He spent his time in vain regrets, neglecting his interests. Things went from bad to worse, until at last there was nothing left to live for. Wandering one day by the seashore, he came upon the decaying remains of the old *Argo*, which revived all the memories of his adventurous voyage. Wearied with his thoughts, he fell asleep under the figurehead, which had been cut from the Speaking Oak at the shrine at Dodona, and was thus gifted with miraculous powers of speech. With the jealous rage and despair of a deserted woman, Medea had foretold Jason's death from the very ship which had been the means of carrying her from her father's home. In verification of this prediction, the figurehead, loosening from its hold through a sudden gust of wind, fell upon and killed the sleeping Jason. Next day he was found by his sorrowing subjects, and buried with all the honours due to his rank, religiously carried out by the affection of those who had never lost faith in him.

Thus ends the plain prose paraphrase of the famous legend of “Jason's Quest of the Golden Fleece.” Robbed of the romance of ages, it remains even in its business aspect an ideal record of the first

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sea-venture having for its direct aim the improvement and development of national industries. This can be successfully accomplished only by personally undertaking the dangers and responsibilities of investigating at first hand all details necessarily to be known before entering into competition with those who have special facilities for an industry which, as in the case of floor-coverings, are a radical necessity in certain climes and perhaps form the only source of national revenue. An industry thus established has an advantage over the imitator, in the fact that in introducing a new method old custom has to be overcome, and prejudice meets an article which threatens to displace one already in general use. It remains to the credit of Jason that, although of royal blood, he did not disdain to interest himself in what concerned the welfare of his subjects, and in so doing gained a practical experience of affairs which doubtless did not fail to impress all with whom he came in contact, and probably stood him in good stead when the turn in his fortunes caused by his own lack of steadfastness might well have incurred the odium of those familiar with the part played in them by Medea. It is impossible to read the story of Jason's success, and of his failure after abandoning Medea, without thinking of the great Napoleon and the wife of his early youth, Josephine. There is a distinct parallel in the fact that both men, though for different reasons, divorced the women who had stood by them in their early struggles in favour of younger sharers of their thrones. Even as Napoleon sought to consolidate his position by allying himself with Marie Louise, of the long line of the Hapsburg dynasty, so Jason, falling in love with the fair Glauce, daughter of Creon, King of Corinth, was doubtless as much influenced by ambition as by any failure to cherish the sterner beauty of Medea, who had served him so well.

In concluding this perhaps too fanciful sketch of one of the world's great fables, it is instructive to note that, with the chivalry of his nation, the great French painter, Gustave Moreau, recognised the part played by Medea in the accomplishment of the object of the expedition. He places Medea not only first in the title of his picture, but also in the romantic depiction of the final episode, clearly suggesting by the attitudes of hero and heroine the prime part played in the adventure by the lady. It is well also to think of the sacrifices she made in leaving her royal position, her friends and country, and following a stranger solely at the dictates of her heart.

If the apparently trifling personal feelings which influence great actions could come down to us from distant ages, it might be found that in instituting the great Order of the Golden Fleece, on the

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occasion of his marriage with Isabella, daughter of King John I. of Portugal, the Good Duke Philip III. of Burgundy and the Netherlands, on that sacred day at Bruges, January 10, 1429, had in his mind not only the prosperity of his kingdom, but also, and in perhaps a greater measure, the mythological but maybe real personalities of Jason and Medea, who, themselves of royal blood, typified immediate and practical interest in all that concerned kingdom and subjects. After all, the first necessity for the progress and happiness of a country is the means of obtaining a living and (with the superfluities arising from a well-diffused and successful industry) the acquisition of comforts and luxuries, which last have the most immediate bearing upon the patronage and fostering of the Arts, without the refinements of which, life is mere vegetating.

Jason and Medea stand side by side as types of the combination of Industry and Art, and as long as the world endures the strength of the bond between this matter of fact and romance will prove to be the true elixir of National Life.

CONTEMPORARY ARTS



JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT

(See Analysis)

CHAPTER II

CONTEMPORARY ARTS

The instinct of man to express himself in art has been co-extensive with the faculty of sight itself; and in sight itself must exist the laws by which such expression is intended to be governed.—“Greek Art and Modern Craftsmanship,” *Edinburgh Review*, October 1906.

The study of the artistic sense and achievements of savage races has proved the universal validity of a fact which seemed incredible so long as it was known only in isolated instances. A very primitive stage of art does not exclude an artistic eye and a correct reproduction, a valuable observation in regard to the origins of Art.—*A Century of Archaeological Discoveries*, Professor A. Michaelis, February 1908.

IT is impossible in the compass of a single chapter to give more than a cursory glance at the most important branches of Art which, directly or indirectly, have bearing upon the particular art under consideration. There are some nations the mention of which suggests thoughts of some particular industry or art; similarly, any reference to such industry or art forms a connection in the mind with the country of its origin or development. This intimate association, which has been developed into a system of hieroglyphics, seems to be the simplest means of dealing with the object-lesson I wish to draw, my aim being to demonstrate, as far as my own personal observation and reading will permit, that with the extreme probability of kindred arts progressing side by side, as far as they are indigenous, the presence of any particular art or industry from the beginning of things in any country or clime affords sufficient grounds for assuming that the arts of Weaving, of which Carpet-weaving can be reasonably suggested as the first, equally existed; and further, it is my intention to point out, by inference, that the exigencies created from the use of carpets and similar textiles had direct influence upon most of the industries and arts referred to in this important section.

The first difficulty to be faced in any endeavour to treat such an extended subject in a manner approaching chronological order is the wide divergence of opinion as to the earliest period at which

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anything instinctive in the direction of industry or art may be supposed to have existed. It may be granted that such instincts were co-existent with life itself, or, as has in the heading of this chapter been asserted, with sight, which is tantamount to the same thing.

A paragraph in Blair's *Chronological Tables*, dealing with the first ages of the world's history, says: "Dr. Hales has enumerated 120 different 'Epochs of the Creation,'—the earliest 6984, and the latest 3616 years B.C. The like confusion prevails as to the date of the Noachian Deluge, which is assigned to fifteen different periods between the years 3246 and 2104 B.C." This was written in 1856; probably later discoveries in archaeology and the results of scientific examinations with more accurate instruments have narrowed the field of inquiry, and brought closer harmony into the various schools of thought. However, even in the latest edition (1906) of one of the leading books of reference generally used in this country, the seeker after truth finds little comfort in his desire to approximate as nearly as may be to the current scientific knowledge, for under the heading "Creation of the World" we read: "The date given by the English Bible, and by Usher, Blair, and some others, is 4004 B.C. There are about 140 different dates assigned to the Creation, varying from 3616 to 6984 B.C. Dr. Hales gives 5411 B.C."

I have no inclination to indulge in speculation when it comes to the treatment of matter-of-fact questions, and in the absence of more definite guidance I shall continue to hold to the Bible Chronology, which at least has the merit of not being shifty.

When we realize the influence of such men as Alexander the Great, Alaric, Attila, Tamerlane, Charlemagne, and Napoleon, it is hard to accept any definitions of the particular periods into which the various ages of Man have been divided. The Golden Age of dreams of perfect bliss and happiness; the Stone Age, which suggests the retrograde; the Bronze Age; the Iron Age—these, in their broad divisions, have afforded a guide for scientific classification which has prevented thought from wandering in a circle, or in parallel lines; but in considering the low state of civilization still existing in many parts of the world, and even the wide differences between the nations in whom some point of contact in these days of widely-diffused knowledge should surely have been arrived at, the influence of the "super-man" upon the history of the world is forced home more strongly than ever.

In dealing with the unknown influences which have been

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brought to bear upon the history of human development, theories must of necessity be permissible. I venture to put forward one of my own, to account for the differences in mental and physical capacity allowed by history to have existed in past ages, and existing at the present day, in directions where the introduction of any strange human element is jealously resented.

