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THE LOOM OF LIFE.

BY EBEN E. REYFORD.

All day, all night, I can hear the jar,
Of the loom of life, and near and far
It thrills with its deep and muffled sound,
As the tireless wheels go always around.

Busily, ceaselessly goes the loom
In the light of day and the midnight's gloom.
The wheels are turning early and late,
And the woof is wound in the warp of fate.

Click, clack! there's a thread of love wove in,
Click, clack! another of wrong and sin;
What a checkered thing will this life be,
When we see it unrolled in eternity!

Time, with a face like a mystery,
And hands as busy as hands can be,
Sits at the loom with its warp outspread,
To catch in its meshes each glancing thread.

When shall this wonderful web be done?
In a thousand years, perhaps, or one;
Or to-morrow. Who knoweth? Not you nor I,
But the wheels turn on, and the shuttles fly.

Ah, sad-eyed weaver, the years are slow,
But each one is nearer the end I know.
And some day the last thread shall be woven in,
God grant it be love instead of sin.

Are we spinners of wool for this life-web—say?
Do we furnish the weaver a thread each day?
It were better then, oh my friend, to spin
A beautiful thread than a thread of sin.

The Regulation Buttons.

AN ENGINEER'S STORY.

It was upon New Year's eve, in the year 1845, thirty good years ago, and a terrible storm, driving snow and sleet mixed together. I was a young fellow; I'd been married about a year. You know the station is a horrible place for service. Let a storm come which way it will, it always sweeps clean across the square, that's as open and level as the top of a table. In toward the town there is a little cut with two tracks, one or the other of which always chokes up in the first hour of a drifting snow. Just as you get through the cut, in the third house in Garden street, behind the old oil mills that we often cursed for a nuisance, because we always had to shut off steam going by for fear of the sparks from the chimney catching in the shingle roof, I lived with my Louise, and Franz, just born, who is superintendent now over at Rudrich's.

So, on Sylvester eve, 1845, I came into the station with a heavy freight train from Griesthal, after standing for fourteen hours on the engine in a storm at six below. I was frozen stiff as an icicle, and glad enough to get hold of something warm. It was getting dusk already as I came in, and, through the whirl of glistening flakes, saw the station with its hundreds on hundreds of lights, like a huge Christmas box. A poor Christmas box for me! There were collected through the holidays a regular town of cars, something like five hundred of them, and they'd got to be all made up so that everything could be off directly after New Years. Hardly had I got off my engine in the engine house when up comes the station master, and says to me:

"Hauser is taken sick, and you will have to take No. 3 in his place."

"Ten thousand thunders!" said I; "but I hope it won't last till midnight, for then I must be at home, or there's ill luck for the New Year."

"Fiddlesticks!" said he; "only you be sure to be on hand," and away he was gone in the driving snow.

I thought I'd taken the matter more to heart than it was worth, and laid the cold shiver that crept over my skin to the uncanny blast that came snorting at me as I came out with the engine. The whole air was full of fine snow, and, as the wreaths of it drove like white ghosts across the engine, I could hardly see the smokestack.

Of the light signals one caught only now and then a glimpse, red, white, or green; of the horn and pipe signals, what with the howling of the wind about the cars and car wheels, and its singing in the telegraph wires, and the rumbling of the cars and the whistling of the engines, one heard only just enough to be sure one had not understood them. Of the shouts of the men, one could make just nothing but that they shouted.

Then there were a couple of hundred cars being shunted about in all directions at the same time; on all sides they came looming like great shadows out of the darkness and thick snow, and straight vanished in it again. The poor switch tenders, wet to the skin, up to their knees in snow, sprung this way and that between the rolling cars. You know how a distributing station looks of a winter night. God only knows how 'tis we're not all made mincemeat of in the course of it, and I've all my life long been surprised when next morning I haven't heard that this one or that one was killed on the spot.

That night then, it was right bad, and the punch, too, may have touched the men's heads a little beforehand, for the ranging went at a fearful rate. The cars flew so this way and that, and the lights went by like flashes, and everywhere one heard the groaning and clinking of the buffers crashing together, and the men crept about under and between the cars as if the wheels were ginger-bread and the buffers downy pillows. But before all there was a wretched little assistant station-master—I could not bear the man, because he once came very much in my way in a certain matter—but I could not help looking in amazement as I saw his signal lantern everywhere, swinging in an inch, swinging horizontally, swinging crosswise, up, down, behind, before, and heard his shrill voice through all the storm. And see, I'd just called to the man as I saw him slip through two buffers, that he ought not to be so reckless, in a storm where one could neither see nor hear a thing, and might slip down into the bargain. But he laughed at me, and called out: "You attend to your own work, Zimmerman, and never mind me; we must be through before midnight—forward, forward!" and away he was gone.

