

greater. As to the health, and pleasure, and all that, to be obtained in the two callings, I am sure nobody would ever think of comparing them.

I am glad I kept this diary. I have now convinced myself of what I had oft-

en been told, viz., that a man who has as nice a little sum of money as twenty thousand dollars saved can be happier and safer in the world, working a bit of land, than by remaining in the risky whirlpool of what is called "business."

ART-EMBROIDERY.

"This bright art
Did zealous Europe learn of pagan hands,
While she assay'd with rage of holy war
To desolate their fields; but old the skill:
Long were the Phrygians' pict'ring looms renowned;
Tyre also, wealthy seat of art, excell'd,
And elder Sidon, in the historic web."—DYER.

EMBROIDERY, though properly considered a comparatively unimportant sister art of painting, is, perhaps, the oldest of the fine arts. Its origin is various in various nations, and it is one of the few arts practiced, more or less imperfectly, by all savage tribes, from time immemorial, in one form or other, according to the materials available, and the religions and customs obtaining. At various periods of the world's history, and in many localities, embroidery has reached great perfection, and has been made "the vehicle of higher powers than its own" for all uses, from mere personal adornment to the expression of religious thought. Technically speaking, the palm must be awarded to the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindoos, the Persians, and the Turks; and as far as Europe is concerned, the practice of embroidery is coeval with the first intercourse with these nations, especially the Persians and Turks, though it is difficult to determine how great an influence the Egyptians exercised in this respect over the Greeks and Romans, and also from what source the Egyptian embroideries were derived. However, the modern interest in embroidery is not archæological, and this glance at that phase of the subject is sufficient.

The present revival of interest in embroidery seems likely to be more permanent than any that has preceded it, because it is now something more than a passing fashion in dress, as was the case in England in 1846, when London alone employed two thousand pair of hands in decorating every conceivable article of dress worn by ladies of fashion. Now it is her own handiwork, the hours of patient stitching, the choice of materials and col-

ors, and the realization of an artistic thought, that the lady of fashion is proud of, not, as formerly, the money that these cost. She has now a real appreciation of the beauty of her India shawl, with its seven hundred stitches to the square inch, and other features that make her treasures of old lace so valuable. The mere filling in of worsted-work is superseded by an occupation that requires thought, knowledge, taste, and skill; the promised slippers or sofa cushion are no longer so much to be dreaded, and even the afghan, chair back, and chauffe-pied are assuming artistic importance—things that can not only be tolerated for the sake of association, but which we can conscientiously admire, and be thankful for. Of course many things are embroidered which should be perfectly plain, if, indeed, as in the case of a valance for a mantel, they should exist at all; but this lack of discrimination is incident to all beginnings, and we may feel certain that the enthusiasm which has carried the mantel valance to completion will lead to a degree of acquirement that will acknowledge its incongruity, and by that time the heat and soot of the fire will have rendered it unsightly enough to be consigned to the attic, among the useless accumulations of the past.

If anything permanent and valuable is to result from the present enthusiasm for art-needlework, it will be the achievement of those who are obliged to find a market for their labors. These will soon discover that while a knowledge of the South Kensington crewel-work is essential, it is a small beginning, that all methods and all materials are available, and that if the effect aimed at can not be realized by known processes, invention must supply the means. The finest modern embroideries I have seen were executed by ladies who had received no special instruction, but who were endowed with the rare quality of mind which accepts the value of precedent as a basis for in-

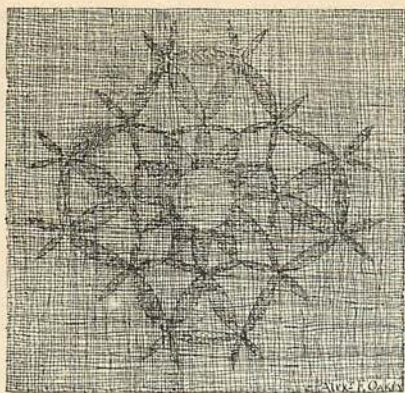


FIG. 1.

novation. It is not too much to say that in embroidery, as in other fine arts, no one can achieve great results without more or less aptitude for form and color,

we may consider "low" embroidery of three general descriptions: 1st, that in which the material wrought upon governs the work, as in what is called passing, the thread of whatever material being merely run over and under, in the directions of the woven fabric, the various lengths of thread describing a design in parallel lines, the outline of which has been marked upon the stuff. Of course in an intricate design like Fig. 1, where the thread constantly disappears from the surface, it should continue underneath till it is brought through again, and when these threads on the back are too long, they should be caught here and there with a thread drawn from the material.

