



*A Book
of
Hand-Woven
Coverlets*

Eliza Calvert Hall

*A Book of Hand-Woven
Coverlets*

BY
ELIZA CALVERT HALL

*Author of "Aunt Jane of Kentucky"
"The Land of Long Ago," etc.*

WITH NUMEROUS PLATES IN COLOR
AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS



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L. B.

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A BOOK OF
HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

THE JOHN MELLINGER COVERLET

WOVEN *near Harrisburg, Pa.*
*The thread was spun and
dyed by Susan Fletcher. Owned by
Mrs. Joseph W. Gilbert, Bowling
Green, Ky.*



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

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

J. H. DILLARD

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	3
CHAPTER	
I. LONG, LONG AGO	13
II. A BACKWARD GLANCE	23
III. THE MOUNTAIN WEAVERS	35
IV. COVERLET NAMES	49
V. COVERLET DESIGNS	99
VI. COVERLET COLORS	127
VII. THE PROFESSIONAL WEAVER	169
VIII. THE STORIED COVERLET	215
IX. THE ANCIENT COVERLET	239
X. THE HEIRLOOM UNAPPRECIATED	257

LIST OF PLATES

ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR

The John Mellinger Coverlet	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
Lee's Surrender	<i>Facing page</i> 10
The Litie McElroy Coverlet	16
Rose in the Wilderness	38
The Sally Rodes Coverlet	52
Seven Stars	64
Pine Bloom	76
Youth and Beauty	84
Tennessee Trouble	92
Fragment of an Old Coverlet from Danville, Ill.	138
The Mary Simmons Coverlet	150
A Mountain "Kiver"	218
Betty Teague	232
Old Ireland	246
Nine Diamonds	260
The Downfall of Paris	268

ILLUSTRATIONS IN HALF-TONE

Hickory Leaf	<i>Facing page</i> 6
Mount Vernon	20
A Modification of Pine Bloom	28

LIST OF PLATES

Sunrise	<i>Facing page</i> 32
King's Flower	42
Cat Track	46
Catalpa Flower or Work Complete	56
Dog Tracks	60
Double Chariot Wheels or Church Windows	68
Missouri Trouble	72
The Blazing Star	80
The Whig Rose	88
Ladies' Delight	96
Double Muscadine Hulls	102
Single Chariot Wheels	106
The Cross	110
A Monroe County Coverlet	116
Old Drafts used in the Kentucky Mountains	120
Forty-Nine Snowballs	124
The Betty Dean Coverlet	164
Thistles and Lilies	168
Irish Chain	172
Lover's Knot	172
Coverlet showing Masonic Emblems	176
Boston Town	176
Birds of Paradise	180
The John Gerard Coverlet	180
The Anne Hay Coverlet	184
Lion and Eagle	184
The Double Roses	188

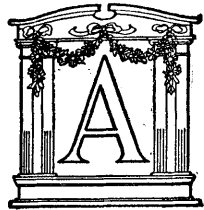
LIST OF PLATES

Chanticleer	<i>Facing page</i> 188
Bird of Paradise	192
The Ida P. Rogers Coverlet	192
E Pluribus Unum	196
Freedom's Home	196
Declaration of Independence	200
Liberty	200
La France	204
Frenchman's Fancy	204
Lover's Chain or Lover's Knot	208
The Flora Woodbury Coverlet	208
The Martha Shepherd Coverlet	222
The Deborah Parker Coverlet	238
Governor's Garden	242
A Variation of Lover's Knot	244
Sunrise	250
The Waity Staples Coverlet	254
The Anthony Wayne Coverlet	264

A Book of Hand-Woven Coverlets

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FOREWORD



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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

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

than twenty-seven days and eight hours.”

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

HICKORY LEAF

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



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

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

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

"Have you an old coverlet?"

"Do you know anybody who has one?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What are ‘Muscadine Hulls’?”

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

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

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

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

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

LEE'S SURRENDER

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



A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

I
LONG, LONG AGO

I

LONG, LONG AGO

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



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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

THE LITIE M^cELROY COVERLET

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



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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

“My mother spun and wove it;”

and the middle-aged:

“My grandmother wove it;”

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

“This is my great grandmother’s coverlet.”

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

How many roads lead to this shadowy

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

*“Have you forgotten? Have you forgot-
ten?”*

Some of us have not forgotten.

II

A BACKWARD GLANCE

II

A BACKWARD GLANCE

“Remembrance wakes with all her busy train.”