I heard him still giving the order "Forward!" yonder among my comrades, and heard the car chains clink, and then a sound—what like was it? have you ever heard a butcher hack through a thick bone with his ax?—and then a dull cry, and then, again, only the cling and clang of the buffers clashing together. A cold shudder ran over me; then I got the signal to go ahead—there was no stopping. "Forward, forward!" In a moment I was far away at the other end of the yard, where no one could know what had happened.

But I did my duty still, only as if I was dreaming, and when, a half-hour later, we had got through and I entered the engine house again, the boss said to me: "Have you heard, Zimmerman, Assistant Station Master Porges has been killed on the spot, crushed to death between the buffers?"

I didn't ask many questions; my very heart shuddered, and I don't know how I took care of my engine and got on the way home. As I passed by the stairs I saw a group with lanterns standing there, and something covered with a cloak lying on the snow. I didn't stop; I shivered all over; and I can tell you, boys, I'd have given Heaven knows what if I hadn't wished him to the devil half an hour before. I tried hard to get that out of my head. I meant nothing particular by it; 'twas a way of talking common enough with us. Among you young chaps it's worse yet, and it would cure you if you once felt the crawling inside of you that I have. Well, at last I made out to get thinking of the warm room at home, where with the felt slippers all ready, and Louise and the youngster, and the sugar and the lemons on the table, and the cat and the tea-kettle singing, and by degrees I begun to feel a little lighter.

Now, with all this thinking of this and that, you'll readily believe I hadn't paid much heed to wind and weather, road or pathway; and all I knew was, it was whirling and howling yet in the air as I entered the cut by the old oil mill, through which I might have seen the windows of my house, if one could have seen anything at ten paces off. I went ahead on the right hand track of the two in the cut, because that was the freer from snow, and from that side I could see my house sooner.

And, in truth, I went along quite carelessly, for I was going from the yard, and that was the in track, so no train could come on me from behind, and at that hour none were to be expected in front. Besides, I must have heard it coming.

Just as I was in the middle of the cut, which lies, you know, in the curve, and where that night one could not see a car-length off, I heard a whistle behind me, and right after it the clip and clap of the approaching train. I noticed, too, that the engine was pushing the train before it, because the stroke of the engine was much further behind than the rolling of the wheels. I thought: "Ah! that is the reserve train of some twenty pair of wheels that stood yonder ahead on the track, and that they are shunting over to the freight house." But all this passed only vaguely through my mind, as one always thinks mechanically of his work even when his head and heart are full of other things. I say vaguely; in reality I didn't feel the slightest interest in it, for the train must directly pass me on the other track. But when the ping and pang of the wheels on the hard frozen track had got quite close up, and I already heard the coupling chain on the foremost car clinking back and forth, and saw the light of its signal lantern begin to glide by me on the snow, I partly turned my head to call out a "Happy New Year!" to the fellows upon the train.

But there was no train on the track; and at the same instant I got a violent blow in the back. The sparks danced before my eyes—slap!—I lay flat on my face on the track, and pung! pung! the cars began to pass on over me.

Here the old engineer made another pause. It was still as death in the room, and faces breathless and riveted leaned forward round the table.

You see, boys, when we sit this way round the table, or stand on the engine, our ideas come along one after the other, slowly and in some sort of order, so that one can take a good look at 'em. They even say that we engineers are slower than other men, because all the quickness is gone out of us into our engines. But, boys, in the second or so between the blow and my lying on the ground, I did more thinking than ever I did before or since from Easter to Whitsuntide.

First about home, the warm room and everything in it, and the New Year's chimes and the going to church in the morning; then the assistant station master as he lay there under the cloak on the snow; and then I begun reckoning as distinctly as if I was giving the orders for making up all the trains, about the train that was passing over me. How was it it was on the wrong track, the one I'd been on, coming out on the in track? And then all at once I thought, what before in the midst of my cogitating I had forgotten—the outward track I had seen as early as noon already deep buried in snow, and that was why they were coming out on the in track. Then I saw plain enough the train as it stood; there couldn't be more than ten or eleven freight cars, all our own cars, they all went high above the rails—they would do me no harm. I lay flat enough between the rails. But the engines—the ashboxes of the engines! I knew all three engines that still stood fired up at the station as well as my tobacco pouch. The "Wittekind" would go harmless enough over me, even though I had been stouter than I was; the "Herman," too, might be merciful to me, at any rate, if it was carrying little water and fire, and the sleepers under me didn't stand up too much; but under the "Sirius," one of the new, low built elephants, I was a dead man. Ay! dead? That would not be the worst. I should be slowly crushed and torn into shreds. What engine was it, then, coming there?

