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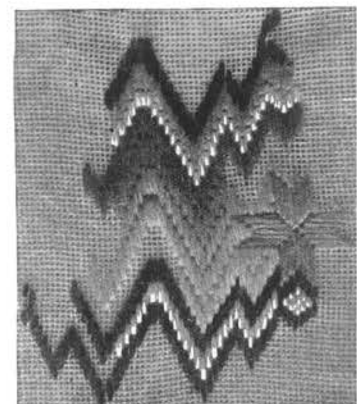

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* *The Girl's Own Paper* ***Cassell's Family Magazine*

Back Then and Back Now

Nostalgia will never go out of style. The phrase "The Good Old Days" will always be in our vocabulary. Some of us feel nostalgia for times we recall (something that grows more common as we grow older and our own "good old days" seem farther and farther behind us). Some feel nostalgia for days we never actually experienced, but imagine to have been better (at least in some respects) than our own—such as the Victorian era.

I've written about nostalgia before in this space (see the February 2019 issue), noting that regardless of whether we regard the old days as "good" or "rotten," the key is our tendency to judge them by their differences from our own times. Those who look back with nostalgia view the "old days" as possessing qualities sadly lacking in our modern society. Those who look back with horror see those days as sadly lacking the qualities modern society possesses!

In either case, however, it's easy to assume that the "good old days" were "good old days" to those who lived in them. We tend to picture the past as a sequence of images, moments frozen in time. We envision, for instance, folks sitting on their rockers on wide front porches on warm summer evenings, waving "howdy" to the neighbors—instead of hunkering in front of televisions or over cell phones, with only a dim notion that neighbors even exist! And it's easy to imagine the folks in this picture sighing and thinking, "this is the life" and assuming that it would always *be* "the life."

As I read articles like this issue's "How We Save Time and Labour," however, I'm reminded that no one actually thinks of their own time as "the old days" (whether good, bad, or indifferent). What was "back then" for us wasn't "back now" for them. And the folks that we envision as happily enjoying those "good old days" were, for the most part, looking ahead to the "good new days" that were to come.

In fact, Victorians seem to have been a most un-nostalgic lot. While I've found a number of articles that look back at the "old days"—anywhere from 50 to 100 years into the past—rarely are these portrayed as the *good* old days. As the article in this issue makes clear, Victorians were very aware of the amazing advantages they had over their ancestors. As the author notes, in the 17th century, it was inconceivable to imagine traveling from London to Edinburgh in a mere seven days. By 1881, one could probably complete the journey in less than 24 hours. In 1835, the idea of traveling at speeds exceeding 20 miles an hour was ridiculed; by 1881, trains traveled at 60 miles per hour! (Having traveled by train from Baltimore to New York, I wish it occasionally *would*...) Today, we take instant international communications for granted—but so could the Victorian, who could send a message from London to New York in seconds.

In short, Victorians never imagined themselves as living in a golden bubble of good-old-dayness. They saw themselves as being on the edge of a fast-moving wave of progress, sweeping forward into the 20th century. Their world had already brought forth vast changes in women's rights, education, social justice, and industrialization that, for all its consequences, freed thousands from literally crippling forms of labour. And so, not surprisingly, those Victorians that we tend to look back upon so nostalgically were themselves looking forward to the times to come, believing (correctly) that their inventions and discoveries were just the beginning of advances that would change the world. To them, *our* days were the golden future, the "good new days" that lay ahead. But just as those given to nostalgia often don't see the problems that went along with the balmy days of the past, neither did the Victorians have any idea what problems were to accompany all the glorious changes in technology, industry and society that they were busily introducing to the world.

Today, most of us (even those who do yearn for the "good old days") have a similar mindset. We look forward to a better future that solves at least some of the grievous problems that afflict the present day. Some hope that technology will provide the key. Some hope that social change will do the trick. But few of us imagine that we are going to remain still, in a golden "back now" bubble of time. What we do know, however, is that our "now" will one day be our descendants' "back then." Some of those descendants will undoubtedly look back upon our day as "the good old days." Some will undoubtedly look back upon us with horror and contempt. They'll undoubtedly both be wrong—and both be right.

Only one thing is truly certain, whether you're a Victorian or a Millennial: if we don't believe that a better world is coming, it won't!

—Moira Allen, Editor
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Some Remarkable Wedding-Cakes.

By Framley Steelcroft.

ONLY a very small percentage of the readers of this article will be able to recall Her Majesty's wedding-day, Monday, February 10th, 1840, when the theatres were open free to the public. In the evening a banquet was given at St. James's Palace, and covers were laid for 130 persons. There were three tables, and at the upper end of the Queen's table stood the two chief wedding-cakes, one of which is depicted here. This cake was made by Messrs. Gunter, of Berkeley Square, and before being sent to the Palace, it was exhibited on the firm's premises to more than 21,000 persons. It is said that besides the two principal wedding-cakes there were nearly a hundred smaller ones, which were subsequently cut up and distributed, practically, all over the world.

WEDDING-CAKE OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND PRINCE ALBERT.
From a Drawing by J. Glover.

The second wedding-cake that figured on this historical occasion was designed by Mr. John C. Mauditt, yeoman confectioner to the Royal household. It weighed nearly 300lb., and was 14in. thick and 12ft. in circumference. On the top was seen a figure of Britannia blessing the bride and bridegroom, who were somewhat incongruously dressed in the costume of ancient Rome. These figures were nearly a foot high, and were, of course, moulded in sugar. At the feet of Prince Albert was the figure of a dog, denoting fidelity; while at Her Majesty's feet were a pair of turtle doves, denoting the felicity of the marriage state. A large Cupid was also seen writing the date of the marriage in a book, and at the top of the cake were many bouquets of white flowers, tied with true lovers' knots of white satin ribbon. Among the decorations of this wedding-cake may also be mentioned four white satin flags, on which were painted the Royal Arms.

The next free theatrical night marked the marriage of the Prince of Wales, on March 10th, 1863. For many days the presents were on view at Garrard's, in the Haymarket, and they included a particularly massive wedding-ring and keeper, the latter set with six precious stones, selected and arranged so that their initial letters formed the word "Bertie." The stones were respectively a beryl, emerald, ruby, turquoise, jacinth, and another emerald. Also among the presents figured eight lockets for the bridesmaids, which were set with coral and diamonds—red and white being the colours of Denmark. In the centre of each was a cipher in crystal, forming the letters "A. E. A.," after a drawing by the late Princess Alice. The bridal garments were ordered from Mr. Levysohn, of Copenhagen, and were, of course, on view at his shop in the Kjöbmagergade. On this occasion a splendid wedding-cake was made by Her Majesty's confectioner, M. Pagniez; but one

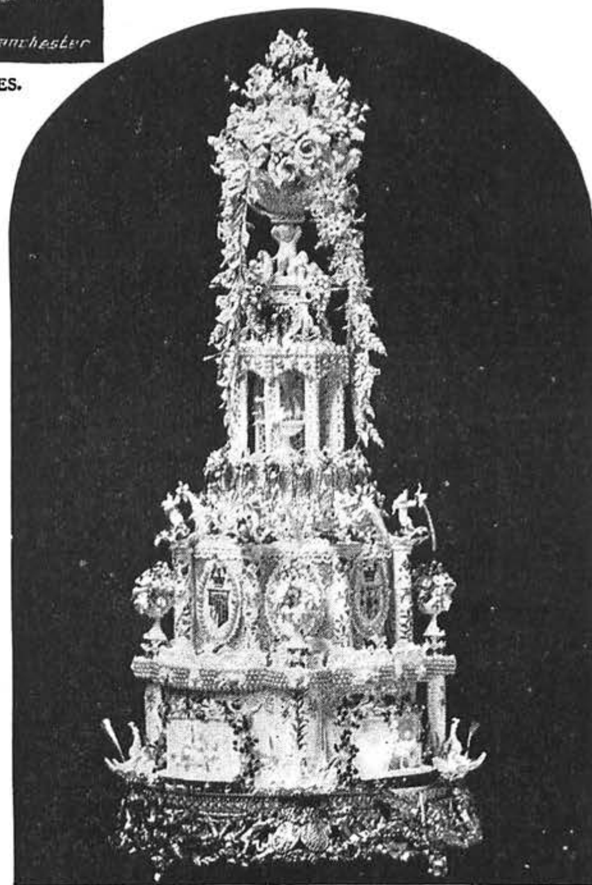
WEDDING-CAKE OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.
From a Photograph.

of equal importance was made by the Royal confectioners, Messrs. Bolland, of Chester, and this great cake is shown here. This is what is known as a "three-tier" cake, and around the base were festoons composed of the rose, thistle, and shamrock, entwined with the Royal and Denmark Arms. On the tiers were placed alternately reflectors and figures of seraphs with harps; also satin flags, on which were painted miniature likenesses of the Prince and Princess. The whole was surmounted by a temple embedded in orange blossoms and silver leaves, on the summit of which was placed the Prince's coronet and a magnificent plume of ostrich feathers. The cake, which stood nearly 5ft. high, was of colossal proportions.

I may mention, incidentally, that the largest cake ever made by Messrs. Gunter was that which figured among the Jubilee presents. This cake was 13ft. high, and weighed a quarter of a ton, its value being about £300. The smallest wedding-cake made was ordered by a lady for a child. It was a doll's wedding-cake, 3in. high, and weighing about four ounces; it cost 10s., because it was perfect in every respect, and the confectioner had great difficulty in getting moulds small enough.

The next wedding-cake shown here is that of Prince Leopold (Duke of Albany) and Princess Helen of Waldeck Pyrmont, who were married on April 27th, 1882.

This wedding-cake stood nearly 6ft. high, and was mounted on a richly-carved gilt stand, which was first employed at the wedding of the Prince of Wales. The total weight of this cake was about 2cwt., and the decoration of the lower tier consisted of four groups, representing the four continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; these being adapted from the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park. Considering the great difficulty of working in material like sugar, and the fact that all the forms have to be built up by squeezing the liquid sugar out of a small hole in a piece of paper, it is perfectly amazing to notice the artistic success of these Royal wedding-cakes.



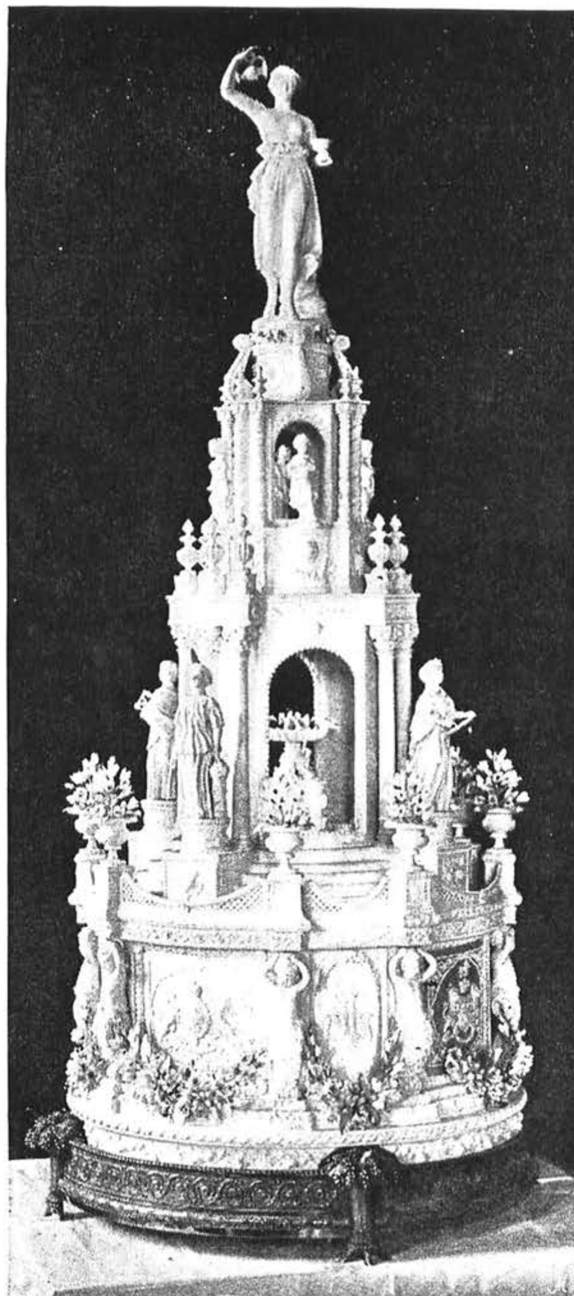
WEDDING-CAKE OF PRINCE LEOPOLD (DUKE OF ALBANY) AND PRINCESS HELEN OF WALDECK-PYRMONT.
From a Photo. by Silvester Parry, Chester.

There were also to be noticed on this particular cake a number of satin-surfaced pillars, painted with the lily and its foliage. These pillars were surmounted by vases containing the characteristic flowers of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and at the base of the vases were reading Cupids, emblematic of the literary and studious tastes of the Royal bridegroom. At the salient points of the base were swans, associated with sea-shells, in which were dolphins at play.

The second tier was octagonal in shape, and in the spaces between the satin-surfaced pillars, painted with orange blossoms, were medallions richly worked in colour, and representing the arms and monogram of the bride and bridegroom. The pillars of this tier were surmounted by Cupids bearing flowers, from which sprang jets of mimic spray to water the flowers contained in the vases below.

The third tier of this cake was ornamented with wedding favours and festoons, and on the top of it was a pavilion containing a fountain playing, with doves drinking from the basin. Above this again was a terminal stage, supporting cornucopiæ, from which issued the various fruits of the earth. In the midst of these emblems of plenty stood a Cupid, bearing upon his shoulders a vase overflowing with the most beautiful flowers.

It is interesting to note that each of the Royal bakers has a distinct recipe, which is guarded like a Cabinet secret. Roughly speaking, a bride-cake takes about half a day to bake, but after the tins have been removed from the oven and the cake turned out, the serious part of the work only commences—for a wedding-cake has to be at least six months old before it is fit to be eaten. During this time it is kept in an enormous warehouse, called the "cake-room," and each firm keeps a separate staff of artists employed in making new designs and altering the fashions in wedding-cakes. Natural flowers are the great feature in modern wedding-cakes; white roses and orange blossoms being the most popular varieties in use. A good deal of ingenuity, however, has to be exercised in keeping these fresh, for a faded wedding-cake would indeed be a grievous sight. The Royal Chester bakers (Messrs. Bolland) have got over the difficulty by having narrow, white porcelain cups sunk in among the decorations, thus enabling each natural bouquet to rest in water.



WEDDING-CAKE OF PRINCESS LOUISE AND THE MARQUIS OF LORNE.
From a Photo. by Hills & Saunders.

An adequate idea of the magnitude of this business may be realized when I mention that Messrs. Bolland's standing stock of wedding-cake is about 2,000lb. The curiously statuesque cake, which we now reproduce, was made, appropriately enough, for the Princess Louise, on the occasion of her wedding with the Marquis of Lorne, which took place on March 21st, 1871. This cake was designed and made by Mr. Samuel Ponder, the present chief confectioner of Her Majesty's household. Mr. Ponder tells me that this cake was about 5ft. 10in. in height, and weighed 2½cwt. The four figures at the angles were modelled from the statues on Holborn Viaduct, and the cake was built in four tiers.

WEDDING-CAKE OF PRINCESS BEATRICE AND PRINCE HENRY OF BATTENBERG.
From a Photo. by Hughes & Mullins, Ryde.

This very artistic wedding-cake was surmounted by a replica of Canova's "Hebe," Mr. Ponder having procured a plaster model of the statue at a decorator's in Leather Lane.

It would appear that there is no limit to the vagaries of those who have wedding-cakes made to order. One titled lady gave Messrs. Gunter an order for a cake weighing 120lb., and standing 5ft. high, the whole cake to be trimmed with splendid ropes of ostrich feathers to match the bridal dress. An M. F. H.'s wedding-cake was entirely decorated with hunting trophies. Around the drum of the cake was an imitation, in sugar, of a rough wooden palisade, round which were represented huntsmen, hounds, and fox—in fact, a lively hunt in full swing. Round the cake itself were medallions showing dogs' and foxes' heads, horses, whips, and brushes. Somewhat similarly, an angler will want piscatorial trophies reproduced on his cake; the architect likes to see his *magnum opus* in the form of a "temple" on the third tier; and yachting and military men, cricketers, and musicians frequently provide special designs for their own wedding-cakes. Even heirlooms are reproduced in coloured sugar on wedding-cakes; for example, I am informed that the famous vase known as "The Luck of Eden Hall," which has been in the possession of the Musgrave family for the past 500 years, was reproduced by a well-known confectioner, and served to adorn the bridal-cake made for the marriage of the daughter of Lady Brougham and Vaux.

Princess Beatrice was married on July 23rd, 1885, and the cake made on that occasion by the Royal Confectioner, Mr. Ponder, was 6ft. high, and weighed 280lb.; it is shown in the accompanying illustration.

The next wedding-cake that figures here is that of the Princess Helena and Prince Christian, whose marriage ceremony was performed in the private chapel attached to the Royal apartments at Windsor Castle. The Queen gave the bride away, and a luncheon was subsequently served privately to the

WEDDING-CAKE OF PRINCESS HELENA AND PRINCE CHRISTIAN.
From a Drawing.

THE "ROYAL" WEDDING-CAKE OF THE DUKE OF YORK AND PRINCESS MAY.
From a Photo. by Gunn & Stuart, 2, The Quadrant, Richmond, Surrey, and 162, Sloane Street, S.W.

members of the Royal Family in the Oak Room, visitors being entertained at a buffet in the Waterloo Gallery.

One of the most important questions I put to the Royal confectioner on the occasion of my visit to him at Buckingham Palace, had reference to the most important wedding-day, from his point of view. Mr. Ponder unhesitatingly replied that the Duke of York's wedding with Princess May entailed by far the greatest strain upon him. The principal cake on this occasion was made at Windsor; it was 6ft. 10in. high, and weighed between 2cwt. and 3cwt. This cake, which is shown in the accompanying reproduction, took the Royal confectioner five weeks to make, there being as many as thirty-nine separate pieces of plaster in some of the figure moulds. Altogether, there were at this wedding six immense cakes, on what is known as the "general table," and in addition to these, Mr. Ponder made sixteen or eighteen smaller cakes for cutting up, each cake averaging about 22lb. Moreover, Messrs. Gunter say that they cut up no fewer than 500 slices of wedding-cake on this occasion, the smallest slice weighing about half a pound, and the largest, a little over 12lb. One of this same firm's confectioners subsequently attended at the Royal kitchen, and, armed with a saw and a special knife, cut up about 16cwt. of wedding-cake in three days.

The second of the "York" wedding-cakes, reproduced here, was made by Messrs. Bolland, to the order of the Prince and Princess of Wales; it was about 4ft. 6in. high, and weighed 224lb.

The ornaments of the cake were representative of the sailor-life of Prince George. The divisions between the pillars

THE SECOND "YORK" WEDDING-CAKE.
From a Photo. by Gunn & Stuart, 2, The Quadrant, Richmond, Surrey, and 162, Sloane Street, S.W.

were occupied by four large panels representing H.M.S. *Thrush* and *Melampus*, modelled in bass-relief from photographs specially taken. This cake has a somewhat interesting history. On being completed it was sent from Chester to Buckingham Palace, where it was built up the afternoon before the wedding. At three o'clock on the eventful day itself, however, the Royal Chester bakers received a telegram,

ordering them to remove the cake from the Palace to Marlborough House — no easy matter, even in the most favourable circumstances. The ornate structure was taken down, and its sections placed in two disreputable-looking "growlers"—positively the only conveyances to be obtained in the crowded and almost impassable streets. The confectioners tell a woful tale of the subsequent funereal procession to Marlborough House, with a surging crowd pressing against, and almost overturning, the wretched cabs. This trying ordeal was over at last, however, and I am told that the Prince of Wales himself supervised the reconstruction of the big cake on a sideboard in the Banqueting Room.

Not to be outdone at this wedding, Scotland came forward in the persons of Messrs. McVitie and Price, of Edinburgh, who produced another magnificent wedding-cake, also of a naval character. This stood 6ft. 4in. in height; the circumference of the lowest tier was nearly 8ft.; the total weight of the cake, 466lb., and its intrinsic value about 140 guineas. To give some idea of the amount of work involved in the execution of such an order, it may be mentioned that the anchors, davits, and blocks for tackle, etc., had to be specially made by one set of workmen; the flowers with which the cake was profusely decorated, by another set; while the making and draping of the stand was intrusted to a famous firm of Regent Street silk merchants: altogether, no fewer than thirty skilled workmen were employed in the manufacture of this cake, which was made within seven days of the receipt of the order. When completed, it was exhibited for two days in Edinburgh, and so great was the public interest taken in the wedding, that in this brief period upwards of 14,000 people had inspected the big Scottish cake; and a special staff of policemen and commissionaires had to be employed to keep the orderly crowd moving.

Lest anyone should think that, in sending out slices of wedding-cake from the Royal palaces to distinguished persons at home and abroad, complimentary cards in ornate silver designs would be prepared, we reproduce here one of the severely plain cards that actually accompany such complimentary gifts. I may say here, too, that these cards are invariably written or lithographed in this simple style.

By command of Her Majesty the Queen

From

Their Royal Highnesses
The Duke and Duchess of York.

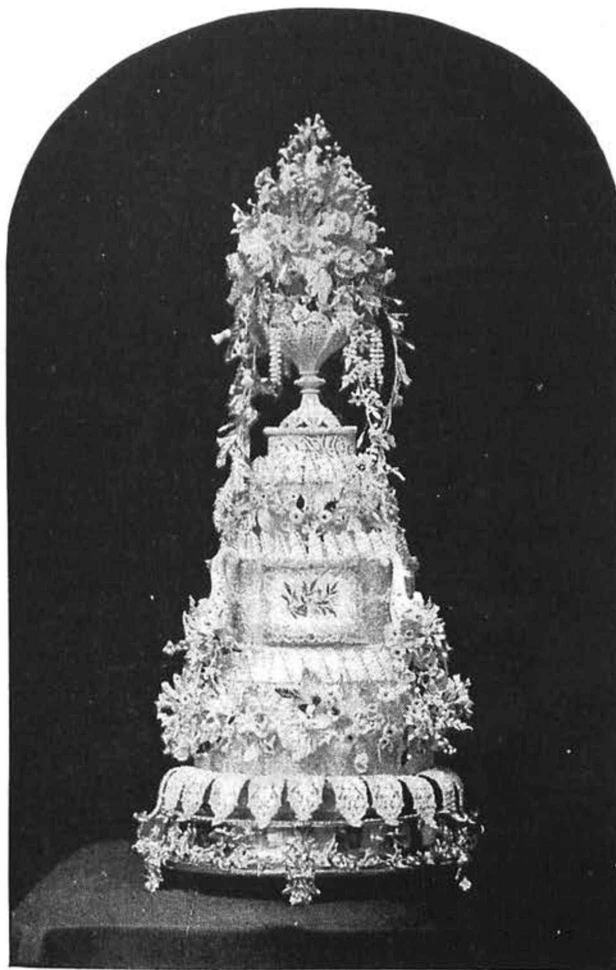
WEDDING-CAKE OF PRINCESS LOUISE OF WALES AND THE DUKE OF FIFE.
From a Photograph.

WEDDING-CAKE OF PRINCE ADOLPHUS OF TECK AND LADY MARGARET GROSVENOR.
From a Photo. by Whatmough Webster, Chester.

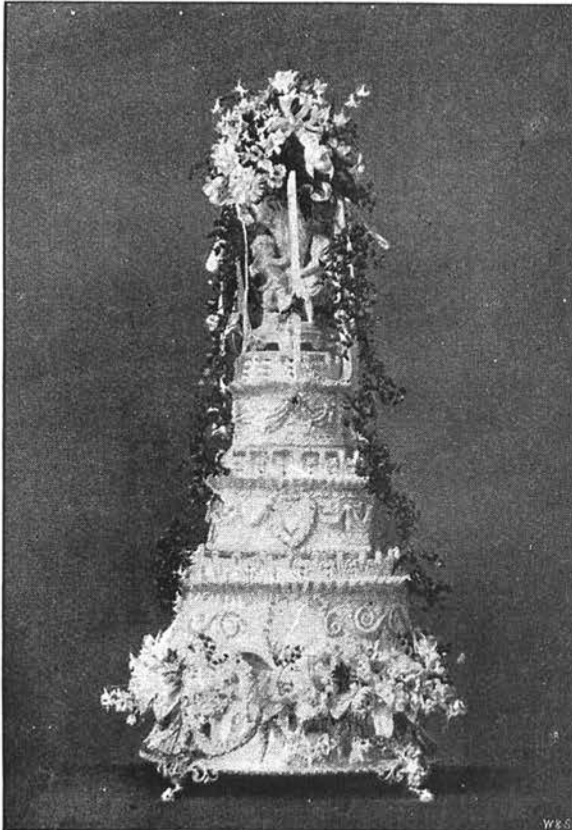
The most important cake made outside the Palace for the "Fife" wedding was provided by Messrs. Gunter, of Berkeley Square. It was 7ft. high, and weighed 150lb. On the cake stood a Greek temple in sugar, and round it were medallions of satin with raised sugar monograms. This cake was exhibited for some time before the day of the marriage, and while it was on show it was decorated with artificial flowers. On the wedding-day, however, about twenty pounds' worth of fresh natural flowers covered the entire structure.

A magnificent wedding-cake was ordered by His Grace the Duke of Westminster, from Messrs. Bolland, for the wedding of Lady Margaret Grosvenor with Prince Adolphus of Teck. In accordance with the express wish of Lady Margaret herself, the cake was similar in design to one of those furnished for the wedding of the Duke of York and Princess May. This cake was arranged in three tiers, and weighed about 2cwt. The lower portion of it differed from the Duke of York's in this respect: instead of bearing representations of ships, there were panels very delicately piped with sugar, with views of White Lodge and Eaton Hall embossed upon them, while beautifully modelled figures surmounted the pillars. On the second tier were the combined arms of the Grosvenor and Teck families painted on white silk shields, alternating with cornucopiæ filled with bouquets of flowers. The second tier was decorated with golden wheat-sheaves and artistically modelled stags, which were quite appropriate, the former being the celebrated Garb d'Or which the Grosvenor family obtained permission to use in the fourteenth century; while the latter form part of the arms of the Teck family. The flowers used in the decoration of this cake were white roses, heather, myrtle, and marguerites.

Here is a picture of Lord Rosebery's wedding-cake, which was made at Chester, on the occasion of that statesman's wedding with Miss Hannah de Rothschild, on March 20th, 1878. A civil ceremony first took place at the registry office in Mount Street, but the actual marriage ceremony was performed at Christ Church, Hertford Street, Mayfair, by the Rev. Prebendary Rogers, rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate. It is interesting to



WEDDING-CAKE OF LORD ROSEBERY AND MISS HANNAH DE ROTHSCHILD.
From a Photo. by Silvester Parry, Chester.



WEDDING-CAKE OF MR. ASQUITH AND MISS MARGOT TENNANT.
From a Photo. by R. W. Morris, Chester.

note that, on this occasion, the bride was given away by the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield.

The Home Secretary, Mr. Asquith, married Miss Margot Tennant, on May 10th, 1894, Mr. Gladstone's little favourite, Miss Dorothy Drew, being the principal bridesmaid on this occasion. Miss Tennant herself ordered the cake shown in this picture, and expressly stipulated that the design should be as simple as possible. This wedding-cake was a three-tier one, standing 4ft. 6in. in height, but only weighing 120lb. It will be seen that there is nothing very elaborate about this cake, the tiers being merely covered with a very delicate sugar piping, and surmounted by a Parian vase, supported by Cupids, and containing a bouquet of natural flowers, from which depend long trails of smilax. On the second tier were four shields, on which were worked the monograms and crests of the bride and bridegroom.

I have previously mentioned instances in which the person ordering the bride-cake has provided a special design. Perhaps the most remarkable of these cakes is the one shown in the accompanying illustration. This wedding-cake was 5ft. high, and weighed about 80lb. It was made for Rear-Admiral A. H. Markham, who served in the Arctic Expedition of 1875–6, and who was presented by the Royal Geographical Society with a gold watch for his services when in command of the Northern Division of sledges in that expedition. On the top of the drum of the cake stood a sugar model of H.M.S. *Alert*, caught in an iceberg. Round the drum were many nautical trophies — capstans, anchors, boats, and davits, and a loaded Arctic sledge. These were surrounded by oak leaves and acorns, and many bunches of flowers. Worked in the sugar round the cake were two life-buoys, in which the Admiral's flag and motto were engraved. This wedding-cake took three weeks to prepare, and its design was entirely provided by the gallant Admiral himself, who took infinite pains to have the modelling and technical details exact to a curious degree.

ADMIRAL MARKHAM'S "ARCTIC" WEDDING-CAKE.
From a Photograph.

OLD NOTIONS CONCERNING BRIDESMAIDS.

A PLEASING and graceful usage which still retains its time-honoured place in our marriage ceremonies is the appointment of bridesmaids. Indeed, these daintily-attired attendants on the bride have an additional interest when we recollect that they can boast of a somewhat eventful and romantic history.