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

“I remember ——.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

A MODIFICATION OF PINE BLOOM

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



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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

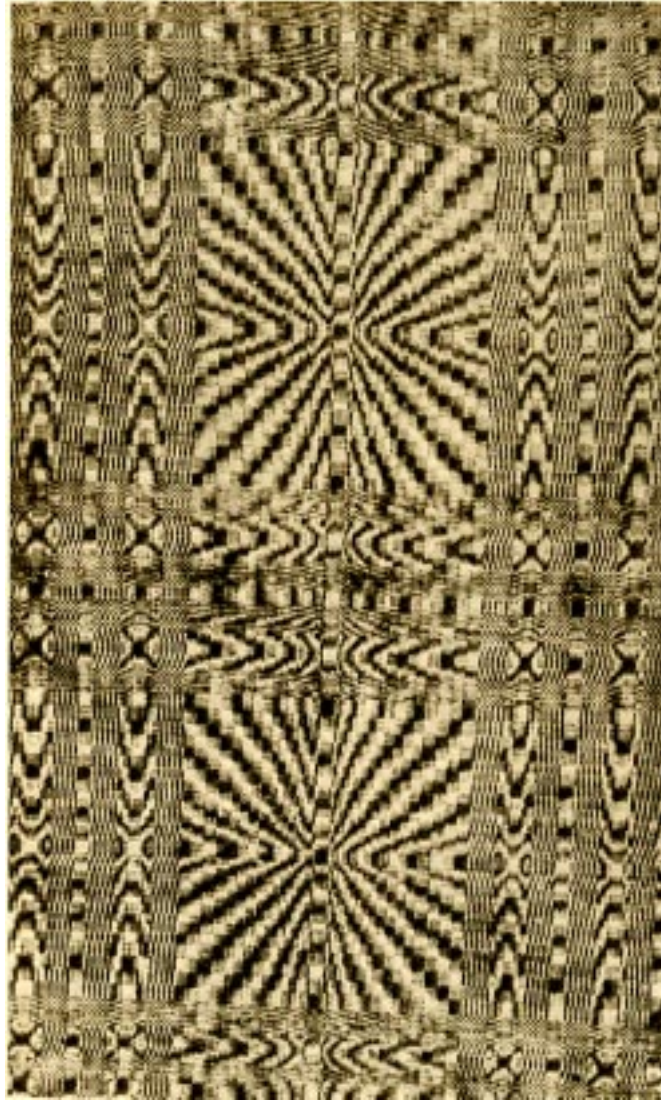
I think the Time Spirit must know that we need to be thus recalled into the life of the past, for everywhere I find the woven coverlet which, more than anything else, seems to stand as a symbol of the olden times.

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

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

SUNRISE

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



A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

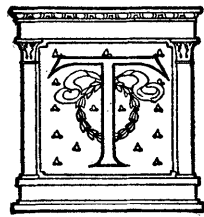
eagerly after it to see if the pattern is one known to me by name, the creaking wagon disappears round the corner in the road, and I turn away, my heart and brain full of the message that the woven coverlet carries to you and to me from our great foremothers of generations ago and our mountain sisters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

III
THE MOUNTAIN WEAVERS

III

THE MOUNTAIN WEAVERS

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



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

purple” into which Penelope had woven a hunting scene:

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

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

ROSE IN THE WILDERNESS

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



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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

KING'S FLOWER

WOVEN *in Knott Co., Ky.*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

CAT TRACK

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



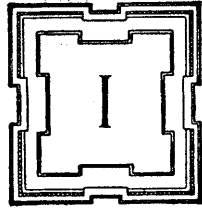
A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

IV
COVERLET NAMES

IV
COVERLET NAMES

"What's in a name?"



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

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

THE SALLY RODES COVERLET

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



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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

Flower of the Mountain (N. C.).

Sunrise on the Walls of Troy.

Rose in the Wilderness (Ky.).

World's Wonder (Ky.).

Wonder of the Forest (Va.).

Wide World's Wonder.

Rose of the Valley.

Old Roads (W. Va.).

Lily of the West.

Spring Flower.

Fading Leaf.

Kentucky Snowballs (Ky.).

Flowers of Edinboro (Ky. and Tenn.).

Winding Vine

Trailing Vine

Dogwood Blossom

} (Ky. and Tenn.).

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Rose in the Garden (N. C.).
Sunflower.
Laurel Blossom.
Pine Top.
Maple Leaf.
Snow Drop.
Pine Burr.
Olive Leaf.
Islands of the Sea (Conn.).
Path of the Sunbeam (Maine).
Single Snowballs.
Rose of Sharon (Ky.).
Lily of the Valley (N. C.).
Mountain Rose.
Peony Leaf (Va.).
Pomegranate.
Primrose and Diamonds.
Governor's Garden.

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

Catalpa Flower.
Sixteen Snowballs.
King's Flower (Ky. and N. C.).
Twining Vine (Ky.).
Red Rose (Va.).
Rose in Bloom.
Rose in the Blossom.
Orange Trees.
Rose and Blossoms.
Rose and Compass.
Hickory Leaf.
Snowballs.
Wreaths and Roses (Tenn.).
Magnolia (Tenn.).
Fig Leaf.
Holly Leaf.
Leaf and Snowball.
Rose Leaf and Bud.

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

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

- Ginny Fowle (Va. and Ky.).
- Doors and Windows } (Ky.).
- Windows and Doors }
- Window Sash (N. C.).
- Locks and Dams (Ky.).
- Dollars and Cents (Ky.).
- Rattlesnake Trail (N. Y.).
- Spectacles (N. C.).
- Sixteen Squares.
- Sugar Loaf (Tenn. and Ky.).
- Bachelor's Thumb (Ky.).
- Rocky Mountain Cucumber.
- Wild Mountain Cucumber (R. I.).
- Cat Track (Ky.).
- Fool's Puzzle (Tenn.).
- Wandering (Winding) Blades and Folding Windows (Tenn. and N. C.).

