

## Miscellaneous.

### SILK AND SATIN MANUFACTURES.

The January issue of the *Art Journal* contains an interesting article by Miss Lucie H. Armstrong on silk and satin manufactures. After sketching the origin of the artistic progress of the silk industry in England, Miss Armstrong says: "The prominence given to the Silk Section at the Manchester Exhibition had its undoubted share in the influence of public opinion, and at the Loan Exhibition of British-made silks held last May, at Lady Egerton of Tatton's, in St. James's-square, the committee were able to draw popular attention to the improved and improving condition of the silk industry of the British Isles.

"The exhibition was perhaps more interesting from an industrial than an artistic point of view, but the beauty of the Spitalfields and Braintree brocades exhi-

enabled by the courtesy of the proprietors of the *Art Journal* to reproduce two of these. The first, which is a specimen selected from the manufactures of Messrs. Walters and Sons, of Braintree, bears a conventional floral design, of modern origin, in pale yellow on a flame-coloured ground. The other illustrated herewith is a design by Mr. Wardle, from a fresco in the Caves of Ajunta.

The principal centres of production for English silks are Macclesfield, Braintree, and Spitalfields. Braintree takes the lead for Furniture Brocades, of which it exports a considerable quantity. The place has been associated with silk weaving since the year 1825, when many of the London manufacturers, in order to keep pace with the demand, started looms and factories there, and at Sudbury and other neighbouring places. Thither went a number of the clever Spitalfields weavers, descendants of those who had fled from France for the sake of their faith. The names of Le Veeg and Le Beau are quite common in Braintree, and the manager of the new mills belonging to Messrs.

*Art Journal*, in which they will also find seven other designs besides those given herewith. The writer, in concluding her article, very properly observes that the chief hope of the silk trade lies in the increased attention given to the aesthetic part of the work. "An ugly trade cannot be bolstered up, and no feelings of patriotism will suffice to make the customer choose an inferior thing when a beautiful thing is near at hand. In the early Victorian days we were not as a nation remarkable for our taste, but we have been living through a time of Renaissance. South Kensington has had its effect on art culture, and such men as Mr. Wm. Morris and Mr. Wardle have left their impress on the times. A national school for silk weaving is greatly wanted (and this should be re-established speedily before the old traditions of the workers have died out); the examples at South Kensington might be more sedulously studied, and their loan collections of specimens of weaving should be circulated in manufacturing centres. Attention should also be paid to the chemical properties of the dyes; and it would be



MODERN FLORAL DESIGN.—BY MESSRS. WALTERS AND SONS, BRAINTREE.



DESIGN FROM A FRESCO IN THE CAVES OF AJUNTA.—BY MR. WARDLE, OF LEIK.

bited was little short of a revelation to many, and the visitor to the exhibition was surprised to notice goods which had generally been sold under original names boldly proclaiming their origin as being more redolent of the East-end than of the East.

"The collection of artistic silken fabrics of English manufacture now exposed at the Aesthetic Gallery in New Bond-street, may be looked upon as the outcome of the exhibition just referred to. . . . The first glance round the establishment would convince the most sceptical visitor of the great improvement in design and colouring which has taken place of late years in English textile fabrics. The colours are pleasurable to the eye, and the designs almost without exception artistic and original. Shades of terra-cotta, pomegranate, chrysanthemum, and flame-colour have superseded the raw tones of colour which used, not so long ago, to be the sole product of Spitalfields, and there is also a great advance in the direction of design."

A glance at the illustrations accompanying the article is more likely to give the reader a better idea of the change that has been wrought for the better than a long description, though necessarily they lose much of their beauty divorced from their colour. We are

Walters and Sons is of Huguenot descent. Messrs. Walters and Sons are our largest manufacturers of furniture silks for home and abroad, and their factory, where both power and hand-looms are employed, is well worth a visit.

"Messrs. Walters," writes Miss Armstrong, "especially deserve commendation for their enterprise with regard to new designs, which they produce from all manner of sources. Some of the patterns are from Genoa velvets, some are of French origin, whilst copies from the work of Robert Adams are a leading speciality of the firm. All kinds of bits of faded silk are cherished for the sake of the patterns, and the design of an old Greek vestment may reappear on a Court train. . . . A brocade in which little red flames run in different directions across a yellow ground represents an artist's impression of a visit to the Lyceum during the torchlight scene in Mr. Irving's production of *Macbeth*."

Miss Armstrong discourses pleasantly of Spitalfields and Macclesfield, but as these places have recently been fully dealt with in the columns of *The Textile Mercury*, we need not reproduce this portion of the article, but must refer our readers to the pages of *The*

well (as Mr. Wardle proposed) that the selling of weighted materials as pure goods should become penal, so that if the customer chose low-priced and adulterated materials he did it at his own risk. English goods have always been remarkable for their genuineness, softness, and durability, and if the present aesthetic movement is continued they will be equally valuable from an artistic point of view. Public attention has now been drawn to the British silk manufactures, and it is to be hoped that it will not be allowed to drop, but that English ladies in particular will do all in their power to encourage these beautiful industries."

INDIGO was in great demand last year in Italy for dyeing purposes, and many important sales took place.

Mr. JOHN GOOD, the inventor and patentee of improved machinery for corlage manufacturers, and who has large works in New York and in London, has disposed of his factory in the latter place for a sum reported at £100,000 sterling, and is at once to rebuild and equip another work in Italy, where hemp and labour can be had low, and where he expects to make handsome returns.