

PEASANT
ART
In
Austria and Hungary



PEASANT ART

IN AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY



EDITED BY CHARLES HOLME

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AUSTRIA. INTRODUCTION BY A. S. LEVETUS.

THE term "Austrian peasant" is intended, broadly speaking, to include all peasants, irrespective of race, who are subject to Austrian rule. Austria is the empire of mixed nationalities, there being some seventeen of them. This conglomeration of races may be more precisely divided into three groups, viz. : the German-speaking people, the Slavs, and a less determinate group composed of the Ladines, the Italians, and the Roumanians. This diversity of race accounts for the variety and richness of the peasant art in which is expressed racial sentiment.

No fine line of demarcation can be drawn to indicate where the peasant art of one nation begins and another ends; yet the practised eye soon learns to differentiate, for though there are certain similarities there are at the same time wide and distinct divergencies. The motive of a design may be the same, but the methods of carrying it out may be various. This variation is due to subconscious racial instinct. There is, moreover, an involuntary personal note which distinguishes the objects made by the peasants of one and the same race, this being particularly the case in the Slav group.

For the better understanding of these points, it may be well to call before the mental eye a picture of those countries composing the Austrian empire. They consist of the German-speaking lands Upper and Lower Austria, Styria, Salzburg, Salzkammergut, North and South Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Carinthia, parts of Bohemia, Moravia; and the Slav lands Bohemia, Moravia, the eastern part of Silesia, Carniola, Istria, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Galicia—that is, Austrian Poland—and the Bukovina. Galicia and Silesia are thickly populated by Poles, East Galicia by Ruthenians, and the Bukovina by Ruthenians and Roumanians. The Ladines are confined to certain valleys of the Tyrol, of which the Grödnertal is the most important, and the Italians to that part of South Tyrol beyond Bozen, the Küstenland and Trieste.

Another special feature which should be borne in mind is the heterogeneous character of the landscape. To the west are the Alps, which extend from Vorarlberg to the Vienna forests, to the east the Carpathians; while Zakopane, a very important place when considering the art of the peasants, is situated on the Galician (Polish) side of the Tatra mountains. Bohemia has the Riesengebirge and the Bohemian Wolds, while those countries to the extreme south, Bosnia and Herzegovina, have nothing but naked Karst rocks. To those countries with a sea front must be added Dalmatia, the Küstenland, and Istria. Nor must the low plains of Moravia be

omitted, for in the Slav parts of this country the art of the peasant shows no signs of dying out.

To complete the picture we must go to the high mountain pastures, where the lonely shepherd, while tending his flock, employs his busy fingers in fashioning some object of use of bone or wood, which he then engraves, inlays, or carves. Indeed, so prolific is his art that it is known as "Hirtenkunst" to distinguish it from the peasant art in general.

It would be useless to enter into the question as to when and where the Austrian peasant obtained his first knowledge of applied and decorative art. Certain it is that to some extent it was inborn ; but whether it received impulse from outside is of some interest to us. We know that two great waves of thought, coming in diametrically opposite directions, must assuredly have made themselves felt even in the most remote districts. These were the Byzantine, which came from the east, and the Catholic from the west. These two distinct influences account, to some extent, for the diversity in the art of the Austrian peasants. For the work of the German-speaking and West Slav peasants is essentially different, from the point of view of history, from that of the east and south Slavs and Roumanians. The art of the Austrian peasant is therefore an exceedingly wide subject, extremely varied, not only in the different countries of the empire but also in the towns and villages comprising these countries.

Unfortunately there is no open air museum in Austria where one can wander at will and form a complete picture for oneself as to how the peasants lived in the past, or how some of them live at the present time. Nevertheless, in the various ethnographical and other museums at Graz, Linz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Bozen, Brunn, Prague, Zakopane, Cracow, Lemberg and Sarajevo fine specimens of peasant work, peculiar to the respective provinces, may be seen. In most of the towns throughout the kingdoms and provinces there are besides small local museums, but the art of the Austrian peasant in its entirety can only be seen at the Museum für österreichische Volkskunde in Vienna, where all the races are represented.

But the decay of the peasant's art is apparent in many quarters, and in its place the home industries have risen. The action taken by the Government and different societies is doing much to revive the lost arts. Schools have been organised, teachers sent from village to village to teach new methods and designs ; but the school work, beautifully executed as it is, loses in comparison with the naïve charm expressed in the spontaneous designs and quaintness

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of thought shown in the work of the unschooled daughters of the soil, who, with hands coarsened by field labour eight months in the year, employed themselves during the long winter months in creating some object of love and fancy. For in the peasant woman, in a still higher degree than in the peasant man, an inborn feeling for art exists. One need only take a glance at the exquisite specimens of lace and embroidery here reproduced to realise the inventiveness of their minds, and with what pride and skill they have performed their self-imposed tasks. Their art has passed from generation to generation. The great-great-grandmother may have learned it from the lady of the demesne in those far-distant times when she, her daughters, and maidens sat at their frames in the "Komenate"; or she may have learnt to embroider from the nuns.

As regards the men, there is no doubt the peasant had ample opportunity in the churches and in the castles of his lord to observe objects of decorative art. The village youth, after having completed his apprenticeship, went on his *Wanderjahr*, and brought back with him new ideas in art as in other things, which he consciously or unconsciously, through his workmanship, conveyed to his neighbours. Again, during the long and frequent wars the villager was forced to serve as a soldier, and no doubt, possessing an observant mind and retentive memory, he involuntarily acquired something of the culture of other lands, which he afterwards turned to account.

Of all the Austrian lands perhaps Tyrol, from Innsbruck southwards, is best known to the English-speaking race. Yet how little does the casual traveller really know of this land of many surprises till he has penetrated her valleys. The old houses and farms, nay, their very roofs tell their own tale, each town, each village, almost, having its own characteristic forms and methods. In the Alpine lands houses are built otherwise than in the districts of the Carpathians, the Tatra, or again in the plains of Bohemia or Moravia. Each country has its own traditions and manner of building, and in Tyrol, Salzburg, Salzkammergut and Upper Austria there are everywhere well-preserved specimens to be seen, for these districts have not suffered so much from war and rapine as the more eastern countries. The existing buildings show us the manner of decorating the eaves, the gables, balconies, and façades, the latter being adorned either with fresco paintings or chip-carving, while in some places both forms of decoration may be seen. In Egerland the houses remind us somewhat of the old English cottages, for they are half-timbered or whitewashed and decorated with black timber. In other parts of Bohemia and in

Moravia, notably among the Slovaks and Hannaks, the houses are whitewashed and ornamented with frescoes of national designs and colours. This work is always executed by women. Every spring the exterior and interior of each house is re-decorated, so that they make bright spots in the landscape and serve to relieve its monotony. In Zakopane the houses are built entirely of wood, with thatched overhanging roofs. Each peasant builds his own house and adorns it with pierced woodcarving, no two designs being alike; indeed, so distinct is the art that it is known as the "Zakopane style."

The Austrian peasant always builds his house with a view to serving practical purposes. The best room, the *Stube*, claims his chief attention and also that of his wife. In some lands the roof is timbered and the walls panelled; this is notably the case in parts of Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Styria. The woodwork is ornamented with chip-carving more or less rich in design, according to the individual taste of the worker. In other parts, and throughout the Crown lands, the walls are whitewashed. The furniture is almost invariably painted in some dull ground tone and ornamented with traditional designs, these being as a rule conventional flowers built up, as it were, in architectural forms. This manner of decoration is, however, not peculiar to any one land but to all those comprising the Austrian dominions. It varies only in form and the manner of executing the design, there being a distinct local and even personal element everywhere present. The distribution of the furniture varies in detail in the different lands. A tremendous amount of thought is spent upon the bed, placed in the *Stube*, which, therefore, forms a living and sleeping room. The beautiful embroidered bed-linen is a special feature in every household, two cupboards, the "marriage" coffer, two immovable benches meet in the angle of the window, and before them is placed the strong table made for the wear and tear of daily use. In another angle is a corner-cupboard, a shelf which serves as an altar. This is covered with a fine embroidered cloth, and on it are placed the Cross, the Image, and the Bible. To the right and left of this hang holy pictures, very primitive and generally of painted glass. Racks ornamented with show plates, mugs, and tankards extend along the walls, sometimes forming a kind of fresco. In Tyrol, in German Bohemia, and particularly in Egerland, the plates and tankards are of pewter. In other countries they are of earthenware, painted in national colours and of various designs. A tiled stove, soft in tone, chairs, and personal treasures complete the furniture.

