

**So Opportune.**  
Down drooping to its nest of gold  
The day a parting kiss bestowed,  
Far out upon the verdured fold  
The splendor of its blessing glows.  
The thrush within the orchard shades  
Pours out the tribute of his heart,  
And from the bracken ambuscades  
The vocal echoes gently start.  
  
Almost the reign of peace is won;  
The kine are at the oaken gate  
Where, fuddled by the waning sun,  
The milkmaid's tender call they wait.  
The kitchen door swings open wide,  
An image treads across the sill,  
And comes a voice, like vernal tide  
Of some o'er-frequented meadow rill—  
  
"Ho! Brownie! Bossie! Bonnie Bess!  
Come home from out your pastures bright  
Come take your mistress' kind caress  
And give me of your wealth to-night!"  
Then toward her fond-eyed lovers three,  
A fairy maid, with tresses brown  
And eyes like hie of starry sea,  
Speeds lightly o'er the emerald down.  
  
She sees not, close beside the gate,  
The farmer's bronzed and trusted son,  
Whose honest eyes with joys elate  
The fairy form are fixed upon.  
She only sees the patient herd  
That silent in the lunge-way stand,  
That mutely wait her ev'ry word  
And stretch their necks to kiss her hand.  
  
"They say you have no heart," she said,  
As Brownie's neck she fondly stroked,  
And round the rugged throat of red  
Her finely-molded arms were yoked.  
"They say you have no heart; but oh!  
You answer ev'ry sweet caress  
With answers that do seem to glow  
With Love's unspoken tenderness!"  
  
"You cannot speak, you Brownie, dear,  
But if your tongue could at naice know  
You wouldn't wed your love with fear,  
But let its fullest glory flow;  
You wouldn't be as mute as he  
That sees my love by silence bound,  
That meets my glances tenderly  
Yet leaves my longings all unbound.  
  
You wouldn't hear me thus set free  
My love, and let your heart to sleep,  
But then—and if you were he,  
I wouldn't dare to thus o'erleap  
All modesty and break the spell  
Of secrecy, as I do now;  
But its relief, 'e'en you to tell,  
Oh! if he only were a cow!"  
  
A scarcely noted fall of feet,  
A hand was on her shoulder laid,  
"I'll play it was if you'll repeat  
That pretty story o'er again,  
With all its show of pettings, too,  
And that sweet noise about my throat,  
There, little one, come, please to do!"  
Perhaps there isn't need to note,  
  
If word for word she o'er-confessed  
The truth so innocently told,  
Or whether 'twas considered best  
To silent be, and seek the fold  
That offered her its benefice,  
But this we'll venture anyhow,  
The lips that left on hers a kiss  
Were not the chattels of a cow.  
*Wade Whipple in Quincy Modern Argosy.*

**THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT IT.**

I remember the way it began. It was in April, and some of the house-cleaning was done. The parlor stove had been taken down and stowed up in its usual canvas bag for the season. Auntie said she wouldn't have the dirt and muss of a fire upon her freshly-turned carpet. We were so sorry, Daisy and Tom and I, because it was the one cheery spot in the whole room. Outside of the dear old thin-legged and thinner-toned piano, there wasn't now a comfortable feature in the whole grim circumference of it. And because it was April, and some of the house-cleaning done, auntie would have it that the parlor was comfortable. Her poor dear nose was red and her thin hands were blue, and we felt so sorry to see her freeze there with her prayer-book in her hand. As for Daisy and me, we stayed out by the kitchen range, pretending to be still doing up the dishes; and it was a mercy we did, for Cousin Tom came right to us instead of blurring into the parlor with his pale face and melancholy news. Somehow the minute he took his hat off I knew by the look of his hair that something had happened. It usually lay kind of curly and soft about his forehead, but now it was lank and stiff and petrified-looking. He came right up to us and said, in a blood-curdling way, "Girls, the bank has busted!" "Not auntie's bank?" said Daisy, for I couldn't speak. "The one where she kept her tin," said Tom. "It's gone up the spout! Clean!" he added, with mournful emphasis. "Who can tell auntie?" whispered Daisy, while we all shrank at the bare thought of such a thing. "After all, why tell her?" said Cousin Tom. "I always draw the money; it will be an easy matter to keep up the humbug of the book." "But the humbug of the money is the difficult part," I said. "Well, it will be a tight shave," said Tom; "there'll be some tall scrooging when rent-day comes around, but I think I can manage it now." We knew that Tom was in an insurance office, and, though the work was light, the pay was correspondingly paltry, and he had always given what he could to the mutual support. I was glad to see him put so brave a face upon the calamity; but now that auntie's income was gone I couldn't see how we were to make ends meet. It had always served to pay the rent, which was a big item in our expenses. We lived across town—no matter where; we had the whole second and part of the third floor in one of those old-fashioned, deep window-silled, wide and mellow mansions, that was quite genteel and grand when auntie first went to housekeeping with her two little orphan nieces. Daisy was but a baby then, and it was not till some years later on she gave shelter to Cousin Tom. By that time this spacious domain was sadly altered; the paint had become more and