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

Snail Trail (Ky. and Tenn.).

Log Cabin.

Double Chain.

Rattlesnake.

Dog Tracks (Mass.).

Sister Blankets.

Dimity.

Shuckeroones (R. I.).

Double Compass.

Bird's Eye.

Flowerpot.

Orange Peeling.

Bricks and Blocks.

Double Table.

Four Times (Va.).

Green Vails.

DOG TRACKS

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



A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Hen Scratch (Ky.).

Buckens and Owls (R. I.).

Huckleberry.

Wheels and Squares (Tenn.).

Forty-Nine Diamonds.

Stripes and Squares.

Checkers.

Cross Roads.

Hail Storm (N. C.).

Pea Fowl.

Cat's Paw.

Summer and Winter Wheel Draught
(1825).

Snow Storm.

Snow Trail.

Ice Balls.

Honeycomb (N. Y.).

Little Window Sash (Va.).

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Number Two }
Number Three } (Va.).

Snake Shed.

Alabama Squares.

White House or American Beauty.

Arrow (N. C.).

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

Windows (Tenn.).

Window Sashes.

Here are the various "Beauties":

Kaintuck Beauty (Ky.).

Parson's Beauty (N. C.).

Captured Beauty.

Stolen Beauty (Vt.).

California Beauty.

Lasting Beauty (Va.).

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

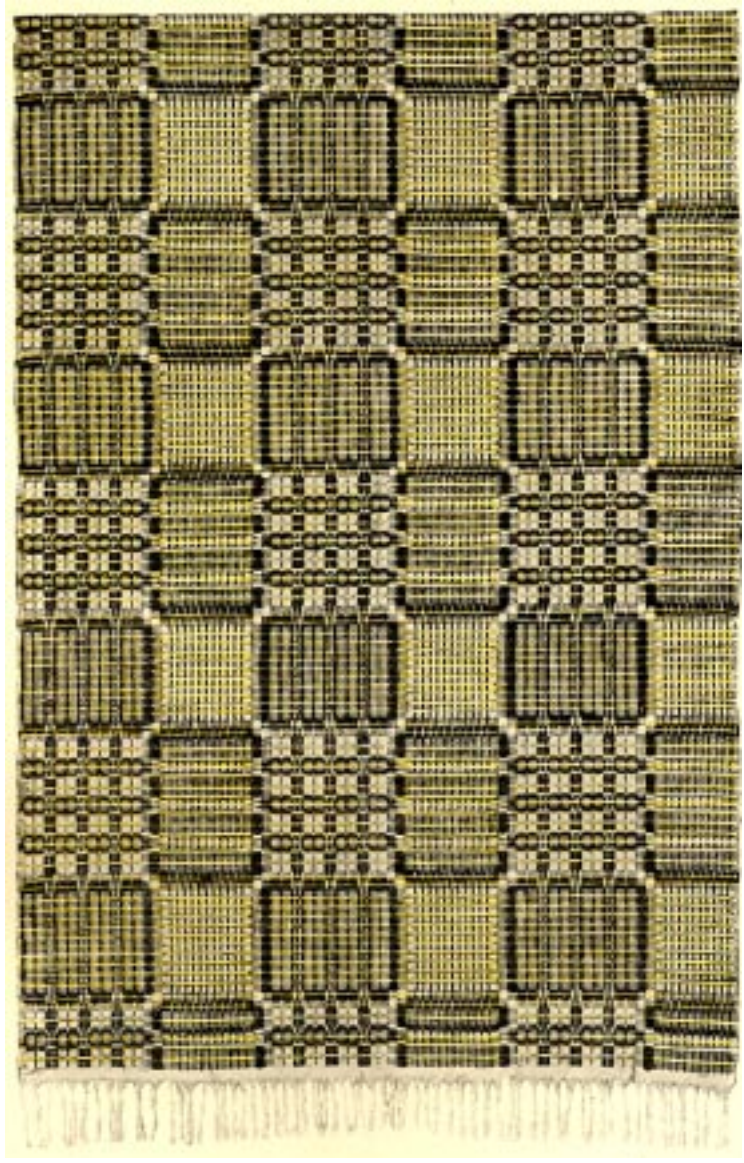
Then come the "Fancies," "Favorites," and "Delights":

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Rich Man's Fancy (N. C.).
Young Man's Fancy.
Gentleman's Fancy.
Lady's Fancy.
Little Girl's Fancy.
Dutchman's Fancy.
Sally's Fancy.
Farmer's Fancy.
French Fancy.
Frenchman's Fancy.
Maiden's Fancy.
Bachelor's Fancy (R. I.).
Diaman's Fancy.
Isaac's Favorite (Tenn. and N. C.).
Frenchman's Favorite.
Mother's Favorite (Tenn.).
Ladies' Delight.
Bachelor's Delight.

SEVEN STARS

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



Wheeler's Delight.

Solomon's Delight.

Queen's Delight.

King's Delight.