Thus, their office is in all probability a survival of the early primitive practice of marriage by capture, when the lady's friends resisted her being seized and carried off. Various traces of this custom may be found here and there throughout the country in some of our village weddings, where a mock contest between the friends of the bride and bridegroom forms part of the day's proceedings. Sir W. Scott, it may be remembered, in describing the marriage of Lucy Ashton, in the "Bride of Lammermoor," probably alludes to the custom of protecting the bride in the following speech of the boy-bridesman, Henry Ashton:—"I am to be bride's-man, and ride before you to the kirk, and all our kith, kin, and allies, and all Bucklaw's, are to be mounted and in order, and I am to have a sword, belt, and a dagger."

In some parts of the county of Durham, the bridal party is escorted to church by men armed with guns, which they fire again and again close to the ears of bride and bridesmaids. At Guisborough, in Cleveland, these guns, adds Mr. Henderson, in his "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties" (1879, p. 38), are fired over the heads of the newly-married couple all the way from church. There can be no doubt that this firing of guns is a survival of the fighting which really happened in primitive times, when marriage by capture was in force.

In this country, as far back as the days of the Anglo-Saxons, bridesmaids attended the bride at the wedding ceremony, although in later times they seem to have escorted the bridegroom, his friends waiting on the bride. As recently, for instance, as the middle of the last century, this was the popular mode of procedure, an illustration of which is given in the "Collier's Wedding":—

> "Two lusty lads, well dressed and strong,
> Stept out to lead the bride along:
> And two young maids of equal size
> As soon the bridegroom's hands surprise."

In Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady" we have a further allusion to this practice:—"Were these two arms encompassed with the hands of bachelors to lead me to the church;" and in the old "History of John Newchombe, the Wealthy Clothier of Newbery," we have a graphic account of how his bride was "led to church between two sweet boys, with bride-laces and rosemary tied about their silken sleeves."

At the marriage of Philip Herbert and Lady Susan at Whitehall, in the reign of James I., two noblemen escorted the bride to church; and Elizabeth Stuart was conducted to the altar by two of the Palatine's bachelor friends. Spenser, again, in his charming picture of an Elizabethan bridal, "The Wedding of the Medway and the Thames," gives the bride for her attendants two bridesmaids and two bride-pages:—

> "On her two pretty bridesmaids did attend,
> Which on her waited, things amiss to mend
> And her before there paced pages twain,
> Both clad in colours like, and like away."

The custom, of course, varied in different localities, and thus Waldron, writing of a Manx wedding, says:—"They have bridemen and bridesmaids, who lead the young couple, as in England, only with this difference, that the former have osier wands in their hands as an emblem of superiority."

On her return from church, the bride was generally escorted by two married persons; and Polydore Virgil, who wrote in the time of Henry the Eighth, informs us that a third married man preceded the bride, bearing instead of a torch a vessel of silver or gold. This was popularly known as the "bride-cup," in which it was customary to place a sprig of rosemary. As a remuneration for their services on this happy occasion, those who led the bride to and from church received from her a pair of gloves during the wedding feast: a custom which apparently was at one time extended to all the guests, for Pepys, writing in the year 1663, tells us that he was at a wedding, and had "two pairs of gloves, like all the rest."

Again, instead of being so many graceful ornaments at the marriage ceremony, as nowadays, the bridesmaids in olden times had various duties assigned to them. Thus, one of their principal tasks was dressing the bride on her wedding morning, when any omission in her toilet was laid to their charge. At a wedding, too, where it was arranged that the bride should be followed by a numerous train of her lady friends, it was the first bridesmaid's duty to play the part of a drill-mistress: "sizing" them, says Mr. Jeaffreson, in his "Brides and Bridals," so that "girls of the same height walked together, and no pair in the procession was followed by a taller couple." She was also expected to see that each bridesmaid was not only duly provided with a sprig of rosemary, or a floral posy

pinned to the breast-folds of her dress, but had a symbolical chaplet in her hand.

In many parts of Germany it is still customary for the bridesmaids to bring the myrtle wreath, which they have subscribed together to purchase on the nuptial eve, to the house of the bride, and to remove it from her head at the close of the wedding day. After this has been done, the bride is blindfolded, and the myrtle wreath being put into her hand, she tries to place it upon the head of one of her bridesmaids as they dance round her; for, in accordance with an old belief, whoever she crowns is sure to be married within a year from that date. As may be imagined, this ceremony is the source of no small excitement, each bridesmaid being naturally anxious to follow the example of the bride.

Referring once more to the bridal wreath and chaplet, it is still a current notion in many parts of our own country that the bride in removing these must take special care that her bridesmaids throw away every pin. Not only is it affirmed that misfortune will overtake the bride who retains even one pin used in her marriage toilet, but woe also to the bridesmaids if they keep any of them, as their prospects of marriage will thereby be materially lessened.

Importance was formerly attached to the colours which the bride wore on her wedding day. Thus, in an old book entitled the "Fifteen Comforts of Marriage," a bride and her bridesmaids are represented conversing together respecting the colours to be used for the decoration of the bridal dress. It was finally decided, after various colours had been rejected, "to mingle a gold tissue with grass green," this being considered symbolical of youthful jollity.

Again, that the office of a bridesmaid was in times past not altogether a *sine qua non* may be gathered from the fact that during the period of the wedding festivities, which often extended over a week, the bridesmaids were expected to be in attendance, and to do whatever they could to promote their success.

Then there was the custom of "flinging the stocking," at which the bridesmaids took a prominent lead: a ceremony to which no small importance was attached. It has been made the subject of frequent allusion by our old writers, and one rhyme, describing a wedding, tells us:—

> "But still the stockings are to throw;
> Some throw too high, and some too low,
> There's none could hit the mark."

Misson further informs us that if the bridegroom's stocking, thrown by one of the bridesmaids, fell upon his head, it was regarded as an omen that she herself would soon be married; and a similar prognostic was taken from the falling of the bride's stocking, thrown by one of the groomsmen. It was the bridesmaid's duty, too, to present the bride with the "benediction posset," so called from the words uttered over it: a practice thus noticed by Herrick, in his "Hesperides":—

> "What short sweet prayers shall be said,
> And how the posset shall be made
> With cream of lilies, not of kine,
> And maiden's blush for spiced wine."

Suckling thus alludes to this custom:—

> "In came the bridesmaids with the posset,
> The bridegroom eat in spight."

Once more, the bridesmaids were supposed to look after the bride's pecuniary interests. Thus, at the church porch, when the bridegroom produced the ring and other articles relating to his marriage, the chief bridesmaid took charge of the "dow-purse," which was publicly given to the bride as an instalment of her pin-money. Horace Walpole, writing to Miss Berry in the year 1791, speaks of the dow-purse as a thing of the past, and writes as follows:—

"Our wedding is over very properly, though with little ceremony, and nothing of ancient fashion but two bridesmaids. The endowing purse, I believe, has been left off since broad pieces were called in and melted down."

It has been pointed out, however, that a survival of this usage is preserved in Cumberland. The bridegroom provides himself with gold and crown pieces, and when the service reaches the point, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," he takes the money, hands the clergyman his fee, and pours the rest into a handkerchief which the bridesmaid holds for the bride.

In Scotland, the bridesmaid is popularly known as the "best maid," and one of her principal duties was to convey the bride's presents on the wedding to her future home. The first article generally taken into the house was a vessel of salt, a portion of which was sprinkled over the floor, as a protection against the "evil eye." She also attended the bride when she called on her friends, and gave a personal invitation to her wedding.

Mr. W. Gregor, in his "Folk-lore of the North-east of Scotland" (1881, p. 92), describing an old Scottish wedding, tells us:—

"After the church door had been opened, the beadle or bellman was in attendance to lead the bridegroom to the *bride-steel*: that is, the pew that was set apart for the use of those who were to be married. The bride was now led forth and placed beside him, and great care was used to have her placed at the proper side. To have placed her improperly would have been unlucky in the extreme. Next to the bride stood her 'best-maid;' this office, though accounted an honour, not being unattended with risk. Three times a bridesmaid was the inevitable prelude of remaining unmarried."

Lastly, referring to similar customs on the Continent, it appears that in many parts of Russia the bride's attendants are often middle-aged women. Thus, according to one authority, when the priest has tied the nuptial knot at the altar, the clerk sprinkles on her head a handful of hops, after which "she is muffled up, and led home by a certain number of old women." Sir John Carr, noticing a Danish wedding procession which he one day saw, thus writes:—

"The fair heroine was preceded by three girls in mob caps, decorated with little bits of gold and silver lace, dressed in red jackets, each with a hook in her

hand, and followed by two old women with hooks also."

In years past marriages, we are told, in Spain were frequently attended with enormous expense, and one of the principal duties of the bridesmaid was to preside over the collection of bridal gifts, which were publicly displayed. Thus, to quote Lady Hamilton's words, in her "Marriage Customs" (1822, p. 140), she enumerated "the articles, carefully pointed out what belonged to the bride, what she owed to the tenderness or vanity of her lover, and what was given to her by her parents, whose generosity was always the greater from their knowing the public would be acquainted therewith."

Indeed, in most cases the bride has from time immemorial had her lady attendants, but it must not be supposed that they were always the elegantly-attired young ladies they are in our own country. Whereas nowadays they may be regarded as so many pretty and attractive appendages of the nuptial ceremony—symbols oftentimes of youth and beauty—they were formerly far less elaborately dressed, and were busily employed by the bride in making all the arrangements throughout the eventful season.

T. F. Thiselton Dyer.

SEASONABLE FARE.

Clear Julienne Soup.—Some clear stock, freed from fat and well-strained, should be at hand in readiness, but this stock may be made from bones and trimmings. One carrot, cut into long thin strips, then across again into fine shreds, likewise a turnip, the white part of two leeks also shred finely, and a few cooked green beans also cut small. These must be stewed in a small pan with sufficient butter until they are perfectly tender, then season well, add the stock and skim off the fat. If a little additional strength is required add a teaspoonful of bovril or meat essence to the stock. The beauty of this soup is in the careful and exact cutting of all the vegetables.

Fish Cutlets with Cream Sauce.—A fresh haddock cut into fillets an inch and a half square, or slices of cod cut into pieces of the same size; take the cutlets and simply scald them by placing in a basin of boiling water for a few minutes. Make about half a pint of good white sauce flavoured with lemon rind and juice, cook the fillets in this sauce by gently simmering them for ten minutes. Then lift them out and pile them prettily on a dish. To the sauce add the beaten yolks of two eggs and half an ounce of butter, adding also a little more pepper to the seasoning. Pour it around the base of the fillets and sprinkle powdered parsley lightly over all.

Peas à la Crême.—Parboil a pint of freshly-shelled peas in salted water; when nearly done strain and place them in a stewpan with an ounce of butter, a sprig of mint, one or two of chervil, a peeled onion and a lettuce cut in half and laid on the top. Let these simmer gently for half an hour, when remove the lettuce and pour into the pan the yolks of two eggs beaten and mixed with a teacupful of milk. As soon as this appears to have begun to "set" pour all into a dish and serve at once.

Braised Veal with Jardinière Sauce.—Take a thick piece of the leg, about three pounds weight, tie it in a firm shape. A large brown covered stewing-jar is the best to use for this; lay at the bottom two or three slices of un-smoked bacon, then place the veal upon it and cover with the same. Around the meat place carrots scraped and cut in half, turnips and a few young onions, also a bunch of sweet herbs. A little sweet dripping to give moisture to the whole. Then place the jar in the oven and cook briskly for two or three hours. Lift the meat out and remove the bacon, setting the meat in a dripping tin to brown the surface a little. Remove the carrots and strain the gravy, taking off all the fat; if there does not appear to be enough add a cupful of clear stock and a teaspoonful of meat essence; add to it also a teaspoonful of potato flour (not ordinary flour), and a little mixed seasoning. Make this sauce ready for pouring around the meat when dished, and meanwhile have a few French beans boiling. Place the meat in the centre of the dish, pour the gravy around it and garnish with small heaps of carrots and beans alternately round the edge.

When young onions have attained a fair size they make a delicious accompaniment to boiled or roast mutton if served thus:

Onions à la Crême.—Peel and boil some onions in salted water until they are tender, drain them on a sieve. Make a white sauce by dissolving an ounce of butter and mixing it smoothly with as much flour, a little salt and pepper, then adding half a pint of milk. Boil until quite smooth, and put the onions in this to simmer a few minutes.

Good Short Pastry for Fruit Tarts.—Instead of using baking powder for short pastry mix a little Paisley or self-raising flour with the ordinary flour in the proportion of one part to eight. Rub in with the tips of the fingers eight ounces of clarified sweet dripping or salt butter to a pound of flour. Mix to a rather stiff paste with cold water and take care to roll the pastry very lightly; much rolling makes it heavy.

Salad of French Beans.—Remove the strings from the beans and break them in half, boil in salted water until tender. Drain them thoroughly, and when cold place them in a salad bowl with quite two tablespoonfuls of finely minced parsley and a few leaves of tarragon. Dress with the usual salad dressing of salt and pepper, mustard, vinegar and oil.

Flaky Pastry (which some people prefer) is made by rubbing a small proportion of the shortening into the flour, and then after rolling the pastry out once, spreading the remainder of the shortening over, with a sprinkling of lemon juice, and folding into a square, rolling it out to the required thickness.

Savoury Sandwiches.—Mince very finely any remains of cold chicken, ham or tongue, season highly and make into a paste with a little good gravy. Roll out a sheet of short pastry a quarter of an inch thick, spread the mince over it (rather thickly also) and lay another sheet of pastry over this. Bake in a quick oven, taking care that both the upper and under sides should be brown. When done cut into squares and serve on a d'oyley.

Picnic Pasties.—Roll out the same pastry and cut into rounds the size of a small saucer. Cut up quite small an ounce of onions, two or three ounces of cooked ham, as much cooked beef, and season with pepper, salt, aromatic herbs, etc., and mix with gravy. Place a little of this mixture on one half of the round of paste, moisten the edges and fold the other half over. Brush over with egg and bake until crisp and well-browned.

L. H. Yates.

Quiver, 1886

HOW WE SAVE TIME AND LABOUR.

GEORGE STEPHENSON'S BIRTHPLACE.

THERE is a certain phrase much in use amongst political economists just now — "The maximum of result with minimum of effort." We might call it trade's text, and we might call our great industries illustrations of that text. In these noisy, busy days, when every man seems to work more intensely, and every wheel seems to go faster, and when one would imagine that the very earth was turned by steam, it is not always easy for us to stop to perceive how much work we are all the while saving. In a page or two it may be possible to indicate the labour-*saving* tendencies of this laborious age.

Strength is like a tool, good for much or little as the handler is good for much or little. The pen that with a hard day's work earns the clerk a few shillings might, in an artist's hand, produce fifty pounds with a few scratches. People pay far less for what they see than they pay for what is not seen. When they buy a book, they get more than paper and print; when they pay thousands for a painting, they buy a few square feet of canvas, paint which may have cost a shilling or two, stucco and gilding, *and* brains—with which Opie and all his fraternity mixed their colours. Those who have no brains become machines in the hands of those who have brains. The simple labourer plods on his way on foot; but the man of brains comes riding past, and gives him a seat behind him. The farmer who gathers his twenty or thirty men of a morning, and sends them about various kinds of work, has been thinking for every one of them, and so has saved each a certain amount of time and trouble. Brassey, in the course of a forenoon, thought and wrote enough to keep large armies of workmen steadily engaged for many days. Or look at London. The proverb has it, "All roads lead to Rome;" but trade snaps its fingers at that old-world saying; all roads lead now-a-days to London. When Londoners speak of the City, they mean a cluster of streets and buildings that may easily be traversed from side to side in a few minutes. The City is like the heart, or better say the brain, of the world. In that subdued, intense hum, you hear the world thinking. Nothing but thinking goes on here. No bales of cotton, no chests of tea, no sacks of grain, no loads of timber are to be found in the City—few workmen of any kind, only those who can think. These City men do most of the thinking for the great companies of the world—the railway companies in the far West, or in Russia, or in India; the submarine telegraph companies; the trading companies in North America, or in Africa, or on the Nile, or in China and Japan; the gas companies and the water companies in Berlin, or elsewhere; the ocean steamship companies; the mining companies; and hundreds of such schemes. Now, the world pays these men to think, and pays them better than any others, because they really do the most work and save the most time—best exemplify the maximum of result with the minimum of labour.

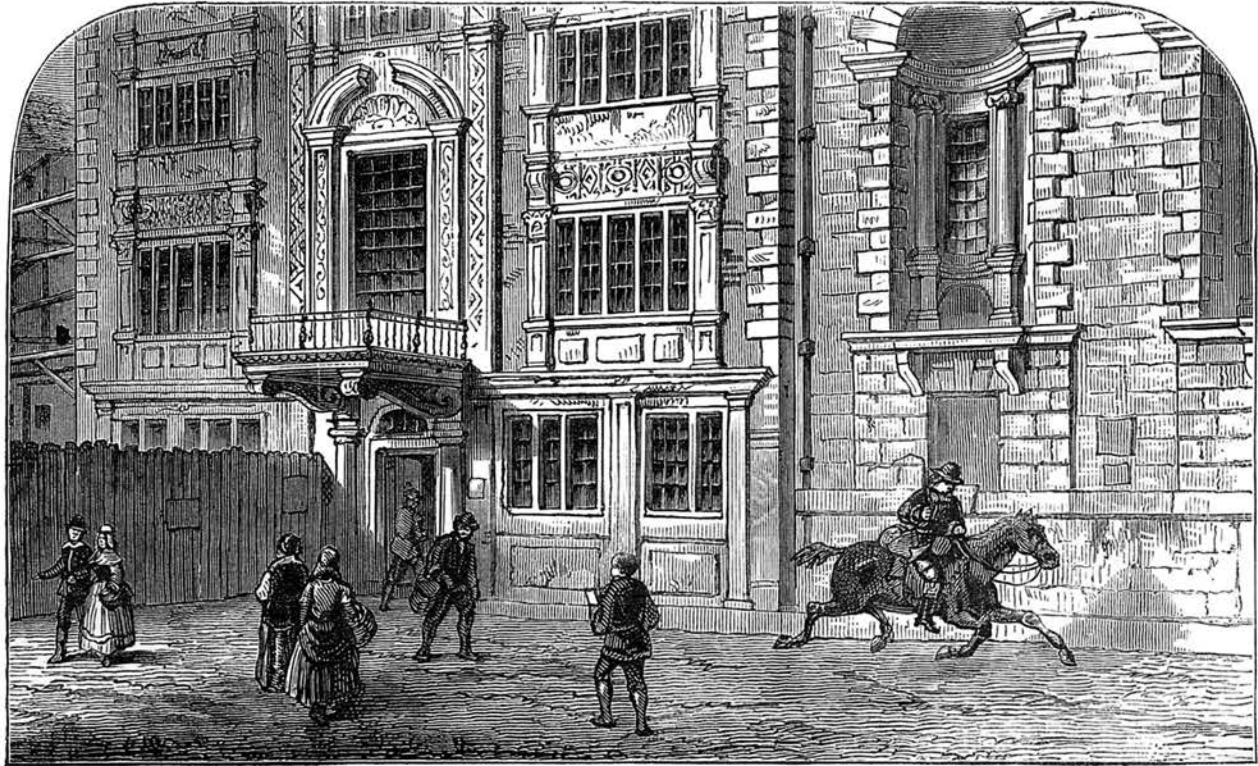
Turn now to the work of still stronger, though not always more highly-paid, thinkers. By the agency of science coal is taught to spin, weave, dye, print, and prepare silks, cottons, woollens, and other cloths; it makes paper, and prints it when made; it converts corn into flour; it presses wine from the grape and oil from the olive; it draws metal from the bowels of the earth, pounds it, smelts it, melts it, moulds it, forges it, rolls it, twists it into any form the imagination can devise. A bushel of it can be made to do the day's work of 200 stage-coach horses. The Great Pyramid of Egypt measures 700 feet across the base, and is 500 feet high; its construction employed 100,000 labourers for twenty years, and it is the puzzle of history to divine the means employed to raise the enormous blocks of stone. Now we know that the whole of its materials might be raised to their present position, at the expense of not more than 480 tons of coal. The Menai Bridge consists of about 2,000 tons of iron. It is said that its whole mass might be raised from the level of the water to its present height—210 feet—by the combustion of four bushels of coal!

Consider what science, with iron, and coal, and steam for helps, accomplished for us in the railway alone. "Man," says Carlyle, "digs up certain black stones from the bowels of the earth, and says to them, 'Transport me and my luggage at the rate of five-and-thirty miles an hour;' and they do it." In 1671, Sir H. Herbert, speaking in the House of Commons, said: "I honestly confess myself an enemy to mad, visionary schemes, and I may be permitted to say that in the late King's reign several of those thoughtless inventions were thrust upon the House, but were most properly rejected. If a man, Sir, were to come to the bar of the House, and tell us that he proposed to convey us regularly to Edinburgh in coaches, in seven days, and bring us back in seven more, should we not vote him to Bedlam? Surely we should, if we did him justice. Or if another told us that he would sail to the East Indies in six months, should we not punish him for practising on our credulity? Assuredly, if we served him rightly." It was perhaps well for James Watt that Sir H. Herbert did not live in his day! Who has not heard of the ridicule cast by the *Quarterly Review* for March, 1835, upon a proposal to carry passengers from London to Woolwich in steam-

coaches, at the rate of eighteen or twenty miles an hour? "We should as soon expect"—these were its words—"the people of Woolwich to suffer themselves to be fired off upon one of Congreve's rockets as trust themselves to such a machine, going at such a rate."

And now sixty miles an hour is daily attained by certain trains! We smile as we read these words of Smith: "A broad-wheeled waggon, attended by two men, and drawn by eight horses, in about six weeks' time carries and brings back between London and Edinburgh near four ton weight of goods." Thus what he took to be the hare we discover to be the tortoise.

The railway has been the great civiliser, the great time-saver of the age. But the sister—the electric telegraph, sharp, quick-witted as her brother is powerful—has done nearly as much for us. The two have always worked hand in hand. It is curious to observe how what is often regarded as chimerical in one age becomes reality in the next. "Strada," says Addison in 1711, "gives an account of a chimerical correspondence between two friends by the help of a certain loadstone which had such a virtue in it that, if touched by two several needles, when one of these needles so touched began to move, the other, though at ever so great a distance, moved at the same time and in the same manner. He tells us that two friends, being each of them possessed of these needles, made a kind of dial-plate, inscribing it with twenty-four letters, in the same manner as the hours of the day are marked upon the ordinary dial-plate. They then fixed one of the needles on each of these plates in such a manner that it could move round without impediment, so as to point to any of the twenty-four letters. Upon their separating from one another into distant countries, they agreed to withdraw themselves punctually into their closets at a certain hour in the day, and to converse with one another by this their invention. Accordingly, when they were some hundred miles asunder, each of them shut himself up in his closet at the time appointed, and immediately cast his eye upon the dial-plate. If he had a mind to write anything to his friend, he directed his needle to every letter that formed the words that he had occasion for, making a little pause at the end of every word or sentence, to avoid confusion. The friend, in the meanwhile, saw his own sympathetic needle moving of itself to every letter to which that of his friend pointed. By this means they talked together across a whole continent, and conveyed their thoughts to one another in an instant over cities and mountains, seas or deserts." A curiously prophetic dream this. Now we send our thoughts, not only through cities and over the hills, but under the sea. Even when our theory of telegraphy was tolerably perfect, it was for long considered a feat to communicate along a wire twenty miles long; and this could only be done in very dry weather. In the present day we pass messages through 2,500 miles of wire without a break. The result of the last Derby was telegraphed from the course to New York in a few seconds. You can order your hamper of wine from the London merchant in three minutes for a shilling; soon you may do it for sixpence. Many London housewives order their butcher's-meat or their groceries by means of district telegraph wires, the cost of the operation being so small that the tradesmen gladly bear it.



THE OLD POST-OFFICE IN LOMBARD STREET, ABOUT 1800.

"If," says the projector of an "accelerated post-service," in 1635, "anie of his Mats subjects shall write to Madrill in Spain, hee shall receive answer sooner and surer than hee shall out of Scotland or Ireland. The letters being now carried by carriers or foot-posts 16 or 18 miles a day, it is full two months before any answer from Scotland or Ireland to London."

A vivid glimpse of posting times before this is gained in a letter of Tuke, Postmaster in the time of Henry VIII. "As to postes betwene London and the courte, there be now but 2, whereof the on is a good robust felowe, and was wont to be diligent, evil entreated many times, he and other postes, by the herbigeours, for lack of horse rome or horsemete, withoute which diligence cannot be. The other hath been the most payneful felowe, in nyght and daye, that I have knowen amongst the messengers. If he nowe slak he shalbe changed, as reason is."

As soon as regular posts were established, the people were glad to support them. Cromwell farmed the Post Office for £10,000 a year; Charles II. farmed it for £21,500 a year. In the next century, when mail coaches were introduced, the number of letters passed through the Office in a certain year was 75,907,572; and the net profit upon carriage was £1,659,509. We all know what increase even upon this large traffic the Penny Post brought. One curious and beneficial result not contemplated by Sir Rowland Hill when he introduced stamps was their use as a medium of exchange. Bankers disdain the copper, but Government has issued a paper currency representing the despised coin, and that currency is in large circulation among the humbler classes. I believe the number of letters passed through post offices last year amounted to about 600,000,000.

The perfect economy of machinery on which we pride ourselves in this country is the strongest proof of our vehement desire to save time. The amount of time spent—often apparently wasted—in the very endeavour to *save* time is incalculable. When Howe, instead of earning a fair mechanic's wage, spent years in the most abject poverty conning the problem of the sewing-machine, most people looked upon him as a very unproductive member of the community. But who can tell how many seamstresses' lives would be worn out in performing the work one of his machines does in a year or two? The wheel, the lever, the pulley, or the wedge enables a single man to do what twenty men might not do without its aid. When we spread the sails of the windmill, we simply set the air to do work; and it does it, with scarcely any attention on our part. When we construct a water-wheel, we are enabled with it to make the patient stream save time for us night and day if we will. The knotted root of a tree might be divided by a stone, better by a knife, a hatchet, a saw, a wedge, but best by gunpowder or dynamite. Each of these methods exemplifies improved economy of labour and time. We have so long been accustomed to use constantly the most complicated and costly machinery that we often forget what we owe to it, as well as to that which is simple and cheaper. The truth is, we cannot snuff a candle, mend a pen, cook a pudding, without resorting to machinery or tools of some sort. Our civilisation and prosperity as a nation are largely the result of the perfection our insular position has enabled us to bring machinery to. What has enabled us to avoid the increase of public debt so many great economists predicted for us, but our improved means of production? While our population has increased, our skill has increased, thanks to such men as Hargreaves, Arkwright, Watt, Wedgwood, Crompton, and Cartwright. It was said, forty years ago, that by means of improved machinery an individual could produce then 200 times the quantity of cotton goods one was able to furnish at the accession of George III., in 1760. It is not going too far to say that we have derived ten times the advantage from the spinning-jenny and the steam-engine that we have obtained from the conquest of India, though by this latter we added nearly 100,000,000 subjects to the Empire. I have seen it stated that the Indians of South America have no other method of making cloth than by taking up thread after thread of the warp, and passing the woof between them by the hand. Thus they are engaged for several years in the weaving of hammocks, coverlets, and other coarse cloth articles, which a European loom might turn out in a few hours. It was not by chance the Greeks ascribed the arts of spinning and weaving to Minerva; they are among the most honourable testimonies to the sagacity of mankind.

Take a few of science's advances in this century alone. A certain Mr. Isaac Holden, lecturer on chemistry, having bethought him of means to insure the quick lighting of a candle, since at four in the morning—the hour he rose at for study—flint and steel proved somewhat irritating, succeeded in uniting wood with chemicals long known to be capable of affording instantaneous light. He mentioned his experiments and their results to his class. One of his students communicated to his father, a London chemist, the information thus given, and lucifer-matches were shortly in the hands of all. One manufacturing firm alone now produces 3,000,000 matches every day.

We have already mentioned the railway, the telegraph, the penny post: the year 1800 had not heard of these. Since then we have been presented with india-rubber and gutta-percha articles; ships have been furnished with screw-propellers; photography has taught us how ugly we are; gun-cotton has shown us an easy way to destruction; steam-ploughs, and reaping-machines, and raking-machines, and road-engines, and tram-cars, and pneumatic tubes have unfolded their powers. England is within ten days' travel of America; we have touched the magnetic pole; Egypt has been disinterred; planets have been discovered; our ancestry has been alarmingly traced; our earth has been proved older than was supposed by some 20,000,000 years. In 1812 the *Comet* was the only steam-ship plying in the United Kingdom—now we have a fleet of some 3,000. Of turnpike roads, canals, railways, there have been formed over

130,000 miles. Montgolfier, studying his coffee-pot as Watt did his kettle, practically founded what is worthy to be termed not only the art but the science of aëronautics, capable of great things in the future. Our fathers cut their own pens out of goose-quills—now we obtain annually from Birmingham alone at least 1,000,000,000 metal nibs. A needle once cost as much as a shilling—that coin to-day buys 100 of the best. Think of the Menai bridges, the Fribourg bridges, the St. Lawrence bridge, the Forth bridge! That good old gentleman we mentioned a little ago, Sir H. Herbert, when he made the remarks quoted, had risen in the House of Commons to denounce as chimerical a scheme to bridge the Thames at Putney!