The biblical account of the building of the Tower of Babel, and the confusion of tongues resulting, is an historical fact in so far that scientific men, such as Layard, Rawlinson, and Rassam, have examined and described the ruins at various times. Interesting as these discoveries undoubtedly are, it is impossible to say at this time how far the biblical records gave name to the ruins most nearly answering to the description, or how far the presence of such ruins in remoter ages gave rise to a reason for their presence; which, in the light of the licence allowed to fable, must be one of the most confusing impediments in the search for practical truth.

In May 1787 Botany Bay was first made use of by a beneficent Government in this country for the segregation of undesirables of all classes and both sexes; and in January 1788 Van Diemen's Land, Norfolk Island, and other far distant lands were utilized for the purpose of preventing the moral contamination which the near presence of the victims of circumstance might be supposed to offer to the more fortunate representatives of humanity, whose superiority in many instances probably only consisted in a providential immunity from the temptations and difficulties their brothers and sisters had failed to overcome.

The thought occurs that if in times of a supposed civilization human beings could be so completely ostracized, it is not improbable that in the early history of the world—especially after the first shedding of human blood, which would be regarded with the greatest horror—in the several families into which the race would be gradually divided, the practice might arise of each tribe sending the halt, the lame, the blind, and particularly those afflicted with the curse of "genius," to the most distant lands possible with the means of locomotion available.

With the jealous conservatism which will always rule in tribes and families, of which the strict divisions of caste in India are typical to the present day, it is morally certain that each separate section of the race had its own particular colony, to which additions would in the natural course of things be constant. The means adopted so stringently in the United States and Australasia against the importation of undesirable aliens throw light upon the methods likely to have

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been adopted by each tribe for not mixing even the supposed refuse of their respective races, and will suggest that in course of time distinct nations would arise, in which the individuality of the transported races would be kept separate, and acquire characteristics dependent upon personality and the effects of climate and environment.

It is common experience in every family of any extent that the "ugly duckling," or the supposedly weak mind, has in the course of time developed unexpected qualities which have lifted the despised one into high position. In like manner, mental "deficiency" may have resolved itself into nothing else than a form of genius, whether in the direction of Action, Science, Art, or the Commercial instinct, producing the eminent men already referred to, and also an Aristotle, a Hannibal, a Nadir Shah, a Michael Angelo, a Homer, a Wagner, and it may be added a Semiramis, a Cleopatra, a Catherine the Great, an Elizabeth, and, in plain justice be it noted, a Victoria the Great, whose exceptional qualities lift her in the category to a plane entirely her own.

The rise and fall of nations is sufficiently well known to make special reference here invidious, especially in view of recent adjustments of the balances of power ; but it may be said that without exception the variations in the scale of fortune can be traced to the predominance of particular individuals, and the balance rises and falls to just the degree in which such individuals are endowed with a desire for mere personal aggrandizement and gratification, or with the true regard for their special spheres of influence for good, and the happiness and progress of the peoples committed to their charge.

What is true of rulers and princes is equally true of Science, Art, Literature, and Industry. An advance results from the energies of a Genius which knows no distinctions of birth or rank ; and reaction comes from the lack of a follower of equal capacity, or even from the contrast of capacities, perhaps even in the same direction ; for as Nature abhors a vacuum, she equally abhors the monotony of repetition, and it is the very rare exception for individuals of equal gifts in the same direction to have the fortune to consolidate what has been initiated. William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham, and his second son, William Pitt, the Great Commoner, occur to the mind ; and other instances in ruling families of the present time will bear witness to the exceptions. It more often happens, however, that the very heights to which an exceptional capacity will raise a nation, in any of the directions indicated, to the highest summits attainable at the time, form an abyss on the other side which by very contrast

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acts towards the demolition of the fabric built up by brains and cemented with blood.

This is a wide digression ; but the subject has the closest relation to any study of the Arts and Industries, which at different periods have been influenced in one direction or another in precisely the same way as in broader aspects nations have for a time ruled the world, and by sudden effects of usurpation, or of revolution, have changed their course at the bidding of one Great Man, or have changed by a gradual process of decay, having also for its origin the weakness and ineffectiveness or moral degradation of a particular ruling family, drifting down from the giddiest heights with the imperceptibility but the inexorable steady decline of a glacier.

Vincent A. Smith, M.A., I.C.S., in a little book published in 1908, entitled *The Oxford Student's History of India*, in speaking of the Stone Age in his third chapter, says : " Poets dream of a golden age when the world was young and men lived in innocent peace and happy plenty. Sober science tells a different tale, and teaches that everywhere the earliest men were rude savages, dwelling in caves or huts, ignorant even of the use of fire and the commonest arts of life."

Generalizing broadly, there may be something to be said for such a view, which, however, is a very poor compliment to our early parents ; indeed, it may be doing them a great injustice. It is possible that in all nations there has always been a difficulty in rising above the level of necessities and surroundings. And in this respect it is well to remember that, while the Oriental Carpet was, from the year 1500 to the death of the great Shah Abbas in 1628, rising from the finest example known of the Art of Carpet-weaving, the Ardebil Carpet, to the examples of the industry brought to its greatest perfection by the personal influence and fostering care of the greatest sovereign Persia has seen, this country in the fifteenth century, and for probably a century after, in the middle and lower classes was content to cover its floors with rushes, which, with a filthy carelessness and want of refinement difficult to believe, gradually gathered a collection of dog-gnawed bones and other disgusting accumulations, which, being allowed to remain for years, were harbourers and propagators of disease ; one wonders that the age survived it so successfully.

With in many nations a state of civilization which the world has previously seen only upon a limited scale—that is to say, when the civilizing effects of Art have been monopolized by the few—there still exist nations (such as the rapidly dying Australian Aborigines, and

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savage communities in the interior of Africa and probably in the undiscovered Northern regions, together with examples of the hideous survival of the worst period of fanatical human worship and sacrifice) which, as showing what human nature is capable of, may throw the earliest human existence into a favourable light.

I prefer to be on the side of the poets, and to believe that Adam and Eve, and their first progeny, were, as the Bible leads us to believe, made in God's own image, and consequently not only endowed with the capacity the world has on occasions shown in the exceptional men and women already cited, but also, being free from accumulated hereditary traits, having particular advantages in the free assimilation of what Nature at its best afforded, which gave them a distinct superiority over future generations, who had in successive ages much to overcome before arriving at the stage in which early innocence left no room for distractions from the ideal state.

Leaving chronology to take care of itself for a time, Egypt first calls for attention, and Egypt, in spite of colossal remains denoting a high stage of architectural progress, remains in the mind as the home of the Pyramids and the mysterious Sphinx, which, emblematical of the mystery surrounding the aeons of time which preceded it, typically throws doubt upon the human penetration which has failed to discover its secret.

The late Mr. James Fergusson, in his *History of Architecture*, writes of the great Pyramids of Ghizeh as being one point of Egyptian history which can with some certainty be ascribed to the kings of the IVth dynasty, which places the date of their erection between 3000 and 3500 B.C. This will serve as a starting-point in dealing with the subject of this slight sketch, and none more impressive could possibly have been selected with deliberate choice.

Mr. Fergusson writes of the wonderful mechanical skill shown in the construction of the Pyramids, of which the greatest, that of Khufu, or (as it is more familiarly called) Cheops, can be taken as an example. The arrangements made for carrying off the water in connection with the inner chambers, the ventilation, and the wonderful resource shown in its construction, call for the admiration of those qualified to appreciate the difficulties to be faced, which would tax the greatest efforts modern mechanical skill and appliances could bring to bear upon such a work. Immense blocks of granite for its construction were brought from Syene—a distance of 500 miles—and each one was polished like glass, and the joints were so wonderfully fitted that the eye could hardly discern where one rested upon the other.

