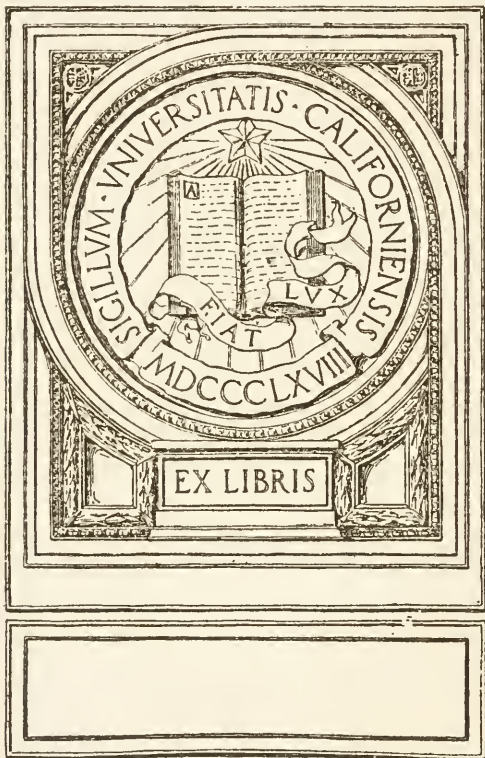




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A BOOK OF
HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS



JOHN MEL.
L. N. GER.
1839

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

BY

ELIZA CALVERT HALL

AUTHOR OF "AUNT JANE OF KENTUCKY," "THE LAND OF LONG AGO," ETC.

*WITH NUMEROUS PLATES IN COLOR AND
OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS*



BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1914

40733

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TO THE MEMORY OF
WILLIAM WADE.
"THE GENTLE MINDE
BY GENTLE DEEDS IS KNOWNE."

It is a pity that when we speak of art, the thought should be of something quite remote from the life of all the people. . . . The word art ought to carry as common and universal a meaning as the words life and love.

J. H. DILLARD

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A Book of Hand-Woven Coverlets

*A Book of
Hand-Woven Coverlets*

FOREWORD



FRIEND once sent me thirty photographs of coverlet designs. In a burst of enthusiasm over their beauty I began to write this book. I thought the task a light one and I expected to see its completion in a few months.

But after my joyous beginning the work grew strangely difficult and my progress strangely slow. A weight seemed to hang on pen and brain. I went

unwillingly to my task and I left it daily with an unaccountable feeling of despair. Often the Devil of Failure has whispered in my ear: "Give it up!" But the charm of the subject had mastered me, and in perplexity and discouragement I plodded on.

At last a day came when I understood why the work was so hard and I so slow. Heretofore I had written what Imagination dictated, but now Imagination stood silent with folded wings, and instead of her dulcet tones I heard a harsh voice that clamored for "Facts! Facts!"

Fact and I have always been strangers. It does not interest me to know that the moon is "a celestial body that revolves around the earth once in a little less

than twenty-seven days and eight hours.”

I prefer to know the moon as Shelley knew her, an

—“*orbèd maiden,*
With white fire laden.”

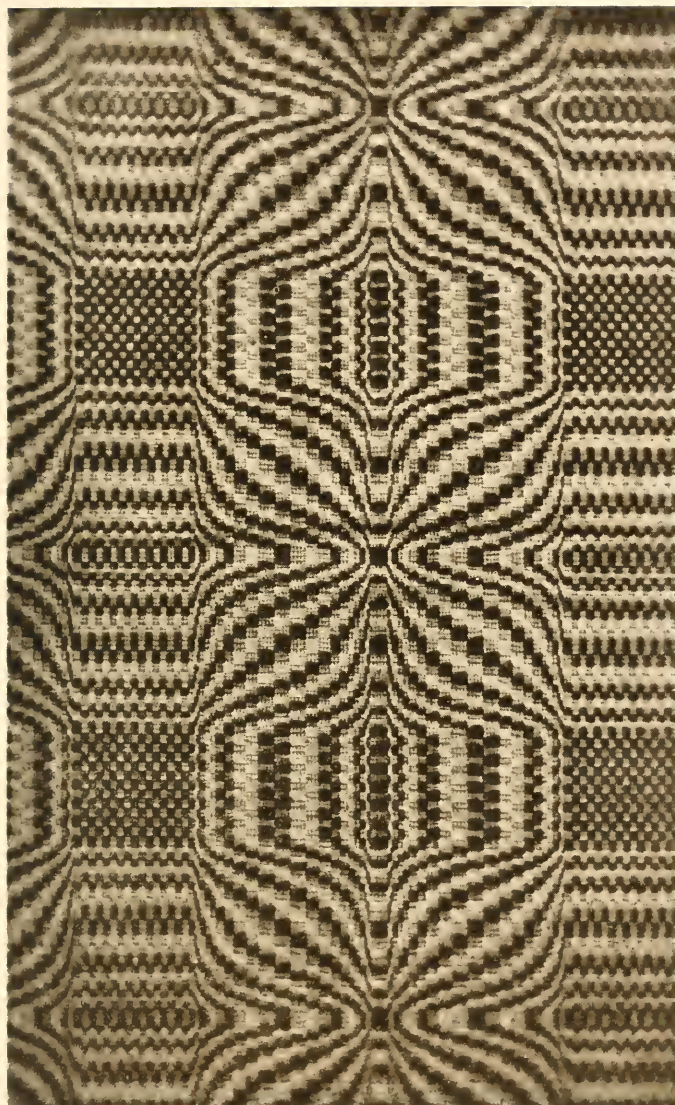
If I ever used a fact, I used it as a slender thread on which I strung the beads of fancy, and in the present work that process had to be reversed; fancy is the thread and the beads are facts.

And where were the facts? Before I could record them I had to go forth and find them in the jungles of “original research.” So many people have helped me in this research work that if I name them all, I shall seriously invalidate my claim to the authorship of this book,

which, indeed, could never have been written without the aid of Miss May Stone and Miss Katherine Pettit of the Settlement School at Hindman, Knott Co., Ky.; Mrs. Jennie Lester Hill, former Superintendent of Fireside Industries at Berea College; Mrs. Laura M. Allen, Director of Weaving in Mechanics' Institute, Rochester, N.Y.; Miss Elizabeth Dangerfield of Lexington, Ky.; Miss Sallie M. Dougherty of Russellville, Tenn.; Miss Amy Du Puy, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Miss Susan Beeler of Fountain City, Tenn.; Mrs. Henderson Dangerfield Norman of Sycamore, Ill.; Miss Florence Strong of Athol, Ky.; Dr. William F. Arnold, Surgeon U.S.N., retired; Miss Madie Woodbury of Danville, Ill.;

HICKORY LEAF

IN Georgia this design is called "Muscadine Hulls," in Mississippi "Double Muscadine Hulls," in North Carolina "Hickory Leaf," in Rhode Island "Double Bow Knot," in Kentucky it is sometimes "Double Bow Knot" and sometimes "Blooming Leaf." Probably "Lemon Leaf" and "Olive Leaf" also belong to it. All of the leaf designs seem to have been evolved from the "Sunrise" design.



J. Capps and Son, Jacksonville, Ill., and last, who should have been first, the late William Wade of Oakmont, Pa., who first made known to me the beauty of the hand-woven coverlet.

Many others whose names appear elsewhere in this book have aided me in my search for rare specimens of weaving and my efforts to bring order and system out of the chaos of names and designs in which I found myself involved at the beginning of my labor and in which I am scarcely less involved at its "ending," so called.

My friends say that for more than two years past my salutation has been:

"Have you an old coverlet?"

"Do you know anybody who has one?"

and do you know the names of any coverlet patterns?"

By putting these questions to friend and foe, rich and poor, high and low, the city-bred and the country-bred, and by writing innumerable letters to dwellers in the mountains and the lowlands I have collected a pleasing array of facts, names, and patterns; but what are these by the side of the facts, names, and patterns that might still be collected?

If life were as long as art, I might come nearer to the goal of completion, but no dictionary or encyclopedia holds the knowledge I seek. To learn what is still unknown to me about names, drafts and designs I would have to make a pilgrimage through the villages of New Eng-

land and the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, stopping at every doorway and asking an alms of information with such questions as these:

“Are ‘Flourishing Wave’ and ‘Floating Wave’ the same as ‘Ocean Wave’?”

“What are the differences between ‘Iron Wheel,’ ‘Running Wheel,’ ‘Wheel of Fortune,’ ‘Wheel of Time’ and ‘Pilot Wheel’?”

“What are ‘Muscadine Hulls’?”

“What flower is ‘King’s Flower’ intended to represent?”

“Was ‘Lee’s Surrender’ named in sorrow or in triumph?”

“Is ‘Penford’ the name of a place or a person?”

Since I cannot go in search of this information, I leave to each reader the task of adding something to my incomplete work. On the blank pages at the end of the book you may place the pictures of your family coverlets and write their history. Thus each book will become a collaboration, and I shall have almost as many collaborators as readers.

Some critics may think the subject unworthy of the labor I have bestowed on it; but the colonial coverlet is to American art what the prose works of Increase Mather and the verses of Anne Bradstreet are to American literature. Whoever tries to trace the rise and progress of art in the New World will see in the colors and designs of the hand-woven

LEE'S SURRENDER

WOVEN by Ernest D. Chapman, Clark's Falls, Conn. There are two drafts of this name, No. 1 and No. 2. The above is "Lee's Surrender" No. 2.



coverlet the first faint stirrings of that spirit which breathes full-awakened through the sculpture of St. Gaudens and Borglum, and the architecture of Richardson and McKim, and glows in the canvases of Whistler, Furness, Sargent and Abbey.

“Art is the wine of life,” says Richter, and the hand-woven coverlet tells you that the humblest artisan who kneels at the altars of Beauty receives from the hand of the god his share of that priceless draught.



I

LONG, LONG AGO

I
LONG, LONG AGO

*“O there are voices of the Past,
Links of a broken chain,
Wings that can bear me back to times
Which cannot come again.”*



HE house-mother sits at her loom weaving in the late afternoon hours. There is the grace of splendid strength in the motion of her arms, and the beauty of boundless health in her sturdy form.

To and fro goes the shuttle over the warp, and to and fro goes the weaver's thought, over the water to Holland, the home of her childhood, or southward to the camp of Washington, where

two stalwart brothers are bearing arms for the cause of freedom. Now she hears the water lapping against the dyke; or she stands by her mother's side listening to stories of the grandfather who fought under William of Orange, and then she thinks of the news the lame soldier brought to the village last week and wonders if the battle he prophesied has been fought.

Memory and love soften the stern face; she whispers a prayer for the safety of the soldier brothers and another prayer for the victory of the patriot army. The old Dutch clock ticks loudly in the corner, and the clatter of the loom makes friendly answer. The scarlet berries of the ash-tree press against

THE LITIE M^cELROY COVERLET

A "King's Flower" design.
Woven on the "Old Home
Place" of Mr. Alanson Trigg near
Glasgow, Ky., by Sam Gamble, a
travelling weaver. Owned by Mrs.
Clarence Underwood McElroy,
Bowling Green, Ky.





the tiny panes of glass and the sunbeams shining through them rest on the burnished pewter vessels over the chimney and touch to a pale lustre the smooth braids of the housewife weaving her blue and white coverlet.

Over the seas they came, these strong-limbed daughters of European lands, from the Palatinate on the Rhine, from the Netherlands, from the provinces of France, from the British Isles, the cantons of Switzerland and the villages of Sweden and Norway, bringing with them the arts and customs of old civilizations to be grafted on a new life in a new world.

The dust of their bodies passed long ago into flower and tree as the strength

of their bodies passed into the making of a nation. Their names are forgotten and unrecorded, except on a fallen, lichen-cruste*d* stone in an old burying-ground or a dim page of family records which their children of the third and fourth generations are too busy to search out and read. But in nearly every American family there is a certain heirloom which is a memorial to the sturdy fore-mothers of the nation—a hand-woven coverlet of which the very old will say in a tremulous voice:

“My mother spun and wove it;”

and the middle-aged:

“My grandmother wove it;”

and the young, touching it with reverent curiosity, whisper:

“This is my great grandmother’s coverlet.”

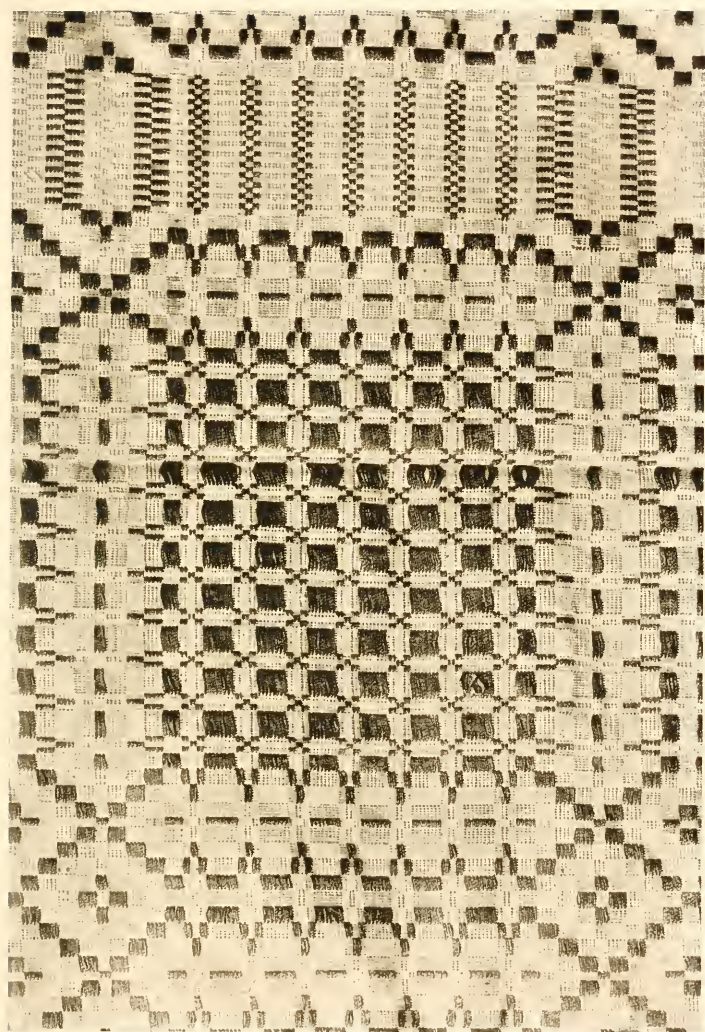
Occultists say that things are endowed with influences, good or evil, according to the nature of those who have owned or used them, and that every one is surrounded by an aura. You may laugh at such statements, but I would not like to wear a jewel that Lucrezia Borgia had worn; a room furnished in old mahogany always seems to me a haunted place, and often I have felt the spells that go out from inanimate objects blotting out all consciousness of the present moment and carrying me at one bound of thought and emotion into “The Land of Long Ago.”

How many roads lead to this shadowy

land, and how many things are guideposts on the way! The perfume of an old-fashioned rose, a bit of yellow lace, your grandfather's seal, the pin your grandmother wore with a lock of hair under the crystal front, a bundle of old letters tied with faded ribbon, a bookmark of time-stained cardboard that said to some beloved one "Remember Me," or "Believe Me True," a pressed flower in an old book, the brass candlestick that used to stand on a shining mahogany table along with the family Bible and the basket that held your grandmother's knitting—but the spell of the past is not as strong in any one of these as it is in a coverlet that, like a family tradition, has drifted down to us of the

MOUNT VERNON

THE real name of this design is not known. Miss Sally M. Dougherty of Russellville, Tenn., copied the design from a coverlet on one of the beds at Washington's home and christened it "Mount Vernon."





present day to be held in honor or cast aside in dishonor, but always seeming to say:

“Have you forgotten? Have you forgotten?”

Some of us have not forgotten.

II

A BACKWARD GLANCE

II
A BACKWARD GLANCE

“Remembrance wakes with all her busy train.”



WHEN the owner of an old coverlet unfolds it to your view, the first words that come to her lips are:

“I remember ——.”

“I remember,” says one, “the year that this was woven. I was just a little girl, only four years old. Father gave Mother a certain number of sheep, and when the sheep were shorn, Mother sent her share of the wool to Indiana to be woven. I remember how interested

she was in the sheep-shearing and how proud she was of her coverlet.”

“I remember,” says another, “when I was a little child, here in New Jersey, there was a kitchen full of darkies, — the kitchen detached from the main house — and over this was a long garret. I remember seeing my old black mammy run back and forth spinning wool into yarn. . . . I remember going with my grandfather to what he called ‘The Falling Hill.’ The little hamlet was called Millford, and it must have been here that the coverlets were woven. My recollection is that we took the wool and got it back in long soft rolls so white and pretty that I loved to put my hands on it. These rolls were what I

saw spun into yarn. I know the blue thread for the coverlets was colored at home, for I have heard of the dyeing. This was seventy years ago.”

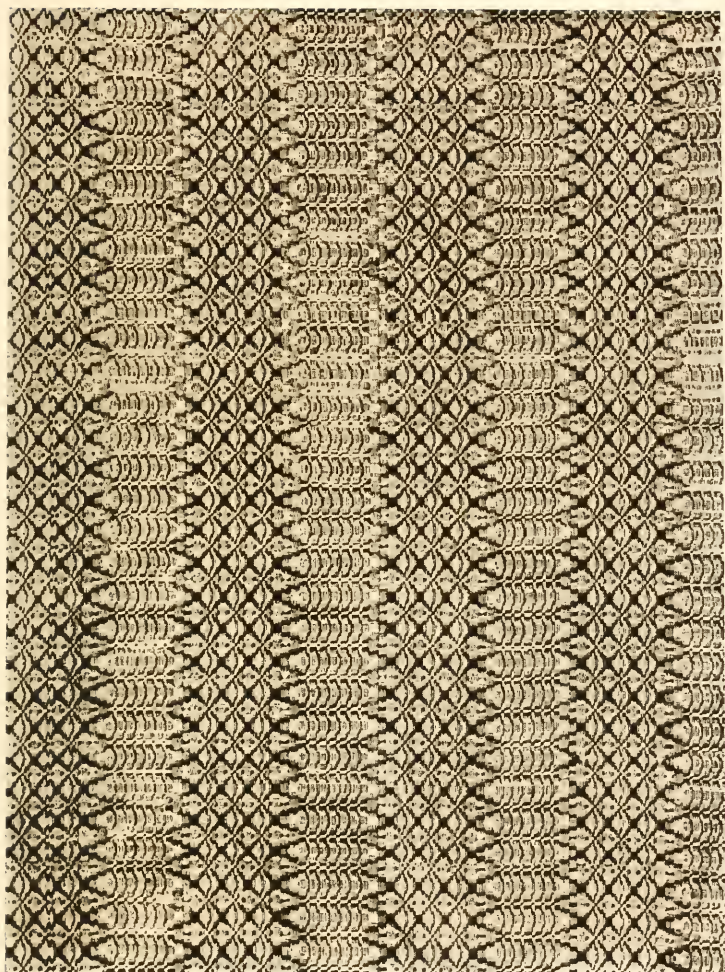
“I remember,” says another, “when Mother used to dye the thread and her nails would be blue with indigo, and I used to wish I could make my finger nails that pretty blue color. I remember, too, how Mother used to spin flax on the little flax wheel to make the foundation for her coverlets. Mother’s thread always brought a higher price than anybody else’s and she was noted for her fine, even selvedge.”

“I remember,” says a distinguished southern educator, “how Mother used to spin flax on the ‘little wheel.’ She

often made fishing lines for me, and they were better in every respect than any twisted line I could get to-day. Our home was a farm in West Virginia, and we made at home all the woollen and linen cloth we used out of wool and flax produced and prepared at home. Cotton was the only material we bought. We wove coverlets with figures, even trees, in them. Many treadles and many shuttles were used and the paper spread before the weaver looked like a piece of music. My mother always put in the web, and many a day I have spent (in fine fishing weather) passing threads through the 'reed' to Mother. When the flax was gathered, we always had a flax-scutching followed by a din-

A MODIFICATION OF PINE BLOOM

THE coverlet from which this design was taken is a very old brown and yellow one made in Warren County, Ky., and owned by Mrs. Emmett G. Logan, Jr., of Bowling Green, Ky.



ner and social amusements running into the night. Girls came chiefly to make this function attractive to the men who did the scutching, though some girls scutched well."

At every recollection like these a curtain lifts and I see the life of an earlier, sterner time than mine when the questions, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? had to be met at the dawning of every day and answered by ceaseless toil, the man wresting the raw materials from the soil, while the woman's labor completed the miracle of clothing and feeding a family. The dying years leave us many legacies, but every generation casts aside old customs, old ways

of thought, old faiths and old ideals, as the forest casts aside its withered leafage, and, in the hurried march we latter-day pilgrims are forced to make, it may happen that something of real value will be purposely thrown away or carelessly left by the wayside. So now and then we should turn from the clamorous present and go back in thought to that quiet past where the roots of our being lie. There is many a Half-Way House on the road; one of them might be called "At the Sign of the Old Coverlet"; and pausing here we may recover certain lost things unknown to us or unremembered, but well deserving both knowledge and remembrance.

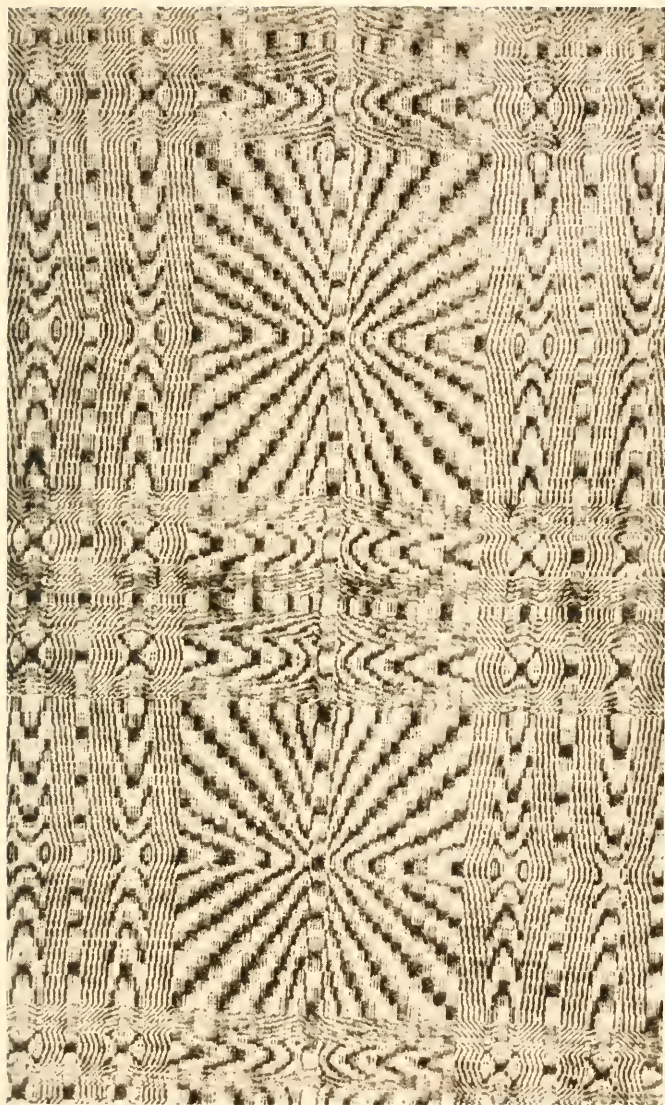
I think the Time Spirit must know that we need to be thus recalled into the life of the past, for everywhere I find the woven coverlet which, more than anything else, seems to stand as a symbol of the olden times.

I ride along a country road and through the open door of a farm-house I have a glimpse of a four-poster bed spread with a blue and white "Pine Bloom," or a "Gentleman's Fancy." I pass a negro cabin and on the clothes-line or the fence hangs a bed-cover inherited from "Old Mistress," spun and woven, probably, on the old plantation in slave days by the skilled fingers of "black Mammy." I walk through the streets of town when the festival of house-cleaning is going

on, and over the railing of balcony or porch I see a "Governor's Garden," or a "Sunrise," older, no doubt, than the oldest member of the family, but flapping gayly in the breeze, and flaunting its reds, blues, and greens in the spring sunshine as if in gay defiance of Time the Destroyer. When November's frosts and fogs are in the air, I stand at my window and watch the tobacco wagons come creeping into town; and now and then under the tarpaulins, rag-carpets and patchwork quilts that cover the rich brown leaves I see the unmistakable colors of a coverlet — Grandmother's handiwork put to such "base uses," but still beautiful, still dignified in the midst of its humiliation. I look

SUNRISE

THE coverlet from which this design was taken was woven eighty years ago by Deborah Campbell of Warren County, Ky. Owned by Mrs. Beulah Wrenn, Warren County, Ky. Colors: pale blue and white. A very fine piece of weaving.



eagerly after it to see if the pattern is one known to me by name, the creaking wagon disappears round the corner in the road, and I turn away, my heart and brain full of the message that the woven coverlet carries to you and to me from our great foremothers of generations ago and our mountain sisters of to-day.

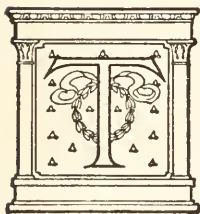
III

THE MOUNTAIN WEAVERS

III

THE MOUNTAIN WEAVERS

*“There she weaves by night and day,
A magic web with color gay.”*



THE art of weaving had its beginning in prehistoric days. In Greece nine hundred years B.C. the art must have been as far advanced as it was in Europe in the eighteenth century, for Homer tells us that when Iris flies to Helen the goddess finds her “in the palace at her loom” weaving into “a golden web” the story of the Trojan wars, “And the dire triumph of her fatal eyes”; and he clothes Ulysses in “A robe of military

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purple" into which Penelope had woven a hunting scene:

*"In the rich woof a hound, Mosaic drawn,
Bore on, full-stretch, and seized a dappled fawn."*

Egyptian hieroglyphics show the goddess Isis with a shuttle in her hands, and Egyptians may have been the first to make textile fabrics, or perhaps it was China twenty-five hundred years before Christ. All we really know is that the weaver's art was borne westward from Egypt and Asia in the march of civilization. Italy was the first European country to weave cotton and wool. In the tenth century Flanders led the world in the manufacture of woollen goods; English wool was wrought in Flanders, and later the Flemings in-

ROSE IN THE WILDERNESS

WOVEN at "The Fireside Industries," Berea, Ky. Loaned for reproduction in color by Mrs. Anna Ernberg of Berea College. "Bonaparte's March" and "Weaver's Choice" resemble "Rose in the Wilderness." The yellow in this coverlet is made from hickory bark.





roduced wool-weaving into England. Early in the seventeenth century the Puritans brought the art to America, along with their ideals of civil and religious liberty. When the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove the Protestants from France, they carried their knowledge of textile art into the southern part of the New World, and from Massachusetts to South Carolina the sound of wheel and loom was mingled with psalms of thanksgiving for the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience. The women of the old south considered weaving a most womanly art; every plantation had its weaving-room and the mistress of the plantation often trained

the slaves to spin and weave. Up to 1785 only hand-weaving was known. Then science and invention began to create machinery that made the human hand seem an awkward, clumsy thing. But there are some things that science and invention can never wholly displace. An editorial writer in the London *Nation* says:

“In certain primitive and necessary things there lies an irresistible appeal. We perceive it in a windmill, a water-mill, a threshing-floor, a wine-press, a cottage loom, a spindle, a baking oven, and even in a pitcher, a hearth-stone, or a wheel. There we see the eternal necessities of mankind in their ancient, most natural form, and, whether by

long association with the satisfaction of some need, or simply by their fitness for utility, they have acquired a peculiar quality of beauty.”

