THE SILK DRESS.

"There's Annie Beldon," said Aunt Jane, looking up from her knitting as she heard the sound of footsteps on the plank walk which lay along the front fence. "Poor soul! I never see her that I don't think of that verse in the Bible which says that "from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath," and she sighed deeply.

I looked from the window just in time to see Annie Beldon before she turned the corner of the next street. She was a taded, careworn looking woman, a little past middle age, with dark brown hair thickly sprinkled with gray. Her dress was a rusty black cashmere, her black shawl was decidedly shabby, and her crape bonnet was shabbier still. She looked neither attractive nor interesting, and I turned from the window and took up my crocheting again, remarking only "that she looked as if she had had her share of sorrow."

"Sometimes I think she has had a good deal more than her share," said Aunt Jane. "I know dozens of women who have sunk into the grave under only half as much. And the best of it is, she don't never complain. She is the cheerfulest soul that ever breathed."

"Does she live near here?" I asked, more out of politeness than from any real interest in the subject.

"No! but she was my next door neighbor for twenty-five years when this was a farmhouse. The town lay two miles off then, and we never looked to see it grow right up to our very doors. Annie wouldn't be wearin' such shabby clothes if there hadn't been a mortgage on their place. She could have sold every acre at a good profit if it had been free."

"Tell me all about her, Aunt Jane," I said, as the old lady paused. "You'll have plenty of time before supper."

"Dear me, child, there isn't much to tell, 'n' maybe the little there is wouldn't prove very interesting to you. I know Annie looks shabby, 'n' old, 'n' gray now, 'n' not much like she did thirty years ago. We was girls together, 'n' she was the prettiest 'n' liveliest little thing I ever saw. Her eyes was as black as coals, 'n' her hair hung in long curls to her waist. She had a laugh 'n' a good word for everybody, 'n' more beaus than she could 'tend to. There was only two of 'em, though, that she favored at all. One was Tom Layton."

"The owner of the Layton Mills?" I interrupted.

"Yes; but he didn't own the mills then. He was only superintendent then, 'n' though he was a saving industrious young man, no one looked to see him get to be a millionaire. But he had a good salary, 'n' his father was well to do, 'n' he was reckoned a good match for Annie. For a while folks thought she'd marry him; but he warn't a professor, 'n' Annie set a deal by her church. She allowed that if she married a man who never went inside of one she'd be false to her principles, for the Bible says the righteous shall not be yoked to the unrighteous, you know. Tom took it real hard at first, but he didn't bear Annie no ill will, 'n' when she married Luther Beldon he sent her a handsome present. Luther, he was a real steady young man, but somehow or other he didn't have no luck. He had a good farm, but, work as he might, he never made nothin' more'n a bare livin,' 'n' Annie had to pinch 'n' screw to keep clothes on their back. She was a master hand at managin,' 'n' she worked like a horse, but year after year went by 'n' they didn't get no better off. Drought 'n' early frost 'n' too much rain, kep' 'em allers behindhand, 'n' jest when they was thinkin' they was goin' to do better there'd come something that would put 'em back again.

"Luther he got discouraged, but Annie she never lost heart. Leastways she never seemed to. When they'd come over here 'n' Luther he'd get to tellin' how crossways things allers went for him, she'd allers have something cheerful to say. She'd tell about it was a long lane that had no turnin', 'n' it was allers darkest jest before the day, 'n' there was allers a silver linin' to every cloud, till Luther he'd get pleasant again 'n' ready to laugh with her over their troubles.

"'Ain't I got a treasure in my wife?' he'd say. 'Long as frost 'n' mildew 'n' floods don't take her away from me, I guess I can get along.'

"They was over here to dinner the day I was 30. I was wearin' for the first time a new black silk which John had given me for a birthday present. It was thick 'n' soft 'n' mighty handsome, 'n' Luther he didn't seem able to keep his eyes off it.

"I wonder when I'll be able to give you a black silk, Annie? he said, putting his arm around her as she stood by his chair. "We've been married seven years, 'n' I ain't been able to get you nothin' better'n a calico.'

"'I don't need a silk,' says Annie. 'I've got all the dresses I can use now.'

"Luther looked at ner real steady a minute. Then he says, sorter slow 'n' quiet, 'For all that, I mean to get you one, Annie. I want to see how you'd look in it.'

"'No better'n I'd look in my blue delaine,' says Annie.