All this, you see, boys, I had thought between the blow and the lying flat; but when I was once down all calculation ceased, and it was just by instinct I stretched myself out and held my breath and made myself as thin as an otter that's trying to get out from a trap, and counted the axles that passed on over me. Every ping and pang spoke distinctly out in syllables: "A wretched death, a wretch-ed death!" And now something heavy catches hold of me! No, it is nothing yet—it only grazes me, and glides clinking its length along over me and off, striking a cold chill to my marrow—it is a chain hanging down. But now it comes! the ground begins, at first gently, then stronger and stronger, to tremble under me; it comes very slowly. Then I saw at the side that the rails and the snow and the rolling wheel shadows over me grew ever redder, redder. It was the engine fire shining from the ashbox. Now I felt it grow hot on my bare head and neck. The sleepers yielded under me; the rails groaned and bent; the ground shook violently; it is on me. It strikes me violently in the back—God have mercy on me! Then rip, crack! something on me gave way. Pang! pang! rolling! thundering! stamping! —the engine passed over me and off. From the free heaven once more the snow cloud plunged down upon me.

How I got on my legs I don't know. I stood there, I shook myself, and saw the red lights of the engine disappear round the curve. They looked to me like the eyes of a veritable bodily death. Then I felt myself to see what the engine had torn loose; and, behold! the regulation buttons were gone from my coat behind.

I went to the nearest switch tender and got a lantern and looked for the buttons in the snow; but when we were sitting round the table at home, and I was very nervous, Louise, wondering, said:

"Husband, what's the matter with you? You tremble so, and don't speak a word."

Then my senses and speech came to me again, and I showed Louise the buttons, and told her the story, and, holding a button 'twixt my finger and thumb, said:

"See, within so much of a horrible death has your husband been to-night!"

I have the buttons yet, and mean to carry them till death comes in reality.

The old man opened his coat and drew out two buttons stamped with the king's arms, which he wore secured by a string about his neck.

I have told you the story because it came up in the talk; but I don't like to speak of it, because the agony of death was in it, and that's something no man calls to mind willingly.

Indians Outwitted.

Many years ago, when the white men who had seen the Rocky Mountains might still have been counted, and only a very few of the prairie Indians knew the use of fire-arms, a hunter named Fitzpatrick had one day got separated from his companions, and was pursuing his game alone in the wilderness, when, as ill-luck would have it, he was seen by a war party of Indians, who immediately prepared to give chase. There was not the smallest chance of escape for him; but the young hunter made a feint of turning away, in order, if possible, to gain time. He happened to know that these savages, who as yet were little acquainted with the use of firearms, had several times, when they had taken white hunters prisoners, put the muzzles of their rifles close to their breasts and fired them, by way of experiment, to see what would come of it. He therefore thought it prudent to extract the bullet from his, and then continued his flight. The Indians followed and very soon overtook him, and then they disarmed him and tied him to a tree. One of the warriors, who, it appeared, understood how to pull a trigger, then seized the rifle, placed himself a few paces in front of the owner of it, took aim at his breast, and fired. But when the Indians looked eagerly through the smoke toward where Fitzpatrick stood, they saw he was safe and sound in his place; and he quietly took out of his pocket the bullet he had previously placed there, and tossed it to his enemies, who were all amazement. They declared he had stopped the bullet in its flight, that he was an invulnerable and wonderful conjuror, and, what was more, that some great misfortune would most likely befall the tribe if they did not set him free immediately. They therefore cut his bonds and made off as fast as possible, leaving Fitzpatrick to go where he pleased.

A Wonderful Surgical Experiment

English surgical and physiological students will find in the *Gazette des Hopitaux* interesting details of an operation of gastrotomy, attended so far with successful results, which has been performed at the Hospital de la Pitie, by Dr. Verneuil. The patient, a lad of seventeen, had inadvertently swallowed a quantity of the solution of caustic potash. This occurred in February, and in spite of the most skilful treatment, the constriction at the upper orifice of œsophagus became so complete that death from inanition must inevitably have ensued without an operation, which was accordingly performed on the 26th of July.

The results will be seen from the medical bulletin of the 10th of September, which states that the patient is in good health, remains up all day, and even helps the hospital assistants in their work; he has almost as much strength and energy as he had before the accident. His diet is composed of soups, fine-chopped meat, mashed vegetables and drink, which are injected through a large elastic tube inserted in the incision made in the stomach. Under this treatment he gained upward of ten pounds in weight between the 18th of August and the 14th of September.

At the moment of the injection of food a flow of saliva in the mouth is produced, in the ejection of which a motion curiously resembling the action of chewing is remarked; he can distinguish between warm and cold substances, but otherwise all are indifferent to him. It is stated this is the first time the operation has been successfully performed; the last time it was attempted, but unsuccessfully, was in 1849, by M. Sedillott, professor of the faculty of medicine of Strasbourg.—*London Standard.*

Japanese Theatres and Tea-houses.

