

# ARMENIA'S RAG-CARPET.

BY SUSAN ARCHER WEISS.

"We can't afford it," said grandma, resignedly. "Why, a carpet at 60 cents a yard would come to—how much, Tom?"

"Wouldn't it depend somewhat upon the number of yards, grandma?" suggested Tom, who was putting on his great-coat in the hall.

"Well, say five broadths of a yard wide, each five yards long," said grandma, in a business tone.

"A carpet of five yards square—25 yards, at 60 cents per yard—\$15," announced Tom, promptly.

Grandma looked up at him admiringly through her glasses.

"It's a good thing to have a head for figures. As for me, I never could put two and two together. But we'll have to give up that carpet, I'm afraid, though it's a great bargain. Mrs. Hackett gave full \$30 for it, and had it only one year, shut up in her parlor where it was scarcely trod upon. I'd like to get it for John's wife's room; but we've too many other uses for money just now."

"What a pity?" said Lizzie, who was sitting on the window-sill, dangling one foot just above the floor. "The room will look so bare and comfortless without a carpet, and John is so anxious to have everything nice for Alice."

"Wouldn't the parlor carpet do?" inquired Tom, demurely. "I heard you say it was getting too shabby for the company room."

"No, it wouldn't do at all," answered Lizzie, sharply. "How would the parlor look with a bare floor at Thanksgiving and Christmas?"

"And Sunday evenings," said I, indignantly.

"Oh," said Tom, brushing his hat. "I had forgotten that. No, certainly. Young Mr. Smith wouldn't find it comfortable; nor the doctor either. They might be afraid of catching cold, and go away early."

"I think I hear the stage, Tom," said Lizzie, leaning a flushed face from the open window.

Tom kissed us all around, and went out with his valise to meet the stage. He was a drummer to the biggest manufacturing firm in the town and was always coming and going.

Tom would be back in six weeks—in time to meet John and his wife, on their arrival at the old homestead.

John was making a good match, and he and his wife were to stay with us all winter, while his own house was being built, about a mile distant, and we were all anxious to have everything nice for Alice.

Liz and I, waving Tom a last adieu from the porch, returned to the sitting-room.

Cousin Armenia had laid aside her knitting and, seated in a low chair in front of grandma, was leaning forward and talking, with that keen light in her gray eyes which always bespoke some new idea or inspiration.

"You see, Aunt Dorothy, 't would be sheer extravagance to give \$15 for a carpet for a bedroom. Now, when I was a girl, I made two splendid rag-carpet; and though it's twenty years ago, I've not forgotten how to do it. Suppose I just set to work and make one for John's wife's room?"

"A rag-carpet?" said Lizzie, disdainfully.

"Yes, child, a rag-carpet. If 'twas called by some high-sounding name, I suppose folks would like it better. If Alice is the right sort, she won't turn up her nose at a rag-carpet, 'specially if it's new and bright. A rag-carpet can be made to look handsome; and, anyway, it's better than none."

"But where will you find the material?"

"Oh, I'll be bound to find rags enough! There's plenty of old clothes hanging in the garret, and the rag-chest and scrap-bag are full; and the neighbors won't begrudge me what old scraps they have no use for."

Grandma looked doubtful, and Lizzie a little scornful; but Cousin Armenia seemed quite elate over her idea. And being one of those active and determined spirits who lose no time in carrying out a plan as soon as it is conceived, we were not surprised to find her, next day, already to work upon her proposed carpet.

First she visited the attic and overhauled the big rag-chest, and examined all the half-worn and cast-off clothing hanging about. Then she went over the whole house and ransacked every box and closet for anything that could be appropriated to her work.

The next few days were spent in washing and freshening up the various articles, and in ripping and tearing them into shreds, which were then rolled into great balls, according to her color.

All the rag-carpet that I had seen were woven in a mixed medley of colors, without order or arrangement; but Cousin Armenia showed herself possessed of an artist's eye and an aesthetic soul.

"The browns and grays and all the other neutral tints," she said, winding her strips about an old ironing-board in the attic to illustrate her pattern, "are to make up the ground color. Then come red and blue stripes; because, you see, one always has most of those two colors; and in the middle of each a narrow stripe of green and yellow, which are skeerce colors to get. I'd like a little purple; but that's what you hardly ever come across."

