

# GODEY'S

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### A LADY'S GLANCE AT THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

#### SHAWLS AND MIXED FABRICS.

As in the earlier ages men were accustomed to turn their gaze towards the eastern quarter of the globe as the source of civilization and the birth-place of the fine arts, so even in the middle of the nineteenth century, in one branch at least of productive industry, its prestige remains unquestioned. Notwithstanding the adaptive genius of the Western World, and the wonders wrought by its machinery, the Indian shawl still remains, par excellence, in the eyes of the initiated, the shawl of the civilized world.

For how large a portion of this distinction it may be indebted to the difficulty of its attainment we are hardly prepared to explain. Nor, unless the limitation of caste be removed which assigns its peculiar work to distinct native tribes, is the question likely to be speedily solved, as the manufacture of a single shawl of high quality is said to absorb the labor of years. Thus, for some time, at least, the demand is likely to exceed the supply, securing for it all the benefit of a mercantile protection, notwithstanding our national boast of universal free trade. Meanwhile, the increased facilities afforded by commerce for the acquisition of the raw material, the successful naturalization of the Thibet goat in Europe, with the advantages of skilled labor and an ever-improving machinery, present formidable obstacles to the long continuance of its hitherto unchallenged supremacy.

That the Indian shawl has been fully appreciated since its first introduction to this country is abundantly evident, from the period when scattered examples found their way through the medium of individual enterprise to the time

when they became more generally familiar to the *elite* through the periodical sales of prohibited goods by the East India Company as early as the year 1750. That the most elaborate specimens of the article should generally find their destination in the families of the Court of Directors is not very surprising, more especially as the possession of one or two shawls of the kind was sufficient to constitute a mark of distinction for the possessor.

Within thirty years of their introduction as articles of merchandise by the India House, we find them in the list of goods imported through the ordinary channel of the Custom House, but at a duty of nearly thirty per cent., which was subsequently reduced through six successive stages to the present merely nominal impost, just sufficient to secure the registry of their number and value.

It may, perhaps, be as well to remind our readers, previous to their visit to the Indian section of the International Exhibition, that the most brilliant specimens of shawls, appealing to the eye as blazing with gold and silver, are by no means the most valuable nor those most eagerly coveted by the initiated. The highest class of Indian shawls are those of more sober pretensions, exclusively loom-made, and may be briefly described as of two particular classes, with, of course, many subdivisions.

The most distinguished are the veritable cashmere, where the pattern (as in Honiton lace) is first made, the groundwork being subsequently filled in in the same loom, and not attached by any needle or similar instrument, although the extreme outer border is usually so joined, and consists of small squares, embodying every shade of color used in the fabric.

The value of a shawl depends on its quality even more than its pattern. Each fleece of the cashmere goat affords about eight ounces of the finest wool, which has to be separated hair by hair. It takes a native rather more than a week to disentangle a single ounce; leaving a second, third, fourth, and even a fifth quality, each having its assigned place, though never mingling in the same shawl. Such minute subdivisions render great experience necessary to decide on the relative value of any individual specimen, irrespective of the taste and extent of the pattern wherewith it is ornamented.

The second of the two classes to which we have above alluded is also made of the genuine Pashum cloth, woven in the loom, of a plain color and in a single piece: the object is to obtain on this ground, through the medium of needlework, an effect similar to that of the more elaborate specimens. This is wonderfully managed by a peculiar kind of applique, as yet without an English name, of so fine and minute a character as to deceive any but the most curious observer, the surface presenting no perceptible inequality from the groundwork. A glance, however, at the reverse side reveals the distinction, but so close is the imitation, that it ranks far more frequently as the genuine cashmere than is supposed.

The indispensable necessity of the shawl as an article of wearing apparel to well-dressed natives of India, Persia, and parts of Turkey, necessarily absorbs so large a proportion of the genuine article that few, comparatively speaking, remain for exportation, and of them the lion's share is secured for our own country, many being re-exported to the Continent and to America, where the demand is even greater than with ourselves. The most elaborate specimens of each kind are to be found in the present exhibition. Among the contributions of the Indian Government, to which a separate case has been assigned, we would direct the especial attention of our readers to one representing a pillar formed of clusters of pine, as remarkable for its beauty, although there is another said on unquestionable authority to bear away the palm. For the almost exclusive use of the pine as a form of decoration, with its various modifications, we are, in all probability, indebted to the almost religious veneration attached by the natives to the "surfeish," or egret, of the Oriental turban, and, as the same pattern is adopted by successive generations, little scope for variety has hitherto been afforded; but, with the more extensive demand consequent upon the opening up of remote provinces, a wider range of inven-