Here are the names celestial:

The Rising Sun.

The Star of Venus.

Sea Star (N. C.).

Sunrise (Ky.).

Virginia Star.

Blazing Star.

Little Blazing Star.

Sun, Moon, and Stars.

Morning Star.

Seven Stars (N. C.).

Lone Star of Texas.

Star of the East (N. C.).

And the three "Waves":

Ocean Wave.

Floating Wave.

Flourishing Wave.

Sometimes the name is of a place
or a person:

Old Duckett (N. C.).

Owsley Forks (Ky.).

Old Virginia.

Cope (Tenn.).

Hixson (Tenn.).

Eve Mast (Tenn.).

Cassie Rogan (Tenn.).

South County.

Brush Valley (Md.).

Miss Chester (N. C.).

St. Ann's Robe (Tenn.).

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Baltimore Street (Md.).
Mary (N. C.).
Ellen Eggers' Counterpane Draught.
Murphy's Legacy (Tenn.).
Isle of Patmos (Tenn.).

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

Lonely Heart (Ky.).
Lover's Knot (Pa.).
True Lover's Knot (Va.).
Lover's Chain (Pa.).
Soldier's Return (Tenn.).
Friendship (Ky.).
Girl's Love.

Then there is a collection of "Wheels":
Penford Chariot Wheels (Ky.).

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Heart and Diamond.
Double Diamond.
Nine Block Diamond.
Square and Diamond.
Cross and Diamond.
Eight Block Diamond.
Broken Diamond (N. C.).
Half Diamond.
The King's Diamond.

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

Indian March.
Indian War.
Indian Warfare.
Indian Camp.
Braddock's Defeat (Ky.).
Battle of Richmond.

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Colonel Jackson's Army.

Democrat Victory (N. C.).

Missouri Trouble.

Tennessee Trouble.

Confederate Flag.

Lee's Surrender.

And still there remains a mighty host
of unclassified names:

Cuckoo's Nest (Ky.).

Tennessee Lace (Ky.).

Broken Snowballs.

The Globe (Ky.).

The Bride's Table (Ky.).

The Sea Shell.

Double Bow Knot.

Irish Chain.

Weaver's Choice.

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Weaver's Pleasure.
Flannery.
Federal Knot.
Waffle Weave.
Scarlet Balls.
Queen's Patch (Ky.).
Work Complete.
Double Muscadine Hulls.
Winding Girl (Ky.).
Queen's Puzzle.
Church Windows (Ky.).
Young Lady's Perplexity (Ky.).
Tennessee Circles.
Tennessee Trouble in North Carolina.
Leopard Spots (Tenn.).
New Jersey Dream.
Kentucky Snowflakes.
Queen of England (Va.).

MISSOURI TROUBLE

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



A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

Squares of England.

Rings and Flowers of Virginia.

Lady's Fancy Draught.

Mission Draught.

Prussian Diaper.

Summer and Winter.

Queen's Household.

Bird's-Eye Coverlet.

Block Coverlet.

Blue and White Coverlet Number
Three.

Capa's Number Five.

Compass Diaper.

Compass Work.

Cross-a-Wise (Ireland, 1769).

Flag of Our Union.

Flag Work.

Freemason's Walk.

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

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

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

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

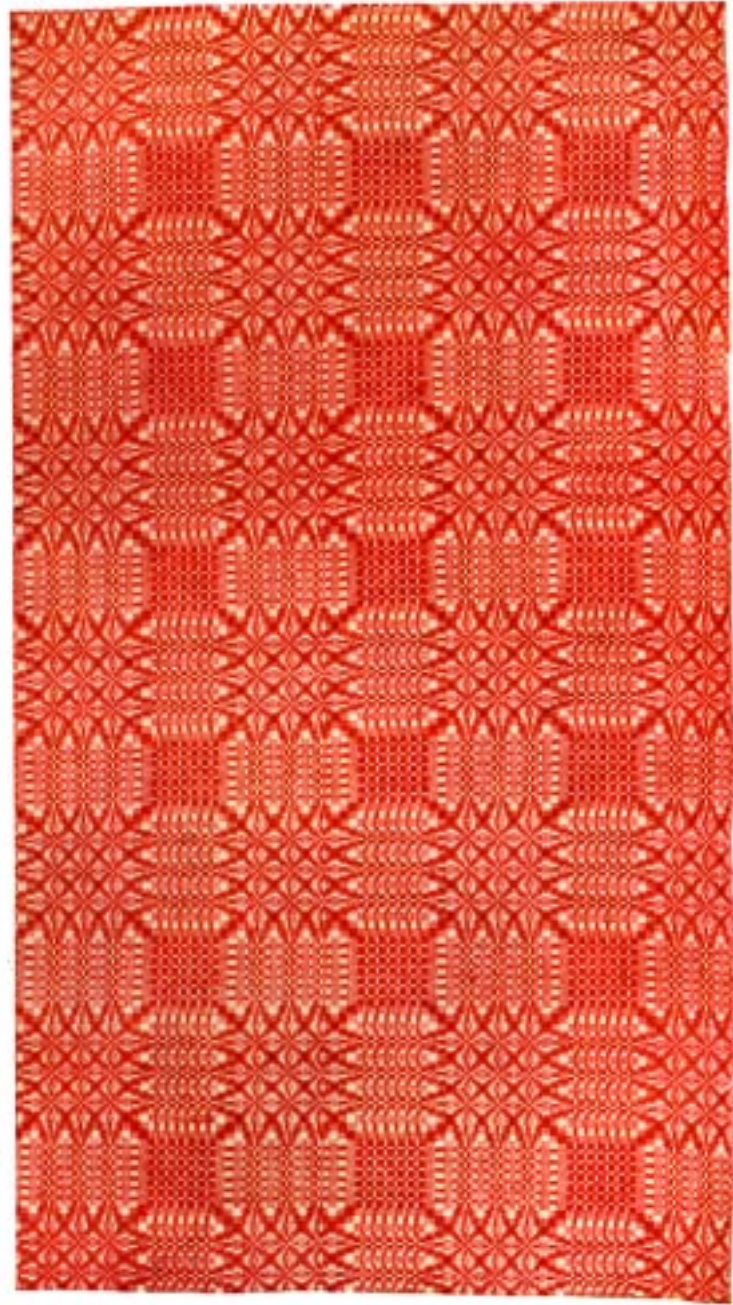
A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

