



Walter A. Hawley

**ORIENTAL
RUGS
ANTIQUE
& MODERN**

with
over 100 illustrations,
including 11 in
full color



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PREFACE



SINCE the appearance, in 1900, of the excellent work of Mr. John Kimberly Mumford on Oriental Rugs, the public interest in these fabrics has so largely increased that the author feels warranted in offering this monograph, which aims to treat the subject in a way that will not only appeal to the general reader but be of value to the student.

In the chapter entitled "Rug Weaving Before the XVIII Century" is a brief review of some of the notable achievements in this branch of art; and in order that the public may as far as possible have access to the masterpieces described, the carpets on exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York have been given unusual prominence. The chapters on "How to Distinguish Rugs" and on "Purchasing Rugs" should prove serviceable to those who are collecting or are buying for use; and the chapter on "Weaving" contains many details which have not previously received from connoisseurs the consideration they deserve.

The descriptions of all but the least important classes of rugs in the Persian, Asia Minor, Caucasian, and Central Asiatic groups include not only a general statement of their most striking features, but also a technical analysis that is termed "Type Characteristics." It should be understood, however, that these characteristics are not invariable, but are remarkably constant. They may interest chiefly those who aim to acquire expert information, yet they will doubtlessly prove valuable to every owner of a rug as a means for its identification.

It would be difficult to acknowledge all the assistance received by the author since he began the study of rugs; for sometimes a mere suggestion has started a line of investigation resulting in interesting discoveries. He has freely consulted well-known authorities, who are quoted in the body of the work; and has received valuable suggestions and assistance from Messrs. T. S. Hawley, of Santa Barbara, Cal., George Harootunian and Frank Loftus, of

Los Angeles, Cal.; George Stevenson, of New York; G. Graf, of the Persiche Teppiche Gesellschaft, of Tabriz; and P. de Andrea & Co., of Constantinople. He gratefully acknowledges the permission of Messrs. C. F. Williams, of Norristown, Penn., and James F. Ballard, of St. Louis, Mo., to study their valuable collections; and the permission of Dr. Wilhelm R. Valentiner, Curator of Decorative Arts in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, to examine the carpets of the museum and to take photographs of them. He also wishes particularly to mention the kindness of the following collectors and firms who have allowed their rugs to be used for illustrations: Miss Emily Davis, of Buffalo, N. Y.; the Misses Palache, and Messrs. Nathan Bentz and T. S. Hawley, of Santa Barbara, Cal.; Mr. R. Y. Struble, of Fredericktown, Ohio; Mr. E. L. Pierce, of Syracuse, N. Y.; Mr. H. C. Merritt, of Pasadena, Cal.; Mr. J. F. Ballard, of St. Louis, Mo.; Mr. C. F. Williams, of Norristown, Penn.; Major L. B. Lawton, U.S.A., of Seneca Falls, N. Y.; Messrs. Mihran & Co., of Los Angeles, Cal.; Messrs. B. Altman & Co., Benguiat & Keresey, Wm. Baumgarten & Co., Jones & Brindisi, Jos. Wild & Co., W. & J. Sloane, and the Tiffany Studios, of New York City. He is also indebted to Vincent Robinson & Co., Ltd., of London, for the use of the colour plate of the Royal Garden Carpet, now owned by them, and to the Royal Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London, for permission to obtain a colour plate of the Holy Carpet of the Mosque of Ardebil.

WALTER A. HAWLEY.

NEW YORK, June, 1913.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



It is not altogether surprising that in a most materialistic age many of a race distinguished more for its utilitarian than artistic accomplishments should fail to see in Oriental carpets high artistic expression; yet during the last twenty years choice specimens have been sold for sums which not only are very large, but show a tendency to increase with each succeeding year. In 1893 a woollen rug, known as the Ardebil carpet and regarded, on account of its beautiful designs and exquisite colours, as one of the finest products of Oriental art, was purchased for the South Kensington Museum. Since it had a length of thirty-four and a half feet with a breadth of seventeen and a half, the price of £2500, which was the sum paid, was at the rate of twenty dollars per square foot. At an auction sale in New York in 1910,* a woollen rug five and a half feet long by three and three quarters wide was sold for the sum of \$10,200, or at the rate of four hundred and ninety-one dollars per square foot; and a silk rug seven feet and two inches long by six feet and four inches wide was sold for the sum of \$35,500, or at the rate of nine hundred and thirty dollars per square foot. As it was the general opinion of connoisseurs that the prices paid for these two rugs were low, and as it is well known that these rugs are not more valuable than some others of equal size, it is not unreasonable to assume that many of the best judges of Oriental rugs would declare that at the present time the sum of five hundred dollars per square foot is a fair price for some antique woollen rugs, and the sum of one thousand dollars per square foot a fair price for some antique silk rugs.

* The Yerkes sale.

If these judges were asked on what they based their opinion of the value of these old pieces, which are less serviceable for wear than new rugs that can be bought of an American factory at twenty cents per square foot, they might with reason reply that they are works of art, woven in those days when Michelangelo, Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt were busy in their studios; that they are as scarce as the paintings of these masters; and that they might justly be compared with them in beauty and artistic execution. Though granting that the technique of weaving makes it impossible to represent a design as perfectly as can be done with a brush, they would claim that the drawing of dainty vines, scrolls, and arabesques was often represented by lines that in abstract beauty of form are unsurpassed, and that no artist had ever produced from his palette colours which equalled in brilliant sheen and marvellously changing hue those of the woven masterpieces.

Whoever is inclined to disagree with these judges and with those art critics of Europe and America who assert that in an æsthetic sense the people of the Orient are cultured to a standard beyond the comprehension of the Western world, should remember that the taste for any kind of art is based on convention and is largely a matter of cultivation. The Occidental, who for generations has cultivated the taste for paintings and statuary, looks to the painter and sculptor for the highest expression of artistic genius; but the Oriental takes greater delight in his marvellous creations of porcelain or woven fabrics. There is, too, a marked difference in treatment. The Occidental demands that in art "everything should be stated with the utmost fullness of a tedious realism before he can grasp its meaning" * and fails to recognise the more subtle beauty of various forms of Oriental art. The Oriental, on the other hand, is far less realistic and is better satisfied if his subject suggests abstract qualities that depend for their fullest appreciation on those quickening experiences that at different times have touched the soul of the observer. Moreover, as Buddhism, which prevails in many of the countries of Asia, teaches that a universal spirit is manifested in each form of nature, determining its character, and a similar idea pervades other religions of the East, the highest aim of Asiatic art is to express that inner spirit. It is largely this difference in artistic cultivation that accounts for the difference in taste. Whoever then would fully appreciate these rugs must view

* Stewart Dix, in "Arts of Old Japan."