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It is to be remembered, in considering the extraordinary perfection shown in dealing with each separate item of construction in a gigantic work of this class, that human life and labour were cheap ; and it may be assumed that under the lash of the taskmasters there would be no waste of time, and that, with the probability of torture or loss of life being meted out for the most trifling error, any possibility of defects sufficient to cause the rejection of a stone by the master-architect was safely guarded against. The polishing and fitting of a single stone would probably engage the undivided attention of as large a body of men as could work at a time, possibly in relays, night and day ; and with the whole plan carefully subdivided, and each section carried on continuously, the whole would be completed in a space of time which would compare favourably with the greatest expedition possible in the present day.

A writer in the *Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette*, under date February 1, 1906, in a paragraph headed "Sealed with Blood," suggests so tellingly the complete indifference to human life displayed in the construction of these marvellous remains of a great age, that I venture to reproduce a portion of it : "Anciently it swelled a man's triumph if his works were costly in human lives. The making of the Red Sea canal is asserted to have involved the loss of no fewer than one hundred and twenty thousand Egyptians. Buckle's examination made him believe the number to have been somewhat exaggerated, but he gives it as still a guide to the enormous and unprincipled waste of human life in those days. The men who would have two thousand slaves engaged for three years bringing a single stone from Elephantine to the Pyramids would not care a great deal so long as for the twenty years in which one of the pyramids was building there were forthcoming the three hundred and sixty thousand men required for the work."

Think of this vast work, finished with such nicety that upon completion it had the appearance of being a solid block of granite ! A highly gifted woman, on May 28, 1793, recorded : "Went to see some drawings in the possession of a Mr. Greaves, a person who accompanied Messrs. Berners and Tilson in their expedition into Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt. The drawings are most accurately executed, and are assured to be faithful portraits. It was the opinion of those gentlemen after minute examination that the Pyramids are works of art, and not huge masses of rock polished and shaped into their present form." Such are the words recorded in the journal of Lady Holland, recently edited by the Earl of Ilchester. This comment upon the minuteness of finish of a work

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of such proportions recalls Sir W. W. Hunter's description of Shah Jahan's tribute to the memory of his wife, the lovely Mumtaz Mahal, the far-famed Taj Mahal, which he describes as a dream in marble, "designed by Titans and finished by jewellers." This wonderful example of Indian architecture will be fully dealt with in my closing chapter ; but it is a useful comparison with the methods described in the construction of the Pyramids to say that the Taj Mahal is supposed to have necessitated the employment of 20,000 men for the space of twenty-two years, during which time—in the expressive language of Mr. Kipling—men were "used up like cattle."

In *A History of Architecture* by Mr. Russell Sturgis, the following significant words are used, in dealing with Ancient Egypt : "Civilization and a steady rule may be assumed to have existed as early as 4400 B.C." In dealing with the magnificent statue of King Khafra or Chefren, found in the well under the granite temple at Ghizeh, now in the Cairo Museum, he writes : "The head of this statue is unsurpassed as a work of realistic art in all the records of sculpture : although probably more ancient to the sculptors of the Parthenon than the Parthenon is to us." This is high praise ; but the admirable reproduction of the statue in question, from a photograph, fully justifies it, and our wonder at such perfection in ancient art is only lessened by the reflection given point to by the headings of this chapter, in which the early judgment of the eye, and the inborn instinct for imitation, suggest the possibility of efforts in the direction of art of all kinds having formed the only outlet for human energy and perseverance in an age when time was of importance only in so far as congenial occupation afforded means of passing it agreeably away.

As recently as January 11, 1905, Mr. Theodore M. Davis, of Newport, Rhode Island, discovered in Western Thebes, near the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, the tomb of Iouiya and his wife Touiyou, and, by the greatest of good fortune, a number of articles of the very first importance, both from an artistic and an industrial point of view. I was not aware that two volumes had been issued, reproducing with the greatest perfection the discoveries made ; and thus the second volume, *The Funeral Papyrus of Iouiya*, with an introduction by Edouard Naville, came first into my possession. On examining a "Book of the Dead" I was struck with astonishment at the exquisite neatness and symmetry of the hieroglyphics, and the happily artistic way in which the vignettes illustrating the book had been designed and spaced.

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On following the subject up, and with the particular desire of touching upon the artistic side of the ancients, the first volume, *The Tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou*, came into my hands this day, February 5, 1909, which I mention with some particularity, as the first portion of this chapter was written the day previously, and the opinions therein expressed as to the possibility of some definite Art expression having characterized the first years of human existence have from the nature of the articles illustrated in the volume under consideration received some justification.

The really beautiful illustration in colour of "The Chariot," forming the frontispiece, in its lightness, grace, and happy proportion, recalled to my mind the ancient Roman chariot which forms a prominent feature in the Salla della Biga, in the Vatican. Probably there is no comparison to be made in fact; but the imagined connection was instantaneous, and I give it for what it is worth.

Figure 4 illustrates in black outline the back of the chair bearing the names of Queen Tiyi and Sat-amen, and is interesting from a decorative standpoint. The most prominent features are two upright panels, apparently carved with a closely continuous spiral key pattern, if the expression can be used. I call particular attention to this, as to obtain such a form in any textile would be a matter of some difficulty, and would tax the ingenuity of the weaver. It is from points such as these that some inference can be drawn as to the branch of art or industry for which any particular form has been designed, and thus some idea of the progress of Art can be gained. From the nature of a woven fabric, to work diagonally, and particularly in rounded forms, involves difficulties, which have of necessity led to an angularity of treatment characteristic of all woven fabrics; or, to be more exact, of fabrics woven in a loom, for in embroidery, and also tapestry, the fineness of the fabric, and the use of a needle, simplify difficulties which in loom-weaving require experienced treatment.

The row of conventional lotus flowers, with long stalks, ending at the base of the design in evenly arranged leaves, is also of great interest, and in this case could be readily reproduced in any woven material of sufficient fineness. The painted dummy vases of wood (Plates XXVII and XXVIII) are of extreme interest, and may well have been derived in their colouring and design from woven fabrics. The Chair of Sat-amen (Plate XXXIII) and the Chair with Cushion (Plate XXXV) are delightful in form and colour, and might with advantage engage the attention of the members of the Arts and Crafts Society. Plate XXXVIII, representing a Coffin bearing the names of Amenothos III., might be an old English spinet, although I have

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never seen one designed with such quaint simplicity and charming appropriateness of colour. Plate XXXIX, "Coffer bearing the names of Amenothès III. and Queen Tiyi," pairs in effective contrast of design, colour, and treatment with the coffer mentioned above. Both examples deserve the close study of artists and artificers, and would repay actual reproduction, care being taken to avoid a certain crudeness and hardness of colour, which the bright Eastern skies and atmosphere reduced to unobjectionable effect to those for whom the articles were made.

The gem of the collection is, in my judgment, the Bed with panelled Head-piece, which it is hard to describe in terms of sufficient admiration (Plate XXXVII). The exquisite sweep of the frame of the bed, which seems to guarantee comfort ; the panelling, which would probably only be partly hidden by the bolster or head support ; the quaint carving and placing of the legs upon the main frame ; the connecting-bars, giving strength to the legs—in fact, all the details—bespeak the artist in design ; and, the bed having presumably been in constant use, the construction also must have been of practical utility.

It is hard to say how far the perfectness of the colour reproductions, presumably from hand-paintings in water-colour, give this impression of an artistic quality which makes them worthy in their way of the best Art products of any period ; it is also fair to say that my experience of such articles of antiquity makes the representation of the plates described nothing more or less than a revelation, which serves to confirm my impression of the possibility of such an art as that of carpet-weaving (which in its primitive stages presents no great difficulty) having preceded any effort in the direction of such household articles of furniture as herein described.