PINE BLOOM

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



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

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

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

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

coverlet pattern is something no dictionary can tell us.

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

THE BLAZING STAR

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



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

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

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

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

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

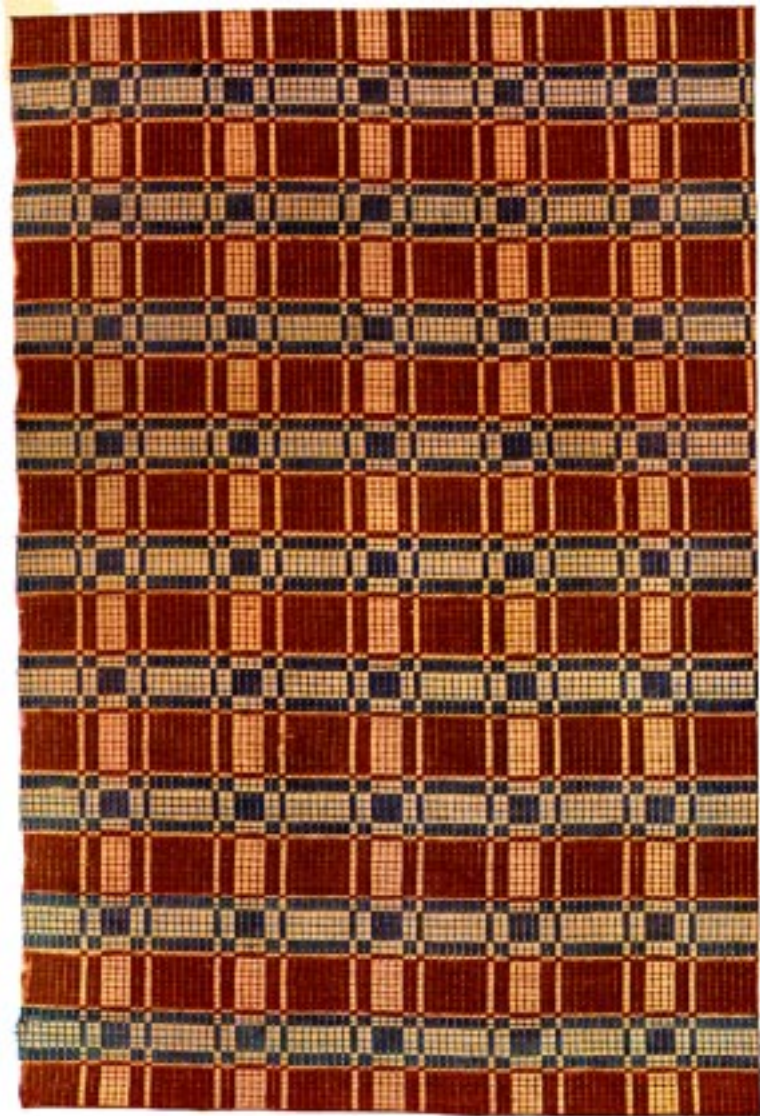
to see how near she is to being caught. "Young Man's Fancy" has a familiar sound. Where have we read those words before? Ah, yes!