In the Levant, this passing is carried to the greatest perfection, the lightest gauze fabrics being wrought in gold and silver

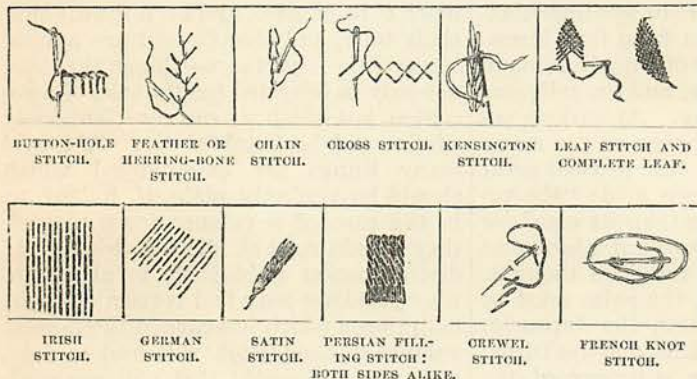


FIG. 2.

assiduously applied to a preconceived scheme to which all methods should be subservient. It is in this painstaking inventive genius that the beauty of the Eastern embroideries consists. In them we find every conceivable method of producing effects employed; and though there are always minor peculiarities that mark the distinction between the work of the several Eastern nations, they all use the three principal methods—*i. e.*, "low" or flat embroidery, "raised" or stuffed embroidery, and "laid" or appliqué embroidery. Under each of these heads there are many varieties, and room for still further invention. In the "low" or flat embroideries the variations can only consist in the nature of the material wrought upon, the nature of the thread used, and the manner of using it. Thus

threads without the least fraying of the material, and though one would not desire to tempt ladies to destroy their eyesight with such work, it may be noted that diaphanous fabrics such as grenadine are the most effective materials for this work, and the coarser the fabric the simpler the task. Effective results

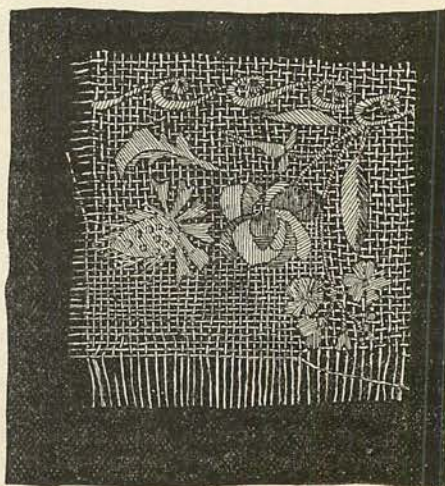


FIG. 3.

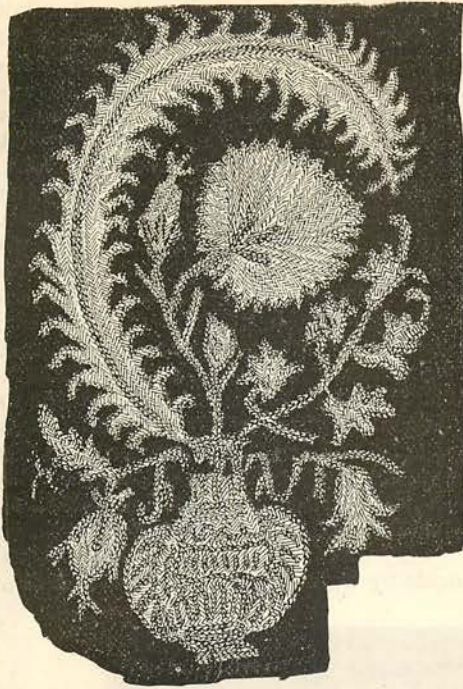


FIG. 4.

may be achieved by making some portions of the work in long stitches, and still further varieties by catching these down to the material in color or gold; in fact, the use of different colors and materials in the threads, as in all styles of embroidery, opens an inexhaustible field for inventive combination.