Once the big cupboards and "marriage" coffers were filled with

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exquisitely embroidered treasures now preserved in museums or private collections. These embroideries offered the peasant woman full scope for her inborn love of the beautiful, the embroidered sheets and pillow-cases, which formerly adorned the beds of the simple peasants, being particularly beautiful. The kitchen is simply for use, and here the meals are cooked and served. It is separated from the *Stube* by a passage, which also divides it from those rooms used to store the provisions and other things for winter's use.

On the embellishment of the home the wife and maiden bestow much thought and personal labour. Each article has its own definite use. Some of them are only brought out on some great occasion, such as a marriage, birth, churching, christening or a funeral. Such articles are still used by the Slovaks and Hannaks in Moravia, where the old customs are maintained. The women embroider as of yore. To describe even a few of the head-shawls, head-scarves, and caps would require more space than we have at our disposal, so fertile are the imaginations of the women, so rich their fantasy. These articles vary considerably; some are elaborately embroidered and ornamented with drawn-thread work, and bordered with pillow-lace, others are worked in silks with lines of drawn-thread work between, but always finished off with lace. The caps, which are only worn by married women, vary much; they mostly display great beauty of design and execution. In olden days it was the pious duty of the mother to fashion and work her daughter's bridal cap, which after the great day was carefully laid aside till the day of death, when it was again placed on the head of the departed one. Such caps are even now sacred to their owners, as a touching incident will serve to show. An old Slovak woman, bent with age, was offered, what was to her, a large sum of money for her cap, which was of more than usual beauty. The money would have provided her with many comforts, but she refused it, saying, in reverential tones, "How will my mother know me? I cannot do it." It was the token by which her mother would recognise her in that "far-off land."

The bedcurtains are only used during confinements. They are meant to keep off the evil spirit and at the same time to secure privacy. Some of these are worked in silks, others in cottons. The designs are sometimes curious, being descriptive of scenes connected with the event, such as the bringing of the food, the coming of the friends, and the churching.

Many fine specimens of work, chiefly head-scarves, may be seen in the village churches, where they serve as antependiums to the altars. These are votive offerings of childless women. The head-

cloths are worn over the cap, which, beautiful as it often is, is hidden from the public view in such a manner that the embroidered ends fall one above the other. The ends themselves are bordered with pillow-lace, made in colours to harmonise with the embroidery, or in white, as the case may be. Exquisite as the embroidery is, the lace made by the peasants is no less beautiful. Often between the lines of embroidery beautiful drawn-thread work is to be seen, this more particularly on the head-shawls. The older specimens are always made on home-spun linen, and the dyes are purely vegetable ones, extracted from the plants by the woman herself. In some villages the designs are roughly drawn with a lead pencil on the material, but more often the worker follows her own fancy as she works.

The blouse is another article of dress upon which a large amount of thought and work is spent. It is interesting to trace how, from the simple strip of embroidery on the upper part of the sleeve, this garment gradually develops into the richly embroidered sleeve and front. Some of this work baffles description, it is so intricate and so beautiful, the designs in the eastern countries reminding one of those of the Orient or of the ancient Egyptians. The soft and harmonious colours chosen by these simple folk are particularly beautiful. In Moravia the young girls wear a kind of sailor collar intricately embroidered in black or coloured silks.

Some of the garments worn by the young unmarried men, the Slovaks and Hannaks of Moravia and the Dalmatians, are exceedingly interesting, their Zouaves being embroidered and their shirt-fronts ornamented with exquisite drawn-thread work. In some lands, notably in Tyrol and Salzburg, the men wear belts embroidered with pated peacock-quills.

It is worth travelling some distance to see the peasants in all their finery on a Saint's day or a holiday, or at the annual fair. The scene is bright and animated, and youths and maidens, in national dress, go through their national dances on the village green, and sing their national songs (*Lieder*), while the old people look on admiringly. The peasants wear their costumes with a grace and charm inherited from their forebears.

But the national dress is unfortunately dying out: it may still be seen in Tyrol, Styria, Silesia, Galicia, Bukovina, parts of Bohemia and Moravia, and in Dalmatia; that of the primitive South Slavs, the Morlakes in Dalmatia, and the Tschitschen in Istria is far more ancient than that worn by the other races. The ornaments have their own peculiar interest, and in this respect Dalmatia is richer than any other country. There is infinite variety, from the simple ornament made of beads and worn by the Ruthenians, to the elaborate

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ones of silver, and even gold, worn by the women of Dalmatia and Istria. The refined filigree ornaments made by the peasants in Cortina are well-known. Less so the heavier silver filigree work made in Salzburg and parts of Tyrol, the filigree brooches of the Wallachians, or the inlaid brooches of Egerland. Sterzing am Brenner has for centuries been famous for its high back-combs, made of ivory or bone engraved or pierced, with silver foil showing through the piercings. The *Stecher*, which serves to keep the heavy braids of hair in place, is still worn by the maidens of Tyrol. Whatever the ornament may be, it has its definite purpose, its object being both for use and adornment.

The village churches possess rich treasures of peasant art in the wood-carvings, wall decorations and votive offerings ; here, too, may be found many specimens of embroidery made by women, such as altar-cloths, chalice-cloths, and vestments.

It is but natural, considering the position of the countries geographically, that the art of the peasants should have reached a higher form of expression in some lands than in others. Take, for instance, Lower Austria, which has always been influenced by Vienna. Here the decay of peasant art first showed itself, for the capital was easy of access by the Danube. The peasants here discarded their national dress more than fifty years ago, almost before the age of railways, and with this departed their old manner of decorating their homes. Still on the oldest houses remains of frescoes executed in sgraffito by itinerants and Italians may still be seen. The *motifs* are as a rule taken from the Holy Scriptures. The furniture was painted in gay colours, all styles conglomerated together to make one style—"Lower Austrian" or "Upper Austrian," as the case may be. Such examples may still be seen in the home-steads round about Enns and Amstetten. Majolica, which was at one time made at Brünn am Steinfield, is a thing of the past, though fine specimens may still be seen in the museums. Here, too, may also be found those lovely caps made of gold thread and embossed which were once the pride of every woman who possessed them. The spinning-wheels and hand-looms have vanished for ever, the manufacturers supplying the needs of the peasant.

Upper Austria, and more especially the Salzkammergut, still retains its old traditions in *Volkskunst*. Here wood-carving is favoured, the making of pottery is a speciality, while the village artist still paints the glass pictures for the adornment of the *Stube* and church. In Ischl and in Aussee, which is in Styria, the women still embroider, not for themselves but for sale. In the more distant

parts the hum of the spinning wheel or the clap of the hand-loom may yet be heard in the winter evenings.

In the Duchy of Salzburg the peasant decorates his home as of yore, and the potter's wheel is still busy, for majolica has been made here since the middle of the sixteenth century, while silver filigree work has flourished since the early part of the nineteenth century, when it was first made by one Jakob Breitsaner, who brought the art to Salzburg.