Old Japan, as far as costume and social observances are concerned, may be compared with revolutionary Japan at the theatres, where are played interminable historic dramas, wholly based on the old state of things. Nothing has been changed in the Japanese theatre, except here and there the hours; most of the theatres at the capital, and all those in the interior, play from 9 A. M. until dark. The theatres of the treaty ports now play from 5 P. M. to one A. M., so that at Tokio one is able to attend the theatres at most hours of the day and night. There the two-sworded Samurai still walk the stage, and Tycoon's soldiers still wear their hideous masks, and Daimios in magnificent trousers, preceded and followed by their banners and processions of retainers, still force the people to prostrate themselves to the dust. In contrast to the conservatism of the theatres, the critical modern spirit is shown in the tea-houses which stand near them. There a common carricature sheet upon the walls, which dates from just before the revolution, represents a Daimio's procession of insects. The playing mantis, the locust, the grasshopper, and the wasps are brought into requisition, given two swords apiece, and made to bear heroic banners of cornflower, poppy, and convulvulus. They imitate the swaggering walk and arms akimbo of the Samurai, and escort a feeble cricket carried in a cage. This is the Daimio, before whom an humble cockroach, who figures the people of Japan, reverently hammers his head upon the ground as he beholds him pass. Those Japanese who best knew their countrymen before the revolution will tell you that there always has been a want of respect, other than forced respect, among the people. Their attitude toward the Mikado seems to be the only exception to their general want of veneration, which is accompanied by a total absence of religious fanaticism, and I think must be added, of religious reverence. The only temple in Japan inside of which I ever saw a crowd, unless there was a wrestling performance going on within the walls, was that of Asaksa, in the capital. This temple is the centre of a sort of fair, or, as the whole of Tokio resembles the fair of St. Cloud more than it does anything else in Europe, the centre of a fair within a fair—the wax-work show and big drum portion of the fair. The temple of Asaksa is entirely surrounded by peep shows and shooting-galleries, and is always crowded, but more I think, by sight-seeing country people out of curiosity, than by the people of the capital from religious motives. The Loe Choe Envoys were there at the time of my visit—tall, bearded, solemn men, who seemed much struck by finding the place of honor in the temple occupied by a gigantic looking glass. The mirror may properly find a place in either Buddhist or Shinfoo Temple. The doctrine of Pure Shintoo informs us that the Sun Goddess was enticed out of her dark cave by a looking-glass; but in Buddhism a looking-glass symbolizes the mirror of the soul, and the worshipers are supposed to repair to it as to a confessional. The young ladies with painted lips and light blue or crimson satin obis, who eye themselves approvingly in the great mirror at Asaksa, perhaps think that it has other objects—at all events, there is nothing in the temple that "draws" so well. In a ghastly representation of the Buddhist hell, which is moved by clock-work and forms one of the most popular peep-shows outside the temple, the mirror also figures, and on it their crimes are shown to the dead as they enter hell. As I have named this show, I may add that, if it was regarded seriously by the people, it would be evidence of the existence of a degrading superstition. It represents green devils with red tongues, pounding people in mortars, boiling them in oil, and frying them in gridirons. In one corner an assistant devil is engaged in tying the legs and arms of men together, and another, who stands by with a plumb-line and crayon, marks a black line down the middle of their backs for the guidance of a third, who saws them deliberately in half. As is seen, however, by the attitude of the spectators, the representation is regarded by the Japanese as a mere joke.

Transfusion of Blood.

Truly science has, as was said recently by one of its eminent votaries, "its romantic side." Its history presents not a few deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice; its results have not seldom been attained by suffering voluntarily inflicted, and have now and then cost the lives of willing victims. The young Berlin doctor who, when a deadly contagious distemper was ravaging the poorer households of that city, thought he had discovered a method for its cure, and, knowing that its test might be fatal, nevertheless boldly tried it upon himself, and who, as he lay dying from its effects, jotted down his observations of its action on his system until within nine minutes of his departure from earth, was a hero to whom Sir Philip Sidney would have doffed his hat. A deed scarcely less noble, as it involved serious self-sacrifice, has just been done at Manchester by a young English medical student. It appears that a weakly young man had a leg amputated at the hospital, which made him so feeble that he was not likely to recover. He was fast sinking when the hospital doctor declared that there was but one possible way of saving him. Into the patient's languid veins must be transfused a quantity of warm blood from a vigorous, living man. A young student, who heard this, at once stepped forward and offered his own blood for the purpose. A pint of the vital fluid was thereupon taken from him, and sent circulating through the arm and body of the moribund youth. Within two hours he revived, recognized people, and was pronounced on the way to recovery.

The young medical student to whose unselfish heroism this good result was due may possibly have worked even better than he knew. It was long a matter of discussion and doubt whether this operation of transfusion could really be performed so as to transfer the vital vigor of one person to another. It is not at all a new idea, indeed, for we read of its having been tried on a certain pope four centuries ago, three young men being compelled to sacrifice their lives in order that the decrepit pontiff might thus renew his youth; but the experiment failed. The experiment has been tried many times, and in different countries; and for the past half-century the practicability of transfusion has been generally admitted by the profession. The difficulty is, to successfully effect it; but it is well known that the blood of animals has been again and again transfused to the veins of human beings with the best physical results.