"'We'll see 'bout that,' says Luther. 'I don't care how hard times are, I mean to live till I get you a black silk dress.'

"She laughed 'n' told him he'd make a peacock of her if he could; but for all her brave words I knew she was downright fond of pretty things, 'n' it really hurt her to have to wear old, faded dresses, 'n' bonnets five years behind the style. But she never said so, 'n' she'd walk into church Sunday after Sunday in her old blue delaine' 'n' yellow straw bonnet, lookin' as sweet 'n' happy as if she'd been dressed like a queen.

"Well, Luther he never came over here after that without he had some remark to make 'bout my black silk, 'n' he stuck to it that he would give Annie one like it before he died.

But year after year went by, 'n' my silk was all worn out 'n' I'd got another, 'n' still Annie's best dress was but a cheap delaine 'n' it wasn't often she could afford to buy even a pair of cotton gloves to cover her hands. Things hadn't gone better with Luther'n 'n' they had other things to sorrow for than losing their best horses 'n' cattle 'n' their crops. They lost their six children, one after the other. Three of 'em died in one week of scarlet fever 'n' the others was sickly little things, 'n' went off in slow consumption.

"If it hadn't been that she had to keep Luther up, I believe Annie'd have give away many a time; but for his sake she didn't show one-half she felt. An' she never lost faith in the Lord. She said His ways seemed hard, but that He knew what was best for her.

"Well, time went on, 'n' about five years ago things seemed to take a turn for the better with Luther. His wheat crop turned out well, 'n' he sold it to good profit, 'n' he got his corn off the bottom lands before the river rose, 'n' that was a great help to him. He seemed real cheerful, 'n' told John he was just beginnin' to enioy life, 'n' if things went well he'd soon have the mortgage cleared off the farm. The weather set in cold 'n' stormy just after Thanksgivin' 'n' one afternoon I was out in the chicken yard shellin' corn to the hens, 'n' all muffled up to my eyes, when I heard a wagon stop at the gate 'n' there was Luther a noddin' 'n' beckonin' to me. I went down to the gate to speak to him, 'n' before I got there he was tellin' me how he'd sold Tom Layton a colt he'd been raisin' 'n' was on his way at last to buy Annie that silk dress. He asked me 'bout the number of yards he ought to get 'n' where he'd best go to buy, 'n' said he couldn't hardly wait to get it now he was ready. He was goin' to give Annie a surprise, he said; she didn't know what he was goin' after.

"Well, the tears was in my eyes as I watched him drive off, pleased as a child at the idea of surprisin' Annie. But I never guessed what the black silk dress was to cost her, poor soul!

"It began to rain soon after Luther 'd gone, 'n' poured down for upward of four hours. I was at the window when he went on his way home, 'n' I noticed he didn't have his overcoat on, 'n' I wondered what he'd done with it, for I was sure he'd had it on when he stopped at the gate. Annie told me afterward that he'd taken the coat off his back 'n' rolled the black silk up in it to keep it from gettin' wet. It wasn't even damp when he unrolled it 'n' showed it to her, but he was wet to the skin himself, 'n' a few days later there was a doctor's buggy at the gate. John he went over to see what was the matter, 'n' found Luther walkin' the floor 'n' groanin' with pain. The cold had settled in his side 'n' the doctor couldn't give him no relief. But he said he guessed he'd pull through all right 'n' there wasn't no need to worry.

"Miss Parsons was makin' the silk up. Luther wasn't satisfied till Annie had gone to the village 'n' got some one to work on it, 'n' she thought best to humor him. He wasn't no better when the dress came home, 'n' the doctor was still 'tending him; but no one 'lowed he was anyway dangerous. It was John who brought the dress home from Miss Parsons, 'n' he said Luther was just too pleased for anything to see the bundle.

"'I'm goin' to have Annie dress right up in it,' he says, 'n' you 'n' Jane must come over after supper 'n' see how she looks.

"Well, as I heard afterward, John had hardly gone when Luther began to tease Annie to put the dress on. She wanted to get supper first, but he wouldn't hear to it.

"'I've been waitin' nearly twenty years to see you in that dress,' he says, 'n' I won't wait even an hour longer.'