Styria being an Alpine land and thickly wooded, it is but natural that the peasants should devote their spare time to wood-carving. Though on the whole this district is less rich in design than is Tyrol, its productions have, nevertheless, peculiar charm. In the mountain villages the furniture is painted in national colours, the designs being of the usual conventional flower and birds, but treated in a refined manner. In Styria also great attention is given to metal-work, and for centuries this country has been celebrated for its wrought-iron work, which found its way to the other countries of the empire, notably Tyrol, and even reached Italy. Jewellery was also made of this material. The women spun and embroidered their garments and probably took their designs from the pattern books which were brought from Italy and Germany; for it must be remembered that even in remote times Styria was one of the highways between these two countries, and consequently, like Tyrol, reached a high degree of culture when the more eastern lands were in a state of semi-barbarity.

Thanks to the comparative difficulty in penetrating its high mountain valleys, both North and South Tyrol are still rich in peasant art. The people retain their national dress, which varies considerably in the different valleys, but which is always harmonious in colour and worn with that peculiar grace which one involuntarily associates with the Tyrolese. There was a time when the peasant women of Tyrol revelled in fine embroidered linen and lace for the decoration of their homes and themselves. It is not so now, but there are fine specimens to be seen in the nunneries, in the churches, and in the museums. Cross-stitched embroidery seems to have been preferred, worked in red on home-spun linen. From the fact that these designs do not greatly vary from those of other countries one may gather that they, too, have been taken from pattern-books. The peasant women wear no jewellery or ornaments except a kind of brooch (*Fürtuchsklemmer*) made of metal set with stones. Similar pieces are also worn by the peasant women of Carniola, Styria, Egerland, Wallachia and East Silesia. The men, on the other hand, wear silver ornaments. They excel in chip-carving, and every swain

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carves his love-offerings, which take a variety of form, such as milking-stools, salt-boxes, knife-handles, forks and spoons, always articles of use. The very cow-collars and halters show how deeply ingrafted is the feeling for decoration in the Tyrolese peasant. Majolica is still made in South Tyrol and is an old peasant industry in North Tyrol; in Schwaz it was first introduced a hundred years ago. The wrought-iron work is also a feature of the district and embraces hanging-lamps, candlesticks, fire-dogs and shields. Vorarlberg shows many affinities to Tyrol in her *Volkskunst*, more especially in wood-carving.

Carinthia has her own peculiar *Volkskunst*, which consists chiefly of basket-weaving, embroidery in bright colours, and objects of wood for daily use, which are carved or painted. The peasants wear wooden shoes cut out of beech wood and decorate them with primitive chip-carving.

Carniola has for centuries been famous for its pillow-lace, said to have been made in Idria as far back as the end of the fifteenth century. It is still a busy centre of lace-making, even men occupying themselves with it. The embroidery is executed in cross or twist-stitch, worked at one time only in black silk or wool. Now other colours are used. The head-cloths of the women are of embroidered cambric. A band so closely wrought in gold thread that it has the appearance of embossed gold is worn in front. The women also wear heavy girdles formed of thick loops of silver or silver-gilt. The breeding of bees being a special industry here, the peasants devote their ingenious fantasy to ornamenting the *Stirnbretter*—that is, the boards to protect the hives—with all manner of painted designs. These decorated boards are also to be found in Carinthia.

The Küstenland, Istria and Dalmatia form the South Slav group of Austrian *Volkskunst*; the further south one goes the more apparent is the peculiar character of the *Volkskunst* which has come under different influences—that of the Slavs of the Balkans, and of the Italians, chiefly Venetians. Dalmatia stands alone, for in addition to these elements the people have also been strongly influenced by Byzantine and Turkish art. This is chiefly to be seen in their homes and in the decorations of their persons. The Dalmatians can boast an extremely rich and varied textile industry, which, like that of the other primitive races of Austria—the Goralians and Ruthenians—expresses itself in the ancient designs and in the technique in which they are executed. They are also famous for their lace work, with which their personal garments and household linen are ornamented. The bridal blouse is to the Dalmatian what the bridal crown is to the Egerlander: and, like the bridal crown,

it generally belongs to the village and is lent when occasion requires. This bridal blouse is most elaborate in design and workmanship, being literally incrustated with embroidery. Though the men's shirts are hidden from all eyes but their own, the amount of earnest labour spent on them is everywhere remarkable.

The love of the Dalmatian for jewellery is well known. He does not make it himself but employs the village silversmith, or it is imported from Istria, which otherwise has little to show in the way of *Volkskunst*. In their wood-carving the Dalmatians take their designs from the Orient. There is nothing they leave unadorned, from the largest objects to the most simple ones. Dalmatia is the land of sunny dreams, peopled with a sunny people; it is the country where the east and west meet; and this accounts for the manifold variety and beauty of its peasant art.

The northern lands, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, may be divided into two groups: the German-speaking people and the Slavs. The Germans are of different tribes, who settled in these parts during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and eighteenth centuries, bringing with them their traditions and customs. Owing to their rapid development, particularly during the last fifty years, the Germans have discarded their national garb, and very little is left of their *Volkskunst*. The Egerland embroidery, which is only worn on the sleeves of the blouses, is of great beauty. It is always worked with some shade of blue silk or cotton veined with chrome yellow. The villagers wear their native dress, which is extremely simple and worn without affectation, but many of the old ceremonies have died out. The bridal crown, once the pride of every village, or in some families an heirloom, can now be seen only in museums. It is made of gold thread in the form of an inverted cup. Egerland is famous for her pewter plates and tankards and for her ceramics, which differ both in design and colour from those made by the Slavs.

The art of Czech-Bohemia differs considerably from that of Egerland. It is more rich, more varied, and akin to that of the Hannaks and Slovaks. Many exquisite examples may be seen in the Ethnographical, National and Náprestek museums in Prague—embroideries, filmy lace, and every possible article both for the adornment of the person and for the home. The dwellers in the Bohemian Wold, the *Choden*, still retain their national garb, which is perhaps the oldest and most beautiful of all the Bohemian types. The women of Pilsen, Plass, and the surrounding villages also wear gay costumes, but the custom is rapidly dying out. Their pottery shows Dutch and Italian influence, but it is inferior to that of Moravia.

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Moravia has been famous for its pottery since the eleventh century and the German settlers have done much towards its development, especially in supplying new *motifs* and in the technique of pottery making. In Iglau, the German part of the Hannakei, where the peasant women also wear their ancient garb, many of the old customs are preserved. The bridal crown here differs from that of Egerland, taking the form of an inverted basin, and is, besides, much heavier. It is made of silver filigree, into which are worked pieces of coloured glass, and is still used at the marriage ceremony. But it is among the Slav races of these countries that the highest expression of *Volkskunst* may be seen, and the many beautiful specimens here reproduced of the embroidery and lace made by the Slovak and Hannak women will show how great their skill in this art is. One asks in vain how did these women learn the wonderful stitches such as are only to be found in their work? The lace made in the German districts differs considerably from that made in the Slav parts; both favour pillow-lace, that of the Slavs being much finer, akin to that made by the Slovaks in Hungary and the Russian peasants. Their costumes are singularly rich and beautiful.

In the south of Moravia everything is decorated in floral designs of rich colour, the exterior and interior of the houses, the furniture and pottery. Here the women make pillow-lace of gold or a combination of gold and silver thread. Since the fifteenth century the peasants of Bohemia and Moravia have occupied themselves with glass-blowing, the objects made being then adorned with engraving, and, as a rule, coloured. The Czechs and Slovaks illuminated their books, and in the middle of the eighteenth century they had their schools where they taught this art.

In the extreme east of the Austrian Empire—East Silesia, Galicia and Bukovina—Byzantine and Oriental influences are everywhere apparent in the peasant's art, not only in the designs but also in the colouring, which is always soft, subdued, and harmonious. This applies not only to the carpets but also to the dress of the people. In Galicia the peasant makes almost everything for his own use and that of his family, or he purchases what he requires by barter, especially in East Galicia among Ruthenians where the *Volkskunst* is most ancient and primitive. The Poles and Ruthenians still work at their hand-looms, consequently their designs are such as can be adapted to weaving purposes. The walls of the homes are decorated with towels woven in attractive hues. Both men and women wear embroidered blouses and belts, the designs being Oriental in character and the colours well blended, the *motifs* being usually conventional foliage.