more yellow with every year that went by; the walls took a deeper, not to say a dingier hue; and the foreign element evolved itself to such an extent about us that the Balbriggans, the family occupying the highest of the house, declared that pyrites might as well be living in Germany. At length the Balbriggans moved away, and the lower floor was turned into a shop for a tailor with an unpronounceable name. He was a good-natured man, with quite an ear for music; and auntie said he might add a Vion to his name if he wanted to, which privilege he was sensible enough to refuse, as it was ever too much too long already. I went to the store very heavily-hearted that morning, and could scarce get patience to endure the whims and ways of my customers. On the way home my head began to ache as well as my heart; but before I was well up the stoop I heard the jingle of the piano. Tom was there before me, and he and Daisy were singing away at the old yellow keys, while auntie in her usual chair by the window, dressed in the rusty alpaca that she had worn at least a hundred afternoons, keeping time, in her accustomed way, with her thin, long-fingered patrician hand.

The day was closing gently without wind or rain, and at parting the sun shed a flattering beam upon the faded old room, the threadbare carpet, the horse-hair seats, and stiff old engravings. One lingering ray fell full upon the lovely head of Daisy as she stood there singing away at the top of her voice, her mouth opened wide, her cheeks glowing, her eyes shining like sapphires. It was an old lyric of Heyward's, of which auntie never grew tired. Tom had squared himself to the piano with the air of a professor, and in his way was as fair to look upon as Daisy herself. "Ach, wunderscho!" said a voice from the door, and there was the old German tailor from the floor below rubbing his hands in ecstasy. Indeed, as the song said, they borrowed their notes from the lark and nightingale, so full and rich and sweet were they. Since ever these children had been able to raise a note they had warbled together to the jingling of this worn-out old spindle-thread of an instrument. It was the only amusement, the one distraction, of the household. The Balbriggans were a musical family; auntie had once a fine contralto of her own; and though I could not carry a tune, I had a fine appreciation for the sweet burden of those more fortunate, and thanked God fervently for this gift to yonder two, who sang and sang away long after auntie and I had gone to dish up the evening meal. I took heart of grace, and grew content once more. "Let's leave it all to God, dear," I whispered to Tom. "He who cares for the fall of a sparrow will not see us want."

"Hum—yes," said Tom, raising his eyebrows and shrugging his shoulders—tricks he had learned from the foreigners about us—yes; but God helps them that help themselves; and while we're on the Scriptures, Prudy, don't you forget that nice little parable about the fellow who came to grief through hiding his talent in a napkin. We must do the best we can with whatever accomplishments we have; eh, Prue?" "I'm sure I've always striven—" I began, for the words of the boy hurt me. "Now, Prudy," he broke in, "who said you didn't? I'm only alluding to others." "Well, as for you—" I began again; but he cut me short by declaring that he had been a second Hercules. "Who, then, do you mean?" I said, wondering; for what could poor old auntie do more than she did, and Daisy was but a child as yet—barely twenty the coming June.