"Well, Annie she made him lie down—for he'd been walkin' the floor constant nearly all day—'n' she went into her bedroom to put the dress on. She'd got the skirt on, 'n' was fastenin' it at the waist, when she heard a queer sound from the spare room where Luther was lyin'. She stopped a minute to listen, 'n' then called to him to know if he wanted anything. There wasn't no answer, 'n' she crossed the hall 'n' hurried into the spare room. Well, child, she found him dead, his face turned toward the door as he'd been watchin' for her, the sound she'd heard was the death rattle in his throat.

"When John 'n' I got there he'd been dead only a few minutes, 'n' I tell you child, it was a sad sight to see Annie kneelin' down by that low bed in her new black silk, her arms round the dead man 'n' moanin' 'n' shudderin' over him 'n' beggin' him to speak to her.

"'He isn't dead!' she says to me as I came in. 'He has only fainted. Jane! do something for him. Get water, 'n' you'll find camphere in the pantry on the lowest shelf to the right.'

"But I saw that hot water 'n' camphere wouldn't be no use, 'n' I told her so as gentle as I could 'n' begged her to come away. She wouldn't listen to me at first, but after the doctor had come, 'n' he'd told her it was all over, 'n' poor Luther'd died from apoplexy of the stomach, she let me take her to her own room.

As we was crossin' the hall she heard the dress rustle, 'n' she stopped short 'n' looked at me pitiful.

"'He never saw me in it, after all,' 'n' she broke down and cried as if her heart would break.

"After poor Luther was buried 'n' there was a stone put over him 'n' his debts were all paid, there wasn't nothin' left for Annie, 'n' she was glad to take a place in the mills. We wanted her to come here, but she was too proud to eat bread she hadn't earned, she said. About a week ago I was out with Miss Sniper gettin' subscriptions for the church carpet, 'n' we met Annie on the street. Miss Sniper, she ain't over-sensitive herself 'n' she don't give no one else credit for being so, 'n' she up 'n' asks Annie if she didn't ever wish she'd said 'yes' 'stead of 'no' to young Tom Layton.

"'Never" says Annie. 'Had I my life to begin again I would not altar it as far as Tom Layton is concerned."

"'But it's pretty hard to have to work for him, isn't it?' asked Miss Sniper, 'n' I felt it in my heart to hate her for asking such a thing.

"But Annie only smiled. 'I consider myself fortunate to be able to earn such good wages,' she says, 'n' then she walked away smilin' still.

"I was glad Miss Sniper didn't know about that black silk dress. If she'd said anything about that, Annie would 'a' broke down. She's got it packed away at the bottom of her trunk, poor soul, 'n' she's never speaks about it."

Theodora.

The Contemporary Review.

Theodora was the daughter of a bear-keeper, attached to the Hippodrome at Constantinople, and was one of three sisters whom their mother sent on the stage when they were still children 7 or 8 years old. With no talent either for music or dancing, her fortune was in her face and her tongue. Her pretty features, her nimble movements, her audacious smartness in repartee, made her the most popular and notorious in the pantomimes (to use the nearest modern equivalent) which delighted a people whose taste had fallen below the regular drama. Needless to say what was the morality of the Byzantine stage, or what was the life the young actress led. Her enemies of later years declared it to have been more than usually shameless and disgusting, but the question, if delicately balanced less or more, besides being now insoluble, need make little difference to our view of her character. After some years she accompanied a wealthy Tyrian, as his mistress, to the Governorship of Tripoli; quarreled with him, left him, and after having been reduced to sad straits in Egypt, found her way back to Constantinople, where, according to a story current long afterward in the city, she ought to support herself by spinning wool in a house near the edge of the Golden Horn. This looks like trying to turn over a new leaf. However, she did not conceal her charms. Encouraged by the words of an Oriental fortune teller, who had promised her wealth and power, she threw herself in the way of Justinian, who yielded at once to her fascinations. He was then about 40 years of age—probably some twenty years her senior—nephew of the reigning Emperor, and gathering into his hands the reins of Government which were beginning to slip from the grasp of his aged and ignorant uncle. He was an able and well-educated man, already remarkable for his fondness for theology and his assiduous attention to public business. His passion led him to promise to marry the whilom actress, but a law dating (in substance) from the time of Augustus, and re-enacted by later Emperors, forbade the union of Senators and other persons of exalted rank to women who had been on the stage. Nothing was left but to repeal the law, which the Emperor was compelled by the urgency of his nephew to do, and the statute may still be read in the Corpus Juris which so long held sway over Continental Europe, a monument of Theodora's arts and Justinian's susceptibility. There had been, however, a more serious obstacle to the nuptials of the eager pair. The Empress Euphemia was an ignorant and rustic person, who had risen in life too late to acquire the polish of the capital. But she was pious, and she was respectable to the backbone. She had probably heard of Theodora's earlier fame, for the Court was like most Courts; anyhow she knew what Theodora had been, and the idea of her nephew marrying such a person was too shocking to be considered. While she lived she held out and kept her husband to his resistance; but when she died he gave way, the law was repealed, the marriage was solemnized, and when in a few years the old Emperor died, Theodora was crowned along with her husband, and received the homage of the Senate, the priesthood and the people. A rise like this had never been seen before, not even in Constantinople and was never seen again.