One of the most interesting tribes in Galicia is the Huzulians, who are breeders of cattle and of sturdy horses. They are even more primitive than the Ruthenians of the plain, though they are better off from a material point of view. Here, too, barter is the means of exchange. Their ornaments are of moulded brass, Oriental in design. Rings, necklaces, ear-rings, bands for the hair, crosses and other objects are made of this metal. Their axe-headed sticks, which also serve as weapons, are of engraved brass, or of wood inlaid with brass, some of the work being beautifully executed. Their textiles and wooden objects, which they ornament with pierced or chip-carving, are particularly good. Pottery is a special industry throughout East Galicia and is made in the plains and in the mountains of Galicia, by far the most interesting being the Bachminski ware. The tiles used for the building of the stoves are also original in form and in design and possess a certain charm of colouring. These tiles are chiefly made at Sokal.

The art of the Polish peasants of Galicia bears on its face the influence of those many races who in remote times settled in what was once the kingdom of Poland. The peasants round Cracow form a special class, and their art is most interesting, their motives being taken from plants and animals, the latter being particularly favoured in their textiles. One can also trace the influence of Gothic art, which is not extraordinary considering how very many lovely ancient Gothic churches there are in Cracow itself and other towns. The Goralians are the Polish peasants of the mountains, dwelling chiefly at Zakopane.

Of the Zakopane style mention has already been made. In the houses one sees the peasant's art in all its refined simplicity. The ornamentation is multifarious in its combinations and executed in chip-carving and pierced work. Each peasant builds his own house, decorates it and furnishes it. The national dress has been discarded, but not the manner of building or of living, and everything is done with express intent. One has only to turn to the illustrations from Zakopane, reproduced in this work, to gather how deep the love of the beautiful is ingrained in these simple Polish peasants of the Tatra.

The south-east of Bukovina is very thickly populated with Ruthenians, whose art resembles that of the Ruthenians of Galicia. It is far otherwise with the Roumanians, who form a very large part of the inhabitants of this country. These peasants have a more fertile imagination, and are more dextrous in the execution of their designs, whether they be for objects for their home or for the church. Their embroidery is chiefly geometrical in design, and one may

safely say that some of the finest specimens of Roumanian embroidery are to be found in Bukovina.

In all the Slav countries they take a particular delight in the painting of Easter eggs. These eggs play an important part in the Easter games and an infinite amount of pains is taken in embellishing them. Sometimes they bear some motto, some wise saw or adage, which has caught the peasant's particular fancy. In some parts the girls make them for their lovers, in others the lovers for the girls; the young men of the village go from house to house on Easter eve, knock at the windows of their sweethearts and demand eggs from them, which they afterwards return at the dance on the village green.

The *Volkskunst* of Bosnia and Herzegovina is essentially Oriental in character, and bears certain traces in common with that of the other Balkan countries, but as they belong to Austria they have been included in this volume. One of the first tasks the Austrian Government took upon itself during the occupation of these countries after restoring order was to give fresh life to the home industries. This it did by establishing schools for metal-work, embroidery, and the weaving of silk, linen, and carpets. Another matter of great moment was the gathering together of the finest specimens of peasant art obtainable, which give us an insight into the manner in which these people lived and their love of ornament. The National Museum at Sarájevo was founded, and the collection here is very complete. It is instructive to learn how such museums are valued throughout Austria and Hungary, for it has everywhere been recognised that they are important for the study of the people themselves, and their way of living. In their manner of building, in the decoration of their homes, and in their dress the Bosnians and Herzegovinians show a fine appreciation for beauty in design and harmonious blending of colours. The designs are inherited, for the peasants can rarely draw or even be taught to draw. With them it is pure instinct. The Bosnians show distinctive aptitude for inlaying and for the incrustation of metal, while they excel in wood-carving. The women, both Mohammedan and Christian, are facile with the needle, their embroidery bearing comparison with that of other nations.

Enough has been said to show how rich a field is offered in the work of the simple people of the nations and to rouse interest in the manner in which these peasants pass their lives. It is a story not told in words but in works, which are everywhere present, and which can only be understood by those impartial minds who make no use of idle comparisons but take peasants' art as it is—a thing

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unto itself. It is impossible to consider here in detail the numerous illustrations which are shown in the Austrian section of this volume. But a careful examination of them cannot fail to interest those whose artistic outlook is broad and sympathetic.

AUSTRIAN PEASANT ART. BY PROFESSOR DR. M. HABERLANDT.

WHEN we turn to the particular branches of the peasant art of Austria, the first division to arouse our keenest interest is that which comprises the needlework and textile productions of the people. As a rule these are the work of the female portion of the population, and have been executed—and in remote districts are still being executed—in their own homes, partly for the adornment of wearing apparel and partly for ecclesiastical and domestic purposes, a vast amount of time and energy being spent on them. From what has already been written we know how strong is the claim for pre-eminence in this field put forward by the non-German races (*i.e.*, the Slavs and Roumanians) on the score of the thoroughly national character of their work, the large scale which such productions have assumed and the diversity of their methods, not forgetting the wealth and antiquity of the treasury of ornamental forms garnered therein. Among these productions the embroideries of the rural districts occupy the most conspicuous place, and along with them woven articles (carpets, aprons, wallets and bags) play a very noteworthy part. Then there is another class, at once considerable in extent and of importance as a peasant craft, comprising the various species of lace, such as needle-point, bobbin, and crochet—in which, on the one hand, the relations with the higher ranges of the art of lace-making, and on the other hand the play of rustic fancy are most clearly exhibited : and then, finally, mention should be made of those productions in which glass-beads are the material employed ; this branch of work also, with the technique belonging to it, was derived in the first place from the modes of the town population.

Apart from material and technique, which everywhere reveal a long-established, indigenous character, the distinguishing feature of this branch of the peasant art of Austria centres in its ornament. In the case of the Eastern and Southern Slavs this ornament has for the most part originated in a remote antiquity and has been sedulously fostered throughout succeeding generations. In the case of German, West Slav, and Italian work, on the other hand, it is demonstrable that the ornamental forms exhibited therein passed over into peasant art at a relatively late period—from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century and even later—through the instrumentality of the Church, the monasteries and monastery schools, or of the ladies of noble and wealthy families, or by means of pattern books and copies. In their adoption by the peasantry such ornamental forms underwent modification ; and often faultiness of

reproduction and technical shortcomings came to be regarded as meritorious features of the peasant productions.

Coming now to the embroideries of the Alpine districts, it is to be observed that they have all more or less their fixed place in the life of the people and consequently have a distinctly national character. There is the bridal trousseau which the bride and her female friends have prepared for the wedding-day, and then there are the various other articles which also belong to her outfit—pillow and cushion covers; baby's christening clothes; *Vorstecktücher*, or overalls; *Balkentücher*, or shutter-cloths (so-called because when a death happens they are laid on the window shutters, a cross and pictures being then placed thereon); altar cloths; covers for the *Weihkorb*, or consecrated basket, in which offerings of eggs and cakes are made at Easter; further, prayer-book wallets, and the so-called *Verstüachl*, or verse-cloths (*i.e.*, handkerchiefs), which the girls give to their sweethearts, having first worked thereon with their own hands a verse, the letters of which have been traced by the village carpenter with red and blue pencil. Among the ornamental motives those most frequently in evidence are stags, birds in pairs, flower vases (sometimes heart-shaped), the double eagle, also various religious symbols—the Monstrance, the Crucifixion, the pelican, the Paschal Lamb, and so forth. In respect of technique the embroideries of the Alpine districts are quite simple. The stitches principally in use are the cross and flat stitch, while occasionally fancy stitches are employed, such as the festoon and the plaited or herring-bone stitch (*Schlingstich*, *Zopfstich*). As a foundation for the needlework, ordinary household linen is the material commonly used, and linen yarn and wool usually serve for the stitching. In most cases the yarn employed for embroidery is dyed red, while for artistic open work white linen yarn is utilized, especially in Tyrol; in Carinthia wool of a rusty red or blue or a light green shade is used for table and cushion covers, while in Carniola black wool or (near the Italian border) black silk used to figure most frequently.