In embroideries upon velvet it is often

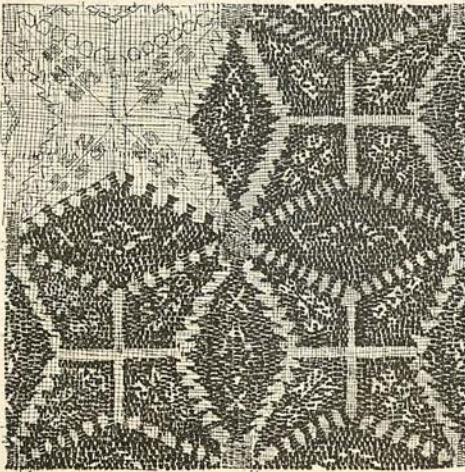


FIG. 5.

simpler to baste over the whole surface to be worked a piece of canvas to act as a guide or scale for the stitches, and when the work is complete, this canvas is drawn, thread by thread, leaving the velvet perfectly clean, with the embroidery upon it (Fig. 3). In such work, the variety of stitches is necessarily limited, and no very ambitious artist would condescend to the expedient.

The various known stitches illustrated in Fig. 2 can all be effectively used in "low" embroidery, and with the assistance of "raised" and "laid" methods make the art capable of important expression. Fig. 4 is a specimen of Persian work in silk and gold thread on silk; in this, only two stitches are employed—the chain and a kind of tent stitch in which both sides

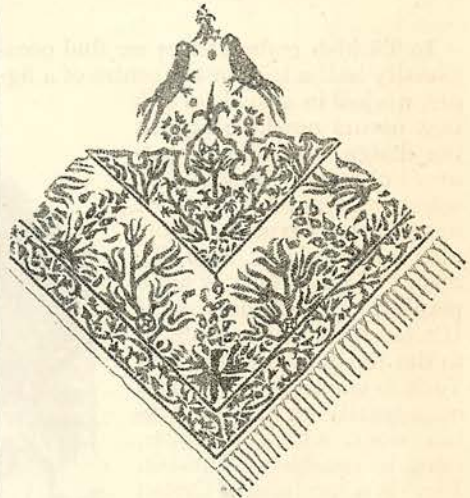


FIG. 6.

are alike. There are two shades of pink and one of blue in the flower and buds, the blue occurring again in the vase, but the outlines, most of the vase, the stems, and tendrils, are of gold, the leaves being filled in with black; the ground is a lustrous sea-green. The illustration is only one of thirty-six patterns forming the border of a plain centre, the whole being four feet long by twenty inches wide, one-third of which surface is covered by the border, that could not have been executed in less than two months' constant labor. The general tone and form of the patterns are similar, while no two are exactly alike in any respect. This variety in unity is one of the strongest characteristics of Eastern work.

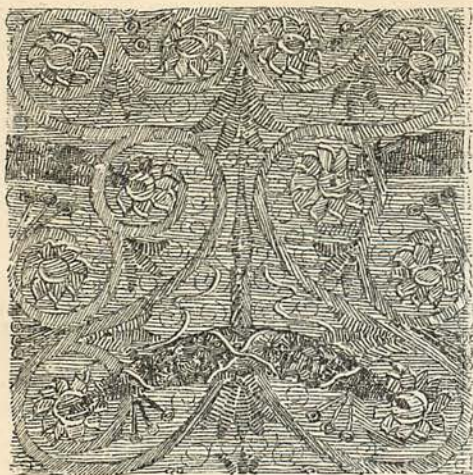


Fig. 7.

In Turkish embroideries we find occasionally half a leaf, or the centre of a figure, worked in a shade of silk that occurs nowhere else in the design, and often a pattern abruptly broken off where other parts of the work have led us to expect a particular termination. This disregard of uniformity is not a peculiarity of Chinese or of Hindoo work, but is confined to the Japanese, Persian, and Turkish embroideries, though occasionally we find it in Cretan work, which, however, must be considered Turkish. Fig. 5 is a specimen of Cretan embroidery on coarse linen, executed in a kind of Irish stitch, in various shades of crimson silk, with pale blue centres. It is impossible in black and white to suggest the arbitrary disposition of the different shades, a deep maroon being here and there worked in for a dozen stitches, as if other material had run short. One would conclude that this was the case were it not for the rich effect produced by such accidental treatment, which charmingly varies the monotony of the set geometric figure. Fig. 6 is the corner of a large linen spread of Turkish work exe-

cuted in the same stitch in pale pink and green silk, but in this the treatment is uniform throughout, the only accidental effect being achieved by the direction of the stitches, which sometimes run in one direction of the fabric and sometimes in the other at right angles, causing an apparent change of depth or saturation in the colors as the direction of the light is changed. This is an effect that demands no great skill to attain, and only requires a little thought to determine which portions of the work should undergo the same changes, and place those stitches in the same direction. Instances of this effect are familiar to most ladies in damask and brocade dress goods, and in linen damask, where the pattern is only plainly visible when the light falls at an angle, and the difference in the texture becomes apparent.