[redacted]

ington and he is invited [redacted] here, and is called upon to associate with people who have plenty of money. As a natural result he soon becomes involved financially. A man who feels the sharp pressure of debt cannot always afford the luxury of indulging in the most rigid ideas of what is strictly honorable. None of them have any better pay than the department clerks and bureau chiefs. Yet these officers live at the best hotels as a general thing, have carriages, dress well and are seen everywhere. The department clerks, who have equal salaries, live in the back rooms of cheap boarding-houses, wear shabby clothes and never go in society. A second lieutenant has $1,400 a year; a first lieutenant, $1,600. that is if he is mounted. An unmounted first lieutenant gets $1,500. A captain not mounted is paid $1,800. A captain mounted has $2,000. It will be seen that up to the grade of captain officers rank with the department clerks so far as salary goes. When you get above captain you strike the salaries paid to the chiefs of bureaus. A major is paid $2,500; a lieutenant-colonel, $3,000; a colonel, $3,500. It is only when you reach the rank of brigadier-general that the pay of a Senator or member is reached. A brigadier-general is paid $5,500. A major-general $7,500, and a lieutenant-general $11,000 per annum.

FARM, FIELD AND FIRESIDE.

A Few Shorts.

It is asserted that the objection formerly urged against the Norman horse, to the effect that it could not endure the southern climate of the United States, is a fallacy, as proven by the experience of the principal importers.

The late General Horace Capron, at one time owned a farm, the net receipts from which amounted, in one year (1847) to over $36,000. It would seem as though some men could make farming pay.

Eighteen hundred dollars' worth of strawberries have been raised on two and a half acres of ground by a farmer of Delaware township, Camden County, N. J., and he accordingly has been awarded a premium by the State Board of Agriculture.

Having abandoned all hope of a peach crop, this year, the fruit growers of the Hudson River Valley have generally resolved to plant young Concord grape vines by the thousand where peach orchards now stand. For the space of sixty by sixteen miles, between Cornwall and Catskill the average of grape vines is already very large. Good wine has been made on the North River for years past. Indeed, there are those who assert the vintage there already exceed that of California, and are confident the average quality of the wines is fully equal to those of the Pacific Coast.

Every one owning a hot-bead, and there is nothing to prevent any one living in the country owning one, should bear in mind that by its use many vegetables may be forwarded several days in advance of the season. Beets, for instance, sown in a warm bed and transplanted to the open ground, may be had much earlier by this method. Use only the turnip-rooted varieties, however, for forcing; the long-rooted, kinds are apt to become forked and covered with fibres. Lima beans, cucumbers, squashes, melons, etc., planted in inverted sods and placed in a hot-bed can be brought into use before the regular season.

In planting trees be careful to preserve the roots moist, and the tops will as a rule take care of themselves. Many planters drop their trees where they are to be set, and allow them to lay in the sun and wind without any protection, until they become seriously injured. The moment they are unpacked at their destination, each tree must at once be "heeled in,"—in other words, have the roots well covered in a trench, and the soil tramped hard. It is ruinous to have the air circulating freely through the delicate fibres, and almost as much care should be taken with the trenching as the planting.

No Cure for Glanders.

Glanders is a certainly fatal disease, and as it is virulently contagious when a horse is known to be affected by it the animal should be killed and buried deeply without delay. The law enforces by heavy penalties this disposition of a glanderous horse. The disease begins with swelling of the glands of the throat; then a white, thin, acid discharge escapes from one nostril, and at times from both. On examination the membrane (called Schinderian) lining the nostrils is seen to be of a livid or lead blue or purple color, spotted with red raw sores or ulcers, having a deeper colored ring around them. This last symptom is unmistakable, and when it appears no doubt remains and the beast should be put out of suffering and misery which will certainly ensue. Death by glanders is horrible; the wretched animal slowly rots away and dies by inches in extreme torment. At first the symptoms of glanders are much the same as those of distemper or nasal gleet, but when these appear every precaution should be taken against contagion.—N. Y. Times.