The embroidered work of the peasants of German race in the Sudetic mountain districts, as well as that of the German colonists in Galicia and the Bukovina, shows, on the whole, a quite close kinship to that of the German Alpine population in technique, material, and ornament. The numerous examples of white embroidery certainly show a Slavic affinity. The ornamentation is of rather recent adoption; open work is frequent, and plant motives (sprigs of blossom, leaf garlands, vine leaves, grapes, etc.), are often employed. Very characteristic are the silk-embroidered sleeve-

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borders of the shirts worn by the women of Egerland. On almost every garment one may find the tripartite blossom issuing from a flower vase, and in many cases this flower vase is heart-shaped, as it frequently is in other connections. These trimmings belong to a period extending from 1820 to 1860 and are worn on the Sunday and wedding apparel of the young women.

The most prominent group of Austrian peasant embroideries, comprehending the artistic needlework of the Czecho-Slavs in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, is rightly regarded as the national pride of this important part of the Austrian population. It is true these productions are rarely ornamental in character, and, moreover, are not very ancient, but still they possess an abundance of meritorious features. The group as a whole falls into three minor divisions, both from a geographical and from an ethnographical point of view ; namely, the Bohemian, the Moravian, and the Silesian. While the Bohemian group, influenced to a greater degree by German models, gives evidence of being less ancient and less independent, the Moravian embroideries, at once the most fully developed and most differentiated group, are, in comparison with the others, distinguished chiefly by their purely native charm, both as regards technique and ornament ; while again the Silesian group, displaying a greater poverty of form, reveals a closer affinity to the Bohemian productions.

The peasant embroidery of the Czecho-Slavs reached its highest state in comparatively recent times ; we may take the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and especially the first half of the latter, as the period in which, under strong foreign influence—German and Italian particularly—this branch of peasant art developed its diversity of technique and ornamentation. These foreign influences were in the hands of the Czecho-Slav peasantry very adroitly blended with their own ancient traditions, and underwent a transformation in the course of which many new devices were produced. Weeks, and oftentimes months, were required for the execution of a simple piece of work. Larger pieces were carried out by several female workers. In many cases, no doubt, professional embroideresses and village sempstresses with their female assistants co-operated. The most ancient and most national productions are always things connected with the household, such as bed-linen, towels, coverlets, etc., while articles of dress, which are subject to greater mobility and more frequent change, disclose later and more varied modes even in respect of decoration. Certain more intimate and permanent components of personal attire, such as the hood, the shirt or blouse, and head-kerchiefs, belong to the

ancient and national order of things. As already mentioned, the technique of Czecho-Slav embroidery in Bohemia, and particularly in Moravia, had a more diversified development than in the Alpine lands. In these embroideries as many as twenty different species of stitch have been found, characteristically mingled according to the dictates of fancy. The same diversity and intermixture exists in regard to colours. The ornamental devices are mostly those we are already familiar with: the strewn flowers of the rococo, the six or eight-pointed star, frequently perforated, the tulip, the pink, garlands of flowers and leaves, all of the very simplest character.

The Moravian embroideries appeal to us as at once more ancient and peculiar, and especially so those of the Slovack people—such, for instance, as the insertion embroideries worked in *punto tirato* and *punto tagliato* with coloured silks, in which conventionalized peacocks occur as motives, as well as others which occur in German work. Very beautiful specimens of work, some of them with very old ornamentation, are also to be found in the hoods of the Moravian women, the ground of which is completely covered with multi-covered silk embroidery worked in the flat stitch (*Flachstich*). One meets also with bridal kerchiefs, head-shawls, hoods, etc., which are worked in white silk, the silk in this case being afterwards dyed with a mixture of saffron and white of egg. The dyeing is done with extreme care, although by a quite primitive process—a small wooden stick being dipped into the mixture and the silk embroidery then dabbed over with it. In a class by themselves are the Wallachian reticulated hoods which display patterns in black and white with geometrical designs.

Another very rich and charming group of Moravian peasant embroideries is that which comprises the collars and head bands worn by the girls, especially in the south of Moravia. The variation of ornament met with in these articles is extraordinary, a fact which can be verified by examining some hundreds of examples, all of which will be found to have been executed with exquisite taste, and without a duplicate amongst them. The colours which predominate are black and white; red and yellow also occur, and occasionally gold and silver; generally the same pattern is worked on the head-kerchiefs, the sleeves of the blouse or shirt and the collars, so that these pieces commonly form a set. A word should be said about the narrow edgings for the collars, the shoulders and shoulder-ends of the shirts; they are usually of a most beautiful golden yellow colour and worked in the so-called “bomb” stitch (*Bombenstich*). In the incredible diversity of ornamentation, which nevertheless varies within narrow limits, as well as in the multitu-

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dinous colour combinations of these astonishingly small compositions we find a striking revelation of the genius of these peasant artists.

It is to an essentially different and much more primitive and undeveloped field of peasant art that we now turn when considering the peasant needlework and textiles of the Carpathian region. In Galicia and the Bukovina not the Polish but only the Ruthenian and Roumanian peasant embroideries belong to the East European sphere of civilisation, and have a linealogy extending from remote antiquity down to the present time, showing us peasant art in its earliest status. From a comparison with Russian, particularly South Russian, and Finnish productions belonging to the Balkan area of civilization, it will be at once seen that in these Galician productions we behold merely the Western off-shoots of a peasant art which, under Byzantine influence, has developed in the east and south-east of Europe among peoples of very low economic status, and which, starting from late antique traditions, has made use of and mingled barbaric and Oriental elements. The survival of primeval or really "antique" methods in the peasant art of Eastern Europe down to the present day is demonstrable in several ways. One such case is the ancient Ruthenian method of plaiting as used in the making of women's hoods, men's girdles, bed-linen insertions, handkerchief borders. Another instance is the use of weaving by the Ruthenians in the production of their carpets, belts, wallets and bags, aprons, etc. A third process, which is undoubtedly of ancient origin, is displayed among the Huzulians in their remarkable bead work, executed with the sewing needle and thread, a species of work which is technically identical with the bead work of the ancient Egyptians. In the embroideries also the same high antiquity prevails along with considerable artistic taste, particularly in those met with on the shirts, the headkerchiefs and wedding-kerchiefs of the women, which latter are, as in South Russia, hung in the "white" room around the holy pictures. Among them we have white embroideries, frequently accompanied by open work and coloured embroidery, the former being done by all the peasant women in satin-stitch (*Plattstich*), the latter by the village needlewomen in cross-stitch, plaited-stitch or flat-stitch, preferably in coloured wool (six different shades or fewer), silk, gold and silver thread. Each pattern has a name peculiar to it. In modern times the application of coloured glass beads and gold and silver tinsel to these embroideries has become a favourite device.

Naturally the ornamentation of these Ruthenian and Rouma-

nian productions is their most interesting and most primitive feature. Connoisseurs of this work declare that in the distribution of particular ornaments and motives localization is clearly the rule, and that various classes of ornament can be distinguished as belonging to particular districts and even occasionally to villages. That, however, does not prevent us from recognising in the aggregate of these patterns a uniform style of peasant art. Many elements have, no doubt, come from outside—from the West as well as from the Orient. The predominant style is at first geometric, followed later by the ornamentation of textile art and conventionalized plant ornament. Figural additions are quite late and isolated. There is an inexhaustible variety of single motives, as well as of combinations of them. On close examination, however, they are seen to have been evolved from a relatively small number of basic motives by slight changes and additions.