This “peculiar quality of beauty” and its “irresistible appeal” will always keep the hand-loom and the spinning-wheel from passing into the musty realm of the obsolete. Moreover, the tide of emigration that brought our ancestors to America still flows between the old world and the new, and with the immigrants come the wheel, the loom and the manual skill found in many European countries where the handicrafts have always been held in honor. Ten years ago a Swedish family settled in the wilds of Edmonson County, Kentucky. Their

farm to-day is a bit of old Sweden in a Kentucky setting, for rugs, clothing, and bed-covering are all homespun, home-dyed, and home-woven. In the mountains of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky women are working at wheel and loom just as their great-great-grandmothers worked. Time and change, like two tired travellers, seem to have paused by the wayside and fallen asleep; and to-day repeats the tale of a century or more ago. Sometimes the life of the lowlands and the life of the highlands meet in a settlement school, and there comes a renaissance of the arts of weaving and spinning. The mountain woman learns the worth of her work; old drafts are

KING'S FLOWER

WOVEN *in Knott Co., Ky.*



brought to light; old secrets of dyeing are unearthed and the mountain coverlet goes forth to teach the world that "Art is not something to be pre-empted by aristocracy."

In the mountains of Knott County, Kentucky, on Troublesome Creek there is a settlement school,¹ and at one end of the long hall in the main building you will find the slab settle, the slab cupboard, the reel, the big wheel for spinning cotton and wool, the little flax wheel, and a sled loom over a hundred years old. At the loom sits a mountain girl and she is called — listen, ye lovers of music! — she is called Dal-

¹ Since this was written the school was burned to the ground and the old loom perished in the flames.

manutha, a name that might have descended to her from some Saxon princess; or perhaps it is Cynthia, name beloved of the Elizabethan poets. She is weaving a coverlet, and as she weaves she looks at a yellow strip of paper on which her mother's mother traced the lines and figures of the draft.

Thoreau says that the value of a thing is determined by the amount of life that goes into it. If Dalmanutha and Cynthia valued their work according to Thoreau's standards, only a queen or a millionaire could possess one of their coverlets, for almost a year of a woman's life goes into the making of a mountain "kiver." It is just as if a painter had to manufacture his can-

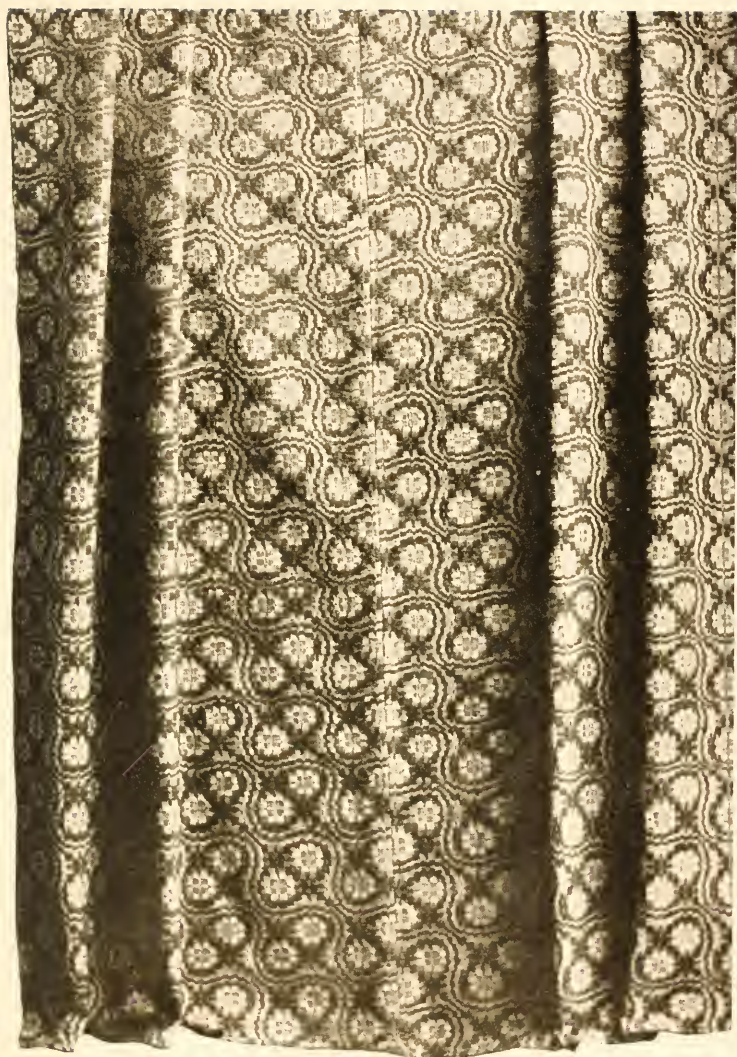
vas, brushes, easel, palette, and paints, or the sculptor go to the quarry and dig out a block of marble for his statue.

In the old days a linen thread was used for the warp, and flax had to be grown, hackled, and spun. Now the coverlet is of cotton overshot with wool, and these materials, too, are a home product. The women work in the field, hoeing the cotton, gathering it when it is ripe, picking it, carding it, and spinning it. The sheep must be sheared and the wool picked, washed, carded, and spun. Then they must dig roots, collect the barks of different trees, set the "blue-pot" and make the dyes according to ancestral methods. When all this drudgery is finished,

the mountain woman seats herself at the loom; her bodily weariness falls from her like a garment; she is no longer a tired drudge, she is an artist, and she breathes the diviner air of that region where beautiful things are created. If a sculptor or a painter should enter her cabin door she might greet him as a sister greets a brother; and I think that if the God of Beauty became incarnate and walked the earth searching for his most faithful worshipper, he would not find what he sought in any studio or art-shop; his search would end on some southern mountain, among gaunt, haggard women toiling for two seasons to make the thread for shuttle and loom, spending the short

CAT TRACK

MANY imaginations have exercised themselves on this pattern and the result is many names: "Cat Track," "Snail Trail," "Winding Vine," "Trailing Vine," "Twining Vine," and "Dogwood Blossom." Woven by Aunt Betsey Thomas, Pine Grove, Ky. Owned by Miss Elizabeth Dangerfield, Lexington, Ky. "Winding Girl" is very similar to "Cat Track," and "Old Roads" is one of its modifications.

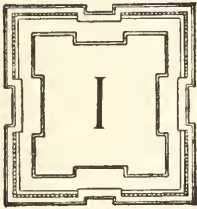


winter days weaving a fabric that will last to the third and fourth generation, and finally christening their work at the springs of fancy with a name that sounds oftentimes like a song or a poem.

IV
COVERLET NAMES

IV
COVERLET NAMES

“What’s in a name?”

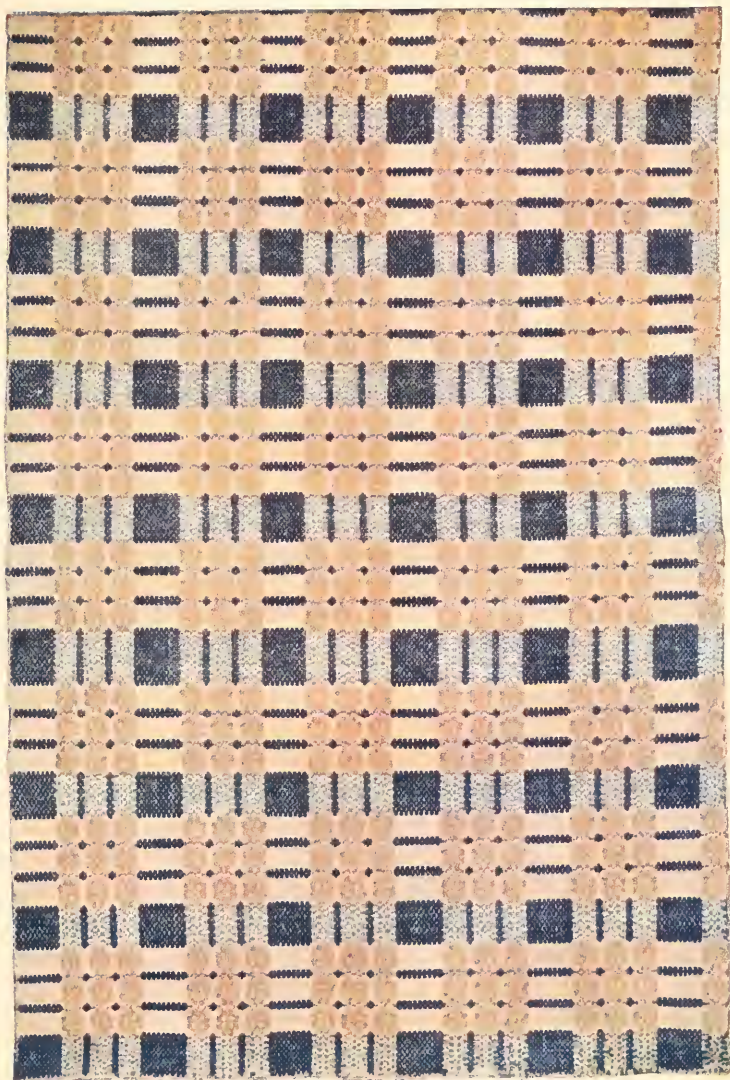


T was Juliet, not Shakespeare, who asked “What’s in a name?” The man who knew all hearts knew that “a rose by any other name” would not smell as sweet. Call a rose a nettle and at once it loses half its rose nature. What name but rose could fit the full-petaled, fragrant flower we call the queen of flowers? And the individual name must fit the individual flower. Who cares for a rose called the Mrs. James Brown? A rose should

be a Duchess de Brabant, a Devonien-sis, or an Empress of India. A rose whose name is lost is a perpetual vexation to the gardener, for with the name goes part of the thing named. If Venus were "Mary Jane," and Juno "Maria" instead of the Goddess of Love and the Queen of Heaven, there would be two plain kitchen-maids. The christening of a child is a matter that calls for divine guidance, for that which we call our "identity" depends largely on our name. If places and people should suddenly lose their old names and acquire new ones, we would be like the builders of the Tower of Babel when the confusion of tongues came on them, and when we lose the faculty of remember-

THE SALLY RODES COVERLET

HISTORY *unknown. Name of design probably "Nine Snowballs." Owned by Miss Sally Rodes, Bowling Green, Ky.*



ing names, we are like travellers astray on a road that has no guide-posts. There was a time when the whole Aryan race believed that a man's name was not only a part of himself but that it was the part we call the soul, and the importance we attach to names is an outgrowth of this race-belief.¹

Instead of asking: "What's in a name?" we should exclaim with another poet:

*"Who hath not owned with rapture-smitten frame
The power of grace, the magic of a name?"*

But only one who has studied the names of coverlet patterns can know the full depth of magic that a name can hold.

¹ See "The Evil Eye," by Frederick Thomas Elworthy.

Here are the flowery, leafy, and poetic names. Listen how sweetly they run:

Flower of the Mountain (N. C.).

Sunrise on the Walls of Troy.

Rose in the Wilderness (Ky.).

World's Wonder (Ky.).

Wonder of the Forest (Va.).

Wide World's Wonder.

Rose of the Valley.

Old Roads (W. Va.).

Lily of the West.

Spring Flower.

Fading Leaf.

Kentucky Snowballs (Ky.).

Flowers of Edinboro (Ky. and Tenn.).

Winding Vine

Trailing Vine

Dogwood Blossom

} (Ky. and Tenn.).

Rose in the Garden (N. C.).

Sunflower.

Laurel Blossom.

Pine Top.

Maple Leaf.

Snow Drop.

Pine Burr.

Olive Leaf.

Islands of the Sea (Conn.).

Path of the Sunbeam (Maine).

Single Snowballs.

Rose of Sharon (Ky.).

Lily of the Valley (N. C.).

Mountain Rose.

Peony Leaf (Va.).

Pomegranate.

Primrose and Diamonds.

Governor's Garden.

Granny's Garden (Ky.).
King's Garden (Maine).
Pansies and Roses in the Wilderness.
Rose and Diamonds.
Roses and Pinies in the Wilderness.
Rosy Walk.
Snowball and Dewdrop.
Wandering Vine.
China Leaves.
Dogwood Rose.
Five Snowballs.
Flowers of Canaan (1827).
Flowery Vine.
Folding Leaf.
Four Snowballs.
Lemon Leaf (Ky.).
Mountain Flower (Tenn.).
Pine Bloom (Ky.).

*CATALPA FLOWER or WORK
COMPLETE*

THE former is the North Carolina, the latter the Alabama, name. In Kentucky it is sometimes called "Lady's Fancy" and "Gentleman's Fancy."



Catalpa Flower.

Sixteen Snowballs.

King's Flower (Ky. and N. C.).

Twining Vine (Ky.).

Red Rose (Va.).

Rose in Bloom.

Rose in the Blossom.

Orange Trees.

Rose and Blossoms.

Rose and Compass.

Hickory Leaf.

Snowballs.

Wreaths and Roses (Tenn.).

Magnolia (Tenn.).

Fig Leaf.

Holly Leaf.

Leaf and Snowball.

Rose Leaf and Bud.

Rosebud.
Reed Leaf.
Nine Snowballs.
Forty-Nine Snowballs.
Blooming Flower.
Indiana Frame Rose (N. C.).
Flowers of Lebanon (Mass.).
Flowery Plains (Tenn.).
Bachelor's Buttons (Tenn.).
Primrose (1813, Conn.).
Shamrock (Tenn.).
Cluster of Vines.
Rose in the Valley.
Piney Rose (N. C.).
Snowball and Leaf.
Rose Walk (Sweden).

And the plain, prosaic names and the grotesque ones, such as:

Ginny Fowle (Va. and Ky.).

Doors and Windows }
Windows and Doors } (Ky.).

Window Sash (N. C.).

Locks and Dams (Ky.).

Dollars and Cents (Ky.).

Rattlesnake Trail (N. Y.).

Spectacles (N. C.).

Sixteen Squares.

Sugar Loaf (Tenn. and Ky.).

Bachelor's Thumb (Ky.).

Rocky Mountain Cucumber.

Wild Mountain Cucumber (R. I.).

Cat Track (Ky.).

Fool's Puzzle (Tenn.).

Wandering (Winding) Blades and Folding Windows (Tenn. and N. C.).

Winding Leaves and Folding Windows (Tenn. and N. C.).

Snail Trail (Ky. and Tenn.).

Log Cabin.

Double Chain.

Rattlesnake.

Dog Tracks (Mass.).

Sister Blankets.

Dimity.

Shuckeroones (R. I.).

Double Compass.

Bird's Eye.

Flowerpot.

Orange Peeling.

Bricks and Blocks.

Double Table.

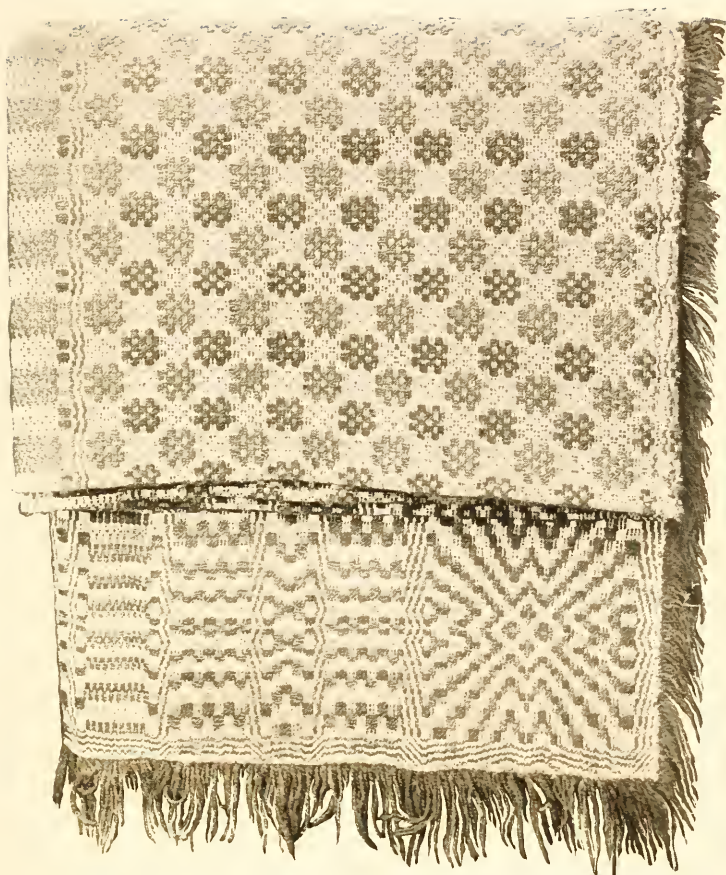
Four Times (Va.).

Green Vails.

DOG TRACKS

WOVEN in 1775. Colors blue
and red. Owned by Mrs.
Charles Stebbins, Deerfield, Mass.
Also called "Virginia Beauty."

_____ 18



Hen Scratch (Ky.).

Buckens and Owls (R. I.).

Huckleberry.

Wheels and Squares (Tenn.).

Forty-Nine Diamonds.

Stripes and Squares.

Checkers.

Cross Roads.

Hail Storm (N. C.).

Pea Fowl.

Cat's Paw.

Summer and Winter Wheel Draught
(1825).

Snow Storm.

Snow Trail.

Ice Balls.

Honeycomb (N. Y.).

Little Window Sash (Va.).

Number Two }
Number Three } (Va.).

Snake Shed.

Alabama Squares.

White House or American Beauty.

Arrow (N. C.).

Reed Canes, Panel Doors and Window
Sash (N. C.).

Windows (Tenn.).

Window Sashes.

Here are the various "Beauties":

Kaintuck Beauty (Ky.).

Parson's Beauty (N. C.).

Captured Beauty.

Stolen Beauty (Vt.).

California Beauty.

Lasting Beauty (Va.).

Virginia Beauty.
Petersburg Beauty (Pa.).
Rocky Mountain Beauty.
Alabama Beauty.
North Carolina Beauty.
Missouri Beauty (N. C.).
Royal Beauty.
Troy's Beauty (1826).
Baltimore Beauty.
Boston Beauty.
Everybody's Beauty.
American Beauty.
Four Square Beauty.
Richmond Beauty.
Beauty of New York (1803).

Then come the "Fancies," "Favorites," and "Delights":

Rich Man's Fancy (N. C.).

Young Man's Fancy.

Gentleman's Fancy.

Lady's Fancy.

Little Girl's Fancy.

Dutchman's Fancy.

Sally's Fancy.

Farmer's Fancy.

French Fancy.

Frenchman's Fancy.

Maiden's Fancy.

Bachelor's Fancy (R. I.).

Diaman's Fancy.

Isaac's Favorite (Tenn. and N. C.).

Frenchman's Favorite.

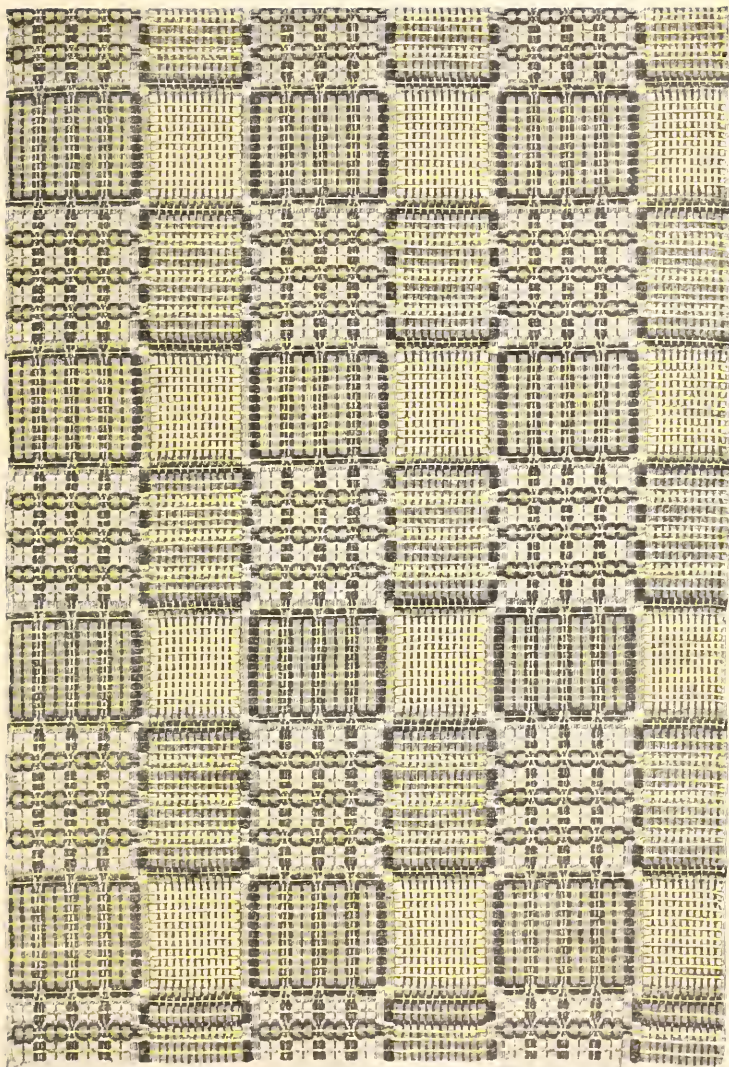
Mother's Favorite (Tenn.).

Ladies' Delight.

Bachelor's Delight.

SEVEN STARS

WOVEN by Mrs. Elmeda Walker, N.C. In McDowell County, N.C., this pattern is called "Sea Star" or "Sea Shell." In Union County, Tenn., it is "Isle of Patmos"; in East Tennessee, "Gentleman's Fancy." The coverlet from which the design is taken was sent from the Allanstand Cottage Industries, Asheville, N.C., by Miss Harriet C. Wilkie. Yellow made from peach leaves.



Wheeler's Delight.

Solomon's Delight.

Queen's Delight.

King's Delight.

Here are the names celestial:

The Rising Sun.

The Star of Venus.

Sea Star (N. C.).

Sunrise (Ky.).

Virginia Star.

Blazing Star.

Little Blazing Star.

Sun, Moon, and Stars.

Morning Star.

Seven Stars (N. C.).

Lone Star of Texas.

Star of the East (N. C.).

And the three "Waves":

Ocean Wave.

Floating Wave.

Flourishing Wave.

Sometimes the name is of a place
or a person:

Old Duckett (N. C.).

Owsley Forks (Ky.).

Old Virginia.

Cope (Tenn.).

Hixson (Tenn.).

Eve Mast (Tenn.).

Cassie Rogan (Tenn.).

South County.

Brush Valley (Md.).

Miss Chester (N. C.).

St. Ann's Robe (Tenn.).

Baltimore Street (Md.).

Mary (N. C.).

Ellen Eggers' Counterpane Draught.

Murphy's Legacy (Tenn.).

Isle of Patmos (Tenn.).

Once in a while you find a sentimental name such as:

Lonely Heart (Ky.).

Lover's Knot (Pa.).

True Lover's Knot (Va.).

Lover's Chain (Pa.).

Soldier's Return (Tenn.).

Friendship (Ky.).

Girl's Love.

Then there is a collection of "Wheels":

Penford Chariot Wheels (Ky.).

Single Chariot Wheels (Ky.).

Iron Wheel (N. C.).

Sixteen Wheel Chariot (Tenn.).

Wheel of Time (Minn.).

Running Wheel (Ky.).

Wheel of Fortune (Minn.).

Methodist Wheel (N. C.).

Charity Wheel.

Wheels of Fancy.

Pilot Wheel (Ky.).

Four Wheels.

Sixteen Chariot Wheels (Tenn.).

Single Wheel.

Wheels and Squares.

And a casket of "Diamonds":

Crown of Diamonds (N. C.).

Crown and Diamonds.

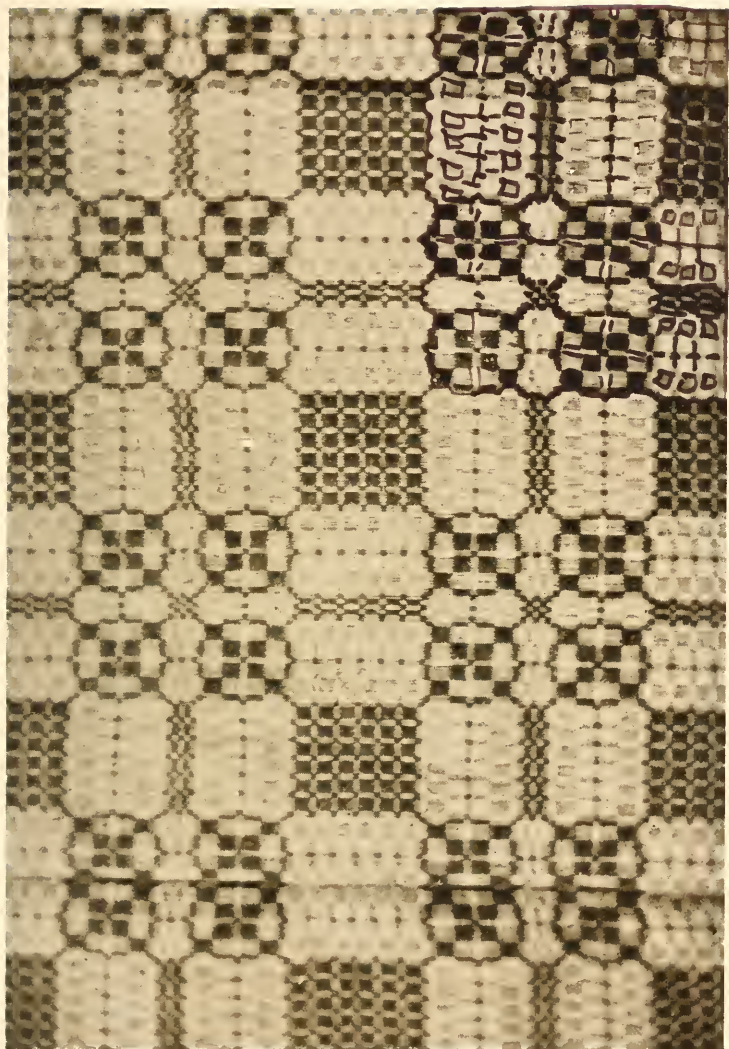
*DOUBLE CHARIOT WHEELS or
CHURCH WINDOWS*

THESE names point to an English origin, but the pattern is also found in Scandinavian weaving. The four "chariot wheels" separated by the arms of a cross suggest a rose window in an English cathedral.

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Heart and Diamond.

Double Diamond.

Nine Block Diamond.

Square and Diamond.

Cross and Diamond.

Eight Block Diamond.

Broken Diamond (N. C.).

Half Diamond.

The King's Diamond.

And more interesting than all others
are the political or historical names:

Indian March.

Indian War.

Indian Warfare.

Indian Camp.

Braddock's Defeat (Ky.).

Battle of Richmond.

Maid of Orleans (Tenn.).
Bonaparte's March.
Bonaparte's Retreat.
Cornwallis' Victory (Ky.).
Washington's Victory.
Washington's Diamond Ring (Va.).
Lady Washington's Delight.
Martha Washington's Choice.
Jay's Fancy.
Lafayette's Fancy.
Jefferson's Fancy (N. J.).
Perry's Victory.
Battle Union.
Mexican Banner (Tenn.).
Polk and Dallas.
Travis' Favorite.
Whig Rose.
Jackson's Army.

Colonel Jackson's Army.
Democrat Victory (N. C.).
Missouri Trouble.
Tennessee Trouble.
Confederate Flag.
Lee's Surrender.

And still there remains a mighty host
of unclassified names:

Cuckoo's Nest (Ky.).
Tennessee Lace (Ky.).
Broken Snowballs.
The Globe (Ky.).
The Bride's Table (Ky.).
The Sea Shell.
Double Bow Knot.
Irish Chain.
Weaver's Choice.

Weaver's Pleasure.