It may be said that the comparative perfection of the articles of personal adornment and family use which have come down to us from remote ages only serve to illustrate an age of the world far in excess of calculations hitherto made ; but there is no direct proof. At the risk of drawing an ineffective parallel, I may call attention to the fact that, although the art of printing with movable types was practised first in A.D. 1454, the great Mainz (Mazarin) Bible of 1454-1456, the Mainz Bible of about 1461, and the Mainz Psalters of 1457 and 1459 have never been surpassed in the records of printing, and in fact, like *Minerva* and the first *Woman*, came into the world with all the perfections one naturally attributes to centuries of experiment.

It may be urged in the matter of printing that when all is said the movable-type printing only reproduced in machine form the

Plate III

PLATE III
JACQUARD "ARDEBIL" CARPET

Size 15-3 × 6-9

WARP—10 cords to the inch

WEFT—10 cords to the inch

100 CORDS TO THE SQUARE INCH

(See Analysis)



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hand-work of previous ages; but the same can be said of all art work not requiring constructive skill and the scientific adjustment of weights, any error in which means instant failure of an unpleasantly practical kind, which probably checked early experiments.

I have quoted at the heading of this chapter two sentences from the deeply interesting work of Professor Michaelis, *A Century of Archaeological Discoveries*—remarks induced by the artistic perfection of incised drawings on bone, found in prehistoric dwelling-places, which on their first discovery were regarded of too perfect an order to be genuine; but later discoveries confirmed the amazing fact that the work was indisputably representative of the earliest stages of human existence. The subject of the greatest artistic merit was “the masterly representation of a reindeer browsing. The perfection of the drawing seemed so inconceivable, for that primitive age, that doubts as to its genuineness were expressed, and were unhappily strengthened by the appearance of forgeries. Suspicion, however, was soon silenced. Recent discoveries in France have almost surpassed these drawings on bone, in the paintings of animals which have been discovered on some of the cave walls at Fond de Gaume (Dordogne).”

The famous “Tiara of Saitapharnes,” recently one of the great treasures of the Louvre Museum, and supposedly of the greatest antiquity, upon close inquiry and examination proved to be the work of a Russian jeweller; and within this present year, on January 7, *The Evening Standard* and *St. James's Gazette*, under the heading “FALSE SCARABAEI,” gives the sequel to an imposition, in which the Brussels Museum for the sum of £400, and the director of the Paris Museum for £100, purchased supposed scarabaei said to have been found at Bubastis: these were the work of a Parisian sculptor, who received the modest sum of £1 each for the stones. On being informed of the fraud, the sculptor remarked with much truth that it was sad to think that such sums should be given for two poor pieces of stone, whilst works of art, shown at the Salon, which are all they pretend to be, should be neglected, and acknowledged only by a meagre distribution of medals and decorations.

In view of these examples, and many others in which the expert has gone astray, any discoveries such as the incised bones referred to may be looked upon with suspicion; but why doubt the artistic capacity of even the earliest of human beings? The quality of the human eye has probably never been in such perfection as

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in the earliest days, when it had nothing to engage its usefulness but what nature showed.

The spirit of Bohemianism probably characterized at an early stage the human beings who, in the absence of all other means of filling in their time, betook themselves, without schooled intent, to reproducing the various forms of nature, with the best means at their disposal ; and there appears to be little cause for doubt that more systematic and extended research will reveal examples of early art of astonishing excellence.

A recent magazine gave interesting particulars of the modern palace which Mr. Pierpont Morgan has erected in New York, to contain the works of art which all the gold of Croesus would not now persuade him to relinquish. From the descriptions given it may be assumed that the unique perfections of the treasures to be housed would have the greatest influence upon the carefully studied architecture of the building itself, and especially upon the internal arrangements, including an artistically masked steel fire-proof safe, containing things the loss of which would be irremediable.

It occurs to me that the motives which have led in this twentieth century to the erection of such a treasure-house also operated quite naturally in the earliest times ; and that, as probably the first article of furniture, a primitive chest, was fashioned to contain the earliest carpets and hangings, and as in time the artistic improvement in such chests and other furniture would suggest a suitable roof to protect them from the accidents of nature, so in time the first modest efforts at architecture would be called into play to provide additional accommodation, according to the size and number of the articles to be enclosed, and perhaps also for purposes of division or classification ; until at last Architecture developed by slow degrees, surpassing in importance and magnificence the earlier arts, which at last became mere adjuncts, as they are at the present day, with the result, in earlier times, that as such domestic Art products as carpets, hangings, cloths, and ordinary household articles and utensils of every description assumed a commonplace aspect in the eyes of the possessors, more and more influenced by the overwhelming impressiveness of the more enduring arts, so less and less care was taken to preserve them, and now, in the mere matter of rarity, the meanest example with an authentic pedigree has become the rarest in the catalogue of Art products.

There is nothing unnatural in the presence of the articles found in the tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou, which dates back to about 1450 B.C. ; the articles are of personal use, or particular to the rites

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of burial ; one would not expect to find domestic appliances, or even articles contributing to the general comfort of surviving relations ; such effects as carpets, for instance, would be in everyday use, upon all occasions, and would be common to the entire family ; these and similar effects would, from their nature, be handed down from father to son, until probably worn out, or displaced by superior articles according to the rise of the family ; in fact, would follow the natural course of the domestic furniture of the present day, the end of which is an ever-present mystery.

In concluding this endeavour to suggest the natural sequence of Art in its earliest forms, such as all woven fabrics, and the gradual influence likely to be exerted in other more permanent directions, it is interesting, after having dealt with Ancient Egypt, from the Pyramids to the homely contents of the tomb so fortunately discovered by Mr. Davis, to reproduce a note in Sir Richard Burton's translation of *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, "The Thousand Nights and a Night," Vol. I. p. 294: "In Egypt there are neither bedsteads nor bedrooms : the carpets and mattresses, pillows and cushions (sheets being unknown) are spread out when wanted, and during the day are put into chests or cupboards, or only rolled up in a corner of the room."

With the tenacity with which Eastern nations adhere to the customs of their forefathers, it is more than probable that this short sentence reproduces, in its homely suggestiveness, the life led by the earliest human beings, whether cave or tent dwellers ; or, as the comforts of life advanced, the householder ; and eventually, with the increased luxury which wealth and position would afford, gives the cue to what might have been the habitual customs of those who dwelt in the palaces of Babylon and Nineveh, with the differences only of "degree," familiar in all directions with the differing grades of social life and the individual tastes, which of necessity are ruling factors, and almost require separate consideration in attempting to arrive at general conclusions. Imagine the civilization of this country a few thousand years hence, and the power and influence of its great capital, being gravely determined by the archaeologists of the time according to excavations made in the east end of London, and, conversely, the effect of unearthing Carlton House Terrace, and the level of luxury which might probably be attributed to the general average of the inhabitants in the absence of further investigations ! As an example of the surprises in store when the time comes for London to be dealt with in similar fashion to the Herculaneum and Pompeii so shamelessly laid bare in their nakedness to the gaze of the tourist

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to-day, the reader is referred to Mr. E. Beresford Chancellor's work, *The Private Palaces of London*, and asked to picture in imagination what effect these artistic gatherings from all quarters of the globe would have not only as conveying an impression of the lavish refinement of luxury displayed, but also, in the lapse of centuries, the difficulty of proper attribution to the homes of their production, with art works of all kinds and nations scattered about in a choice profusion, while every example has been the object of deliberate selection under the guidance of the leading experts of the day. To pursue the idea a point further: Who would expect to find in a London private house a collection of art treasures such as is to be found in the Wallace Collection at Hertford House? Such a gathering of the art masterpieces of the world would suggest a National Collection, housed upon the conventional national lines; but the house under consideration, in spite of the alterations made for the purpose of the collection, is so obviously an example of the taste and splendour of an individual and artistic judgment that the puzzle would not be easy of solution.