As already hinted on more than one occasion, the Dalmatian embroideries are related to these both historically and in regard to style. Only in Dalmatia we have to do with a peasant art that is declining, while among the Ruthenians production still goes on with undiminished vitality. Many and varied are the articles to which the hand of the Dalmatian woman applies embroidery, in the technique of which there is also great diversity. The kerchief for the head, the hood, the upper part of the shirt, jackets and coats, aprons, girdles, vests, socks—these form the field of operations in this ancient and laborious craft. Almost everywhere bright colours are preferred; white embroidery is falling very much into the background and is only locally developed. The kinds of stitch used are numerous and artistic as well as technically interesting. The geometrical style of ornament which predominates is beautiful and recalls on the one hand that of the Greek Archipelago, and on the other hand that met with in South Russian and Finnish work. Later, in point of age, are the motives derived from plant prototypes, these being found more especially on the head-kerchiefs. In the south of Dalmatia Turkish influence is strongly in evidence; while the extremely effective and highly artistic open-work of the Island of Pago points to Venetian models.

The craft of weaving has been practised by generations of peasant workers among the Southern Slavs, in Roumania, and northwards as far as Scandinavia. In Austria, relics of this peasant art exist in Tyrol, Dalmatia and Bosnia, among the Ruthenians of Galicia and the Roumanians of the Bukovina. The products met with are carpets, bags and satchels, aprons, etc., worked in purely geometrical patterns which are handed down from father to son and are known

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by local names. These products were in days gone by scrupulously preserved as heirlooms and only parted with to strangers in case of dire necessity. At the present day a domestic industry has grown up in connection with them.

On most of the textile work executed by women in Austria lace-work of peasant origin is to be found. The rise of lace-making as a domestic industry in Austria has been everywhere due to the encouragement and facilities for instruction which the people have received from the upper and more cultured classes of society ; only in regard to certain developments which have taken place on Tyrolese, Dalmatian and Ruthenian soil can we assume that such a domestic industry has arisen spontaneously out of primitive rudiments. Apart from a few traces of late date met with in Upper Austria (the Salz-Kammergut) and Salzburg (Mattsee), it is only in Tyrol that we find lace-making carried on as a home industry, under the category of bobbin-lace, needle-point, and fillet lace. The patterns predominating are those of the purely geometrical order, corresponding to the earliest Renaissance lace. We also occasionally come across trees of an obviously conventionalized form, candelabra, monstrances, chalices, hearts, letters of the alphabet, these being typical of Tyrolese embroideries. Another famous centre of lace-making as a domestic industry is Idria in Carniola, where methods and motives have become very much mixed. Istria, Dalmatia and Croatia also produce peasant lace of a primitive character ; and from Dalmatia, moreover, at an earlier period came a very beautiful lace, *point de Raguse*, made especially for ecclesiastical vestments and luxurious wearing apparel, the patterns used being of Venetian origin. The bobbin or pillow-lace manufacture of Bohemia has its two chief areas of production in the Erzgebirge and the Böhmerwald. Czecho-Slav lace, so frequently distinguished by being multi-coloured and original in design, reached its culminating point in two districts—in the Slovack country (Slovakei) and divers places in Bohemia. In Silesia the bobbin-lace technique has become pretty general, especially in the mountain districts ; but in Galicia and the Bukovina it makes only a sporadic appearance, being replaced by the Ruthenian method of plaiting referred to above.

As a counterpart to the textile productions of peasant art which we have been noticing, and which almost without exception emanate from the female portion of the population, we have the woodwork of the men, the one like the other subserving in an eminent degree the needs of the household. In Austria, as elsewhere, this kind of work is very general among the people and very diversified in

character : for wood is *par excellence* the favourite material of the peasant worker ; in this readily accessible and pliant material his artistic propensities find their chief channel of expression. At one time the peasant's dwelling itself, constructed almost wholly of wood, was entirely put together by the hands of the occupier. But long before he became his own builder the peasant was accustomed to fashion his household furniture with axe and knife, until at the close of the Middle Ages properly so-called the handicrafts became established. Chiefly, however, it is the small articles of household use that have during later periods offered scope for the peasant artist's talent. A considerable section of them comprises the vessels and implements used by him in pastoral and agricultural operations, and these, therefore, constitute the principal objects of his art and have a character of their own, unrelated to higher types of artistic production, though we meet with close kinship of type and similarity of ornamentation among peoples of German, Slav, and Latin origin. The peasant craftsman also finds a frequent stimulus to his activity in the social and religious life of the community, the requirements of which afford occupation to the cleverest carvers of the village. There are the wooden masks for the secular and sacred plays performed by the people—the Nicholas Play, the Witches and Paradise Play, the so-called "Perchtenmasken" of Salzburg and Tyrol (*i.e.*, masques supposed to represent a survival of rites performed in pagan times in honour of the goddess Berchta) ; there are the staves of the herdsmen and couriers, the infinite number of manger figures for the tableaux which are so popular at Christmas time ; then one or other wayside shrine requires a holy figure, which is also needed for the gable niche or the domestic altar. There is a constant demand for crosses to be hung in house and stable, for doves emblematic of the Holy Ghost to suspend over the dining table, for figures and reliefs for the innumerable Calvaries. Here, from the earliest times, zealous village craftsmen of more than average skill have found a field for their artistic activities, always following, however, the traditions and, quite unconsciously, the models furnished by ecclesiastical and higher secular art. From the hands of such village craftsmen there have also issued certain memorials which owe their artistic value chiefly to the fact of their being painted, such as the so-called "Marterln" (pictures painted as memorials of the dead, and especially of those who have lost their lives in Alpine accidents), and votive pictures, the "Leonhardstafeln" (*i.e.*, painted tablets with figures of animals, so-called because dedicated to St. Leonard as the patron saint of huntsmen), beehive barge-boards, "Totenbretter"

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(*i.e.*, boards on which the dead are placed before being put into the coffin), crosses and tablets for graves, etc.

This kind of painting has in many places become a distinct branch of peasant art. Frequently it is to the female relations of the wood-carver that this work falls. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries itinerant painters, mostly Tyrolese from the Fleimser and Fassa Valleys (whence the name "Fassaner"), undertook the painting of domestic articles and all kinds of religious carvings as a branch of jobbing work and occasionally added their signatures. The carvers of Groeden took their figures to Ober-Ammergau to be painted. For the rest the painting of wood-carvings and signboards is chiefly met with in the German and Czecho-Slav peasant art of Austria; in the primitive art of the cultivators and herdsmen of the Carpathian districts and Dalmatia the application of colour to woodwork plays a much less conspicuous part.

The decorative processes which are met with in the woodwork of peasant origin are of manifold kinds and vary considerably in different localities. Naturally they are most abundant in the peasant art of the Alpine districts, where since the seventeenth century a high degree of skill has been attained, while there is a falling off in quantity and quality as we pass to the eastern and southern parts of the monarchy. The most primitive and ancient kind is the "Ritz-technik," in which the surface is simply scored over or scarified with a graving tool. It is still found occasionally in the woodwork of the Alpine districts and on corn-bins, intermingled with other species of ornament (chip-carving and fluting); in Roumania it continues in full vogue and is found in the shape of geometrical patterns (circles, semi-circles, spirals and crosses) on the furniture of the peasants. It is practised also in Istria and Dalmatia, particularly on the fronts of boxes and coffers. The most general and, next to this species of wood decoration, the most ancient technique is the "Kerbschnitt," *i.e.*, chip or notch-carving, which is met with less in the art of the regular craftsman than in the strictly primary peasant art of the Alpine lands; in the so-called Zakopane peasant art of the Goraliens spoon-racks, picture frames and kindred articles are decorated in this manner, as also among the Ruthenians, and especially the Huzulians and Roumanians; further, in the woodwork of Dalmatia—more particularly in that of the herdsmen of North Dalmatia and Bosnia—it figures on such things as spinning-wheels, spools, washing sticks, etc. For the rest many kinds of ornament are executed in high or low relief, fluted work, etc., such as geometrical patterns, religious symbols, dates, names and initial letters, monograms of Jesus and Mary, the multitudinous

plant motives of tradition (leaves, buds, flowers, flower-vases), and, finally, those scenic representations in which peasant art is so rich.