Of course the idea of transfusion gives rise to many amusing fancies. Can you make an old man young, a cross man amiable, a coward brave, a nervous man phlegmatic, by exchanging the vital fluid in the veins? Is there a modicum of sober truth in Edmond About's funny conceit about the "nose of a notary?" The blood of lambs is sometimes used in the operation of transfusion: do the doctors find the patients thereafter more lamb-like? How gratifying it would be if, by merely vivisecting the gentle denizen of the pasture, and transferring its blood to mortal veins, we could transform the uncomfortable tempers around us into perennial docility! We fear, however, that psychological results are not to be attained by this very material process. Very much will be gained, however, if we can restore ruddiness to pallid cheeks, and strength to a tottering body; if we can see the consumptive revive under the circulation of healthy blood yielded to him by the self-sacrifice of another, as the fainting vampire revived under the moon's rays; and if the effects of those horrible sudden hæmorrhages which end in abrupt death from mere loss of blood can be obviated by a prompt transfusion. It may not be that the fountain of perpetual youth is to be found welling up from the heart of one's neighbor; but the gift of health from one mortal body to another has a certain poetry about it scarcely less pleasing to the fancy than the ancient fable, being significant of human self-sacrifice, a noble emotion in which the ancient fable was wanting. —*Appletons' Journal.*

Snuff-Taking Ladies.

It is not until we come to the reign of Queen Anne that we find positive proof of masculine noses no longer enjoying a monopoly of the piquant powder. The feminine admirers of Sacheverell contended as ardently for a pinch of his "orangery," as second-hand beaux had once struggled to dip their fingers in Dryden's box, and carried their idols' portraits in the lids of their boxes. A lady writing in 1712, describes herself as an insignificant creature, who dressed not, took no snuff and did no fashionable things. Lady Betty Modish, who would accept no gift from her lover save a snuff-box, asserts, "sincerity in love is as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; nobody takes it now;" which may account for the feminine dissatisfaction expressed in these lines:

"From agate box, the newest mode,
Her snuff Miss Bid takes in a shell,
A thousand times to me she's vowed,
'Tis faint, 'tis languid, has no smell."

Steele inveighed loudly against the impertinent custom fine women had fallen into, which performed coquetishly or with a sedate, masculine air, was in his eyes equally disagreeable.

He describes Mrs. Saunter taking snuff as often as salt with her meals, with such wonderful negligence that an upper lip covered with snuff and sauce was presented to all who had the honor of dining with her; while her pretty niece made up for not offending the eye to the same degree by starling the ear with a nauseous rattle, as she stopped her nostrils with her fingers. He could bear with beauties who manipulated the snuff-box for the sake of displaying a pretty hand; but thought Flavilla went a little too far in pulling out her box in the middle of the sermon and offering it to the men and women sitting near her; as well as inviting the church warden to take a pinch as she dropped her contribution into the plate. Sir Richard declares—how truthfully, who shall say?—that a learned lady of his acquaintance, whom he had vainly tried to talk out of the evil habit, happened one day to have a pretty fellow hidden in her closet when some company called. She made an excuse to go to the closet for something they had been talking about; her eager gallant snatched a kiss, but, being unused to snuff, some grains from her upper lip set him sneezing, much to the astonishment of the visitors, who thereby learned that profound reading and very much intelligence could not fill up her vacant hours so much but she was obliged to descend to less intellectual entertainments.—*All the Year Around.*

Stick to a Legitimate Business.

Well directed energy and enterprise are the life of American progress; but if there is one lesson taught more plainly than others by the great failures of late, it is that safety lies in sticking to a legitimate business. No man—manufacturer, trader, or banker—has any moral right to be so energetic and enterprising as to take from his legitimate business the capital which it requires to meet any emergency.

Apologies are sometimes made for firms who have failed, by recurring to the important experiments they have aided, and the unnumbered fields of enterprise where they have freely scattered their money. We are told that individual losses sustained by those failures will be as nothing compared with the benefits conferred on the community by their liberality in every public work. There is little force in such reasoning. A man's relation to a creditor are vastly different from his relations to what is called the public. The demands of the one are definite, the claims of the other are just what the ambition of the man may make them.

The histories of the honorably successful business men unite to exalt the importance of sticking to a legitimate business; and it is most instructive to see that, in the greater portion of the failures, the real cause of disaster was the branching out beyond a legitimate business, in the taking hold of this and that tempting offer, and, for the sake of some great gain, venturing where they did not know the ground, and could not know the pitfall.

British Boarding-House.

