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ARTS OF OUR ANCESTORS.

THEY ARE BEING REVIVED UNDER ARISTOCRATIC PATRONAGE.

Hand Weaving and Spinning Substantially Encouraged in England—Industries That Flourished Before the Era of Machine Made Goods.

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to purchase from the women on his Caithness estate all the goods thus manufactured, and to supply them with the raw material. A few years ago Queen Victoria, and more recently the Princess Alexandra, wife of the Prince of Wales, gave a similar impetus to lace making in Ireland. There is reason to believe that a popular movement of this kind may extend to other countries in which modern machinery may have deprived a portion of the working classes of one of the means of livelihood.

It great age can dignify an art or lend value to its products, spinning and weaving should surely be among the most fashionable of sociable pursuits. The old distaffs and spindles of our grandmothers, instead of occupying a place among the articles of verba and bric a brac in the parlors of the rich, would then again be in use by the maids and matrons of our time, and Minerva once more become the patron saint of woman's husbandry. We read that the mother of Alfred the Great was "skillful in the spinning of wool, and instructed her daughters therein." At a later date the art was considered a part of good education, and the term "spinster," as applied to unmarried females, indicated the nature of their occupation.

Concerning its origin, we only know that the invention sprang from human necessity at an early period of the world's history. According to Pliny, Semiramis, the Assyrian queen, was supposed to be the author of the art; Minerva is represented in some of the ancient statues with a staff, to intimate that it was she who taught man, while the honor is given by the Egyptians to Isis, by the Mohammedans to the Virgin Mary, and by the Chinese to a son of Japhet, and by the Chi-

inese to the consort of their emperor, Yao, who was the founder of one of the colonies formed at the dispersion of Noah's posterity. Spinning and weaving certainly existed in Egypt in the times of Joseph, 1,700 years before the Christian era, it being recorded that "Pharaoh arrayed him in vestures of fine linen."

When Moses constructed the tabernacle in the wilderness, "the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen." Linen was the national manufacture of Egypt, the prolific borders of the Nile furnishing from remotest periods, as at the present time, an abundance of flax. The Egyptians exported their "linen yarns" and "fine linen" to the kingdom of Israel in the days of Solomon. Helen of Troy is mentioned by Homer, who lived 900 years before Christ, as engaged in making tapestry that illustrated the combats of the Greeks and Trojans. The spindle and distaff form a leading feature in King Lemuel's description of a virtuous woman. "She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff. She maketh fine linen and selleth it, and deliveth girdles unto the merchant."

The tapestry of Babylon, even as early as the days of Joshua, appears to have excited universal admiration, one of the fabrics being compared to a peacock's train. Martial celebrates the magnificence of the Babylonish textures. Pliny mentions the enormous prices paid for them to decorate dining rooms, and Phutarch speaks of a splendid shawl which was bequeathed to the elder Cato. The Roman matrons wore robes with golden threads, and in 1544 the nuptial garments of Maria, wife of Honorius, were discovered in Rome in the marble coffin that contained her remains.

The extraordinary fineness of some of the threads is obtained by spinning them in dark underground rooms, where dry air is avoided and the best light is secured, which is done by admitting a single beam and directing it upon the work. Brussels lace has been sold as high as \$2,500 a pound. The point d'Alemon has been styled "the queen of lace," and owing to the delicacy of its construction is seldom seen in large pieces. At the French exposition of 1867 two flounces and trimmings of this material were exhibited, the price of which was \$5,000 francs. It occupied the labor of forty women for seven years. The lace represented in the portraits painted by Van Dyke in the time of Charles I is Brussels point. The Honiton lace of England is a pillow lace, but it is rivaled by the Limerick lace, which is peculiar to Ireland, and a valuable source of industry to that country.

From the foregoing sketch of the origin and progress of some of the industrial arts connected with home labor one may easily infer why several of the wealthy ladies of Great Britain, including its queen, seek to encourage a return to the old fashioned hand methods for the production of fabrics in common as well as aristocratic use, and thus reopen avenues for the employment of women and children who are now disengaged by the innovations of machinery from earning a livelihood in the fields once occupied by their ancestors.

F. G. DE FONTAINE.

The Authorship of "The Marseillaise."

