

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

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

This recipe for yellow dye comes from North Carolina:

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

The weaver who gave me this recipe

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

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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

LARKSPUR: flowers, a fine blue dye.

GARDEN PURSLANE: a desirable blue.

WILD INDIGO: blue equal to commercial.

YELLOW LOCUST: Chinese yellow for silks.

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

KNOT GRASS: color similar to Japanese blue.

BLOOD ROOT TRIBE: a beautiful dye.

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

HYDRASTIS CANADENSIS: brilliant yellow color.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHESS: a good green from flowers.

CLEMATIS: yellow from both leaves and branches.

BARBERRY: root boiled in lye, yellow to wool.

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

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

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

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

CYNARA, ARTICHOKE: dyes yellow color.

SASSAFRAS: roots with copperas yield drab.

YELLOW WOOD: beautiful saffron.

IRON-WOOD: inner bark, permanent yellow.

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

SWEET LEAF LAUREL: yields yellow.

LOVE VINE: yellow to cloth.

MANGROVE TRIBE: black.

BURDOCK: yellow.

TALLOW TREE: leaves, a black dye

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

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DOG-BANE: black or brown.

CYPRESS: leaves, a cinnamon, boil several hours.

BLACK ALDER: indelible orange.

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

RED OAK: cream or black, depending on mordant.

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

HEATH TRIBES: purple with copperas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

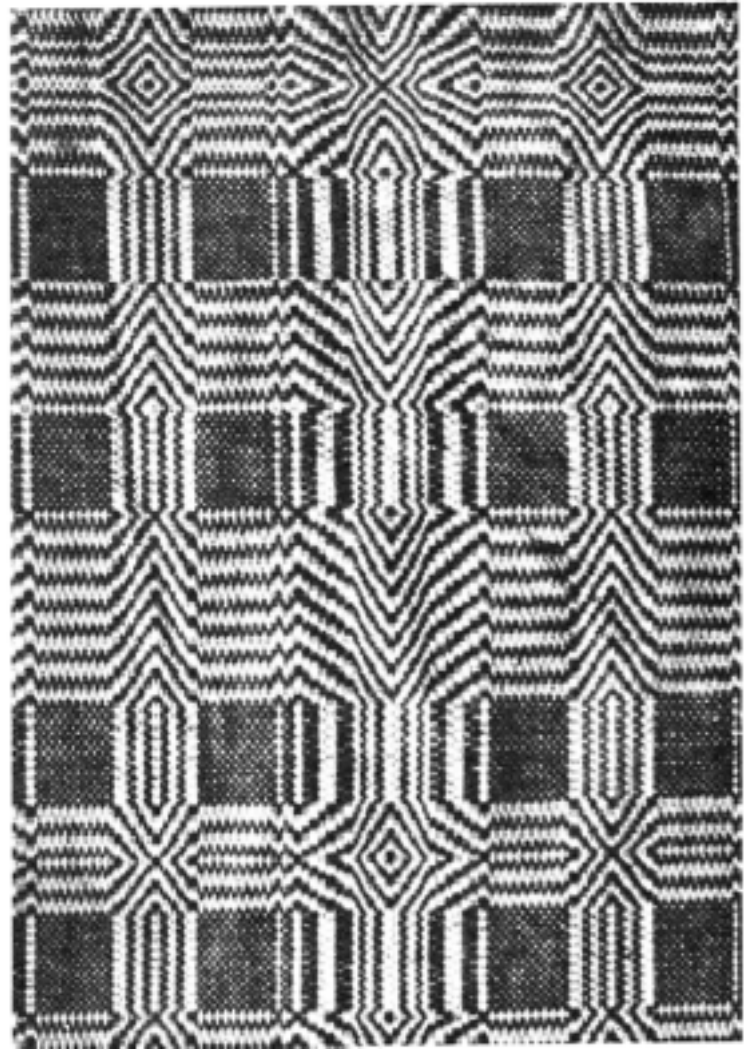
I have said that the unfaded colors "strike the eye," but the colors that strike both "eye" and "heart" are found in the unappreciated, abused, and abandoned coverlets that have lain around in stables and barns and braved the elements year after year journeying to town on the tobacco wagon, serving between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

