

WEAVING WAS AN ART

IN THE DAYS OF HOMESPUN WOMEN USED TO WORK HARD.

Our Grandmothers Used to Spend Much Time Spinning, Weaving, Knitting, Netting and Embroidering—They Manufactured All Their Own Cloth.

In the days of homespun four ounces of lint, cotton or a half pound of lock wool was a day's stint in spinning, though a clever spinner could easily do twice as much. Wool was often colored before spinning—dyed black or red, then carded with white. The resultant thread, steel or red mixed, was wonderfully soft and harmonious in color.

Old silk carefully reeled, then carded with white wool or cotton, made the silk mixed that was such a favorite for the long stockings worn with knee breeches, as well as for homespun gowns. They were woven in checks, stripes and cloudings. One of the prettiest was dice cloth—a kind of basket weave—of alternate white and black or gray threads, thirteen to the group. It was troublesome to weave—a thread too many made a bulk in the pattern. Children and servants had simple checks in blue or coppers and white. Linseys for winter wear were gorgeous in green and scarlet and black and blue.

Dyeing was part of the home work, as well as weaving and spinning. From walnut hulls, bark and root came twenty shades of brown. Green walnuts and sumach berries gave a beautiful fast black that did not stain the wearer. Hickory bark or peach leaves gave a glowing yellow; swamp maple, a blackish purple; sugar maple, a light leather tint, and oak bark, set with coppers, a handsome grayish color. In fact, a skilled dyer could get twenty colors from the woods and fields.

Except for flannels, carpets and blankets the warp was usually of flax or cotton. A very pretty carpet had half the warp of coarse wool doubled—a strand of green and one of brown. In weaving when the wool came uppermost a very coarse wool thread was shot in. When the cotton came up a very fine thread caught and held it almost invisibly. Beaten up thick the effect was that of a mossy, clouded Turkey fabric. Other carpets were woven in stripes or plain, like webbing, the woolen wool threads passing over and under the cotton warp two at a time.

Size was estimated by the number of threads that, laid side by side, made cloth the regulation yard wide. The coarsest was 400. From that it went up and up with hardly a limit except that of the spinners' skill and patience. There was scarcely anything they couldn't weave on the looms—jersey and serge, and cotton and linsey, house linen, bed linen, blankets and counterpanes. The counterpane was homespun high water mark. Woolen ones had usually the figure in colors skipped up on a white or blue ground. Those of cotton were left white and bleached till they dazzled the eyes. Of some easy patterns a clever woman could weave eight yards in a day.

Of honeycomb, huckaback and diamond draper three yards was a good day's work. Fancy patterns were more tedious. The crown of skill and patience was knotted cloth. The weave was perfectly plain, but at intervals of an inch a big soft cord was woven in and pulled up in little knots all along its length. Over the body of the cloth they formed regular diamonds. For the center they made an elaborate arabesque design. Down one side of the spread the maker generally drew them up to shape her initials, with either the date of making in roman letters or her husband's name opposite, to balance her own.

There was room, and to spare. Beds in those days stood four feet from the floor. Counterpanes were three yards by four without the fringe, which was either woven with dates and initials in the deep open heading or knitted in open lozenge pattern to which deep tassels were attached. It fell over a valance, also homespun, and was either fringed or edged with netted points at the bottom.

Weaving was not the sum of housewifery in that era. The good dames knew as much of embroidery as their favored great-granddaughters. One of them has left behind her a monumental piece of work, in which can be found no less than nineteen different stitches, many of them among the rarest and most difficult known.

The netting needle and stirrup filled up many a day. The bed was the piece de resistance in furnishing then. It was a tall four poster, and, besides counterpane and valance, had netted curtains and netted points, edging the long pillow and bolster cases. Window curtains were netted, too, besides edgings and fringes for all kinds of household articles. In particular the "toilets" that fell over the high square bureaus had often a netted fall half a yard deep around them. In addition, caps, ruffles, purses and fichus were netted. The latter were called dress handkerchiefs, and folded high about the throat over the low cut gowns. On them the netter lavished her choicest art.