There is no need to deal in detail with the architectural arts of the Chaldeans, although it is interesting to note the probable date, 2234 B.C., assigned by Fergusson to the palace of Nimrod, and to call attention to a plate entitled "Elevation of Wall at Wurka (from the Report of the Assyrian Excavation Fund)"; this, the main feature of which consists of narrow diagonal lines of a light tint, forming lozenge spaces, enclosing similarly-shaped forms in a darker tint, clearly suggests textile design; and in this and other features of a plan formed by horizontal zigzag white, light, and dark lines, this ancient piece of ornamental work has a curious resemblance to the native woven garments of the Maoris, referred to at the end of this chapter.

Mention of Assyria brings to mind Nineveh, and to readers of Dante Gabriel Rossetti the fine poem, "The Burden of Nineveh," first published in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* for August 1856, which reproduces a train of thought called forth by the sight of "A winged beast from Nineveh" being hoisted into the British Museum. The artist-poet writes:

Some colour'd Arab straw-matting,
Half-ripp'd, was still upon the thing.
(What song did the brown maidens sing,
From purple mouths alternating,
When that was woven languidly?)

The whole poem might well be read with serious attention by those

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who desire to clothe the dry relics of a great past with the inspired imagery of an artistic and poetical nature, which, probably by instinct, arrives at a much nearer approach to the spirit of the times than the scientific sense is capable of.

Semiramis, wife of Ninus, the mythical founder of Nineveh, in the mere mention of her name, gives life association to a period which probably benefits in many directions from the air of mystery surrounding the unearthed skeleton of the great city. Semiramis, in spite of her evil reputation, was historically a great queen, who during a reign of forty-two years conquered Persia, Libya, and Aethiopia, being unsuccessful in India alone. The article in *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* continues the account of her life by saying that "the name of the mighty queen survived in place-names, and was familiarly attached to the great works of antiquity, as the hanging gardens of Babylon. Many things in her story, and such points of detail as her personal beauty and her voluptuousness, point to an identification with the great Assyrian goddess Astarte."

Fergusson, under the heading of "Assyrian Palaces," reproduces a "Pavement Slab from the Central Palace, Koyunjik," which is particularly germane to my purpose, on account of the same illustration having been used by Alexander Speltz, architect, in his *Styles of Ornament*, the first part of which was issued in English in 1906. The illustration in question is given on Plate 9, Fig. 1, and is thus described: "FLOOR ORNAMENT FROM KUYUNDSCHIK (Lübke, *Kunst des Altertums*). *The motif in this ornament appears to have been copied from a very ancient piece of textile-work, which, notwithstanding its antiquity, shows highly-developed artistic workmanship.*" The date of 667 B.C. is assigned to this palace of Sardanapalus, whose name inevitably recalls Lord Byron's tragedy to which the ill-fated king gives the title. The last king of the Assyrians, as he is described, exceeded all his predecessors in a luxurious effeminacy which excited the wrath and disgust of Arbaces, Governor of Media, to such a degree that, he acting in collusion with Beleses, Governor of Babylon, Nineveh was besieged, and Sardanapalus, at last aroused from his slothful indulgence, under the spur of necessity showed something of the spirit of his ancient race. Nature, appropriately taking part with outraged humanity, aided the besiegers of Nineveh, and an inundation of the Tigris overthrew two miles and a half of the city wall, which in his pride Sardanapalus regarded as impregnable. The end is soon told. With the same desire for a posthumous renown, without any of the qualities to ensure it, which caused Herostratus some three hundred years later to set fire to the

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great Temple of Diana at Ephesus, Sardanapalus "resolved to die in such a manner as, according to his opinion, would cover the infamy of his scandalous and effeminate life. He ordered a pile of wood to be made in his palace, and, setting fire to it, burnt himself, his eunuchs, his women, and his treasures." Thus reads a note attached to the opening lines of the tragedy referred to, which in poetic detail relates episodes in the life of the monarch, and his end, that gave an *éclat* to his reign which any good qualities he may have betrayed from time to time would not otherwise have saved from oblivion. Byron's tragedy should be read by all who prefer the insight of a man of genius to the dry skeletons of archaeological romance, although it may be said that the combination of the two affords a picture of the past which might whet the interest of those saturated by the flood of literature let loose upon the earth by the introduction of machine-printing, which has carried with it a curious mixture of satisfaction and satiety.

The fall of Nineveh, accompanied by the death of the last king of Assyria, opens the way to a somewhat more detailed consideration of the great empire of Persia, of which Chardin relates the saying that its extent is so vast that winter and summer rule at one and the same time within the compass of its boundaries. Persepolis, with its close connection with the empire which gave its name, claims attention by its palace of Darius, and the "hundred-columned hall of Artaxerxes," to borrow again from Professor Michaelis.

In dealing with the architectural arts of Persia, Fergusson writes : "By a fortunate accident the Persians used stone where the Assyrians used only wood, and consequently many details of their architecture have come down to our day which would otherwise have passed away had the more perishable materials of their predecessors been made use of." After referring to the wonderful stone temples of Thebes and Memphis, he proceeds : "It is easy to see how little the arts of the Assyrians were changed by their successors. The winged lions and bulls that adorn the portals at Persepolis are practically identical with those of Nineveh."

As one of my main points in attempting this sketch of the ancient arts is a desire to trace in the perfected carpet of the reign of Shah Abbas the Great the hereditary influence of the ancient nations which preceded them, this similarity in the architectural arts mentioned above is of the first importance. It establishes the link which, from the first one forged by Adam, probably passed in a continuous chain through the medium of the race he left behind him, the leaders of which successively added their links to form the

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chain from Adam ("Le nom d'*Adam*, dans les langues orientales, est un nom générique, qui signifie *homme* en général, et par excellence, *le premier homme*"—CHARDIN) to the year A.D. 1909. This seems to be a modest claim, in view of the fact that in an introductory article by Sir George Birdwood to the Vienna Carpet Book, he writes: "No limit this side of 5000 B.C. can be given as the first date of Carpet Manufacture." Think of a chain of evidence the links of which, beginning with Adam (4004 B.C.), include among the Egyptian kings, Menes (3906 B.C.), Khufu (3500-3000 B.C.), Osirtasen (2300 B.C.?), Amenhotep I. (1830 B.C.), Rameses I. (1436 B.C.); these, strengthened by connecting links afforded by the Chaldean Nimrod (2234 B.C.?), Sin Shada (1700 B.C.), and Purna Puryas (1600 B.C.), lead to the Assyrian Shalmaneser I. (1290 B.C.), Shamas Iva (822 B.C.), Sennacherib (704 B.C.), and Sardanapalus (667 B.C.). Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire, forms the first link of the Persian chain, probably making up for the weakness of the effete Sardanapalus, who, by the nature of his death, may be said to have welded the link of Assyria with Persia, which, in spite of chronology, will serve the purpose of my illustration. Cyrus, in overthrowing the Medo-Babylonian monarchy (557 B.C.), and his son Cambyses in conquering Egypt (525 B.C.), probably in so doing inoculated their own kingdom with the best that the conquered nations had to afford, and, with the Oriental love of luxury and splendour, did not fail either in transferring to their own capitals the spoils from the palaces of the kings, or in selecting bands of artists and artisans for the purpose of establishing industries which, from the constancy of a lucrative demand, would add so much to the general prosperity of their country, and thus secure the goodwill of the inhabitants.

Darius I. (521 B.C.), Xerxes I. (485 B.C.), Alexander the Great (330-323 B.C.)—I follow M. Bouillet's *Dictionnaire universel d'histoire et de géographie*—begin the great line of Persian kings, which, with an interval from the death of Alexander at Babylon (323 B.C.) to the Persian revolt (A.D. 226), during which the rule of the country devolved upon the dynasties of the Seleucidae and the Arsacidae, includes such names as Artaxerxes I. (A.D. 226), Sapor I. (A.D. 238), Hormisdas I. (A.D. 271), Narses (A.D. 296), Chosroes the Great (A.D. 531), Mahmoud (A.D. 999), Mohammed I. (A.D. 1105), Genghis Khan (A.D. 1225), and Tamerlane (A.D. 1360-1405), the Tartar conquerors, and the first of the great Sophi dynasty, Ismail I. (A.D. 1499). Shah Abbas the Great, third son of the Sultan Mohammed Khodabundeh, came to the throne in A.D. 1585, in spite of a peremptory and repeated order from Ismail III.