Very beautiful embroideries have been made by working the woven pattern in a

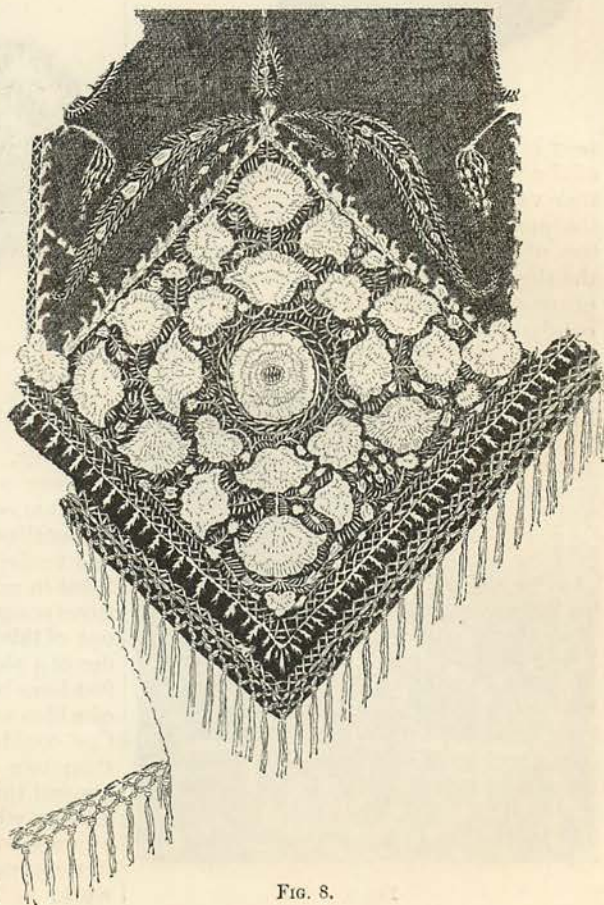


Fig. 8.

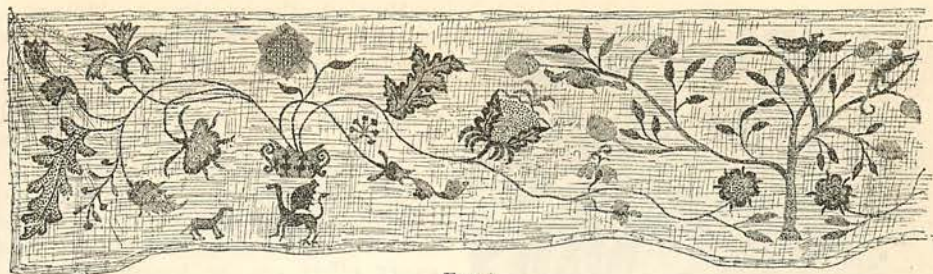


FIG. 9.

damask with colors in silk or crewels, crewels being more in keeping with linen damask, and silk with satins or brocades. Fig. 7 is an old piece of amber-colored brocade, upon which some Italian lady of the sixteenth century worked a very charming fancy in color. The pattern existed, but we feel certain, in examining the delicate shades of her floss, that she must have designed many patterns to exercise this subtle discrimination upon. In the accompanying sketch the black and white retains very little of the charm of her work.