In 1801 the quantity of raw cotton consumed in this country was 54,000,000 lbs.—now it approaches 2,000,000,000 lbs. In 1860 Mr. Samuel Maverick, of South Carolina, who assisted in packing the first bag of cotton sent to Liverpool from America, was still living—he may be alive yet. In that same year, 1860, the number of exported bags was computed by him to be 2,500,000. I heard it said lately that the civilisation of the country might be computed by the amount of sulphuric acid it consumed. The powers of sulphur are the discovery of this century; it is the great requisite for colour-making in all forms, dyeing, paper-making, bleaching, medical preparations, instruments of war, and many arts. With sulphuric acid the chemist makes nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, phosphorus, chlorine, and many other things. Not so long ago sulphuric acid was half-a-crown per pound—now it is a penny.

But lately we have learned to utilise much that was regarded as refuse. Glycerine was looked upon by chemists as a nuisance, to be got rid of at great expense—now it is the most valued friend of the candle-maker, and is likewise used by the dispensing chemist. Soda, formerly made from Highland kelp and Spanish barilla, is now to be got in unlimited quantities from ordinary sea-water. Bones are ground into manure. The refuse of gas-works furnishes ammonia; and from the same source we obtain carbolic acid and aniline dyes. Old rags form some of our most beautiful furniture. A church in Norway, adorned most elaborately outside and inside with statues and Corinthian capitals, is composed entirely of papier-maché.

Aluminium was discovered in 1827. Although it is yet a most expensive metal, the fact that its oxide is the chief ingredient of all common clays inspires chemists with the hope of making it "as cheap as dirt."

In navigation, science has made rapid strides during the last eighty years. Wind and tide charts, deep-sea sounding, and the like, have been skilfully executed. The compass, more particularly in iron ships, is being made more truthful every year. The *Sirius* and the *Great Western* achieved the passage of the Atlantic just as Lardner had finished to his own satisfaction a proof that such a passage was impossible.

E. S. R.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

A SOVEREIGN remedy for dulness on a wet day is to polish all the furniture with plenty of elbow grease. The very shine of the tables will cheer you, and the exercise is capital. So is that of making beds, especially if you bang the pillows and mattresses well.

To make an egg lighter and more digestible for an invalid, break it into a small basin of water and let it stand some hours before using, it will then be de-albuminised. This was told to me by a celebrated physician with reference to a case I was nursing.

MANY plumbers' bills and accidents might be saved by an elementary knowledge of taps and meters. Every householder should know how to turn off the gas and water-supply at the main in their houses, and the kitchen boiler flues and chimneys should be well understood also.

To make neat-looking and safe parcels is an accomplishment few possess, but should be learnt by everyone. Few people trouble themselves to make them properly, and the result in transit is disastrous. The wonder is that so many reach their owners.

CULTIVATE the habit of keeping your mouth shut, and of breathing through your nose by day and by night. The fine hairs that line the nose prevent all sorts of impurities and cold air from getting into the lungs; especially remember this when going out of doors after being in warm rooms.

NEVER throw rusty nails, needles or pins into the fire, for (unless it is a very large one) they do not melt, and remain a danger for the hands of the person next cleaning out the grate. Throw them in the garden, if possible, on to the earth.

WHEN boiling (or rather simmering) a piece of silver side of round of beef it makes a pleasant variety to have a piquant sauce with it; so while it is simmering and nearly done, make a sauce as follows: One tablespoonful of vinegar, one tablespoonful of Worcester sauce, one tablespoonful of stout, one teaspoonful of dry mustard, one tablespoonful of sugar or treacle, two or three cloves, mix well together and cook with the beef.

BE very careful in the use of xylonite articles, which are highly imflammable and most dangerous; hair-combs are made of it in imitation of tortoise-shell, dress-buttons, and the washable collars and cuffs are also made of it, and one should never go near a fire with them on. They take light easily and burn with a fierce and sudden blaze.

A PRETTY table ornament is made by placing six horse-chestnuts in a soup-plate filled with earth with moss on the top; lay the nuts in the moss and keep damp till the leaves appear, then sow the moss over with musk seed; put it on a stand in the sun. The musk plants will droop over the edge, the little trees standing up all round.

THERE is a danger connected with cheap tooth brushes which it is well to know; the bristles are often only lightly glued on, and being loosened by the water, get into the throat and stomach and cause troublesome inflammation.

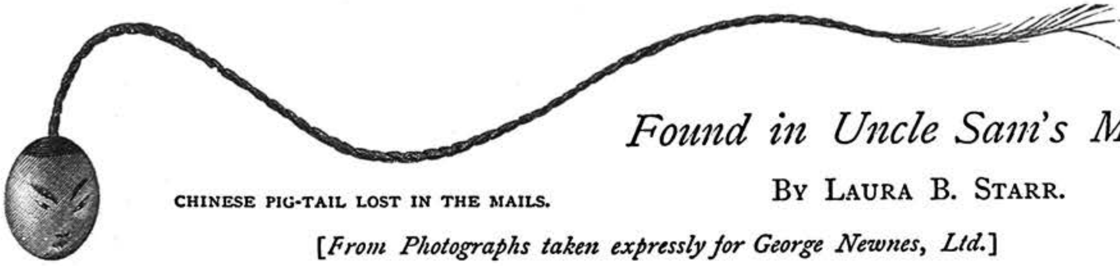
FOR invalids, make their tea with boiling milk instead of boiling water; it is much more nourishing and much nicer if the milk really boils.

IF a child is left in a room to sleep and the door is open, see that any cat or dog in the house is kept away, or they may be found on the bed, and little children run the risk of being suffocated and older ones of being very much frightened. In either case it is not wholesome or safe.

DO not let babies be sucking anything when not taking nourishment. It is injurious to the stomach, a very bad habit, and spoils the look of the lips.

ALWAYS let boiled meat get cold in its own broth if you wish it to be tender when cold. A ham or boiled bacon is much nicer if treated this way, and even a joint which you carve hot can be put back in the broth to get cold.

I AM often asked what we polish our brass trays with to make them bright, and my invariable reply is first, boiling water and a little Hudson's powder, then unlimited leather and elbow grease.



CHINESE PIG-TAIL LOST IN THE MAILS.

Found in Uncle Sam's Mails.

By Laura B. Starr.

[*From Photographs taken expressly for George Newnes, Ltd.*]

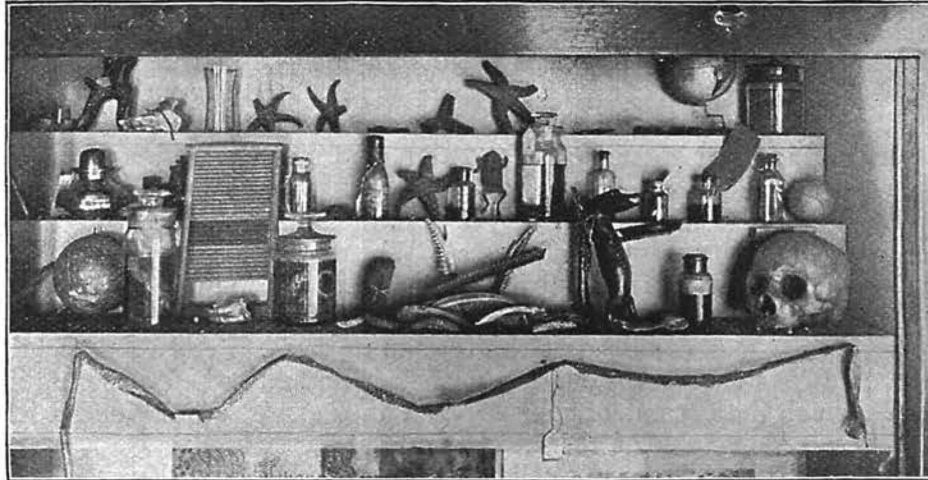
THERE is a museum connected with the Dead Letter Office at Washington which contains the most heterogeneous mass of stuff ever collected together. It consists of a variety of articles whose transmission by mail is forbidden, and those for which owners could not be found, some of the most curious of which have been from time to time collected in this room.

It would strike an outsider that, even without a law to forbid it, no one would wish to send rattlesnakes through the mails, would it not?

But, stringent as are the regulations, it is not long since there was received from Australia a perforated tin can containing three rattlesnakes, very much alive. The superintendent sent to the Smithsonian Institute for someone accustomed to handling such reptiles to come and chloroform them.

The man performed the operation successfully as he thought, and left the dead snakes in the open can, under the superintendent's desk. A day or two later a lady was standing near talking to the superintendent, when she heard a peculiar sound which she recognised as the deadly rattle. She turned her eyes, not daring to move, and was transfixed with terror to see a rattlesnake coiled ready to spring at her.

A carrier who was just coming in took in the situation at a glance, and threw a full mail pouch upon the reptile, and trampled upon it, until someone appeared with a poker and killed the snake. This one and its two companions were put into alcohol, and now stand on a shelf in the museum. This small but dangerous family may be noticed in the bottles shown in the illustration on this page. Naturally the clerks who open packages do so with the utmost care, as frequently bombs and other explosives are sent through the mails.



SHELVES OF MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS SENT THROUGH THE MAILS, NOW IN THE MUSEUM OF THE DEAD LETTER OFFICE IN WASHINGTON.

Another gruesome object on one of the shelves is a grinning skull, shown in the lower right-hand corner of the same picture. This was very likely sent by someone to an impecunious medical student, as also probably were the fingers and toes and human ear, which were caught in Uncle Sam's toils somewhere between the sender and assignee.

The illustrations in this article are mainly intended to convey an idea of the extraordinary diversity in the interesting contents of Uncle Sam's Museum. Take, for example, the three shelves shown on the first page. The long and undulating skin of some once-dangerous snake ornaments a case which holds sharks' teeth, skulls, starfishes, lamps, bottles of tabloids, medicine, dried frogs, and several other things, seized by lynx-eyed inspectors.

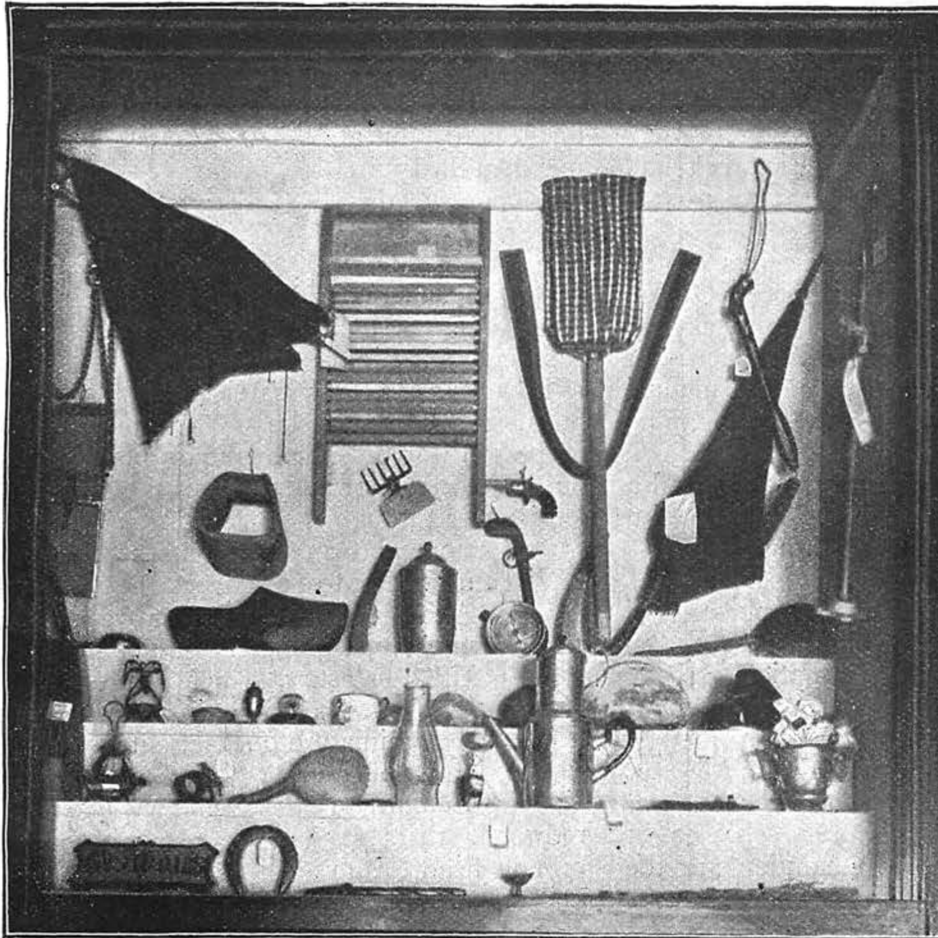
TOY ALLIGATOR,

PLASTER MANIKIN.

half cocked, which was addressed to a woman in New York. There is a washboard, a new long-handled mop, bunches of Easter candles, a cocoanut, a card upon which is inscribed the Lord's Prayer in fifty-two languages, and a mail pouch covered with blood, which a carrier in the Far West had given his life to defend from the Indians. Fastened to a card is a lock of hair cut from the head of Guiteau, the slayer of President Garfield.

CRUET

There is a copy of a marriage certificate which declares that Samuel Whitehead and Jane Miller were married in the Parish Church, Manchester, England, June 4th, 1804. There are deeds of property, musical instruments, corn-poppers, cups and saucers, horns of animals, a hack driver's license, a tarantula (which was quickly done up in alcohol), a bottle of consumption cure (which it was a pity not to have forwarded to its destination), Chinese curios, canvas needles, and a potato-bug exterminator.



MORE SHELVES IN THE MUSEUM.

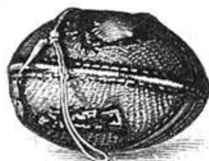
On this page may be noted an ornamental alligator with a fetching parasol, a little clay doll, a cruet, and a remarkable zoological monstrosity (shown in the lower right-hand corner of this page), which may be one of the animals which Alice saw in Wonderland. Our centre illustration contains several explosives, from fire-crackers to a large-size cartridge with a loaded revolver,

The next page gives an added idea of the incongruity. First we have a negro parson

WHAT IS IT?

delivering a sermon from a pulpit made of feathers. The poor little preacher looks lonesome on his shelf. Beneath him lies a little work-basket, woven by the Indians, and this in turn is supported by a diminutive Bruin, represented resting on a small stool, in an attitude of expectation and respectability. Near this clay bear is a sea urchin, attached to a bit of string, while in the immediate neighbourhood is an old and dilapidated boot, and a finely-etched glass flower-holder. How many children in the United States have waited in vain for the postman to deliver these knick-knacks, and what a lesson it is to people as to the value of securely wrapping their parcels and obeying the postal laws.

THE NEGRO PARSON IN HIS FEATHER PULPIT.



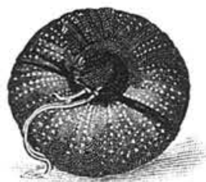
NEEDLE BASKET.

The receipts of the Dead Letter Office from all sources are about 20,000 pieces for every business day of the year. The manual labour of handling such a bulk is something enormous.

In addition to letters, newspapers, and a few hundred small articles which Uncle Sam allows to be transported through the mails, at certain rates of postages, there are a thousand and one other articles which are contraband that are continually being emptied into the mail bags.

BRIC-A-BRAC BEAR.

Many of these are mailed through ignorance of the postal regulations; others are sent forward with malice aforethought, to avoid express charges or customs due, while the remainder are the result of carelessness or momentary aberration of mind. Unfortunately for the senders thereof, Uncle Sam's officials have a way of discovering the nature of such as are dutiable, and the majority of such packages are confiscated either at the mailing station or a subsequent one.



SEA URCHIN.

When the contraband contents are discovered, the packages are sent to the Dead Letter Office, where they are prepared for burial after every effort has been made to return them to the sender, or to forward them to the addressee —who is asked to send the proper amount of stamps to pay for the transportation.

Parcels of merchandise are held two years, if not sooner delivered, and are then sold at auction. Unaddressed parcels and such as are found loose in the mails and received at the Dead Letter Office more than six months prior to the annual sales are included in such sales.

About the middle of December the annual sale of property parcels takes place, and many are the curious mistakes that occur at this time. Although there is a brief description attached to each package, it is wrapped so that no one has an opportunity of examining the contents. One day a gentleman who was bidding on a parcel for a maiden lady in the country, discovered to his horror that he had bought a complete layette for an infant. The average price received for these packages is seventy-five cents.

OLD BOOT.

It is amazing how careless people, even business people, can be. One would think no person would send cheque or money without giving name or address, but thousands of letters pass through the mails in that condition, and in many cases it is impossible to discover the owner. After a lapse of four years the unclaimed money is turned into the U.S. Treasury, which is the richer by about $50,000 each year.

A miniature obelisk, cut from the bark of a Californian redwood, rears its proud head from one corner of the room; by the side of it lies a pair of gloves taken from the steamer *Oregon*, after having been in the water fourteen days.

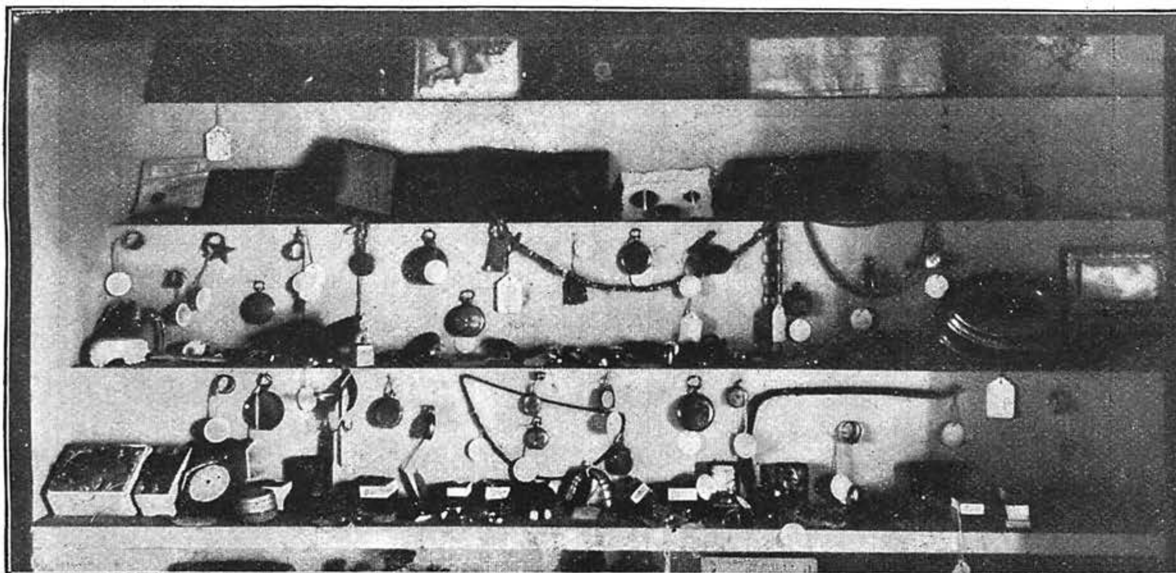
There is a large collection of photographs of soldiers and sailors — evi-

ORNAMENTAL FLOWER-HOLDER.

dently mailed in war times, from the uniforms which all wear. Once in a while one of these is identified by some visitor, but most of them will for ever remain unknown. One's sympathies are touched when it is remembered that in most cases these were probably the last memento of some loved and lost one.

MINIATURE SKELETON.

Chinese cash, eggs, dogs, a buck-saw, a box of geological specimens, a lemon-squeezer, candle-snuffers, boot-trees of various sizes, Chinese junk, fans, hair flowers, stuffed birds, horned toads from California, hand mirrors, birds' nests, Indian canoes, a miniature skeleton (shown in the accompanying illustration), a toy gondola (seen below), shells, watches, cheap jewellery of all sorts, a set of false teeth, door plates, valentines, painted fungi, toys, jewelled daggers, and a letter indorsed: "If not delivered in thirty years, return to the Farallone Island."



A FEW WATCHES LOST IN THE MAILS.

The illustration in the middle of this page shows four shelves, two of which are filled with all sorts and conditions of watches—some of them old-time cumbersome "turnips," others of fine gold, ornamented with costly gems. Every watch is tagged, awaiting ownership, but the unfortunate time-pieces will probably remain on those lonesome shelves, marking time till the Day of Judgment.

There are collections of coins extracted from the mails and framed specimens of envelopes with "blind" addresses, and a set of account-books kept by Benjamin Franklin when he was Deputy Postmaster-General for the Colonies in 1753, the accounts of which are kept in £ s. d.

In spite of the fact that all notices sent ask for minute details as to time of mailing and careful description for identification, it is not one time in a hundred that they are given. A case occurred a few years ago when a resident of a western city applied for a missing set of false teeth. As he did not furnish the required details, there were sent to the post-master at his office several sets of teeth, which had been found about the time mentioned in his application.

They were all returned to this office, accompanied by an indignant communication from the complainant, stating that the teeth sent him were "just common Texas store teeth, and could not by any possibility belong to so refined a mouth as mine."

Again, people sometimes get very impatient at what they consider the unnecessary delay of the postal officials. The following is a case in point. A few years ago a parcel of infant's clothing addressed to a woman

MINIATURE VENETIAN GONDOLA.

missionary in Africa was detained for want of proper postage. In reply to the notice sent her the woman very angrily wrote as follows: "The child for whom the garments were intended has not yet been eaten by the cannibals, but it has quite outgrown the clothing, and it may be returned to the sender whose address I inclose."

One shelf, as may be seen in the accompanying illustration, is given over to dolls of different varieties, for whom the would-be recipients are probably still mourning. The same illustration also shows a Masonic apron, lace, bellows, a steel trap, and various other objects, the study of which will doubtless cause a broad smile. One is made and dressed entirely of corn-husks, with red hair made of the corn silk. There are also in the museum bricks, and old umbrellas that would have been a joy to Sairey Gamp; new-fangled coffee-pots, lamp shades galore, a baby's boot-tree, and a Gargantuan cigar a foot long.

DOLLS, LACE, MASONIC APRON, BELLOWS, AND OTHER OBJECTS IN THE MUSEUM.

The inspectors keep a sharp look-out for smuggling through the mails. About 750 sealed packages are seized annually in the New York Post-office. In an average year, according to one authority, 25,000 unsealed parcels are confiscated at the same office, and released on the payment of fines which are equivalent to the duties. Some very ingenious methods are employed for transmitting dutiable articles by post. Not long ago a package from Germany was found to contain a small roll of butter. A wire passed through it met with an obstruction, which proved to be a tin box filled with valuable jewellery. Probably a dozen silk handkerchiefs are found wrapped up in newspapers in every mail from China. The skill exhibited by the postal clerks in detecting such contraband inclosures is wonderful. Silk stockings are mailed from France in the same manner. An odd kind of smuggling is the sending of mushrooms by mail from Italy. They are of a peculiar kind, dried, and are much relished by the natives of that country in the United States. They come in small bags, and are easily distinguished by smell.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

BY THE REV. T. F. THISELTON DYER.

NO flower, perhaps, from our early childhood has possessed for each one of us a greater charm than the little forget-me-not. Indeed, it is so entirely a flower of associations that, as it has been often said, there are few lives in which its memory is not treasured up long after, it may be, its beautiful blossoms have faded away and perished. From time immemorial, too, this favourite flower has been made the subject of numerous poetical fancies and legendary tales; and throughout Europe it is still regarded as the emblem of true friendship. Wherever seen, either by the brook or riverside, or in the hedge ditch of some leafy lane, its bright-coloured turquoise flowers seldom fail to captivate the passer-by, and to arouse within him feelings of mingled joy and melancholy. Who, as Coleridge says, but loves to meet—

> "By rivulet or wet roadside,
> That blue and bright-eyed flow'ret of the brook,
> Hope's gentle gem, the sweet forget-me-not."

And again, to quote some further lines on the subject—

> "Sweet, fragile weed, while thus I view
> Thy softened tint of constant blue,
> I pray in life, whate'er my lot,
> May those I love 'Forget-me-not.'"

It is not generally known that, in the first instance, the forget-me-not derived its name from its supposed talismanic or magic virtues —notices of which are frequently to be met with in many of the German legends. Thus, it is related, for example, how a traveller when wandering on a bleak and lonely mountain unexpectedly picks up a small blue flower which he sticks in his hat. He has no sooner done so than forthwith there appears before him an entrance into a magnificent hall, where he sees rubies, diamonds, and all kinds of precious stones piled up in huge heaps. Seizing the opportunity, he enters this enchanted building, and eagerly fills his pockets with the treasures that lie before him. In the excitement of the moment, however, his hat falls off, and with it the little flower, but in his anxiety to enrich himself as much as possible, he pays no heed to his loss. On taking his departure, the tiny flower, which has brought him so much good luck, calls after him, "Forget-me-not!"—a voice to which he turns a deaf ear;—so bewildered is he through his strange adventure. As he passes out of the doorway the mysterious door closes behind him amidst the clashing of thunder, and once more he finds himself a lonely traveller on the dreary mountain top. Although he searches on all sides for the entrance to the golden hall, yet it is in vain, as all sight of it has completely vanished, and never again is he favoured with a view of it. On this account, therefore, the little blue flower was known as the "forget-me-not." This legend has a variety of forms, and in years gone was current in many parts of the Continent. Thus, for example, sometimes a white lady confronts the traveller in his wanderings, and invites the finder of the luck-flower or "forget-me-not" to help himself to her treasures, warning him at the same time to be on his guard lest he lose the magic charm. The sequel in most cases is generally the same: the unwary traveller, in his desire to enrich himself as quickly as possible, forgets the real secret of his good fortune. Such, then, are the talismanic properties formerly assigned to this little wild-flower, and hence originated the popular name assigned to it.

Many of our readers will wish, perhaps, that these wonderful virtues still resided in the forget-me-not, for although in their summer rambles they may have often gathered it, yet its presence in their hands has never brought them the good fortune of which the old German legend speaks.

But it must not be forgotten that this pretty flower, like all other of God's beautiful handiworks, contains a lesson for all who see it, in that its very name of "forget-me-not" should warn us not to forget Him who made it, especially as He has in store for all those who love Him such unsearchable riches as can be found nowhere on earth.

Referring in the next place to the romantic origin of the name of the forget-me-not, this, as most of our readers are doubtless aware, is of a very different kind. It is related that a young couple, who were on the eve of being united, whilst walking along the delightful and picturesque banks of the Danube, saw one of these flowers floating on the surface of the water, which seemed ready at any moment to carry it away. The affianced bride, struck with admiration at the beauty of the flower, regretted she could not have it, whereupon, anxious to gratify ever so small a wish on her part, her lover jumped into the stream, but had no sooner grasped the fatal flower than he sank beneath the flood. Making, however, one desperate effort on rising to regain the shore, he threw the flower upon the bank, and casting a long affectionate glance upon his lady love, he gasped out the words, "Forget-me-not," and then was seen no more. Since this romantic occurrence the flower, it is said, has been made emblematical of, and taken the name of, "forget-me-not." This is the popular origin of the name of this familiar flower, although Miss Strickland, in her "Lives of the Queens of England," gives another explanation. Speaking of Henry of Lancaster, she says:—

"This royal adventurer, the banished and aspiring Lancaster, appears to have been the person who gave to the forget-me-not its emblematical and poetical meaning by writing it at the period of his exile on his collar of S. S., with the initial letter of his *mot*, or watchword, "*Souveigne vous de moy*," thus rendering it the symbol of remembrance, and, like the subsequent fatal roses of York and Lancaster, and Stuart, the lily of Bourbon, and the violet of Napoleon, an historical flower. Few of those who, at parting, exchange the simple touching appeal to memory, are aware of the fact that it was first used as such by a royal Plantagenet prince, who was, perhaps, indebted to the agency of this mystic blossom for the Crown of England."

Whether or not this be the true origin of the forget-me-not's emblematical meaning, there can be no doubt that from time immemorial it has been employed for the same sentimental purpose as it is famous nowadays:—

> "An emblem true thou art
> Of love's enduring lustre, given
> To cheer a lonely heart."