Side by side with these ornamental methods, but on a slightly higher plane, certain other and more difficult woodwork processes make their appearance. There is, first of all, inlaid work. It figures prominently in the work of the Renaissance period and follows Italian models. It has been practised more especially in Tyrol, Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, and is not uncommonly met with as a peasant craft. As an offshoot from it we have the filling up of intaglio ornaments with dark or coloured wax, a process much favoured by the herdsmen of Alpine and Carpathian districts, and especially in Tyrol and Carniola (here more particularly for decorating the stems of spoons). In many places instead of ordinary wax use is made of sealing-wax. Then we have straw inlay, which we find employed with very pleasing effect on wooden crucifixes, on the furniture of the Hanaks (particularly the benches, the panels of boxes and coffers, table-tops, etc.), and also, though to a less extent, on Roumanian furniture; in all probability it was originally a method practised in the monasteries and afterwards adopted by secular workers. Metals, such as brass, lead and pewter, were also employed by regular craftsmen for the production of ornamental inlays (*e.g.*, in measuring-rods, whip-handles, distaffs, pipes), and analogous ornamentation found its way into the domestic productions of the rural cultivators, as among the Wallachs, with their mother-o'-pearl inlays, and especially the Huzulians; while in Dalmatia, and more particularly in Bosnia, the same aptitude in assimilating Saracenic practices is met with. A process of wood decoration which is of very great antiquity, going back, in fact, to prehistoric times, and is also still in general use, has to be mentioned, namely, pyrography or poker-painting (*Brandmalerei*). It is found on wooden articles of everyday use among the herdsmen, and also still in certain home industries of the Alpine districts (Ebensee, Ischl, Goisern), on the woodwork of the Goralians, Huzulians, and gypsies of the Carpathians (such as spoon-stems, brandy-flasks, butter-dishes, plates, etc.), and in Dalmatia for the decoration of chests. Practically all these diverse methods of decoration are employed in conjunction with painting or staining in colours.

In contradistinction to the woodwork we have been considering, peasant pottery, which figures so prominently among the productions of the people, and has a character peculiarly its own, belongs essentially to a branch of industrial practice. Although scarcely surviving as a domestic occupation in the Middle Ages, yet in view

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of the important part it played in domestic economy, it continued to retain its native character.

The products of the potter's art first became established in the household of the townsman, only later penetrating the dwelling of the rural cultivator, where, however, they gained a more permanent footing than they did in the household of the citizen, in which porcelain and glass ware have gained the upper hand.

The pottery of the Middle Ages was quite unpretentious and lacking in decoration. The simple methods of ornamenting mediæval ceramic ware—such as could be accomplished by the help of primitive implements (roughly-fashioned wooden splints, or perhaps the finger itself) in the shape of indented or perforated patterns, or perhaps in the form of superposed clay or "slip," still continue to be employed in the peasant ware of the present day. In the graphite and stoneware of Styria, of Eibenschitz in Moravia, in Eastern Galicia and Bosnia, we have before us the modern analogues of these mediæval beginnings.

With the advent of the Renaissance the ceramic manufacture of Austria received a powerful artistic impulse from Italy. The numerous wares imported from Upper Italy and Venice were imitated on a large scale in Western Austria, just as they were in South Germany and Switzerland. It was more especially in regard to pictorial qualities, which only came into prominence in the sixteenth century, that our ceramic production was thus influenced. Plastic decoration, on the other hand (in the shape of coloured reliefs applied to the ware, or figural adjuncts), is probably of indigenous origin. Another great and lasting impulse came from South Germany, with Nuremberg as the focal point, and from Eastern Switzerland; commercial intercourse, exchange of patterns and models, and the wanderings of journeymen, contributed to its diffusion. Despite these influences, however, we have to recognise an independent evolution of the potter and tilemaker's art in Austria. The national element became more and more emphasized, motives were drawn from the natural and ethnographical environment, and thus it is permissible for us to speak here of a really national peasant art.

About the beginning of the eighteenth century the popularity of Delft ware had spread to Austria and exerted a marked influence on the majolica of the peasants, traces of which we may observe in Gmunden, Salzburg, Wischau, in the so-called "Habaner" ware, and in other directions.

The national pottery of Austria is of two kinds. The coloured-glaze ware, in part painted, constitutes one division, and the peasant

majolica ware the other ; the first kind was produced on a large scale mainly in the Alpine regions, but also elsewhere—Moravia and Eastern Galicia especially—but the production of majolica has been comparatively meagre and restricted to a definite area. The former, by its greater variety of form, its closer relation to household and rural economy, and, lastly, by its more modest decoration, which is essentially that of the peasant artist, is entitled to the same high regard as the production of majolica, which received its impulse from higher artistic practice.

As regards the nature of the articles of pottery produced we find everywhere among the glazed ware the following typical forms of production :—dishes, plates, pots (double or “ twin ” pots), jugs, crocks, fry-pans, cake-moulds, basins, jars with lids, field-bottles with loops for the strap to carry them, wash-basins, holy-water fonts, ink-pots, “ puzzle ” jugs and comic jugs, freely modelled figures, figure groups, reliefs (house-charms), tiled stoves, and, lastly, children’s toys. Beautiful glazes of one or more colours in the most diverse combinations constitute the simple but at the same time extremely effective decorations of these wares. At a later period painting makes its appearance, following Italian models, and was much employed for large dishes and plates, but to a less extent for jugs and pots. The so-called “ onion dishes ” (*Zwiebelschüsseln*), which since the end of the sixteenth century have formed an important and favourite speciality among the peasant art productions of the Alpine districts, are decorated with painted signs of varied and always striking kinds. Passing over the much simpler and monotonous ceramics of the Czecho-Slavs we come further east to the wholly primitive pottery of Eastern Galicia and the Bukovina, on which the very simplest geometrical ornament is found ; it is of a quite cheap character, and in fact glazing itself is often the only form of decoration.

Turning now to the majolica ware of the peasants, we have first to note the ornate and luxurious character which as a rule distinguishes it. Alike in the Alpine districts and in Bohemia, and more especially in Moravia, where the fabrication of this majolica ware is very prominent, these dishes, plates, and jugs, painted in a style which appeals strongly to popular taste, are used in the peasant’s dwelling on festal and other special occasions ; also in the inns and hostelries for the use of guests ; or, again, they are found in the houses of peasants as ornaments pure and simple. In Eastern Galicia and the Bukovina among the Huzulians we find dishes and plates used as a modest adornment of the living-room. In Istria, too, every peasant woman takes a pride in having as large a number as possible of gaily decorated plates, which she exposes