"If you could get the purple," I said, "you would have all the colors of the

rainbow, and one would call your carpet the Iris pattern."

She appeared struck with this idea.

"To be sure, there's my old purple merino, which I'd had an idea of making over for a Sunday school dress for little Kitty Leary. But I dare say a new calico would do as well. Calico is only six or eight cents a yard; and, anyway, charity ought to begin at home."

That evening she came down, covered with dust and bits of thread, just in time to tidy herself for supper.

Deacon Hutchings had come in to see grandma on some business matter, and at table grandma apologized for the absence of hot cakes, on the plea of Cousin Armenia's pre-occupation with her carpet.

"A rag-carpet, eh?" said the deacon, with interest. "Well, my mother used to be a great hand on rag-carpet; but since her day they seem pretty nigh to ha' died out. Seems to me wimmen ain't so keerful and saving nowadays as they used to be. Now, if I ever get married," he said, with his dry smile, "I'll expect Mrs. Deacon to make the rag-carpet the first thing a'most."

"Then don't ask Susie for me, please, deacon," said Lizzie, archly; "for we both hate rag-carpet—they're so ugly."

"You won't think so when you've seen mine," said Cousin Armenia, with a confident nod; "and anyway, it'll save \$15 out of nothing, and that's a consideration."

The deacon looked approvingly at the woman who could make \$15 out of nothing. He was a good man, generally liked and respected, but bore the character of being rather "closer" than there was any necessity for, seeing that he was well off, and with no family to support—for the deacon was a bachelor.

When Cousin Armenia had used up all her "material" she discovered to her dismay that at least one-third more was required. So she went again over the house, collecting everything before rejected that could be made available. Colored hose and corsets were pressed into service—bits formerly considered too small were carefully collected and stitched together. The very rag-bag itself, when emptied, was seized upon; and even grandma's old red flannel dusting-rag did not escape. The rag-carpet became a standing joke with us.

"There's a pair of leather shoe strings for your carpet, Armenia," grandma would observe, drily, "and some raveled rope-ends in the barn, if you're a mind to have 'em."

But Cousin Armenia's soul was not to be put down by sarcasm, any more than it had been dismayed by difficulties. The carpet progressed, and about the same time Lizzie and I began to discover various articles of our clothing missing, which upon rigid investigation were found reduced to strips in Cousin Armenia's carpet bag balls.

Grandpa informed us in confidence, became very particular in putting away his clothes, and instead of leaving his coat hanging behind the entry door or over a chair a night, always carefully deposited it behind his bed or under his pillow.

One day the deacon "happened in" when Cousin Armenia was piecing together a quantity of very small scraps wherewith to ek out her carpet.

"You make pretty close work of them little rag-tags, Miss Armenia," he remarked in his slow way.

"Yes, I make a pint of never thrown in' away anything that can be put to a use," she returned, complacently. "But I'm dreadful scrimped for rags enough to finish my carpet in time. Mebbe, deacon, you haven't any old vest or such that you'd be glad to get rid of, eh?"

The deacon said he'd look, and the next day he sent over some well-worn silk neckties and pocket-handkerchiefs, for which certainly no other use could have been found, save that which he himself suggested, of "putting 'em on a pole to scare the crows with."

We laughed at the idea of a silk carpet; but Cousin Armenia, without a word, carefully incorporated them in her work.

After this she canvassed the village, importuning her friends for "old clothes," and the tailors and dress-makers for salvages.

And so in time, to the relief of everybody concerned, a sufficient quantity of "material" had been provided, and the carpet was sent to be woven at a neighboring farm house.

Meantime, we had been busied in other preparations for John and his bride, and when these were all completed, nothing remained save to put down Cousin Armenia's new carpet.

"Lizzie and I rode with her to the farmhouse to get it, and on seeing it, had to acknowledge that it was as near pretty as a rag-carpet could be. Still it was ugly, for how can a rag-carpet be made to look like anything but coarse and common?"

We spent that night at a friend's in the country; and next morning returning home, Cousin Armenia triumphant-ly ordered her carpet to be carried up to "John's wife's room."

Lizzie and I followed. I opened the door and stopped short at sight of a pretty, bright-colored, three-ply carpet lying in the middle of the floor.