Sometimes the mesh was as fine almost as bobbinet. Netted capes were high in favor, but the square with long ends was accounted better for young women. Sometimes they had fringe or tassels about the edge, or even a ruffle of the net with a big pattern run in. The handsomest finish was embroidery. For that the net was tacked smooth over cloth, the figures were wrought through both, then the under fabrics were cut away, leaving something closely approaching old rose point.

The women who practiced these arts made tatting, knit lace, stockings, mittens, tufted gloves, overshoes, coverlets; garters, gallsies and many things besides. Before their works follow them it might be well if some collector should gather up and keep safe for later generations a representative array of the homespun masterpieces.—New York Sun.

A COSMOPOLITAN SCHOOL.

A Queer Mixture of Children in One of New York's Big School Buildings.

Until about a year ago the principal of ward school No. 23, New York, did not realize what a queer lot of pupils he had, although he had sometimes laughed over the strange collection of names upon the rolls. A year ago he took a census and carefully traced out the exact part of the earth from which the parents of each of his pupils had come. He found that there were in his school no less than twenty-seven different nationalities, speaking about twenty-five languages other than English and its dialects. He found that of these sixteen were in the primary department alone.

So not long afterward he arranged a novel feature to one of the school entertainments. At a certain place in the programme each child arose, holding in his or her hands two flags. One was the American flag, the other the flag of the nation from which the father had come. The visitors to the school were astonished. They recognized half a dozen flags well known as the banners of European nations—Italian, German, Spanish, French, Swiss and the like. Then they saw nearly a dozen others, recognizable from their shapes and colors and designs as the banners of barbaric or semibarbaric countries, known to us in a vague way as heathen.

When these children, none being under five years of age, first come to this school they are foreigners to the very core. They speak the language of their fathers, and perhaps have never even heard the sound of an English word. They are of the country from which their parents came both in customs and ideas. Their clothing alone bears the stamp of America, and that so out of accord with their faces and expressions that they seem ill at ease, and even more poorly clad than they really are. They enter the primary department. And here it may be said that, although the youngest are five years old, the ages of many extend upward toward eighteen and twenty years.

It is the business of Miss Rose O'Neill and her seven assistants to teach these children the English language, and then to make American children out of them. Go into the school at the beginning of the school year, and you will think the task hopeless, impossible. Come back at the end of six months, and if you close your eyes and listen to the reading exercises you will not be able to distinguish Chinese child or Arab child or Tunisian child from the few pure blooded Americans who form the curiosities of the school. Then you will wonder how the miracle has been performed.—Harper's Weekly.

Educate Children to High Ideals.

We are too ready to impart instruction to children from low moods and on a low plane, because we do not ourselves habitually dwell in the latitude of the uplands. Motives of policy, of vanity, of seeming instead of being right, enter into our own lives and, alas! poison the lives of the little ones at the fountain. A grand life, a brave example, a splendid instance of fortitude, of self abnegation, of courage against odds is never in vain. It is an object lesson that flames out from the sky, as the planet amid the host of lesser stars. Whether it be an arctic or an African explorer, the leader of a forlorn hope, the missionary living among the island lepers, or the army nurse, leaving home and luxury to minister to the wounded and soothe the dying, the noble ideal is uplifted before the eyes of those who are yet in the initial stages, and whose characters are not yet in the mold of destiny.

This thought of the lofty ideal gives the chief value of our annual Decoration Day, giving us pause amid the pomp and ease of peace, that we may think not of the pageantry of war, but of its sufferings, its fever and thirst, its rigors of cold and furnace heats, its weary marches, fierce battles and the patriotism which alone condones its bitter woe and the mourning that follows in its track.—Harper's Bazar.

How His Heart Was Won.

When Colonel Van Wyck was running for congress many years ago in the Fifteenth New York district, there was a certain Irishman who steadfastly refused to give the old soldier any encouragement. The colonel was greatly surprised, therefore, when Pat informed him on election day that he had concluded to support him.

"Glad to hear it, glad to hear it," said the colonel. "I rather thought you were against me, Patrick."

"Well, sir," said Patrick, "I was, and when ye staid by me pigger and talked that day fur two hours or worse ye didn't budge me a hair's breadth, sir; but after ye was gone away I got to thinking now ye reached yer hand over the fence and scratched the pig on the back till he laid down wid the pleasure of it, and I made up me mind that when a rale colonel was as sociable as that I wasn't the man to vote agin him."—Nebraska State Journal.