"Nous verrons," said Tom, who interrupted his conversation in this polyglot way. From that time out Tom did work like a heathen Hercules. Every night he went back to the office, and worked there till close on to midnight. I had no idea that in the insurance business people could be so hurried, and, indeed, had heard of considerable depression in all the mercantile branches; but Tom assured me that the rush in his line of business was remarkable; that people stood in a line and waited till their turn came around, and there seemed to be no diminution in the rush as yet. He hoped it would last till the summer, and begin again with renewed zeal with the gales of autumn.

"Life and property are so uncertain," I said, mournfully. "But I'm afraid you'll be worn out, Tom." "Not at all," he cried; "I rather enjoy it. It's good fun, you know, to see people so excited and enthusiastic. I'm going to take Daisy down there to-night, Prue. She's crazy to go, and what on earth harm can there be? Now you know I love her better than my life; and do you suppose I'd risk hurting a hair of her lovely head? But I believe there's more in her than anybody fancies. I'm going to see, anyhow. And don't look as if you'd seen a ghost, Prue. I'll be there to look after her."

"But what can the child do there?" "Do!" he cried. "Der Liebe Himmel!" Tom gasped and shook his head as if the subject was too much for him. Then he added, more soberly: "She can do lots of things, Prudy—sorting out pens and paper, and—and lots of things. You've no objection to her going any where on my protection, have you?" "N—no," I stammered; but I didn't half like it, and couldn't understand it. "If she must do something, why can't I get her a situation in the store with me?" "Pah! Never!" said Tom. "Good gracious! I should think not! That would be another case of hiding one's light under a bushel; and such a bushel! Now just leave it to me, Prue." I was silent, but not convinced. Auntie was more easily won over. Tom was her oracle. She never appealed from Tom. So Daisy went, with much shyness and confusion and trembling, from which I argued that this experiment would soon spend itself. What was my chagrin when, several days after, Daisy, with a burst of tears, threw herself upon my neck, and declared that hereafter she could bear her share of the family expenses; that her venture was a success, and she was engaged.

Daisy said not a word, but looked so glad and radiant, poor child, I could not further heart to hinder their joy; but I couldn't help saying that I had no idea they had ladies at the office. Tom had never mentioned it.

"Ladies! God bless you, Prue, they're everywhere. The whole government will be administered by the fair sex one of these days, and quite right, too. Now don't you worry about Daisy. I'll take care of her."

But I did worry, nevertheless. My days were passed in tormenting, doubtful reverie; my nights were haunted by melancholy dreams, so that I started up in bed, and was never satisfied until I had gone to look at Daisy, and bending over the child, was only content to find her sleeping innocently, with her rounded cheeks upon her arm, and her little hand tucked up to her eye. I never could get to sleep till Tom and Daisy were home, and everything settled for the night; and I used to lie awake listening for the rattle of the cab wheels; for it seemed their united efforts could now afford a cab. Daisy always came straight to me, and kissed me good-night; and I cannot tell what it was made me more and more wretched as the brilliant, beautiful creature bent over me with all and more of her old tenderness. On one of these nights I lay awake for a long time after she had gone, and finally went wandering, as usual, to Daisy's little child, with her hand buried in the fluffy waves of her hair, and gazing thus, I fancied I saw a deep red bar of crimson upon her cheek, and scarcely knowing what I was about, I held the lamp still closer, and taking the fine cambric frill of her night-gown, I rubbed it lightly upon the stain, and, yes—ah! the bitterness of having a damning doubt confirmed—ah! he had painted! It was a mercy to God I did not drop the lamp upon the floor. I dropped there myself shortly after, and knew no more until morning. I remember the cold gray light of day stealing into my room, and then dropped off again into an exhausted sleep till noon. I heard Daisy's soft footsteps at the door, and closed my eyes, for I couldn't hear her knock upon her. She went softly away again, only to come shortly after and look at me again. The next footstep I heard was Tom's. Coming on tiptoe in my room, which made his boots squeak all the more, he found my eyes wide open and staring upon him. He started back in alarm, for I suppose he saw something wild and strained about them.