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to view in the kitchen. Two qualities of this rural majolica are to be distinguished. First, there is the ware produced on a large scale for the market and carried far and wide by itinerant traders on carts and boats. In this way the majolica ware of Upper Austria has been transported wholesale to Lower Austria and Vienna, and similarly a vast quantity of Moravian ware has reached the Alpine region. Then, secondly, we have "bespoke" ware—that ordered from the master potter for special purposes. Here the guilds have played a prominent part with their requirements in the shape of jugs, beakers, "puzzle" vessels, goblets, dishes, etc., for their gatherings and observances; but private persons also figure largely among the potter's customers with orders for drinking vessels and dishes as souvenirs of name-days, birthdays, hunting events, etc., such wares generally bearing the name and initials of the customer, the year, the number of the house, and mottoes or inscriptions which contain some allusion to the personal affairs, profession, etc., of the customer. The painting of such vessels was frequently done by the wife and daughters of the master potter or by special assistants. Majolica workshops are known to us at Salzburg, in Upper and Lower Austria, Styria and Tyrol; only few have existed in Carniola; while, on the other hand, Moravia again is particularly rich in such centres of production, which belong only in part to the districts inhabited by the Slovacks. One of the most interesting specialities—and one at the same time ranking high from the artistic point of view—are the so-called "Habaner" jugs and plates, the manufacture of which was started about the middle of the seventeenth century in the settlements of the Anabaptists or "Wiedertäufer" by potters who had migrated from Winterthur. In Bohemia little was produced outside Prague, Eger, and Kuttenberg; but, on the other hand, a good deal of peasant majolica of Saxon and Silesian origin found its way about. To our surprise we also find in Eastern Galicia and the Bukovina a number of majolica concerns of a primitive order, among which the productions of A. Bachminski and those of the town of Sokal enjoy a wide reputation. They are akin to the mezza-majolica of Turkey. The white ware one finds distributed throughout Istria and Dalmatia with its varied decoration is mostly of Italian importation, coming more particularly from Pesaro and Bordenone. South Tyrol has special centres where similar ware is produced.

Peasant glass-ware affords a clearer confirmation than other classes of production of the theory that peasant art to a large extent represents a crude and persistent utilisation of more ancient and higher forms of artistic production. Nevertheless, by the intro-

duction of popular motives and the simplification of technique which they exhibit, these peasant productions are invested with a naïve and inimitable charm. As a rule they are only to be regarded as belonging to peasant art in the sense that they are made for the use of the people and to suit the popular taste. The glasses with enamel decoration, as used among the people, are naturally related to the betrothal, nuptial, hunting, and jocular goblets which had such an extensive vogue in South Germany during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only the motives have undergone modification; nearly all of them belong to the eighteenth century, and are found chiefly in the Alpine districts. A further class is derived from the baroque forms of glass ware (boot-shaped tankards, animals, musical instruments, weapons, guild-signs, etc.), a favourite mode of enrichment being by means of buttons, beads, etc. A speciality deserving of mention from the standpoint of folk-lore are the pilgrims' bottles and holy-water bottles with religious representations embossed upon them. Of extraordinary popularity everywhere, even to the present day, in peasants' houses, in wayside chapels and shrines, are the "Hinterglasbilder," *i.e.*, cheap and, for the most part, extremely crude pictures painted on the back of sheets of glass. These glass pictures, with their infinite variety of sacred subjects, mostly of a quite primitive character, are produced in the Alpine districts, also in Bohemia and Moravia, and are to be met with likewise in Galicia and the Bukovina among followers of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Metal work in Austria has always been a branch of industry, but it has played a large part in the life of the country people and maintained a character suited to their tastes. Of the various kinds of metal work that in iron has had the closest connection with the occupation of the peasant cultivator. Fire-irons, pine-wood light holders (*Kienleuchter*), locks and keys for doors, chests, and coffers, door knockers and handles, window and skylight gratings and grilles, all following the forms in vogue in the towns, have been in use since the seventeenth century, and especially since the eighteenth century, amongst the more prosperous of peasants at all events, in the Alpine regions, everywhere assuming characteristically peasant forms. The ornamental adjuncts reflect, as a rule, the style of the period. The beautifully forged iron crosses for graves are met with throughout the whole of Western Austria. Interlaced patterns and an abundant use of spiral forms, with the addition of foliar and floral motives, followed the manufacture of bar-iron from the sixteenth century onwards, but in the eighteenth century the ornamental composition gradually degenerated in the

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hands of the smaller craftsmen and became stereotyped. The various kinds of lighting apparatus furnish many fine examples of the iron-worker's art. Later than these, on the whole, are those artistic iron forgings which served the purpose of inn signs and trade signs and were frequently painted in bright colours. The popular symbolism of the handicrafts and even more the interesting allegory of the hostelry sign afforded the eighteenth-century smith an opportunity of producing some very beautiful work.

Only in the south, where Italian influence made itself felt in daily life, do pewter and copper figure in the peasant household to any extent. As regards pewter—"the poor man's silver," as it was called—it may at once be stated that as a rule the peasant household contained only two small articles of this metal, which were used for sacred or festal purposes, namely the holy-water font or stoop, and the salt-cellar. For the rest pewter vessels figured chiefly at the gatherings of guilds and in the households of townspeople. Engraved examples—that is, those richly decorated with engraved devices or representations—are comparatively scarce. Their ornamentation is akin to that of the contemporary majolica. Various articles made of stamped pewter, such as house and stable charms, pilgrim's tablets, wedding and christening spoons, amulets and numerous other things of that sort, were in use among the people.

Here, too, a word or two may be said about the personal ornaments of the peasants in so far as they are made of metal. Very frequently they are of some other material, for instance, bone or horn, like the hair ornaments, fancy combs, and arrows for the hair in Tyrol. As with the native costume so with the various forms of native adornment, we find that they do not date back to a particularly early period. Great beauty of form and colour is shown in the ornaments worn by brides and bridegrooms in the Alpine districts, and very varied are the hair ornaments as well as the neck and corsage ornaments of the German and Slav districts. Of the highest antiquity are the brass ornaments of the Bojkians and Huzulians in Galicia. They are crucifixes of various sizes, Byzantine in style, which have been cast and afterwards engraved. They are also worn round the neck attached to chains made of twisted brass wire. We also meet with engraved or enamelled girdle-clasps of various shapes. We have here to do with genuine peasant work following archaic traditions, in many cases executed by untaught herdsmen while tending cattle.

A pronounced speciality of peasant art throughout the whole of Austria, but particularly marked among the Slav and Roumanian

population, are the coloured Easter eggs decorated with mottoes and ornamental patterns ; they are presented by girls to young men for attentions paid to them in the dances at the carnival, and are also consecrated in church as symbols of Eastertide.

Brief reference must be made to the memorial cards and paper paintings for commemorating various special occasions. To this category belong those house and trade charms which are at once so ancient and so quaint ; the love-letters of the country people, chiefly in the form of a heart and with elaborate floral decoration ; wedding pictures, which in Egerland especially are executed with so much care ; further, the humorous pictures and caricatures in vogue among the peasantry, and other things of a similar character.

For a long time peasant art was everywhere ignored. With certain honourable exceptions the eighteenth century looked down with scorn and disdain upon the peasant and his affairs, and so, too, in the nineteenth century with the growing pride of the urban proletariat the peasant was made to look small and ridiculous. To-day, however, he and his work are taken seriously, alike from a scientific and from an artistic point of view, and the Cinderella stage of peasant art has been passed for good. From a scientific point of view, let us repeat, because here our ancient civilisation may be studied in its still extant survivals, and from an artistic point of view because here one may win back truths and ideas which amid the complex developments of higher artistic practice have to a great extent been lost sight of. Educated people have something to learn from the sobriety and restraint of peasant art. The lesson it teaches is that art is not to be desired at any price, but only when it is prompted by a vital motive or some special occasion. It is then, perhaps, that peasant art may serve us as an example and model for a really living and personal exercise of the artistic faculty.

And then, by way of conclusion, let us affirm our belief that peasant art neither admits of direct imitation, nor with its fund of original ornament is to be regarded as an exhausted field. No, the spirit underlying it is the spirit which should animate us in our work and inspire a sincere and earnest devotion to even the smallest labour of our hands ; our art should be as deeply rooted in our lives as peasant art in the lives of the people. To such conclusions the peasant art of Austria especially points in all its manifestations, and on that account it may claim special recognition and the interest of all, even outside the country itself.