There is another kind of Turkish "low" embroidery—almost all Turkish embroid-

floss, the former being usually scarlet or blue, of a tone that the French would call *vif*, while the floss is usually of one color—white or of very pale tint—though I have seen table-covers of this work executed in as many as a dozen strong colors. In such cases, however, the cloth is of a pale tint, and is almost entirely covered with embroidery, the margin only acting as a sort of frame for a profusion of palm leaves, lotus, etc. Embroidery in crewels upon linen is now a revival of an old occupation of our grandmothers. About one hundred years ago a lady in Connecticut embroidered the valance shown in Fig. 9, in crewels upon linen

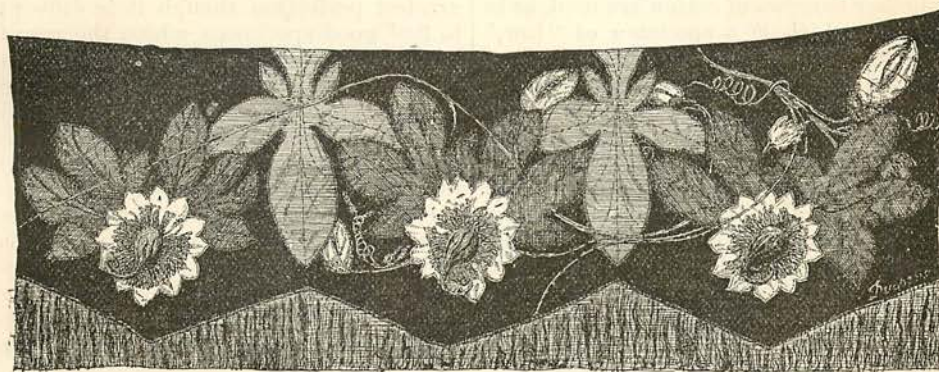


FIG. 10.

Miss F. Oakey del.

ery is of the "low" description—which is very beautiful, and whose difficulties consist mainly in procuring suitable designs, that is, forms that can be effectively displayed without great variety of outline. Some specimens of East Indian embroideries bear a strong resemblance to Turkish work. I refer to the floss embroideries on cloth, of which Fig. 8 is a specimen. This is not a very durable class of work, as the floss is used in heavy strands and long stitches, any sense of relief being gained by the strong contrast between the color of the cloth and the

woven by the slaves on her husband's plantation, and we find, on examination, that she was an adept in South Kensington stitches, as in many more that are not taught nowadays. Where she procured her design it would be hard to say; it is neither so beautiful nor so ugly that she might not have conceived it in her primitive soul, but there is such a curious combination of Eastern symbolism and native products that her inspiration must have been derived in part from her family's connection with the East India trade, though no record exists of any such.



FIG. 11.

“Raised” embroidery is the term employed for all filled work of any kind, whether the filling is merely a few strands of yarn, as in the embroideries on the borders of white flannel garments, or whether bunches of cotton are used, as in Fig. 10, which is a specimen of “low,” “raised,” and “laid” work all together, worked by a lady in New York, and purchased by the Boston Art Museum, where it now hangs. The “low” work consists in all the stitching for the various purposes of fastening the leaves to the cloth ground, in making the veins on the leaves, and in making the finer tendrils and stems; for these purposes the button-hole, chain, and overcast stitches are used, and sometimes one over the other. The “raised” work consists in the stuffed seed-vessels and buds, and the “laid” work is, as the term implies, the leaves, the stems, and the covering of the seed-vessels; this last is most effectively managed by a prodigal use of silk laid in long heavy strands over the body of the seed-vessels, the ends of the strands being twisted into cords, laid in their natural positions, and caught here and there to the cloth by a stitch of the same color. The leaves are of maroon satin, the ground of maroon silk rep, whose corded surface has an especial value in contrast with the satin leaves, while the pale pink seed-vessels suggest more than one connecting link in the chain of reds with the shadows from their high relief.

Most effective results are obtained in “laid” work by merely laying strands of silk in parallel lines, shorter or longer, so that the differences of length shall describe the pattern previously marked on the material. These strands are caught down as often as desirable to insure their remaining in position. In this simple way every conceivable gradation of color may be indulged, and every effect can be tested before the worker is committed to a combination. Many varieties of this work may be easily invented, such as twisting the strands into cords, spreading them so that each individual thread must be caught, and in this way the necessary stitches may be made a feature in describing a subsidiary design. Fig. 11 is a piece of Turkish work of this description, except the line of stitching dividing the border from the main field. This line is done in what the South Kensington School would call feather stitch, if they were only a little closer, as a whole, and not in collections of three at intervals.