Flannery.

Federal Knot.

Waffle Weave.

Scarlet Balls.

Queen's Patch (Ky.).

Work Complete.

Double Muscadine Hulls.

Winding Girl (Ky.).

Queen's Puzzle.

Church Windows (Ky.).

Young Lady's Perplexity (Ky.).

Tennessee Circles.

Tennessee Trouble in North Carolina.

Leopard Spots (Tenn.).

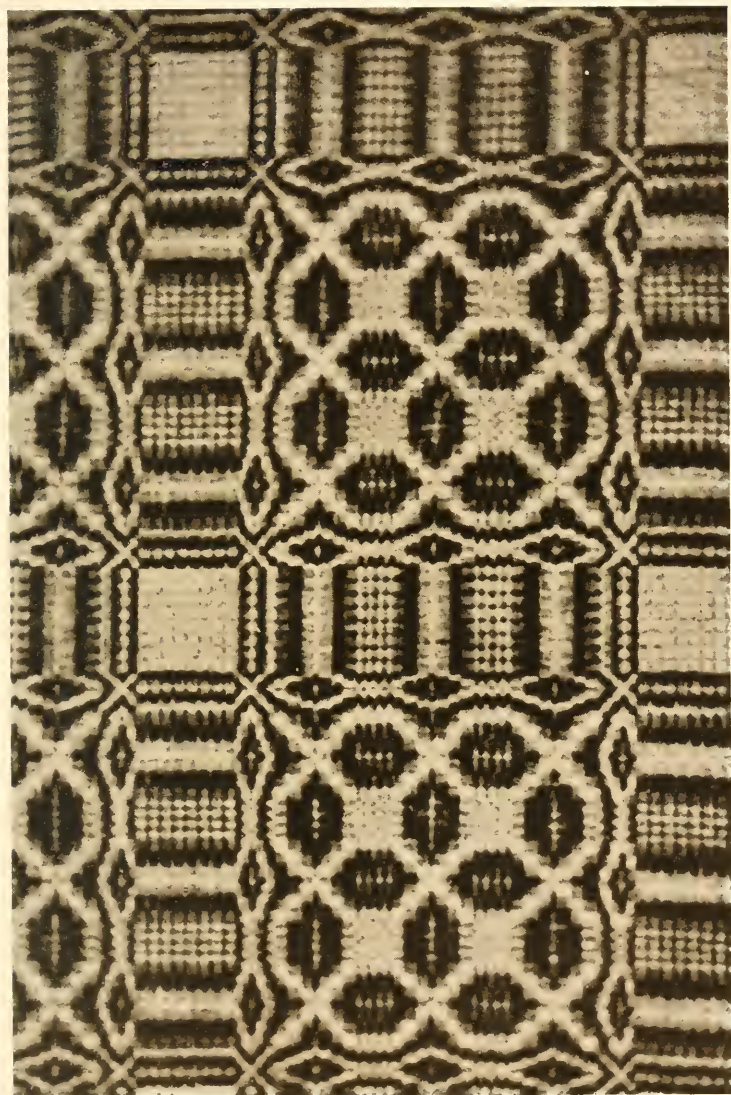
New Jersey Dream.

Kentucky Snowflakes.

Queen of England (Va.).

MISSOURI TROUBLE

IN the Kentucky mountains this pattern is called by the above name. In North Carolina it is "Spectacles," or "Mountain Flower." The Spectacle square forms a part of "Tennessee Trouble."



Squares of England.

Rings and Flowers of Virginia.

Lady's Fancy Draught.

Mission Draught.

Prussian Diaper.

Summer and Winter.

Queen's Household.

Bird's-Eye Coverlet.

Block Coverlet.

Blue and White Coverlet Number
Three.

Capa's Number Five.

Compass Diaper.

Compass Work.

Cross-a-Wise (Ireland, 1769).

Flag of Our Union.

Flag Work.

Freemason's Walk.

Gardener's Note.
Single Chain.
Job's Trouble (Tenn.).
Spotted Leopard (Tenn.).
Old Glory.
Little Checked.
Federal City (Ky.).
Catch Me If You Can.
Forty-Niners.
The Union Draught (1827).
Fox Trail (N. C.).
Guess Me (N. C.).
Leopard Skin (N. C.).
Venus.
Birds of the Air (N. Y.).

And I do not know how many more
there may be, hidden — like gems in a

mine — under the failing memories of old mountain women or country folk, whose mothers and grandmothers practised the weaver's art.

Do you remember the "charm string" you had when you were a little girl, each button holding in its crystal depth a reminder of the one who gave it and the circumstances under which it was given? As I collected the names of these coverlet patterns it seemed to me I was a child again and the list of names my "charm string." Over and over I tell these names as a devotee tells the beads of her rosary; some are windows through which I look into the lives of my mountain sisters, and some are tiny caskets holding "infinite riches in a little room,"

a flash of humor, a gleam of tear-drops, a flight of fancy, a poet's imagery, a woman's longing, a page of history.

"Star of the East," "Rose in the Wilderness," "Rose in the Garden," "Star of Venus," "Wonder of the Forest," "Flower of the Mountain," "Rose Leaf and Bud," "Sunrise on the Walls of Troy," "Rose in the Valley," "Wreaths and Roses," and "Morning Star" are not merely poetical, they are poetry itself. The weavers who gave these names to their coverlet designs were poets, but they died "with all their music in them" except the few notes we hear in those simple rhythmic phrases that one loves to say over and over with a regretful thought of the woman whose soul

PINE BLOOM

WOVEN at "The Fireside Industries," Berea, Ky. Loaned for reproduction in color by Mrs. Anna Ernberg, Superintendent of Weaving at Berea College. Red dyed with madder. Woven on an enlarged scale this pattern becomes "Sea Star," "Sea Shell," "Isle of Patmos," "Gentleman's Fancy," and "Lady's Fancy" according to the locality in which it is woven.

held something for which she had no means of expression except the weaving and naming of a coverlet. Sometimes a design possesses two names, one poetic and the other prosaic. The round flower-like figure which the southern mountaineer calls "Dogwood Blossom" or "Snowball" is "Dog Tracks" and "Catspaw" in the New England States; and "Hen Scratch" is, I am sure, the prosaic name for the beautiful "Sunrise" pattern. It was a realist and a prosaist who named "Sixteen Squares" and a weaver who belonged to the romantic school changed it to "Sixteen Snowballs." There is a name obvious and a name obscure. I can see the fitness of "Sea Star" and "Pine Bloom," but

to find a "Catalpa Flower" in the pattern of that name requires the same kind of imagination that could see Arcturus with his bow in the starry heavens. Perhaps a catalpa tree stood at the door of the weaver's home, and perhaps it bloomed the day she took her coverlet from the loom. (In North Carolina, by the way, "Catalpa" is pronounced "Catawba.") "Shuckeroones," "Rocky Mountain Cucumbers," "Bachelor's Thumb," "Murphy's Legacy," and "Buckens and Owls" belong to the list of the queer and fantastic. "Buckens and Owls" was for a while one of the inexplicables, and "Shuckeroones" still is. I thought "buckens" was an obsolete word and I looked for it in Halli-

well's Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, published in London in 1850, but found it not. Then to the unabridged dictionary, where it is seen in its correct spelling: *buckeens*. It is an Anglo-Irish word which formerly denoted a young man of the second-rate gentry or a younger son of the poorer aristocracy who aped the manners of the wealthy. Froude uses the word thus in "Two Chiefs of Dunboy": "The buckeens who had been his companions sate the night through drinking whiskey in the hall at Derreen."

The buckeen and the owl are both night-birds, hence the association of ideas that brings the two words together, but why should they be applied to a

coverlet pattern is something no dictionary can tell us.

“Travis Favorite,” “Whig Rose,” and “Polk and Dallas” doubtless originated in Tennessee. “World’s Wonder” is an exclamation of pure delight and self-congratulation. She had toiled long at wheel and dye-pot and loom. She had cut the breadths and sewed them together and hemmed the ends with coarse homespun threads. Then she swept and garnished her room, and spread the new coverlet over the high fluffy feather-bed and retreated to a distance to see the effect. Ah, the snowy white of that foundation, and the rich tracery of dark blue! Was there ever anything as beautiful as this latest work

THE BLAZING STAR

THE picture shows well the heavy sombre character of the coverlet. Observe the similarity between this and the "Sunrise" design.



of her hands? It is the wonder of the world and "World's Wonder" should be its name.

"Lonely Heart" tells a story of a deserted wife or a maid forlorn. "Flowers of Edinboro" is a Scotch emigrant's sigh for her native land, and if you knew nothing of the origin of these mountain people, such titles as "Queen's Patch," "King's Flower," "Cuckoo's Nest," "Penford Chariot Wheels," and "Flowers of Edinboro" would tell a story of Scotch and English ancestry quite as authentic as the aristocratic surnames borne by the weavers themselves. "Young Lady's Perplexity" suggests a maiden hesitating between two lovers. "The Forty-Niners"

commemorates the discovery of gold in California. "Rose of Sharon," "Lily of the Valley," "Olive Leaf," and "Isle of Patmos" show the Biblical knowledge of the mountaineer. "The Bride's Table" is a rare pattern woven near Athol, Ky. There are squares representing tables, and in the centre of each a round tufted figure which is the bride's cake.

"Youth and Beauty" and "Lasting Beauty" are names that tap the fountain of tears. There are some things that we do not know until we lose them, nor can we really know a thing until we know its opposite. If you want a hymn in praise of youth and beauty, you must not expect it of the

young and the beautiful. Only the old know what youth and beauty are, and looking at the faded blue of Rachel Marran Chambers' coverlet and the simple squares of the other Scandinavian design, I see two women wearied with "care and sorrow and childbirth pain," withered, toothless, colorless, bending over the loom and naming their handiwork in memory of a swift-winged splendor that once was theirs and that will never be theirs again. "Soldier's Return" is a mother's psalm of rejoicing over a son saved from the perils of war and restored to the safety of home. "Catch Me If You Can" paints a picture of a coquette with flying feet and flying curls looking back

to see how near she is to being caught. "Young Man's Fancy" has a familiar sound. Where have we read those words before? Ah, yes!

"In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

We are not daring enough to advance the theory that "Locksley Hall" was read in the mountains where we find this name; but let us suppose that it designates a pattern of English origin, that the English poet in his childhood slept under a coverlet by this name. Perhaps, as his fingers traced the pattern, his old nurse told him it was called "Young Man's Fancy," and the phrase lingering in his mind with other childish memories was caught one day

YOUTH AND BEAUTY

A MOUNTAIN *coverlet*. Woven by Rachel Marran Chambers five generations ago. Owned by Miss Elizabeth Dangerfield of Lexington, Ky., to whom it was given by Florence Strong, Athol, Ky., the great-great-granddaughter of the weaver.



by a tide of poetic inspiration and drifted into the poem of his young manhood, just as the empty shell and the perfect pearl are brought to shore by the same ocean tide. Smile if you will at this fantastic theory; but "Young Man's Fancy" will always seem to me a link between the English poet who wrote "Locksley Hall" and the Anglo-Saxon woman who spins and weaves in the mountains of Kentucky. Every coverlet-lover may theorize in perfect freedom, as I do, for the field is all our own and no philologist can question the correctness of our conclusions.

The design called "Owsley Forks" is meant to show the current of a creek flowing by the home of a mountain

weaver in Kentucky. She made the creek the theme of her weaving, as Tennyson made a brook the theme of his poem; and who shall say she is not soul-kin to the English poet or to any artist in Japan who looks with worshipful eyes toward Fujiyama and then takes up his brush to paint its snow-clad beauty?

“Work Complete” sounds a note of triumph. I see the weaver gazing at her web as you gaze at your water-color painting, your delicate embroidery or your stamped leather. In the curves of that flower-like design there is the satisfactory beauty of work that lasts. To the end of her life she must do work that each day will undo, but

here is one completed task never to be done again, and she feels the large content that filled the soul of Milton when he wrote the last lines of "Paradise Lost."

"Petersburg Beauty" suggests at once a pretty Virginia girl, but the name was more probably given in honor of some German maiden in the town of Petersburg, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, for here in the old days lived many skilled weavers whose names we read to-day in the corners of their double-woven coverlets.

"Battle of Richmond" will puzzle the reader who knows that there was no battle of that name during the Civil War, though several battles occurred

near the city. But in the annals of the Revolutionary War we find a story of the capture and burning of Richmond by Cornwallis assisted by Benedict Arnold, and the name doubtless commemorates this event. How strangely life links the small and the great, when the pattern of an old bed-covering can recall one of the battles in a great war!

The "Whig Rose" is sometimes classed as an English pattern, but to my mind it is a modification of a Scandinavian pattern which goes by various names — "Lover's Knot" in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and "Flower Pot" and "Philadelphia Pavement" in New York. Every coverlet of this pattern that I have ever seen

THE WHIG ROSE

PATTERN *taken from coverlet woven fifty years ago near Paris, Tenn. Owned by Mrs. T. H. Bunch of Memphis, Tenn. The design is a modification of the Scandinavian "Lover's Knot." "Wheel of Fortune" and "Sun, Moon and Stars" closely resemble "Whig Rose."*



was woven in Tennessee and its name probably commemorates the formation of the Whig party in Andrew Jackson's administration. The complicated nature of "Missouri Trouble" and "Tennessee Trouble" might well be the reason for these names, but the former is a reference to the stormy days of 1850, and the East Tennessee weavers say that "Tennessee Trouble" commemorates the trouble that Tennessee had with the Indians at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In some parts of the state the pattern is called "Job's Trouble," and if Job should ever become acquainted with its intricacies and difficulties he would give thanks to God for having been spared this trouble.

The "Sea Star" pattern probably originated in a seaport town, for the four-cornered figure suggests the starfish, but it wandered down into Tennessee and fell into the hands of a religious enthusiast, who saw things in visions as did John, and there it became "Isle of Patmos."

To read the political names is like viewing a pageant that shows the whole course of American history with now and then a glimpse of European affairs. Each name is a tableau. You see the wigwam of the Indian and the cabin of the settler; you hear the shrieks of women and children and the march of contending armies; stately figures pass before you, diplomat, war-

rior, colonial dame, statesman and philosopher; war succeeds war, political parties are formed, and as you ponder each historical picture you see in the background a woman spinning and weaving. Not hers to write odes and epics or to measure her powers with man's in affairs of state. But while her toil-worn hands are busy with the work of home-making, her thoughts are divided between her home and her country, and these coverlet names are pathetic evidence that the fire of patriotism burned in her heart as warmly as in the heart of her husband or her son.

“What can you see in these old coverlets?” ask my friends, half-wonderingly, half-contemptuously.

What can I not see? I see poetry, romance, religion, sociology, philology, politics, and history, and if any Juliet asks me "What's in a name?" I answer: "*All that's in human life.*"

To find the design corresponding to a name or the name corresponding to a design requires the brain and skill of a detective. Sometimes the name serves for the design of a coverlet and the design of a piece of piece-work quilt. The lady who purchased for Miss Kenyon her beautiful "Lover's Knot" says it was called "Philadelphia Pavement," and I have seen a piece quilt of purple and white calico with that name. "Irish Chain," "Log Cabin," "Sugar Loaf," and many others belong to the nomen-

TENNESSEE TROUBLE

OWNED by Mrs. Benjamin F.
Proctor, Bowling Green, Ky.
*Woven by slave labor about sixty
years ago in Warren County, Ky.*



clature of both coverlets and quilts. It is part of the charm of names that every one likes to christen something, whether it be a horse or a book, a battle-ship, or a child, and we find the coverlet weavers varying designs and changing names at will. Thus, some one simplified the "Sugar Loaf" design and re-named it "Youth and Beauty."¹ Sometimes one name does duty for two or three dissimilar designs, and a design

¹In many instances I have designated the state where a name is found, but this is seldom any clue to the origin of the name. I first found "Youth and Beauty" in Kentucky. A year later I found it in Kingston, R. I. Whether it originated in Kentucky and wandered off to Rhode Island or vice versa no one knows. The few dates given are taken from old drafts, but they indicate only the age of the draft, not the age of the pattern itself.

may have one name in North Carolina, another in Kentucky, another in Tennessee, and still another in Virginia, as if it were a criminal fleeing from justice. A friend whose coverlet knowledge is both wide and deep once told me that "Governor's Garden" was "Governor's Garden" always and everywhere. So I took my pen and wrote:

"In this bewildering masquerade there is one steadfast pattern. Whether you find 'Governor's Garden' in Massachusetts or Kentucky, in Maine or Ohio, it is always 'Governor's Garden,' a stately aristocrat with whose name no one dares take liberties." But a few weeks later I learned from some East Tennessee weavers that "Gov-

ernor's Garden" is also called "Leopard Spots" or "The Spotted Leopard," and later still I found my "stately aristocrat" known in New York as "Rocky Mountain Cucumber," the most grotesque and plebeian of all the grotesque and plebeian names!

Writing on this particular branch of my subject is like walking on shifting sands. When I write a name under a design it is with a hesitating pen, for I know that any statement as to nomenclature will have to be added to or subtracted from or perhaps completely erased. Usually investigation results in certainty and clear knowledge, but the more you investigate this subject the deeper grows your bewilderment and

the less certainty do you feel about the correctness of your naming. For two years I knew one pattern as "Kentucky Snowballs." Then I learned that it should be "Kentucky Snowflakes." Later on I discovered it in East Tennessee under the name of "Hail Storm," and somewhere else it is "Colonel Jackson's Army" — the small white spots resembling the tents of an army encamped on a plain — and yet again it is "Alabama Squares," and next week or a week after I may learn a fresh name. I have names without patterns and patterns without names, and both distress me, for they are like souls without bodies and bodies without souls. I feel great pride at the thought that

LADIES' DELIGHT

A COMBINATION of "*Window Sash*" and "*Double Bow Knot*." In the Kentucky mountains it is sometimes called "*Gentleman's Fancy*." The coverlet was woven about sixty years ago near Franklin, Ky. Owned by Mrs. M. A. Cooke, Bowling Green, Ky. Colors, dark blue and white.



perhaps no one in the world has as many coverlet names as I have; but, dear as these are to me, many of them only increase the sum of life's disappointments. There are so many things I would like to see and never shall see: the heather purpling on the moors of Scotland, sunshine on the bay of Naples, the Coliseum by moonlight, violets blooming over the grave of Keats, and to these I must add "Cuckoo's Nest," "Fading Leaf," "Snowball and Dew-drop," and a hundred other missing designs whose names "haunt my dreams" as the odors from those "lilies of eternal peace" haunted the dreams of Galahad.

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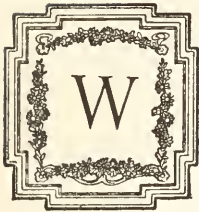
COVERLET DESIGNS



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COVERLET DESIGNS

"In my mind's eye, Horatio."



HENCE do they come,
these myriad designs
and their fantastic
names?

From the same
ethereal region where Shakespeare met
Miranda and Rosalind, where Prax-
iteles first saw his statues and Shelley
heard his "Hymn to the Skylark."
The mountain woman, like the Sensi-
tive Plant,

" . . . desires what she has not, the beautiful."

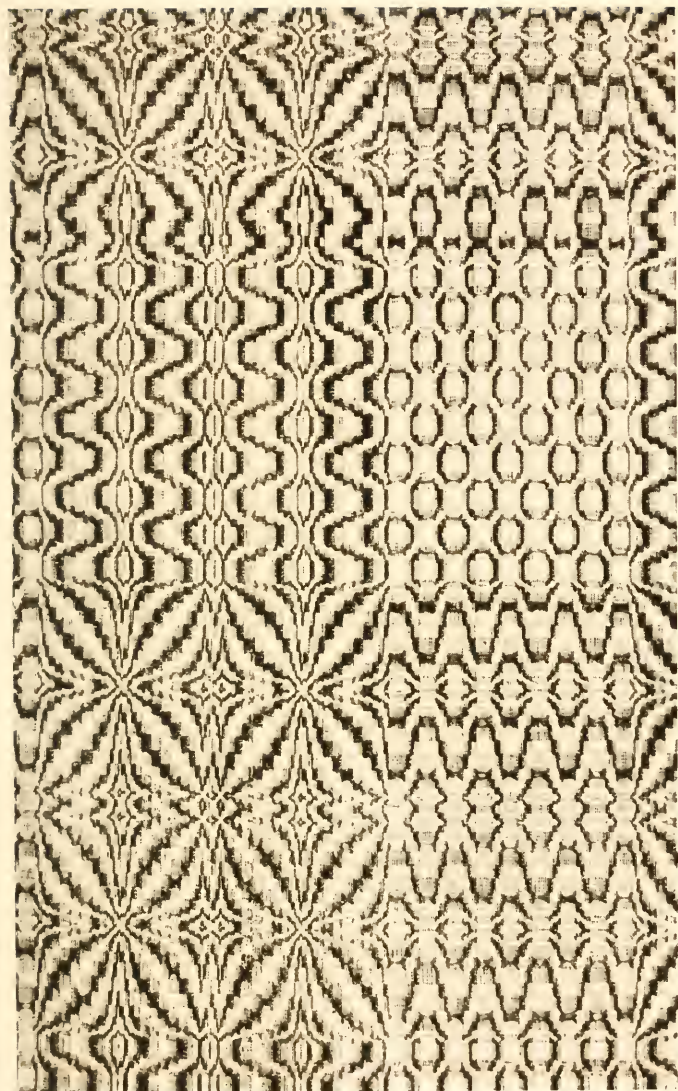
There are no paintings on her walls,

no bric-a-brac on her mantel-shelf, but over her shine the same moon and stars that woke dreams in the soul of Homer; at her feet bloom the flowers that the poets loved, and in her brain is the creative imagination that is the source of all art; so, though palette, chisel, brush, and the lore of books be withheld from her, the love of beauty, the desire to create beauty, will have its way, and with wheel and distaff, loom and dye-pot, she does an artist's work.

Certain folk-stories and myths are common to all literature, and certain forms of beauty are common to all art. We find them drifting from one country to another, seeking expression in clay or marble or in woven threads.

DOUBLE MUSCADINE HULLS

A COMPOSITE *pattern showing features of "Weaver's Choice" and the "Double Bow Knot" or "Hickory Leaf" designs. Woven in Tishomingo County, Miss. Owned by the writer, to whom it was given by William Wade.*



The swastika of the Hindoo race is also a Christian symbol and is found in the Roman catacombs of the fourth century, in Iceland in the ninth century, all over Asia and Europe, on old Greek coins, on Etruscan vases, on the pottery of the Pueblo Indian, on the Navajo blanket, and in the decorative work of the Hindoo. In the ruins of Yucatan we see sculptured designs similar to the scrolls and rectilinear frets used by the Greeks and Romans, and if you place side by side the designs used by the Navajo Indian and the Scandinavian weaver, you would say that artists of the same blood must have created them. The Scandinavian weaver uses the straight lines that are the special


mark of Navajo work. The zigzag design that the Navajo uses to represent lightning is found in the textile work of Norway and Sweden, and some old coverlet woven in New England or the mountains of the southern states may show a pattern whose lines will lead us back to the days of the Vikings.

Over a sofa in my parlor hangs a "Double Muscadine Hulls" in brown and ecru. Every one who sees it says, "That is oriental." It resembles Japanese matting, but is closer kin to a piece of Samoan tapa cloth which hangs over the landing of my stairway. Both are brown, both are divided into squares, and both show the leafy design known as "Bow Knot." The gorgeous beauty of

“Thistles and Lilies” is Chinese in effect, and the “Bird of Paradise” is like a piece of old English tapestry.

One day a photograph of “Bonaparte’s March” came to me. As I studied it I happened to look down and found “Bonaparte’s March” in the rug under my feet. The flower-like “Snowball” and the figure that the mountain woman calls “Catalpa Flower” also occur in oriental rugs, and a Navajo squaw might have woven Elizabeth Dean’s blue and white coverlet.

The “Chariot Wheel,” a circle with two diameters crossing each other at right angles, is one of the oldest designs. In the pictographs of the Moqui Indians in Arizona the symbol for the word

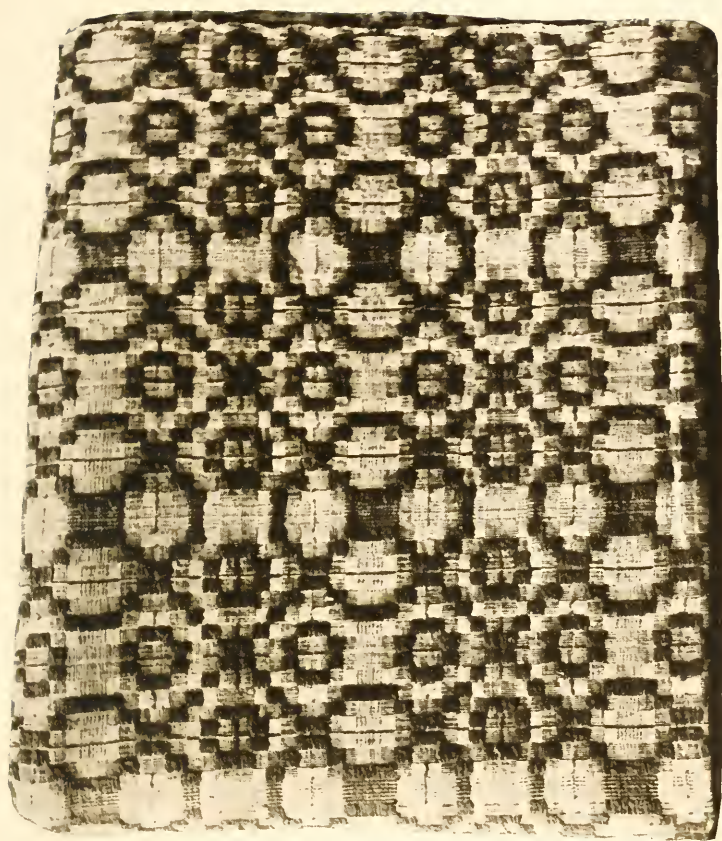
“star” is the hub and spokes of the Chariot Wheel, thus: . The wheel itself, like the swastika, is almost omnipresent. It is the letter *theta* of the Greek alphabet, it is found in the insignia of the Roman legions, in the Aramean alphabet, in the pictographs and syllabary of the Cherokee Indians and the ancient Mexicans, in the Codex Cortesianus, an old Maya manuscript, and on the pottery of the Mound Builders.¹ Thus does one touch of art, like “one touch of nature,” make “the whole world kin.”

Once when I was a child of eleven years, somebody placed a kaleidoscope in my hand and told me to look through

¹In the Mexican pictographs it represents a bale of blankets and the diameters are the ropes that tie the bale.

SINGLE CHARIOT WHEELS

DESIGN *taken from a cover-
let woven in Madison County,
Ky. Part of the William Wade
Collection.*



it. Memory has loosed her grasp on hundreds of childish days, but this one she still holds fast and surrounds with the halo of enchantment. All day I sat gazing through the little tube into a world of form and color that delighted my eye as chords of music delight my ear, and the same witchery seizes and holds me when I look long at some of these coverlets. You know how one slight motion of the kaleidoscope displaces the pieces of colored glass, dissolving the pattern at which you were gazing and replacing it with another of equal beauty. So it is with these designs. I have only to throw an old coverlet over a chair, sit down and fix my eyes on it and behold! I am a

child and the coverlet is my kaleidoscope.