Sweet Corn Better than Sorghum.

The planting of sorghum for stock is again recommended in the agricultural papers; but after several years cultivating I have given it up for this purpose, much preferring sweet corn. The objection I found was, the stalks are so hard and tough that cattle will not eat any part except about two feet of the top, whereas they eat every particle of the sorts of sweet corn I raise for them, the stalks being three-quarters of an inch in diameter at the butts, and 5 to 6 feet tall. If the sorghum could be first crushed by passing through heavy rollers, as is done when the juice is to be made into syrup and sugar, the stalks might be made tender enough for cattle fodder; but to pass them through a corn-stalk cutter would be of little benefit, as the pieces, however short-cut, would be still sharp at the edges, hard to chew, and still harder to digest. I believe there is a great future for sorghum throughout all our climates for making a superior quality of syrup, and perhaps also of sugar when the process of granulation becomes perfected, which I suppose chemists will be able to accomplish in time. Sorghum has one merit over corn—its roots penetrate the soil more deeply, and this enables it to bear a drouth better, and particularly in light gravelly and sandy soils. If any one has had a more favorable experience in making it acceptable fodder for stock than I give above, I shall be glad to hear from him.—A. B. Allen.

The Winter's Lesson.

If any farmer has gone through the past winter and learned no lesson, he is not the man we write for. It has been a severe schooling to many. Some will become disgusted with the State, and resolve at all risk to sell out and go somewhere. But where will it be? Running away from Iowa blizzards, what country will you find which has not something worse? With your present knowledge of the good health and prolific character of Iowa, can not ample preparations be made to avoid the bad effects and annoyances of Iowa storms cheaper than you can sacrifice your property, and go to some other region where rose-colored letters are written from by bold speculators, and where the country never keeps half pace with Iowa in production, prosperity and population.

There will this spring probably be stampedes from the best States in the Union to Oklahoma and the two Indian reservations just brought into market in Dakota, south of Pierre. In either case, in two years they will wish they were back at their old homes.

Stay in Iowa, and prepare your farms by evergreen wind-breaks, and fast-growing groves for fuel, and provide cheap but warm and comfortable stock barns and sheds. Then when winter comes you have wood on your farm, and your stock and food where you can take care of them in comfort to yourselves, with an increased profit on the stock. This is not a hard question to solve. There is no need of facing suffering in Iowa blizzards. They can be provided against. Then stay home with your family through the winter, which ought to be the happiest place in this world, and the most profitable place for any farmer in or out of Iowa.—Des Moines Register.

Handsome Mantel Lambrequins and Hat Crowns.

A handsome lambrequin which I am making is of crimson velvet. For a mantel two yards long take one yard of velvet and cut in two lengthwise; fold one of these pieces in half and cut, making two strips one-half yard long, and another one yard in length. The short pieces are tacked around the ends of the shelf, then tack the longer strip also. Pleat one end of the long piece and fasten it up to the shelf under a handsome bow of ribbon. This drapes the center strip quite gracefully; place another bow of ribbon at the other end of it and trim all the lower edges with crescents and tassels. One of the smaller pieces paint in Kensington painting a spray of pansies, and the other carnations; the long strip has a large, graceful spray of Virginia creeper. Hat crowns, so much in vogue now, are very easily made. Take one-third of a yard of satin, cut the flat piece from one corner. then divide the remainder into two strips and pleat around it (the material should be on the bias). I have both painted and embroidered them. One, painted on gray satin, was a wreath of pink, blue and yellow daises, with the initial in guilt. I painted the same design on pale-blue satin, and embroidered in chenille on crimson and on dark blue. Another one on pale-blue, was a spray of poppies and wheat. A pretty design for an old gold lining is a wreath of pansies.

The Best Land for Melons.

From the Nashville American.