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to put the young Abbas to death in order to secure his throne. In view of the great influence Abbas I. had upon the fortunes of Persia, it is interesting to record that his life was spared in consequence of the superstition of the powerful chief, Aly Kooli Khan, who had been ordered to slay him, but refrained until the sacred month of Ramazan had passed, before the end of which brief respite Ismail died, and the glory of Persia was saved.

As further particulars of the life of Shah Abbas I. enter more appropriately into the next chapter, I will now deal as briefly as the interest of the subject will permit with some opinions of the Chevalier Chardin, described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as "Sir John Chardin (1643-1713), traveller; born in Paris; a wealthy jeweller; travelled as a jewel merchant through Turkey to Persia and India, 1664-1670 and 1671-1677." It is hardly reasonable to expect a dealer in precious stones to pay any particular attention to textiles; but there is so much of artistic interest in the pages of the learned author, and so much light thrown upon other contemporary features of the artistic life of the nation, that sufficient tribute cannot be paid to the eminent Frenchman to whom we owe the volumes now to be made use of in the interests of the art in neglecting which he lost to a great degree his title to permanent fame.

Chardin, in the second volume of the edition I am making use of, refers to the curious fashion in which the Persians emphasize their incomparable politeness in letter-writing, by seeking to convey an additional compliment in the choice of the papers used, of which they had seven or eight varieties—white, yellow, green, red, and other colours—the sheet in addition being gilded and silvered at the top and bottom. The most flattering mark of attention consisted in using a sheet of white paper lightly damasked with gold flowers. Another mark of the greatest civility was to inscribe the name and titles of the person addressed in coloured letters, or in gold. These and other artistic trifles in the adjustment of the margin of paper used, and the position of the seal, the impression of which upon the lower corner of the missive was a carefully observed point of etiquette, were carried to such an extent that care was taken that the whole of the seal should not appear in the impression, implying "I am not worthy to appear before you; I dare only to show my respect by half-displaying my seal to your presence." To those sufficiently curious, other details of the position of the seal according to rank will provide forms and ceremonies the study and practice of which would pleasantly distract those to whom the recent lectures on Plato

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in a leading London hotel may have still left room for a fresh novelty to divert their minds from the more serious problems of the day. Reference is made to the subject here to show how inborn is the instinct to make use of colour in the everyday actions of life, and the natural artistic sense which will invest with importance the most minute observances which seem to be typical of the "weaver's mind," trained through centuries to the careful tying in of every single knot of colour, any deviation from absolute precision in which means a defect, the avoidance of which, with the ensuing easiness of design, forms one of the chief charms of the Oriental fabric.

Chardin relates that Shah Abbas II. had made for him a tent costing two millions of francs, or roughly £80,000, which was called the "Golden Pavilion," on account of the lavishness with which gold was used in its decoration and appointments. The price gives some idea of the materials, richness of manufacture, and general effect; and its importance as an abode "fit for a king" is demonstrated by the fact that it required close upon 250 camels to transport it from place to place. The antechamber was made of gold-brocaded velvet, upon the upper band of which this inscription was worked—*"If you ask how long this throne of the Second Solomon was in making, I reply, Behold the throne of the Second Solomon."* The letters of these last words formed a cipher representing a period of 1057 years. This grandiloquence is characteristic of the nation, and with Orientals adds beauty and grace; it has to be taken into account when forming a precise estimate of things artistic and monetary.

In giving evidence of the richness and importance of the tents used by the Persian monarchs, my intention is to emphasize to what a great extent the use of the carpet was on all occasions required to give to the floors the same harmony and balance of effect which the amount expended on the tent itself would make a matter of absolute necessity to an artistic eye. Chardin remarks, in his fifth volume, upon the strict observance of all the forms of etiquette, and the elaborate service, which was carried out as much in the monarch's country fêtes as in his capital. The tents were divided into rooms, just as was the case in the buildings, the only difference being an absence of some of the magnificence which made the latter unequalled in the world. Our author proceeds to give an account of the pavilion used by the King when giving audience to the Dutch Ambassador at Hyrcania. This tent-pavilion was 60 feet in length, 35 in width, and something under 30 feet in height. After speaking of the massiveness of the supporting poles, and the elaborate features of the

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internal arrangements, those visible to the outside world being made to serve as indications of the might and majesty of the monarch, Chardin mentions the interesting fact that the carpets were held firmly to the ground by means of orange-shaped gold weights of about five pounds each, placed in rows 4 feet apart.

As frequently happens throughout the work, just at the point where Chardin's information with regard to the designs and colourings of the carpets used would have made his book absolutely indispensable to all lovers of Art, he branches off to the consideration of similar weights used in connection with the King's throne, and the rich stuffs around it. These weights were studded with precious stones, which accounts for the predilection shown in their description and disposition. In the same way, in describing the liberality with which the Persian monarch paid and treated the chief officers who had charge of the various departments of Art industry, in which he had a direct pecuniary interest, Chardin, after mentioning that the chiefs with their staff of workmen are grouped in the various studios or workshops according to their professions, proceeds to say that "the emoluments of the chief of the jewellers will serve to illustrate all the rest"; and the same principle quite naturally places before the reader a large amount of information upon the particular subject which interests the author, while having an exasperating effect upon the lover of the fine old Oriental carpets, upon the manufacture of which the keen-sighted lover of precious stones could have brought a useful scrutiny.

In referring to the ornamentation of houses, Chardin mentions painting as the decoration most frequently used; sculpture was rarely employed, and then it mostly consisted of flowers and foliage roughly chiselled in the plaster; the relief, which is low, remains white, while the groundwork is grey; they finally paint the relief-work, touching it up with gold and blue, which gives to the ornament a beautiful effect. These Moresque paintings on the buildings are very choice, and present an attractive appearance, the dryness of the air preserving the colours in all their original freshness and brilliancy. Chardin states that he has never seen the Persian colours excelled for clearness, brilliancy, and depth, in which they approach nature. The moistness of European climates clouds the colours used, causing them to deteriorate and lose their freshness, in such a fashion that it may well be said that those who are not familiar with the Oriental colouring in its own home cannot form a proper impression of Nature's colours in their most brilliant aspect.

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Chardin speaks in glowing terms of the beautiful enamelled porcelains manufactured in Persia, which, he asserts, excel those of China, ancient and modern. The clever workers in this artistic industry attribute the beauty and quality of the colours to the water, saying that there are some waters which dissolve the colour and give it body ; while others refuse to assimilate it properly, and hold it without being able to impart it.

In speaking of the subject of dyeing generally, Chardin remarks that the art was more advanced in Persia than in Europe, the colours having more depth and brilliancy, and also being faster ; this, however, he attributes less to art than to the air and the climate generally, which, being dry and pure, enhances the brightness of the tints, while the dyes themselves, being natural to the country, are used in their freshness, and consequently with their full essential essences. These are points to bear in mind when considering the superiority of the art of carpet manufacture as practised in the countries of its origin ; all the factors mentioned are of the first importance, and again bear witness to the immense influence Nature has in propagating and fostering the Arts.

In dealing with the manufactures of the country, the author speaks particularly of the cotton, goat's hair, camel's hair, and wool industries, and makes special reference to the silk, which, being abundant in Persia, is largely used, and forms one of the most important manufactures of the country. Many details are given as to the method of treating the silk. Chardin writes with the greatest appreciation of the beauty of the brocades, some of which, worked in gold, are the most beautiful and dearest in the world ; in fact, the reader is gratified with the fullest information as to the value and merits of the fabrics, with incidental information as to the wages paid to the workers. He also mentions the fact that even after twenty or thirty years the gold and silver thread used in the rich brocades do not tarnish ; this again he attributes to the purity of the air, and the excellence of the workmanship, presumably including the preparation of the materials.