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

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

YOUTH AND BEAUTY

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE WHIG ROSE

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



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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

TENNESSEE TROUBLE

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



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

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

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

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

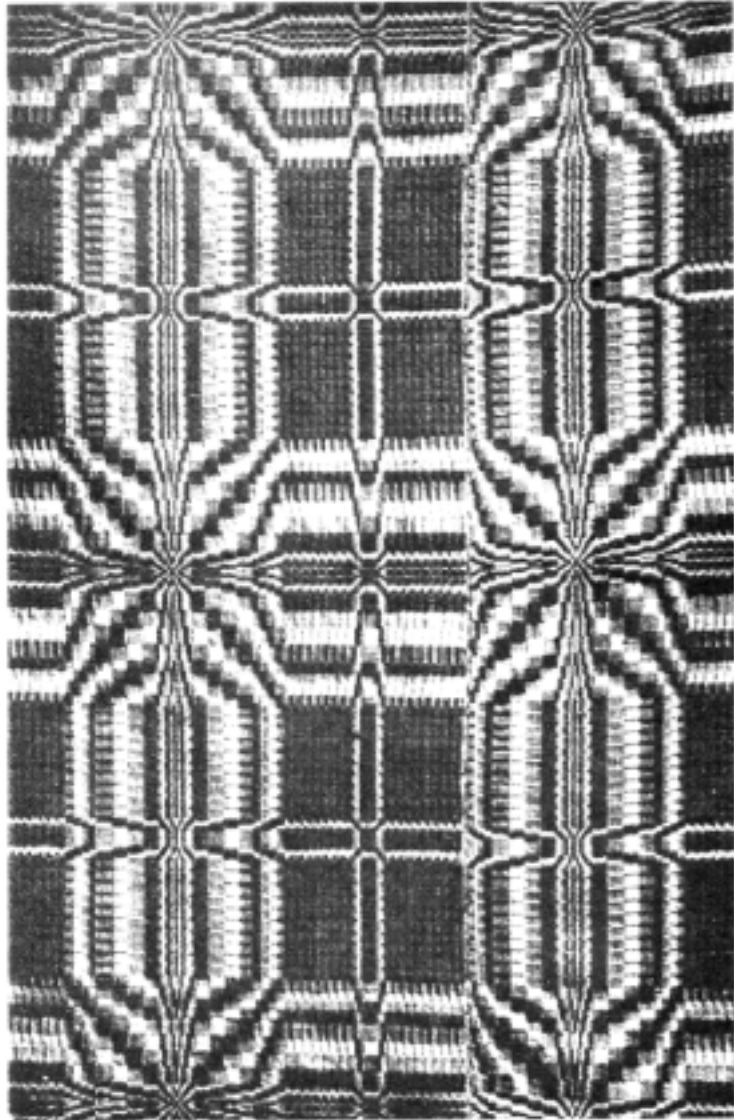
ernor's Garden" is also called "Leopard Spots" or "The Spotted Leopard," and later still I found my "stately aristocrat" known in New York as "Rocky Mountain Cucumber," the most grotesque and plebeian of all the grotesque and plebeian names!

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

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

LADIES' DELIGHT

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



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

V

COVERLET DESIGNS

V

COVERLET DESIGNS

"In my mind's eye, Horatio."