"Why, it's Mrs. Hackett's carpet!" Lizzie exclaimed; "the very one that we wanted to buy when she broke up housekeeping."

"Yes," said grandma, a little du-

biously, coming up behind us, "It seems that Tom, when he heard how much we wanted it, that day that he went away, stopped at the Bradleys', and told Alf to get it for him, and Alf never thought of doing anything but keeping it until Tom came back, as he did yesterday, just after you left. Here he is now," as Tom came bounding up stairs, three steps at a time.

Lizzie and I sprang to meet him, but Cousin Armenia received his greeting with the air of a deeply injured and indignant person.

"I don't see the use of having two carpets in one room," she presently remarked, coldly.

And Tom had to explain how he had not had time to make up his mind about the purchase of the carpet until he had actually driven off in the stage-coach, when stopping at the Bradleys', he had arranged with Alfred to get it for him, but forgot to say that it must be sent to grandpa's. And as for Cousin Armenia's carpet, he was innocent of its existence, nothing having ever been said to him about it.

"Well," said Cousin Armenia, "I've had all my pains and labor for nothing. The idea," she added, indignantly—"the idea of spending \$15 dollars on a bed-room carpet, when one just as serviceable could be had for nothing!" and she looked proudly at her work.

"For nothing, Cousin Armenia?" inquired Tom.

"For skeerce anything. The weaving did cost about four dollars; but that don't count."

"And the thread for the wool?" suggested Tom.

"Well, that might be a few dollars more," she admitted.

And a rather uneasy light came into her eyes. She left the room abruptly.

Then Lizzie said: "And the good clothing destroyed, and the time spent on preparing those rags, and the hiring of the wagon to go for the carpet—what do these amount to?"

"To say nothing of the new dress that must be bought for Kitty Leary, and the new curtain for Tom's room," I added. "Why, altogether, these two carpets must have cost about the same, and Cousin Armenia has made nothing by her economical idea."

Grandpa was standing behind us, his hands in his pockets, and a very knowing look in his eyes.

"Mebbe you're a leetle mistaken, Susie, he said, drily. "My own idea is that Armenia's made more on that rag-carpet than she'd a notion of, and a good deal more than it's worth. It's likely the best investment she's ever made."

"And meantime," said grandma, "we will put Tom's carpet in the parlor, and Armenia's in this room. She's done what she thought best, and it wouldn't do to hurt her feelings."

That evening Tom slyly called me to look at Cousin Armenia, who, with a kitchen knife in her hand, was pruning away at the rose bushes in the garden, while the deacon, seated cross-legged on the fence, was deliberately and carefully whittling a stick.

"Why, she will ruin the bushes!" I exclaimed. "See how she is chopping them to pieces. What can she be thinking of?"

"What were you thinking of, Susie?" said Tom, solemnly, "that time in the parlor when the doctor was saying something in a low tone and you were deliberately picking your glove to pieces?"

And then a light flashed upon me, and I ran out to tell Lizzie that I had found out what grandpa meant by Cousin Armenia's "investment." And Lizzie laughed and said, "How ridiculous!" And then in the same breath, "Why, how nice it will be, Susie! I'm so glad!"

Next day John and his wife came, and we were all delighted with Alice. Her father had money, and she had been brought up in a more dainty style of living than we were accustomed to, which made us rather anxious about her being pleased with Lungs. One day, when she had been about a week with us, grandma inquired of John if Alice were perfectly satisfied, or if there was anything that he would like to have done for her?

"Only one thing, grandma," he replied, cheerfully. "She's delighted, and perfectly satisfied and happy; but, you see, she has some fancies which you would think whimsical. The carpet in her room—"

"I knew it!" exclaimed Lizzie, flushing. "That horrid rag-carpet!"

John laughed.

"It isn't its being a rag-carpet that she objects to, Liz; but she has a prejudice against any sort of a carpet in a sleeping room. She thinks it unhealthy—and, you know, many physicians hold that opinion. A little strip by the bedside and before the hearth are all that she requires."

"I'll see to it today," said grandma. And then she looked up at us and laughed a little.

"Poor Armenia's carpet seems unlucky," she said.

"Oh, she'll find a use for it," said grandma, quietly. "We must make her a present of it, Dorothy, and she'll find the right place for it before long."