The Japanese have, on the whole, carried “raised” and “laid” work to the greatest perfection, though it is difficult to find good specimens where the result is not due as much to the combination of all three kinds of embroidery as to the skillful application of any one. The manner of embroidering a feather, for instance, in one piece of Japanese work is no criterion for that of another. Each undertaking seems to be governed by its own requirements, and if a certain realism is aimed at, their success is perfect. In Persian work, on the other hand, according to the kind of embroidery, we shall invariably find the same things done in the

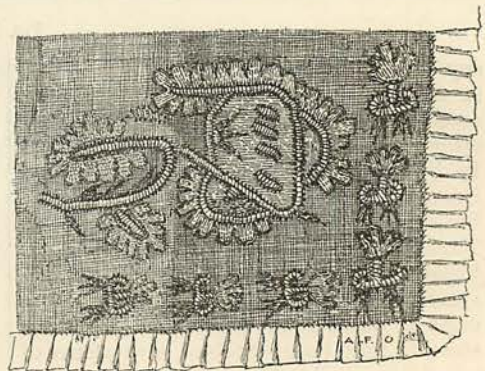


FIG. 12.

same way. Fig. 12 is an embroidered Persian napkin, in which the stems of the flowers are "raised," and this effected in a way peculiar to Persia; the lines of the stems are laid with a few strands of thread, and this filling is over-cast with a flat strip of gold about one-sixteenth of an inch wide, drawn through the stuff without regard to consequences, and leaving such openings in the fabric that the stems appear like brides in lace, attached to the work only at intervals. In "laid and raised" work, nothing can be more effective than the simple manner adopted in the Chinese and Japanese robes, where the background is composed of gold threads laid close together in waving lines following every variation of outline in the pattern, which is executed in "low and raised" work, but all in one simple long stitch, veins and tendrils of the leaves and flowers being used also to catch the long stitches. The lessons we may learn from the best examples of embroidery of all kinds are not so much the particular manner of executing this or that stitch for a particular purpose, as that the art is relative; that ev-

ery material in fabric or thread has its special advantages; that while it is indispensable to acquire skill in the various processes, this alone can never atone for an ill-devised scheme in form or color.

The embroidery for a robe that is to hang in folds, or for a curtain, must be of such a design and of such color combinations that its use may enhance its value both as a matter of effect and durability. A screen has the advantage, on the other hand, of appearing as it should and is to be while stretched to work upon. In sofa cushions and the like, the convex form, when the work is made up, must affect the design, and even the colors, and this should be made a virtue of. We are gradually getting out of the habit of walking about in the house with a bunch of flowers, fearfully wrought, on each toe of our slippers, just as we are substituting Eastern rugs for our former extraordinary floral carpets. If our missionaries are half as successful in converting the heathen to Christianity as the heathen have been in converting us to a belief in and appreciation of real art, the millennium can not be long delayed.

AN ARTIST'S REMINISCENCES.

I.—GEORGE.

"WHERE'S George?" Many years ago, while travelling in a foreign land, I heard this interrogatory, under circumstances that sent a peculiar thrill through my nerves, and caused my memory, in a moment's time, to travel back over a space of nearly thirty years, when I, in the early dawn of life, had made that same inquiry in an agony of soul to which my young heart was hitherto a stranger.

I was seated in the corridor of the interior court of an old Swiss inn, in an out-of-the-way town amid the mountains, listening with surprise and interest to the singing of what I had only known as a negro melody, which came from the kitchen below. Astonished at the sound of those familiar notes so far away, and puzzled to account for their recurrence there, I had finally settled upon what was probably the true solution—that the air was *still at home*: originally Swiss, it had been stolen and adapted to the negro words—and had relapsed into that peculiar sense of loneliness and retrospection

so often experienced by travellers in a strange country, when some sight or sound awakens memories of home and early days. I was not aware that any being speaking or understanding my mother-tongue was within miles of me, when the above question, in broad English, from the servants' quarters below, smote upon my ear. "Where's George?"

I was but a babe, and can just remember when my little playfellow George left my native village. The evening before the family were to leave, my mother told me that George was going away in the morning before I would be awake, and that I had better go over then and bid him good-by. An unutterable dread came over me, and I could not be persuaded then, but said I would go in the morning. In vain I was told it would be too late, that I would not be up until long after they were gone, etc. I could not believe or understand that my George would not be found as usual in his old home. How well I recall, but can not describe, the various feelings that made up the load of sorrow too great for my young heart, al-