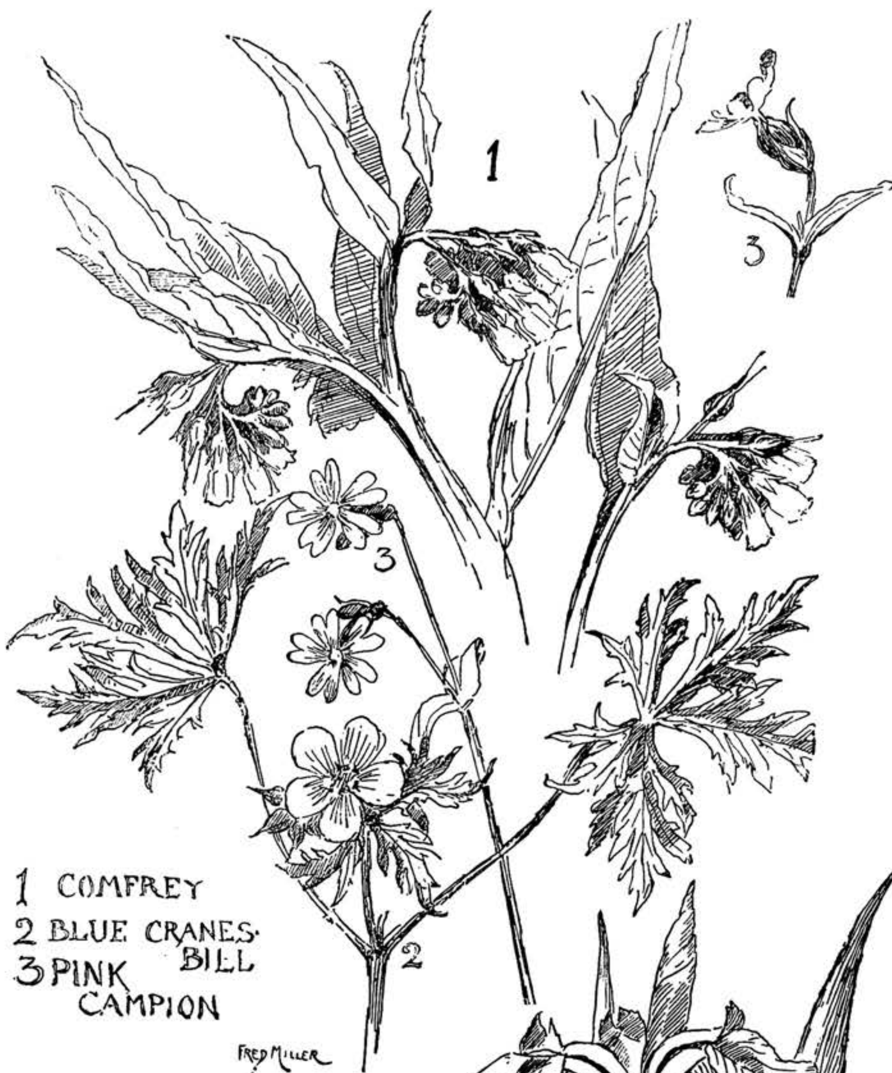
As a further evidence, also, of its long established use in floral language, it appears that as early as the year 1465, when a joust was held in which Lord Scales, brother to the queen of Edward IV., took part, the fair ladies of her Court presented to the favoured knight a collar of gold, enamelled with the words "Forget-me-not." A well-known botanist, however, disregarding the romantic associations which have clustered round the flower, considers that the true signification of its name is really due to the bright blue tint and yellow eye of its blossom, which, if but once seen, is not likely to be forgotten. This prosaic and matter-of-fact explanation, which divests the forget-me-not of all the pretty sentiment connected with it, will never find favour with those of a romantic or poetical turn of mind, because:—

> "Where time or sorrow's page of gloom
> Has fixed its envious lot,
> Or swept the record from the tomb,
> It says, 'Forget-me-not.'
>
> And this is still the loveliest flower—
> The fairest of the fair
> Of all that deck my lady's bower,
> Or bind her floating hair."

In days gone by the forget-me-not grew nowhere in greater perfection than on the banks of a stream in the environs of Luxembourg, popularly known as the "Fairies' Bath," or the "Cascade of the Enchanted Oak." To this favourite spot the young girls of the neighbourhood often resorted to spend their leisure hours. On holidays, too, we are told, they might be seen crowned with flowers gathered from the stream, "like so many nymphs celebrating games in honour of the Naiad of the Enchanted Oak." So much prized, too, was this little flower in France, that it was generally cultivated with the greatest care, and when sent to the Parisian markets, found a ready sale.

The forget-me-not is not without its superstitions, having been supposed to possess the peculiar property of hardening steel. It was also said that if edged tools of this metal were made red hot, and then dipped in its juice, the steel would become so hard as to cut iron, or even stone, without turning the edge. In the Netherlands a syrup is made of the juice of this plant, and given as a remedy against consumptive coughs.

Once more, the name given to the forget-me-not by the ancients was "mouse-ear," from the form of its leaves; and for the same reason it is still called by the French "rat's ear." The name "forget-me-not," it may be noted, was also applied in years gone by to a popular wild-flower known as the speedwell, from its corolla falling off and flying away when gathered—"speedwell" having been a common form of valediction, and equivalent to our "farewell" or "good-bye."



"LEAVES OF GRASS."

NOTES BY AN ARTIST NATURALIST.

THE fields are never so lovely as in the middle of June, just about the time when the rattle of the mowing machines is first heard, and the peculiar "this way and that way" as the mowers whet their scythes. It has been remarked, that with the advance of science the poetry will fade out of life; and with the introduction of machinery the romance is dying out of agriculture. If this be true—and it cannot be denied that the picturesque is steadily being eliminated from life (George Eliot, in a well-known passage in the opening of *Felix Holt*, touches on this ugliness that must overtake us)—it behoves us to get as close to nature as we can, to make the most of our opportunities, and to look at nature with a sympathetic discernment that shall fix *what* we see upon the "tablets of the mind."

And a field of grass can be much more than it appears at a casual glance if we will only take the trouble to particularise. We have it on the authority of Macaulay, that the man who will leave the general for the particular at once stands a chance of being interesting. Let us look at a field of grass in detail, treating it as so many leaves, a few of which we can read if we will.

To know a field of grass means spending an afternoon—or many, for that matter—in one. The landscape painter has a good opportunity of becoming intimate with nature if he but keep his eyes and ears open.

It was in painting out of doors this spring that I for the first time studied a grass field from a painter's or a botanist's point of view. And how difficult to render it is! There were three of us, and we started by making studies of an apple orchard, with the grass below. At the end of our afternoon's work, when we came to compare notes, we had to confess that day after day we were beaten. Nature was too infinite for us to make definite. Some days it would look all grey—silver and gold, for the buttercups were in full blow—another day it would look green and yellow, and then we got our work rank, and it mightily offended our artistic sense.

It was no use individualising either. Painting from knowledge is useless to obtain effects. The painter must work entirely from observation. Many a man who fails completely to get the effect he sees, could draw most faithfully any individual grass or flower that goes to make up nature's treasury.

And yet it interested me to individualise, and see what went to make up the grass-field. And my studies in this direction proved to me the truth of an expression my fellow-worker was fond of using: "Throw on everything in your box; it's your only chance." This was said to counteract a tendency on my part to get my field too much one colour. Quite true, I said to myself, when I looked into the matter. There were buttercups, ox-eye daisies, pink clover, wild sage, sorrel, and grasses too numerous to mention. I found upon examination, however, that there were some six very familiar forms; and as all grasses lean to a warm purple hue when in bloom, the fields where much has run to seed present a very reddish-purple tone, as subtle as it is beautiful.

REED WARBLERS NEST.

Another difficulty the painter has to meet — as though the difficulty of his task were not already more than he could bear —is that nature is constantly changing. One flower goes off and two come on. And it is worth while noting the marked changes a grass field undergoes. In the beginning of May or end of April we have Shakespeare's—

"Daisies pied and violets blue,
And ladysmocks all silver white,
* * *
Do paint the meadows with delight."

This is the silver age of the field. Later on we get the golden age of the buttercups: but before that happens we have the cowslip period—the link between the silver and the gold age. As the buttercups go off the pink clover and red sorrel come into the field to lend their redder tones of colour, which, mingling with the purples of the grasses, brings us into what we may call the bronze age of the field.

Situation is everything to plants, and in one field bordering the river, and in which were some boggy places, a very varied flora was to be obtained. Enumerating only the most conspicuous, in the pond itself the yellow lily and beautiful delicate pink water violet; and on the margin, the flower de luce or yellow flag, and the most beautiful of wild flowers, the azure and pink forget-me-not.

The docks and sorrel in bloom in the drier portions of the field presented a most varied palette of reddish tones, the sorrel in particular being found from crimson to a yellowish pink. Ox-eye or moon daisies are a conspicuous feature of the fields, and usher in June. By the river itself the wild rose is now in bloom, many of the branches drooping over into the water so that the blossoms are reflected in the stream.

Imagining the field before one as a large map, the various territories are severally coloured by the particular group of plants in flower, for among the grasses themselves you will find all one kind growing together, occupying a territory to themselves, while another kind claims its acre alongside. The comfrey is a striking wayside flower just now, delighting in ditch banks and the sides of streams. The pink campion, erroneously called ragged robin by some people, and the blue meadow crane's bill, delight in a damp situation. The comfrey is one of the few wild flowers that is many-coloured, for you can find them purple, pale yellow, white, and pink side by side. It is full of ornamental suggestion when examined, the curve taken by its flower spikes being full of meaning to the eye that sees aright.

Designers are aware that wild flowers are fuller of suggestion than cultivated ones, and amateurs might pick up many a hint in the colouring of their rooms and the art of combining colours. This last remark is particularly addressed to Miss Mantilini, for I have heard experts express the difficulty they find in harmonising contrasting colours. A well-known flower, the cowslip, suggests a good scheme for a dress, the pale green of the calyx carried out in some soft thin woollen material, while the pale yellow of the flower with its accent of orange forming the trimming in two tones of silk.

Birds, again, are full of suggestions in this way; and now that any tone can be produced by skilful dyeing, the most striking and original harmonies might be carried out in dress by following the plumage of a male chaffinch, for instance.

In arranging bouquets and vases of cut flowers, lightness, variety, and chasteness can be obtained by the judicious use of grasses and the introduction of a few spikes of sorrel in the midst of the flowers.

But the beauty of the flowers of the field is only seen by those who go into the fields and have the taste and leisure to drink in what they see; and by waiting quietly birds come and show themselves in a way that surprises those who only know birds in museums. The reed bunting I have frequently watched fly on to a spike of dock, and I found two nests of the reed warbler cleverly woven around four reeds. In one case the bird had collected pieces of string, worsted, and thread, to bind round the outside of the nest. In another nest a cuckoo had dropped its egg.

6 COMMON GRASSES

DOCK FRED MILLER SORREL

CONDUCTED BY LAURA WILLIS LATHROP.

JUNE JOTTINGS.

SPRING has passed with its dreams and vivid realizations of moving, house-cleaning, general sewing, and kindred duties, and we gladly close our eyes upon them to welcome June with its entrancing, dreamy, quiet and sunny skies. Our homes are fairly embowered in its gorgeous wealth of roses, while over in the snow-tipped garden-beds, we catch the dazzling gleam of the scarlet strawberry, and we drink deep draughts of the summer air freighted with their delightful aroma which is but a faint suggestion of the royal fare in store for us. No other fruit meets with such universal acceptance, its appetizing acidity and delicious flavor combining to tempt the most fastidious palate and to meet the requirements of the system at this season. The most wholesome form of serving is with sugar alone, and eaten with good home-made bread and butter, especially for the little folks; but where is the child whose eyes do not open wide at the mere mention of that delightful dish, strawberry shortcake?—and before the month is over, he will have discovered that cherries are ripe. The housewife will have discovered it also, and that raspberries are on hand and that the Tropics have added to our plentious store immense quantities of the delicious pineapple, reminding her that June has its thoroughly practical side as well as poetical. So we will turn from thoughts of new-mown hay and June roses to the discussion of more substantial topics.

Table Delicacies.

Strawberry Shortcake:—For the benefit of those who have been unsuccessful in presenting this popular dish at the table in an attractive and wholesome form, we will furnish a most excellent recipe, premising a few general directions which apply to cake baking in any form. Always use the same size of teacup for flour, sugar, and all ingredients measured by this standard. The ordinary teacup referred to in recipes holds just a half pint. It is a good plan to set aside two or three cups of this size and keep in readiness for baking purposes. In measuring fractions of a cup of either sugar or flour, note that eight *rounding* tablespoonfuls of either are equal to a cupful. It follows that four such measures are equivalent to a half cup. A little practice in filling and refilling a cup with either sugar or flour will render you expert in ladling out fractional parts with the spoon. In order to be exact, sugar must be free of lumps. If it is not, it may be made so by the use of the rolling-pin. Liquid measure has been given before. A word of caution: Never bake a short-cake in a form which necessitates splitting with a knife. Always bake them in layers thin enough to obviate the necessity of cutting, which destroys the feathery lightness which constitutes its "chiefest charm." And now for the recipe. Mix well together and rub through a sieve two and a half cups of good flour, two teaspoonfuls of best baking powder, a tablespoonful of sugar, and half a teaspoonful of salt. Rub thoroughly into this mixture three tablespoonfuls of nice butter, and then mix with a teacupful of sweet milk or water. Divide the dough into four equal parts and roll each one out until large enough to fill a jelly-cake plate. The edge may be trimmed neatly (if you wish) by laying the plate, inverted, upon the dough, and cutting around its edge with a sharp knife. Brush the top of each cake lightly with melted butter, and lay in buttered jelly-cake plates—two in each plate. Bake in a quick oven for fifteen minutes, as hot as it can be without burning. On removing from the oven, separate the cakes (you will not need a knife), and spread a quart of strawberries between the matched layers into which you have mixed a teacupful of powdered sugar, chopping it in with a sharp knife. Or the layers may be placed separate in four jelly-cake pans (baking more

quickly), and formed into one loaf, using three pints of berries and a half more sugar, reserving a few berries for the top of the cake, and sprinkling with powdered sugar. Some like a pint of whipped cream added to the berries, but it renders the cake less wholesome.

A delicious short-cake which will be welcomed by hurried housekeepers, may be compounded in less than ten minutes, and baked in fifteen. You need but to follow directions closely to be convinced of its excellence. Add to two teacupfuls of buttermilk, a teaspoonful of sugar, a teaspoonful of salt, two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, and a teaspoonful of soda. Into this beat thoroughly two teacupfuls of flour (rounded measure). Bake in four jelly-cake pans, and spread a layer of crushed strawberries and sugar between the cakes. In the absence of buttermilk, sweet milk may be used, with the addition of two heaping teaspoonfuls of baking powder instead of the soda. Sweetened strawberry juice is nice to serve with short-cake.

Strawberry Trifle.—Line a deep glass dish with slices of stale sponge cake, and moisten with a little strawberry juice. Nearly fill the dish with strawberries, slightly crushed and sweetened. Beat the whites of four eggs to a stiff froth, then beat into them four tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar, and when it is light and stiff, add little by little two tablespoonfuls of strawberry juice. Heap upon the top of your dish and serve soon.

Preserved Strawberries or Raspberries.—If you wish your berries to retain their color, shape and flavor, preserve them in their own juice, and carefully follow directions. For ten quarts of berries use five quarts of sugar. Put two quarts of the berries into the preserving kettle, with half a gill (four tablespoonfuls) of water. Heat slowly, mash thoroughly, and turn into a stout piece of cheese cloth. When cool enough, squeeze every particle of juice from the berries. Put this juice with the sugar into the preserving kettle and bring slowly to the boiling point, stirring to prevent the sugar from settling and scorching. When the juice boils add the remaining eight quarts of berries. Bring slowly to the boiling point, then simmer gently for fifteen minutes. Skim as required during the boiling process. When done put carefully into jars, the berries first, then filling up the jars with juice. Seal as quickly as possible. If any juice remains it may be put boiling hot into a self-sealing jar, and will be found excellent to use in pudding sauces. For preserving, choose firm, well-ripened fruit, being careful that it is not over-ripe.

Raspberry Shrub—Place nice ripe black-cap raspberries in a stone jar, cover them with good cider vinegar, and allow them to stand covered for forty-eight hours. Strain through a jelly-bag, pressing hard to extract all the juice. For every pint of juice add a pound of sugar. Boil together in a porcelain kettle for fifteen minutes, then bottle, and when it becomes cool, cork and set away in a cool cellar. A teacupful of this added to a quart of ice water, forms a delicious drink, very refreshing in hot weather.

Cherry Pudding.—A delightful cherry pudding is made by sifting together a quart of flour, a teaspoonful of sugar, half a teaspoonful of salt, and three full teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Next add three well beaten eggs to one pint of sweet milk, and stir rapidly into the above mixture. Finally add a generous quart of stoned ripe cherries (or unstoned if you prefer). Pour into a buttered pudding dish, and steam two hours. Eat with the sauce given in December number for Christmas plum pudding, substituting cherry juice.

Cherry Pies.—These are delicious baked without an under crust. Fill three-fourths full a deep earthen pie-plate with ripe cherries, stoned or unstoned, and thickly strewn with sugar. Cover with a rich paste, and bake in a moderate oven for three-quarters of an hour. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Canned Pineapple.—These are much finer flavored than when preserved. Choose the sugar-loaf or conical shaped pineapple. It has less core than the strawberry variety, is not so sour, and much finer flavored. Prepare your fruit by peeling, cutting out the eyes and core, and then cutting in very thin slices. For every two pounds of pineapple, allow a pint of water and a teacupful of sugar. Put the sugar and water into a preserving kettle, and after it boils fifteen minutes, add fruit. Let come to a boil, after which simmer for fifteen minutes. Lift the slices carefully, to avoid breaking, place in jars, cover with the juice, and seal immediately.

BETWEEN TWO WATERS.

BY A MODERN RAMBLER.

> "While we find God's signet
> Fresh on English ground,
> Why go gallivanting
> With the nations round?"
> —KINGSLEY.

PERHAPS I ought rather to say three waters, as we sometimes caught distant glimpses of the Thames. The other two waters were the Crouch and the Roach—the former known chiefly as defining the situation of Burnham-on-Crouch, the latter, we fondly hope, known only to ourselves in its upper course. Of course, we except the dwellers on its banks from this audacious expectation, but, as far as the ordinary tourist is concerned, we have found no one who is acquainted with the River Roach.

"What's that place?" ask the friends who turn over our sketches.

"How did you find it out?" they next inquire.

We almost feel as if the spot were an invention of our own, and that we ought to take out a patent for it.

Modest people hesitate to ask for definite information; sketchers and fishermen, in this crowded country, are often shy of revealing their favourite nooks, like the ladies who decline to give the address of a clever dressmaker.

It does not really matter, for it is much more amusing to find out a place for yourself. Instead of asking your friends, consult a map—a good big one: Lord Salisbury's excellent advice should never be forgotten.

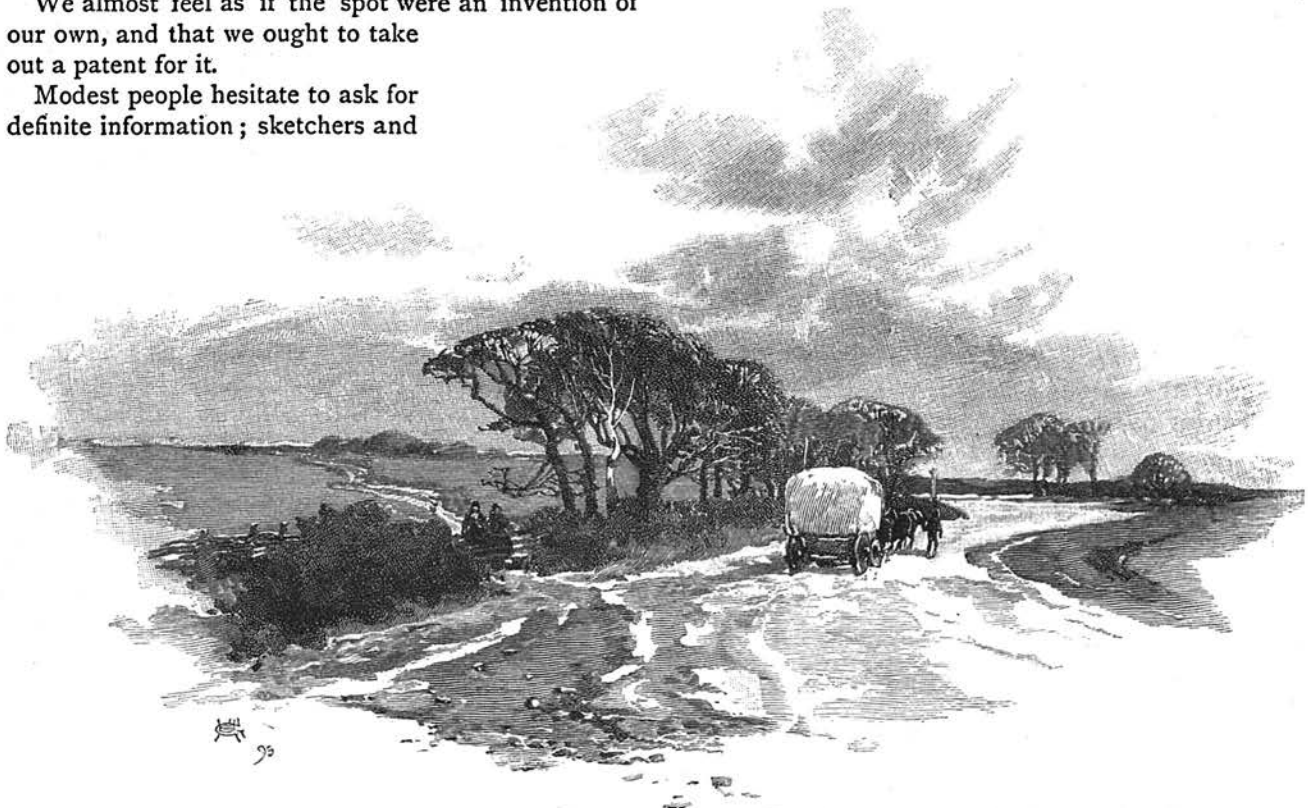
Hill or plain, marsh or moorland, sea-coast or river-bank, the little black dots and lines become wonderfully interesting, when you mean to go and see what those symbols represent.

Whatever place you choose, you are sure to find something beautiful or interesting in the neighbourhood—it is difficult in England not to find both; and the distances between the places are so small that, if the first one does not suit you, you can take the next train and go on to another.

There is a pleasant sense of adventure as you start off to visit the spot you have chosen, and compare the reality with the imaginary picture you have formed of it.

Our destination was a little range of hills in the south-east corner of Essex, to which a newly-opened railway line gave easy access.

Two little towns, Rayleigh and Rochford, lie at either extremity of the range, and a railway runs along the foot of the hills on their northern side. There is



"AT THE TOP OF THE FIELD, OVER A LOW STILE, WE FOUND OURSELVES IN THE MAIN ROAD"

a station at both the townlets, and a third station between them, lying among the fields of Hockley.

For some inscrutable reason, the fare from London to all these stations costs the same modest sum of two shillings and twopence, so we vindicated the commercial spirit of our race by getting the longest ride we could for our money, and early one April morning we took our tickets to the little town of Rochford.

At first we thought we had drawn a blank.

The little town looked uninviting in a drizzling rain, and my companion—who is fastidious, though she thinks she is not—declared that it was "sordid."

The field path was charming, running slant-wise across a green pasture, which sloped gently upwards in gracious curves, and a lark was singing overhead.

At the top of the field, over a low stile, we found ourselves in the main road, along which a high-laden hay waggon was slowly making its way.

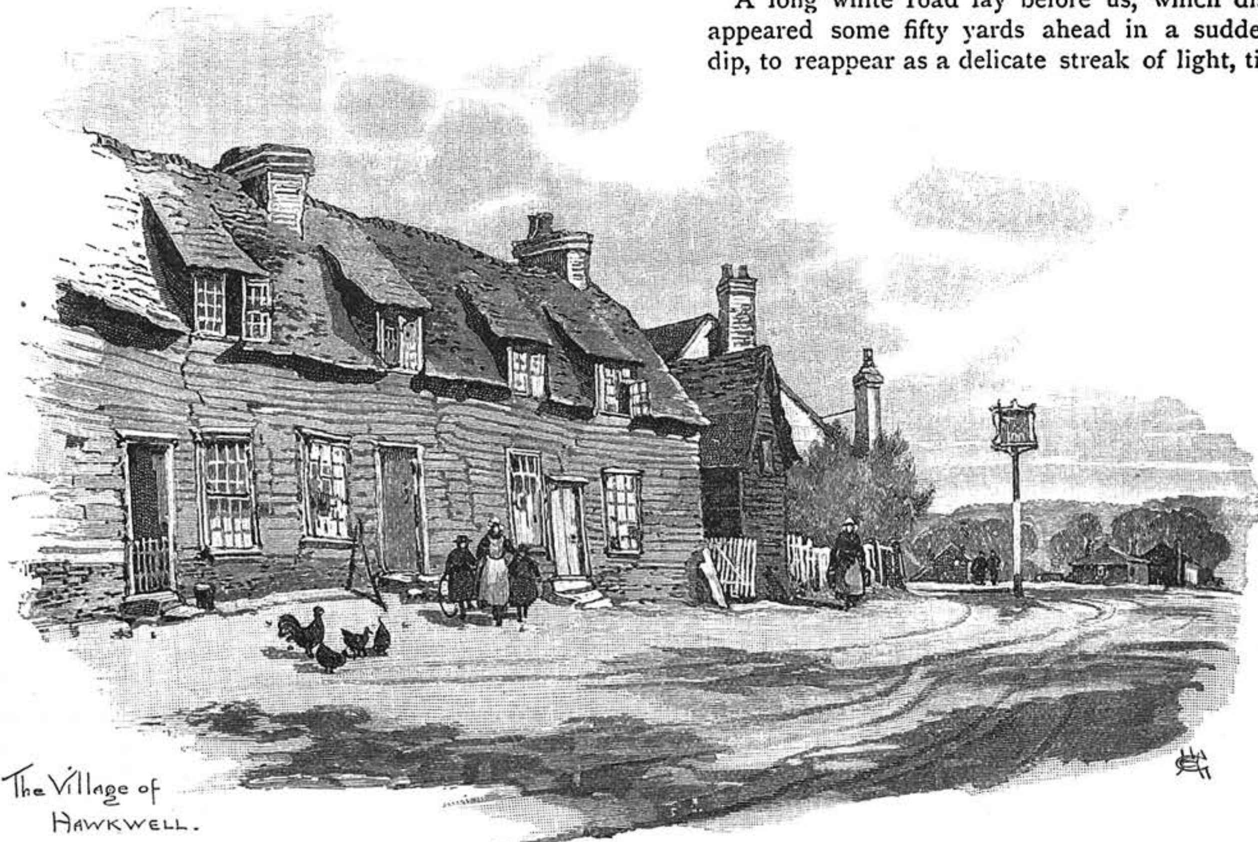
After a moment's consultation, we decided to turn to the left, and walked between the budding hedgerows up a gentle hill.

Three minutes brought us to the crest, and then we both stopped short and looked at one another.

"That's exactly what I want," said Anna.

I may as well give my companion half, at least, of her lawful name.

A long white road lay before us, which disappeared some fifty yards ahead in a sudden dip, to reappear as a delicate streak of light, till



The Village of Hawkwell.

A hasty view of the surrounding country revealed none of the beauties which I felt certain existed, and which I later on discovered, to the delight of my unbelieving companion.

Even the interesting old church and a picturesque manor-house, half hall and half farm, did not reconcile her to the place ; so we agreed to shelter in the railway-station, and take the next train back to Hockley.

The weather had cleared a little when we again got out of the railway carriage and looked around us, wondering how our second venture would turn out.

Two or three new railway buildings, houses for station-master and porters, a country road, with a curious dilapidated-looking building on one side of it, a field or two, bounded by hedges and studded with hedgerow trees, made up the prospect.

A porter directed us to the village, and raised our spirits by sending us through the fields.

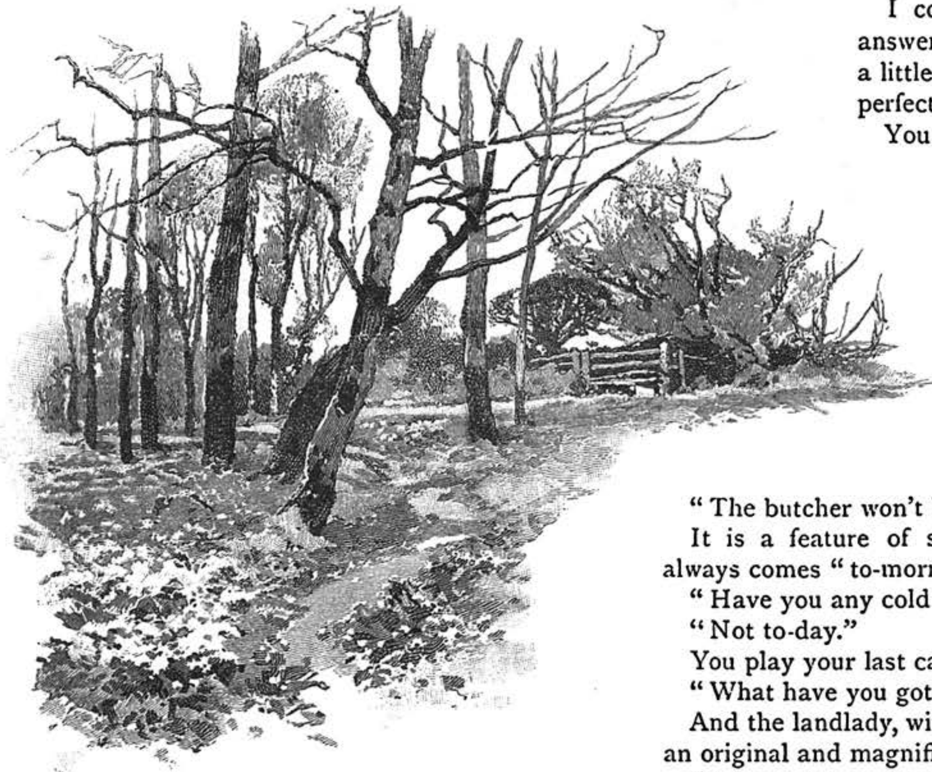
it vanished once again in the shadowy recesses of a mass of tufted green.