Grandpa was right. Long before John and Alice moved into their new house, Cousin Armenia's bright rag-carpet was reposing upon Deacon Hutchings' parlor floor, with the deacon's silk handkerchiefs gleaming conspicuously in the centre, while Cousin Armenia herself moved about making his home pleasant and cheerful for him.

"Savin' is makin'," said the deacon; "and a woman who can make \$15 out of nothing is worth something."

Nor do I think that his wife has ever hinted to him what that carpet really cost.—Saturday Night



The Last Milk from the Cow.

The last milk taken from the cow is much richer in butter fat than the first. It is important that every drop of milk be taken from the udder. Much depends upon the milker and his treatment of the animals. Some milkers will get more milk than others owing to their knowledge of the characteristics of the animals.

### Pure Bred Sheep.

The increase in the use of pure bred rams to grade up the sheep is accountable not only for the larger clips of wool, but for the increased demand for mutton and lamb in our markets. To use a grade lamb is poor economy when the pure bred can be bought as cheaply as now, and the larger profit in both lambs and wool will soon repay the cost of a really good sire to head the flock. There has been much said and written about the large profit to be made in having lambs dropped in the fall or early winter and ready to sell in the spring, but unless one has a place well fitted up so that the lambs can be kept warm we doubt if there is much more profit in them than in spring lambs. The extra care and extra feed take no small part of the extra price.

### For Winter or Spring Pigs.

Pigs coming in the months of December, January and February need the very best conditions of warmth and are quite expensive on account of the long time they must be kept penned up before grass grows. Pigs farrowed in January and February need a warm, roomy, well ventilated pen, which few farmers have. The two best months for litters to come, under ordinary circumstances, are March and September, and a good, thrifty sow can just as well have two litters a year as one. The sow, when mated, should be in good, thrifty condition. It is a mistake to breed when either boar or sow is in poor condition.

When two litters a year are desired, the sow should be bred between Nov. 15 and Dec. 15. If only one litter a year is wanted, breed a month later. There is a decided advantage in not having pigs come until between April 15 and May 15. The weather is then quite warm and there will be no danger of losing the youngsters by cold. Grass will then be obtainable, and the sows having access to grass will give little or no trouble when farrowing. But those who mean to raise two litters a year must have the first litter come not later than April 1, so the sow can be bred in good time for the fall litter.—J. A. McDonald, in Orange Judd Farmer.

### Improved Methods in the Dairy.

American farmers are rapidly turning their attention to the utilization of farm products on the farms, in order to derive the most that is possible to be obtained therefrom. Dairying is making great progress, but this is due to the invention of the cream separator and the improved churns and dairy appliances. Compared with the past a well-managed farm can support twice as many animals as formerly because of the great saving of labor. In some communities the farmers take their milk or cream to the factory and bring back the skim milk to be converted into pork. If within convenient distance milk is shipped to the cities. Dairying entails tedious work during every month of the year and every day in the week, early and late, but no industry on the farm gives such large returns, which is demonstrated by the large number of farmers who are annually being added to the list of dairymen. The dairy farm provides a market for the products grown, and the dairy farmer need not grow any crop that can not be used on the farm. Dairying gives the farmer greater control of his operations, and the work is also educational. It leads to the use of better stock, and the farms are gradually being depopulated of the scrub cattle which have caused so much loss in the past, the pure breeds rapidly coming into use over all portions of the country. Dairy farms must also necessarily be kept clean and in good condition, and they increase in attractiveness as each year comes in.—Philadelphia Record.

### When to Start the Incubators.

December and January are the months when incubators should be started, and a few words now about their management will not be amiss. In the first place, don't experiment with cheap or home-made incubators.

Select the kind you prefer, and after having it set up, run it for a few days in order to test the heat and familiarize yourself with its workings. If after the second day, you find the required heat, about 102 degrees, is steadily maintained (a few degrees either way makes little difference), then the eggs may be put in. Select eggs of uniform size that are perfectly fresh, certainly not over a week old, and those that have not been chilled, and lay them gently in the machine. It matters not in what position they are placed, as they must be shifted morning and night during incubation.

The temperature in the incubator will at once go down, owing to the cold eggs, but will gradually rise, as the eggs become heated.

Don't attempt to force up the temperature by applying more heat. Leave the lamp just as before, and the proper heat should soon assert itself. As before stated, a variation of a few degrees makes but little difference, though uniformity of heat is better.