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

If I wanted to construct a color

THE BETTY DEAN COVERLET

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



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

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

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

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

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

THISTLES AND LILIES

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



VII
THE PROFESSIONAL WEAVER

VII

THE PROFESSIONAL WEAVER

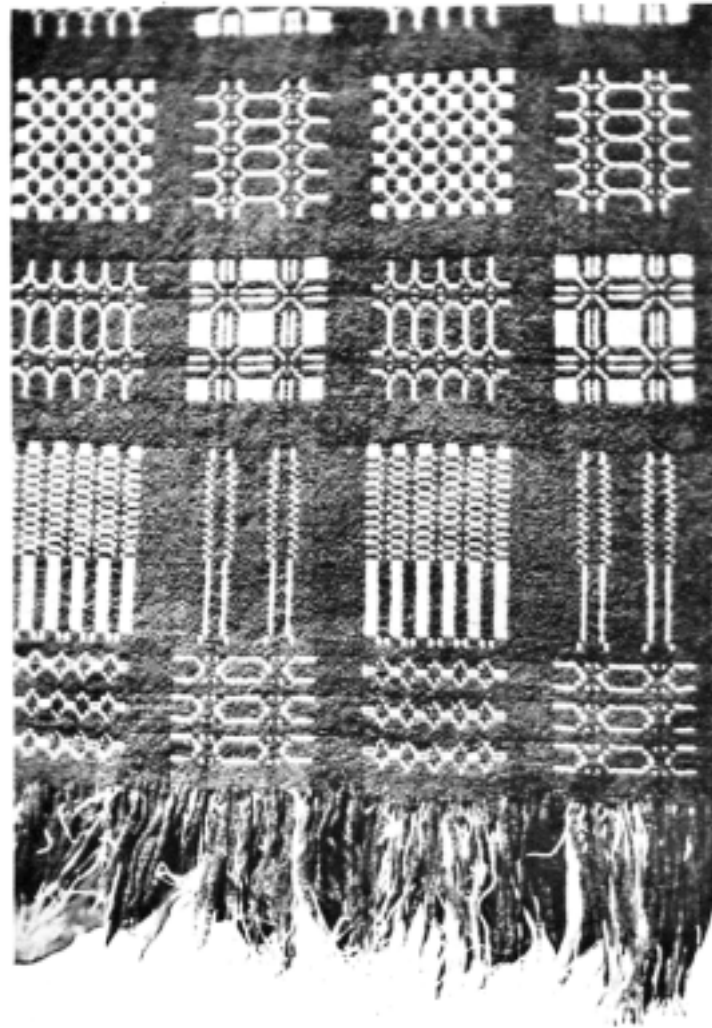
“And taking the sacred woven-cloths out of the treasures, he formed with them an awning, a marvel for men to behold. . . . And the woven texture had pictures such as these: Uranus collecting the stars in the circle (vault) of æther; the Sun driving his horses to the last waning light (sunset point),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