I look at "Single Chariot Wheels" and see first the circular figures that represent wheels. Then I catch sight of a straight line; I follow it up; instantly the Chariot Wheels disappear and I see only diagonal lines meeting, crossing, and forming a net-work of beautiful squares, four small squares making a large square as in patchwork. I study "The Cross," and at first it seems only a collection of squares, with the sunburst pattern in some of them, then the cross appears, and longer study reveals the beautiful octagonal figure found in "Lover's Knot." This is very elusive. I find it, then lose it, and find

it again only to have it disappear before the "Cross" or the "Sunrise." Place the "Cross" by the side of "Snail Trail" and they seem entirely different; but make an inclined plane of the page on which "The Cross" is found, and look diagonally from the lower left-hand corner to the upper right-hand corner and presto! you have the winding lines of "Snail Trail." To look at "Double Muscadine Hulls" is like walking in a maze where every path leads to something beautiful. I thread my way through "Governor's Garden," finding gravelled walks edged with box, grassy terraces, and beds of pinks, and clumps of old-fashioned roses. "Missouri Trouble" is as beautiful as a stained glass window,

and "Sunrise on the Walls of Troy" is a Greek poem of form and color.

The quincunx, five squares or figures, one in the centre and one at each corner, is a frequent feature. "Catalpa Flower" has this quincuncial arrangement in the dark groundwork, making a background for the white flowers and the white bars connecting them. If these bars were woven in dark thread instead of white, the appropriateness of the name would be indisputable, for the four "flowers" would appear just as in "Missouri Trouble." This bar with a flower-like figure at each end often accompanies the "Chariot Wheel." You find it in "Shells of Ocean" slightly pointed, in "Ocean Wave" long and slen-

THE CROSS

WOVEN in Union County,
Tenn. Owing to the colors
of this coverlet, dark brown and
ecru, it does not photograph well,
but the picture shows the beauty of
the design.



der, in "Single Chariot Wheels" short and broad, and in "Double Chariot Wheels" it separates the four wheels, forming a beautiful cross very much like the cross treflé of heraldry. The Tennessee design called "The Cross" shows the coupé cross of heraldry, and the cross decussata or St. Andrew's cross occurs in "Tennessee Trouble," "Missouri Trouble," "Irish Chain," and "Lily of the Valley." It is probable that designs showing heraldic devices are of English origin. "Double Chariot Wheels" undoubtedly is, for it is also called "Church Windows" from its resemblance to a rose window in an English cathedral. But whoever tries to trace any heraldic design to its

ultimate source will find himself on a long journey whose end lies in pre-historic darkness. Oriental nations, the Chinese especially, placed certain symbolic designs on their shields when they went to war, believing that these were charms to avert the weapons of the enemy. The Greeks and Romans and later the Normans adopted the same custom. In the days of chivalry the device on a knight's armor became the symbol of his family; when one family intermarried with another the two devices were blended, and this was the origin of "armorial bearings" and the science of heraldry. Thus my thread-bare "Chariot Wheel" coverlet in black, white, and dull red, woven half

a century ago by an illiterate country-woman, speaks to me of strange things in strange lands; of armed warriors from Thrace and the Palatine, of crusaders bound for the Holy Land, of cathedrals where the light falls dim through windows of wonderful colored glass, and of kings in gilded chariots going through London town to the place of coronation.

Some of the designs are modern and purely American. "Federal City," for instance, was an attempt to represent the squares and avenues of the national capital. Sometimes an old design is slightly modified and re-named. "Lee's Surrender" is said to be a modification of the older design, "Braddock's

Defeat," and the "Double Bow Knot" is an evolution of the ancient "Sunrise" design so often seen in the oldest coverlets. I wish I knew the name of the weaver who had originality enough to think of making the sun-rays converge at both points, thus forming the beautiful leafy pattern that has so many names. It is curious to observe how a slight variation like this will completely disguise a pattern, and merely enlarging or diminishing a pattern will sometimes conceal its identity. I looked at "Sugar Loaf" and "Doors and Windows" many times before I saw that they were the same, only woven on a different scale.

It is impossible to speak of these

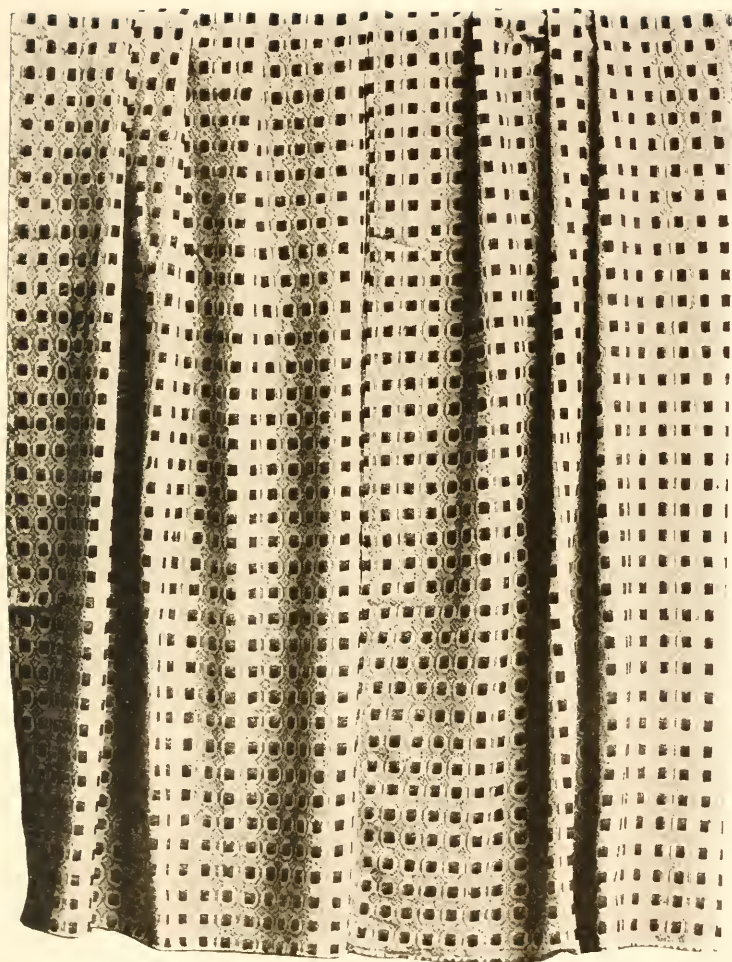
coverlet patterns except in the terms of art. Often I find myself thinking and writing as if weaving and music were sister arts. A draft is like a long bar of music and the figures or marks on it are the notes. When I see a weaver at his loom I think of an organist seated before a great organ, and the treadles of the loom are like the pedals and stops of the musical instrument. I look at the threads and the loom seems a stringed instrument, too huge for the hand of man, but made to be played on by every wind of heaven; and whenever I begin to study a new coverlet pattern, Milton's lines come to me:

*“Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.”*

We think with wonder and admiration of the musician who carries in his brain a repertory of harmonies that his fingers express on the strings of his chosen instrument. But the same wonder and admiration that I would feel in the presence of Chaminade or Paderewski comes over me when I stand in the presence of a mountain weaver. Her dress may be unfashionable, her language plain and ungrammatical, but she is mistress of an art so old that history can tell us nothing of its beginning; her brain holds the complexities of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty harmonies of form and color, and her work endures because it bears the marks of that noble craftsmanship

A MONROE COUNTY COVERLET

AN original design woven about sixty years ago in Monroe County, Ky., by Mrs. Irene Celsor. A magnifying glass is needed to show the beauty of the pattern. Colors, black, white, and pinkish heliotrope.



which William Morris defined as “thoroughly good workmanship which results from a positive interest and satisfaction in the work.”

“I come of a weaving family,” said a Monroe County woman to me, as she displayed some coverlets of highly original designs and colors. The talent for weaving “runs” in families and manifests itself in varying degrees. Some weavers must have a draft to guide them; they are like musicians who play only by note. Others can look at a coverlet or a picture of one, then write a draft and weave it with perfect accuracy; they are like musicians who play by ear. Others require neither coverlet nor picture to guide them; they make

their own drafts, following an inner vision after the manner of the Navajo artist, and they are the original composers, the Mozarts and Beethovens of textile art. Then, too, there are the less gifted ones whose originality goes no farther than making slight variations in some well-known pattern or combining two patterns.

All musical harmonies are constructed on a basis of seven primary notes, and a like simplicity underlies the harmonies of form and color found in coverlets. At first the patterns seem bewilderingly complex and different, but after much gazing and comparing, the coverlet student will find the different units, the pine burr, the sea star, the

catalpa flower, the leaf, the chariot wheel, the king's flower, the dogwood blossom or snowball, the square, the circle, the diamond, and when a new design is brought before him he analyzes it at a glance and determines its relation to other designs. The related designs are represented in this book so that the reader may see the "like in like" and "like in difference" and observe how one design is evolved from another.

The Navajo weaver originates his own designs and never weaves the same design twice. The mountain woman, on the other hand, inherits her patterns. In the old days every mother taught her daughter to weave and every family had its own particular

patterns; but lest the precious knowledge might be lost, the patterns were indicated by marks and figures on paper, and these "drafts," as the weavers call them, passed from hand to hand as long as the paper lasted. Eleven "drafts" lie before me and I wish each reader could see the slender rolls of paper and cloths as I see them. I handle them reverently as I would handle a poet's manuscript, for is not each the record of a woman's dream of art? Cloth and paper alike are brown with age and the paper is brittle as birch bark. One bears a date which shows it to be fifty-eight years old; another must be at least twenty years older, for the paper falls into fragments as

*OLD DRAFTS USED IN THE
KENTUCKY MOUNTAINS*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Handwritten notes and numbers on a torn strip of paper.

Handwritten notes and numbers on a torn strip of paper, including the date "May 1872 - 1875".

Handwritten notes and numbers on a torn strip of paper, featuring vertical lines and numerical sequences.

Handwritten notes and numbers on a torn strip of paper, including the phrase "greeny matis / any".

you unroll it. Old letters were cut into strips an inch and a half or two inches wide. The strips were sewed together with coarse homespun thread, one is pinned with a clumsy old pin, and as the paper began to wear out it was sewed on a strip of homespun cloth. On one side of the paper a long dead mountaineer says:

“My dere brother I take my pen in hand to tell you that I am well and hope you have the same blessing of health.” On the other side the brother’s wife has traced a “draft” called “the ginny-fowle.” The handwriting on one of the drafts is that of an educated person, and this cabalistic direction is written on one: “Five threads in each split

as *fare* as the fives in draft." With such slender memoranda as these old slips of paper it is a marvel that more patterns have not become obsolete, and often a long search has to be made for a wise old woman who can weave a rare pattern and teach the art to the younger weavers.

There are at least six different methods of writing drafts and the method often shows the nationality of the weavers. All the drafts found about Berea are written in the English method, another proof that the mountaineer is of Anglo-Saxon blood. Drafts written according to the Scotch method point, of course, to a Scotch or Scotch-Irish ancestry.

The designer's art will never go be-

yond the beauty of these old patterns. The revival of the handcrafts restores to them their former value, and whoever rescues one design from destruction renders a service to textile art. How many designs there were in our grandmother's day we shall never know, and my list of names is no index to their number, since each pattern has more than one name. Many are already lost beyond recovery and more will be lost, year by year, as the drafts are destroyed and the coverlets fall into tatters. What beautiful designs have I seen on ragged, dirty fragments of coverlets, and how often have I listened trustingly to the farmer as he says cheerfully:

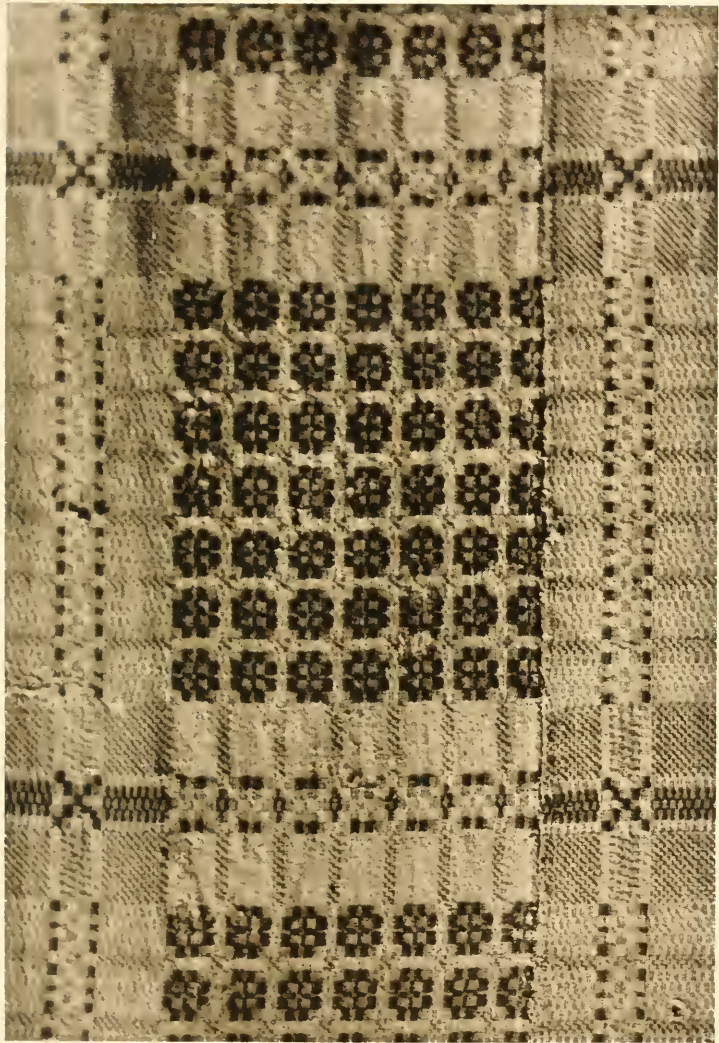
“Yes, ma’am, I’ll bring it to you jist as soon as I sell my terbacker.”

“Please, please, don’t forget,” I plead, “I only want to get a photograph of it.”

He repeats his promise, goes his way, and I never see that scrap of a coverlet again. Thus have I lost a wonderful “Magnolia Bloom,” a composite pattern resembling “Weaver’s Choice” and “Forty-Nine Snowballs,” and another of Scandinavian origin, whose name I did not know, and whose like I probably shall never look upon again. These three and countless others are lying in barn lofts or dusty garrets, and as ill usage destroys the last shred of each, a form of beauty perishes and the world is poorer evermore.

FORTY-NINE SNOWBALLS

A “RESTORED” *coverlet,*
owned by the author.

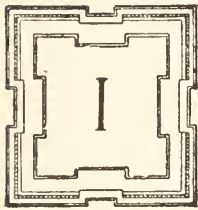


The charm of the coverlet pattern may not be at once apparent, but hang a "Whig Rose" or a "Dogwood Blossom" in the most elegant parlor you can find, and presently that homespun, home-dyed, home-woven fabric will be "the cynosure of every eye." The walls may be hung with masterpieces in oil and water-color, the windows curtained with costly lace, the doorways draped with portières of oriental silk and the floors carpeted with oriental rugs. Still the coverlet, though worn and faded, will hold its own in the midst of all this magnificence, because the hand that made it was guided by the soul of an artist.

VI
COVERLET COLORS

VI
COVERLET COLORS

"Its loveliness increases."



IN 1817, the year in which Bryant's "Thanatopsis" appeared, at the beginning of Monroe's administration, a book was published with the following title:

THE
DOMESTIC MANUFACTURER'S ASSISTANT,
AND
FAMILY DIRECTORY,
IN THE ARTS
OF
WEAVING AND DYEING
COMPREHENDING
A PLAIN SYSTEM OF DIRECTIONS,
APPLYING TO THOSE ARTS AND OTHER BRANCHES
NEARLY CONNECTED WITH

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

THEM IN THE MANUFACTURE OF
COTTON AND WOOLLEN GOODS;
INCLUDING MANY USEFUL
TABLES AND DRAFTS,
IN CALCULATING AND FORMING VARIOUS KINDS
AND PATTERNS OF GOODS
DESIGNED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF DOMESTIC
MANUFACTURERS.

BY J. & R. BRONSON.

UTICA.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM WILLIAMS;

NO. 60, GENESEE STREET.

If the purpose of a title is to give the reader a clue to the character of the book this title is faultless; and utilitarian as the volume is, it was doubtless a "best seller" in its time, for in 1817 every housewife was a "Domestic Manufacturer," and weaving and dyeing were as much a part of the day's work as cooking and dish-washing. Indeed, a coat of arms that would suit the origin of most American families

would be a field of white and azure, — the azure made with indigo — a loom and spinning-wheel rampant and a dye-pot couchant.

Should you, by good chance, ever find this little book with the long title amongst the rubbish of a second-hand book-store, you will learn from its pages what “woman’s work” was a century ago, and you will read with wonder the processes by which our ancestors managed to put color into their surroundings; for even Puritanism could not crush out their love of bright hues. There must be brown, drab, gray, and black for matron and man; yes, and blue, scarlet, and green for the maiden’s gown and kirtle, and for the coverlet

that draped the four-poster bed. So every housekeeper toiled willingly over vat and dye-pot; and the joy she had in her completed work was greater than yours as you shake out the lustrous folds of silk and cashmere you have bought from the merchant's counter, for your joy is that of the careless buyer, and hers was the joy of the toiler and the creator.

When ships from foreign parts came sailing into the harbors of Boston, New York, and Charleston, they carried in their cargoes madder, Nicaragua wood, anotta, Brazil wood, camwood, log-wood, and rocou from South America and Central America; fustic from the West Indies, turmeric and indigo from

the East Indies, tin from the mines of Cornwall, cochineal from Mexico and Central America, and woad from English fields where centuries ago the savage Britons gathered it and stained their bodies with the juice.

Your grandmother probably kept all these strange things in her cupboard and used them with the skill of the professional dyer. From cochineal, madder, Nicaragua wood, Brazil wood, and camwood she produced every shade of scarlet and crimson; logwood furnished a black dye; fustic, weld, turmeric, and anotta gave any shade of yellow; woad and indigo made the blue dyes; and if these commercial articles were too costly for her purse the forest was just

beyond her door, and, though she was no student of botany, she knew how to gather from plant and tree dye-stuffs as worthy as those that came from beyond the seas. If she wanted yellow dye, she used peach leaves or the leaves of the smart-weed growing in moist places by the wayside. Alder, birch, walnut, hickory, yellow oak, and Lombardy poplar offered their bark, and the sumac its stalks for the same purpose. The butternut, hemlock, and maple gave her brown dyes, and nutgalls made black or gray. She knew, also, how to produce two or three colors from the same substance by using different mordants such as sal-ammoniac, alum, copperas, blue vitriol, verdi-

gris, and cream of tartar; and she melted the block tin of Cornish mines, dissolved it in aqua fortis and used it in dyeing scarlet, crimson, and yellow. Grandmother did not know it, but the art she dabbled in is perhaps as old as the art of weaving, and some of the materials she used were known centuries ago. Traces of indigo have been found in the garments of mummies that were embalmed nearly a thousand years before the birth of Christ. A manuscript book on the art of dyeing written in French in 1380 mentions Brazil wood, indigo, gallnuts, alum, copperas and tin, and an old fifteenth-century manuscript in the convent of St. Salvatore in Bologna gives directions

for dyeing with woad, sumac, gallnuts, berries of the buckthorn, Brazil wood, and madder. In these remote times color was something more than a delight to the eye; it had a significance and importance unknown to us who live under a triumphant democracy. Among the ancient laws of Ireland was one that prescribed the number of colors that each class could wear, and only kings were allowed to wear seven colors. The clans of Scotland were known by the colors of their tartans, and color was a distinguishing feature of every coat of arms. The curtains of the ark and the garments of the high-priest were gorgeous with color, scarlet, purple, and blue; and in the thirteenth century the

Jews excelled all other nations in the dyer's art. But neither Egyptian, Oriental, French, Tyrian, Italian, or Jewish dyer ever produced colors more vivid and lasting than those which came from the dye-pots of your grandmother's days.

Do you know the blue of the ocean in Sir Frederick Leighton's pictures? — that clear, greenish sea-blue that makes you think of fathom on fathom of ocean depth? I get this same impression of endless depth when I look at the indigo blue of an old coverlet. Place such a coverlet as "Double Roses" or any of the "Lover's Knots" under an electric light, and you catch your breath and burst into admiring exclamation, as the blue designs "stand out" from the back-

ground of dazzling white and the coverlet becomes apparently a square of embossed velvet.

“Lasting Beauty” might be the name of any of these coverlets. Time has his way with the tints of a woman’s cheek and a woman’s hair, but when he tries his wicked arts on grandmother’s indigo blue he stands amazed and baffled, and all he can do to the reds, greens, browns, and yellows that came from the old-fashioned dye-pots is to soften them to a delicate beauty that makes their old age better than their youth. Are you a worshipper of color? Can you dream for an hour over the dull pink and the ivory white of an Iran rug? Do you prowl around in old junk shops



looking for faded tapestry, Belgian or English? Then you should belong to the Cult of the Old Coverlet. Never mind about the lost secrets of the Gobelin tapestry workers; cease to yearn for that Etruscan blue whose formula perished centuries ago; all the lost colors, and some that were never lost and never will be lost you can find in the threads of those old coverlets, and the artist who mixes the color will tell you her professional secrets.

Here are some recipes from Knott County, Kentucky, given by Mary Stacey, a mountain woman who is noted for the beauty and variety of her vegetable dyes. They were taken down in her own language:

“INDIGO DYE. — To two gallons of warm water add one pint lye from wood ashes. Mix one pint of madder with one pint wheat bran, and a little water — enough to wet it. Put this in the bottom of the kettle with a white plate over it. Put the indigo in a thick cloth in the two gallons of water and when it is soft rub out the dye. Then put in the blue yeast saved from the last dyeing. Keep it warm — just milk warm — for four or five days without bothering it. At night draw hot ashes plumb around your jar, and in the day-time keep it setting by the hearth just lukewarm all the time.

“For a dark blue let the yarn lay in several hours. Take it out and air it

and put it back. Be sure to wet the goods before you put it in. Rench it in cold water when you take it out. If you want a light blue, dip it over and over till you have the right color.

“RED. — Have the yarn clean, washed with soap and renched well. Bile it in alum water a small while. Take it out and throw out the alum water. Then make a thin flour starch and put in the madder and put the yarn in and bile it till it makes a good color. Hang it out to dry: Take one pound of madder to every three yards of goods, or four pounds of yarn.

“GREEN. — Peel off the bark of black jack or black oak. Bile your bark much as half an hour. Hits awful

strong. Take the bark out and have plenty of water in the kettle. Put in some alum and put your yarn in and bile it awhile, maybe half an hour. Wring it out and dip it in blue dye and then its pint blank like that I colored out thar.

“BROWN. — Take white walnut bark and bile till its a good strong ooze, then take the bark out. Put in the yarn and bile it till its as dark as you want it.

“BLACK. — When you take out your walnut put in a big tablespoonful of copperas. A handful of shumake berries makes it glisterin’ black.”

Mrs. Frankie Sturgill of Knott County, Kentucky, contributes the following recipes:

“INDIGO DYE. — Ought to have wheat bran if you can get it, but corn bran will do. Put in a little grain of flour. Just take wheat bran and madder, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of madder and a pint of bran, mix up with water, put in kettle. Make a little cotton bag and put the indigo in it and wet it and just keep rubbing out your indigo, like bluing in clothes. You must let this set three or four days in summer and keep the water warm. You can just put your hand on top of it and the indigo will stick to your hands. Then it is ready. Take water and mix up madder and boil all together. Dip in your wool and then take it out and let it air, then dip again, and keep on dipping and airing and rubbing in your

indigo until it gits as dark as you want.

“MADDER. — Have your wool right clean, washed with soap, and git you some alum. It takes a half pound of alum for five yards of yarn. Just put in enough water that you think will cover five yards. You boil it in that alum water for half an hour and then take it out and air it. Put in your madder and let it boil and then put in your wool and let it boil about an hour. Take out and wring and let it dry. My mother showed me how to do it when I was a little child.

“GREEN DYE. — Git this here black jack bark. Have your yarn dyed indigo blue first. Bile it well and put in

a lump of alum as big as your fist. It don't take very much black jack or very much hickory bark, nary one. Bile it in a tolerable large vessel. When you get your ooze biled, take out your bark and put in the wool and bile just a few minutes.

“PURPLE. — Git maple bark and copperas.

“Bile your bark until you git a pretty good ooze and put in just a little grain of copperas, then put in your wool.

“BROWN, SPRUCE PINE. — Just git bark and put in water and bile and do not put in alum.

“Chestnut bark makes awful pretty brown and hit never fades, but spruce pine will fade.

“Copperas makes walnut dye black. If you don’t put in your copperas it will be brown.”

“What is an ‘ooze’?” I asked.

“I can’t tell you just what a ooze is. You can just come and see. Hits just the dye that you put the wool in and if you want another ooze, you bile more bark and put it in.”

Mrs. Sally Gayheart from the same county gives her methods of dyeing just as she learned them from her grandmother, who was a Salisbury from “that absent and far away country they call England.”

“WALNUT DYE. — You want to git your roots and sprouts. Git ’em on the new moon in June. Skin ’em from the

root up. Bile 'em about two or three hours. Bile just about one ooze. Put your wool in the ooze and bile it. If it haint dark enough, take out and bile more bark and put it in that. A grain of copperas'll make it darker. If you hang it out in the sun, hit'll turn dark.

“GREEN DYE. — Git hickory bark any time. Better git it when the sap's up. That's heap the easiest time. Bile out your ooze, and put in a little alum. Keep bilin' until it gits strong enough. Put in your wool. You kin tell when hit's green enough.” (Just here I asked Aunt Sally to make me a pretty green coverlet. She said, “Hit's right smart both-erment to put in just one kiverlet.”)

“DYE FOR COTTON. — Just take maple

and chestnut bark.” (“How much?” I asked.) “I never pay no ’tention to how much. I just throw it in until I git enough. Hit’ll either be coal black or purple, when you bile it enough.

“WALNUT DYE. — Have plenty of white walnut bark. Put a little copperas in it. Bile it good and strong and put in yarn. Bile it till it gits as deep as you want it.

“PURPLE OR BLACK. — Git maple bark and bile it. Throw in a grain of copperas and put in your wool. Bile it just about so long, if you want purple, and longer if you want black. The longer you bile it the darker it gits.

“GREEN. — Git black jack or black oak and bile it right good, and put in a

little piece of alum. This makes the prettiest green, mighty-nigh, that ever was.

“YELLOW. — Git brown sage,¹ and bile it and put in a little alum. It makes the prettiest yaller that ever was.”

The indefiniteness of these recipes is a proof that they come from the world of art. Do you suppose Turner and Rembrandt could have given an exact formula for any one of their matchless colors? They were guided by a power they themselves did not understand, the power we call genius, that works through the medium of a mortal mind, but refuses an answer when we question: “How?” This power guides the mountain artist when she puts an

¹ Sedge grass.

unknown quantity of bark or roots into an uncertain quantity of water, throws in "a grain" of copperas or "a little piece" of alum and boils it "just about so long."

