of harsh colours shows any sign of decadence of style. Strong marks of Oriental influence are visible in these fine patterns, but the method of weaving is purely native, —probably very like what the edicts of Louis IX. call “tapisserie nostrez.” Very beautiful fabrics are still pro­duced in India, old designs being followed, and woven in the simplest form of loom. Fig. 8 shows an example of a modern Indian loom used by the hill weavers. In such looms the richest materials, such as gold and silk, and the most elaborate patterns are woven, often by travelling weavers who can set up their whole apparatus in a very short time.

Carpets.

Carpet weaving was essentially an Oriental art, and was the natural product of a dry mudless country, where little furniture was used and the shoes were removed on entering a building. Till the 16th century carpets were almost unknown in France and England, except for royal personages and for the sanctuaries of cathedrals and im­portant churches. In the latter case they were usually laid in front of the high altar, and thus carried on to the floor the richness of colour which ornamented the walls and vault. Oriental carpets frequently occur in cathedral inventories among the other rich treasures of foreign or native make which adorned the building. They were first employed in England for domestic purposes by Queen Eleanor of Castile and her suite, in the latter part of the 13th century. In the palaces of Spain they were intro­duced much earlier, owing to the presence of the Moors in southern Spain. In many cases they were used for wall hangings, and the smaller ones to cover tables and other furniture, as is represented in many 15th-century Italian pictures. Though few examples of Oriental carpets exist earlier in date than the 15th century, yet the manufacture was carried on in the highest state of perfection centuries before. An example of the 14th century is preserved in a private collection at Vienna ; it was originally made as a hanging for the Kaaba at Mecca.@@1 These beautiful Oriental pile carpets are among the most perfect produc­tions of the weaver’s art, and till the 16th century were masterpieces of design and splendour of colour. Usually they were woven of wool or of camels’ or goats’ hair, with a separate warp and weft of flax ; but many magnificent carpets were also made of silk mixed with gold thread. This extravagance of luxury produced an effect, at least as regards the use of silk, but little superior to that of fine wool or camel’s hair, as the special beauty of the silken gloss is seen on the sides, not on the ends of the silk thread. Pile carpets are woven in a very different way from ordinary textiles : short tufts of wool or silk are knotted on the warp so that the ends of the threads which form the pattern project, and these are cut down by shears to a uniform surface, thus forming a sort of textile mosaic. Each row is firmly fixed by a shoot of linen weft-thread thrown across the web, and then carefully beaten down with the batten.

Various classes of ornament occur in these magnificent Oriental carpets ; one variety has stiff geometrical patterns, the motives of which appear to be taken from mosaics or tiles. Another and still more beautiful sort, manufactured especially at Ispahan (see fig. 9), has elaborate flowing designs of flower forms, sometimes mixed with figures of cheetahs, lions, antelopes, and birds, in a few cases com­bined with human figures. Mr W. Morris, in his valuable lecture on textile fabrics (London, 1884), traces three stages of design,—first, a pure flowing style, closely resembling the early stucco mural reliefs of Cairo; secondly, a similar style blended with animal forms ; and thirdly, a purely

floral style, flowing in its lines and very fantastic and ingenious in its patterns ; this last he thinks belongs to about the time of Shah Abbas, and lasted from about 1550 to 1650,—the culminating period of Oriental art.@@2 Since then there has been a distinct degradation of style, though in many cases older patterns have been worked from and very perfect work produced. At the present day the influ­ence of European taste is rapidly destroying this survival of the best class of design, and especially is introducing the most harsh and discordant colouring in place of the glorious rich hues of the earlier Oriental weavers.

Though no existing specimens can be pointed out, it appears probable that the “ tapisserie Saracenois ” of Louis IX.’s edicts (1226-1270) refers to pile carpets made by French weavers after the Oriental fashion.@@3 The same edicts for the regulation of the textile industry mention two other classes of manufacture, “ tapisserie à la haute lisse,” *i.e.,* what we call tapestry, and “ tapisserie nostrez,” “ native stuff,” probably resembling the coarse but effective patterned fabrics for aprons and dresses which are still woven by the peasantry near Rome, in the Abruzzi moun­tains, and elsewhere in Italy, and in Scandinavia.

Tapestry.

The making of tapestry (Gk. *τάπης*)*,* like the weaving of pile carpets, differs from ordinary fabric in that no visible weft is thrown completely across the loom, but the

@@@1 See Karabacek, *Die persische Nadelmalerei Susandschird* and *Oestr. Monatsch. f. d. Orient,* 1884, p. 49, with cut.

@@@2 A valuable help towards establishing the dates of carpet patterns is given by many mediæval Italian pictures, in which Oriental carpets are often represented with wonderful minuteness and appreciation.

@@@3 *Tapisserie* in French means all sorts of patterned stuffs.