TAPESTRY, a kind of cloth made of wool and silk, adorned with figures of different animals, &c. and formerly used for lining the walls of rooms, churches, &c.

The art of weaving tapestry is supposed to have been borrowed from the Saracens; accordingly the workmen employed in this manufacture in France were formerly called *Sarazins* or *Sarazinois*. Guicciardini ascribes the invention of tapestry hangings to the inhabitants of the Netherlands; but he has not mentioned at what time the discovery was made. This art was brought into England by William Sheldon, near the end of Henry VIII.'s reign. In 1619 a manufacture was established at Mortlake in Surry by Sir Francis Crane, who received 2000l. from King James to encourage the design. The first manufacture of tapestry at Paris was set up under Henry IV. in 1606 or 1607, by several artists whom that monarch invited from Flanders. Under Louis XIV. the manufacture of the Gobelins was instituted, which has introduced very beautiful cloths, remarkable for strength, for elegance of design, and a happy choice of colours. The finest paintings are copied, and eminent painters have been employed in making designs for the work.

Tapestry-work is distinguished by the workmen into two kinds, viz. that of high and that of low warp; though the difference is rather in the manner of working than in the work itself; which is in effect the same in both: only the looms, and consequently the warps, are differently situated; those of the low warp being placed flat and parallel to the horizon, and those of the high warp erected perpendicularly. The English anciently excelled all the world in the tapestry of the high warp; and they still retain their former reputation, though with some little change: their low warps are still admired; but as for the high ones, they are quite laid aside by the French. The French, before the revolution, had three considerable tapestry manufactures besides that of the Gobelins; the first at Aubusson in Auvergne, the second at Felletin in the Upper Marche, and the third at Beauvais. They were all equally established for the high and the low warp; but they had all laid aside the high warp excepting the Gobelins. There were admirable low warps likewise in Flanders, generally exceeding those of France; the chief and almost only Flemish manufactures were at Brussels, Antwerp, Oudenard, Lisle, Tournay, Bruges, and Valenciennes; but of the state of these manufactures now we are ignorant.

The usual widths of tapestry are from two ells to three ells Paris measure.

The Manufacture of Tapestry of the High Warp.—The loom on which it is wrought is placed perpendicularly: it consists of four principal pieces; two long planks or cheeks of wood, and two thick rollers or beams. The planks are set upright, and the beams across them, one at the top and the other at the bottom, or about a foot distance from the ground. They have each their trunnions, by which they are suspended on the planks, and are turned with bars. In each roller is a groove, from one end to the other, capable of containing a long round piece of wood, fastened therein with hooks. The use of it is to tie the ends of the warp to. The warp, which is a kind of worsted, or twisted woollen thread, is wound on the upper roller; and the work, as fast as wove, is wound on the lower. Withinside the planks, which are seven or eight feet high, fourteen or fifteen inches broad, and three or four thick, are holes pierced from top to bottom, in which are put thick pieces of iron, with hooks at one end serving to sustain the coat-stave: these pieces of iron have also holes pierced, by putting a pin in which the stave is drawn nearer or set farther off; and thus the coats or threads are stretched or loosened at pleasure. The coat-stave is about three inches diameter, and runs all the length of the loom; on this are fixed the coats or threads, which make the threads of the warp cross each other. It has much the same effect here as the spring stave and treddles have in the common looms. The coats are little threads fastened to each thread of the warp with a kind of sliding knot, which forms a sort of mesh or ring. They serve to keep the warp open for the passage of broaches wound with silks, woollens, or other matters used in the piece of tapestry. In the last place, there are a number of little sticks of different lengths, but all about an inch in diameter, which the workman keeps by him in baskets, to serve to make the threads of the warp cross each other, by passing them across; and, that the threads thus crossed may retain their proper situation, a packthread is run among the threads above the stick.

The loom being thus formed, and mounted with its warp, the first thing the workman does is to draw on the threads of this warp the principal lines and strokes of the design to be represented on the piece of tapestry; which is done by applying cartoons made from the painting he intends to copy to the side that is to be the wrong side of the piece, and then, with a black lead pencil, following and tracing out the contours thereof on the thread of the right side; so that the strokes appear equally both before and behind.

As for the original design the work is to be finished by, it is hung up behind the workmen, and wound on a long staff, from which a piece is unrolled from time to time as the work proceeds.