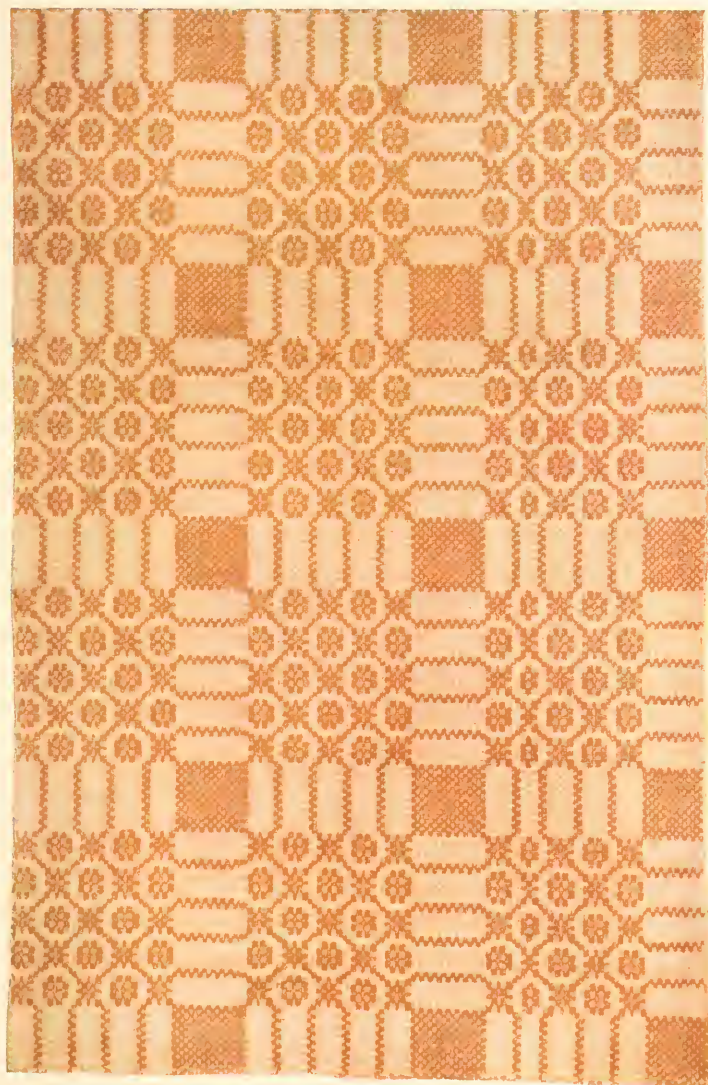
The following exact recipes are for those who lack the intuitive knowledge of the mountain dyer:

"YELLOW HICKORY BARK DYE FOR WOOL. — For one pound of wool put one half bushel of bark in kettle. Cover with water. Boil two hours. Take out and add one table-spoon of alum. Put in wool and boil until strength is out. Peach tree leaves and sage grass will color the same.

"SPRUCE DYE FOR WOOL. — For one pound of wool, put one bushel of bark

THE MARY SIMMONS COVERLET

WOVEN *in Warren County,*
Ky. Owned by Mrs. Mary
C. Simmons, Bowling Green, Ky.



in a large kettle and cover with water. Boil two hours; take out the bark and put in the wool and boil until the strength is all out and then dip in weak lye.

“WALNUT DYE FOR WOOL. — For one pound of wool put one half bushel of bark or roots in a kettle and cover with water. Boil two hours; take out bark and put in wool; boil until strength is out. Add one table-spoonful of copperas to above if you want black, and dip in weak lye.”

This recipe for yellow dye comes from North Carolina:

“Get the flowers of the Black-eyed Susan, boil them and set the color with alum.”

The weaver who gave me this recipe

said that a beautiful green used to be made by dyeing the yarn blue with indigo and then dipping it into a yellow dye made from the leaves of a shrub found in the North Carolina mountains, probably the sweet laurel. I have a tiny sample of yarn, dyed yellow with the flowers of the Black-eyed Susan, and twisted with it is a piece of brownish-black yarn that owes its color to the "bark from the roots of the butternut." Whoever uses the bark of the yellow oak must know that there are three coats of bark and that the coloring matter is found only in the middle coat.

Curious color effects are produced by weaving a warp of one color with a

woof of another. Dark blue woven with white makes a pale blue; a brownish red woven with indigo blue makes a purplish tint, and a soft grayish tint comes from weaving a blue cotton warp with a woof of natural color wool. Madder was generally used to make the red dye of early days, and the weavers of Knott County, Kentucky, use the same madder that the Government uses for dyeing the red stripes in the American flag. But occasionally you find among old coverlets a red made from cochineal, and a color expert can easily distinguish this from the madder red.

A certain Government bulletin on industries in the southern mountains tells of a weaver who makes a blue dye

equal to indigo from a plant known only to herself. This mysterious plant may be the weld, a native of Europe, but found in the eastern part of the United States. The dictionary speaks of "woad or weld," but botany distinguishes the two, woad being *isatis tinctoria*, a member of the mustard family, and weld, *reseda luteola*, a congener of mignonette.

Necessity is the mother of more than invention. Necessity forced upon the mountain woman her knowledge of the coloring properties of barks, roots, and herbs, and during the Civil War the same hard mother taught the southerner the uses of many a plant hitherto considered useless or merely ornamental.

The following list of dyes indigenous to the southern states was given me by Dr. S. D. G. Niles of Tennessee, who copied it from a rare old book, "Resources of Southern Fields and Forests," by Francis Peyre Porcher, Surgeon P.A.C.S., published by order of the Surgeon-General, C.S., Charleston, S.C., 1863:

LARKSPUR: flowers, a fine blue dye.

GARDEN PURSLANE: a desirable blue.

WILD INDIGO: blue equal to commercial.

YELLOW LOCUST: Chinese yellow for silks.

WAX MYRTLE: dark blue, brown, black, according to mordant.

KNOT GRASS: color similar to Japanese blue.

BLOOD ROOT TRIBE: a beautiful dye.

THE SPIDER WORT TRIBE: the flower is a beautiful blue and Kaempher says a color like ultramarine might be obtained.

HYDRASTIS CANADENSIS: brilliant yellow color.

ORANGE OR YELLOW ROOT: with indigo yields a rich green.

TURMEIN OR GOLDEN SEAL: with indigo yields a rich green.

YELLOW ROOT: plentiful coloring matter, — drab to wool, rich yellow to silk, with Prussian blue strikes dull olive-green.

WHITE ASH: the bark dyes green, blue, and black.

ONION TREE: with addition of lime to leaves a beautiful green is obtained.

MEADOW GARLIC: with addition of lime to leaves a beautiful green is obtained.

CHESS: a good green from flowers.

CLEMATIS: yellow from both leaves and branches.

BARBERRY: root boiled in lye, yellow to wool.

ST. JOHN'S WORT: a yellow to woven fabrics from its flowers, and good red dye from leaves.

OSAGE ORANGE: said to be equal to fustic as yellow dye.

COCKLE BURR OR AGRIMONY: leaves and stalks a beautiful permanent gold

color to animal wool, previously impregnated with weak solution of bismuth.

CYNARA, ARTICHOKE: dyes yellow color.

SASSAFRAS: roots with copperas yield drab.

YELLOW WOOD: beautiful saffron.

IRON-WOOD: inner bark, permanent yellow.

COMMON NETTLE: root boiled in alum water, a yellow.

SWEET LEAF LAUREL: yields yellow.

LOVE VINE: yellow to cloth.

MANGROVE TRIBE: black.

BURDOCK: yellow.

TALLOW TREE: leaves, a black dye

BUGLE WEED: black to linen, wool, and silk.

DOG-BANE: black or brown.

CYPRESS: leaves, a cinnamon, boil several hours.

BLACK ALDER: indelible orange.

POKE ROOT: solferino; red ink, alum to fix.

RED OAK: cream or black, depending on mordant.

PERSIMMON: dye with iron black, color depends on mordant.

HEATH TRIBES: purple with copperas.

An old East Tennessean told me that he had a shawl striped with green, and the color was made by dyeing the yarn blue with indigo and then dipping it into a dye made from crab-apple bark. He said he had often gathered willow

bark from which a light gray color was made, and he described accurately the wild madder and wild indigo which made a good substitute for the madder and indigo of commerce.

These home-made dyes are a fascinating study, drawing one back to nature and leading him into the secrets of her laboratory. I like to look at the green leaves of the peach, the golden disk of the Black-eyed Susan or the sedge grass that gilds the autumn fields, and know that the color of sunshine may be distilled from their juices; and since I learned how the hand-woven coverlet came by its splendid hues, I see in field, forest, and garden more than I ever saw before. A great transcendentalist

says that everything in the mineral and vegetable world has a "spiritual dynamis" that may be extracted from it for man's use, and Tennyson speaks of "the soul of the rose."

What is the soul of a rose, unless it be the color and the perfume? We know how to prison the perfume in an imperishable essence; what if we could fix the color in a dye that would last when petal and calyx had mouldered back to earth? The tree from whose bark your grandmother made her dyes was felled and sawn into boards long, long ago. Flower, leaf, and fruit, grace and stateliness, its million leafy shadows on the grass of spring, the darker shade of midsummer and the glory of its au-

tumns, all are gone, but in your coverlet's threads, the soul of the tree still lives.

There is a startling brilliance in the colors of well-kept coverlets. I have seen them come from the darkness of cedar chest or closet where they have lain for forty, fifty, or sixty years, and "they strike my eye" as the notes of a clarinet would strike my ear. I am glad that Susan Fletcher saw fit to have her name woven into her coverlet, for the woman who made those wonderful scarlets, the deep blue, and the clear olive-green, deserves to be remembered as a skilled colorist. I wish I knew how Rachel Marran Chambers made the soft blue and the russet brown of her "kiver,"

and sometime, perhaps, I may go into the forest and try to find some root or leaf or bark hitherto untried from which the world may gain a new color.

I have said that the unfaded colors "strike the eye," but the colors that strike both "eye" and "heart" are found in the unappreciated, abused, and abandoned coverlets that have lain around in stables and barns and braved the elements year after year journeying to town on the tobacco wagon, serving between times as a horse-blanket or a covering for a pile of potatoes down in the cellar. When you see one of these outcast "kivers" you will grieve first over its ruinous estate, and then you will rejoice over its colors. Grand-

mother's dyes were too intense to please the modern taste, but passed through the softening processes of time they turn to tints that make an old coverlet worthy to stand with an oriental rug — blue like the color of eyes washed dim by the tears of a lifetime, brown and yellow that match the leaves of autumn after November's rains have fallen on them, pale red, paler pink, and dull crimson like faded rose-petals, purple like withered violets — and through the rags and tatters of every breadth a glimpse of their former beauty comes to you, just as an old woman's smile, or the ripple of her snowy hair, suggests the freshness of her maidenhood.

If I wanted to construct a color

THE BETTY DEAN COVERLET

WOVEN in South Carolina probably eighty years ago by Betty Dean of Yorkshire, England. Owned by her grandson, Dr. H. P. Cartwright of Bowling Green, Ky. A design very similar to this is called "Winding Leaves."



scheme that would speak at once to the eye, the heart, and the imagination, I would not turn to Persia or Turkey to find it. I would throw over my sofa a threadbare "Tennessee Trouble" in blue, white, and red; over an arm-chair I would drape a "Double Chariot Wheels" in black, white, and dull crimson, or a "Forty-Nine Snowballs" in gray, tan, and old rose; and I would curtain the doorway and glorify the piano with Rachel Marran Chambers, "Youth and Beauty," and the old Irish "kiver" whose color hesitates between scarlet and old rose, and as long as their threads held together the presence of these old coverlets would create for me an abiding Vision of Fair Color.

In many coverlets the personality of the weaver is very apparent. The long, broad, heavy, closely-woven one of dark indigo blue and white is the coverlet of the pioneer woman. Such is Betty Elizabeth Dean's and the "Blazing Star." How well I remember the January day when I saw the latter! Overhead was a leaden sky, underfoot snow and ice. The telephone rang and a voice said: "There are two coverlets coming your way."

I ran to the porch and watched the wagons crawl slowly up the street, the longest and most heavily loaded wagons I had ever seen, and over each a "Blazing Star," dark as the winter sky, longer and broader than the wagon, and so

thick and heavy that it required a man's strength to fold it and carry it to the photographer. There was something majestic about these coverlets. Their folds hung sombre as a winter cloud, and they were more like a pall over the bier of a king than the covering of a commonplace tobacco wagon. I think the woman who wove these coverlets was tall, muscular, broad-shouldered, stern of face and manner, with iron-gray hair drawn tightly back from her face. But when I look at the cheerful colors and elaborate pattern of my "Tennessee Trouble," I see a happy-faced woman, who wore gay-colored muslins, put a flower in her hair occasionally, and sang at her spinning

and weaving, and to see this elaborate design in blue, red, and white is like hearing the music of the "Carnival of Venice."

THISTLES AND LILIES

PART of the *William Wade* Collection. It was purchased in *Clarke Co., Ind.* Its lower border is the same as that of the *Anne Hay* coverlet, and the thistle design shows that the weaver was of Scotch birth.





VII

THE PROFESSIONAL WEAVER

VII

THE PROFESSIONAL WEAVER

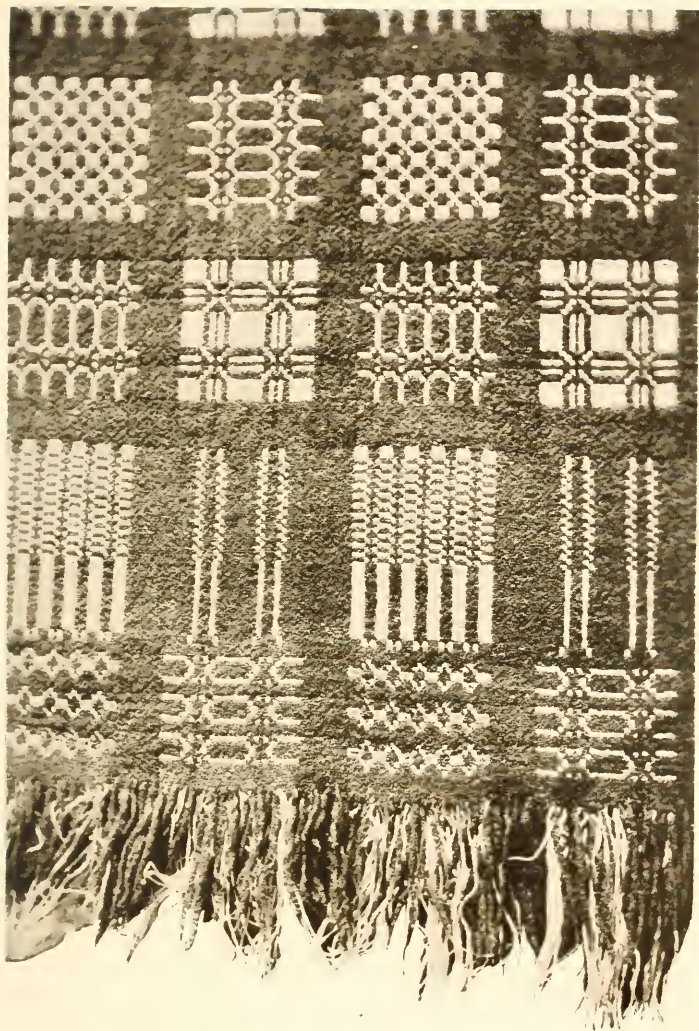
“And taking the sacred woven-cloths out of the treasures, he formed with them an awning, a marvel for men to behold. . . . And the woven texture had pictures such as these: Uranus collecting the stars in the circle (vault) of æther; the Sun driving his horses to the last waning light (sunset point), drawing with him the shining light of Vesper (the planet Venus). And black-robed Night was driving the two-horse chariot, without loose-reined steeds (side horses of the four-horse chariot), and the Stars accompanied the goddess (from the East). The Pleiad was travelling through the midway æther, and sword-bearing Orion; and above was the Bear turning his tail about the golden pole.”—EURIPIDES, ION. Bohn’s Library Translation, emended by Prof. Milton W. Humphreys, University of Virginia.



SOMETIMES your grandmother's coverlet was a collaboration; she did the carding, spinning, and dyeing, and a professional weaver finished the work. These skilled weavers came originally from European countries in which textile art had reached a high degree of perfection. They plied their profession, they taught the secrets of their art to younger men or hired apprentices, and as the population of America increased and the people drifted westward, the weaver, also, moved westward. In all of the older states we find his gorgeous, florid creations, and by the removal of

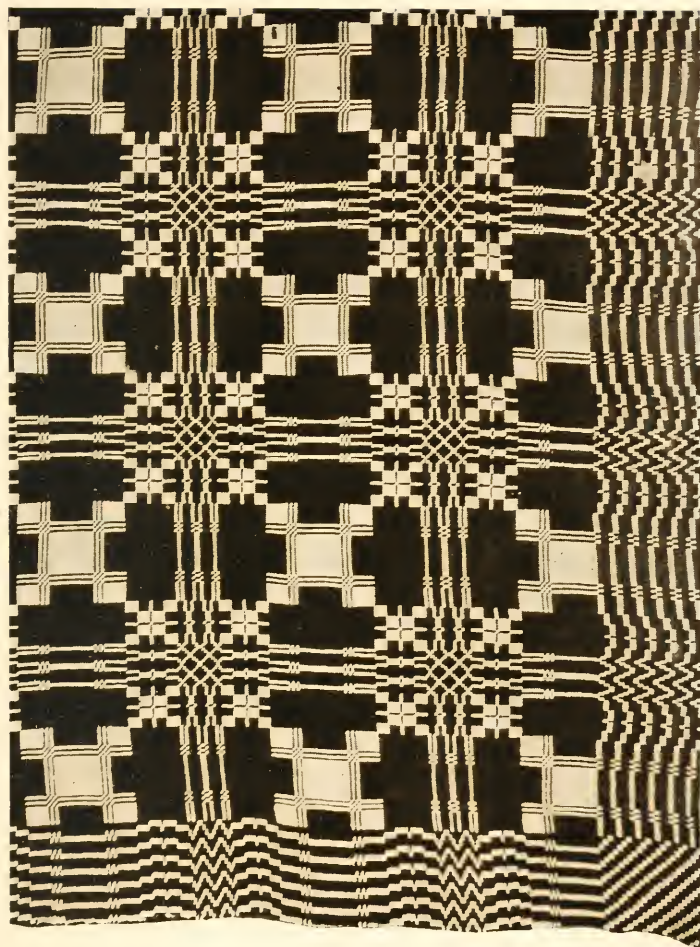
IRISH CHAIN

STUDY the squares of this coverlet and you will find five designs. Observe the "Pine Tree" which appears as a border in many of the double-woven coverlets of the "Lover's Knot" pattern.



LOVER'S KNOT

OVER *a hundred years old.*
Double-woven, blue and white.
Owned by Miss Helen Kenyon,
Brooklyn, N.Y.



families these are scattered far and wide. In the little southern town where I live, I can walk across the street, around the corner or a few squares away, and find masterpieces of weaving done one hundred, seventy-five, or fifty years ago in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and the older towns of Kentucky, and if I find an "oldest inhabitant" in any old town I can always gather a few facts that bring me very near to the professional weaver.

In your grandmother's time the advent of a professional weaver, in any community, must have produced the same excitement that a new fashion from Paris or a new custom from England produces to-day. There were home-

woven coverlets on every bed, but a great discontent and longing filled the heart of the housewife as she listened to some gossip's tale of those foreign weavers who were making double-woven coverlets — actually two separate coverlets, but inseparably joined so as to appear one — and who used designs that made “Governor's Garden,” “Sunrise,” and all the other familiar figures seem plain and commonplace. I am sure that every dame who could afford such a luxury made haste to spin the very best quality of thread, dye it with the choicest colors, and carry it to the nearest artist. “Every man is the son of his own work,” says Richter; which means that a man's work influences

his character just as his character influences his work. We cannot look at the coverlets of these old weavers without wondering what manner of men these were who could make from such simple materials as homespun threads of cotton and wool a perfect image of flower and leaf, bird and beast, as delicately outlined as if an artist had drawn it with a pencil.

There is a kind of brotherhood, the world over, composed of wandering artists, the travelling painter from Bohemia, who knocks at your door, and stays only long enough to catch the fleeting beauty of a woman's face, imprisoning it forever in the colors of his palette; the singer who pauses under your

window to sing a song of his native land and then goes his way leaving the song in your heart; the minstrel of the harp or violin who sets his strings a-thrill in the market-place of the town and then goes back to the lonely, dusty road that the homeless tread; and — close-kin to these — the professional weaver of your grandmother's day, sometimes an itinerant, sometimes a permanent resident, but always a person of much importance. I think he realized his importance, too, for often he wove his name and the name of his town, county, and state into the corner of a coverlet just as an artist writes his name in a corner of a picture.

I have copied a few names from these

*COVERLET SHOWING MASONIC
EMBLEMS*

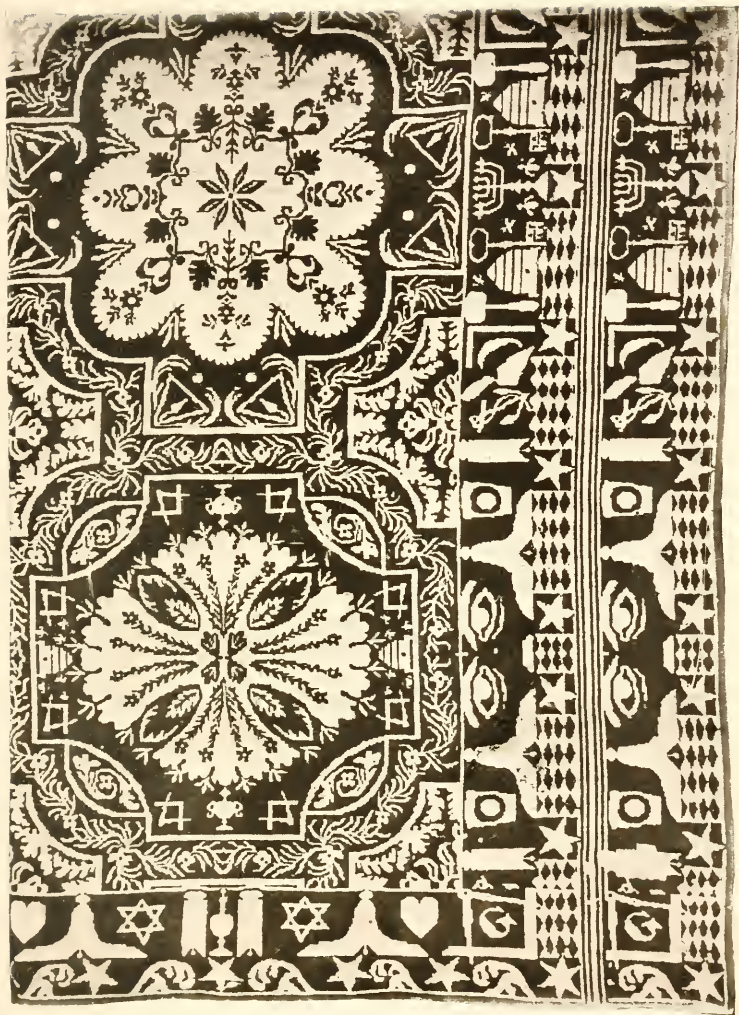
Year	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population (millions)	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5
GDP (billions)	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500	550	600

The following table shows the population and GDP of the United States from 1900 to 2000. The population has increased from 1.5 million in 1900 to 2.5 million in 2000. The GDP has increased from 100 billion in 1900 to 600 billion in 2000.

The population of the United States has grown steadily over the past century. This growth has been driven by a combination of factors, including immigration and a high birth rate. The GDP has also grown significantly, reflecting the country's economic development and technological progress.

The increase in population and GDP has had a significant impact on the United States. It has led to a larger workforce, increased innovation, and higher living standards. However, it has also led to challenges such as environmental degradation and income inequality.

In conclusion, the United States has experienced remarkable growth in both population and GDP over the past century. This growth has shaped the country's identity and future prospects.



BOSTON TOWN

DDOUBLE-WOVEN *blue and white coverlet owned by Mrs. H. W. Morehouse, Danville, Ill. The border is called "Boston Town." Woven probably by Gabriel Miller, Bethlehem, Pa.*



coverlet corners and placed them on my page, because when a man's work lasts, his name should not be forgotten.

GABRIEL RAUSCHER, Pennsylvania.

JOHN MELLINGER AND SON, Pennsylvania.

J. GEBHART, Pennsylvania.

F. METZGER, Pennsylvania.

IRA HADSELL, New York.

J. CONGER, New York.

J. A. GETTY, Indiana.

SARAH LA TOURRETTE VAN SICKLE,
Indiana.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON ROSE,
Rhode Island.

HARMON GOODWIN, Maine.

— MOWRY, Ohio.

G. HEILBRON.

SAM CURRY, Kentucky.

SAM GAMBLE, Kentucky.

ANNE HAY, Indiana.

These names represent five nationalities; German, English, Scotch, French, and Irish. Mowry lived in Revolutionary days, and between us and most of the others lies the space of a long lifetime. So if we go to searching for information concerning them, we are likely to run up against the blank wall of oblivion. But the coverlets they wove are still with us, whole and unfaded, and now and then a scrap of biography comes to me carrying a distinct picture of a class of artists as

interesting and as individual as the minstrels of England and the pipers of Scotland.

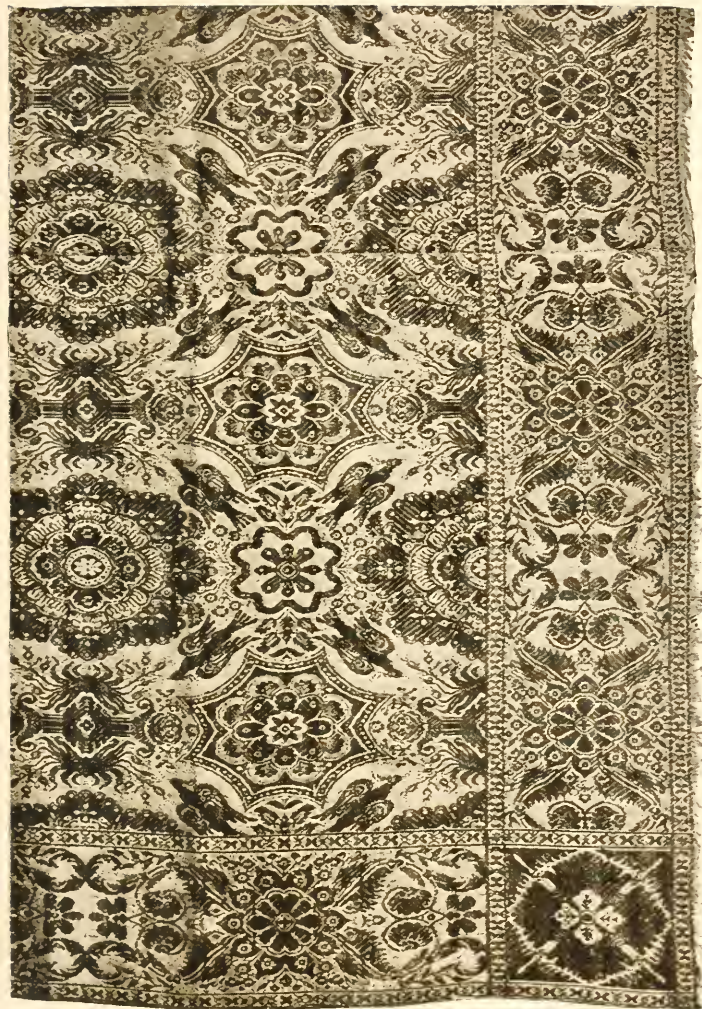
Mrs. Hayden Trigg of Glasgow, Kentucky, gives me the following account of a weaver who lived in her mother's time and wove here and there in the county of Barren:

“As early as 1830 there came to this neighborhood an Irish weaver, Sam Gamble by name, who regularly made the rounds, weaving cloth for the different families who lived near by, and tarrying longest where the hospitality of John Barleycorn offered the best inducement. At the ‘Old Place,’ the home of Mr. Alanson Trigg, he found comfort for both body and soul in the

fine old peach brandy distilled from the fruit of the orchard and stored away in pantry and cellar, and here he would linger for months plying his trade with the assistance of 'Aunt Rose,' the 'Black Mammy,' who spun the thread, filled the bobbins, and threaded the sley. The woolen woof was made from the fleece of sheep that grazed on the neighboring hillside, and probably the cotton thread, too, was a home product. The music of Sam Gamble's shuttle delighted the whole family, for to the negroes it meant new clothes at Christmas time; to the mistress it meant fleecy blankets and gay coverlets, and all these were colored with dyes made from barks and roots

BIRDS OF PARADISE

WOVEN in *New York* nearly
one hundred years ago.
Owned by Mrs. J. M. Galloway,
Bowling Green, Ky. Colors, blue
and white.