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

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

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

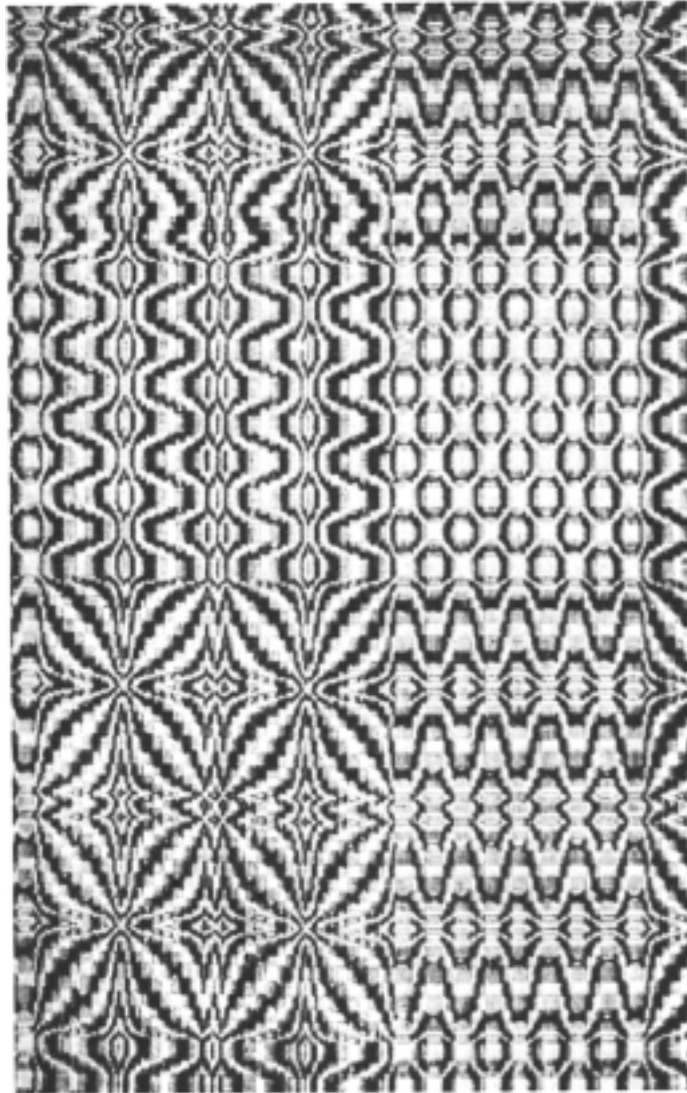
There are no paintings on her walls,

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

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

DOUBLE MUSCADINE HULLS

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



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


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

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

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

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

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

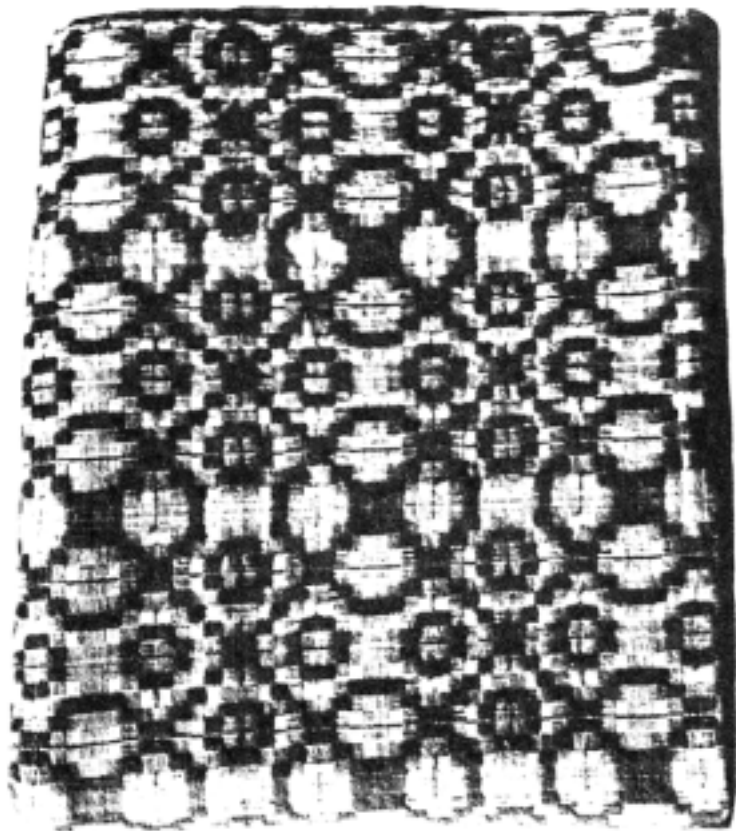
“star” is the hub and spokes of the Chariot Wheel, thus: . The wheel itself, like the swastika, is almost omnipresent. It is the letter *theta* of the Greek alphabet, it is found in the insignia of the Roman legions, in the Aramean alphabet, in the pictographs and syllabary of the Cherokee Indians and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

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

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

SINGLE CHARIOT WHEELS

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



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

child and the coverlet is my kaleidoscope.

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

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

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

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

THE CROSS

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



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

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

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

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

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

It is impossible to speak of these

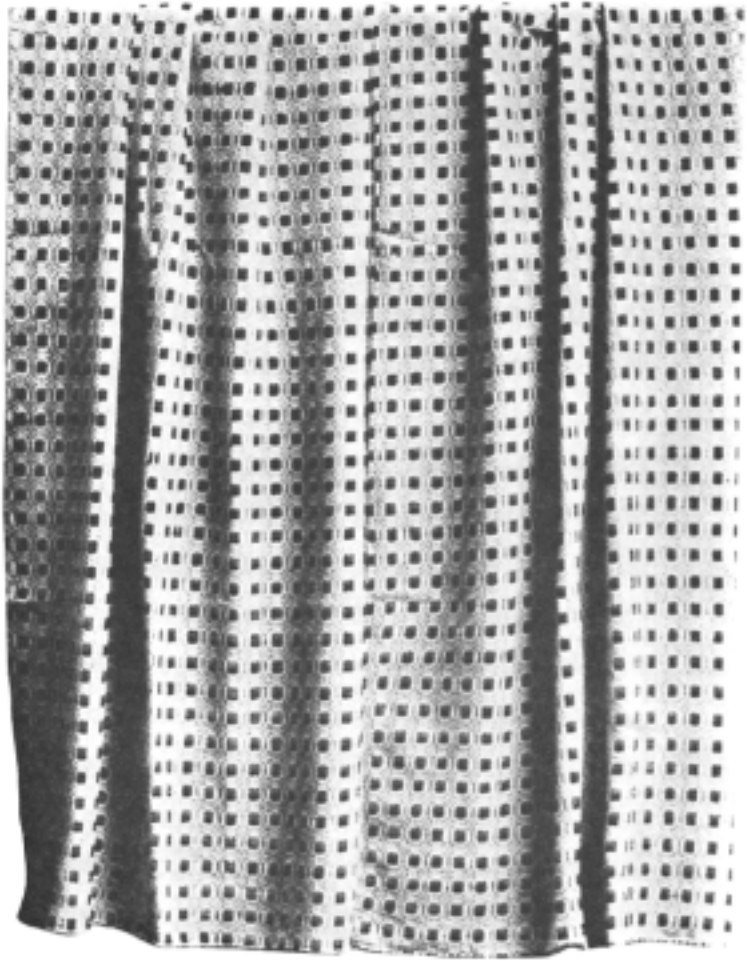
coverlet patterns except in the terms of art. Often I find myself thinking and writing as if weaving and music were sister arts. A draft is like a long bar of music and the figures or marks on it are the notes. When I see a weaver at his loom I think of an organist seated before a great organ, and the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

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

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

A MONROE COUNTY COVERLET

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*OLD DRAFTS USED IN THE
KENTUCKY MOUNTAINS*

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation consists of vertical strokes and some numbers, possibly representing a rhythmic or melodic sequence. The ink is dark and the paper shows signs of age and wear.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation includes vertical strokes and some numbers. At the bottom of the staff, there is a handwritten signature or name, possibly "F. J. C. S.", and the date "1842-1843".