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

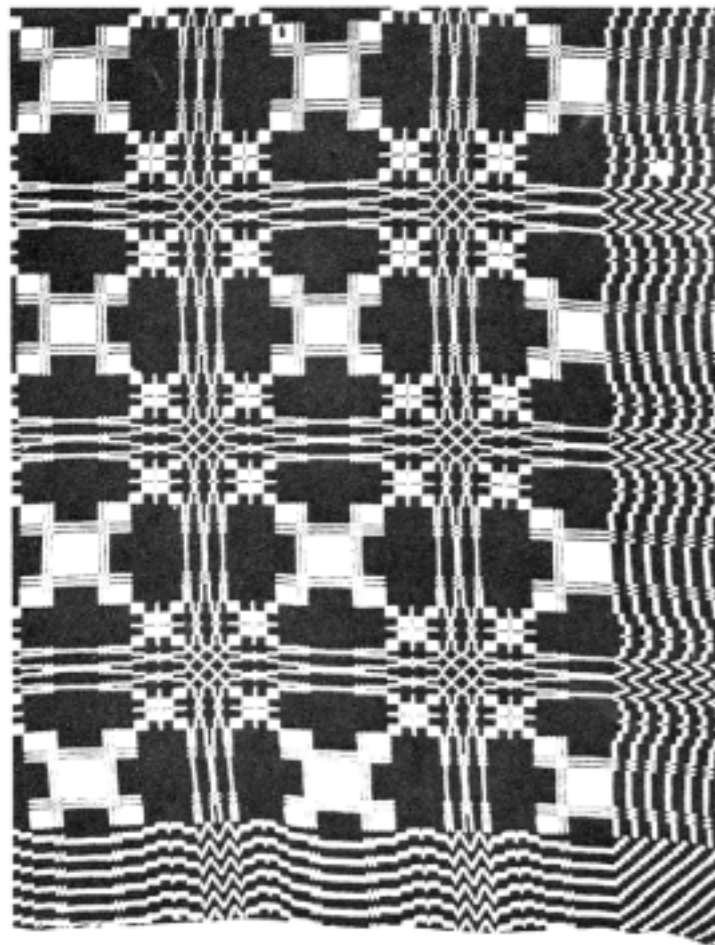
IRISH CHAIN

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



LOVER'S KNOT

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



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

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

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

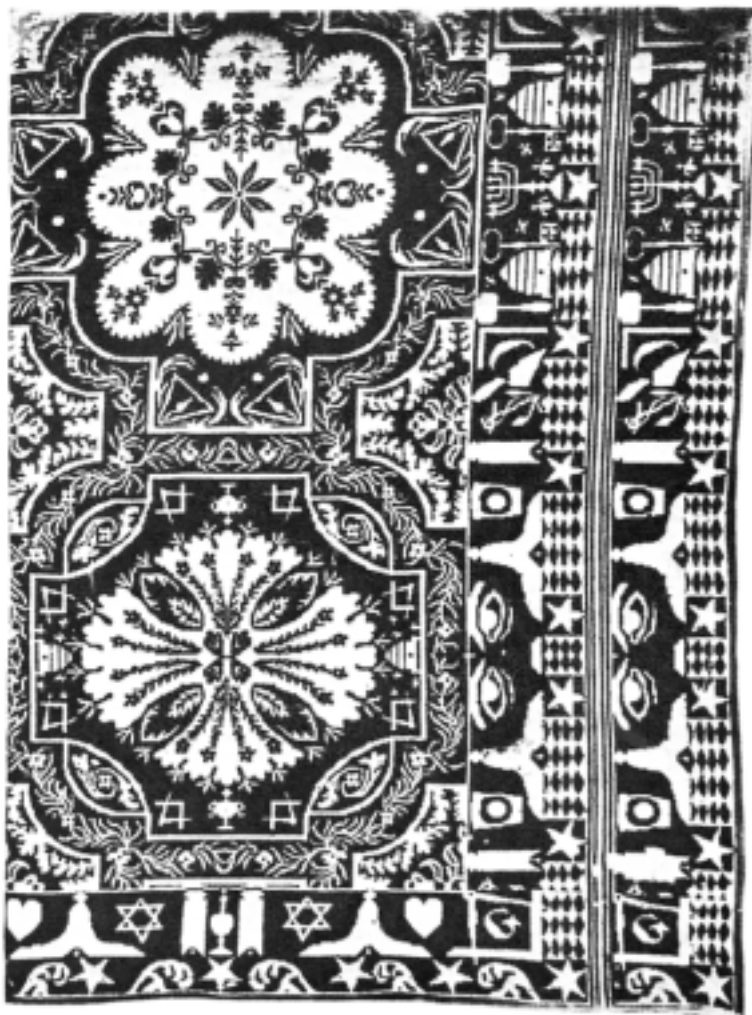
his character just as his character influences his work. We cannot look at the coverlets of these old weavers without wondering what manner of men these were who could make from such simple materials as homespun threads of cotton and wool a perfect image of flower and leaf, bird and beast, as delicately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

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

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

I have copied a few names from these

*COVERLET SHOWING MASONIC
EMBLEMS*



BOSTON TOWN

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



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

GABRIEL RAUSCHER, Pennsylvania.

JOHN MELLINGER AND SON, Pennsylvania.

J. GEBHART, Pennsylvania.

F. METZGER, Pennsylvania.

IRA HADSELL, New York.

J. CONGER, New York.

J. A. GETTY, Indiana.

SARAH LA TOURRETTE VAN SICKLE, Indiana.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON ROSE, Rhode Island.

HARMON GOODWIN, Maine.

— MOWRY, Ohio.

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G. HEILBRON.

SAM CURRY, Kentucky.

SAM GAMBLE, Kentucky.

ANNE HAY, Indiana.

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

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

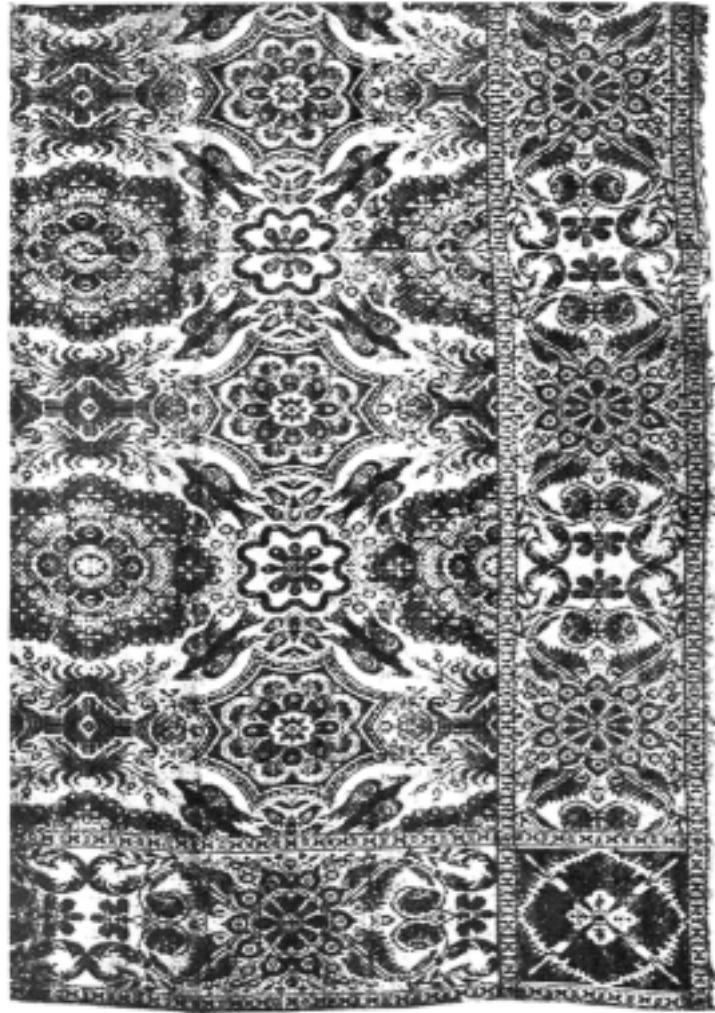
Mrs. Hayden Trigg of Glasgow, Kentucky, gives me the following account of a weaver who lived in her mother's time and wove here and there in the county of Barren:

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

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

BIRDS OF PARADISE

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



THE JOHN GERARD COVERLET

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



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

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

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

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

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

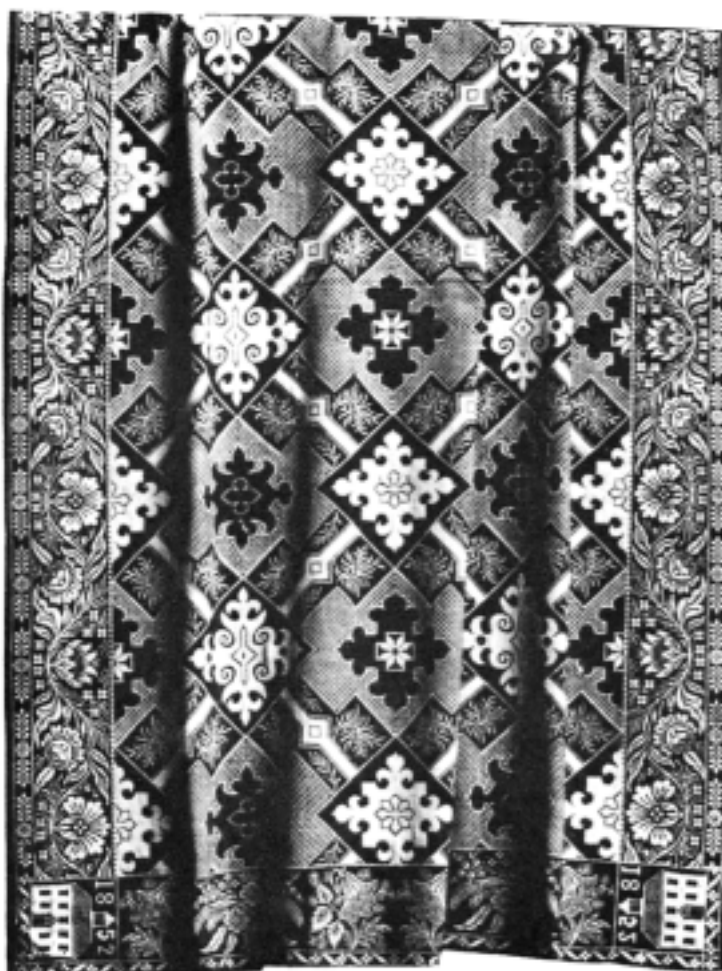
So all we know of this master of weaving is that he was a drunkard and that the “Lover's Knot” pleased his taste.

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

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

THE ANNE HAY COVERLET

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



LION AND EAGLE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE DOUBLE ROSES