Besides the loom, &c. here described, there are three other principal instruments required for working the silk or the wool of the woof within the threads of the warp; these are a broach, a reed, and an iron needle. The broach is made of a hard wood, seven or eight inches long, and two-thirds of an inch thick, ending in a point with a little handle. This serves as a shuttle; the silks, woollens, gold, or silver, to be used in the work

work being wound on it. The reed or comb is also of wood, eight or nine inches long, and an inch thick on the back, whence it grows less and less to the extremity of the teeth, which are more or less apart, according to the greater or less degree of fineness of the intended work. Lastly, the needle is made in form of the common needle, only bigger and longer. Its use is to press close the wool and silks when there is any line or colour that does not fit well.

All things being prepared for the work, and the workman ready to begin, he places himself on the wrong side of the piece, with his back towards the design: so that he works as it were blindfold, seeing nothing of what he does, and being obliged to quit his post, and go to the other side of the loom whenever he would view and examine the piece, to correct it with his pressing-needle. To put silk, &c. in the warp, he first turns and looks at the design; then, taking a broach full of the proper colour, he places it among the threads of the warp, which he brings cross each other with his fingers, by means of the coats or threads fastened to the staff; this he repeats every time he is to change his colour. Having placed the silk or wool, he beats it with his reed or comb; and when he has thus wrought in several rows over each other, he goes to see the effects they have, in order to reform the contours with his needle, if there be occasion. As the work advances, it is rolled upon the lower beam, and they unroll as much warp from the upper beam as suffices them to continue the piece: the like they do of the design behind them. When the pieces are wide, several workmen may be employed at once.

We have but two things to add: the first is, that the high warp tapestry goes on much more slowly than the low warp, and takes up almost twice the time and trouble. The second is, that all the difference that the eye can perceive between the two kinds, consists in this, that in the low warp there is a red fillet, about one-twelfth of an inch broad, running on each side from top to bottom, which is wanting in the high warp.

Manufacture of Tapestry of the Low Warp.—The loom or frame, whereon the low warp is wrought, is much like that of the weavers; the principal parts thereof are two strong pieces of wood forming the sides of the loom, and bearing a beam or roller at each end: they are sustained at bottom with other strong pieces of wood in manner of trestles; and, to keep them the firmer, they are likewise fastened to the floor with a kind of buttresses, which prevent any shaking, though there are sometimes four or five workmen leaning on the fore-beam at once.

The rollers have each their trunnions, by which they are sustained: they are turned by large iron pins three feet long. Along each beam runs a groove, wherein is placed the wich, a piece of wood of about two inches diameter, and almost of the length of the roller: this piece fills the groove entirely, and is fastened therein, from space to space, by wooden pins. To the two wiches are fastened the two extremities of the warp, which is wound on the farther roller, and the work, as it advances, on the nearer.

Across the two sides, almost in the middle of the loom, passes a wooden bar, which sustains little pieces of wood, not unlike the beam of a balance: to these pieces are fastened strings, which bear certain spring staves, where-with the workman, by means of two treddles under the loom whereon he sets his feet, gives a motion to the coats, and makes the threads of the warp rise and fall alternately. Each loom has more or fewer of these spring-staves, and each staff more or fewer coats, as the tapestry consists of more or fewer threads.

The design or painting the tapestry-man is to follow is placed underneath the warp; where it is sustained from space to space with strings, by means of which the design is brought nearer the warp.

The loom being mounted, there are two instruments used in working it, viz. the reed and the flute. The flute does the office of the weaver's shuttle; it is made of an hard polished wood, three or four lines thick at the ends, and somewhat more in the middle, and three or four inches long. On it are wound the silks or other matters to be used as the woof of the tapestry. The comb or reed is of wood or ivory; it has usually teeth on both sides; it is about an inch thick in the middle, but diminishes each way to the extremity of the teeth: it serves to beat the threads of the woof close to each other, as fast as the workman has passed and placed them with his flute amongst the threads of the warp.

The workman is seated on a bench before the loom, with his breast against the beam, only a cushion or pillow between them; and, in this posture, separating, with his fingers, the threads of the warp, that he may see the design underneath, and taking a flute, mounted with a proper colour, he passes it among the threads, after having raised or lowered them, by means of the treddles moving the spring-staves and coats.

Lastly, to press and close the threads of the silk or yarn, &c. thus placed, he strikes each course (i. e. what the flute leaves in its passing and coming back again) with the reed.