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation is dense and consists of many vertical strokes, possibly representing a complex rhythmic pattern or a specific musical exercise.

Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. The notation includes vertical strokes and some numbers. The handwriting is somewhat cursive and the paper shows signs of age and wear.

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

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

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

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

The designer's art will never go be-

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

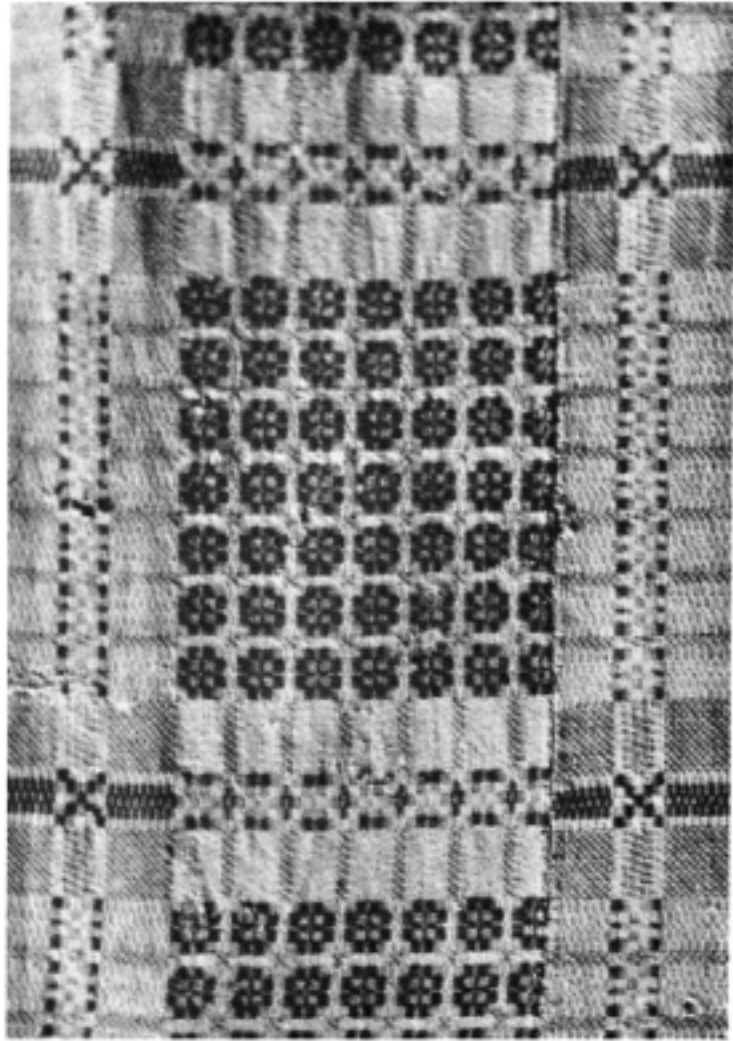
“Yes, ma’am, I’ll bring it to you jest as soon as I sell my terbacker.”

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

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

FORTY-NINE SNOWBALLS

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



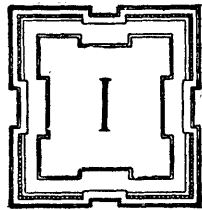
The charm of the coverlet pattern may not be at once apparent, but hang a "Whig Rose" or a "Dogwood Blossom" in the most elegant parlor you can find, and presently that homespun, home-dyed, home-woven fabric will be "the cynosure of every eye." The walls may be hung with masterpieces in oil and water-color,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

VI
COVERLET COLORS

VI

COVERLET COLORS

"Its loveliness increases."



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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

THEM IN THE MANUFACTURE OF
COTTON AND WOOLLEN GOODS;
INCLUDING MANY USEFUL
TABLES AND DRAFTS,
IN CALCULATING AND FORMING VARIOUS KINDS
AND PATTERNS OF GOODS
DESIGNED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF DOMESTIC
MANUFACTURERS.
BY J. & R. BRONSON.
UTICA.
PRINTED BY WILLIAM WILLIAMS;
No. 60, GENESEE STREET.

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

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

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

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

*FRAGMENT OF AN OLD COVERLET
FROM DANVILLE, ILL.*

THE *design resembles "Bona-
parte's March." The colors
are like those found in oriental rugs.*



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

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

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

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

A BOOK OF HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

indigo until it gits as dark as you want.

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

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

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

“PURPLE. — Git maple bark and copperas.

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

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

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

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

“What is an ‘ooze?’” I asked.

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

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

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

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

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

“DYE FOR COTTON. — Just take maple

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ Sedge grass.

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

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

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

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

THE MARY SIMMONS COVERLET

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