tion may be anticipated, and evidence of such advance has already presented itself in a most gorgeous specimen wrought in gold on a groundwork of four colors. The favorite design is in this case alternately reversed, by which means a circular ornament is achieved. Among the more brilliant shawls a black and gold applique from Delhi, priced at 25 guineas, appears to be remarkably cheap for its quality; whilst a black cashmere cloth embroidered in scarlet and gold, at 18 guineas, is scarcely less attractive. Of the silk and silver kingcobs many, in stripes resembling gold and silver ribbons on a dark groundwork, are very effective. Among the lighter scarfs, entitled "doopatta," or ornamented net, an example bearing a resemblance to scale-armor in silver, with a gemlike ornament on each scale, seems worthy the attention of our home manufacturers. One in "dhanoe," or faded leaf-color, with gold embroidery, is, from the contrast of tints, exceedingly effective, and a cinnamon-brown, with silver, is hardly less striking. There are many others, among which may be particularized samples of the renowned embroideries of Seinde, and the filmy gold muslins of Dacca; but over these we will not linger, as they scarcely seem to come legitimately within the scope of our subject.

Great as may be the value and reputation of Oriental shawls, it is in the French department that ladies will instinctively seek for evidence of that progress in design and execution so noticeable in other branches of industrial production, and, therefore, reasonably to be looked for in the one in question. We may not now stop to define that particular element in the taste and character of a Frenchwoman which secures her unwavering favor for this form of outdoor drapery, and renders the possession of a really good and varied assortment the object of her ardent ambition. Suffice it for us to extol the great perfection which, under the influence of such incentives, has been attained by French manufacturers, whose triumphs, by the way, will probably be more highly estimated in this country than in their own. The enthusiasm for Indian cashmeres, which is undoubtedly far more genuine and universal in France than among ourselves, leads to a certain disregard of all imitations, however beautiful. Ladies of very moderate means and position will strain every nerve to obtain the more expensive adornment, should it not have constituted a feature of the *corbeille de mariage*; but, happily, the absolute necessity of such a possession for a married woman is

admitted by reasonable husbands and fathers, and its attainment seconded by them almost as a point of honor. This being the case even among the middle classes of society, those beautiful *cachemires Français* which amply gratify our feminine ambition are obliged at home to descend a grade lower before they meet with perfect appreciation, and become in turn objects of aspiration or self-gratulation, as the case may be.

The origin of this national predilection for shawls has been traced to the close of the last century, when a few Oriental specimens were imported, as it were, by accident from Egypt, and quickly found favor in the eyes of republican beauties. The ever-increasing demand, which was sparingly supplied through British agency, soon suggested to private enterprise the idea of an imitative manufacture. The enormous expense of setting up a loom for this purpose, which in 1802 amounted to 60,000*l.*, is said to have concentrated the attention of Jacquard on the invention of a process for working intricate designs with greater facility; and the perfect success of his efforts converted a curious experiment into one of the most productive and honorable of the industrial resources of France. We find that in 1819 very excellent shawls were produced from real cashmere wool, imported of course, but prepared at home, as at present. A great improvement was effected about thirty years since by the introduction of a new power into the loom, the effects of which are precisely similar to those of the simple yet laborious processes employed in the East. We are informed that thirty or forty men would there be occupied many months in the construction of a shawl, of which an exquisite imitation can, thanks to this invention, called *sponline*, be woven in less time by the intelligent industry of one person.

As a feature of the specimens contributed to the exhibition by French manufacturers, we are gratified to notice a less servile adhesion to the Indian style of ornament than was apparent in 1851. Many beautiful and ingenious modifications of the accredited type are presented to our view, retaining just enough of the Oriental character to indicate the source in which they originated. We may point, for instance, to a shawl representing an open tent, the looped curtains of which reveal very successfully by their massive folds the richness and quality of the fabric. In the foreground two emblematical green dragons appear to be keeping watch and ward before the entrance of the pavilion, which rises from a wilderness of tropical foliage.

Birds of Paradise and other gay-plumaged creatures figure also occasionally on shawls of a high class, but such designs are more remarkable for brilliancy and novelty than for real artistic beauty. No such exception can be taken to a superb specimen manufactured by the well-known house of Duché, and appropriately designated the Albion cashmere. It is a perfect triumph of elaborate simplicity, and adapted to meet the requirements of a really refined taste. Equally attractive is one exhibited by Messrs. Allison, bearing a figured stripe on a black ground; modest in pretension, but very elegant. A charming example from the looms of M. Lair deserves especial notice; and there are, indeed, many others which will fully repay careful inspection, though scarcely adapted for minute description. A claim to distinction has been put forth by one manufacturer, M. Biétry, to which we allude rather as giving an idea of the importance attached to details by shawl buyers and sellers than because his invention, designated by the author as "a real and admirable progress," seems to us worthy of such exalted pretensions. It appears that it has been the practice to attach to the finest Indian shawls a *mignonette* pattern, designed and embroidered in France. M. Biétry has just discovered a means of producing this order of merit in the French shawls, woven in with the original substance, and consequently immovable; for this discovery he has obtained a patent.