Criticizing the art of painting, Chardin speaks of the easy-going idle ways of the Orientals, who have little desire for work, and only then for necessaries. Their finest paintings, as also sculpture, turnery, and other arts, of which the beauty consists in faithfully following nature, only have value in the country of production, and in nations equally affected by climatic conditions. They think that, such arts not having any direct bearing upon actual human needs, they do not merit special attention ; in fact,

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they have no very great regard for the Arts ; as a result of which they are little cultivated, in spite of the fact that as a nation the Persians are intelligent, discerning, patient, and frank, and, if liberally paid, succeed in what they undertake. Chardin remarks, further, that they do not show much energy in seeking out new inventions and discoveries, being content with what they possess of the necessities of life, buying from foreign countries, instead of introducing the manufacture of new articles into their own.

In an earlier volume, in referring to the costumes of the Persians, Chardin deals with this characteristic of Eastern nations—their disinclination to give up their own habits and customs, and reluctance to introduce innovations—which makes the study of ancient manners and customs so particularly interesting and valuable, especially from an artistic point of view, as the preservation of early forms can be traced with some certainty when not hybridized by the introduction of foreign elements. Chardin's illustration of the tenacity with which the Persians adhere to old customs is important when we consider the probability of the art of carpet manufacture, in common with the kindred arts, having come down to us from the remotest times, without other changes than are natural to increased facilities of production, both as regards the appliances and as regards the personal influence of the rulers, who, deriving their income in some part from privileged manufactures, may be supposed to have exercised considerable discretion in keeping them up to the highest standard of perfection. Chardin writes : "The costumes of the Orientals are not subject to fashion ; they are invariably made in the same style ; and if the prudence of a nation is shown by this constancy, the Persians are worthy of all praise, for they not only adhere to the same style of dress, but even to shades of the same colours, and in the same materials. I have seen robes worn by Tamerlane, which are preserved in the treasury of Ispahan ; they are made the same as those of the present day, without any difference." This period was close upon three hundred years, and, although trifling in comparison with the time which has elapsed since the first primitive efforts, is valuable as an indication of a consistency which is in favour of the antiquity of any article which, so to say, the Persians originally adopted, and this in any case can with certainty be claimed for the Carpet.

Chardin devotes a considerable amount of attention to the glories of Ispahan, including the King's palaces, the public buildings, and particularly the Royal Mosque, or Musjid-i-Shah, upon which Shah Abbas the Great expended enormous sums. It is impossible to deal

Plate IV

PLATE IV
JACQUARD CARPET

Size 13-4 × 6-0

WARP—10 cords to the inch

WEFT—10 cords to the inch

100 CORDS TO THE SQUARE INCH

(See Analysis)



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with these features here : so for the present we will leave our author, and endeavour to give some slight indication of the artistic tendencies of India, which seems naturally to follow the country which in the time of Akbar the Great, if not earlier, introduced from Persia the carpet-weaving industry.

Fergusson in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* opens Book I., "Buddhist Architecture," thus : "It may create a feeling of disappointment in some minds when they are told that there is no stone architecture in India older than two and a half centuries before the Christian era." The introduction of this permanent building material coincided impressively with the introduction of Buddhism, both due to the great Indian king Asoka (272-236 B.C.), regarded as the "Buddhist Constantine." There are many beautiful buildings in India, which it would be an impertinence to attempt to describe in detail ; and as the principal architectural glory of the Empire is admitted to be the Taj Mahal, which forms the subject of the concluding chapter of this book, I will only say, in passing on to the arts of sculpture and painting, that, if we may judge from the remains illustrated in current works upon the ancient architecture, the same features of elaboration which are shown in the carved stone-work of the magnificent Victoria Terminus, Bombay, have ruled throughout, and this richness of detail, this minuteness of finish, is characteristic of the carved sandal-wood and metal-work familiar to the visitor to India. It all suggests that human labour is of trifling account, and that patience, while of infinite use to such as the inventor of the phrase *Nulla dies sine linea*, is a quality which, directed by the limitations of the native mind, tends to a certain monotony, making for the "curio" rather than for Art.

Chardin's remarks upon Persian painting inevitably recur to the mind upon inspecting the splendid plates in Mr. E. B. Havell's recently published *Indian Sculpture and Painting*. The carvings are extremely rich and beautiful in their way, but have a conventional precision which presumably is the national characteristic, and recalls the saying, "The weaver weaves what he has in his mind," which is applicable to the carver in wood, to the artist in metals, and (with the addition of a larger share of genius) to the sculptor and the painter. The splendid and elaborate "Eastern Gateway, Sanchi," in Mr. Havell's book, has for its most prominent feature the spiral key-form which I have noticed in connection with ancient Egyptian ornament, and the Maori tattooing which is spoken of at the end of this chapter. The form is so obvious, and follows so naturally after the close angular key-forms, that there is nothing surprising in the

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feature being common to many nations ; but it strikes the eye, and in doing so evokes the commonplace that "the simple ornamental forms are common to all eyes, and their adaptation and variation are subject to the mind."

The reproductions of paintings are the most surprising feature in Mr. Havell's book, and come as a revelation to those who have not had the advantage of previous study. "A Portrait Group," by one of Shah Jahan's Court painters, is in all respects a beautiful piece of human work, but as conventional in its treatment as the early Italian Masters. One feels that the likenesses are true to life ; the landscape and accessories are microscopically exact ; there is even some suggestion of the hard Oriental atmosphere ; but there is no flexibility, and the impression left upon the mind is that it is a "design," a "pattern," and not in the usual artistic sense the Art which, with a full knowledge of the limitations of the human eye, is exercised with the deceitfulness of a genius overcoming Nature itself, to cause the eye to accept what is in reality Nature as it is, rather than what it appears to be. The great architects Ictinus and Callicrates, in this way, designed the Parthenon with an ingenuity which escaped attention until the English architects, J. Pennethorne in 1837, and F. C. Penrose in 1846-1847, with infinite patience and skill, discovered by means of elaborate measurements that the apparently simply-constructed Parthenon was not only a triumph of artistic skill in construction and design, but also a successful attempt to make Art surpass Nature, in the sense that the greatest subtlety of human genius had been bestowed upon the building to overcome the defects of the eye, and to convey an impression of perfectness of form, which is entirely provided by Art. The apparently conventional lines which modern architects have made use of in such reproductions of the Parthenon as the Madeleine, Paris, and the Town Hall, Birmingham, as in others which there is no need to mention, convey a sufficient indication of what the Athenian masterpiece would have been had not the architects (under what training and influence it is impossible to conjecture) given to the building as a whole the most infinitesimal tendency towards the pyramidal form, imparting the necessary ease and "atmospheric flexibility," which for over two thousand years has baffled the imitation of the architects, in spite of all the advantages of modern science and training.

Returning to Mr. Havell's book : An interesting "Wounded Lion" (Plate LIII), a marvellous "Turkey Cock," by one of Jahangir's Court painters, some exquisite portraits in colours, and

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even more satisfying lightly-tinted sketches, notably "A Portrait of Ytikad Khan" (Plate LV), make up a book which it is worth while having written this chapter to have had the pleasure of calling attention to—a work which should be in the hands of all interested in our great Indian Empire.

The Lion Gate of Mycenae opens the consideration of Greek Art, which in Mr. H. B. Walters's chronological table dates from 2500-900 B.C., a margin sufficiently broad to satisfy the most exacting. The Palace of Knossos is placed under the same heading, "Pre-Historic Greece"; and I venture to give some attention to this, as I remember in a Royal Academy Exhibition, some few years ago, a room having been specially devoted to the discoveries of Mr. Arthur Evans, son of Sir John Evans, the eminent antiquary and savant. If my memory serves, the actual examples exhibited, and a series of coloured sketches, clearly gave indication of an Art facility which goes again to prove the power of the eye, and the natural instinct for Art in which it is the agent and instrument.