On our left hand a little row of wooden houses ended with the village inn and its old-fashioned sign-post. On our right lay a horse-pond, shaded by fine old trees ; and a scanty sprinkling of cottages on either side of the grass-margined road completed the street of Hawkwell village.

But the beauty of the scene lay above these nearer objects.

Seen from our little eminence, the far-off country unrolled itself in misty shades of endless blue : that exquisite tint which gives a hint of something beyond the actual prospect, and lends it the charm which hope bestows on life.

"I don't like to leave it," said Anna, "for fear it should change before we come back again. It seems too good to last."



"WE WANDER ALONG THE PRIMROSE-BORDERED PATH"

Half-way down the village road—you could not call it a street—we had heard of a house where there were rooms to let.

We found a little parlour, lined with varnished wood, and with window and door opening on to the narrow strip of garden which parted it from the road. There were two white-curtained bedrooms above, small, but delicately clean. We took them at once—rather taking away their owner's breath at the same time—and we left her to make the afternoon tea while we went back to the station to look after our luggage.

You can generally find accommodation in an English village, though you must sometimes employ a little persuasiveness or firmness, according to the nature of the case.

If there does not happen to be a lodging, you can make one.

The villages are scantily peopled nowadays, alas! and if you go the right way to work, you can generally hear of somebody glad to earn a little money by taking in a lodger who does not give too much trouble.

The chances are you will be far more comfortable in such a lodging than in the ordinary village inn.

In tourist neighbourhoods you may find little country hotels, which live by their visitors and make them comfortable.

At Porlock and at Aberaron, at Church-Stretton and in the Forest of Dean, I have found civilisation and good cooking at very moderate prices, but in breaking new ground, the village inn is to be avoided if possible.

I know beforehand the exact course which events will take in such places.

I could supply all the landlady's answers to my own questions. It is a little comedy in which I am word-perfect.

You arrive, tired and hungry, after much tramping across the country, or a long day spent in and out of railway carriages, and having taken your room for the night, you next inquire about some food.

"What would you like?" asks the landlady, as if you had only to choose.

"Can you get me a chop or a steak?"

"The butcher won't be here till to-morrow."

It is a feature of such villages that the butcher always comes "to-morrow."

"Have you any cold meat?"

"Not to-day."

You play your last card.

"What have you got in the house?"

And the landlady, with the air of one who is making an original and magnificent offer, replies—

"I can get you some ham and eggs."

I am afraid to say how many times I have rehearsed this little dialogue, and watched for the inevitable ending with which it is bound to conclude. There is only one variation to the monotonous theme: sometimes, as a great novelty, instead of offering you ham and eggs, your landlady will proffer you a dish of eggs and ham. Even if you are not sinfully luxurious, this style of living palls at last, and it has not always the merit of being cheap.

You are a troublesome visitor. You require a tablecloth for your meals, or you don't like Swiss milk in your tea. You are bewildering and unintelligible. You may be no better than themselves, in which case it will be a pity to have treated you with too much deference. On the other hand, you may suddenly develop an acquaintanceship with the neighbouring squire, which may rouse feelings of remorse for not having treated you better or charged you more.

"*Why* didn't you tell me you knew him before?" said one of my many landladies when I asked her for a messenger to carry a note to a local magnate.

The tears almost stood in her eyes, and there were depths of reproachfulness in her tones.

You deserve to pay for your eccentricities, and you had better submit cheerfully to your fate, unless you can avoid it by avoiding the inn altogether.

For preference, I like a lodging which has been inhabited by the village curate. Your landlady will have acquired a deferential tone, and be accustomed to surround the good gentleman with certain little attentions, which will be passed on to you, in spite of your inferior merit.

Failing the curate's lodging, you may be very comfortable with the retired servant of a "good" family. She will be able to "place" you in five minutes, and know your exact position in the social scale.

It really matters very little whether she is right or wrong in her estimate. The important thing is that she should place you somewhere—that being the condition of easy intercourse with the average English woman.

I have always found perfect honesty in my rural hostesses. I use that term advisedly, for they generally regard you as somewhat of a guest.

Unlike the landlady of the inn, they have time and leisure to be interested in you, and we find they can manage our housekeeping much better than we can manage it for ourselves.

Anna is apt to go off sketching in the morning, and forget that she will want dinner when she comes back again; while I am a little nonplussed—say, on a Tuesday morning—at being told—

"The butcher *sometimes* comes round here of a Friday."

It is a great relief when the village woman takes the command of the situation. She knows where to go for a fowl or a rabbit, she can find the eatable butter or the young vegetables, she likes to exercise the little patronage afforded by your custom, and can conduct a delicate transaction according to the strictest rules of rustic propriety.

My own assurance would be quite unequal to approaching the respected vicar of a country parish with a view to dealings in gooseberries and cauliflowers. Yet during one happy summer in Wales all our fruit supplies came from the vicarage garden. Like neighbouring potentates, we had no personal transactions, but employed ambassadors, in the persons of his housekeeper and our landlady, who carried on negotiations to our mutual satisfaction.

The village woman of the eastern counties is often clever, and strikes one generally as having more brains than her partner—a silent person, who puts his best energies into guiding his plough or minding his "beasts," and rarely develops conversational powers till he arrives at old age.

An outsider is struck by her cleanliness. I have seen cottage homes where the virtue verges upon the heroic. She can vie with her neighbours of Holland on the one hand, and with her cousins of New England on the other. The latter spring from the same source as herself, and the Jane Fields and Amanda Pratts of Miss Wilkins's pathetic tales are near akin to the Essex and Suffolk village folk.

It was from this race that the Pilgrim Fathers drew the religious enthusiasm which formed the backbone of their enterprise.

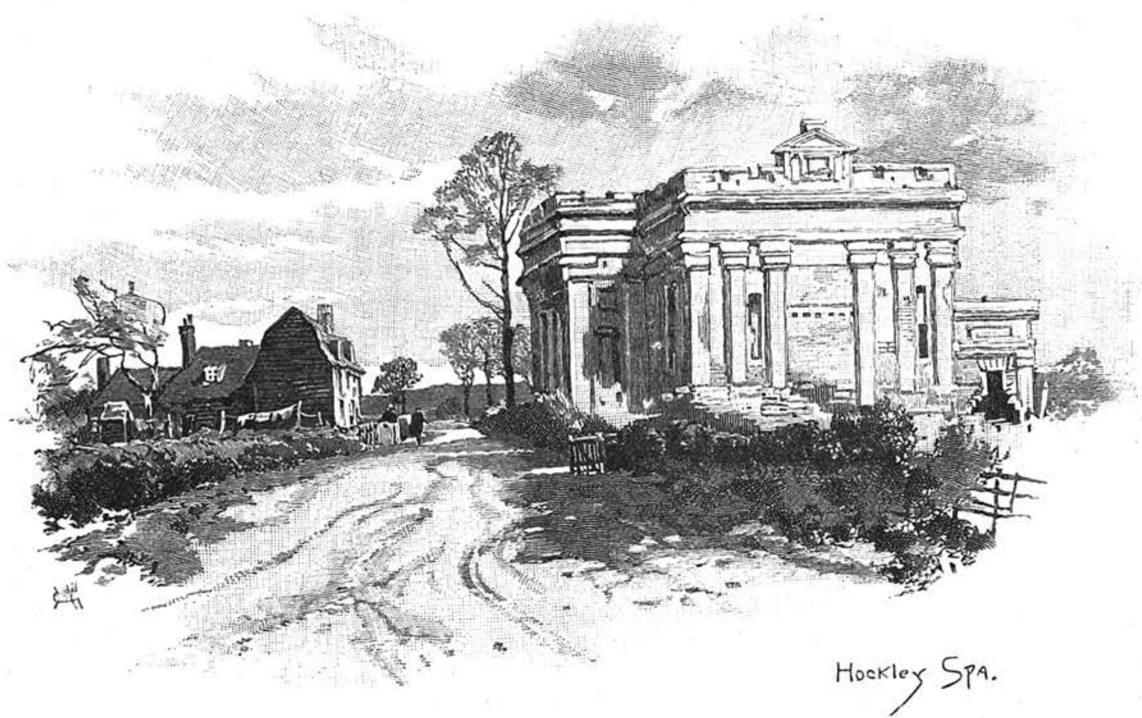
If you learn to know these outwardly quiet and unromantic-looking peasants, you will be startled at the vividness of their inward life, and you will understand how their forefathers faced the Marian persecutions—exceptionally severe in Essex.

Where the brooding imagination of this people is fostered by solitude and a monotonous life, it will sometimes become strong enough to overpower the senses, and the inward thoughts will clothe themselves as outward sights or sounds.

Sitting in lonely cottages, by the light of a half-starved fire or the soft glow of the evening sky, I have listened to strange tales of apparition and vision—sometimes beautiful and sometimes terrible, but never failing to be impressive.

As the teller of the story, a homely figure with toil-worn hands and earnest face, describes her strange experiences, you almost see the vision which she has seen, or hear the voices which she has heard, calling to you outside the cottage door.

By other firesides you hear other stories of the



Hockley Spa.

village life; you see the people from their own standpoint, and may get glimpses of their primitive code of morals—pitifully lax on some points, on others comparing favourably with that of the world outside.

My companion sees the brighter side of the village life. The children cluster around her easel; they bring her flowers and stand as models, and tell her that they could not make pictures like hers, "not if they tried ever so."

This gratifies her, as she is used to small French critics, who declare they could paint as well as she does if they only had a paint-box like hers. She is proud of the superior modesty of her own country-people.

To her great delight, the village accepts her as one of themselves.

The policeman's wife steps out of her leafy cottage for a friendly chat across the thick box-hedge, and the village cobbler interests himself in making the paste to strain her boards.

The labourers who pass in and out of the fields address her as "young woman" with grave civility and friendly remarks—

"Be it mapping now you're a-doing?" or—

"You work very hard."

They tell her of the pasture where the cows have been driven, they let her know when the sheep-shearing has begun, and a flower is sent to her as a sign that a charming garden is ready for her brush.

When the keen wind from the east makes it impossible to sit longer out of doors, we wander along the primrose-bordered path of Hockley great wood, or across the fields, for a mile and a half, to Hockley Church, with its curious octagonal tower.

The churches in this neighbourhood are generally placed on the highest available ground, and are often at some distance from the rest of the village.

Some of them, like Canewdon and Prittlewell, are landmarks for miles around; and at Maldon there is an old church with a triangular tower: the only example I have ever met with.

Besides its church, Hockley is distinguished by a remarkable elevation, called Plumburrow Mount, from which a bird's-eye view is obtained of the surrounding country. The River Crouch is the chief feature in the scene, but prettier views can be had of it a little lower down the hill. The appearance of the smooth green mound suggests that, at some distant period, art has assisted nature in its formation, and the summer-house on the top, which reminds one of a large bathing-machine, adds to the artificial look of the place.

The mineral spring, which once promised fame and prosperity to Hockley, was left stranded by the construction of the railway to Southend.

The only traces of its existence are an inn—out of proportion to the size of the village—bearing the name of Spa Hotel, and the dilapidated building one notices from the railway—the ruinous old pump-room, which looks disreputable rather than picturesque.

But fashion and new buildings would spoil the charm of this neighbourhood, which consists in its simple rustic beauty and the freedom with which one can roam in all directions—through the endless field paths, with their happy accidents; down the grassy roads, with their sparsely-scattered cottages and wayside ponds; and along the tops of the sea-walls, which confine the tidal rivers, and from which one looks across the flat, indented banks, with their covering of sea-thrift, to the white-sailed boats gliding up and down the wide waters.

When we come home in the evening we find the village men are playing quoits upon the tiny Hawkwell green, and half-way down the village road a father is teaching the game to his boys upon a patch of wayside turf.

The game is kept up till it is too dark to see any longer. One wishes that it were always May, and that the cheerful spring would never cease to breathe over the land.

We are told of sufferings from the winter's cold, when the little wooden cottages are a poor protection from the icy winds ; and we cannot but think that if the butcher's cart were a more frequent feature in the village life the men would look stronger, and the women would not lose their early bloom so soon.

The children, however, seem healthy enough, and Anna is captivated by two tiny creatures with fair hair and mottled arms, their red frocks peeping beyond the white edges of their pinafores, who are just big enough to toddle about the village, holding each other by the hand.

With some trouble she prevails on them to stand for her, but barely five minutes have passed before the smallest toddler is overcome with shyness, buries his face in his sister's skirt, and breaks forth into lamentations, which require to be pacified with many chocolate-drops.

It is best to try and catch hurried sketches of the children before their unstudied grace stiffens into awkwardness, under the consciousness of being looked at. Only one little girl was able to stand this ordeal, and she was so anxious her baby should be "taken" that she forgot to think about her own *pose*.

If you want a change from the village, a twopenny railway fare takes you to pretty, clean, little Rayleigh, with its air of genteel prosperity, on the one hand, or to old-world and melancholy Rochford on the other. Another twopence franks you on to Southend, a pretty watering-place, in spite of the somewhat plebeian character of its attractiveness.

But here one touches on well-known ground, and my last words must be for the less visible beauties of Rochford. The old Hall, of course, is well-known to the visitors at the watering-place, and the obliging caretaker who shows you over gives you her own version of the history of England and the fate of Anne Boleyn, whose mother, Lady Rochford, once owned the hall.

She also gives us roses off a great tangled bush in the courtyard. In shape they are like large single wild roses, but in colour they are of a vivid golden yellow, such as we do not remember to have seen elsewhere. We cannot learn how the flowers came here, and please ourselves with fancying that Anne Boleyn may once have gathered such roses and worn them in her hair or on her dress.

As I began this sketch in April, I may be asked how I have already reached the time of roses ; but while business often called me away to town, my companion stuck faithfully to her village, and lured me back again and again to this soft land of spreading fields and waters.

It was in one of my walks beyond Rochford that I lighted upon the River Roach, and introduced my unbelieving comrade to its beauties.

She forthwith fell a helpless victim to its charms, and moved to Rochford to be within easy reach of the wide Dutch-looking landscapes, where the distant boats seem to be sailing through the green meadows, and the little river-side harbours offer their unique combinations of seafaring and agricultural life.

It is a country you leave with regret and return to with pleasure, and after months of London life you may get as complete a change in rambling around an Essex village as you will find in Swiss hotels or German baths.

E. CHAPMAN.

Wail of an Old-Timer.

EACH new invention doubles our worries an' our troubles!
These scientific fellows are spoilin' of our land.
With motor, wire, an' cable, now'days we 're scarcely able
To walk or ride in peace o' mind—an' 't is n't safe to stand.

It fairly makes me crazy to see how 'tarnal lazy
The risin' generation grows—an' science is to blame.
With telephones for talkin' an' messengers for walkin',
Our young men sit an' loaf an' smoke without a blush o' shame.

An' then they wa'n't contented until some one invented
A sort o' jerky tape-line clock, to help on wasteful ways.
An' that infernal ticker spends money fur 'em quicker
'An any neighborhood o' men in good old bygone days.

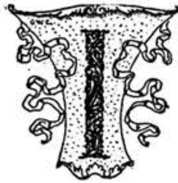
The risin' generation is bent so on creation,
Folks have n't time to talk, or sing, or cry, or even laugh.
But if you take a notion to want some such emotion,
They 've got it all on tap for you, right in the phonograph!

But now a crazy creature has introduced the feature
Of artificial weather—I think we 're nearly through.
For when we once go strainin' to keep it dry or rainin'
To suit the general public—'t will bu'st the world in two.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

By the Author of «Social Evolution.»



T is one A. M. We are on the open chalk downs under the stars, and twenty miles due south from London as the crow flies. The low summer moon, which has been but a few hours above the horizon, is already sinking away in the southwest. There is but little light, for the pale yellow beams do not illuminate; now, even before the dawn has come, they are waning, and a ghostly air has settled upon the almost invisible landscape. The northerly breeze has come through the wood which meets the sky in the foreground, and the aroma of leaves, still in all their delicate summer freshness, lingers on the night air. The distant bay of the watch-dog comes over the hills, to be answered by another still farther away, and yet now by another in the valley below. But the sounds themselves are part of the solitude; they seem only to increase the silence.

Under the clear sky the heavy dew has made the grass dripping wet, and in the uncertain light it is difficult to keep to the steep pathway through the upland meadows. In the low ground below, where the trees rise specter-like through the mist, the railway runs. It is but a few hours ago since the roar and crash of wheels echoed up here, and the tail lights of the Continental Express flashed through the trees; but shadowy and unreal seems the world to which such life belongs, a part of a far-off existence which has no touch or communication with these rural fastnesses. It is a silent land. Celt and Roman and Saxon alike have carried highways of the world through it. But it is still silent; now, as ever, the life of the highways tarries not in these solitudes which sleep between London and the southern sea.

Chur-r-r-r-r!—distinct and eerie, the sound comes up the hillside, the air vibrating with the harsh, rolling note. Now it is answered by a similar sound, and the belt of small oaks and bracken below seems suddenly possessed by a troop of invisible spirits. It is the fern-owl, or night-jar, calling to his mate—a sound which has caused a growth of superstition to follow the bird into every land in which it has traveled. The female, who nests on the ground, is usually sitting when the male makes the night air thrill with his strange note. The bird is heard here only about this season. Out of the unknown it comes with the rising year, and thither it returns with its decline, reaching here on the crest of that great migratory wave of life from the south, of which we know so little, and which now, almost with the summer solstice, will turn again as mysteriously as it came.

Slowly the splendid summer night opens out as the ground still rises. Far away in the north, in the direction of London, a soft opal light hangs upon the horizon. It is the fringe of twilight from the midnight sun circling below the horizon, though it is still more than two hours to sunrise. The moon has almost ceased to shine, but the planets burn more brightly as the light wanes, and a deeper hush seems to fall upon the darkening landscape. Hark! In the still night air at this altitude the ear catches now for the first time a solemn undertone of the night. It is like the subdued echo of the surf, but from a shore so distant that the sound is here only the gentlest sigh in the air; the ear strains after it when at times it seems to

melt back again into the silence. The ground here is the watershed between two rivers, the northern Thames and the eastern Medway. It has been raining heavily during the past week; every little rill is full, and the river in the valley below is still in flood. It is the faint sound of the plash and fall of many waters which reaches here in the stillness. This is that voice which, once heard at night on the open hills or moors, is never forgotten; that sound which, more than any other audible to human ear, suggests the infinite—

> The sound of streams that swift or slow
> Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
> The dust of continents to be.

The pathway through the fields runs close to the hedge now. The scent of white clover comes down the breeze. In front, where the ground rises highest, the Southdown sheep lie huddled against the sky-line. They have given a historic name to a breed famous for its mutton; yet even in such descendants survive the instincts of long-forgotten ancestors. It is the highest spot of the pasture they have chosen to rest in, and they lie with noses to the wind, waiting, they know not why, for an enemy that will never more disturb the slumber of their degenerate lives. Faint brushing sounds come through the grass; shadowy forms which the eye does not catch seem to move before; a hollow, sepulchral double knock comes from the depths of the hedge: it is only the angry, warning stamp of the rabbits that have been disturbed feeding.

As the road goes north the scene changes. These rolling chalk downs, with the deep combs nestling at intervals between, have given trouble to the ancient road-makers: now the track mounts suddenly and steeply, and in an instant descends again almost precipitously. Here the hills have closed round again, the breeze is no longer felt in the valley, and the shadows seem to come closer. The long, lush grass, almost ripe for cutting, still stands by the road, and the green wheat, already in the ear, makes a somber gloom on the southern slopes under the hazel copses. Crake-crake, crake-crake!—far and wide the sound echoes through the still air. It is not a stone's throw off now, and it comes from the thick cover by the roadside, harsh, loud, and strident, drowning all other noises of the night. It is only the love-note of the land-rail, one of the most familiar of all the night sounds in this strange, wanton honeymoon of our Northern year, when for a few short weeks all nature stirs and glows and seeks to utter herself of a life that passeth understanding. Thus still for a little does the male bird cheer the female as she sits on the eggs. Yet a few weeks more, and he will be no longer heard; for he will change and relapse into silence and other moods when the young are hatched out. The sound ceases suddenly now, only to render audible a similar note in the distance. When it is renewed, after a short interval, the bird has moved. He travels quickly through the long grass. Well do you remember how in other days you hunted him, what good sport he made, how fleetly the long legs carried the slim, brown body, how loath he was to fly, and how heavily he rose. The country-people said, indeed, that his wings were of little use; that, left to himself, he never used them; and even that he shed his feathers, and slept through the winter in the rabbit-burrows. Yet not the least of nature's mysteries are the now well-established wanderings of this familiar land-rail of our homestead meadows. By what strange routes has he been tracked over land and ocean with the waning year, south along the Nile valley, and even across the equator into southern Africa! And yet, withal, what faithful ardor drives him, that he should return again to woo his mate and rear his chicks in this gray twilight of our Northern night.

The path leaves the road and crosses the fields again. The shrill cry of the partridge comes up the breeze. A little while ago, leaving the beaten track, the foot stumbled into a cut thorn-bush on the open ground. Now where the grass is smooth and short the same accident happens again. We are in a land where the love of wild nature has left many a strange mark on character—a land in which respect for law still struggles unsuccessfully with the inborn belief that a man may take wild game and yet scorn to be a thief. The poacher loves these long, even slopes as they will be later in the year, and the cut thorn-bushes have relation to his visits. The men walk them at night, two abreast and far apart, carrying a long, narrow net between them, slightly lifted in front and weighted behind. The birds lie on the open ground and do not rise. As soon as the net is over them they are doomed, and a whole covey may be captured at once. The thorn-bushes are the snares which wreck the net.

In the dim light mansions begin to loom out of the trees, and to take up the best positions on the higher grounds. The outskirts of the metropolis have met us; just now, where no landmark showed the spot, the first

boundary line was crossed—the line which marks the limits of the London Metropolitan Police area, a circle within which sleeps a population of nearly 6,000,000. Under the oak copses the way winds. It is sheltered here from the north, and the air is warm and still. Hark! From the depths of the straggling thicket which skirts the wood there comes now a sound in which there is something curiously weird when heard for the first time and from a distance. It is a bird singing in the night. Clear, soft, and distinct, the notes rise and fall in the silence. It is the nightingale; this is a favorite haunt of the birds. It is surprising how far the sound travels; even after a quarter of a mile has been traversed in its direction it is still a considerable distance off. Similar sounds come now from the copses above, but the birds have each appropriated a situation; solitary they sit without changing position, each in continuous song throughout the night. It is the male bird which thus sings to the female as she sits on the nest. It is only a few steps from the thicket at last, and the songster cannot be more than twenty yards off. You do not wonder now at the estimate of the extraordinary quality of the bird's song, nor that it should have stirred the tongues of men to strophes in many languages. Full, rich, and liquid, the notes fall with a strange loudness into the still night. Yet it is not so much the form of the song itself which is remarkable as the passion with which it seems to thrill. Sweet, sw-e-e-t, sw-e-e-e-t—lower and tenderer the long-drawn-out notes come, the last of the series prolonged till the air vibrates as if a wire had been struck, and the solitary singer seems almost to choke with the overmastering intensity of feeling in the final effort. The stars shine through the feathery branches of the silver birches as you listen; the hoarse bay of the watch-dog still comes at intervals on the breeze; far down the valley burns the red eye of the railway signal; in the distance a coal-train is slowly panting southward, a pillar of fire seeming to precede it when the white light from the engine fire shines upon the steam: but the bird still sings on and on. It is lost in a world to which you have no key; it has not changed its position nor ceased its song since sunset, and it will be singing still with the dawn. Strange infinity of nature! Thus must its kind have sung here while the name of England was yet unfashioned on men's lips, and it was still a pathless wood to the northern Thames. Thus do the birds sing still on the fringes of modern Babylon, oblivious and indifferent to all that men consider the vast import of the seething life beyond.

The nesting season, when the birds sing, is drawing to a close. As the road winds near the copses, the voices of other nightingales are heard, but they are not nearly so numerous as a few weeks ago. The birds are slowly retiring before the growth of the metropolis. The writer's experience must have been that of many a Londoner in the outer zone. He has heard the bird from his bedroom window at night for a season; then the builder has come, its favorite grove or thicket has been cut down, and it has flown farther out, to return no more. The nightingales begin song here by the end of April, and they are almost silent by the end of June. They do not migrate till much later, and they continue year after year to frequent a locality until driven away; for, like the swallow, the same nightingale returns each year, faithful to its old haunts. The nightingale is not the very shy bird it is often supposed to be; although it usually keeps in the depths of its thicket, it may be easily seen moving about in the daytime. It sings then also, but its song is usually not continuous as at night.

The opal light in the northeast is spreading to the zenith. The path is through the fields again—another of those public footways which render England dear to the lover of nature. Although it is yet an hour and a half to sunrise, a red tinge is on the horizon, but everything is still ghostly and indistinct. Flip, flip!—a pair of larks flutter up from under the feet in the half light; they do not rise skyward, but they are already on the alert waiting to welcome the dawn. Hark! There is the first songster away on the right, the herald of the approaching day. This ridge is the last wrinkle of the chalk downs, the land which the larks love; from the next we shall overlook the outer rim of the great clay basin on which the metropolis is built, and London will have straggled to our feet. A large gray bird, slimmer than a pigeon, sails out of the elms by the wayside into the morning twilight. It is the restless cuckoo, already astir. She does not call—it is too early. Besides, she has grown silent; the purpose of her strange, feckless life here is spent; a fortnight more, and her voice will no longer be heard in the land. The chorus of larks grows louder in the growing light. Already the southern slopes of London are in sight, shadowy and indistinct in outline, yet with a clearness rarely seen, and peculiar only to the smokeless summer dawn.

Away still on the horizon runs the inner rim of the London basin, the line along which rise the heights of Richmond, Wimbledon, Sydenham, and Blackheath. Not so long ago, and its southern limit was still a wooded solitude; now the life of London has flowed far over its crest to the south, west, and east.

The bats are still wheeling in the streets of Croydon; a railway signalman swinging a red lamp crosses the way in front, and passes homeward; two men carrying lanterns and searching the ground pass down a yet unfinished side street. They are looking for the water-valves; this is the hour at which they can try the water in the new-laid connections with least fear of protest from the sleeping householder. Through the deserted roadways and sleeping squares the way mounts to the hill on which the water-tower stands. No other footsteps have broken the silence. Our janitor has kept his promise, and the key grates in the lock in a moment. Up we go the many steps,—almost in the dark, it seems, for it is still nearly an hour to sunrise,—and then out into the open at the top.

It is a strange world, dim and silent, which unrolls itself before the eye here. There are in many ways few aspects of life more impressive than the awakening of nature on the fringes of a great city, and there are not many points of vantage better than this. Far below, the rows of houses and streets spread away on every side, the southern outskirts of the great circle, twenty miles across, which London occupies. Away to the north, farther in, though still only in the outer zone, rises the last ridge which shuts in the Thames valley; on its crest the gaunt glass structure of the Crystal Palace sits darkly on the horizon. Behind, to the south, stretch the downs we have traversed in the night. Between lies a great suburban land of brick buildings, new for the most part, here ranged in great solid blocks deep and wide, there straggling loosely apart. Everywhere between rise tall trees, now dark in their full summer foliage, the last survivors of that great North Wood in which, down almost into recent times, the charcoal-burners plied their trade—the North Wood which still gives its name to the district of Norwood, and which was so called to distinguish it from the other great wood, the Southern Weald, which stretched through Kent, Surrey, and Sussex. It is a fair land still, as it sleeps now under a cloudless sky out of which the stars have not yet faded, a battle-field, withal,—a land upon which the invading Celt and Roman and Saxon has in turn left his hand, it is true,—but a battle-field, most of all, where nature fights year after year a losing stand against the blighting and despoiling forces of civilization.

Hark! There comes now the first sound from below. It is a thrush tuning for the opening symphony. After a few tentative notes it bursts into full song. Cherry-dew, cherry-dew! Be-quick, be-quick! Strangely clear and distinct, the full notes ring out in the still morning. Soon it is joined by another, and in a moment another and another have answered from the high elms around. The volume of sound continues to grow, but as yet it is only the thrushes which greet the dawn. Soon there reaches the ear a faint, harsh murmur; now it is louder, and soon it swells into a hoarse din. It is as if a great army of workmen had suddenly begun to labor below, and the harsh chip and fret of countless iron tools rose upward in blended discord. It is the multitudinous voice of the house-sparrow. He rears three families in the year, and he has begun his day's work of eighteen hours. He it is who, alone of wild birds, can regard the nineteenth century as an era of unexampled prosperity. He has multiplied in incredible numbers with the growth of towns. Nay, more: following the Anglo-Saxon, he has spread with the extending race to the ends of the world, till over two continents, with a certain appropriate inaccuracy, he is known and banned as the English sparrow. From the lower shrubs of the private gardens the rich, mellow note of the blackbird begins now to blend with the others. Louder and louder swells the chorus of voices, as the finches, robins, and other small birds join in at last. It is a strange harmony—one which is seldom heard by the sleeping world. The strangest feature is, indeed, the almost complete absence of any human sound; save for the occasional scream of the whistle of a belated locomotive shunting on the distant line, all but the voices of the birds is silent.

Round the tower the bats are still hawking. From below there reaches up a familiar twitter. It comes from a line of swallows which stand huddled up after the night on the paling, their white breasts showing in marked contrast to the black-painted fence. One takes wing now, at last, to begin that long chase after flying insects which the bats have not yet abandoned. Thus do the fringes of the night overlap the coming day.