How Wade Hampton Used Cigars.

Wade Hampton never smoked cigars in a rational way like the rest of mankind. Instead, he took the cigars as he bought them and crushed them to powder between the palms of his hands and made use of the fragments as the old regime use snuff. The coarse bits were thrown away, and in the military committee room, of which he was so long an occupant, there was always a pile of cigar shavings on the floor beside his chair. The finest cigars in the market were none too good to be treated this way, and more than one genuine cigar smoker has been moved to expostulation as he has seen Hampton dispose of a fine weed in such an unceremonious way.—Kate Field's Washington.

The rapid progress of photography in the discovery of one hand of new wonders in the heavens, and the revelation on the other hand of many hitherto hidden facts concerning familiar objects upon the earth, is one of the most notable phenomena of this distinctively scientific age.

Walled Cities in India and China.

The first glimpse we get of an eastern walled city unfolds at once memories of our childhood days, which have perhaps never been awakened since, and the pictures of our childish books, which impressed themselves so vividly upon our minds, are reproduced in the bright colors of old, when we are brought face to face with the quaint battlements and the dark gateways, with the accessories of bright, burning sunshine and turbaned figures and processions of camels and the listless calm of the tropical land. Such old cities are still to be seen in India, still walled in the old fashion and still peopled by the figures of the Biblical picture book.

Closely akin to them are those walled towns standing on the canals of mid-China, passing through which, say at the close of day, when every tower and every roof stands out clearly cut against the brilliant western sky and we are challenged by a grotesque figure, armed with a spear and probably wearing armor, the illusion is complete, and for the moment we find it hard to realize that we are traveling at the end of the Nineteenth century.

Even in much changed Japan there are old cities which still retain their walls of the age of feudalism, and in the very heart of the capital the imperial palace is surrounded by the same quaint fortifications which in old troublous times made it an imperium in imperio, although the walls are crumbling and the gates are never shut, and the moats have been abandoned to the lotus and to carp of monstrous size and fabulous age.—Cor. Chicago Herald.

The Azores.

In 1580 the Azores came under the power of Spain, and in the history of the next twenty years their name is frequent as the favorite battleground of the English and Spanish fleets. The partiality was, indeed, mainly on the side of the former, and for a good reason. These islands lay right in the track of all vessels sailing to and from that enchanted region known then to all men as the Spanish Main. On the highest peak of Terceira, whence in clear weather the sea could be scanned for leagues around, were raised two columns, and by them a man watched night and day. When he saw any sails approaching from the west he set a flag upon the western column, one for each sail; if they came from the east a similar sign was set up on the eastern column.

Hither in those days came up out of the mysterious western seas the great argosies laden with gold and silver and jewels, with silks and spices and rare woods, wrung at the cost of thousands of harmless lives and cruelties unspeakable from the fair lands which lie between the waters of the Caribbean sea and the giant wall of the Andes. And hither, when England too began to turn her eyes to El Dorado, came the great war galleons of Spain and Portugal to meet these precious cargoes and convey them safe into Lisbon or Cadix before those terrible English sea wolves could get scent of the prize.—Macmillan's Magazine.

Important Advice.

A gentleman who believed that to an important extent clothes made the man, even when the man is a royal personage, visited the Comte de Chambord at Fontenoy a few years ago. The Comte de Chambord was the grandson of Charles X, the last Bourbon king of France, and the French Royalists called him Henri V, and hoped, until his death, in 1883, to restore him to the throne. The marquis, of whom this story is told, was a Parisian, a man of fashion and an ardent Royalist. The Comte de Chambord was glad of an opportunity to talk over political affairs with a man who must know what was going on in Paris; so after a few minutes' chat he said: "Marquis, it is not often that I have a chance to talk with any one so well informed on the signs of the times in Paris as yourself. Now in case I return to Paris, what would you advise me to do?"

He waited for a bit of profound political philosophy. The marquis looked at "Henri the Fifth" and hesitated. Should he venture on a great liberty? But his advice had been asked; as a loyal subject he would give it frankly. "Sire—monseigneur," he stammered, "I think you had better give up your German tailor and have your trousers made in Paris." "My trousers!" "Yes, sire; pardon me, but your trousers are out of fashion."—San Francisco Argonaut.

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