THE JOHN GERARD COVERLET

DDOUBLE-WOVEN *blue and white coverlet owned by Mrs. John Gerard, Bowling Green, Ky. Woven in Ohio. The border is similar to the side border of Anne Hay's coverlet and almost the counterpart of the border on "Frenchman's Fancy."*





of trees that grew around the 'Old Place.' Sam Gamble's Irish wit and good-nature made him a welcome guest wherever he went, but he left the neighborhood in 1844, and was never seen there again. The oldest inhabitants still remember him, and the record he left behind him is a good one: 'What he did, he did well.' Surely, in spite of his fondness for peach brandy, his reward in the hereafter is a glorious certainty."

Fifty or sixty years ago, Sam Curry, a compatriot of Sam Gamble, practised his profession in the counties of Scott, Fayette, and Bourbon. I have seen three of his coverlets, all double-woven in the "Lover's Knot" design, with

the "Pine Tree" border. I never meet this design, so classic in its simplicity and beauty, that I do not think there must have been something fine in the character of the man who loved to weave it. Many a Kentucky family possesses a "Lover's Knot" woven by this Irish artist, but the only personal reminiscence of Sam Curry that I have been able to find is the fact that he was "a terrible drunkard." I wish those for whom he worked had remembered and handed down to us something besides this mention of his human frailty. They might have said that he was a merry soul, that little children followed him and clung to him, and that he told them tales and sang to them

when his day's work was over; but
Tradition is a foolish old hag who

*“. . . stores her chaff in bins
And throws away the grain.”*

So all we know of this master of weaving is that he was a drunkard and that the “*Lover's Knot*” pleased his taste.

If the coverlet is not inscribed with a name, a place, and a date, the design may give you a clue to the nationality of the weaver. Whenever I see the flower of the thistle or the tiny bells of heather, I say: “A Scotchman wove that.” The *Bird of Paradise*, so frequent in old English tapestries, shows that the weaver was of English birth. The “*Lion and Eagle*” coverlet was the work of an English immigrant who

loved both the land of his adoption and the land of his birth. I used to think that if two coverlets showed the same design it was a positive proof that the same hand wove both, but I found later that the designs of the professional weaver, like the mountain designs, were common property; Gabriel Rauscher and John Mellinger both used the "Almira" design, and the "Double Rose" design is found in the work of Conger, Heilbron, the two Mellingers, Metzger, Gebhart, and Rauscher. The coverlets woven by these men are either double-woven or of tapestry weave, and double-weaving seems to have been an open secret in Europe at the time these weavers lived, for we find double-woven

THE ANNE HAY COVERLET

DDOUBLE-WOVEN *coverlet,*
blue and white, woven by Anne
Hay, Scott County, Ind. Owned by
Anne Hay's granddaughter, Mrs.
W. B. Mayes, Bowling Green, Ky.

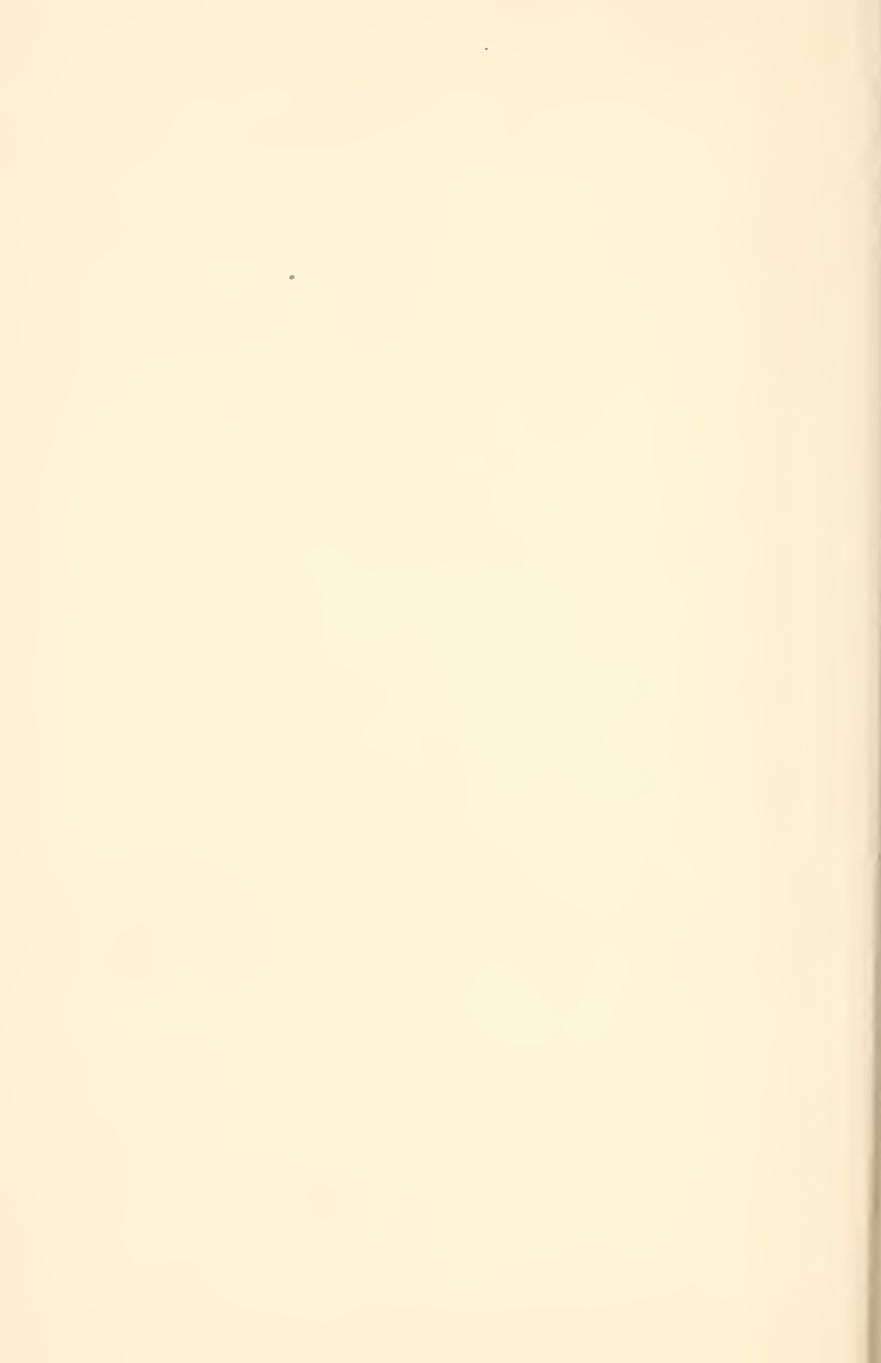


LION AND EAGLE

DOUBLE-WOVEN *coverlet*
owned by Mrs. William H.
Matthews, Pittsburg, Pa. Observe the
British lion and the American eagle.



ELIZA MITCHELL. MITCHELL. MITCHELL. MITCHELL.



coverlets of English, Irish, Scotch, French, and German manufacture. I had a theory that only men did double-weaving, but Anne Hay's double-woven coverlet upset my theory and a year later I discovered Sarah La Tourrette Van Sickle, who was in her youth a mistress of double-weaving. Anne Hay was a Scotch maiden who came to this country and settled in Indiana. Her granddaughter remembers the loom which was brought from Scotland, and which may yet be standing in the weaving-room at the old home-
stead. Anne Hay married an Oldfield, and on his death she married James Getty, a weaver, probably the J. A. Getty who wove the Lockport, New

York, coverlet with the date of the Declaration of Independence in one corner. It is also probable that Anne Hay wove "Thistles and Lilies," as the border is the same in both coverlets, and the dates are only a few years apart, 1850 to 1858.

When I discovered the John Mellinger coverlet I wrote to a friend in Pennsylvania, and he at once identified John Mellinger as an old acquaintance of his boyhood, known then as "Thread Jock," because of the threads that always stuck to his coat.

While I was writing this chapter I strayed into a loan exhibit one day to see the old coverlets. A dingy half-coverlet caught my glance. The

“Double Rose” design reminded me at once of the Mellingers and Rauschers, and when I looked in the corner I was not surprised to find the name of Gabriel Rauscher. I sought the owner of the half-coverlet, found that his wife was a Rauscher, and learned how the German Rauscher came by the French name Gabriel. The Rauscher family came to America from Elsass, or Alsace, in Lorraine when that province was under French rule. The coverlet had been cut in two in order that a brother and a sister might share this heirloom.

A writer in one of the bulletins of the Art Institute of Chicago says that such coverlets as “Bird of Paradise” and similar designs were not woven

after 1861. The outbreak of the war did silence the looms for a while. As one writer pathetically expresses it:

“When the war began, no more yarn was brought to the weavers. The men went to war and the women went to the fields, so the looms had to quit work.” It is impossible to say when the last double-woven coverlet was made. We only know that as the abandoned looms fell into decay and rust and the weavers passed away, double-weaving became a lost art in this country. Instructions for doing double-weaving could be found in certain text-books, but those who tried to put the teaching into practice met with failure. How the art of double-weaving was revived in this country is

THE DOUBLE ROSES

TAPESTRY *weave. Colors the same as the John Mellinger coverlet. Owned by Mr. Henry Reiff, Oakland, Ky. Susan Fletcher spun and dyed the thread.*



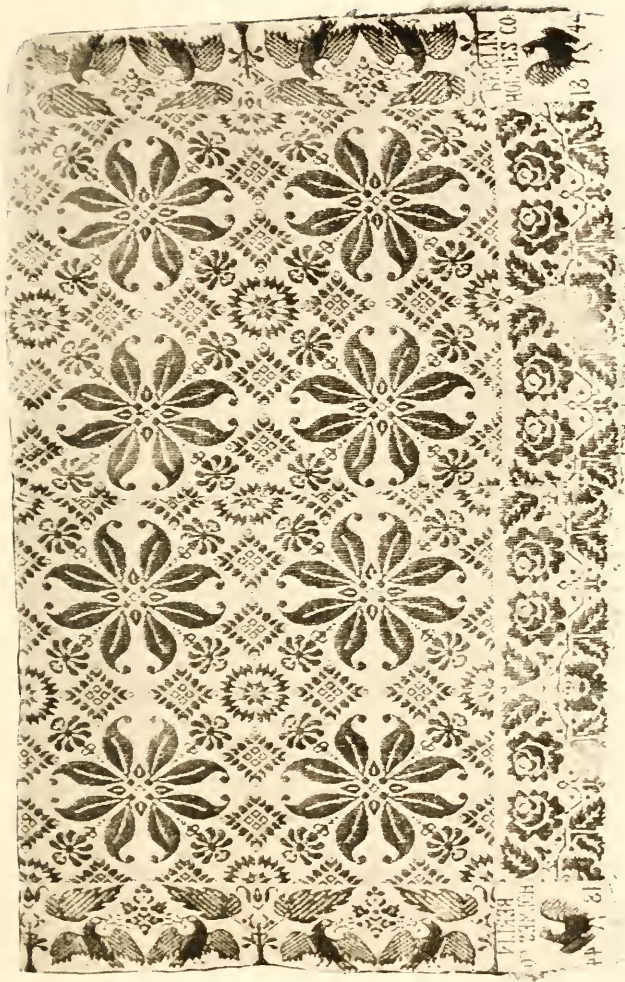
J. R. GEEHART
MAYTOWN
LANCASTER
CO:
1841

S. FLATNER



CHANTICLEER

WOVEN when Berlin was a Mennonite settlement. Owned by Mrs. E. L. Painter, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. In 1844 James K. Polk of Tennessee and George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania were the Democratic candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency, and about this time the "Rooster" was made the emblem of the Democratic party.



HARPER & BROS. CO.
NEW YORK

HARPER & BROS. CO.
NEW YORK

best told in the words of Mr. William Wade:

“Shortly after I got my ‘*Lover’s Knot*’ from Somerset County, Pa., I was impressed by its ‘*tuck-in-a-bility*,’ it being so much softer and more pliable than coverlets even lighter in weight. On investigation I found it was because the coverlet was really two separate fabrics. I asked Mrs. Hill of Berea and the Hindman folks about that peculiar weave, and learned that there were four different weaves, single, six-shaft, eight-shaft, and double. I went on finding double-woven coverlets in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and New York. Then I set out to find somebody who knew how to do double-weaving. For

a long time I was knocked from pillar to post. Some weavers in Wisconsin thought they knew it, but I soon found they did not. I discovered an old woman in West Virginia who evidently understood it, but she was verging on her second childhood and could not teach it. All the time I was making this search I knew it was done in Europe, especially in the Scandinavian countries, so I looked up a Norse book on weaving and had enough translated to show me that it would not suffice to teach it. About this time I made the acquaintance of Miss Grace Tabor of New York, a charming writer on art, gardening, etc. She was much interested in the double-weaving and joined

me in my search for a weaver. At last she wrote to me: 'Eureka!' She had found Mrs. Anna Ernberg, a native of Sweden — (the daughter of an officer of the Swedish Army) — and an expert in all kinds of weaving.

"I have long thought that if the coverlet industry at Berea is to pay, it must get away from single-weaving, as that has come to be a 'fad' and the market will soon be overstocked. I brought Mrs. Ernberg to the notice of President Frost of Berea, and she was engaged to succeed Mrs. Jennie Lester Hill, under whose superintendence the Department of Fireside Industries had become justly famous. Mrs. Ernberg is to give lessons in double-weaving to

a weaver from Knott County, Kentucky. This weaver will carry the knowledge to her mountain home, and in time double-weaving may be as frequent here as it is in Europe."

Looking at the designs of these coverlets is like walking in strange gardens. Here flits the Bird of Paradise, here bloom thistles, roses, lilies, and clematis, and the wild cactus shows both flower and fruit; here are flower and leaf conventionalized beyond recognition, and in the coverlet's border you will find things as interesting and mysterious as the hieroglyphics of Egypt. History, politics, and masonry jostle each other; there are churches and dwellings; the architecture of Bos-

BIRD OF PARADISE

WOVEN *in Genessee County,
N.Y. Part of the William
Wade Collection. Notice its re-
semblance to English tapestry.*



THE IDA P. ROGERS COVERLET

WOVEN in *Washington*
County, Pa., about eighty
years ago. Double-woven, blue and
white, all in one piece. Owned by
Mrs. S. G. Rogers, Bowling Green,
Ky.



ton Town and the architecture of the Orient, palm trees and pine trees, an American eagle and a ridiculous jackanapes, and a friend tells me of one border that must have been inspired by "A Midsummer Night's Dream," as it consisted of donkeys with cupids hovering around. Doubtless an unfortunate love affair had taught the weaver that Cupid doth make donkeys of us all.

But after puzzling and wondering over the elaborate patterns of the professional weaver, I turn lovingly back to the old homespun, home-woven "kiver." I am sure these professional weavers loved their work, but they wrought for money's sake as well as

for art's sake, and their work lacks the quality that our spiritual sense apprehends when we touch an old coverlet made by the toil-worn hands of a patient woman who wove with her threads a thought of love for the home that would be beautified, and another thought for the husband and children who would sleep warmer through all life's winters under her blue-and-white coverlet.

Miss Grace Tabor says that such coverlets as "E Pluribus Unum" are to the textile world what Raphael's "Transfiguration" is to the world of art; but when I look at "E Pluribus Unum" and its companions, their historical significance wholly overshadows their art.

There are no New Worlds to-day. All the strangeness and wonder of the earth are gone. But the designs and inscriptions on some of these coverlets recall the day when every wind that blew eastward across the ocean brought with it a story that passed from lip to lip till it was told in every language of the Old World. It was a fairy tale of the centuries, the tale of a New World where there were no popes, no priests, no kings, no nobles; where the land reached from ocean to ocean and the poorest man could have his share of it for the asking; where the mountains had their summits in the sky and the rivers began and ended no man knew where. There was gold in the mines; a fountain of

Perpetual Youth, an El Dorado, and above all, Freedom, the right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience; the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And for love of liberty and right men left the homes of their forefathers and braved the perils of the sea to reach the shores of this New World.

A New World! There is something in these words that makes the heart leap. We are all searching for new worlds or trying to turn old worlds into new ones, and we know how the tales of the early explorers must have stirred men's hearts two or three centuries ago, and how the magic of "America" continues to charm to our shores

E PLURIBUS UNUM

PART of the *William Wade* Collection. The owner considered it the finest piece of weaving he had ever seen.



Anna E Dewey

WOVEN AT PALMYRA, N.Y. BY IRA HADSELL

FREEDOM'S HOME

PART of the *William Wade Col-
lection.*



FREEDOM'S HOME ONTARIO CO. N.Y.

“the oppressed of all nations.” The immigrant of to-day may not find all he is seeking, but the immigrant of those early days did find the fulfilment of his heart’s desire, and as the Puritan knelt on the rocky shores of Massachusetts and offered thanks to God for the boon of freedom, the weaver likewise set up his loom and expressed his gratitude and his patriotism by weaving into a coverlet the emblems of his country or his party. It was no accident that placed the Bird of the Morning in the corners of the coverlet woven in Berlin County, Ohio, in 1844. This coverlet is a paragraph from American annals telling us that about this time the Democratic party

was formed and chanticleer with flapping wings was made the party device. The man who wove the word "Liberty" thirty-six times into the fabric of his coverlet must have loved liberty as Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson loved it. I find in "E Pluribus Unum" and "Freedom's Home" all that Francis Scott Key and Samuel Smith felt when they wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "My Country, 'Tis of Thee"; and when I read on the coverlet's border the name of the woman who chose the pattern and ordered the weaving I think she was a truer Daughter of the American Revolution, a truer Colonial Dame than the Daughters and Dames of to-day, who would smile in

æsthetic scorn at the thought of sleeping under a bed-spread displaying this somewhat grotesque mixture of stars, shields, flags, spread-eagles, arrows, domes, and patriotic mottoes. Moncure D. Conway says that the history of tobacco is the history of American liberty. But read again the historic names beginning with Indian Warfare and ending with Lee's Surrender, then study these inscriptions and designs, and you will see the history of American liberty told again in the old hand-woven coverlet.

Of the weavers whose names are preserved in this book, only three are living; William Henry Harrison Rose, the last of the professional weavers

of Rhode Island, Sarah La Tourrette Van Sickle of Indiana, and Harmon Goodwin of Maine. The world in which these weavers once lived has passed away, and they themselves are like apparitions in the world to-day. One who had recently penetrated the seclusion that surrounds William Henry Harrison Rose says of him:

“When I called at this weaver’s home, I was admitted by an old woman of small stature, who informed me that she was a sister of the weaver, and that he was in the field a short distance from the house. She blew a blast on a cockleshell, which notified the weaver that he was wanted at the house. In a few minutes I beheld

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

OWNED by *Mrs. William J.
Fender, Lockport, N.Y.*



AMERIC
AN INDE
PENDEN
CE. DECL
ARED. JU
LY. 4. 1776
WOVE
INI 1839
J. GETTY

LIBERTY

A PENNSYLVANIA *coverlet.*
*History unknown. Notice the
picture of General Washington in
the corner.*



an old man, with long white hair and flowing white beard and bare feet, approaching the house. He carried a scythe over his shoulder, and for an instant I was startled, as the old man's appearance was the most perfect picture of Father Time I have ever seen. The house is as singular as the people who live in it. A low stone wall runs across the front of the yard, with a large white boulder at each corner. On the top of the wall are shells bleached to snowy whiteness by the rains and suns of many years. A wooden fence separates the yard from the garden, and on every post hung two white shells. In the yard there are seven bird-houses of modern architecture. The weaver

and his sister have lived here for more than eighty years. Once a year he goes to Providence, a carpet bag in his hand, carpet slippers on his feet, and a rope tied round his waist. As he walks the city streets the hurrying throng pauses to look after him, for he seems a being from the Ages Long Since Gone."

The old Rhode Islander learned the art of weaving from his grandfather, who was a pupil of William Reed, a celebrated English weaver. Rose is an original designer and possesses many rare drafts, which he occasionally loans to fellow-weavers of whose honesty he feels assured.

Harmon Goodwin is also an original designer. Two of his original drafts

bear the names, "Path of the Sunbeam" and "The King's Garden," by which tokens we know him to be a poet also.

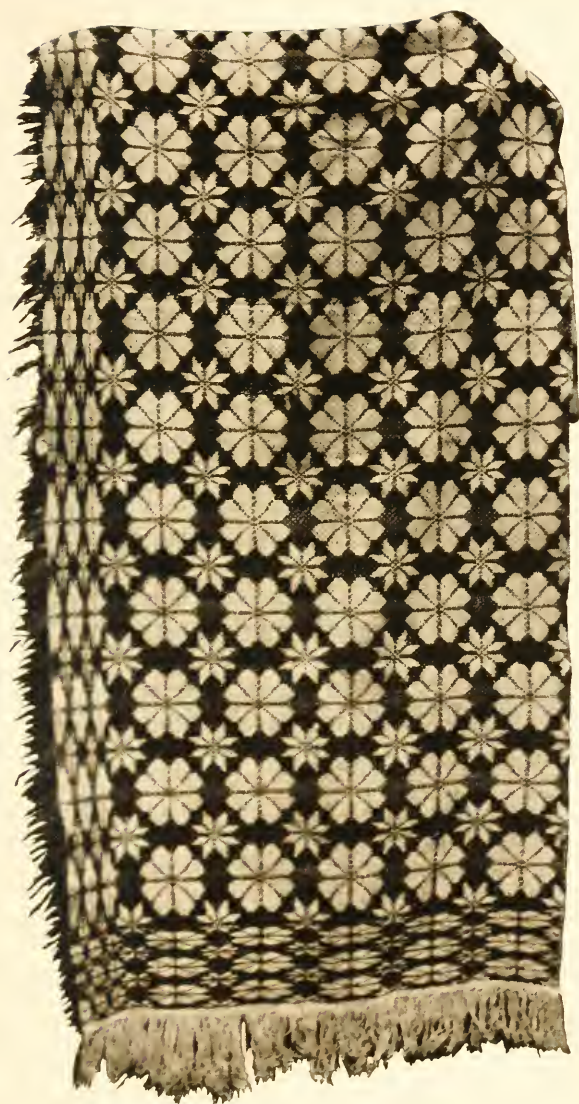
The word "Liberty" may not be woven into any of Sarah La Tourrette's coverlets, but you may read it between the lines of family history that tell how these French Huguenots chanced to come to America. Taking the name La Tourrette as a clue we can go back through five centuries of French history to the time when the De La Tourrettes were Keepers of the Little Tower. There is a tradition that a De La Tourrette came to this country with La Salle, and it is certain that about eighty-eight years after the Revo-

cation of the Edict of Nantes a younger son of one branch of the Tourrette family came to America and settled on Staten Island in 1773. In the same year a son John was born and this son was the father of Sarah La Tourrette. John La Tourrette was a weaver by birth and training. More than three centuries ago the Tourrettes practised the weaver's art in a crude way. In Florida in 1566 there were weavers by that name. They probably belonged to the ill-fated colony that settled on St. John's river in 1564 and were exterminated by the Spanish governor, Menendez.

Between 1750 and 1760 the Tourrettes acquired, in France, the art of

LA FRANCE

COVERLET of dark blue, white,
green, and old rose. Woven
in France three generations ago.
Owned by Mrs. Hubert W. Bessey,
Stuart, Fla.



FRENCHMAN'S FANCY

PART of the *William Wade Collection*. The border seems to show the flowers and fruit of the wild cactus slightly conventionalized.



double-weaving, and it is said of John La Tourrette that he could weave any fabric from coverlets to the finest table linen, and goods for wearing apparel, and he also made his own loom and designed many patterns. He established himself in Indiana in the neighborhood of Covington and set up a factory with four large looms. Before the Civil War laid a paralyzing hand on all industry a thousand double-woven coverlets were sent out from this factory, and most of these were woven by Sarah La Tourrette, on whom the mantle of her father's skill had fallen.

Memory must stretch her wings for a long backward flight when Sarah La Tourrette begins to talk of her youth,

for she is now eighty-nine years old; but her mind is unimpaired and she loves to talk of the time when she was young and strong and the fame of her weaving went abroad in the state. She used to weave on an average three coverlets a week, and if a customer was impatient for his order to be filled she could make one a day. (The price for a double-woven coverlet, by the way, was ten or twelve dollars.) Forty pounds of homespun linen thread were required to string the loom, and John's wife, Mother La Tourrette, used to spin this thread. Two thousand threads came down from the cross-piece of the loom, and when Sarah was working she could hardly be seen

by a person coming in at the other end of the building.

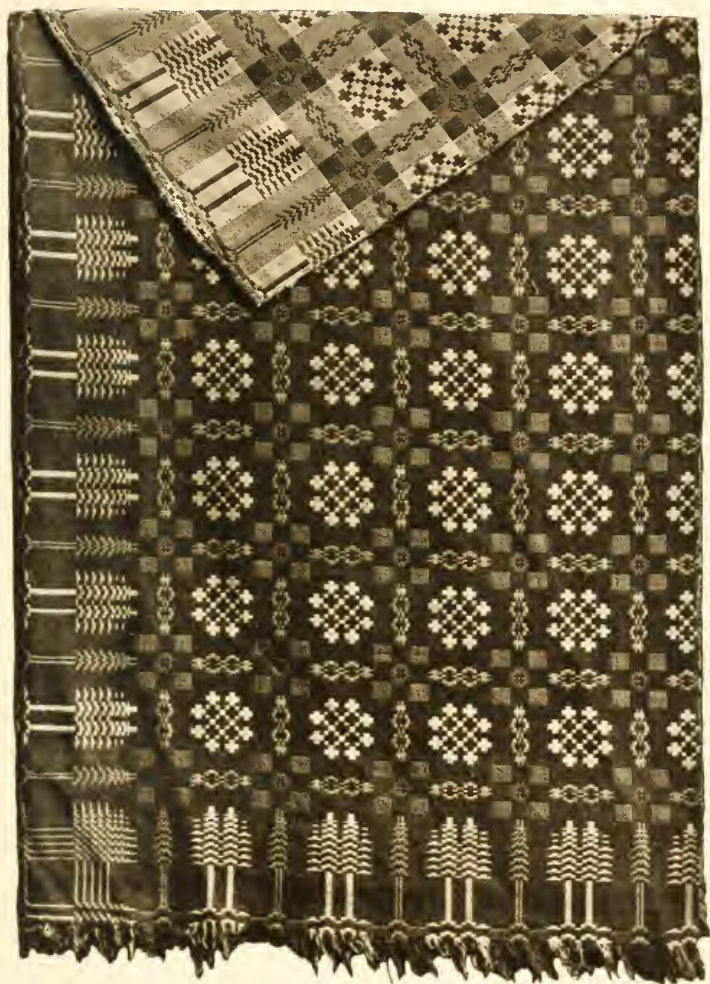
Charles K. Bright, a nephew of Sarah La Tourette, gives me the following description of the way the professional weaver wove his florid patterns:

“The patterns consisted of heavy card-board, about six inches by two feet, and punched full of holes, the size of a lead pencil, and one hundred and eighty of them joined together like the straw-carrier of a threshing machine, or moved on the principle that the bundles of grain are fed into the modern threshing machine. These were changed to make different figures or flowers, which were called ‘Lafayette’s Fancy,’ ‘Rose-of-Sharon,’ etc.,

etc. There was a sort of needle for every hole in the pattern, and in each of these there was a stout cord the size of fine fish-line, and at the other end of the cord was attached a lead weight eight inches long and the size of a small pencil. This labyrinth of cords and weights resembled somewhat the profile of a monster fashionable lady in hoop-skirt, trimmed with flounce or ruffle of eighteen hundred medium-sized pencils. As the weaver bore down on the 'treadle' with his foot the needles were inserted in aforesaid holes; when the foot was raised the weights released the needles; the other foot was then used, and other needles and holes brought into use, and so on alternately,

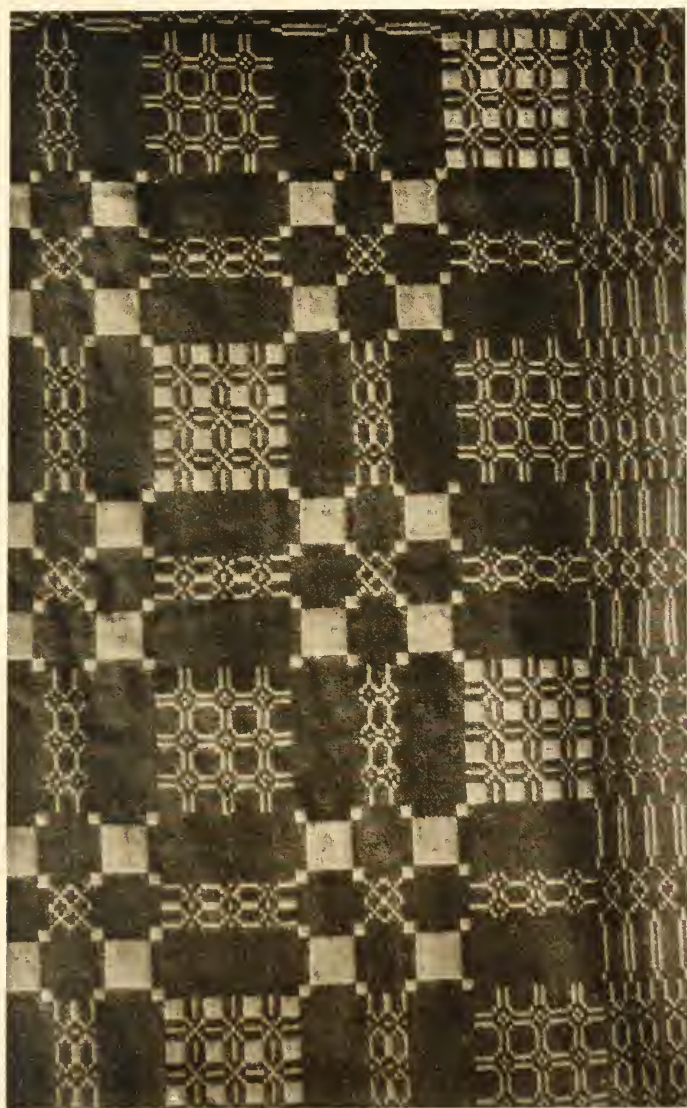
LOVER'S CHAIN or LOVER'S KNOT

DDOUBLE-WOVEN, *blue, white,*
and a very peculiar pinkish
red. Woven by Sam Curry. Owned
by Mrs. S. H. Yancey, Lexington,
Ky.