As the light grows, the features of the land open out. One does not wonder here why the migratory wild birds come to us in the far Northwest in such numbers. Why should they

linger amid the barren larch plantations and the *petite culture* of the Continent? Where else, despite the growth of the towns, has the country been preserved so unchanged as in England? To the right stretch the natural woods and copses in the direction of Chiselhurst; nearer at hand lie the Addington hills and the splendid wooded lands of the manor of Croydon, still an appanage of the see of Canterbury, and doubtless not greatly changed since the great Lanfranc held them of the Conqueror. Away to the left roll the level plains toward Windsor, the great trees so thickly strewn over the land as almost to give it the appearance of a thickly wooded country—trees which rise unkempt in the free air of heaven, with limbs unlopped, in all their natural beauty. To the south stretches the open land, the commons of Epsom and Banstead, and the range of the North Downs, with the little village of Purley, associated with the fame of Horne Tooke, sleeping on the edge. It is all little changed since the days of the author of the «Diversions,» always and except for the vast growth of London. What would the eccentric parson and politician have thought of the age if he had lived to see the metropolis almost at his doors, and all that the whirligig of time had brought with it? Would he have thought any better now of the crime which split the Anglo-Saxon peoples in two, or of his countrymen who fined and imprisoned him for opening a subscription for the widows and orphans of the Americans «murdered by the King's troops at Lexington and Concord»?

The rooks are spreading out across the sky as they sail from their nests to the distant pastures. As the light ripens, the view enlarges of greater London stretching away to the north. Like the arms of a great octopus, its fringes strike far into the open land. Farther in, caught between them, rises bravely many a pleasant grove; parks, open spaces, and even fields gleam a fitful green among the bricks in the morning light—but surrounded all; doomed, injected morsels waiting to be digested at leisure, to serve the strenuous purposes of another life. And yet only the outer suburban zone is visible here—a land of beauty without refinement, of wealth without distinction; a land of groves and spires and villas hedged round with reformatories, schools, and asylums. And everywhere, from horizon to horizon, the unfinished brick and timber of the builder, emblems of the ever-rising flood, of a movement of which the springs are at the ends of the earth, of a life which takes toll of every land under heaven.

Now at last, away in the northeast, the fiery red rim of the sun shows above the horizon. There has been no gorgeous preparatory display, no massing of shades and colors for the opening ceremony. With scarce an anticipatory flush he rises full into a gray, expressionless sky, and a moment afterward disappears into a bank of fog which hangs on the horizon over the Essex marshes. A fitting tribute, perhaps, to the race and clime. For he has risen over the first meridian, over the mother city of the Northern vikings. It is from here that the nations have learned to count their distance. It is from here that they measure his course in his race round the trackless seas.

Benjamin Kidd.

TAME SNAKES: A TRUE STORY.

BY WALTER SEVERN.

ON a dull afternoon during the Easter recess of 1872, I went out for a holiday stroll towards the river at Chelsea, and on finding myself near to that Dutch-looking quarter, Cheyne Walk, I determined to discover the abode of an old friend, who I had reason to know lodged in the locality. As I knew he was an inveterate smoker, I inquired about him at a tobacconist's, who told me that he had apartments in one of the quaint old houses with ornamental iron gates.

On passing through the gate and ringing the bell, the door was opened by an individual in shirt-sleeves, who informed me that my friend was away. Attracted by the gentlemanly bearing of the coatless individual, whom I had at first taken for a carpenter, I remained talking to him about the quaintness of the old hall and its paintings. I am sure we both felt that there was something sympathetic in our natures—perhaps this consisted in a touch of æsthetic Bohemianism—at all events, he pressed me to stay and smoke with him.

We sat in the front parlour, and chatted pleasantly over a log fire which was burning in a fire-place from which the grate had been removed. Of course we soon discovered that we had mutual friends—where did I ever go, or whom did I ever meet, without making this discovery? After a time, I began to look round the room: no carpet, an old table, a dilapidated sofa, and a few chairs—an impression of curious untidiness was left on my mind.

While looking at some small pictures hanging crooked on the wall, I noticed, what struck me as being very odd, a red blanket protruding from a hole in the wainscoting, near the mantel-piece. In reply to my inquiry as to what this meant, my host said, "Oh! that is where we keep our snakes; are you afraid of snakes?" Before I could stammer out a reply, and while I was trying to steady my nerves, he thrust in his arm, and pulled out with the blanket a lot of serpents, which tumbled on to the ground and the table. Another dive brought out the rest of the blanket, and with it *two large snakes*, which he informed me were special favourites—a python and a boa constrictor. These at once coiled themselves all round my host's body, in and out of his arms, and about his neck.

Dazed with astonishment and shaking with fear, I tried to retreat, but he assured me, in winning accents and soft words, that the "dear things" were quite tame; and for some minutes we stood, I close to the window—which I thought might afford a means of escape—and he between me and the door. Suddenly my eccentric host, who had very large excited eyes, called out that he must really fetch down his wife, and shovelling off the two monsters on to the floor (which he did not do without some difficulty), he darted from the room, closing the door behind him.

* * * * * *

I leave you, kind readers, to imagine my feelings! I experienced a creepy sensation in my hair, and strange feelings of fascination, faintness, and fear stole over me, as I stood rooted to the floor, afraid even to look round at my possible window-escape. The two huge monsters crawled stealthily up the sofa, and kept stretching out their necks to gaze at me, their forked tongues jerking in and out, and their eyes staring with what seemed to me a devilish inquisitiveness. Dante's Inferno, the Laocoon group, and other horrors, filled my brain.

The silence was only disturbed by the beating of my poor heart, and I knew not how long it was before the door opened, and my host reappeared with a pretty lady, who, after a smiling curtsey to me, lifted the snakes from the sofa, or rather, leaning towards them, allowed them to entwine themselves quickly round her comely figure. Although still frightened, I began to heave sighs of relief, and I could not help being impressed by the picturesqueness of the scene. The lady's black velvet bodice showed off to great advantage the large snake-coils, with their curious markings, and her rich brown hair was soon charmingly ruffled by the caresses of the snakes as they poked their noses through it. In a few minutes two little girls appeared, and tripping up to their mother, began playing with the snakes, calling the boa "Cleopatra dear," and actually kissing its nose, until the snake tried impatiently to withdraw its neck from their fond little hands.

Mrs. M., who seemed overweighted with the two snakes, asked her husband to relieve her of the python, and she then proposed that we should have some coffee, which was brought in by the little girls. By this time I had regained my self-possession, and watched her with the keen interest of an artist as she poured out the coffee, and tapped occasionally the head of the boa, which was inquisitively stretched out towards me. During this time the smaller snakes were all about the room, a green one half hidden in the blotting-book and others hanging from the table and chairs, and from Mr. M.'s pockets.

Several months after this adventure, I happened to be at a rather smart wedding, and meeting Lord Arthur Russell (who I knew was a lover of snakes), I narrated the circumstances to him, and was rather taken aback by his proposal that we should go away, there and then, in a hansom cab to Chelsea. "Surely,"

I exclaimed, "you don't propose to leave this goodly company" (Mr. Gladstone was there, among many other celebrities) "and this goodly cheer, to see the snakes?

> "'The guests are met, the feast is set:
> Mays't hear the merry din.'"

But he was evidently determined. So off we drove to Cheyne Walk, where we fortunately found the snake-charmers at home, and saw much the same scene that I have already described. Lord Arthur was more venturesome than I was, and got one of the smaller reptiles up his sleeve, and Mr. M. had to come to the rescue, and draw it forth through his shirt-cuff. We were shown a very perfect skin, apparently about three yards long, which Mr. M. coolly told us the boa had cast while in bed with him one cold night. He felt "the poor thing fretting about," and kept telling it to be quiet, but it would persist in squeezing between his legs and feet, and in the morning he found that it had shed its skin!

Mr. and Mrs. M. informed us that once, when they were away for two months, they left the two big snakes in charge of a keeper at the Zoo. On their return, the keeper said that if they had delayed much longer the boa might have died, as it was refusing food; and when he produced the snake, it recognised Mrs. M.'s voice, and sprang at her with such vehement affection as nearly to upset her, coiling itself closely round her until they reached home in a cab. Our hosts also informed us that one summer's evening, when the family (including all the snakes) were having tea in the garden, Cleopatra kept swinging from a tree by its tail, and Mr. M., thinking it a good opportunity to gauge the strength of the boa, placed himself under the tree, and allowed the snake to coil itself round his waist. He then found that he could lift his feet from the ground. We were also informed that if the big snakes once made pets of live animals given for food—which they were apt to do when not hungry—they would never eat them, but would wait until fresh beasts or birds were provided.

I must now narrate, in his own language, an incident about these snakes written out for me by an Italian friend, who says—"*Ecco il racconto dell annedoto dei serpenti;* but please correct the English and clean it up. I cannot do better in your language, so much in hurry as you are for it. Mr. M. he was a composer of music; he was very fond of serpents or snakes, and he made a very particular study in the natural history about such kind of fearful reptiles. He very often spoke to me, desirous to show me these animals, which he nursered with care, and brooded the eggs to generate the little ones.

"At the back of his appartement there was a small garden, and next a kind of orchard court, where a merchant of chickens and fowls had a nursery of these domestic animals, which he keeped for trade. At that time Mr. M. had in his bed-room two enormous boa constrictors, which sleeped with him as two little babies, as Mr. M. was confident that not traison or mischief could come from them, so beloved and well trained by him. So he took his sleep confidently every night. But the wild ibrid animals, with a natural bad instinct for rapine and murder, would smell often their prey, the poor innocent chickens, and when Mr. M. peacefully sleeped, the horrid reptiles oozed from the bed, and silently creeped to the gardens where the chickens were, killing and eating often of them. During this assault the chickens begun to *crock*, and some time the proprietor was awaked and visited the garden, and when he discovered a chicken dying and others destroyed, he began for to watch during many nights, till, what was the horror and fright of the master when, at the feeble light of the break of the day, he discovered a sterminate serpent with a large chicken strangled in its coils! At sudden he gave the alarm and called the police; all the neighbours' houses were also frightened; at last he discovers that Mr. M. was the keeper of such extraordinary nuisible things, and went to the court, where the magistrate summoned Mr. M.; but, strange to say, there was not a slight intention found on the part of the unconscious Mr. M. to give harm to anybody, and he was not at all punished for it, but only warned to take measures as to assure that the two serpents would have not in future to make so romantic assays in like excursions nightly to the mild and useful race of bipeds so good for human food."

Some years later, while I was abroad, I noticed in the English newspapers an account of a Chancery suit affecting my friends and their beloved snakes, and on my return, finding that they were likely to be turned out of their house, owing to a stray snake having frightened a neighbour's servant into a fit, I wrote a letter to the *Times*, in defence of the snakes, which will be found quoted in Dr. Romanes' book on "Animal Intelligence." In spite of my protestations, the serpents were declared to be a dangerous nuisance, and my friends were turned out, nearly broken-hearted and ruined.

After a long interval I heard of them again from the late Frank Buckland, who was a kind friend to the family. They were living quietly with their snakes in small lodgings near Leicester Square. One day Mr. M., who was a delicate man, was seized with a fainting-fit, and remained on his bed insensible while Mrs. M. hastened out for the doctor. On her return with Buckland, they found Mr. M. still on the bed, but regaining his consciousness. He was weeping over the prostrate body of his beloved Cleopatra. The snake, suspecting something wrong, had evidently crept up-stairs, and when it found its beloved master insensible had experienced some kind of shock. Partly on the bed and partly trailing on the ground, the poor boa was found *stone-dead!*

POINT DE HONGROIE.

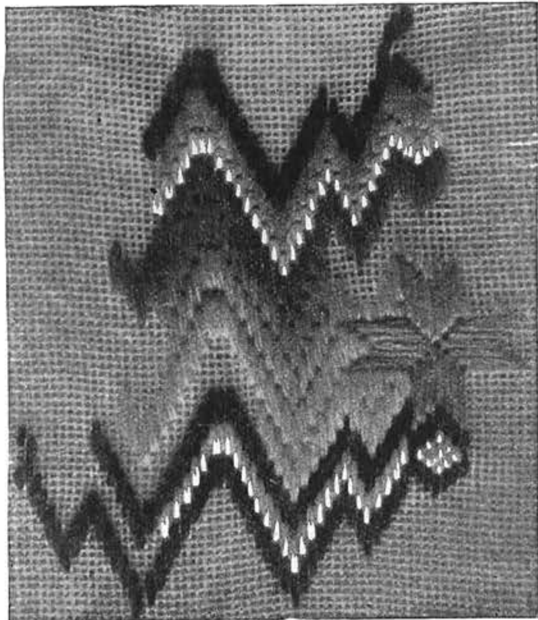


FIG. 2.

THE easy yet most effective kind of embroidery known as point de Hongroie, or punto Ungaro, is now again very popular, and the modern forms of it show but little variation from those early examples whose origin is lost in antiquity and legends.

Point de Hongroie may be roughly divided into two varieties, the one executed with wool upon coarse congress canvas being adapted for large pieces of work, such as cushion-covers; the other upon fine canvas and with silks, being sufficiently dainty to serve for book-covers, and similar small pieces of work.

As an example of the coarse style of this kind of embroidery, we give a design for one side of a tea-cosy (see Fig. 1). This is worked with tapestry-wools and *filoselle* silk upon congress canvas. Although the fact may not be very plainly obvious from the illustration, it must be borne in mind that the chief feature of the work is the amount of shading introduced into it. The piece now under consideration is worked in only three colours of wool, but of each colour there are five shades, carefully graduating and merging one into the other. At the top is a band, shaded from brown to cream, through yellows; in the centre, one from sap to willow-green, and at the bottom the zig-zags are in reds, ranging from crimson to the palest pink. In addition to this, the outlines are traced out with a double line of black, enclosing one of white. White also occurs as a dividing band above the darkest shade of every colour wool that is used.

The peculiarity of the patterns of point de Hongroie are their real or apparent irregularity. However the stitches and colouring may be arranged, these must always be kept in zigzag up-and-down lines of the most "thunder and lightning" description. In the cosy cover before us, the pattern it will be observed is a repeat one, and by no means so informal as it at first sight might appear to be. For the more complete comprehension of it, reference should be made to Fig. 2. Here is to be seen one of the large silk stars, which should be worked first at equal distances apart, to serve as guides ensuring the exactitude of the woollen stitches. Three strands of *filoselle* silk are taken together to work these stars, each stitch of which extends over eight strands of the canvas; in the model they were bright-blue, to form an effective contrast to the colours of the background.

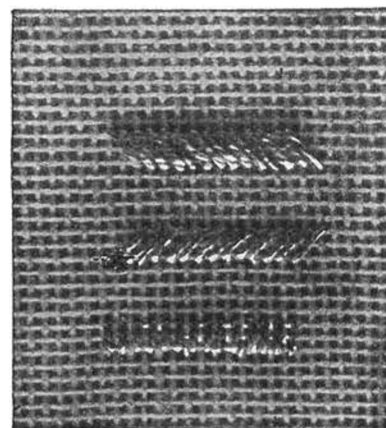


FIG. 3.

The stars completed, the black and white guide-lines should next be sewn; these are shown in the Figure, wherein, as will be seen, the position for the next star above and at the side of the one worked is indicated. Just below the upper line of black stitchery is one of *filoselle* silk; this must be green, red, or yellow, according to the colour of the wool-work below it, and in tone midway between the darkest and palest used in the wool.

The stitches used in punto Ungaro are exceedingly simple; they are shown at Fig. 3, where one row is upright, and the other two slanting in directions opposite to each other. In some patterns horizontal stitches, such as are seen in the side rays of the blue stars, are

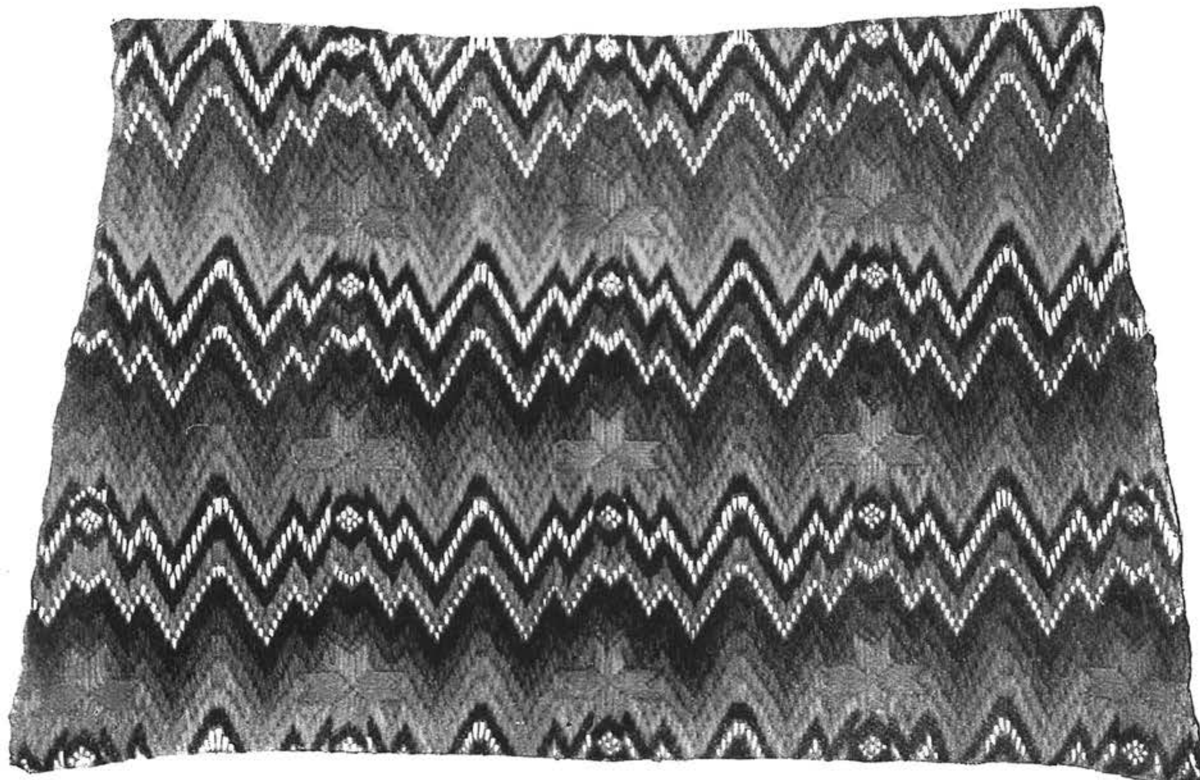


FIG. I.

used; these are too simple to need further explanation.

Petit point, an important feature in point de Hongroie, need not be illustrated. It is a stitch exactly similar to those already described, and owes its name to the fact that in working it the wool is carried over exactly half the number of strands of the canvas as were covered by the full-sized stitches. The greater part of every pattern is worked with stitches carried over four, six, or eight strands of the canvas, according to the coarseness of that fabric and to that of the wool used upon it. Consequently *petit point* covers two, three, or four strands.

From the cosy thus elaborately described, the embroideress will see how many patterns are open to her, when once the few and easy rules of the work are well understood. For those who cannot thus arrange designs for themselves, many varied ones can now be purchased from the leading fancy-shops, and some few favoured persons may have in their possession patterns or actual specimens of the work, done of old by their forerunners.

A word or two about this thick kind of punto Ungaro, before speaking of the more delicate variety of it. When executed wholly or chiefly with wool—tapestry, crewel, Andalusian, or single Berlin wool, according to the canvas and the stores, taste, and purse of the worker—it is as cosy and soft as a luxurious carpet. The uses, therefore, to which it can be put are many. Among the articles which may be ornamented may be mentioned cushions, hassocks, kneelers, chair-backs, bracket- and basket-drapes, foot-warmers, and ottoman tops. There are, doubtless, many others, but these are the first which come to mind.

Fig. 4 is a fair sample of point de Hongroie, executed entirely in silks and on a fine background. The pattern is a most typical one, consisting as it does of up and down lines, no two of which are of the same height or depth. When working it, care should be taken to get one row of the stitchery quite correct before working another. This because, though irregularity is the rule, it must not verge into eccentricity or be wholly without reason, as (for instance) would be the case if one upward slant were so sharp and long as not to come down again within a reasonable space.

The little key- or bonbon-bag here shown is worked in crewel-silk, blue, red, and green,

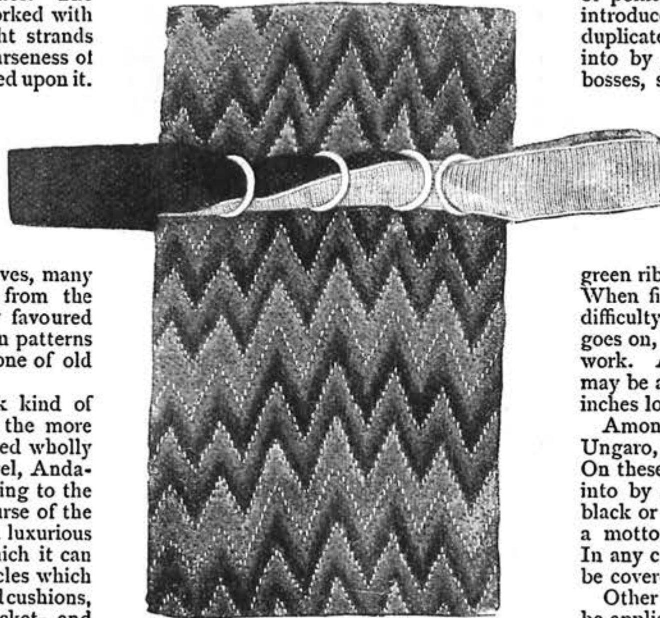


FIG. 4.

three shades of each colour repeated in the above sequence from the top to the bottom of the bag. Instead of the black, which in the larger specimens separates the bands of colour, fine gold Japanese tinsel is here used, threaded through a large-eyed needle (in short needlefuls) and arranged to form *petit point*, or half-stitch as some call it.

The silk stitches are in this example carried over four strands of the canvas, the shorter ones, therefore, over two only. In this pattern every row is an exact copy of the first one made; this greatly simplifies the work, as but little counting is required, and the least error is at once detected by the manner in which the stripes are thrown out by it. In specimens of point de Hongroie where more variety is introduced into the pattern, there are fewer duplicate rows, and these are often broken into by *petit point* of different kinds, and by bosses, stars, crosses, and other powderings, worked either in wool or silk. The tea-cosy is an example of a design so treated.

To return to the little bag. When the canvas is covered with stitchery it is to be made up into shape, lined with green silk, and drawn up with a crimson and a green ribbon run through outside bone rings. When first new it will close with some little difficulty, but more and more easily as time goes on, as is proved by old specimens of the work. As a slight guide to the worker, it may be added that this model measured seven inches long by four inches wide.

Among dainty trifles made with fine punto Ungaro, book-covers take a foremost place. On these the set-pattern is sometimes broken into by a shield-shaped space, outlined with black or with tinsel, and displaying within it a motto or monogram on a white ground. In any case, every thread of the canvas must be covered with stitches.

Other small articles to which the work can be applied include trinket-trays, wall-pockets, reticules of various sizes, tidys, screens, blotters, and mats.

The silk, which can be afforded for this miniature kind of the embroidery, gives to it a rich appearance, which is enhanced by the tinsel. So in the larger articles does the wool give warmth and softness, while the sharp black and white outlines add character and effect to the pattern.

LEIRION CLIFFORD.

SOME AUSTRIAN RECIPES.

***Vanilla Sugar*.—Vanilla sugar so often finds a place in Austrian cookery that a recipe for it must preface the following directions for making some very delicious dishes often enjoyed in that country. The pod of vanilla bean can be had at most grocers, and the flavouring it gives is most delicate and preferable to any of the liquid essences. Take a piece of this vanilla bean and some sifted sugar and pound the two together until quite fine. You must judge of the quantity of both vanilla and sugar by adding the latter gradually until on tasting it, it is well-flavoured with vanilla. Pass this through a sieve and keep it in a tin. When required for use add it to other fine sugar according to taste.**

***Vanilla Crescents*.—Ingredients: Eight ounces of best flour, six ounces of fresh butter, three ounces of peeled almonds chopped very finely indeed, and two yolks of egg. Mix all this up with a knife on your pastry board, and then roll it out with a rolling pin. Cut the paste thus formed into small pieces and form them into little crescents about two or three inches long and as thick as your thumb—if you have a small hand. Bake in a very moderate oven, and remember that they must not brown. Cover with finest vanilla sugar powdered thickly over them. These biscuits, if properly made, should be very light and extremely brittle. They keep good and fresh if placed in an air-tight tin.**

***Lemon Soufflé*.—The Austrian recipe for the above is as follows:—**

Ingredients: Five tablespoonfuls of sifted sugar, five yolks of egg, the flavour of one rind of a lemon, and the juice of one lemon. This should all be stirred for half an hour, and then a hard snow-like mixture should be added, made of the five whites of egg whipped until quite consistent. Bake about fifteen minutes in a brisk oven, in an ordinary pie-dish in which the mixture has been heaped up. Serve immediately it is done.

***Apricot Soufflé*.—Take five tablespoonfuls of apricot jam, passed through a sieve. Two spoonfuls of fine sifted sugar. Stir this up well for half an hour. Make a stiff snow of five whites of egg, and add very lightly to the above. Heap this up lightly in any pie or soufflé-dish, and ornament with some sliced almonds on the top. Bake from fifteen to twenty minutes in a brisk oven. Serve immediately it is cooked.**

***Chestnut Cream*.—Boil some large chestnuts, peel them and pass them through a sieve. Mix with a little cream and vanilla sugar to taste. Heap part of this paste in the middle of a dish. With a fancy forcing bag make part of it into balls the size of a chestnut, and glaze these balls with sugar. Surround the centre heap with whipped cream, flavoured with vanilla sugar, on which the glazed chestnuts are to be laid.**

***Chocolate Pudding*.—Dissolve three ounces of the best chocolate in half a pint of single cream which is on the fire. Let this get cold and then gradually mix it with two spoonfuls of flour and two ounces of white sugar. This should be done while the mixture is on the fire until it is of the consistence of a thick batter. Let this cool in one basin, and in another stir well two ounces of fresh butter with five yolks of egg; then add the cold batter and mix it up well. Next beat up five whites of egg until they are in a stiff froth, and add slowly but lightly to the aforenamed mixture. Bake this in a soufflé dish for about twenty to twenty-five minutes. The same mixture can be made with essence of coffee instead of the chocolate.**

Receipts, &c.

SUMMER BEVERAGES.

LEMONADES.—Lemons furnish two important products for the formation of beverages, an acid juice, and an aromatic stomachic oil, contained in the rind. Lemon-juice is a slightly turbid, very sour liquid, having a pleasant flavor when diluted. It contains a considerable quantity of gummy mucilage, which causes it to become mouldy on exposure to the air. It is capable of furnishing a large number of acidulated drinks, which are exceedingly useful in allaying thirst, and are most valuable for their anti-scorbutic properties.

In making any kind of lemonade, the proportions given need not be adhered to, but the quantities ordered may be increased or lessened to suit the taste.

For a quart of lemonade, take six lemons and a quarter of a pound of sugar; rub off part of the yellow rind of the lemons on to the sugar, squeeze the juice on to the latter, and pour on the water boiling hot; mix the whole, and run through a flannel jelly-bag.

Lemons are not always to be procured, especially on a journey, and we have, therefore, much pleasure in drawing attention to the following useful directions for making portable lemonade:—

Excellent Portable Lemonade.—Rasp with a quarter of a pound of sugar, the rind of a fine juicy lemon; reduce the sugar to powder, and pour on it the strained juice of the fruit; press the mixture into a jar, and when wanted for use dissolve a table-spoonful of it in a glass of water; it will keep a considerable time. If too sweet for the taste of the drinker, a very small portion of citric acid may be added when it is taken.

Mock Lemonade.—A cheap substitute for lemonade may be made as follows: Tartaric acid, a quarter of an ounce; sugar, six ounces; essence of lemon, dropped on the sugar, about four or five drops; boiling water, two pints. This, allowed to stand till cold, makes a wholesome, cooling, summer beverage, economical in its cost, but the flavor is not equal to that prepared from lemon-juice.

Another Mock Lemonade.—A mock lemonade of superior flavor may be made by using the acid prepared from lemons, citric acid, according to the following receipt: Citric acid, a quarter of an ounce; essence of lemon, ten to twenty drops; syrup, half a pint; boiling water, as much as may be required. This preparation is expensive, and is not equal to lemonade from fresh lemons, which should always be preferred when they can be obtained.

Plain Orangeade.—Orangeade should be made in precisely a similar manner to lemonade, using oranges instead of lemons; but as there is less acid in this fruit, a much larger proportion of juice is required, and, however prepared, this beverage is rather insipid, and is inferior to the following:—

Orange Lemonade.—Take three oranges, one large lemon, and two or three ounces of sugar; rub off some of the peel on to the sugar, squeeze on the juice, and pour on two pints of boiling water; mix the whole and strain.

Imperial.—May be regarded as a sort of mock lemonade; it forms a cheap, wholesome, cooling summer beverage. Two receipts are added, the first being the better of the two: No. 1. Cream of tartar, half an ounce; one lemon cut in slices; white sugar, half a pound; spring water, three pints. Mix, and allow them to stand for an hour or two before use, as the cream of tartar dissolves but slowly. No. 2. Cream of tartar, a quarter of an ounce; lemon-peel and sugar to suit the taste; boiling water, two pints. Mix, and allow to stand until cold.