"Why, my dear old Prudy"—he began. "But I drew him closer to me, and whispered, fiercely: "No more night-work for Daisy. I won't have it. Do you understand? Pray God it may not be too late to save the child now!" His face took a serious expression, and he pulled at his mustache. "Now, auntie, Prue," he said, "don't, for Heaven's sake, get any nonsense of that kind into your head. She couldn't drop out now, you know; the very device would be to pay."

I replied, bitterly, "God help me! what am I to do?" And seeing Daisy trembling in the doorway, I held out my arms to her; her sweet eyes filled, and she threw herself, sobbing, upon my breast. I hated to hurt my child, I hated to shock Tom, but something must be done at once to check these evil ways; and while I strove for a word to begin with, Tom said that some old woman had been meddling, he supposed.

"Oh, Tom, I was the witness to my own misery!" And then, keeping Daisy's face hidden near my heart, I told them of all my fears for Daisy's increasing vanity, my awful doubts about the glitter of her beauty, and at last the discovery of the dreadful stain upon her cheek.

I expected to see Tom fall back aglance. I thought that Daisy would sob the more and hide her face the closer. To my surprise, Tom blew a long, low whistle, and Daisy raised her head and looked at him.

"There's no use talking, Tom. I won't go on with it if it makes Prue feel so badly. I couldn't, Tom, if I made a thousand dollars a night." This was what Daisy said, and began stroking my hair and fondling me again as if I were the diseased and pitiable one. I thought I should go mad with bewilderment, when Tom spoke up again.

"Now, see here, girls," he said, "no more melancholy pumping, please; there's misery enough in the world without going out of one's way to find it. The best way to convince Prue that everything is right is to let her see for herself. I propose to take Prue down with us to-night." "To the—the—" faltered Daisy. "To the insurance office," said Tom. She can remain there and watch us at our work; and if, taking into consideration the fact that we must earn an honest living in some way, she finds this one altogether objectionable, we'll let it slide. Now dry your tears and call it a bargain." He went out, and I heard him whistle as he went. It was very bewildering that he should take so grave a matter in that way. "Is this the little girl, Daisy," I said, solemnly, "that has lain so many years at my heart—my pure, innocent little sister?" "Yes, yes, Prudy, a thousand times yes," she cried. "I'm a great deal better, and happier than ever I was, because I can help along with the rest." Then I kissed her, and turned my tired head to the pillow. I was only too glad to take a brief and troubled respite. And shortly after I arose and dressed, and toward evening Mrs. Balbriggan called to tell me that Tom had asked her to go with me in the evening. I did not like this foolish and fussy woman as a witness to probable shame or discomfiture, but hadn't much time for any further worry. Mrs. Balbriggan, finding it impossible to induce me to fix what she called my front hair, devoted her attention to her own, and gave way at times to an unseemliness of mirth which I thought sadly out of place; but she had always been a ridiculous old woman. We got into the cab that Tom had provided, and shortly went into what Tom called the side entrance to the insurance office, and made our way into a gaudy little curtained stall, with a lot of fiddlers twanging away within a hand's-breadth. O, the bitterness of that moment! Tom, the lad that I had loved and trusted, had tricked me into coming to the theater to assuage a misery that he could not understand or comfort, and had given me over to the company of this crazy Balbriggan woman, who was already pulling upon her pudgy hands a pair of yellow gloves many sizes too small; and happier than ever I was, because I looked about me for a means of escape, but the play had already begun, and the stage was filled with a motley crowd of women and sailors. One of these exchanged a glance with Mrs. Balbriggan,

sliding up to the box, and another of them followed her. Mrs. Balbriggan nudged me with her fan, and asked me if I had ever seen them before. And one of the poor creatures giggling up in my face, I couldn't but see the startling resemblance to Jane Balbriggan, while the fat little tawdry thing by her side was the image of her sister Susan. Scarce recovered from this bewildering, I saw that one of the sailors was John; and another poke of Mrs. Balbriggan's fan drew my attention to a fine, handsome young officer just striding upon the stage. Before he began to sing I knew it was Tom, and sank back in my seat.