The strongest chicks are those hatched by machines kept at an even temperature. There is some question as to time of putting moisture in egg chamber, each factory furnishing directions in this matter.

After the first few hatches one will become familiar with the workings of the machine, and need no further instructions. The principal point to look after in running an incubator is to adhere as nearly as possible to nature, and remember that it is not the closest sitter among the hens that hatches the most chickens. The writer has seen hens sitting in the coldest months of the year come off to feed when the temperature was almost zero, and still they brought out fairly good hatches. A strong, fertile egg will stand quite a lot of apparent rough treatment and yet hatch, nevertheless, it is not advisable to encourage such habits with them.—Home and Farm.

### Managing the Woodlot.

Timber land in the section of New Jersey where I live is growing scarce, says Grant Davis, in the American Agriculturist. There is not 1 percent left outside of the mountains or rocky elevations which cannot be cleared for cultivation. Almost every farmer has his woodlot on the mountain, from two to 10 acres in size, and sometimes as far as 10 miles from the farm. Before the time of wire fencing, it was quite a feature of the winter's work to get out posts and rails. Considerable wood is still used for rail fences as well as for posts for wire fences. A good finished rail is worth 12 1-2c, and a holed post 25c. The original growth on these rocky slopes was chestnut, and it still predominates, although on account of the severe cutting the oaks and hickories have got a start and there are also some basswood and birch. Chestnut is the ideal fencing wood, as it splits neatly and is very lasting in the soil and to the weather.

There are three ways in which these woodlots are treated. Some are cut off clean and the stumps allowed to sprout and are cut again in 20 years. This is the coppice method. A few are well cared for and only moderate improvement cuttings made. Again, there are many which are treated with no system at all. The coppice method depends upon the sprouting from the stumps for the reproduction of the wood crop. These sprouts grow rapidly, but do not attain much size and are short-lived. There are lots which have been cut over two or three times where the chestnut is dying before it gets big enough to split for rails. Chestnut is a good sprouter and will hold its own with the other kinds, but for best results in the long run some seedlings should be left. Cutting should be done in the winter or early spring. If cut in midsummer the stump will usually die. The growing capacity of timber and the high prices of fuel and lumber make the farmer's woodlot worthy of his careful attention. It should be so managed as to get the most wood out of it every year without marring its future usefulness.

### Improving Soils.

In order to get at the true condition of things today we need often to take a back track and note the condition of things at the beginning. Old soils are not new soils. The growth of forests for centuries had prepared the soil for man's particular use. Being a New Hampshire farmer I refer now to New Hampshire lands. The glaciers centuries ago came grinding down from the north and left the debris they had taken on board or shovelled up by the way suited for forest growth, while the water from the melted ice cut its way to the sea coast.

We are not told from whence the seeds of the forest trees came, but the first settlers in New Hampshire found all of forest they cared to deal with. They found their lands lumbered up with giant trees not easy to deal with. Yet with the courage of the pioneer they "laid the axe at the root of the tree," it came crashing to the ground. All but enough for their cabins was converted into ashes and strewn over the soil. Hundreds of cords to the acre of the roots decayed in the soil, furnishing humus for the farmers' benefit for many years after. The ashes, too, were there to do their work, and the farmer had but to plant his seed, be it corn, wheat or potatoes, and he was sure of a large yield. In my boyhood days the failure of a crop of wheat, corn or potatoes was hardly known. The first failure was the wheat crop, when attacked by the weevil. I remember the sad havoc that pest made. Acres and acres were ruined entirely and wheat raising in New Hampshire soon became impossible. No fault of the soil, for the straw was all right in length, but often injured by the rust. Many years went by before any fertilizer but barnyard manure was talked of. The demand for something to grow crops was urgent. Chemistry was ransacked, and one enthusiastic student declared that the time would come when a farmer could carry enough fertilizer in his vest pocket for an acre. A wag standing by replied, "Yes, and he will carry off the crop in the other pocket." We want to get right back to first conditions. Fill the soil full of humus if it be only sawdust and shavings; and apply the needed elements, hard wood ashes if you please, or their equivalent, and crops will grow again. Plowing in forage crops is a cheap way of putting New Hampshire soils in a good mechanical condition by separating the solid particles of the earth one from the other, also furnishing plant food. There is an A B C in farming furnished us by nature, and it is well for us to go back to first principles now and then.—Z. Breed, in New England Farmer.

### SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY.

Cargoes or other masses of coal often take fire spontaneously. The popular belief is that this is due to the action of moisture on the pyrites and other impurities in the coal. The Marine Review, however, now quotes the results of Professor Threlfall's experiments on the subject, and shows that popular tradition is again wrong. The investigations showed that dry coal is more likely to take fire than wet.

A lecturer at the London Polytechnic declared at a recent meeting that the progress of leprosy could be arrested if sufferers would abstain wholly from eating fish. He cited several cases in his own experience. One was that of a man who was blind from leprosy and who had had muscular atrophy for 15 years. After 18 months' abstinence, taking at the same time small doses of arsenic, all traces of patches had disappeared from his hands and feet.

An extensive botanical garden has recently been laid out at Dahlem, a village within easy distance of Berlin, which possesses some novel features. It is situated in very rough country, and unique advantage has been taken of this fact by reproducing, as far as possible, the natural scenery from which the various specimens of flora have been collected from all parts of the world. By this means a more comprehensive idea is obtainable of the native habitat of the plants and trees, and the conditions under which they thrive.

An outbreak of typhoid fever has occurred in Lambeth, Eng., owing to infected mangles. Forty-one cases occurred in 24 houses, all within a restricted area. There was much inter-communication between places and families living in different houses. Many of the inhabitants after washing their clothes in their own homes took them to some neighbor to be mangled. Owing to this custom, bedding and clothing of those ill with typhoid fever were mangled in the same machine, thus spreading the disease. Four different infected mangles were traced.

Professor Koch, in describing his experiences with the government expedition in Java and New Guinea, stated that he had reached the conclusion that gnat bites introduced and developed parasites into the human body. The germs are passed by a gnat from one human body to another, but they develop in the body of the gnat during the passage. Children are especially liable to impregnation. In a village in New Guinea, 137 inhabitants out of 700 were infected by the disease. All inoculations have hitherto proved to be failures, but the success of quinine is very gratifying.

The liquid crystals with which O. Lehmann so startled the world a few years ago have now been proven to lack no quality that can be logically made part of the definition of a crystal. The only general characteristics of crystals are that they are not isotropic, and that they possess a molecular directive force that governs their shape and the disposition of their particles. The directive force is preserved by surface tension, so that crystals may be liquid or solid but not gaseous. Liquid crystals may be produced by depositing solid crystals from a mother liquor on the cover glass of a microscope and gently heating them above the fusing point.

### A Scientific Violin.

The science of the violin, as may be supposed, is but imperfectly understood. The present form of the instrument was worked out more than 200 years ago by the Italian makers, but resulted from experiment rather than an intelligent application of acoustic principles, and gives varying results. When the curves of the ribs or sides are uneven or incorrect the sound waves interfere, causing some tones to be imperfect. After much study of the subject, Dr. Alfred Stelzner, a German, has brought out a new model, in which sections of ellipses are adopted for the ribs and the opposite sides are made carefully symmetrical, so that the sound waves from each side are reflected to the same focal point in the middle. Whether the theory of the violin has been fully mastered or not the new model is said to produce a remarkably fine tone.

### Sea Currents and Migrations.

A French scientific journal calls attention to a recent report of the French consul at Hawaii which it thinks, throws light on some problems of ethnography. Not long ago a little schooner, dismantled and with its rudder gone as the result of a tempest, was drifted by winds and ocean currents from Tahiti to Hawaii after 81 days of helpless wandering. Hawaiian traditions declare that in ancient days people came from Tahiti, drifting with the currents, and settled Hawaii. The adventure of the dismantled schooner seems to prove the possibility of such a migration, and it is suggested that the currents of the Pacific, which have not yet been sufficiently studied, may throw much light on the distribution of the native races among the island groups.—Youth's Companion.

### To Surmount the Difficulty.

"And if your party came suddenly to a stream," said the story teller, "too deep for your horse to wade over, and too wide for it to jump over, and too swift flowing for it to swim over, what would you do?"

"Why, that's easy," said one of the party; "we'd sit down and think it over."—Yonkers Statesman.