Lemonade à la Soyer.—Put a quart of water in a stewpan to boil, into which put two moist dried figs, each split in two; let it boil a quarter of an hour, then have ready the peel of a lemon, taken off rather thickly, and the half of the lemon cut in thin slices; throw them into the stewpan, and boil two minutes longer, then pour it into a jug, which cover closely with paper until cold, then pass it through a sieve, add a teaspoonful of honey, and it is ready for use.

Orangeade à la Soyer.—Proceed as for lemonade, but using the whole of the orange, a little of the peel included, sweetening with sugar-candy, and adding a teaspoonful of arrowroot, mixed with a little cold water, which pour into the boiling liquid at the same time you put in the orange. The arrowroot makes it very delicate.

Superior Lemonade à la Soyer.—Take the peel of six lemons, free from pith, cut it up in small pieces, and put it with two cloves into a bottle containing half a pint of hot water, place the bottle in a stewpan with boiling water, and let it stand by the side of a fire for one or two hours, taking care it does not boil; then take half a pint of lemon-juice, half a pint of syrup, if none, use plain syrup, or sugar, in like proportion, adding a few drops of orange-flower water; add the infusion of the rind, which has been previously made, and allowed to become cold, stir well together, and add two quarts of cold water.

Barley Lemonade.—Put a quarter of a pound of sugar into a small stewpan, with half a pint of water, which boil about ten minutes, or until forming a thickish syrup; then add the rind of a fresh lemon and the pulp of two; let it boil two minutes longer, when add two quarts of barley-water, made without sugar and lemon; boil five minutes longer, pass it through a hair sieve into a jug, which cover with paper, making a hole in the centre to let the heat through; when cold it is ready for use; if put cold into a bottle, and well corked down, it would keep good several days.

Barley Orangeade.—Barley orangeade is made in the same manner, substituting the rind and juice of oranges; the juice of a lemon, in addition, is an improvement.

ON A SHEEPSKIN.

LONG since, when I groped in the darkness
  Of languages ancient and dead,
With lessons from Hadley and Harkness
  Served up between breakfast and bed.
When Xenophon, Cæsar, and Sallust
  Were vessels I tried hard to sail,
I'd no intellectual ballast
  To baffle the blustering gale.

My grammars were dismally dry ones,
  All full of bewildering rules;
My "ponies" were certainly shy ones,
  And balked quite as badly as mules;
The tutors that taught me in college
  Concluded—and wisely—at once,
'Twere hopeless to try to make knowledge
  Take root in the brains of a dunce.

Yet look; I possess a diploma
  Conferring the proper degree—
A parchment whose musty aroma
  Is very delightful to me.
But gorgeous in old English letter,
  And in its mahogany frame,
'Twould please me a thousand times better
  If I could read more than my name.

IDLE IDYLLER.

THE G. B.

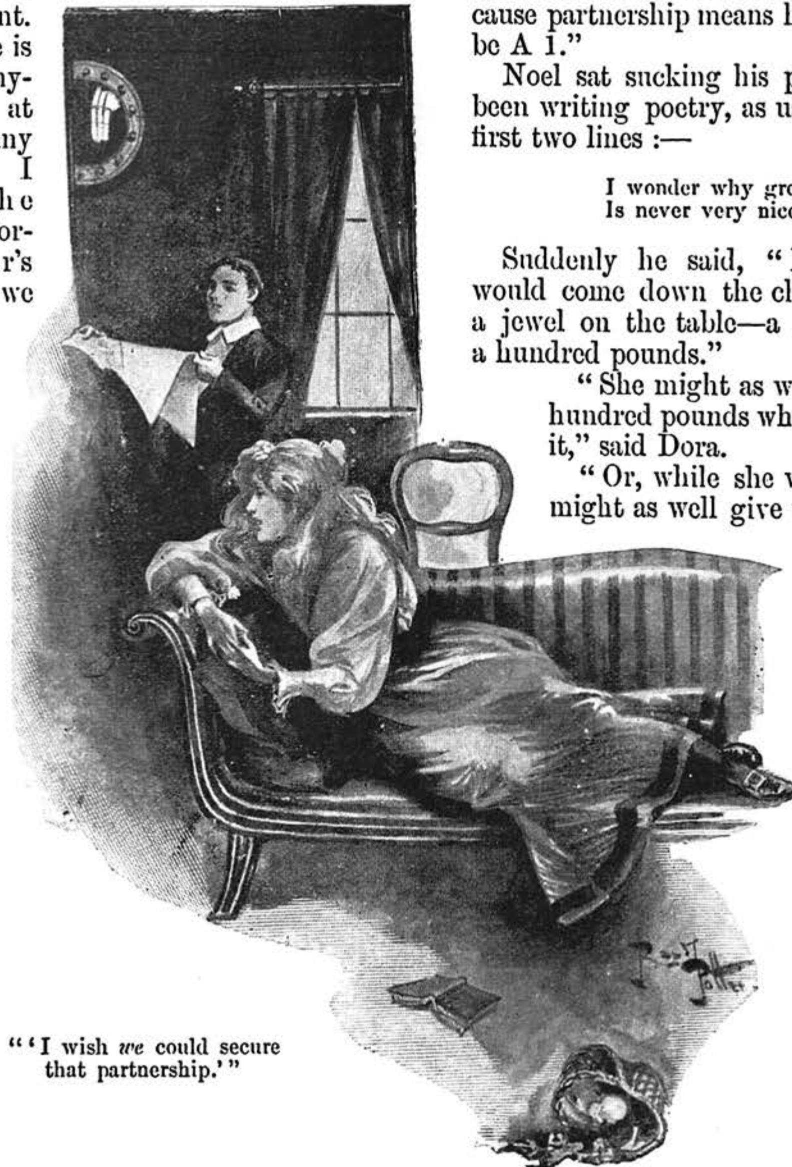
By E. Nesbit.

Illustrated by Raymond Potter.

WE thought of all sorts of ways to restore the fallen fortunes of our house. You see, we had been rich once. Oswald and Dora can remember when father was always bringing nice things home from London, and there used to be game and wine and cigars sent as Christmas presents, and boxes of candied fruit, and French plums in boxes with silk and velvet and gilt on them. They were called prunes; but the prunes you buy at the grocer's are quite different. But now there is very seldom anything nice at Christmas or any other time. I suppose the people have forgotten father's address; so we used to look at the advertisements in the *Daily Chronicle*, and one day Dickie read out this:—

> £100 secures partnership in lucrative business for sale of useful patent. £10 weekly. No personal attendance necessary Jepson, 106, Old Street Road.

"I wish *we* could secure that partnership," said Oswald. He is twelve, and a very thoughtful boy for his age.



"'I wish *we* could secure that partnership.'"

Alice looked up from her painting. She was trying to paint a fairy queen's frock with green bice, and it wouldn't rub. There is something funny about green bice; it will never rub off, no matter how expensive your paint box is, and even boiling water is very little use.

She said, "Bother the bice; and, Oswald, it's no use thinking about that. Where are we to get a hundred pounds?"

"Ten pounds a week is five pounds to *us*," Oswald went on—he had done the sum in his head while Alice was talking—"because partnership means halves. It would be A 1."

Noel sat sucking his pencil. He had been writing poetry, as usual. I saw the first two lines:—

> I wonder why green bice
> Is never very nice.

Suddenly he said, "I wish a fairy would come down the chimney and drop a jewel on the table—a jewel worth just a hundred pounds."

"She might as well give you the hundred pounds while she was about it," said Dora.

"Or, while she was about it, she might as well give us five pounds a week," said Alice.

"Or fifty," said I.

"Or five hundred," said Dickie.

I saw H. O. open his mouth—his name is Horace Octavius, but the other is shorter—and I knew he was going to say, "Or five thousand"; so I said, "Well, she won't give us five pence;

but if you would only do as I am always saying, and rescue a wealthy old gentleman from deadly peril, he would give us a pot of money, and we could have the partnership and five pounds a week. Five pounds a week would buy a great many things."

Then Dickie said, "Why shouldn't we borrow it?" So we said, "Who from?" And then he read this out of the paper :—

> Money privately, without fees. The Bond Street Bank (manager, Z. Rosenbaum) advances cash from £20 to £10,000 on ladies' or gentlemen's note of hand alone, without security. No fees. No inquiries. Absolute privacy guaranteed.

"What does it all mean?" asked H. O.

"It means that there is a kind gentleman who has a lot of money, and he doesn't know enough poor people to help, so he puts it in the paper that he will help them by lending them his money; that's it, isn't it, Dickie?"

Dora explained this, and Dickie said, "Yes," and H. O. said he was a Generous Benefactor, like in Miss Edgeworth. Then Noel wanted to know what a note of hand was, and Dickie knew that, because he had read it in a book, and it was just a letter saying you will pay the money when you can, and signed with your name.

"No inquiries." said Alice. "Oh, Dickie, do you think he would?"

"Yes, I think so," said Dickie. "I wonder father doesn't go to this kind gentleman. I've seen his name before on a circular in father's study."

"Perhaps he has," said Dora; but the rest of us were sure he hadn't, because, of course, if he had there would have been more money to buy nice things.

Just then Pincher jumped up and knocked over the painting water. He is a very careless dog. I wonder why painting water is always such an ugly colour. Dora ran for a duster to wipe it up, and H. O. dropped drops of the water on his hands and said he had got the plague. So we played at the plague a bit, and I was an Arab physician and cured the plague with magic acid drops.

After that it was time for dinner, and after dinner we talked it all over and settled that we would go and see the Generous Benefactor the very next day. Of course we all wanted to go, but we thought perhaps the G. B.—it is short for Generous Benefactor—would not like it if there were so many of us. I have often noticed that it is the worst of our being six—people think six a great many when it's children. That sentence looks wrong somehow. I mean they don't mind six pairs of boots, or six pounds of apples, or six oranges, especially in equations, but they seem to think you ought not to have five brothers and sisters. Of course Dickie was to go, because it was his idea. Dora had to go to Blackheath to see an old lady, a friend of father's, so she couldn't go. Alice said she ought to go, because it said "ladies and gentlemen," and perhaps the G. B. wouldn't let us have the money unless there were both kinds of us.

"Then he called her a disagreeable cat, and she began to cry."

H. O. said Alice wasn't a lady, and she said he wasn't going, any way. Then he called her a disagreeable cat, and she began to cry.

But Oswald always tries to make up quarrels, so he said, "You're little sillies, both of you."

And Dora said, "Don't cry, Alice; he only meant you weren't a grown-up lady."

Then H. O. said, "What else did you think I meant, disagreeable?"

So Dickie said, "Don't be disagreeable yourself, H. O. Let her alone and say you're sorry, or I'll jolly well make you."

So H. O. said he was sorry. Then Alice kissed him and said she was sorry, too, and after that H. O. gave her a hug, and said, "Now I'm really and truly sorry"; so it was all right.

Noel went the last time we went to London, so he was out of it, and Dora said she would take him to Blackheath if we'd take H. O. So, as there'd been a row, we thought it was better to take him, and we did. At first we thought we'd tear our oldest things a bit more and put some patches of different colours on them to show the G. B. how much we wanted money. But Dora said that it would be a sort of cheating, pretending we were poorer than we were; and Dora is right sometimes, though she is a girl. Then we thought we'd better wear our best things, so that the G. B. might see we weren't so very poor that he couldn't trust us to pay his money back when we had it. But Dora said that would be wrong, too. So it came to our being quite honest, as Dora said, and going just as we were, without even washing our faces and hands; but when I looked at H. O.'s in the train, I wished we had not been quite so particularly honest.

Everyone who reads this knows what it is like to go in the train, so I shall not tell about it, though it was rather fun, especially the part where the guard came for the tickets at Vauxhall, and H. O. was under the seat, and pretended to be a dog without a ticket. We went to Charing Cross, and we just went round by Whitehall to see the soldiers, and then by St. James's Palace for the same reason, and when we'd looked in the shops a little we got to Grafton Street. It was a brass plate on a door next to a shop —a very grand place, where they sold bonnets and hats, all very bright and smart, and no tickets on them to tell you the price. We rang a bell, and a boy opened the door, and we asked for Mr. Rosenbaum. The boy was not polite—he did not ask us in. So then Dickie gave him his visiting card; it was one of father's, really, but the name is the same —Mr. Richard Bastable—and we others wrote our names underneath. I happened to have a piece of pink chalk in my pocket, and we wrote them with that.

Then the boy shut the door in our faces, and we waited on the step. But presently he came down and asked our business. So Dickie said—

"Money advanced, young shaver, and don't be all day about it!"

And then he made us wait again, till I was quite stiff in my legs, but Alice liked it, because of looking at the hats and bonnets; and at last the door opened and the boy said, "Mr. Rosenbaum will see you."

So we wiped our feet on the mat, which said so, and we went up stairs with soft carpets and into a room. It was a beautiful room. I wished then we had put on our best things, or at least washed a little; but it was too late now.

The room had velvet curtains and a soft, soft carpet, and it was full of the most splendid things—inlaid cabinets, and china, and statues, and pictures. There was a picture of a cabbage and a pheasant and a dead hare that was just like life, and I would have given worlds to have it for my own. The fur was so natural, I should never have got tired of looking at it; but Alice liked the one of the girl with the broken jug best. Then, besides the pictures, there were clocks, and candlesticks, and vases, and gilt looking-glasses, and boxes of cigars and scent and things littered all over the tables and chairs. It was a wonderful place; and in the middle of all the splendour was a little old gentleman with a very long black coat and a very long white beard and a hooky nose like a falcon. And he put on a pair of gold spectacles and looked at us as if he knew exactly how much our clothes were worth; and while we elder ones were thinking how to begin—for we had all said "Good morning" as we came in, of course—H. O. began before we could stop him. He said—

"Are you the G. B.?"

"The *what?*" said the little old gentleman.

"The G. B.," said H. O., and I winked at him to shut up, and he didn't see me, and the G. B. did. He waved his hand at *me* to shut up, so I had to, and H. O. went on—

"It stands for Generous Benefactor."

The old gentleman frowned. Then he said, "Your father sent you here, I suppose?"

"No, he didn't," said Dickie. "Why did you think so?"

The old gentleman held out the card, and I explained that we took that because father's name happens to be the same as Dickie's.

"Doesn't he know you've come?"

"No," said Alice. "We shan't tell him till we've got the partnership, because his own business worries him a good deal, and we don't want to bother him with ours till it's settled, and then we shall give him half our share."

The old gentleman took off his spectacles

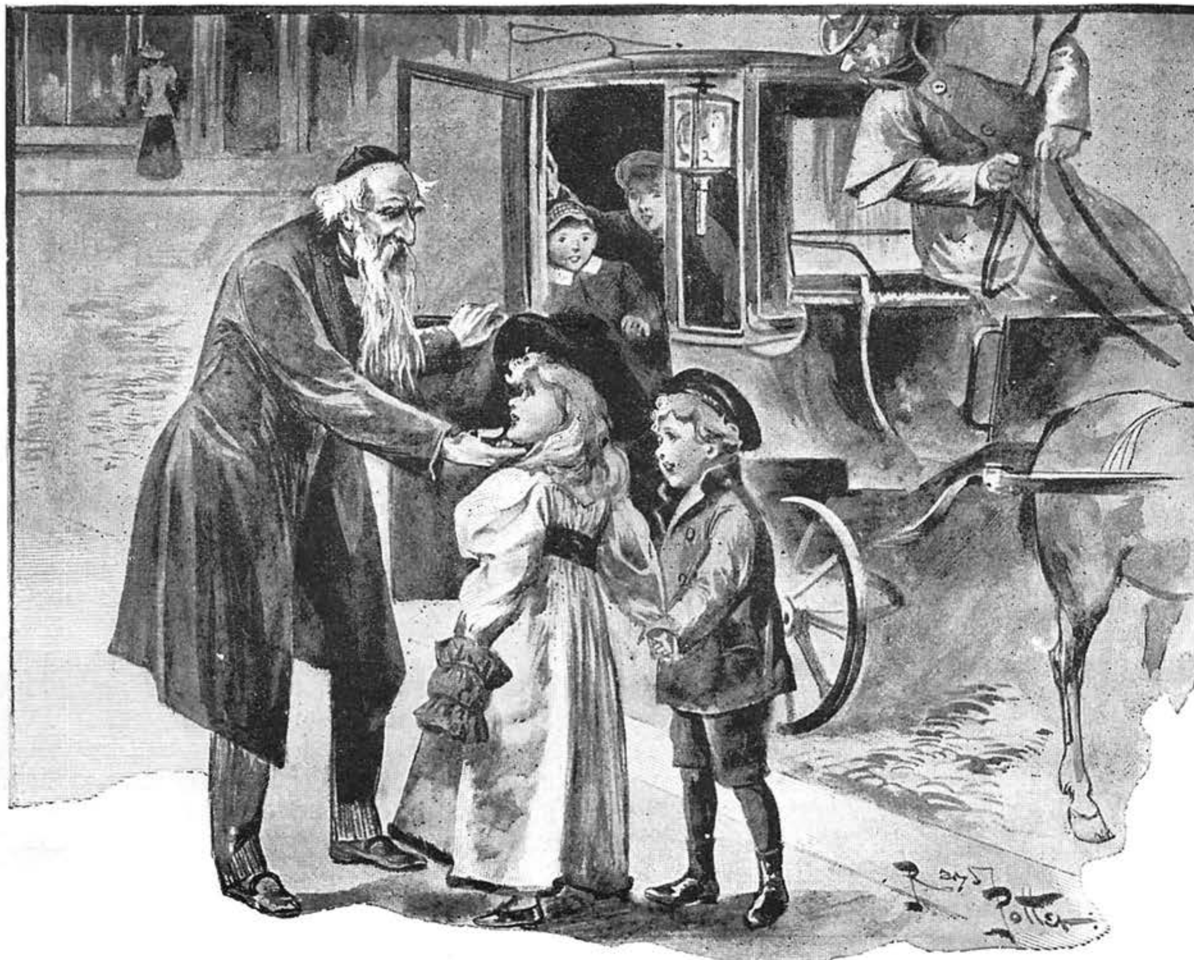
and rubbed his hair with his hands; then he said, "Then what did you come for?"

"We saw your advertisement," Dickie said, "and we want a hundred pounds on our note of hand, and my sister came so that there should be both kinds of us, and we want it to buy a partnership in the lucrative business for sale of useful patent—no personal attendance necessary."

"I don't think I quite follow you," said the G. B.; "but one thing I should like settled before entering more fully into the

"Now," he said, "you ought to be at school instead of thinking about money. Why aren't you?"

We told him we should go to school again when father could manage it; but, meantime, we wanted to do something to restore the fallen fortunes of the house of Bastable, and we said we thought the lucrative business would be a very good thing. He asked a lot of questions, and we told him everything we didn't think father would mind our telling, and at last he said, "You



"He shook hands with us all, and asked Alice to give him a kiss."

matter—why did you call me the Generous Benefactor?"

"Well, you see," said Alice, smiling at him to show she wasn't frightened—though I know really she was, awfully—"we thought it was so very kind of you to try to find out the poor people who want money, and to help them, and lend them your money."

"Hum!" said the G. B. "Sit down."

He cleared the clocks and vases and candlesticks off some of the chairs, and we sat down. The chairs were velvet, with gilt legs. It was like a king's palace.

wish to borrow money. When will you repay it?"

"As soon as we've got it, of course." Dickie said.

Then the G. B. said to Oswald, "You seem the eldest." But I explained to him that it was Dickie's idea, so my being the eldest didn't matter.

Then he said to Dickie, "You are a minor, I presume?"

Dickie said he wasn't yet, but he had thought of being a mining engineer and going to Klondyke.

"Min*or*, not min*er*," said the G. B. "I mean you're not of age?"

"I shall be in ten years, though," Dickie said.

"Then you might repudiate the loan," said the G. B., and Dickie said, "What?" Of course he ought to have said, "I beg your pardon, I didn't quite catch what you said." That is what Oswald would have said; it is more polite than "What?"

"Repudiate the loan," the G. B. repeated. "I mean you might say you would not pay me back the money, and the law could not compel you to do so."

"Oh, well, if you think we are such sneaks——" said Dickie, and he got up off his chair. But the G. B. said, "Sit down, sit down, I was only joking."

Then he talked some more, and at last he said, "I don't advise you to enter into that partnership. It's a swindle. Many advertisements are. And I have not a hundred pounds by me to lend you; but I will lend you a pound, and you can spend it as you like, and when you are twenty-one you shall pay me back."

"I shall pay you back long before that," said Dickie. "Thanks awfully. And what about the note of hand?"

"Oh," said the G. B., "I'll trust to your honour. Between gentlemen, you know, and ladies"—he made a bow to Alice—"a word is as good as a bond."

Then he took out a sovereign and held it in his hand while he talked to us. He gave us a lot of good advice about not going into business too young, and about doing our lessons—just swatting a bit on our own hook, so as not to be put in a low form when we went back to school. And all the time he was stroking the sovereign, and looking at it as if he thought it very beautiful. And so it was, for it was a new one. Then, at last, he held it out to Dickie, and when Dickie held out his hand for it the G. B. suddenly put the sovereign back into his pocket.

"No," he said, "I won't give you the sovereign; I'll give you fifteen shillings and this nice bottle of scent. It's worth far more than the five shillings I'm charging you for it. And you shall pay me back the pound and only sixty per cent. interest—sixty per cent.—sixty per cent.!"

"What's that?" said H. O.

The G. B. said he'd tell us when we paid him back the sovereign, but sixty per cent. was nothing to be afraid of.

He gave Dickie the money. The boy was made to call a cab, and he put us in and shook hands with us all, and asked Alice to give him a kiss. So she did, and H. O. would do it, too, though his face was dirtier than ever. The G. B. paid the cabman and told him where to go, and so we went home.

That evening father had a letter by the seven o'clock post, and when he had read it he came up into our nursery. He did not look quite so unhappy as usual, but he looked grave.

"You've been to Mr. Rosenbaum," he said.

So we told him all about it. It took a long time, and father sat in the armchair. He doesn't often come and talk to us now; he has to spend all his time thinking about his business. And when we'd told him all about it, he said—

"You haven't done any harm, this time, children—rather good than harm, indeed. Mr. Rosenbaum has written me a very kind letter."

"Is he a friend of yours, father?" Oswald asked.

"He is an acquaintance," said my father, frowning a little. "We have done business together. And this letter——" He stopped, and then said, "No, you didn't do any harm to-day, but I want you for the future not to do anything so serious as to buy a partnership without consulting me. That's all. I don't want to interfere with your plays and pleasures, but you will consult me about business matters, won't you?"

Of course we said we would with pleasure. Then Alice, who was sitting on his knee, said, "We didn't like to bother you."

Father said, "I haven't much time to be with you, for my business takes most of my time. It is an anxious business. But I can't bear to think of your being left alone like this."

He looked so sad, we all said we liked being alone; and then he looked sadder than ever.

Then Noel said, "We don't mean that, exactly, father. It is rather lonely sometimes, since mother died."

Then we were all quiet for a little while.

Father stayed with us till we went to bed, and when he said, "Good-night," he looked quite cheerful. So we told him so, and he said, "That letter took a weight off my mind."

I can't think what he meant, but I am sure the G. B. would be pleased if he knew he had taken a weight off anybody's mind. He is that sort of noble-minded man, I think.

A MENU FOR A BICYCLE PICNIC.

By AMY S. WOODS.

WHEN balmy summer decks the earth with gold our thoughts turn naturally to the attractions of leafy woodlands and sylvan shades, of limpid streams and meadows dimpled o'er with flowers.

Alas, however, it must sadly be admitted that to however great a height our poetical and romantic feelings may soar, however much we may revel in the rich feast which lavish nature spreads before our higher faculties, our physical nature cannot and will not be satisfied with any "feast of reason" or draught of beauty alone, and the loveliest landscape is apt to grow tame and lifeless when we are—*hungry*. Yes, there is no help for it, though it seems quite "a come-down" to admit it when we have been dwelling in a land of imagination and dreamy fancy; but it is an unavoidable necessity that we should feed our lower nature as well as our higher, and therefore I submit these few suggestions for a picnic menu.

With the bill of fare for an ordinary picnic wherein joints and fowls, champagne and ices, find a place, we will, if you please, have nothing to do. We do not want to turn our sylvans repast into a bad imitation of the Café Veney or the St. James' Restaurant, but simply desire to refresh exhausted nature in as pleasant a form as may be, avoiding on the one hand the tough meat and bread and cheese of the average country inn, or any cumbersome baskets and packages on the other.

Before passing on to the consideration of the menu itself, let me explain that it is intended principally for cyclists who prefer a light weight on their handle-bars or carriers to an elaborate luncheon, but it will admit of extension or modification, according to circumstances.

I have not included many beverages for the sole reason that they are so difficult to carry. Ginger-beer, lemonade or milk and a few bottles of soda-water can be purchased in most villages of any size, or if quite a country place is selected, a hamper of such fragile yet without weighty articles may be sent on by carrier beforehand, or by rail to the nearest station, and thence conveyed to the scene of action.

Having introduced the subject of beverages, I may as well finish with it before proceeding to the menu proper. The quantities provided in the list are sufficient for about fifteen people, if gentlemen share the feast, or for twenty girls. It will, therefore, readily be seen that to provide cups, glasses, or even beverages in bottles for such a number would be a severe tax upon any party of cyclists. The hostess or hostesses, or the arrangers of the party must therefore be guided by circumstances. If the picnic is a very free and easy affair, two or more glasses or cups may be taken and washed as required should there be a "limpid stream" conveniently placed for the purpose; otherwise it would be better to send the glasses when the beverages are sent, or if bought *en route*, to borrow them or hire them where the lemonade and so forth is bought.

In either case, however, a bottle of raspberry syrup and one of portable lemonade, both of which only require the addition of water, simple or aerated, will be found very acceptable, for as we all know, cycling, especially in summer-time, is thirsty work. If tea is preferred to any other beverage, or if it is wanted as well, any respectable-looking cottage will furnish a kettle of boiling water for threepence and probably lend some cups as well, while two of the party can scour the country side for a pennyworth of milk or even cream, though in the case of novices I do not advise them to try milking any stray cows by way of getting it.

The menu itself is as follows—

Pressed Tongue Sandwiches.
Chicken and Ham Sandwiches.
Eggs in Jelly Sandwiches.
Cucumber Sandwiches.
Cress Sandwiches.
Victoria Sandwich.
Cold Plum Pudding.
Shortbread.
Fruit.

If tea is required as well, one or two cakes, a tin of biscuits and some bread-and-butter will need to be added to the list.

You will notice there is nothing that necessitates the conveyance of knives and forks, either for eating or serving; though most people will prefer to take three or four large forks or tablespoons to help the pudding and the sandwiches and fruit. Nor are plates required. Two dozen dessert papers (round) answer the purpose admirably, and can be buried or burnt, not thrown away when done with. Oval dish-papers will hold the various sandwiches, cakes and pudding, and the fruit will look its best on some cool green leaves. It may appear that the cutting of so many sandwiches will involve a good deal of labour, but "many hands make light work," much can be done the day before, and the saving in weight and trouble, both on the road and at the picnic, will be adequate compensation for any trouble beforehand.

For the tongue sandwiches a tinned tongue is best. The Paysandu or Poulton and Noel's are reliable brands. The chicken sandwiches should be made of roast fowl, pounded in a mortar with plenty of seasoning, gravy and three or four ounces of cooked ham. This should be done the day before, and when the pounded meat is a perfectly smooth paste it may be set away in a jar in a cool place. The advantage of pounding meat consists in the avoidance of all waste; there are no crumbs or fragments to drop about, and all the fowl except the sinews and bones can be used.

For the eggs in jelly, stew down the carcase of your fowl, and all trimmings of the ham (not fat) in three pints of cold water, adding a scrap of onion, a small bunch of fine herbs, a sprig or two of parsley and some pepper and salt; a little celery or celery-seed is an improvement. When reduced to two pints strain it off, stir into it a teaspoonful of Liebeg's essence and half an ounce of leaf gelatine, set over the fire till the gelatine has melted. Meanwhile cut ten or twelve hard boiled eggs in slices, pour a little of the jelly into a plain, rather shallow mould previously well wetted, arrange in it a layer of egg; when nearly set cover with more jelly, when that is set add another layer of eggs, and so on till you have used all your materials. The mould should be set during the process either on ice or in a pan of salt and water in a cellar or cool place.

The Victoria sandwich can be made the day before, using the weight of four eggs in flour and sugar, the weight of one in butter, a tablespoonful of baking-powder and some vanilla flavouring. The mixture should be an inch thick when baked. Split whilst hot and spread with a stiff jam.

As every housewife has her own particular recipe for plum pudding, I will pass that over in silence.

The shortbread can be bought, but it is cheaper and more wholesome when made at home.

Beat one pound and a half of butter to a cream, gradually sift into it three pounds of flour, and half a pound of ground rice and half a pound of sugar. Turn on to a board, make a hole in the middle and work in one large egg or two small ones, adding a little milk if too dry. When quite smooth roll out to the thickness of half an inch, divide into triangular pieces, prick them all over, pinch the edges and bake in a good oven for half an hour. Keep in a tin.