But the interior of the British boarding-house is also worthy of attention. In the first place, it has existed through such a lengthy though unknown period of time! The sojourner from the setting sun has never inquired when the edifice was built; but to his eyes, accustomed to frequent emissions of a shinplaster architecture, it looks old enough to be fit for pulling down; and he has even a vague, superstitious feeling that its destruction would be an act of mercy, setting free many generations of ghosts which now tenant it, and permitting them to find places of rest. Indeed, if one may venture such a disrespectful statement, the edifice has not borne its years well. There is a looseness and also a a clatteringness about its fittings which reminds one of machinery, and sets one to marveling what unearthly web and woof is being woven by the spirits of the invisible. There is a certain chamber door which rattles to that degree that the occupant frequently shouts "Come in," when nobody is there but a lost breeze which has stumbled into the house by some cranny and is fumbling in all directions to get out again. That occupant proudly believes that nothing in the world can out-rattle his door, except his windows. These last, especially when the wind blows from the southward side, have an ague which transports him with a mixture of admiration and pity. He would caulk them up with coats and trousers, only that he has other uses for those articles. Everything within the room corresponds with these symptons of senility. An antiquarian would fall down and worship before a certain bleared and tottering washstand which has, to all appearance, been in steady use for a matter of five or ten centuries. A shaky, worm-eaten bedstead, which the Plantagenets may have had the nightmare on, would fill the right kind of a soul with pensive joy. This bedstead, by the way, is so lofty that, if the boarder tumbles off it, he will dash himself to atoms on the grimiest of carpets. Into the composition of the bedding—the mere, sheer, complex, miscellaneous bedding—there is at least one man who has never dared to explore exhaustively. He knows, however, that it contains not only springs and mattresses, but also feathers. Furthermore, he has noted that what should be a bolster is simply a roll of threadbare blanket, ambuscaded under the sheet. The curtains are of a very venerable fabric, matching in color the grimy exterior of the building. In one corner of the room (and only to be discovered by pulling idiotically at the wall-paper) is a totally improbable closet which smells as though it might have been a locker in Noah's ark, so strong is the perfume of antediluvian bilgewater.—*The Atlantic.*

Scotch Heather.

The "bonny heath" was Scott's favorite plant, and naturally occurs again and again in the Ettrick Shepherd's songs, perhaps never more beautifully than in his exquisite poem to the Skylark—

"Then when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!"

In prose no one has emphasized its cheerful appearance and fitness to the localities it chooses better than Mr. Ruskin, and certainly no one ever drew it with more exact delineation of every curve and grace. When roaming over a highland corrie, however, or marking the sunlight fall on the granite blocks of Dartmoor, all but swallowed, as they are in Summer, by the purple ocean of heather that surges in upon their desolation, the traveler is apt to forget that there are more than one species of heather in the kingdom. There are seven (or, omitting *Calluna*, six) even in England, while the whole family boasts some four hundred species, to say nothing of the innumerable hybrids and varieties which our gardens produce. Every one knows the common ling or heather, (*Calluna,*) which is the most widely distributed of the family, ranging, as it does, from Labrador to the Azores, and spreading all along the western coast of Europe from the Atlantic-washed side of Africa, which is the original home of the race. The Scotch heather proper (*Erica cinerea*) is somewhat thicker and taller than this last, with reddish-purple flowers which delight bees, while its tender shoots are dear to the grouse and blackcock. The cross-leaved heath (*E. tetralix*) once seen is never forgotten. Fairies might have modeled it in wax, as rising four or five inches from the ground, it hangs its delicately-tinted, rose-flushed flowers over some boggy spot where the cotton-grass flutters in the wind and the plover whistles against the bleating snipe, hence known in Scotland as the "heather-bleat." Whoever has penetrated to the angry coast of the Lizard, either to see its curious churches or to gather its characteristics plants, must have recognized the Cornish heath (*E. vagans*) as soon as he set foot upon the magnesian limestone, while the ciliated heath occurs in isolated spots in the Cornish peninsula, and Mackay's and the Mediterranean heath are only to be found in the south-western districts of Ireland, being in truth outliers from the flora of the Spanish Peninsula on the Continent. All these heaths are fond of lonely, wind-smitten localities, tenderly flinging their red and purple jewels over nature's desolations, and as the long Summer days die out, rusting their sere and withered flowers (which remain on the plant even dead, and form the chief characteristic of the family in a botanist's eyes) among snow and wet, determined to do their best to cheer the waste places of the earth. The Autumnal holiday-maker never fails to greet the heath as the symbol of all that is free and pleasurable in out-door life, while to the inmates of the Scotch shieling heather stands in much the same relation for its economic uses as does the bamboo to the Gond or Malay. Even the gipsy and the tramp have reason to bless heather, as it helps them to a livelihood by making brooms, if they only can obtain, or take, right of common where it grows. And to many a mountain child the purple hillside is the only flower garden he knows. But what a garden! reaching from horizon to horizon, itself the best of bedding plants, requiring no care or expenditure, the greener after the worst of storms, when August's sun blazes most fiercely only more purple and luxuriant, the home of all that is elevated and purifying in heart and taste. For "it is not the written poetry which affects us most, but the unwritten poetry of our own youth, and mine is all bound up with heather and fern, and streams flowing under the shade of alders."—*Cornhill Magazine.*

Pretty or Not.