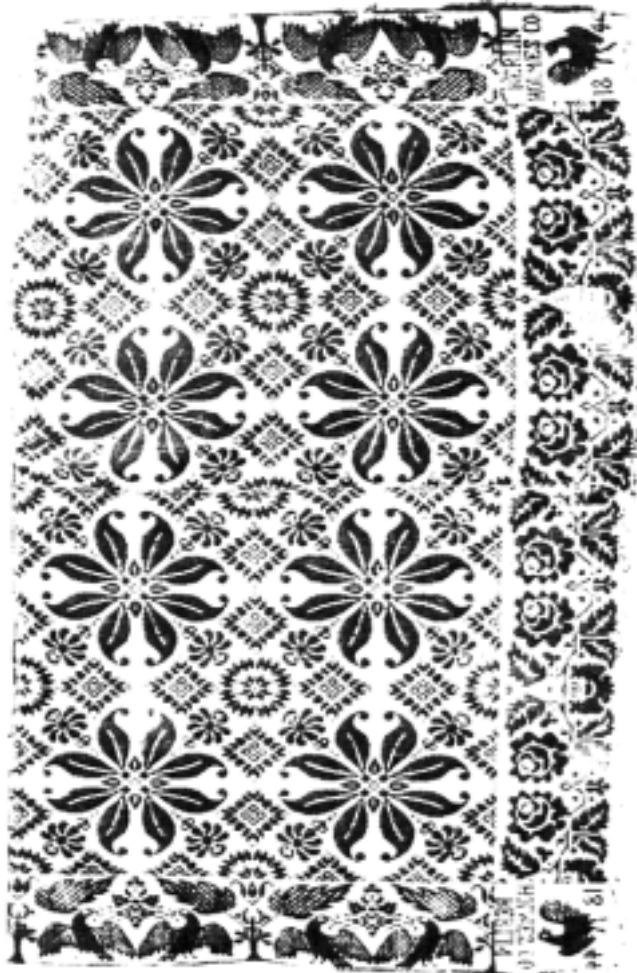
TAPESTRY *weave. Colors the same as the John Mellinger coverlet. Owned by Mr. Henry Reiff, Oakland, Ky. Susan Fletcher spun and dyed the thread.*



J. R. GEBHART
MAYTOWN
LANCASTER
CO.
1841
S. FLETCHER

CHANTICLEER

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



best told in the words of Mr. William Wade:

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

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

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

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

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

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

BIRD OF PARADISE

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



THE IDA P. ROGERS COVERLET

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



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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

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

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

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

E PLURIBUS UNUM

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



FREEDOM'S HOME

PART of the *William Wade Col-*
lection.



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

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

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

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

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

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

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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



LIBERTY

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



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

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

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

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

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

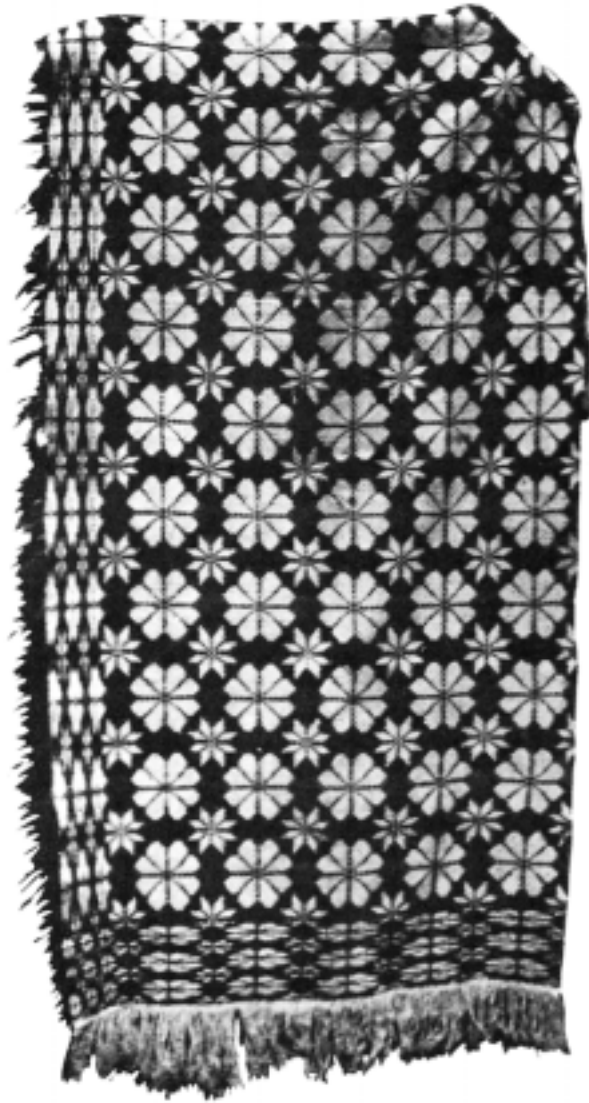
The word "Liberty" may not be woven into any of Sarah La Tourrette's coverlets, but you may read it between the lines of family history that tell how these French Huguenots chanced to come to America. Taking the name La Tourrette as a clue we can go back through five centuries of French history to the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