For the sandwiches lay in a stock of sandwich or tin loaves twenty-four hours old, and a pound of good butter.

If time is likely to run short on the day of your picnic, you can economise it by cutting the bread-and-butter for the sandwiches the previous evening. Do not put on the butter too lavishly, for a greasy sandwich is an abomination. Pile the slices closely together and pack them in an old biscuit-tin (perfectly clean and dry) and set the tin on a brick floor or in a cool place until the morning.

The tongue may also be sliced the evening before, and a supply of mustard, pepper and salt set ready to hand, also a spoonful or two of mayonnaise sauce for the cucumber sandwiches.

When you commence the work of sandwich-making, let one person arrange the meat, etc., on the bread, another cut into shape, and a third pack in white paper and label. Do not cut the sandwiches too small—four on a round of bread is about the size for hungry folk, and do not remove all the crust.

Make the packages a convenient size for the bicycle baskets or carriers of those who have to convey them, and tie them up firmly. The closer the contents are pressed the less dry are they likely to become.

The cucumber and cress sandwiches should be made last of all as they get dry so soon.

It will be found easy to pack the pudding (in slices), Victoria sandwiches and shortbread in a very small space. If tea is taken do not forget a little sugar and one teaspoon.

The question of fruit must be individually decided, as so much depends upon the kinds in season, whether it is best to take it with one or to buy it at the place where you are going. In the case of the fortunate people who possess a good garden it is certainly more satisfactory to take or send it on before, but in the case of London girls going into the country, I should certainly advise it being bought on the spot. Cottagers are as a rule only too glad to sell currants, raspberries, cherries, gooseberries and apples to any one who will buy them, and in the autumn a blackberry picnic furnishes a delightful excuse for a day in the country.

The recipe for portable lemonade was given in my paper on "Summer Beverages," which appeared in "Summer Spices," the extra Summer Number of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER for 1896; but for the benefit of any readers who may not have a copy of that number I will conclude my remarks by repeating it.

Boil together a pound of loaf sugar and a pint of cold water till clear, then add the thinly-peeled rind of one lemon, and, after the white pith is removed, the fruit itself thinly sliced and free from pips. Boil for twenty minutes, then remove from the fire and add one ounce of citric acid. Strain into a jug, and when cool bottle and cork tightly. Use one tablespoonful in a small tumbler of water.

With Regard to Age.

THE incoming of the new year, about the time when this is written, would seem to make the subject of age a timely Topic. Perhaps it is natural that the less age a person has, the less vitally interested he is in the subject. And yet, on the other hand, the more age a person has, and the more interested he is in the subject, the less agreeable its contemplation and discussion seem to be. The young, as a rule, can talk about age, even old age, without any sense of unpleasantness, because the young, while they expect to live forever, do not expect ever to be old. To the young the state of old age is unthinkable. Young people like to play with the idea of old age. Young poets are apt to write verses about it; but the interest on their part is a matter of sentimentalism rather than of true sentiment.

After writing thus far there comes to memory a story printed in this magazine for March, 1876. Mr. Edward Bellamy, in the days before he was transformed from an imaginative artist into an earnest propagandist,—when he was writing those delightful and original stories which we dare say he now regards as comparatively a waste of powers, save as they gave him his training for the ingenious works which carry his « message » to such an immense number of readers,—in those old days Mr. Bellamy wrote a little story in which he shows the usual attitude of youth toward the idea of old age, and also the disturbing effect of that idea when circumstances have brought it home to young minds in a novel and pressing way. A group of young people belonging to the social club of a New England village resolve to have an « old folks' party.» The plan was to dress so as to resemble what they expected to look like fifty years hence. They were to study up their demeanor to correspond with what they expected to be and feel like at that time. As Henry, the originator of the happy thought, put it, they would just call on Mary next Wednesday evening to talk over old times, and recall what they could, if anything, of their vanished youth, and the days when they belonged to the social club at C——. It was to be a sort of ghost party—« ghosts of the future, instead of ghosts of the past.» There is a touch, by the way, of the coming Bellamy in the remark of one of the characters: « Ghosts of the future are the only sort worth heeding. Apparitions of things past are a very unpractical sort of demonology, in my opinion, compared with apparitions of things to come.»

There was great amusement at the old folk's party. The boys and girls entered into the idea with heartiness and ingenuity. But their parts had been so well studied, and were so well played, that after the thing had gone on awhile « the pathos and melancholy of the retrospections in which they were indulging became real.» All felt that if it was acting now, it was but the rehearsal of a coming reality. So when, finally, Mary went to the piano and sang, to an air in a minor key, « The days that are no more,» the girls found themselves crying. Suddenly Henry sprang to his feet, tore off his wig, letting the brown hair fall over his forehead, and cried: « Thank God, thank God, it is only a dream.» Instantly the transformation was effected, and the boys and girls were waltzing in the « maddest round that ever was danced.» After an exhausted pause, they noticed that the one real grandmother at the party was smiling through tears. About her they gathered with affectionate caresses, weeping again because they could not take the old lady back with them into youth.

But would the old lady have wished to go back—unless they could have revived for her the companions of her own young days? To this same old lady they had come for costumes, and to ask her to go with them to the party and, as a matter of fact, also to observe the peculiarities of old age; and she had said to one of them, as if she « saw right through » her: « I suppose, my child, you think being old a sort of misfortune, like being hunchbacked or blind, and are afraid of hurting my feelings; but you need n't be. The good Lord has made it so that at whichever end of life we are the other end looks pretty uninteresting; and if it won't hurt your feelings to have somebody in the party who has got through all the troubles you have yet before you I should be glad to come.» Was it bravado on the old lady's part? Was it the habit of an unselfish lifetime, to make the girls cheerful by pretending that she herself was cheerful? Or was she content? Who knows, except the old women and the old men themselves?

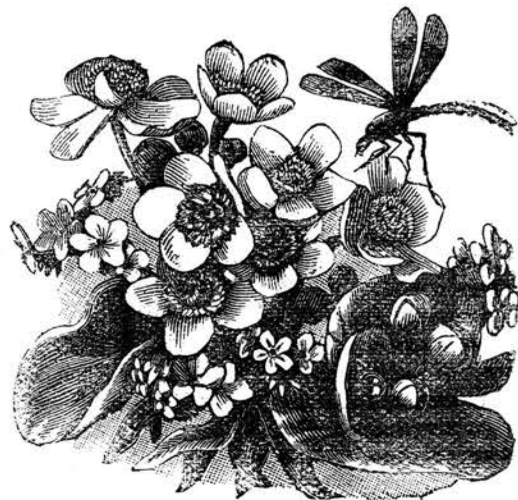
Notwithstanding Charles Dudley Warner's contention that fiction, or at least some fiction, is stranger than truth, there is enough strangeness in truth to account for the familiar proverb. Something has just come to our notice that has an inverted resemblance to Mr. Bellamy's story. (We wish Mr. Bellamy would put it in his note-book.) A « veteran » of the Army of the Potomac, one of the youngest officers in that army, by the way—dropped in the other day, and told us that his friends were about to celebrate his eighteenth birthday. It seems that, just before the exact date of that birthday, a Confederate projectile plowed a hole along the top of his head,—you can lay your finger in the furrow now,—and left him in no condition for festivity. He was for a long time more dead than alive, and funereal honors would have been more appropriate at the time than any other ceremonies. It was the only birthday of his fifty odd which had passed without celebration, and his friends thought that it was a pity that his heroism should stand in the way of a proper birthday feast, even if this should have been unavoidably delayed a third of a century. We do not know just how the « occasion » is to be « improved.» We hope the veteran will remember to forget everything that has come to pass since he recovered consciousness in the very stress and agony of the

great war. As it happens, his hair is still dark, and he can look the part to singular perfection. We can see the fire and determination in his eye as he addresses the assembled company; we can see him as he urges «the boys» to stand by the flag, and «honest old Abe,» and the imperiled Union. And these grizzle-beards about him, do they partake of the illusion? Though, most of them, so much older, is it not as easy for them as for him to throw off, in their minds, the accidents of age, and again, with breathless frenzy, «up and at them» through storm of whistling bullets and howling shells?

Of one thing we may be sure: that most people who are called old feel younger, and therefore may be said to be younger, than they are called. And one reason why most people feel younger in their middle and old age than others regard them is that the first impression is the deepest, and our first impression of ourselves is that we are young. Not that every one does not have at various times a strong sense of age; but this sense may come upon one with as great force in youth as in advanced years. A friend, not young, once told us that he had never had the realization of advancing age thrust upon him with more powerful effect than when, over thirty years before, he entered a barber-shop, and with fear and shame offered his virgin mustache to the remorseless blade. It seemed as if «youth, the dream,» had indeed departed. The same self-observant psychologist remembered another sobering and disillusioning plunge into something like old age. His salary had been raised; he was no longer to be the struggling, and therefore perhaps somewhat interesting, young economist that he had believed himself destined always to be. Our friend said that it was singular, in this case, how soon the melancholy of accomplishment and of age-in-youth disappeared under the growing conviction that his unexpectedly large income was in reality not half large enough to meet his absolutely necessary expenses.

The attitude of Mr. Bellamy's young people toward the old is well-nigh universal in the Occidental world, whatever may be the feeling in the Orient; and perhaps we do not fully understand the psychology of the Orient. It is impossible for an old person to argue away the feeling of a young person toward an old person. It is an attitude of affection, of respect, of awe, of all sorts of sentiments, according to individuality; but in relation to the one quality of age, the younger gives «the look from above downward,» just as the grandmother in Mr. Bellamy's story suspected. The young person may not be fully aware of this attitude on his own part; and the older person may be philosophical about it, and think little of it, as he should; but, as a rule, it is there.

What good would it do for the old person to say: «My young friend, you take a very unphilosophical position with regard to my age. I am merely myself, which includes all that youth which you now have, and a good deal more besides. I simply have succeeded in keeping alive. You know what Tennyson says about ‹the glory of going on, and still to be.› Well, unless you are deprived of this glory, you will soon have passed through that brief experience of youth with which every life begins. And, besides, I may be a good deal younger than you suppose. For age is relative. Men and women nominally of the same age are by no means truly so. Every life is a clock, wound up to go so many hours, and then to stop, so far as this world is concerned. One human machine is wound up to run, barring accident, say fifty years; another seventy years; another ninety or a hundred years. Suppose that three men were born on the same day, and you asked each of them, forty years after birth, how old he was; would forty years old be the correct answer in each case? Of course not; and it is the injustice of such calculations that makes most women and many men sensitive on the subject of their age. Popular arithmetic is deficient in this particular. You need not smile. Go and ask some biologist if I am not right. It is the amount of initial vitality that counts. You think you are twenty years younger than I am, and you look down upon me from your altitude of youth. As a matter of scientific fact—in the strict measurement of vitalities—you may be six months older than I am. There is enough that is tragic about age without complicating the subject with conventional inaccuracies. Yes; perhaps I am hovering about the seventies. There is nothing in that to frighten any but the plenary inspirationist and strict constructionist; for sanitary science, medicine, and surgery long ago antiquated the psalmist's baleful ‹threescore years and ten.› Any actuary can tell you that human longevity is increasing. And, besides, as the commander said to his troops in the thick of the battle, does a man want ‹to live forever›?»



Wedding Clothes.

"IF either of my daughters want to get married they will have to elope," I heard a gentleman say a few evenings since, "for I am not in circumstances to provide the *trousseau* the average young lady thinks positively necessary."

His remark caused a general laugh; but the subject of wedding garments is a very serious one, and very often there is a very little common sense shown in the preparation of the wardrobe of the expectant bride.

It is well to provide a good outfit, but it should be a suitable one, and have reference to the sort of life the bride is to lead.

I knew, years ago, a young girl who prepared a very elaborate *trousseau* on the occasion of her marriage to a gentleman whose home was several hundred miles from her own. He was too busy to visit her often, and she made no inquiries as to the social position she would occupy as his wife, but took it for granted that she would find use for evening, ball, and

lunch dresses, and therefore had many such made. Her surprise and chagrin may be imagined when, on arriving at her new home, she found that her husband cared nothing for society, and was so thoroughly tired on his return from business in the evening that all he desired was his newspaper or a quiet game of cards. He did not dance, abhorred visiting, and had no lady friends to introduce to his wife. And he could not be persuaded to keep house ; so his wife had to give up any idea of entertaining.

A year after her marriage when she had settled down to a quiet, monotonous existence which knew no dissipation other than an occasional evening at the theater, she packed a trunk full of her wedding finery and sent it home to her younger sister.

"I find no use for anything better than a black silk," she said in the letter which accompanied the trunk, "and it is wicked to let these handsome dresses go out of fashion without being used. I do hope, Nellie, that when you marry you will have a more sensible *trousseau* than mine was."

Piles of underclothing are as unnecessary as a great number of dresses, for while the latter go out of fashion the former grows yellow and rotten. A friend of mine who on her marriage, nearly thirty years ago, had twenty-nine white skirts made is *wearing them still.*

"They will last as long as I live—some of them, at least," she said, "a perpetual reminder of my ignorance and folly."

In her anxiety to have a *trousseau* which shall do her credit and be a source of envy and admiration to her friends, the bride-elect who has not the means to have her sewing "done out" frequently overtasks herself to a lamentable degree.

This was the case with Ada H——. For three or four months before her marriage she sewed from eight in the morning until six at night, taking neither recreation nor exercise, and growing more nervous and irritable with every day. But her parents made no effort to check her zeal, seeming, indeed, to think it very praiseworthy, for they called the attention of all their friends to it.

A more delicate looking girl than Ada was on the day of her wedding it would have been hard to find, and it surprised no one except herself and her parents that within a week of her marriage she was taken ill with nervous prostration.

It was only at the cost of a stay of nearly a year at a home in the mountains, where she had complete rest and entire freedom from excitement and noise, that her nerves recovered their tone, and she was able to assume her duties as wife and housekeeper.

"I fairly loathe the sight of my wedding dresses," she said, one day, "for I cannot help thinking when I look at them of the wretchedness they cost me, and the many weary months I was separated from my husband because of them."

Calling on an intimate friend some time since, I found her finishing off a most elaborate white wrapper. The front was composed entirely of insertion, beneath which ran pale pink ribbon, and the long train was edged with lace.

"I thought you had too much to occupy you in the care of the baby and the house to spend time in making anything so elaborate as this," I said, as I examined it. "This is really a work of art."

"I can't let you think that I have been guilty of this folly since my marriage," she said, blushing. "No ; this was one of the night-dresses of my *trousseau*. John has assured me that he doesn't know 'bias from tuck,' and so I am turning it into a white wrapper to wear sometimes in the evening when it is too warm to dress up. I haven't altered it at all except to make the waist half-tight. It is hard for me to believe now that I ever was so silly as to put so much work on a *night-dress.*"

For years Carrie D—— had as housekeeper and seamstress a middle-aged woman who was very skillful with her needle, and kept Carrie well supplied with underclothes of the most beautiful make, and elaborately finished with every variety of embroidery and thread edge. But at length the woman became engaged to be married to a man living in Florida, and Carrie felt sure she should never see her again. So she set her immediately to work on underclothing, saying:

"No one can make underclothing like you, Margaret, and I want you to make me enough for a bridal outfit, for if I marry I will need them."

Margaret made *three dozen sets* before Carrie was satisfied. They were folded away in a big chest to wait the wedding of their foolish owner, and sad to tell, *they are there still*, though Carrie's hair is thickly sprinkled with gray, and there are numberless crows'-feet about her eyes.

Another young lady who had her underclothing very elaborately trimmed, has been obliged since her marriage to make herself some perfectly plain undergarments because she could not, in the little western town to which her husband carried her, find a washerwoman competent to do up laces and embroidery. It seems to be the custom for parents to provide the daughter's *trousseau* on her marriage without any reference to her future condition in life, but in accordance with her own wishes or the mother's desire to make a show.

Not long since I was invited to inspect the wedding garments of a very dear girl friend, who was to go to New Mexico to live. The dresses were too numerous to mention; but among them were a cardinal satin with plush polonaise of the same color, a green surah with damassé overdress and basque, a black satin elaborately trimmed in Spanish lace and jet, a black silk, a bronze gold rhadame with plush basque, and a black velvet underskirt to be worn with a polonaise of cream-colored satin. There were also several wrappers, one of pale blue cashmere trimmed in Oriental lace, and one of white surah silk. There were seven bonnets to match the different suits, and gloves, stockings, collars, and handkerchiefs without number.

Well, she was married—in a white moire with a long train and a Spanish lace flounce nearly a foot deep—and went away the happiest bride I ever saw ; but I have often wondered if she has ever worn any of those costly dresses; for I have had several letters from her, and she tells me she is living in a small settlement of about one hundred souls, fifty miles from a fort, and two hundred miles from a town !

Another friend who was married with great *éclat* found when she had been a wife only a few weeks that her husband was horribly in debt, and that the greatest economy was necessary if irretrievable ruin was to be averted.

She moved into the country at once, taking a house several miles from any other because the rent was low. In her last letter she said that for *three months* she had not spoken to a woman except her servant. She has her *trousseau*, in which are several ball and reception dresses, packed away in four large trunks in the garret ! She finds a calico morning dress and a black cashmere for evening all that she requires.

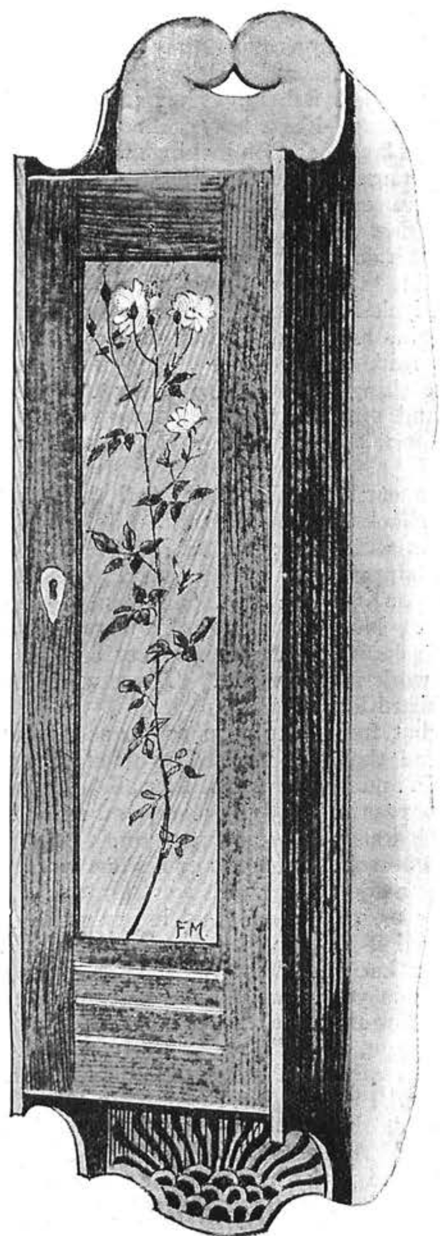
I might go on thus enumerating instances which have come under my personal experience of the folly of preparing a *trousseau* without regard to its future use ; but feel sure that any one who reads this can supply from his or her own experience similar cases without number.

In the choice of wedding presents the same regard to circumstances should be paid. It is not an unusual sight to see two people living on a very small income, and yet having in every room of their small house dozens of ornamental articles in gold, silver and cut glass in sad incongruity with the cheap ingrain carpets and plain furniture.

FLORENCE B. HALLOWELL.

A HANGING CUPBOARD WITH DECORATED PANEL.

THE design here given was suggested by a cupboard I saw at one of the exhibitions of the Home Arts Association at the Albert Hall. Most hanging cupboards are square, more or less, but it seemed to me a pleasant innovation to make a long narrow one. The proportion of the one sketched gives a good panel for decorating, and in order to enable the reader to see the details of the design, I have drawn the panel full size, though it has had to be reduced to get it within the compass of this page. The branch of rose, which forms the motif of the panel, was sketched direct from nature, but I carefully selected a spray which came simply, so that there is no confusion or complicated foreshortening to handicap the decorator. The result is that it might be treated as an inlay (an article appeared on inlaying or marquetry in No. 1154 of the "G.O.P."), but we will here confine our attention to brush-work. If the panel be some light natural wood, then the design might be transferred to the panel, and all the drawing done with a fine long-haired brush known as a rigger, using some dark colour such as burnt sienna and lamp-black mixed with a little copal varnish and turpentine. When this is quite dry, the leaves can be coloured with transparent oil colour, using such mixtures as Prussian blue and raw sienna, gamboge and terre verte, burnt sienna and viridian. Thin with varnish only, and float on with a camel-hair brush. "Break" the colour, as artists say, that is, do not mix up a lot of colour, but just tone the blue with the yellows, and so on. Don't think of getting a natural effect, but a pleasant piece of decoration. The flowers and butterflies can be put in with flake white, and when this is quite dry, the former can be glazed with a transparent tint of rose madder and gamboge mixed with varnish, while the insects can be variously coloured. Transparent or semi-transparent colours on light wood have a very soft and pleasant appearance.



DESIGN FOR HANGING CUPBOARD WITH DECORATED PANEL AND FRET-CUT END.
(For detail of panel see other design.)

Those who use gesso (see No. 1142 of the "G.O.P.") could employ it in carrying out this design with good effect. The gesso could be used for stems and flowers, leaving the leaves to be painted except where one leaf comes against another one: the gesso can be used to accent portions of the design. If the panel is painted a dark colour, then the decoration might be in light tones of greyish green, dull yellow, or red. The leaves and stem should be put in with flake-white thinned with turpentine, and when this is quite dry the drawing can be put in in outline, as I have before suggested, and then when this too is hard, the white can be glazed with some tone of colour. If yellow be the tone, and this would go well with a dull geeen or brownish ground, then use raw sienna, golden ochre, gamboge, cadmium or middle chrome, and possibly a touch of burnt sienna and terre verte just to give variety, but keep the whole design in some one tone of colour, so as to obtain a pleasant harmony. Remember you are decorating a piece of furniture and not painting a picture or making a transcript from Nature. A certain simplicity and even severity should characterise your work.

Artists' canvas, tinted with some greyish tint made of flake white, raw umber, cobalt, with a touch of yellow ochre put on thinly, so as to leave the grain of the canvas showing, could be used to paint on. It is a good plan to put the ground colour on with a palette knife, as by this means the colour is more "broken" looking, some parts of the canvas receiving more colour than others. Don't thin the colour, but use it as it comes from the tubes. When this is dry the design can be carried out in some simple way as before suggested, decorative rather than realistic. The canvas should be cut to fit the panel exactly, and it can be stuck on with very thin glue used boiling hot. The decoration might be quite finished before the canvas is stuck on the wood.

A word as to the cupboard itself. I have shown it is a hanging cupboard, but it could be made to fit a corner with a little adaptation. If it is for painting, then make it of pine or American bass-wood. If it is for a corner, then the two sides must come to a right angle. I have suggested a simple fret-cut or pierced design at the bottom just to give a little daintiness to the article. The top could be so treated if desired. In the case of a corner cupboard the piercing must be designed to be repeated on both sides, and not as shown in sketch. A corner cupboard would be easier to make, and I am inclined to think that it would have a nicer appearance than a square one. Many of my readers may have brothers who would do the wood-work, leaving the decoration to the sisters.

Paint of various shades can be purchased ready mixed in tins, or enamel could be used as a finishing coat, but if the panel is to be painted, do not enamel it, as paint does not take kindly to enamel.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

The Scullery.

A few words concerning the scullery and how to keep kitchen utensils generally may not be out of place.

Firstly, then, let us deal with the scullery sink, this bane of so many housekeepers. The sink should be cleaned thoroughly each time after washing up, and if housewives would insist upon this a great many troubles would be avoided.

Over the mouth of the waste-pipe I like a perforated brass or zinc trap, which cannot be removed; this prevents many a stoppage in the drain from an accumulation of potato-parings and odds and ends, even to knives and forks, being washed down.

If much grease has to be got rid of, or indeed very greasy pots washed, I recommend that when possible the water should not be thrown down the sink. But if this cannot be avoided then see that a kettleful of boiling water is poured down immediately afterwards. The reason why I advise this precaution is that the grease in the water in its passage down the cold pipe becomes cold and sticks to the sides of the pipe, gradually blocking the pipe up, and if not removed by the flush of boiling water it soon becomes unwholesome, and gives off bad gases which come up through the pipe into the house, and are undoubtedly the cause of much nausea and sickness, if of nothing worse.

Wooden Utensils.

All wooden utensils should be cleaned thoroughly each day after they are used. This is most necessary, as wood absorbs dirt and grease so easily, and if grease is allowed to soak in, it is most difficult to make the utensil sweet, clean and a good colour.

I deprecate the use of soda in washing wooden utensils, I find that it makes wood a bad colour.

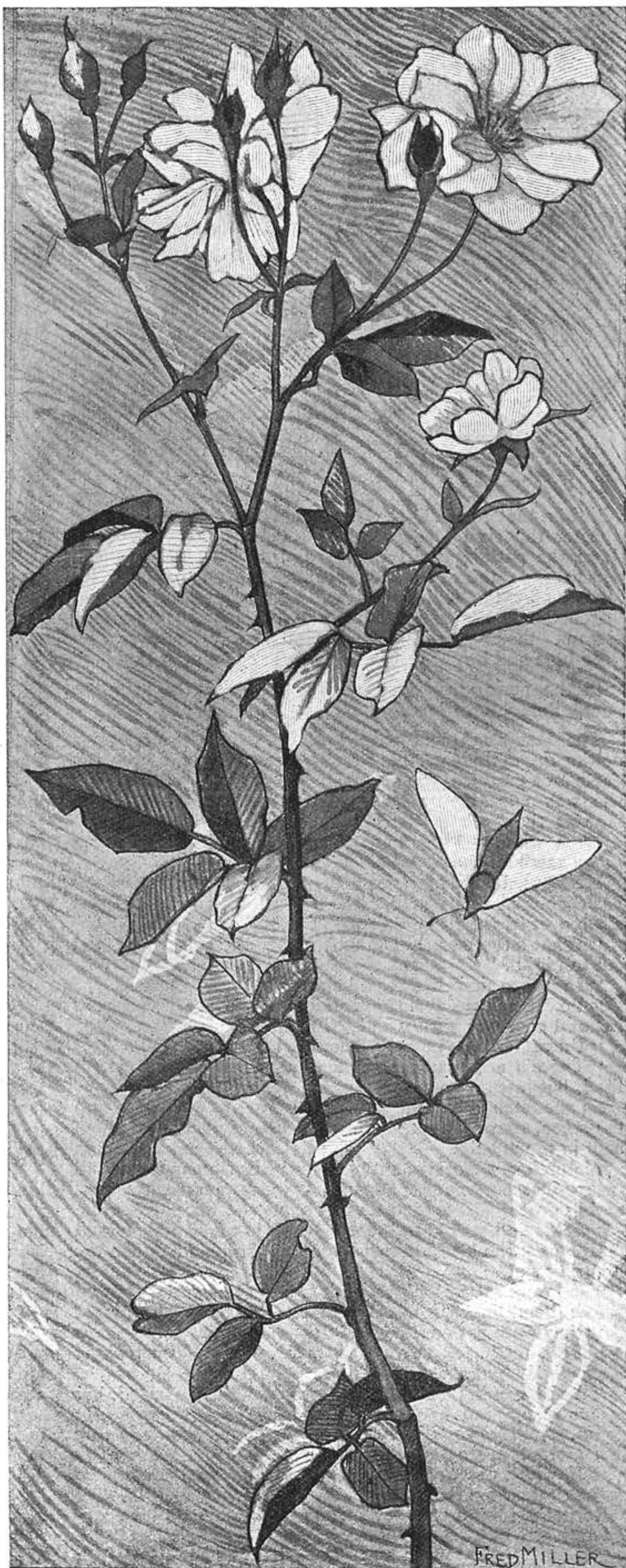
We will suppose you are going to wash a pastry board on which pastry has been made. First scrape off the flour and any paste which may have stuck to the board, wash the board well all over with cold water. If hot water were used the flour on the board would become sticky, and would be much more difficult to remove. Now scrub the board thoroughly with hot water, using a little soap on the scrubbing brush, and sprinkling a little Calais sand over the board. Be careful to scrub the way of the grain in the wood, otherwise the board will soon have a rough woolly appearance. Swill the board thoroughly with cold water to get rid of any particles of soap and sand. Dry the board with a clean dishcloth and stand it on end where the air can purify it, but not close to a fire, for fear of warping the wood.

Knives and Forks.

Knives and forks should never be thrown into a bath of hot water with other utensils; the hot water loosens the handles. The best plan is to collect the knives and forks, then have ready a jug of hot water, to which may be added a small piece of washing soda if the knives and forks are very greasy. Now stand the knives in the jug, blade downwards, being careful that the water does not touch the handles. Allow the knives to remain in the water for ten minutes, then take them out, wipe them dry and polish them on a knife-board, being careful to see that the ferrules are bright and clean. Dust them and put them away.

If the blades of the knives are stained in any way, a raw potato cut in half, dipped in a little knife powder or powdered bath-brick and rubbed on the blade will remove the stain very quickly.

Mary Skene.



PANEL OF HANGING CUPBOARD, ABOUT HALF SCALE, TREATED WITH SPRAY OF ROSE.

(It was drawn direct from Nature, though the forms were simplified. For method of reproduction refer to article.)

Illustrated London Almanack, 1866