To be pretty is the great object of almost every living woman, even those who lecture upon the impropriety of doing so.

Brautiful women spend a great deal of thought upon their own charms, and homely women grow homelier through fretting because they are not handsome.

Men, at least when they are young, are very much like women in this respect, though they hide their feelings better.

There is one comfort to the homely ones however.

After you come to know people very intimately, you do not know whether they are pretty or not.

Their "ways" make an impression on you, but not their noses and ears, their eyes and mouths.

In time the soul expresses itself to you, and it is that which you see.

A man who has been married twenty years scarcely knows what his wife looks like.

He may declare that he does, and tell you that she is a bewitching little blonde, with soft blue eyes, long after after she is fat and red, and forty; because the image of his early love is in his heart, and he doesn't see her as she is to day, but as she was when he courted her.

Or, being an indifferent husband, he may not know she is the fine woman that other people think her.

You have known men who have married the plainest women, and think them beauties; and you know beauties who are quite thrown away on men who value a wife for her success as a cook.

As far as one's effect upon strangers is to be taken into consideration, beauty is valuable, and very valuable.

So, if you have it, rejoice; but if you have it not, be content.

Take care of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your manners, and you will make for yourself that beauty which will render you lovely to those who are nearest and dearest to you.

Errors in Marriage.

Many of the errors of life admit of remedy. A loss in one business may be repaired by a gain in another. A miscalculation this year may be retrieved by special care the next. A bad partnership may be dissolved, an injury repaired, a wrong step retraced; but an error in marriage goes to the very root and foundation of life. It has been said that no man is utterly ruined till he has married a worthless wife. And so every woman has a future before her until she is chained in a wedlock, which is a pallock, to a wretched and an unworthy man. The deed once done cannot be recalled. The wine of life is wasted and the goblet is broken, and no tears nor toils can bring back the precious draught. Let the young think of this, and let them walk carefully in a world of snares, and take heed to their steps, lest, in this most critical event of life, they go fatally astray. But here we must guard against another error. Many people think they have made a mistake in marriage, when the mistake is only in their own behavior since they were married. Good husbands make good wives, and good wives make good husbands; and the scolding, or intemperate, or slatternly partner often has but himself or herself to blame for the misery that clouds the life and desolates the home. Multitudes who feel that their marriage was a mistake, and who make their existence a lifelong misery, might by a little self-denial and patience, and forbearance and gentleness, and old-time courtesy, make their home brighten like the gates of Eden, and bring back again the old love that blessed the happy days gone by.

Suppose the wife does not know quite so much as you do. Well, you showed *your* great judgement when you thought her the chief among ten thousand! Or, if your husband is not the most wonderful man in the world, it simply illustrates the wit and wisdom of the young woman who once thought he was, and who could not be convinced of the contrary! So, perhaps you are not so unevenly mated after all. And if one has had better opportunities since marriage, then of course that one should teach and cultivate and encourage the other, and so both journey on together. But if one has grown worse, and has sunk lower than at the beginning, perhaps even then patience and toil and sunshine may bring back the erring one to duty, lift up the fallen, rescue the perishing, and save the lost. How glorious for a wife to pluck her husband from the jaws of ruin, and to bring him safely to the heavenly home! How blessed for the husband to bring back to the gates of Paradise the woman who through weakness had been led astray!

Theory of Luminous Flames.

Dr. Karl Heumann considers the circumstances that a gas-flame does not actually touch the edge of a burner nor a candle-flame the summit of a wick, and that a flame never comes in contact with a cold body, are due to the fact that heat is conducted away by the solid body. The flame gases are cooled for a certain distance below their ignition point, and the flame is consequently extinguished within this region. The distance between a gas-flame and a burner is considerably increased if the inflammable gas or vapor streams out under a high pressure, or is mixed with a large amount of non-inflammable gas.

—A man twenty-seven years old has just been sent to the Massachusetts State Prison who has spent all but two years and three days of his life in reformatory and charitable institutions.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

—Baldwin's new San Francisco hotel has five miles of fire hose coiled on the different floors.

—It is now proposed that the Prince of Wales shall visit New Zealand and Australia in 1878.

—Germany proposes a further reduction of its silver currency by withdrawing the two-thaler pieces.

—Edward Fox of Titusville, Pa., has recovered $95,000 damages from the Baltimore and Ohio railroad by a 23 years' suit.

—In the four ports, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, the amount of sugar refined is about fifty thousand tons a month.

—Queen Victoria has granted medals to every person serving on the steamers Alert, Discovery and Pandora during the Arctic expedition.

—Several large, white arctic owls, rarely seen south of the St. Lawrence river, have recently been shot near Brumswick, Maine.