Although the reputation of England as a shawl-weaving country has not hitherto approached that established by French manufacturers, it is undoubtedly true that they acted as pioneers in the enterprise of imitating the productions of the East. In 1784 Alderman Watson and Mr. Barrow, of Norwich, achieved the first shawl of that character ever made in Europe. The process was too slow and unprofitable to be repeated; but some specimens were produced soon afterwards, of mixed silk and worsted, the pattern being embroidered by hand. No particular advance was made until the year 1805, which witnessed the completion of the first shawl wholly fashioned in the loom. The manufacture was taken up about the same time in Edinburgh, where it was afterwards abandoned, and in Paisley, then suffering much from the decline in the muslin trade. There it took root, and that town, with its vicinity, is well known to be the seat of production for all shawls of the Indian style, the higher classes consisting of real cashmere wool, and being afforded in great beauty at comparatively low

prices. The recent removal of the paper duty will, we should hope, give an impetus to the trade, as the cost of the card-board for a Jacquard loom forms a very important element in the expense of production. As regards quality, the present exhibition affords several specimens of British design and workmanship which will challenge the admiration of the most fastidious taste. Among these is a shawl which appears under the auspices of Messrs. Lock & Co., consisting of a striped pattern of remarkable variety, with a light design intersecting it from corner to corner, as if by the suggestion of some happy afterthought. In one, exhibited by Spiers & Co., Paisley, the ornamentation assumes the form of an elongated arch of interwoven pines. Its attractions are great, but not inferior are those of similar articles from the looms of Forbes and Hutcheson.

Of Norwich silk and mixed shawls, Messrs. Claburn & Crisp are the most extensive exhibitors. Their productions are remarkable for

brilliance of color; indeed, they are in all respects worthy the established reputation of the firm, and as much may be said for those of Kerr, Scott, & Kilner. The assortment of warm, thick shawls for winter use is remarkably excellent and varied. It is a department in which they are, of course, unrivalled. The prevailing fashion for the coming season is evidently supposed to tend towards colors of a sober cast, for in cases where the material used is some animal fibre, the natural shade is closely imitated, or it is even manufactured undyed, different shades being supplied from various portions of the animal's body. The style of make is furlike, as may be inferred from the substances used. In the case of Mr. Bliss, of Chipping Norton, shawls may be seen woven from the hair of the beaver, hare, fox, rabbit, llama, alpaca, Thibet goat, and camel. Thus it would seem that every quarter of the globe has furnished its especial tribute for our benefit, and ingenuity has turned all of them to good account.

## THE TURRETS OF THE STONE HOUSE.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

"HAVE you been over the house, Miss Margaret?" inquired Mrs. Stebbins, a little, pleasant-faced, vivacious woman, as she stopped a moment in the sitting-room to adjust her shawl and receive the blue china bowl which she had brought over filled with jelly for Mrs. Phillips, who was an invalid.

The mound of jelly stood on the table, on a small cut-glass dish of an antique pattern, and as the sunlight poured its golden rain upon the "quaking tumulus," it looked like an immense ruby.

"No, Mrs. Stebbins; I haven't seen the house at all." The tones were sweet and distinct that answered. Hearing them, you would not need to see Margaret Phillips to know that she was a lady, so far as cultivation of mind and graciousness of manner make one this.

"Oh, you don't know what you've missed," added Mrs. Stebbins, in her good-natured, sympathetic way. "It's a perfect palace. John says it's built after the style of some foreign nobleman's. There's no end to the money that it cost. I can't attempt to describe it, but there's the library openin' on the lawn, all of oak; and the parlors, with the green and gold; and the dinin'-room—well, there's no tellin'; but I told John after I got home that my house didn't look bigger nor better 'n a shanty. But

it's some folks' luck to be born with silver spoons in their mouths."

"And some have the faculty of keeping the silver spoons, and some don't seem to." This general statement had a particular application in Margaret's mind, and this was the reason that there was a little touch of bitterness or pain in her voice, which only a very keen observer would have detected.

"That's a fact." Mrs. Stebbins was of the acquiescent, approbative type. "But"—slipping at once from general theories to specific facts—"it's too late now to see the inside of the house, for the family are expected next week, and they've got a train of servants puttin' things to rights."

"If it were otherwise, I haven't the time to get over there," answered Margaret, with a lack of enthusiasm which even Mrs. Stebbins must have perceived. "You were very kind, Mrs. Stebbins, to remember mother so often; I wish you knew how she will enjoy your jelly."

"La! don't speak of *that*. I thought it might set well with an egg or some chicken broth. My grandmother Parsons used to say, and she was a reg'lar hand at nussin', that there was everything in knowin' how to coax along a weak stomach; it did more than the doctor a good many times."