"It's quite a family party," said Mrs. Balbriggan. "There's lots of 'em from the choir in the Lutheran church—" But a loud burst of applause drowned her voice, and before that awful Balbriggan began joggling me with her fan I knew the awful moment had come. I suppose I was a fool. Other people might have been proud of her beauty and talent and success, but the tears rained out of my eyes; and as she stood therein the big bonnet that only served to set off her lovely face, and bowed to the gaping crowd, I felt as many a other wretched soul when seeing a dear one upon the scaffold. It was all in vain—the glittering lights, the melody and bewitchery, the brazen boldness of the Balbriggans, and their mother's cool serenity. I set there pale and forlorn, repeating to myself the lines of the scoffing Byron:

"From the rose you have shaken the tremulous dew,  
From the grape you have pressed the soft innocent blue."  
It was hard for the dear child, I know, to come straight from the admiration and applause of the multitude to the frantic clutch and wild imploring of her poor pride of a sister.

"It's only the *Penaflore*, Prue," begged Tom; "the purest, neatest, most enchanting little opera, and Little Buttercup has to do with nobody but me. You wouldn't object to her being a prima donna, if it lay in her power?" "God knows I would!" I said, and they shook their heads hopelessly. What was the use of striving? The mischief was done. I could coax Daisy into a ready consent to give it up, but the child's heart would be there, what was the use? I was, as Mrs. Balbriggan said, an absurd, prinky old maid. I made no further complaint or resistance, and Daisy thought I was resigned; but Tom has promised me, on his honor, that he and Daisy will be married soon, and that his wife shall never set her foot upon the stage.—*Harper's Weekly.*

**Easy Lessons in Etiquette.**

We have been profoundly interested in a work that has just been sent us, the author of which is Professor B. E. Fanning. It aims to give to the world easy lessons in etiquette for gentlemen. It is a useful work. Among other things the professor says:

"When calling on a new lady acquaintance, the hat should be taken to the parlor and held in the hand."  
"This is one of the best instructions in the book. When you don't know all about the young lady and her family, young man, freeze to your hat all the time. We once knew a young lady who kept her father and four brothers in nice, new stylish hats all the time, by simply instructing the servant to just skin the hat rack every time a young man with a glibly head was fresh enough to leave his hat in the hall. We'll bet a dollar Professor Fanning has been there himself. And then, besides, a 'plug' hat is such a comfortable thing to hold in one's hand. When you can't think of anything to say, you can stroke the hat the wrong way, and then exert your energies during the rest of the visit to getting it smooth again."  
"A gentlemen," says the professor, with becoming severity, "never dances with his overcoat on."  
And we may add that he hardly ever dances with his overshoes on, and the instances in the best society in which a gentleman has danced through an entire set with his overcoat on are used for the corsage and train, with plain satin for the front and sides of the skirt. Modistes say the wedding dress has a distinctive style peculiar to it, somewhat severe, and entirely different from that of any other dress. The train is made longer, wider and more severe in shape, flowing quite plain from the waist, and is untrimmed. The panier effect, if given at all, is very slight, and is made by a scarf passed around the hips and held by orange blossoms. The garniture is displayed elaborately on the front and side zones of the skirt. The corsage is a basic cut high in the back, with low square or V-shaped neck and transparent sleeves of lace or of pearl trimming; these may reach to the elbow or to the wrist, as the arms require. Pearl beads in passementerie and fringe are much used for trimming white satin dresses. A pyramid of the fringe is on the front of the skirt, the neck and edges of the basque are finished with it, perhaps there are panels of pearls on the side zones, and the sleeves are made to look like a network of pearls, as they are made of lengthwise strips of the passementerie. Pearl-embroidered fronts of the skirt and an embroidered vest for the basque are imported ready for use. The beads are iridescent pearls, showing opal tints, and are strung on threads and wrought in loops and branches in the neckwork. Handsome laces are always in fashion, but are specially desirable now for arranging in rows across the front and sides of the satin dress, or else in jabots and panels on the sides. Wide lace flounces at the foot are festooned at intervals with satin ribbon loops. When lace is used on the train it is not as flounces, but in lengthwise designs. In one instance lately a wide duchesse flounce, with the straight edges sewed together, formed a beautiful panier scarf that was passed around the hips and held in the back and front by a cluster of flowers. Sometimes lace is used for the transparent sleeves instead of the pearl trimming. Flowers are set as lavishly used as they were formerly. Small bouquets set at intervals down the front amid rows of lace, or else clusters for the back and front of the paniers, are favorite styles of garniture. Some sets of orange blossoms outline the panier on the hips, others form a curve around a tablier, and still others are massed as panels on the side. A fancy with Worth is that of arranging orange buds in a pyramid of lace or else satin plaitings in the front of the skirt. White laces, jasmine or clematis are mixed with orange blossoms. The bridal veil is of tulle, and is now draped on the side and back of the hair, instead of being thrown over the face in the French fashion. The edges are not hemmed, and a cluster of flowers holds the veil instead of a wreath.—*Bazar.*