—Another Mormon wife has followed the example of Ann Eliza Young. She is a Mrs. Thomas, of Ogden, Utah, and she sues for divorce and alimony.

—The richest man in England, the Duke of Westminister, has a sister 36 years old who is about to marry a commoner two years older than herself.

—Christianity is spreading rapidly in Japan. At Tokio 10,000 people attend the Missionary Churches on the Sabbath, according to a native paper.

—A citizen of Harwinton, Conn., has in good condition for eating an apple which he has kept for twenty-two years by a process which he discovered by accident.

—For a closely built wooden town Plymouth, Mass., enjoys a wonderful immunity from fires. There has been no alarm since July 4th, a period of nearly five months.

—The editor of the Hansboro' (Miss.) Democrat has a charmed life. Fifteen attempts have been made to kill him, and the last shot fired in his direction killed a boy instead.

—A cautious resident of Troy, N. Y., mindful of the contingencies of post-mortem extortions, has called for proposals from several undertakers for conducting his funeral.

—There is a hermit at Greenwood Lake, New York, who lives in a hut that is hardly large enough to allow a man to lie at full length or stand erect. His article of furniture is a powder keg.

—Russia has taken pity on Prince Milan since he pawned the sword of his ancestors, and has sent him another one 1,400 years old. No pawnbroker with any respect for himself would take that.

—The new 150 ton gun to be made at Woolwich, England, will be 36 feet long, with a calibre of 20 inches, will throw a shot weighing 3,000 pounds and exhaust 600 pounds of gunpowder at each discharge.

—No more Sunday trains in Canada. The Dominion Government has issued orders that no trains shall be run on the Sabbath day except in case of great emergency, and then only on direct order of the Government.

—Mrs. Pamelia Brown, wife of General Jacob Brown, the victor with Scott at Lundy's Lane, in the war of 1812, is still living. She is now ninety eight years of age, and resides with her daughter, Mrs. Evarts, at Rye, N. Y.

—Mr. Robert Mickle, cashier of the Union bank of Baltimore, has probably been a bank officer for a longer time than any other man in the United States. He entered the service of that bank in 1819, and since 1830 has been its cashier.

—It is a costly honor to be Lord Mayor of London. It cost the last incumbent of the office about $85,000 to maintain its dignity, which sum is said to be $25,000 less than it cost Sir A. Lusk. The salary of the office is not more than $25,000.

—The amount of meat consumed annually per head in Spain is twenty-five pounds; in Italy, thirty-three; Sweden fifty-four; Prussia fifty six; Austria, fifty eight; Belgium, sixty seven; France, seventy-three; Meckienburg, eighty-five; England, 205.

—A mass of rock weighing 2,500 pounds, recently came thundering down a mountain side into the city of Denver, Colorado, barely missing a house and burying itself in a stable. Fortunately no person was injured. The sight was a frightful one to the spectators.

—Mr. Adams Kellogg, of Madison Parish, La., who received the award at the Centennial for growing the finest cotton in the world, is a native of Vermont, who went South after the war, and has become one of the most successful cotton planters. His plantation is about twenty miles below Vicksburg.

—Charles Fenno Hoffman, a noted literateur of the old Knickerbocker Magazine days, recently reported dead, is still living at the age of 70, in the state lunatic asylum at Harrisburg, Pa. and his insanity is less obtrusive than for many years. It is now 26 years since his retirement from the world.

—Few persons not familiar with geography will believe that the Pacific Ocean boundary of the United States has a greater extent of coast line than the Atlantic shore. The aggregate of our shore line on the Pacific is 12,734 miles, while on the Atlantic it is 11,890 miles, and on the Gulf of Mexico 6,843 miles.

—The Fairbanks family in Vermont has furnished scales for the world, supplied Vermont with two Governors and raised St. Johnsbury from a hamlet to the most prosperous village of Northern New England, giving it a library, academy, and atheneum. Their success is a shining illustration of the value of skill and integrity in business affairs.

—Some curious statistics, just published, show that out of a population of 36,000,000 in France, there are 37,927 blind, and 29,512 deaf and dumb; so that in 950 inhabitants there is one blind, and in 1,220 there is one deaf and dumb person. In Paris alone there are 7,333 mad people, while in all France there are 17,123 male and 14,964 female lunatics.

—A colored child was recently born in Bayside, Talbot County, Md., of the tiniest proportions ever known. At birth it was only about twelve inches long, and weighed one pound. The only imperfection about it is a total absence of thumbs, not having even a place where thumbs ought to be. It has long hair, coming down over the shoulders. It is a female child.

—This year's business in the Lake Superior iron district has been fairly prosperous, nearly 900,000 tons of ore having been shipped from the district which is a gain of 100,000 tons over last year. While prices have been low as compared with those of former years, they have, as a rule, been remunerative to the mine owners. Nearly all the mines will work during the winter.