THE FLORA WOODBURY COVERLET

OWNED by *Miss Flora Wood-*
bury, Danville, Ill. Double-
woven, red, white, and blue. Made
in 1855. Observe the likeness to
“Irish Chain.”





day in and day out, almost 'ad infinitum.' ”

But all that the unlearned reader gains from this explanation is a clearer impression of the difficulty of the work and a deeper admiration for the weaver who could thread her way through this “labyrinth” and produce a texture like “Double Roses” or “Bird of Paradise.” Perhaps Jacquard patterns and looms like John La Tourrette’s were known in Euripides’ day, for how else could Creusa have woven into her web “a Gorgon fringed with serpents?”

The Tourrette name is an honorable one in France. A Tourrette daughter once married into the nobility of Italy, and one of her descendants is the pres-

ent Count de Portales of Florence, Italy. The Indiana Tourrettes, on the contrary, call themselves "plain people," and their only boast is that their ancestors have fought in every war for liberty this country ever had. Sarah La Tourrette might be a Colonial Dame and a D. A. R., for her grandfather fought in the American Revolution from 1776 to 1783; her father served in the second war with England from 1812 to 1814, and her three brothers fought on the Union side in the Civil War.

The house that John La Tourrette built is standing yet; a few yards away from it is the old loomhouse, and in the loft is one of the looms at which the beautiful French girl used to stand

weaving such patterns as "Jefferson's Fancy," "Broken Snowballs," "Single Snowballs," "Double Compass," "Rising Sun," "Laurel Blossoms," "Lafayette's Fancy," and "Blazing Star." The coverlets that Sarah wove are in possession of many families in many states; but if one of them should be brought to her, she would know it at once and name the pattern without hesitation. The memory of her hard toil at the loom has destroyed her appreciation of her own work, but she says: "The old loom, like the old oaken bucket, is 'dear to my heart.'" Mother La Tourette is dead these many years and there is no one to spin the linen thread. Sarah's dim eyes can no longer

see through the mysteries of a Jacquard pattern, and no hand will ever again set in motion the machinery of that loom, yet the weaver will cherish it till death, as an old warrior cherishes his sword or an old musician his violin. Scattered all over the older states you find these disused looms. I think of them standing in dusty lofts and deserted cabins, and then I think of Tom Moore's lament over the harp of Tara:

*“The harp that once thro' Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were dead.”*

To me the unstrung loom is as deeply poetic as the unstrung harp.

Scott sang the passing of minstrelsy,
and there should be another Scott or
another Moore to sing the Passing of
the Last Weaver and the Lay of the
Ancient Loom.

VIII

THE STORIED COVERLET

VIII

THE STORIED COVERLET

*"I cannot tell how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 'twas said to me."*



HE handicraftsman will tell you that a coverlet is "a cotton foundation overshoot with wool," and this definition will suffice for those to whom "A primrose by the river's brim" is "a yellow primrose" and nothing more. But around some of these old coverlets hangs a fringe of memories and traditions, little stories of life, love, and death, and listening to these the

faded cover becomes "a weird palimpsest" under whose threads we read through the mazes of the pattern the record of "a spectral past."

A daring colorist was she who wove the mountain coverlet, and blended the rich blue with dull scarlet like the coals of a smouldering fire. Tradition says that during the Civil War some Union soldiers raided the mountains and one of them carried away this coverlet as contraband of war. Perhaps the red and blue, like the colors of the national flag, pleased his taste, and perhaps he thought that taking an old woman's bed-cover was a safe and easy form of loot. But the "kivers" of the mountain woman are

A MOUNTAIN "KIVER"

THE age of this coverlet is unknown, but as it was "considered old before the Civil War" it must be at least a hundred years old. Owned by Miss Elizabeth Dangerfield, Lexington, Ky., to whom it was given by the wife of James B. Howard, of Breathitt County, Ky.





to her what ancestral portraits and family silver are to the woman of the lowlands. The owner of the "kiver" followed the marauders, forced her way into the presence of the commanding officer, and asserted her right to search the camp for the lost treasure. I think the officer must have recognized in this woman something that made her kin to him and to his soldiers, for he gave her permission to make the search and she left the camp in triumph, bearing away her coverlet, a red and blue "badge of courage." The marks of fire are on this old bed-cover and through its barbaric colors flames the spirit of fierce daring that comes to the mountaineer from the days of Hengist and Horsa.

Among my photographs I have one of a fraction of a coverlet which in its entirety was once a cherished heirloom in the family of the present owner. In the division of their father's estate four sisters contended for the possession of this coverlet. Each had an equal right to it and not one of the four would relinquish her claim. Finally an old friend of the family was called in to arbitrate the matter. Following Solomon's example he decided that the precious fabric should be cut into four parts and one-fourth given to each sister. The sense of justice in these sisters was stronger than their love for beauty and they consented to the mutilation of the coverlet. I fancy each one watch-

ing the cutting with a jealous eye and carefully measuring her fourth to see if, perchance, she might have an inch or so less than her share.

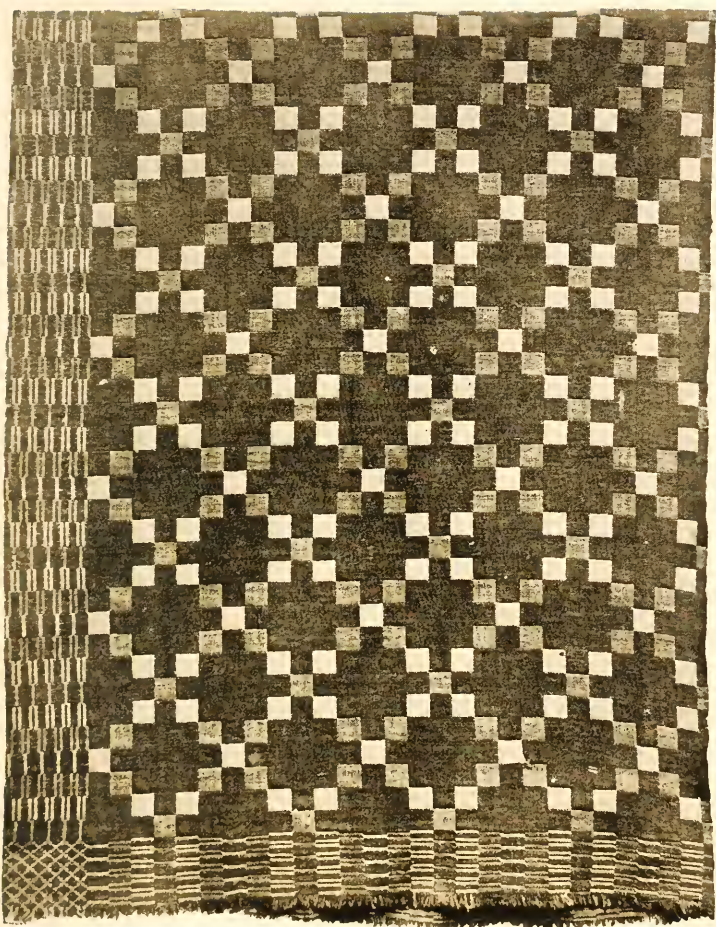
This story lacks the quality of sweetness, but under the apparent sordidness of the four women I see the strong sense of right, the stern determination to have one's right which we call "the spirit of '76." I am sure those four sisters were true Daughters of the American Revolution and I hope their love for justice yet lives in their descendants.

With two Mohawk Valley coverlets goes a tale of the great-grandmother who fled from the tomahawk and firebrand of Butler and his Indians and came as a bride to Pennsylvania over a

hundred years ago. When Butler attacked the Cherry Valley settlement her father's house was burned and the family fled to the forts for protection, carrying with them as much of their household goods as they could rescue. There was a coverlet in process of weaving, and before the Indians applied the torch to the cabin they took the web from the loom and later cut it into strips for belts. Besides looting and burning the house, they carried away two little boys. Sad memories to cluster around a fabric woven for warmth, comfort, and beauty! If one lay down to rest under such a coverlet, his sleep might be broken by dreams of fire, murder, and rapine.

THE MARTHA SHEPHERD COVERLET

WOVEN in Belmont County, Ohio, in the latter part of the Revolutionary War, by an English weaver, — Mowry. Owned by Martha Shepherd's great-granddaughter, Miss Lucy Wheeler, Danville, Ill. In Virginia a similar pattern is called "Windows and Doors."



A great-great-granddaughter of Martha Shepherd sent me the picture of her coverlet, and a story that takes us back to heroic days.

Martha was one of ten children born to Thomas Shepherd and his wife Elizabeth Van Metre. Thomas was a millwright, the founder of Shepherdstown, Virginia, and the man for whom the town was named. His oldest child was a son, David, born in 1734. David emigrated to the western country in 1773, and at the age of thirty-nine was appointed Commissary of Ohio County. In 1774 he pre-empted a claim at the forks of Wheeling Creek and erected a stockade which he called Shepherd's Fort. When the Indians

were ravaging this part of the country in 1777, Governor Patrick Henry appointed him County Lieutenant with headquarters at Fort Henry, now Fincastle. In the family history where Col. David Shepherd's gallant deeds are recorded, the only mention of his sister Martha is that she was born in a certain year and married in a certain year, but from the following story we learn that the spirit of the warrior and frontiersman lived also in this maiden of colonial days.

After the Shepherd family moved to Ohio, it was Martha Shepherd's custom to go at intervals to Fort Henry, taking a load of ginseng. She would ride one horse and lead another to bring

back the merchandise she would get in exchange for the ginseng. On one occasion she did not return as quickly as usual. When she was three days overdue the family began to be extremely anxious. It was spring-time and all the streams were out of their banks. Hostile Indians and British were numerous, and as the Shepherd family gathered around the fire on the night of the third day, they thought fearfully of all the horrible things that might befall a young woman travelling alone through the wilderness, and decided that early the next morning they would go in search of her. Suddenly out of the darkness they heard a familiar voice calling, first like an owl: "Whoo-oo!"

and then saying: "Hurry up, and let down the bars!"

Joyfully they hurried up; down came the bars, and a tired little woman was lifted from her horse and carried into the house. She had "just stopped over for a few days in Fort Henry." The courage of a race is not to be estimated solely by the courage of its sons, and when we think of this fearless pioneer girl riding alone through the virgin forest, fording swollen streams and braving yet greater dangers, we see the reason for that miracle of conquest wrought by a band of ragged American rebels over the redcoats of King George.

On the back of one picture is this

inscription: "Spun and woven by Lucetta ——, my grandfather's first wife."

Here is the history of the "first wife," whose title to remembrance lies only in the things she spun and wove.

She was a New Hampshire girl to whom Love came earlier than he comes to most of us. She was but sixteen and he eighteen, and the road to the marriage altar stretched long before them, for the home must be built, the purse filled, and childhood outgrown before the wedding day could be set. "Work and wait," said Love, and six years they obeyed the command, walking happily down Courtship's Lane. Six springs, six summers, six autumns,

and six winters were hers to spend in preparation for the time when she would joyfully leave the empire of her maidenhood and enter on the wider sovereignty of wifehood.

When May came over the bleak New England hills, she might walk in the sunshine and gather to her cheeks the same pink that flushed the flowers of the trailing arbutus. When the apple orchards wooed the bee, she might sit under the blossoming boughs and dream of the time when her life would flower even as the tree. When the noonday sun of summer shone hot on field and garden, she might gather into her body the same magical essence that turns the flower of May into the fruit of Octo-

ber; and thus strengthened she could smile fearlessly in the face of winter and make every north wind and every snow yield her a tribute of health. Surely she would not be found unready for the marriage day.

When she told her father of her betrothal he said:

“You may have all that you can spin and weave.”

It was a liberal permission for those days when frugality was one of the cardinal virtues, and at the seasons of sheep-shearing and flax-gathering the farmer may have regretted his generosity to this daughter of industry, for through all the lovely changes of the seasons she spun and wove, and

the noise of loom and wheel drowned every whisper from the lips of nature. When the years of waiting ended and the bride left her father's house she carried with her as dowry forty woolen sheets, and blankets, linen sheets, towels, pillow-cases, table-cloths, chemises, and other things in due proportion; also many woven coverlets, one of which lies to-day in stately beauty on the bed of her husband's granddaughter — not hers, alas!

I know she displayed her stock of household goods to the admiring eyes of friends just as the modern bride displays her superfluous silver and cut-glass, her imported lingerie and Paris millinery, and we need no historian to

tell us of the solid satisfaction that filled the heart of the bridegroom as he watched Lucetta storing away her linen and woolens on his closet shelves.

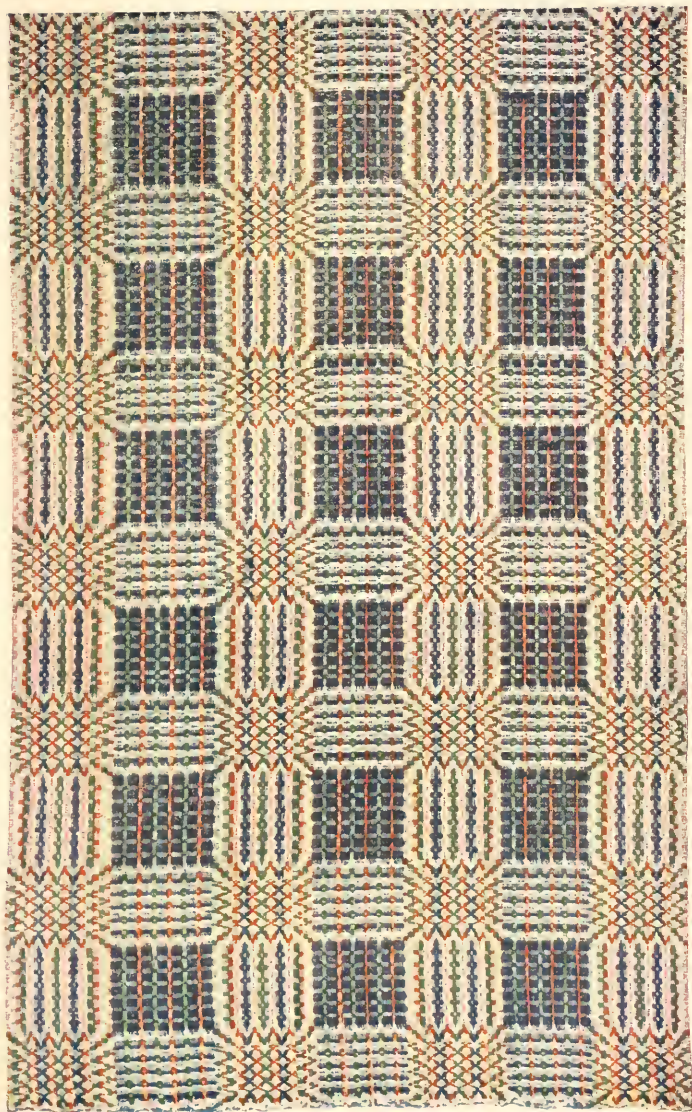
Poor little bride! There was no one to tell her that a woman's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that she hath; no one to preach to her the joyful gospel of Christ who would have us live as the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. When she went to church on Sunday and sat in the high-backed pew by her mother's side, she was likely to hear a sermon whose text was from Proverbs, and the woman lauded by the preacher was that woman who rose up early and worked late, who laid her hands to the

spindle and the distaff, who clothed her household in scarlet and made herself coverings of tapestry and clothing of silk and purple, who made fine linen and sold it, and delivered girdles to the merchants. Doubtless she and her lover exchanged shy glances, and he thought with pride how much she was like this woman of the Bible whose price Solomon placed above rubies.

The maiden who toils six years for love's sake has a right to expect happiness, and it is pleasant to know that Lucetta had hers. The story runs that she was much beloved by her husband's family, and that she and her husband were like two children playing at housekeeping. But their

BETTY TEAGUE

PILLOW top from the All-
stand Cottage Industries, Ashe-
ville, N.C. Woven by Mrs. Cumi
Woody, N.C.



joy was like the flower of an hour. In a little while a strange weakness stayed the hands of the young wife. A color came into her face, but it was not the token of health. The light in her eyes was the brilliance of a fast-wasting taper, and the warmth in her blood was the fever that precedes the chill of death. A day came when she spread her bed with snowy sheets and soft blankets and crept between them never to rise again.

Perhaps as she lay under the blue and white coverlet watching the gray sand of life and the gold sand of love run low in the glass, her aching heart told her that a woman's life is more than spinning and weaving, and a

woman's body more than woolen sheets and woven coverlets.

She who had never lingered over any task was not long at the task of dying. One morning her face lay thin and white against the linen pillow-case. The neighbors came with soft footsteps and whispered words, carried the bed-clothes out into the sweet spring sunshine, and robed her body for the grave. The next day her light coffin was borne to the graveyard, and the chief mourner went home alone, alone.

With every cup of sorrow Life mercifully proffers us more than one cup of nepenthe, and surely the young husband needed to drink all of his to the last drop. Her linen covered the table

at which he ate his solitary meals with no grace save a groan. When he dried his face on one of Her towels some tears must have mingled with the cleansing water. When he lay warm between Her woolen sheets did he not shiver and cry aloud at the thought of Her lying cold under earth and sod and graveyard stone? How *could* he forget Her? But —

*“Of all strange things this is the strangest yet,
That we can love and lose and then forget.”*

He was young. There were other maidens crossing his path and thwarting him when he would have remembered. He looked into their eyes and saw what he had seen once before in Her eyes. Another spring brought new

life to the earth, and above the steady throb of sorrow and regret he felt the impulse of that old primal law which says:

“ . . . *a man must go with a woman.*”

Besides — Great Heavens! How his house needed a housekeeper! So in less time than it took the first wife to die there was another courtship, another wedding, and the desolate house became a home once more.

The second bride brought to her husband no dowry but health and a care-free habit of mind that made her walk lightly over the responsibilities and burdens that life thrusts in our way. The days of her courtship were short and easy. No need for her to

toil when the fruit of another's toil hung within reach of her hands. Joyfully she stepped into the vacant heart and the vacant house. Wifehood was hers, and motherhood, too. Ah, happy home! But on All Souls' Eve I know a lonely little ghost flitted out from the old graveyard and stole into the house that once was hers, paused beside the bed where the new wife slumbered under Her sheets, Her coverlet, and then fled forlorn and bewildered back to the place of ghosts.

In the old graveyard you may read the epitaph:

*"Fare thee well, my kind husband," said she;
"Now from thy fond bosom I leap
With Jesus my bride-groom to be,
My flesh in the tomb for to sleep."*

Poor little childless first wife, so soon displaced, so soon forgotten! There are no children or grandchildren to visit the old graveyard where her flesh sleeps, but as long as the threads of her "Cross and Circle" hold together, Lucetta will be remembered, for a coverlet is a better memorial than a gravestone, even though it be of granite.

"A foundation of cotton or linen overshot with wool?" Not for Lucetta's coverlet this barren definition. Its warp is not mere linen thread. It was spun from the substance that we call human life, and the colors of its woof are the rainbow hues of a woman's hopes and joys.

THE DEBORAH PARKER COVERLET

TAN and white coverlet, all wool.
Woven in 1798. The design
is Scandinavian. Owned by Mrs.
Charles Stebbins, Deerfield, Mass.
Name of design unknown. The
corner shows the "Sunrise" pat-
tern.



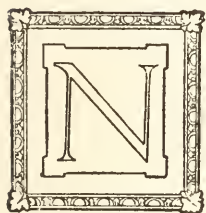
IX

THE ANCIENT COVERLET

IX

THE ANCIENT COVERLET

“Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty.”



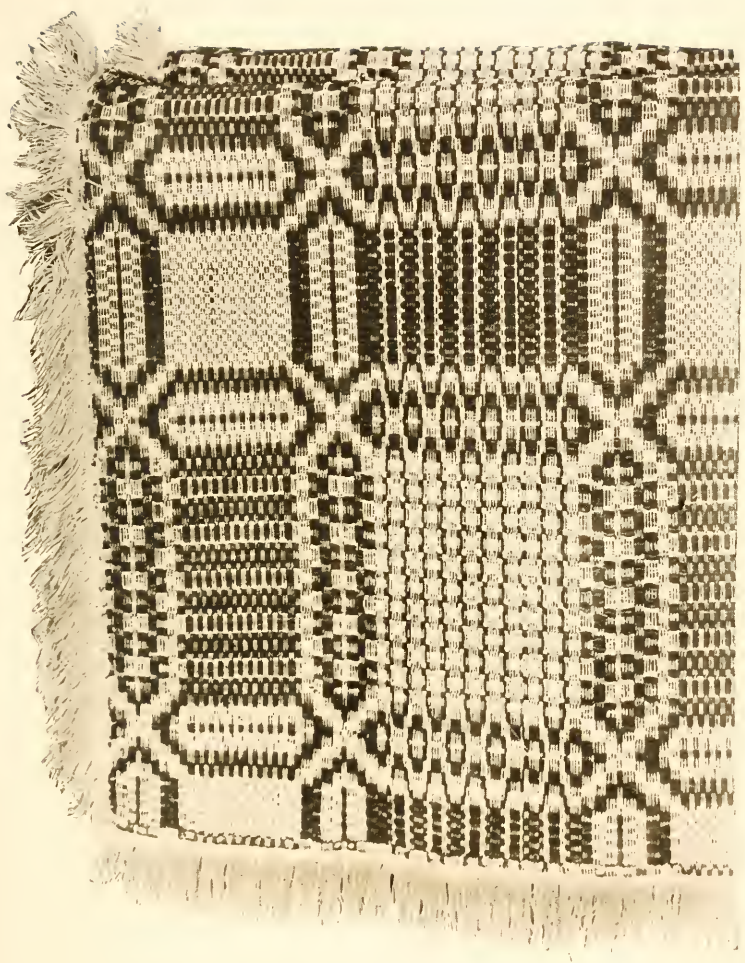
NOT only are the colors of the coverlet wonderfully lasting, but there is a quality in the homespun thread that resists the moth of time, and in all my searching I have found but one really worn-out coverlet.

Walking across a farm one spring day I passed the cabin of the negro tenant. On a clothes-line in front of the house hung a curious object. Was

it a coverlet or a calico quilt? I went nearer and discovered it to be a little of both. The foundation was a ragged calico quilt. To reinforce its waning strength Aunt Dinah had quilted over it a blue and white coverlet which hung in melancholy tatters against the background of faded patchwork. The separate tatters were so small that the design of the weaving could not be determined, and as I gazed sorrowfully at the strange sight of a coverlet in ruins, I tried to imagine what hard usage had reduced that robust fabric to a mass of worthless rags. For with only tolerable care the life of a coverlet is longer than the allotted life of man. I find on every hand coverlets

GOVERNOR'S GARDEN

SPUN *and woven in 1810. The warp is linen overshot with blue wool. Owned by Mrs. Charles Stebbins, Deerfield, Mass.*





that have been used for seventy-five years or more and are still perfectly preserved.

The hundred-year-old Governor's Garden has served three generations as a best bed-spread, "being kept very choice, carefully folded in newspaper, and used only on state occasions." There is nothing in its general appearance to contradict the belief that it may last another hundred years, but perhaps when a coverlet does go to pieces, its going is like that of the "One Hoss Shay."

The owner of the one-hundred-and-forty-year-old coverlet, whose yarn was spun in Scotland, says: "To-day it is unfaded and not threadbare any-

where except on the hem. The blue is as bright as ever and the white is clear and unyellowed by age.”