**FOR THE FAIR SEX.**

**Fashions of the Season.**

Vests, which are separated from the skirts, whether matching the dress or not, are cut very long in front, with ends reaching nearly to the knees, and cut up on the hips, to prevent the dress from working up when sitting. This style is mostly made for full walking suits, which can in this way be worn without over-garments.

Jackets with white vests are worn. As these vests must always be very white, they are made complete with a back, like gentlemen's vests, in order that they can be changed as often as necessary. The jacket is no longer buttoned in front, but is left open, and only fastened with a hook on either side of the vest.

Short dresses continue in favor. Among these are Pompadour suits, which are cut very short and have small draped paniers in the back. Handsome silk tissues do not require anything under the panier to puff them out, but woolen and fancy goods must have the addition of "toursures," with light springs, almost flat, to support them. These must be very small, and great moderation should be observed in their manufacture.

Among pretty designs for out-door and home dresses of cash materials for young girls are the yoke waists and yoke basques. These are as fashionable as ever, and are very becoming to youthful, slender figures. But this style should be avoided by the stout, the middle-aged, or elderly women, whether stout or slim. There is no style more inelegant when it fails to come up to the requirements of the best sort of a fit. Select a good pattern to begin with; the yoke must be deep, both back and front, and fitted neatly, so as to outline the top of the arm and shoulder. It should also be as closely and perfectly fitted under the arm as if the waist were plain; and if the pleats extend over the hips in the basque form, they should be graduated so as to admit of a slight spring; at the back they may be kept straight. Yoke blouses or blouses are suitable for gingham, Madras, checks, percales, calicoes, lawns and linens. All yoke bodies are belted in. This belt is now more fashionable when made of a strip of the material of the dress than of ribbon or leather. Looped bows of the material or of ribbon may be made to cover the point of fastening of the belt.