The conscientious historian is always an iconoclast. Whenever he gets a chance to topes over a popular idol by proving that William Tell never existed or that King Arthur was a myth. His latest test is in connection with that famous French battle hymn, "The Marseillaise." It is asserted that Rouget de Lisle did not write the music at all. The researches of musical scholars within the last quarter of a century prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the melody was copied by him from the works of a modest old chapel master who lived at St. Omer, in the department of Pas-de-Calais, and who, having control of the music of the cathedral, wrote hymns and anthems during the years of his office, which began in 1775 and ended in 1787. When he retired his MSS. were deposited in the archives of the town, where they have since remained.

The fishermen of Egypt formed their nets into a tent, and a gauze curtain was ex-

panded over beds and couches to keep out flying insects. Curtains were used for partitions, concealing statues and decorating scenes in theatres. Napkins, which were used for wiping the fingers, were embroidered or interwoven with gold. In the time of the emperors the Romans began to cover their tables with linen cloths, some of which were striped with purple and gold. Table linen was so rare in the Fourteenth

century that each tablecloth made for the nobility and gentry cost £13.

The spider was the first weaver and the wasp the first paper maker. Hence, the generic name textile, from which is derived the English terms "texture" and "textile" as applied to woven fabrics. From these insects the ancients probably acquired their first idea of combining threads, yarns and filaments so as to form a kind of cloth or fabric. The fibrous parts of plants, together with rushes, plants and straws woven into a kind of matting, constituted the simplest kind of ancient weaving preceding the art of spinning or twisting the material into yarn and doubling the continuous threads of yarn into thread. The early looms depicted on the tombs at Thebes, though rude in construction, produced fine and costly fabrics, and the rude looms of the Hindoo workmen of the present time exceed in their product the beauty that comes from the most elaborate machinery.

The ancient distaff was generally about three feet in length, commonly a stick or reed, with an expansion near the top for holding the ball. Sometimes for ladies of rank it was exquisitely wrought and highly ornamented. It was usually held under the left arm, and the fibers were drawn out from the projecting ball, being at the same time spirally twisted by the forefinger and thumb of the right hand. The thread so produced was wound upon the spindle until the quantity was as great as it would carry. The spindle was not unlike in its general form that which is still employed

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IS HE A MARRIED MAN?

The Serious Side of a Joke Perpetrated by an Illinois Lawmaker.

Dan G. Ramsay, one of the members of the Illinois legislature, confesses himself in a quandary; he is unable to determine whether he is a married man or a bachelor. The difficulty is an interesting one, inasmuch as it involves the troublesome question whether a contract of marriage entered into in a spirit of fun is valid in law. Mr. Ramsay, who is himself an attorney in practice at East St. Louis, met Miss Bessie Caldwell of that town one day while she was laughing over the report that a marriage by contract entered into by a couple at Johnstown, Pa., was regarded as binding.

Mr. Ramsay contended that it was a lawful common law marriage, and Miss Caldwell told him to draw up a similar contract. "For what purpose?" asked the lawyer. "Never mind," was the response; "just draw one out."

Mr. Ramsay clipped the contract in question from a newspaper, pasted it on a slip of paper, and signed it. The young lady attached her signature to it, and the document was read:

Attest:

R. J. Long, J. P.
Frank E. Millard.

The fact that such a contract was in existence soon became public property, and the result was a spirited controversy as to whether or not the parties were man and wife. Mr. Ramsay contended that the affair was neither more nor less than a joke, and Miss Caldwell admits that she is ignorant of what its legal force may be. Mr. Ramsay is troubled, however, by the unpleasant notoriety growing out of the matter, and is afraid that Miss Caldwell may be injured by the joke. "There is really nothing in it," he explained to an interviewer. "Suppose we had signed our names to a deed to property which was clipped from a newspaper. That would not convey the property, nor do our signatures to this clipping, put there in a spirit of humor, make us man and wife. I have been the groom in several mock marriages at church fairs and entertainments of that kind, and I know that this affair amounts to nothing more than a joke which has taken a rather disagreeable turn."

"We never had any idea of getting married," said Miss Caldwell, in giving her version of the affair. "Pshaw! it was just for fun. Once we went over to St. Louis together, and we joked then about eloping, and Dan always said afterward that he had proposed to elope, and he had bluffed me clean out."

It is believed in East St. Louis that the legal question involved will be settled by another ceremony, and that Mr. Ramsay and Miss Caldwell will speedily be married in real earnest.

Soon to Be a Bride.

Chief Justice Fuller is about to lose another of his beautiful family of six daughters by marriage. Grace Fuller, the young lady in question, is the eldest child of the

W. W. FULLER.

He is the son of a prominent lawyer and a member of a distinguished family. He is the third son of the late Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and the second son of the late Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Massachusetts.

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