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

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

LA FRANCE

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



FRENCHMAN'S FANCY

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



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

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

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

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

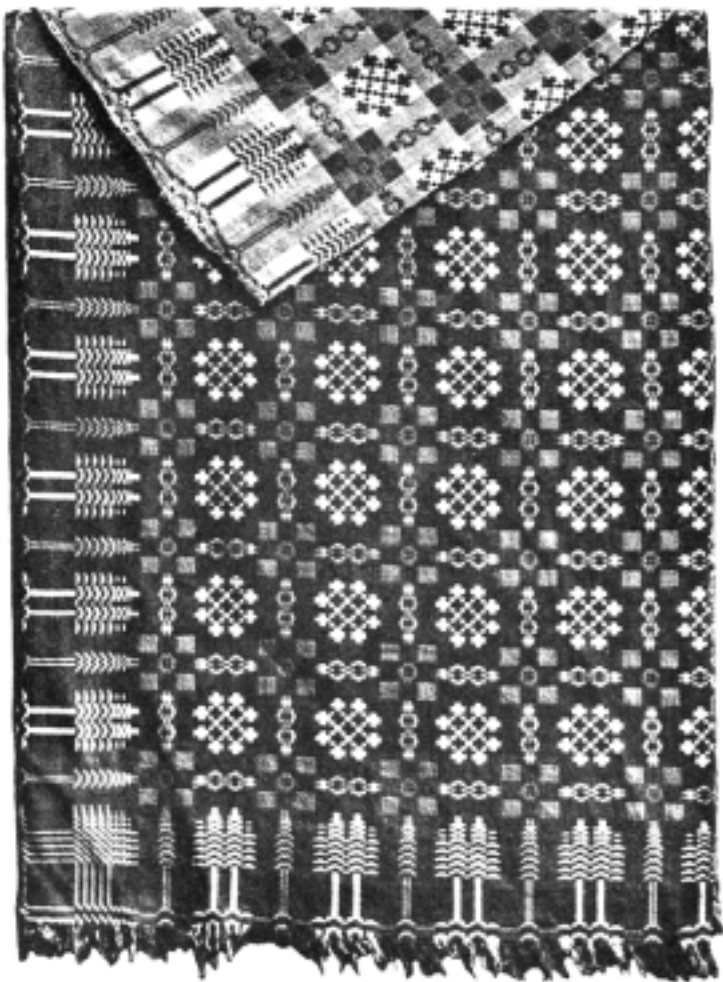
Charles K. Bright, a nephew of Sarah La Tourrette, gives me the following description of the way the professional weaver wove his florid patterns:

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

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

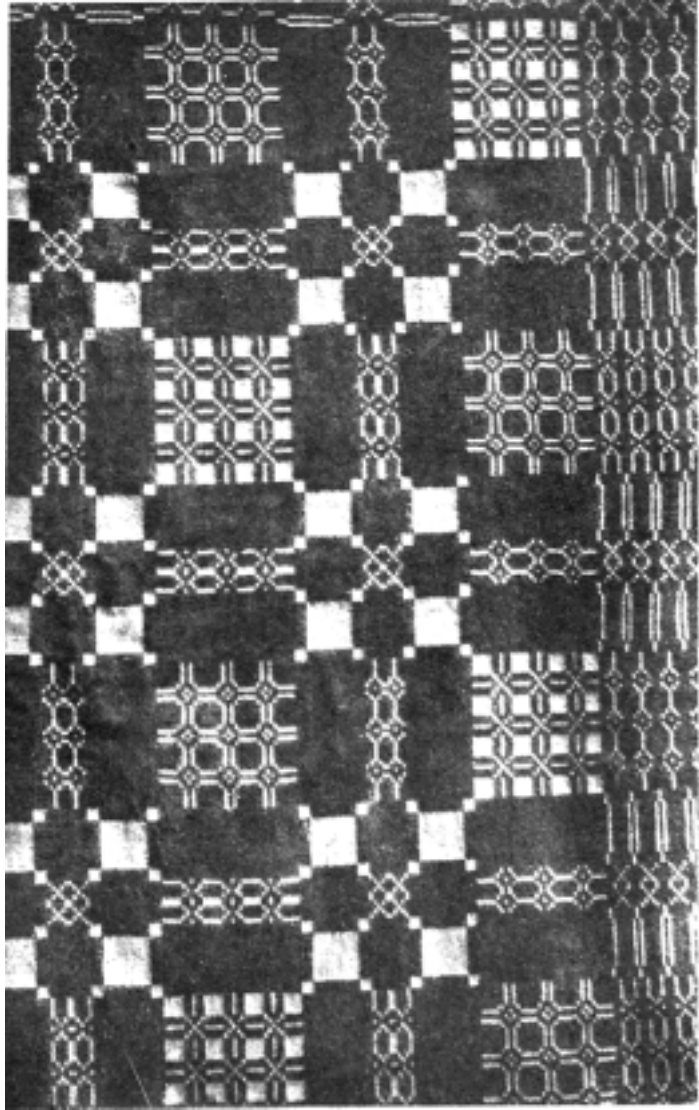
LOVER'S CHAIN or LOVER'S KNOT

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



THE FLORA WOODBURY COVERLET

OWNEED by *Miss Flora Woodbury, Danville, Ill. Double-woven, red, white, and blue. Made in 1855. Observe the likeness to "Irish Chain."*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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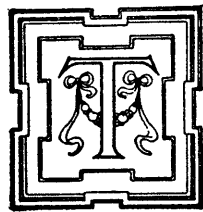
Scott sang the passing of minstrelsy,
and there should be another Scott or
another Moore to sing the Passing of
the Last Weaver and the Lay of the
Ancient Loom.