The wonderful discoveries at Olympia, including the Temple of Zeus and the remarkable "Nike of Paionios," open up a subject for examination and discussion sufficiently bewildering with ample space and leisure for its treatment, but which, fascinating as it is, must be briefly passed over. As late as Christmas 1875, the original work of the great sculptor Paionios was brought to light, somewhat upsetting theories as to the sculptors engaged upon the construction of the great Temple of Zeus, the sculptural decorations of which had been hitherto largely attributed to the pupils of Phidias.

The difficulty of giving the crudest idea of what the world owes to Greek architecture, sculpture, and painting, is enough to deter the boldest from making the attempt in less than a series of volumes; moreover, the examples that have come down to us are so scattered as to necessitate the study of each important museum throughout the world, in order to form a comprehensive view of the overwhelming part the Greeks have played in the Art-history of the world. The way in which examples of the finest period of Greek Art have been scattered is illustrated by the fact that to obtain a sight of the splendid "Alexander Sarcophagus" the student has to make a pilgrimage to Constantinople, which, from the illustration and description given by Professor Michaelis, would be amply repaid. It is quite possible that the average lover of Greek Art is content to begin his investigations from the period of the great sculptor Phidias, and probably no name in the records of Art is better known, the immortal sculptures of the Parthenon, although only partly from

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his own hand, being sufficient to justify the place assigned to Greek Art, as the foundation upon which the arts of all nations have been based.

There are remains of earlier temples than the Parthenon upon the Acropolis ; but the Parthenon demands the first place, remaining as it does to the present day, and by universal consent of all competent to judge, the finest example extant of its particular style. A recent volume by Martin L. d'Ooge, entitled *The Acropolis of Athens*, deals very fully with all details in connection with the important buildings which crown the Acropolis, and the many illustrations, including a very beautiful view of "The Acropolis from the West," deal very comprehensively with the historical and architectural features, as far as they have come down to us ; but of necessity much has to be left to the imagination ; and, without disrespect, it is worth while to consider how far the wonderful glamour thrown upon the whole subject of Greek Art by the marvellous achievements of so small a nation has cast a halo of reflected glory upon mere fragments, which even in their earliest freshness may not have produced the extravagant effect which the enthusiasm aroused by the great contemporary, literary, and political representatives of the people has caused almost to amount to an obsession, to the great detriment of modern Art. The masterpieces of architecture, sculpture, and probably painting were inimitable in their time, as those which have come down to us in sufficient preservation amply prove ; but *all* that is Greek is not necessarily above criticism, and the fear of comparison may have prevented many an excellent artist from doing the best that was in him, and thus many admirable productions which would have satisfied the average lover of Art have been lost to the many to whom a fine piece of sculpture is still fine, even if it has not the name of Phidias or Praxiteles attached to it. This is, of course, rank heresy ; but, while fully appreciating the apparently perfect and exquisite statues of "The Apoxyomenos," after Lysippus ; the "Silenus nursing Dionysus," also perhaps derived from the same artist ; the splendid "Apollo Belvedere," a copy of an earlier masterpiece ; the beautiful statue "Apollo and the Lizard," a most divinely perfect figure of the god, leaning on the trunk of a tree, up which a small tree lizard is creeping (these statues in the Vatican museum) ; the lovely "Venus of the Capitol," and other statues well known to all visitors to Rome, which cannot fail to excite the admiration of the merest tyro in Art matters, there is no reason why a just tribute should not be paid to the fine statue of "Perseus," by Canova, which is in the same

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room as the "Apollo Belvedere" in the Vatican ; and the beautiful statue of "Venus," also by Canova, in the Pitti Gallery, Florence ; and, it may be added, the comparatively brand-new statue of "Victory" in the same gallery, by "Consani," to which the date 1867 is assigned in the catalogue.

Again, while having honestly admired the mere fragment, the "Torso of the Belvedere" in the Vatican, which, it is said, Michael Angelo continued his admiration of by the sense of touch after he had lost his sight ; and with a perfect appreciation of the superb "Venus de Milo" in the Louvre ; and a sufficient understanding of the merits of the Parthenon Frieze, the sculptures of which Lord Elgin rescued or ravished from the Athenian Acropolis, and which now dignify the British Museum, it is impossible to say, in their incompleteness, how far admiration is extorted by the suggested perfections, which, of course, vary according to the artistic training or natural appreciation of those who study them. Various attempts have been made to restore the "Venus de Milo," but with a success which, if really approaching the design of the original creator of the work, leaves one with a devout thankfulness that the statue has come down to us in its mutilated state ; in fact, the extreme difficulty of arriving at a perfect pose, with the due expression of every part of the body, down to the finger-tips, not to say the arrangement of the accessories—all these points are taken for granted when the perfection of a part suggests an equal perfection in the whole ; but there is no room for such sentimental allowance with the modern sculptor, who has to face the criticism of the learned and the ignorant, with every part of his work exposed to the merciless severity of present-day judgment ; being the work of a living artist, it cannot compare with the priceless relics of the great dead.

It is hard to say how far the perfect studies of the human body which excite such admiration in the few original works, and the masterly copies from such artists as Phidias, Scopas, Lysippus, Polyklitos, Myron, Praxiteles, and others, are to be attributed to the fact that in the days in which they practised their art, the study of the human form in all its naked splendour was not a question of the privacy of the studio, but an everyday example under the broad natural light of the sky, and not subject to the effects of light and shade, which, however perfect a studio may be, have the greatest influence upon the eye, and the consequent impression conveyed to the brain. Mr. James Donaldson, in a series of articles contributed to *The Contemporary Review*, afterwards collected and with additional

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matter issued under the title *Woman*, mentions that the young Spartan girls wrestled in a state of nudity ; it is also certain that in the festival processions and games in ancient Greece the opportunity of studying the human forms of both sexes, under every conceivable expression of the play of the muscles, was a matter not for wondering comment, but a comparatively common occurrence, which, leaving an artist with his study unfinished upon any one occasion, would give him the comfortable certainty of an equally favourable chance to complete his work more or less at his own choice.

Mr. Donaldson speaks of the absolute worship of the human body, which was as natural in its expression as the beauties of Nature are to us ; he conveys this admiration in the following terms, which leave nothing to add : “The Greeks loved everything that was beautiful, but it was in the human body that they saw the noblest form of earthly beauty.” He proceeds to relate the well-known and probably true anecdote of Phryne, the celebrated courtesan, who, being accused of impiety, was defended in full court by the orator Hyperides ; he, seeing that the verdict would certainly go against his client, with dramatic action tore open the bosom of her dress, exposing to the assembled judges a form perfectly marvellous in its moulded beauty. An acquittal followed, which the low-minded might attribute to the seduction of the female form ; but the artistic motive which probably ruled with old men, unlikely to be carried away by any such temptation, is so well expressed by Mr. Donaldson that I take the liberty of reproducing the passage : “One of the writers who relate the circumstance gives the reason of the decision. The judges beheld in such an exquisite form not an ordinary mortal, but a priestess and prophetess of the divine Aphrodite. They were inspired with awe, and would have deemed it a sacrilege to mar or destroy such a perfect masterpiece of creative power.” A like veneration for the beautiful since the occurrence of this episode would have saved to the world many exquisite specimens of Art, destroyed with reckless indifference by those who, with early training on the lines upon which the ancient Greeks conveyed their lessons to the young, would have perhaps been able to overcome their hate and fanaticism by the reflection that the highest displays of artistic work in any direction are something more than human, and that the expression of a perfect art is not to be gauged by the moral status of the artist.

It may be asked, “But what has this to do with Carpets, or the Contemporary Arts ?” It is safe to say that the cultivation of the eye in one direction cannot fail to be of the greatest service to the