**Wedding Dresses.**

Satin, the traditional fabric for wedding dresses, is also the fashionable choice this season. Both plain and brocade satins are used; the latter are in large leaf or flower patterns, or else in small polka dots. In some rich dresses the entire dress is of plain satin, while in others brocade satins are used for the corsage and train, with plain satin for the front and sides of the skirt. Modistes say the wedding dress has a distinctive style peculiar to it, somewhat severe, and entirely different from that of any other dress. The train is made longer, wider and more severe in shape, flowing quite plain from the waist, and is untrimmed. The panier effect, if given at all, is very slight, and is made by a scarf passed around the hips and held by orange blossoms. The garniture is displayed elaborately on the front and side zones of the skirt. The corsage is a basic cut high in the back, with low square or V-shaped neck and transparent sleeves of lace or of pearl trimming; these may reach to the elbow or to the wrist, as the arms require. Pearl beads in passementerie and fringe are much used for trimming white satin dresses. A pyramid of the fringe is on the front of the skirt, the neck and edges of the basque are finished with it, perhaps there are panels of pearls on the side zones, and the sleeves are made to look like a network of pearls, as they are made of lengthwise strips of the passementerie. Pearl-embroidered fronts of the skirt and an embroidered vest for the basque are imported ready for use. The beads are iridescent pearls, showing opal tints, and are strung on threads and wrought in loops and branches in the neckwork. Handsome laces are always in fashion, but are specially desirable now for arranging in rows across the front and sides of the satin dress, or else in jabots and panels on the sides. Wide lace flounces at the foot are festooned at intervals with satin ribbon loops. When lace is used on the train it is not as flounces, but in lengthwise designs. In one instance lately a wide duchesse flounce, with the straight edges sewed together, formed a beautiful panier scarf that was passed around the hips and held in the back and front by a cluster of flowers. Sometimes lace is used for the transparent sleeves instead of the pearl trimming. Flowers are set as lavishly used as they were formerly. Small bouquets set at intervals down the front amid rows of lace, or else clusters for the back and front of the paniers, are favorite styles of garniture. Some sets of orange blossoms outline the panier on the hips, others form a curve around a tablier, and still others are massed as panels on the side. A fancy with Worth is that of arranging orange buds in a pyramid of lace or else satin plaitings in the front of the skirt. White laces, jasmine or clematis are mixed with orange blossoms. The bridal veil is of tulle, and is now draped on the side and back of the hair, instead of being thrown over the face in the French fashion. The edges are not hemmed, and a cluster of flowers holds the veil instead of a wreath.—*Bazar.*

**Improving His Opportunities.**

Burdett, the Burlington *Hawkeye* humorist, writes from Ashland, Ky., thus humorously: During the day I went to the great Norton iron works and learned how to make nails.

I can make a nail now as well as anybody, but I'm not going to try. This is an iron town. When iron is busy and the mills are running the town is lively and happy, and away up in the scale of prosperity. Iron? The hills are full of it, and the way it is worked up is a caution. I went down to the works in the morning, and then I was down there again with Hartford Gridler at midnight. I stared until my eyes ached, and I could have seen more if I had had more eyes. Why, the machine that makes the nail ought to be allowed to vote. It ought to be sent to Congress. If ever one of the machines in the Norton mills runs for Congress I will come back to Ashland to vote for it. It would make a good Congressman. It can make nails, and it can make them to perfection, and it doesn't try to do anything else. I watched one of them for an hour, and it went on all the time, making good, useful, perfect nails. It never once talked politics. It never went out to take a drink.

**Fashion Notes.**

China crape mantles are trimmed with silk fringe tied in the hem or with jet beads.

on top of the head is called the Josephine.  
Black wraps are worn for full dress, light jackets for occasions when service is needed.

White satin bonnets embroidered with seed pearls are one of the favorites of this summer.  
Grenadine veils are of tan color or of light blue, with Roman borders on each edge.

Bengaline, the new material for mantles, is lustrous as grosgrain but pliable as Sicilienne.  
Large white satin hats, trimmed with white ostrich feathers, are the most elegant for evening wear.

Mask veils are of black or white Breton lace covered with tiny dots arranged in groups of three.  
The little round capes composed of rows of fringe, have come up again this year, for the fourth or fifth season.

Very new bonnets have large crowns covered with flowers and narrow brims of shirred silk—pink, blue or ivory.  
The heads of hounds, spaniels and terriers are used to head the sticks of sun-umbrellas, as well as those of pug dogs.  
The newest Marie Stuart bonnet is made of black Spanish lace, edged with cut jet beads. The garniture consists of an Arabian bow, sprays of white lilac and a large ruby butterfly fastening the bow.  
Shawls of crape or lace, both white and black, are drawn up in folds upon the shoulders and worn as fichus, the point at the back only reaching to or just below the waist. The belt of the dress is fastened over the ends in front.