I have heard of a double-woven coverlet that was cut into carpet rags — (a woman who would destroy a family coverlet to make a rag-carpet would be capable of using her grandmother’s tombstone for a biscuit block or a door-step) — and another of which nothing remains but a tattered corner bearing the weaver’s name and a date:

H. W. Tilton. 1835

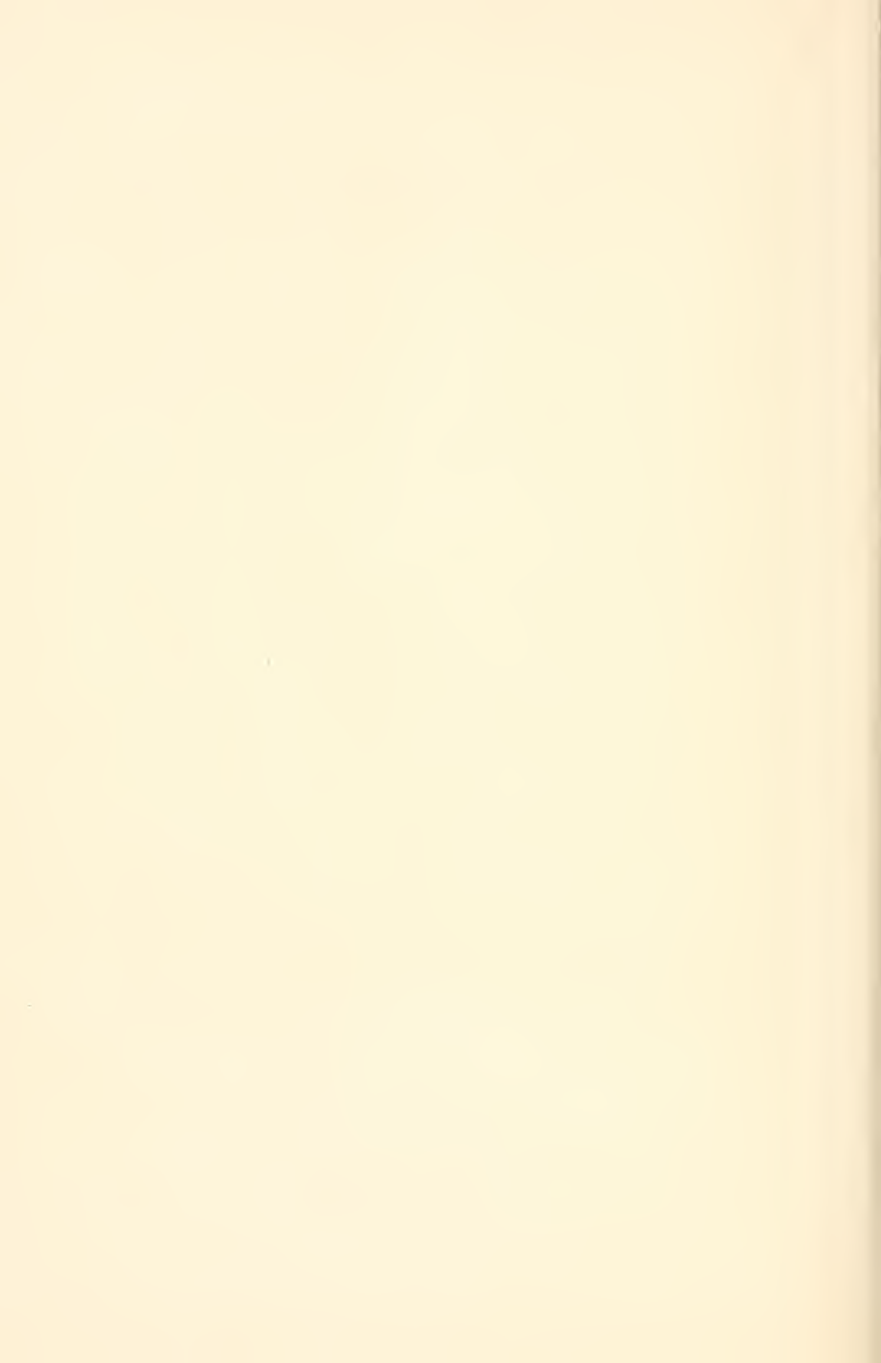
yet I find it hard to think of any lawful usage wearing out a double-woven coverlet.

We read the dates on these old coverlets and exclaim:

A VARIATION OF "LOVER'S KNOT"

OWNED by Mrs. Henrietta L. Dunlap Painter, Mount Vernon, Ohio. The wool for this coverlet was spun in Scotland in 1750 by Mrs. Painter's great-grandmother, then a girl of sixteen.





“Some smack of age in you; some relish of the saltiness of time!” and half-forgotten history, page by page, unrolls before us.

In 1720, when Benjamin Henry’s wife was threading her shuttle in her Vermont home, Franklin was a boy in his teens, George I was on the throne, and England was still the beloved “mother-country”; France was gaining a foothold in the New World, and in conflicts with the French and the Indians the colonists were whetting the swords that fifty-five years later they were to draw in defence of American liberty.

In 1762 the American colonies were groaning under the Acts of Trade, the Navigation Laws, and the Writs of

Assistance; Patrick Henry was making fiery speeches in defence of the people's rights, and about this time an Irish immigrant in the Old Dominion was weaving Miss Dangerfield's coverlet by a pattern which she had brought to "Ameriky" from the "ould counthry."

In 1775, in the village of Ayr, a peasant boy was following the plough and dreaming of the time when he would sing a song "for Scotland's sake." In France the reign of Louis XVI was just beginning; Marie Antoinette was amusing herself in ways forbidden to royalty; the peasants were eating the bark of trees, while nobles and priests lived in reckless splendor; Voltaire was writing; the people were thinking, and above

OLD IRELAND

THIS coverlet was woven in Bath County, Pa., one hundred and fifty years ago. The former owner was an Irish woman who died, the last of her race, at the age of ninety. According to family tradition the coverlet was woven by her grandmother, who brought the pattern from Ireland. The present owner is Miss Elizabeth Dangerfield of Lexington, Ky.





the music and laughter of the Court of Versailles you could hear a murmur that later grew into the tumult of the Commune. In America, too, the people were thinking, and now and then a man would put the burden of his thought into heroic words. It was in this year that Patrick Henry said: "Give me liberty or give me death!" that Paul Revere made his midnight ride; that the minute-men assembled on the common of Lexington, and in the dark hour just before the dawn the first blood of the Revolution stained the dust of the road to Concord. In 1775 old Israel Putnam left his plow; Ethan Allen demanded the surrender of Ticonderoga "In the name of the

Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," and Washington took command of the army whose victories were to destroy the power of kings and light the lamp of liberty in a New World.

A glorious page of history is that which holds the record of 1775! And while the God of Nations was trying the souls of men and sending them forth to battle, in every Puritan home the women were fighting their battles with distaff and loom and needle, and the work of their hands was so established that some of it stands to-day. Where are the silken covers of Marie Antoinette's couch? Torn to pieces and scattered to the autumn wind by the mob that attacked Versailles on that wild

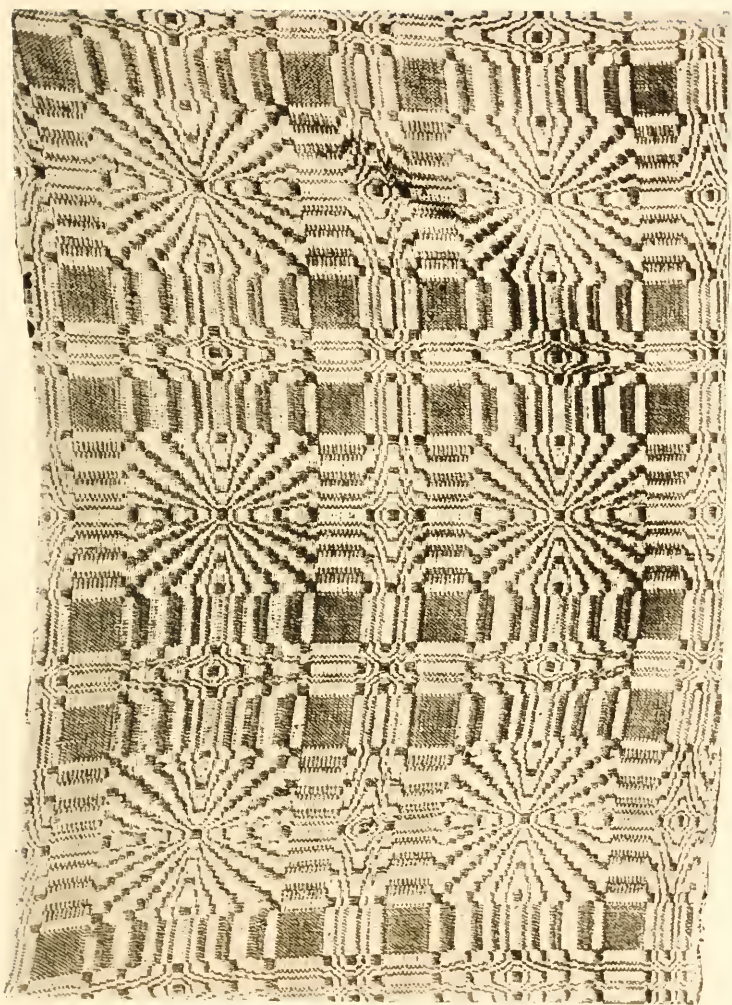
October night. But not a thread is missing from the blue and red coverlet that a certain Puritan housewife wove in 1775.

When the tan and white coverlet with the sunrise pattern in its corners was taken from the loom, America was standing doubtful and hesitant in the period of uncertainty that always comes after struggle and acquisition. She was face to face with the liberty for which she had fought and bled, and wondering what she would do with it after all. In France the crimes committed in the name of liberty had made that name hateful to many. Marat, Danton, and Robespierre had quaffed the wine of death from the same cup they had

pressed to the lips of Louis and Marie Antoinette. Weary of their orgy of liberty, the people were standing bewildered. The hour called for "a head and a sword," and in answer to the call came a young Corsican officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, who was to build a military despotism on the ruined throne of the Capets. John Adams was president of the United States and Thomas Jefferson vice-president. Talleyrand was playing his game of diplomacy with the American envoys, Pinckney, Marshall, and Gerry. Captain Decatur was cruising the seas and capturing the privateer ships of France; the people were finding the problems of liberty as hard as those

SUNRISE

WOVEN in 1720 by Mrs. Benjamin Henry, Halifax, Vt. The great age of the coverlet shows plainly in the picture, the light spots being places where the wool is worn off from the linen foundation. This resembles "Sunrise on the Walls of Troy," which is sometimes called "Jefferson's Fancy."



of tyranny had been, and when the Alien and Sedition Laws were passed, only Virginia and Kentucky had faith enough in liberty to vote against them. A troubled, unrestful year was 1798, but in older lands there was time for the poetry of Wordsworth, Cowper, Goethe, and Schiller, the philosophy of Kant, and the art of Canova, Flaxman, Thorwaldsen, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Turner, and everywhere time for the ancient business of falling in love, giving in marriage, and going to house-keeping. It is a matter of authentic record that in this year a New England girl, Deborah Parker, was married, and an important part of her bridal outfit was a tan and white cov-

erlet made of wool which was taken from the sheep's back, dyed, spun, and woven on the home farm of the bride. It is one hundred and fourteen years old in this year of 1912, and still it holds both usefulness and beauty as in the day when the young wife made her bridal bed and draped it with her cherished coverlet.

Will any work of your hand or of mine last as long?

When Waity Staples wove her tapestry coverlet of snowy white the question of foreign trade was vexing the nation; the English were capturing American vessels and impressing American seamen. Napoleon was Emperor of France. His star had reached its zenith

and was beginning to go down; Josephine was divorced; behind him lay the splendid victories of the Pyramids, Aboukir, Marengo, and Jena; before him lay defeat, abdication, and exile. James Madison was president of the United States, and the clouds of the Second War of Independence were gathering on the horizon. Thomas Jefferson in the seclusion of Monticello was dreaming of the great university that became an immortal reality a few years later. In England the musical cantos of "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake" were on every lip, and in America, Emerson, a child of seven, played in the commons around Boston.

"What should we speak of when we

are as old as you?" asks Arviragus in "Cymbeline."

A certain awe comes over me as I think that if I were as old as that Vermont coverlet woven by Dame Henry, and if the trailing years had not blurred the writing on the tablets of memory, I should be talking of Bonaparte and Elba, of the flight to Varennes, of Lord Nelson and Trafalgar, of General Washington and Cornwallis, of Lafayette and Benjamin Franklin. And if but one of those ancient webs lay before me in some dark hour when the senses are half-asleep and only the imagination wakes, I might see the gleam of Charlotte Corday's dagger, the flash of the queen's necklace; I might hear the roar of the

THE WAITY STAPLES COVERLET

PURE *white tapestry weave coverlet made in Illinois in 1810 by Mrs. Waity Staples. The central design resembles that of Miss Dangerfield's Irish coverlet.*



Commune or the clangor of the bell that proclaimed Liberty to all the nations, and the clumsy old bed-covering would seem like Aladdin's magic carpet bearing me back to that glorious century when a nation in the Old World and another in the New turned their faces towards democracy.

X

THE HEIRLOOM UNAPPRECIATED

X

THE HEIRLOOM UNAPPRECIATED

"What we do not understand, we do not possess."



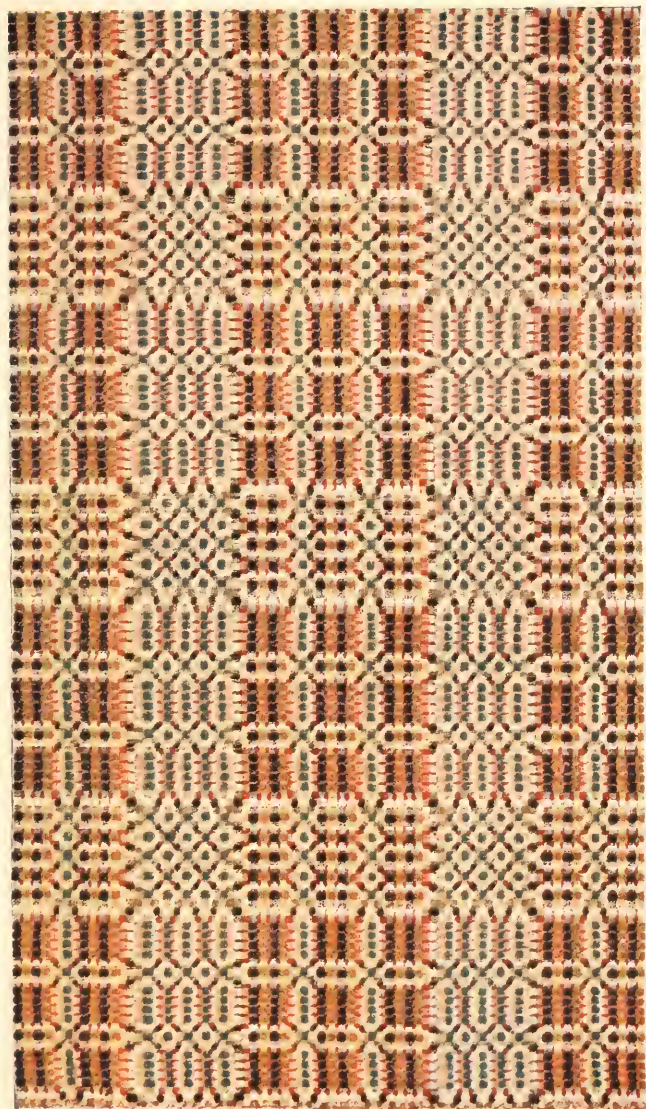
HE mania for collecting things is a delightful form of madness. Did you ever pick up a dusky painting in an old junk-shop and later discover it to be a masterpiece? Did you ever buy an old violin for a song and find the soul of music in its battered frame? Are your pilgrim feet set in the path whose ultimate shrine is a battered mahogany sideboard or a four-poster bed? Do you collect facts instead of

things, and are you trying by a chain of genealogical facts to prove your kinship to Lord Baltimore or William the Conqueror? Or are you searching for some lost ancestor whose name is the only evidence needed to establish your claim to a vast fortune?

If you are a collector of anything whatever, you can understand how one is drawn into the Quest of the Woven Coverlet. Here, as in any other pleasant madness, are mystery, romance, surprise. The past becomes as vital and clear as the passing hour; names of melody sing themselves in your brain; beautiful colors and forms fill your vision; you see beauty sacredly cherished or fallen and profaned; and

NINE DIAMONDS

PILLOW *top from the Alland
stand Cottage Industries, Ashe-
ville, N.C. Woven by Mrs. Cumi
Woody, N.C.*



you hear stories that bring to mind Cinderella in the kitchen, royal princesses disguised in beggars' rags, queens in exile, poets starving in garrets, and many another instance of worth and beauty unappreciated by an ignorant world.

"Yes, I have two coverlets," said a friend in answer to my question. "But they are on the cook's bed, and so dirty I am ashamed to show them to you."

"I used to have three or four," said another, "but I gave them away to the family servants, and now my daughter is trying to buy one for a couch cover."

"I used to have two," said a third,

“but I covered the ironing board with one and it was scorched to pieces.”

“Those old blue and white coverlets?” said a fourth. “Why, last summer, when I was at home, down in Georgia, the dog was sleeping on one under the back porch.”

“Yes, I have one,” said a fifth, and she brought out a gorgeous “Whig Rose” in black, red, olive-green, and ecru; and that piece of weaving fit for a queen’s portière was serving as a mattress cover on a servant’s bed.

I knocked one day at the door of an old-fashioned house; an old-fashioned woman opened the door and greeted me with outstretched hands. I entered and walked through the old-fashioned

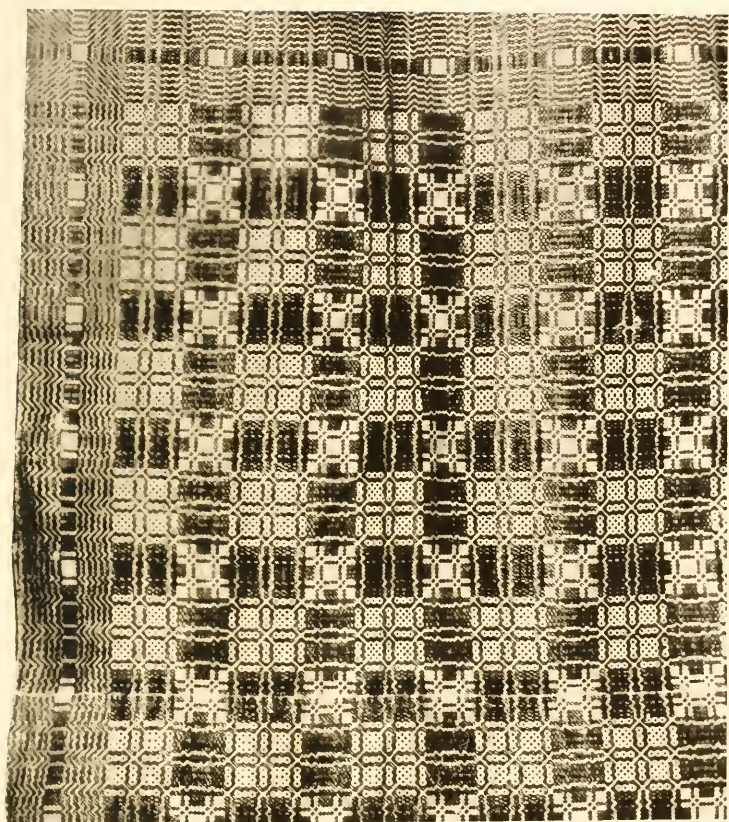
parlor. On the beautiful mahogany table lay a sampler worked in many colored silks; on the sampler stood a wonderful old lamp resting on a brass pedestal and shaded by an exquisite cut-glass globe; this lamp, the mistress of the house said, was made in the days when lard oil was used for illuminating. On the high, ivory-white mantel were glass candlesticks. In one corner stood a mahogany sofa, hand-carved and built on lines of perfect grace and beauty. Around the sofa and table stood chairs with oddly curved legs, and backs too beautiful to lean against. It was the parlor of our grandmother's day, the day of ruffled shirt-bosoms, gold-headed canes, and

fine manners; and as the mistress of the house began to talk, her words were of a day still farther off, for she told the story of her great-grandfather, twice married and the father of thirty children — a seafaring man, captured at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, carried to England and held a prisoner for three years, suffering all the cruelty that English captors could heap on a “rebel subject,” and finally escaping and returning to Virginia to live the life of a tobacco planter on his vast estates. It was like a chapter from “To Have and To Hold,” and while I listened I thought: “Surely there must be a coverlet in this family.”

There were two. From the depths

THE ANTHONY WAYNE COVERLET

OWNED by Mrs. H. C. Torrance, Pittsburg, Pa. The mother of Mrs. Torrance inherited it from a niece of Gen. Wayne. This niece inherited most of her uncle's property, and it has always been believed that the coverlet was one of his possessions. The plate shows the worn condition of the coverlet. A very fine piece of weaving.



of an old oak chest upstairs she brought them forth, and we carried them out of doors, where the rays of the setting sun could light up the splendid color and the glorious designs, "Lover's Knot" and "Double Bow Knot," both dark blue and white.

"I had another one," said my hostess. "It was red and green, but I did not know the value of it and I sold it to a negro woman for a dollar, *and never got the dollar*. No, I can't trace it up, for the woman who bought it is dead and her husband went away from this place years ago."

A tragic story this! And I doubt not that in her mind, as in my own, that green and red coverlet will always

be like the hound, the bay horse, and the turtle-dove that Thoreau lost and never found.

When the Kentucky farmer starts to town with a load of tobacco he usually covers the precious commodity with a tarpaulin, which is the proper cover for tobacco and a sign of the farmer's wealth and thrift. But there is no picturesqueness about a tarpaulin, and the wagons that keep me looking out of the window and flying down the street all winter are those of the farmers who cannot afford tarpaulins. O, for a brush and skill to paint a picture of these wagons crawling slowly along the 'pike under the winter sunshine, over the winter snow, while every

color an artist ever dreamed of shows startlingly bright or delicately faded from the rag carpets, calico quilts, and old coverlets that only partly hide the "vile weed" of the rich brown color that King James so hated. As these wagons trail by my house, a cry goes up from some watcher: "There goes a coverlet!" I rush out signalling to the man on the wagon and begging him to let me see that old coverlet, while passers-by stare amazedly at the sight of a bare-headed woman standing in Kentucky mud or melting snow, imploring a tobacco farmer to sell her a ragged, filthy bed-cover. It was thus that I became the possessor of "Tennessee Trouble," a pattern I had long desired

to see. It was a pitiable-looking object, and when I brought it into the house and spread it on the parlor floor I felt like a knight who had rescued a fair maiden from captivity. Man and beast, earth, fire, and water seemed to have worked their evil will on the once lovely thing. Five inches had been torn from the end of one breadth and three inches from another. One breadth was torn in two and there was a jagged rent on one edge as if a dog had clawed it. Three large holes had been burned in it, the selvedge was ragged, in some places the wool was completely worn off from the cotton foundation, leaving a large bare spot like a piece of white paper, and its colors were obscured by

THE DOWNFALL OF PARIS

WOVEN in North Carolina three generations ago. Some vandal cut this coverlet into thirty-two pieces, but it was "restored" by sewing the pieces together. I first saw it on a load of tobacco, and the owner of the tobacco, Mr. Kirk Bailey, Richelieu, Ky., kindly loaned it to me for illustrating purposes. The name of the design commemorates the 31st of March, 1814, when the allied armies entered Paris accompanied by the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, or perhaps the 7th of July, 1815, when for the second time the allies took possession of the French capital and Napoleon's power was finally broken.



mud and dust, stained with tobacco, and faded by long exposure to untoward weather. But the cleansing waters whitened and brightened it, countless patches and darns made it whole, and now its soft colors and elaborate pattern delight the eye as it reposes on the back of an easy chair, where after all life's hardships it is having an old age

*“Serene and bright
And lovely as a Lapland night.”*

In like manner I rescued “Forty-Nine Snowballs” and restored it to usefulness and beauty after it had suffered the degradation of serving as a horse-blanket in the stable and a cover for potatoes down in the cellar of a farm-house.

Desecration and humiliation are not always the lot of the ancestral coverlet. The owner of the "Waity Staples" coverlet declares that she welcomes a spell of sickness because it gives her an opportunity to use that beautiful white spread. The owner of the Monroe County coverlets says that five hundred dollars could not buy them from her, but I usually find that the degree of appreciation accorded to the family coverlet results merely in its being carefully put away. The family portraits are honorably placed on the walls; the old mahogany sideboard graces the dining-room, and the family silver stands on its polished top, while the family coverlet, the contemporary of

all these things and the most beautiful of all, is hidden away in the dark recesses of closet or chest; and in ignorance of the noble beauty of grandmother's work, we buy factory-made textiles to decorate our homes, while servants and dogs slumber on our ancestral coverlets!

To my mind there is more of prestige in an old coverlet than in anything else that comes to us from the hands of the dead. Whenever I find one I try to construct its biography, asking these questions: Where and when was it made? Who spun and dyed the thread? Who did the weaving? Who was the original owner and who is the present owner? As these questions are answered the

history of the coverlet is found to be, in brief, the history of the family owning it.

Where, reader, is your family coverlet? In a dusty garret corner, perhaps, or buried from sight under the rubbish of the lumber-room. Wherever it is, go bring it out to the air and sunshine. Spread it over that damask-covered couch, and stand off a little distance so that you may study the pattern. How queer it looks surrounded by the furniture and bric-a-brac of a modern parlor! It is like an anachronism on a page of history or an obsolete word strayed from the time of Shakespeare into present-day fiction, and its weight is as "the weary weight of all

this unintelligible world." You think of your silken, down-filled coverlet and wonder how any one could sleep under a fabric as coarse and heavy as this coverlet. But its weight once matched the strength of the hands that spun, dyed, and wove it, and if your imaginative faculties are not wholly wasted away, this old bed-cover ought to bring you face to face with your foremother, as worthy a dame as any whose names are on the visiting cards that fill your silver card plate. Unless you are a Daughter of the American Revolution or a Colonial Dame, you probably do not know your foremother's name, and if she, or a woman like her, came into your parlor, you would hesitate about

asking her to be seated. Your hands are soft, white, and jewelled; her hands were hard and knotted, and her wedding ring was worn to a thread by labors that you would scorn. Your speech has the elegance of one who has studied in school and college; hers was plain and ungrammatical. You hold familiar converse with great minds in the worlds of science, philosophy, history, art, and literature; she learned her science, philosophy, and history from the Bible. "The Pilgrim's Progress" was her only fiction, all the poetry and music of her life lay between the covers of the hymn-book, and she never had a glimpse of the land of art except when she dyed her woollen thread and wove

her coverlets, or pieced a calico quilt, or embroidered a sampler.

There was nothing æsthetic about her life, and the word "æsthetic" was unknown to her, but her love of beauty was deeper and sincerer than ours; luxury had not enervated the sinews of her soul or her body, and the record of her tireless industry and her dumb fortitude are like an epic poem. Some call themselves high-born if they can trace their ancestry back to a red-handed warrior or a degenerate king. But when pride of blood, place, or wealth swells our heart, it is well to remember that every family tree has its roots in the life of the common people, and though coronets and

Norman blood are not named in your pedigree, a hand-woven coverlet may be your genealogical chart, proving that your life sprang from the life of a woman who was girded with strength and who never "ate the bread of idleness," and this is noble birth.

A link between the present and the past, between the Old World and the New, between you and your fore-mother, that is what your coverlet should be to you. Cherish it according to its real worth, and if you are incapable of doing this, let it pass into worthier hands than yours; for a wave of wholesome taste is sweeping over the world, and the law that brings to us our own is lifting the hand-woven

coverlet out of obscurity and neglect into an atmosphere of loving appreciation. The old Dutch dame "builded better than she knew" when she wove her blue and white coverlet. I think of her again in the colonial house, in the low-ceiled room where the pewter dishes caught the light that came through the tiny panes of glass; then the picture fades and another comes to replace it.

I see a reception hall in an American palace home. It is not common air, but music and perfume that those breathe who cross that lighted threshold — music from lips in whose melody kings have delighted, perfume from a thousand flowers, though it is winter,

and outside the snow is falling, falling on the uniforms of the tall policemen who watch lest an unbidden guest stray into the festivity, and on the ragged shawl of the beggar who looks with evil, envious eyes at the glowing windows and thinks hungrily of the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

If the sturdy Dutch woman crowned with her braided hair should appear on the brilliant scene she might not recognize her great-granddaughter in the fragile, elegant creature who holds out a slender hand and smiles faintly at each new guest. But she would surely know her own handiwork hanging there in the arched doorway between a Japanese carving and an Alma-Tadema.

It has covered the sleep of bride and groom, it has warmed the new-made mother and babe, it has lain in straight solemn folds on the rigid limbs of the dead, and now the hand of a foreign ambassador is thrusting it aside, and, as he passes, the jeweled star on his coat touches the homespun folds of the old blue and white counterpane.



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