VIII

THE STORIED COVERLET

VIII
THE STORIED COVERLET

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



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

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

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

A MOUNTAIN "KIVER"

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



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

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

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

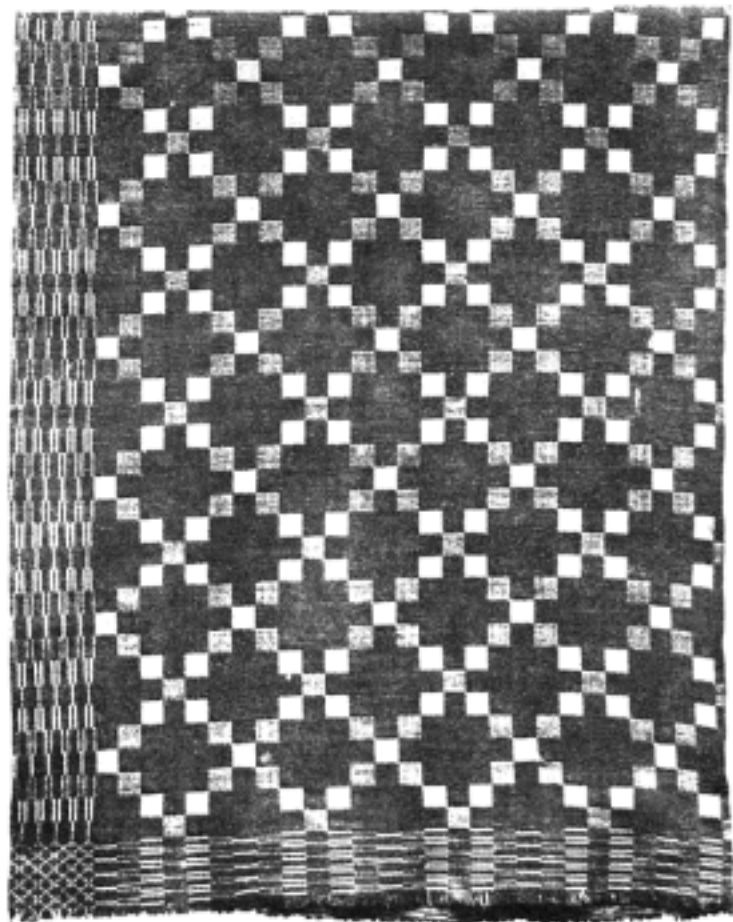
This story lacks the quality of sweetness, but under the apparent sordidness of the four women I see the strong sense of right, the stern determination to have one's right which we call "the spirit of '76." I am sure those four sisters were true Daughters of the American Revolution and I hope their love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

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

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

THE MARTHA SHEPHERD COVERLET

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the back of one picture is this

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

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

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

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

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

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

When she told her father of her betrothal he said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BETTY TEAGUE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" . . . a man must go with a woman."

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

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

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

In the old graveyard you may read the epitaph:

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

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

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

THE DEBORAH PARKER COVERLET

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



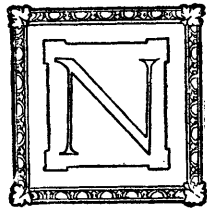
IX

THE ANCIENT COVERLET

IX

THE ANCIENT COVERLET

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



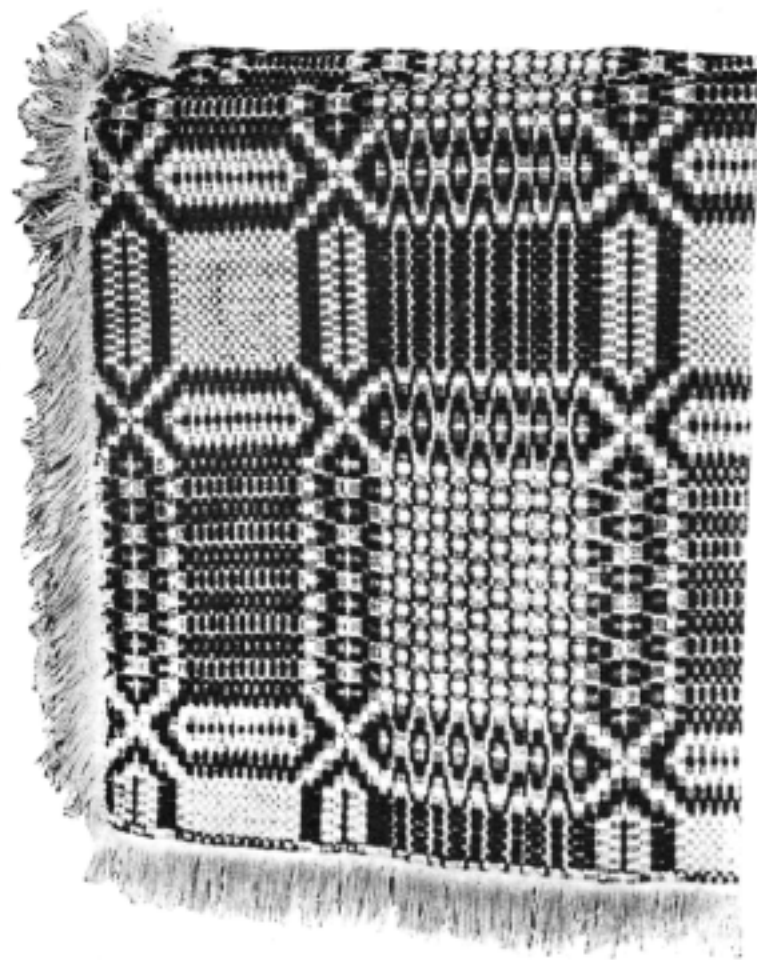
NOT only are the colors of the coverlet wonderfully lasting, but there is a quality in the homespun thread that resists the moth of time, and in all my searching I have found but one really worn-out coverlet.

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

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

GOVERNOR'S GARDEN

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



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

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

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

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

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

H. W. Tilton. 1835

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

We read the dates on these old coverlets and exclaim:

A VARIATION OF "LOVER'S KNOT"

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



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

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

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

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

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

OLD IRELAND

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

SUNRISE

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



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

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

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

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

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

"What should we speak of when we

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

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

THE WAITY STAPLES COVERLET

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



A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

X

THE HEIRLOOM UNAPPRECIATED

X

THE HEIRLOOM UNAPPRECIATED

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



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

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

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

NINE DIAMONDS

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

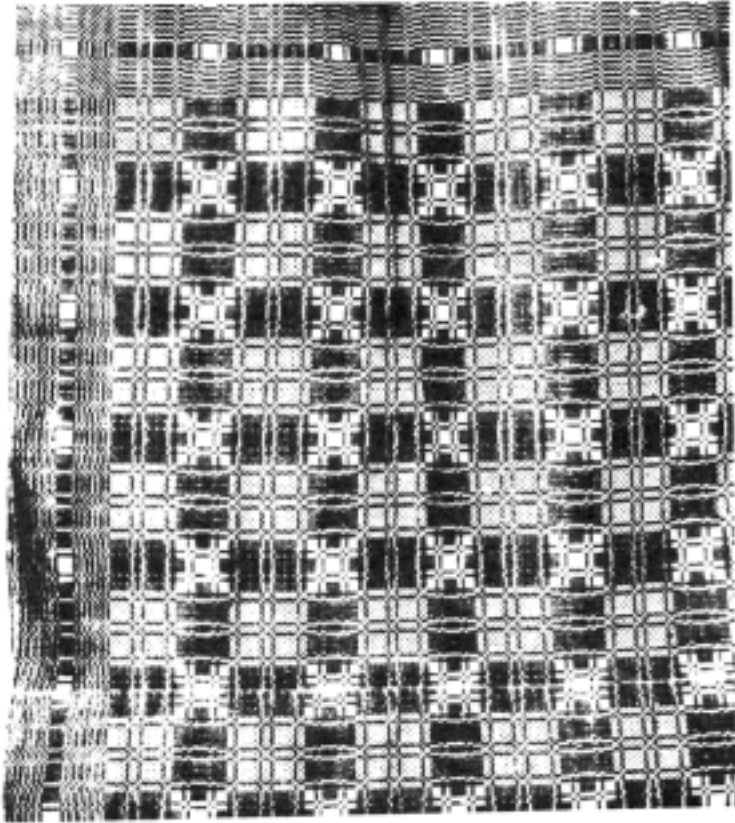
parlor. On the beautiful mahogany table lay a sampler worked in many colored silks; on the sampler stood a wonderful old lamp resting on a brass pedestal and shaded by an exquisite cut-glass globe; this lamp, the mistress of the house said, was made in the days when lard oil was used for illuminating.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

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

There were two. From the depths

THE ANTHONY WAYNE COVERLET

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE DOWNFALL OF PARIS

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



A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

*"Serene and bright
And lovely as a Lapland night."*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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