The most fashionable street garment is a small black cape, composed of rows of lace or fine cut jet, upon a foundation of camel's hair, which is as fine and soft as silk. Straps laid across and fastened with buttons have taken the place of pockets upon cloth jackets, and also of the large unvelveted cuffs.

The very latest in black kid gloves have bands of black real lace insertion alternating with bands of equal width in black kid, which extend over the arm above the elbow. The band which covers the elbow must, of course, be of the kid, and the top is finished with a standing ruffle of black lace. The fit must be perfectly accurate or the effect would be spoiled. The lace insertions begin two or three inches below the line of the wrist.

A Pretty Window Plant.  
Ladies who never tried the experiment may at a trifling expense have a beautiful hanging plant in the east or south window of the sitting-room, that will grow very thrifty and retain its rich green color for months.  
Take a round piece of coarse cheap sponge and soak it thoroughly in warm water until it is fully expanded. Squeeze out most of the water, and in the opened holes of the sponge thrust rice, oat, barley, grass, millet and red clover seed. Hang this improvised flower pot where the sun will reach it during a portion of the day, and for a week after depositing the seeds above mentioned, sprinkle the sponge lightly every morning to keep the inside damp, but not wet.  
In a little while the seeds will commence to push out their spiky leaves from every part of the sponge, and, falling down in graceful tendrils as they rapidly increase, there will soon be formed a pretty mass of flowing green fringe, that will remain bright and cheerful to the eye for a long time. If carefully sprinkled later on, the clover will bloom before the mass decays at the roots.

**Web Engineering.**

On going round the garden this morning, says a writer in *Land and Water*, I perceived what seemed a small piece of cheese apparently floating in the air straight before me. On coming up to it, I found that it was suspended from a spider's web, which was spun right across the path. One's first hasty thought was that this spider had found a piece of cheese below, and, taking a fancy to it, was then drawing it up into its web to eat it. Further examination, however, showed that the substance was not cheese, but a small pebble much resembling that edible, evidently taken from the gravel walk beneath. There was nothing for the spider to attach his web to on the walk, so he had selected a suitable stone to balance his web, which, indeed, it did admirably, the web being attached to trees on either side of the walk, and weighted below by the stone, so as to be in nearly a perpendicular position. The stone was connected with the web by a threefold cord, the strands of which were attached to different parts of the stone. I visited the web two or three hours after the spider had finished it, and found that his industry had been rewarded, as the web contained, besides a large fly, off which he was dining, more small flies than I have ever before seen in a web. Neither myself, nor those of my friends to whom I showed the web, have ever seen anything of the kind before. Perhaps your readers will be interested in such an example of high instinct in a spider, and those who are more versed in natural history than myself may be able to remember other examples of the same kind. That the stability of the web depended upon the weight of the stone was shown when I put my hand under the latter. The result was that as I raised my hand the lower part of the web gradually collapsed, but when the stone was suffered again to fall gently the web resumed its proper shape. The web was about five feet from the ground.

Spider engineering is a most interesting subject, and one that I have spent hours in studying. I have worked out most of the problems in connection with it, but the weight of the stone I have not yet been able to explain. Some spiders will use ties; but others, of exactly the same species, will use a weight although the circumstances under which both built apparently are similar. But how does the spider raise the weight? This I could never explain to my satisfaction, as some of the weights are so large that it is scarcely possible they could lift them by a "dead lift." Besides, they will put on one, two or more weights in a few hours before wind, to fix their structures. The industry and ingenuity of the spider passes belief to all those who have seen them at work, but no more profitable day can be spent by a young engineer than a day after a storm in a path through the gorse watching a spider reconstructing its web. This is the legitimate way of seeing the work done, but there are other dodges, such as breaking down the web, and watching the poor insects reconstruct them.

One hundred English farmers go into bankruptcy every week on account of the importation into England of American beef, says a high English authority.