The best land for growing melons is a dark, sandy loam, having a gravelly subsoil, through which water rises within 2 or 6 feet of the surface. Such lands are seldom found outside of the first or second bottoms of large or small rivers. The high or upland which nearest approaches in character river bottom is the best place to grow melons. The best manure is well-rotten stable dung, in connection with that of pigeons, chickens and turkers; and the best fertilizer, guano, with or without the acid phosphate. The land should be plowed, harrowed and fined in the fall, and laid off so the melon hills will be from ten to twelve feet apart each way. Where each hill is to be an opening should be made a foot deep, and in circular shape, three feet across. Into this the manure and fertilizers should be put to the extent in quantity that will a third fill the hole, the earth returned and filling the remaining two-thirds. This should be done in the fall, so as to give a chance for the manures, fertilizers and earth to become incorporated with each other. Plant a dozen seed in a hill as soon as the earth is well warmed up and there is nothing to fear from frost. Commence cultivating as soon as plants are fairly above ground, and when the cut-worms have done their work, thin to two plants in a hill. Continue cultivating, and keep the land clean till the vines begin to run, but beware of disturbing them in any way after that period of growth has been reached. If our correspondent will find the right kind of land, and will follow these directions, he will be pretty sure to get large, if not early, melons. But still he will find many difficulties in his way, and we advise him before he undertakes growing melons on any considerable scale to take a tour among the melon growers, near and remote, and he will return home feeling the time and money well spent.

Shall We Sleep With Open Windows?

This question introduces a subject upon which there is a diversity of opinion, both among medical practitioners and individuals. "I have no bad colds since I learned to sleep with my window open," remarked a gentleman in the office of the medical and surgical reporter the other day. In reply, the editor says that the only "hard colds" he ever suffered from were contracted by sleeping in rooms to which the night air had free access. The editor adds that it is well known that the bodily temperature sinks slightly during sleep; the physiological functions act with diminished activity; and hence the resistance of the economy to morbific influences is proportionately lessened. But it is also well known that at night these influences are more potent and noxious. The air is charged with greater humidity; miasmetic and malarial poisons rise to higher levels and extend with greater rapidity; the chill of the damp night air is penetrating and dangerous; the emanations from organic decay are more perceptible. Against these the sleeper is less protected than in the daytime. He has divested himself of his woolen external clothing to put on cotton or linen, and lies between sheets of the same material, between which, at the tops and sides of the bed, the air gains ready access to his unprotected surface. If he is restless, he renders such access yet more easy. A greater risk awaits him. A sudden fall in temperature at night is no unusual occurrence. In summer a thunder gust, in winter a shift of the wind to the north, often reduces the temperature ten to twenty degrees. The sleeper is unaware of this. He remains exposed to it with no further protection than he found agreeable at the higher temperature, until he awakes chilled and stiff, perhaps with the seeds of a serious illness already sown. These are such positive and unavoidable risks that we should counsel a delicate person to be exceedingly cautious how he ventured on the plan of open windows at night, however much has been said in its favor by popular hygienists.

A Young Girl's Good Taste.

A Lady in New York Mail.

A well cooked meal served on a poorly set table is like gingerbread with the spice left out. Say as you will, eatables taste better out of pretty dishes; but to be pretty, it is not necessary that they should be expensive. A lady was once visiting a family whose means were somewhat straitened, yet through the deftness and ingenuity of one of the daughters' busy fingers, their home always possessed a cosy prettiness peculiarly its own.

"My dear," said the lady, I was never so much surprised as when Hattie explained to me the modus operandi of some of her home achievements. Why! the chair I was sitting on, such an easy one, with just the right hollow for your back, was made out of a flour barrel. Her brother did the carpentry and she the upholstery. Old fashioned flowered chintz, too lovely for anything. And then the lunch. I don't mean the eatables, which were very simple, but deliciously cooked. You would never have guessed what the center-piece for the table was composed of. As pretty a flower ornament as I ever saw that girl had manufactured out of an old cruet-stand and a pie plate. Positively! The cruet-stand was set upon the tin plate, then the whole covered with this luscious green moss, excepting, of course, the handle around which were twined, so as to conceal the plating, some creeping vines. Nestling amid the moss were half-blown roses and buds, while feathery ferns trembled gracefully at each passing breeze. There, you see, I am getting quite poetic over it, and no wonder, for really that house is the abode of poesy. It was summer time, and they have a lovely garden, or they could not have afforded the flowers, of course; but I assure you, before my visit ended, I should not have doubted Hattie if she had informed me she could transform a teakettle into a lovely parlor ornament.

THE KEY OF DEATH.

A Marvel of Mechanical Ingenuity That Excited Terror in Venice.

From Public Opinion.

In the collection of curiosities preserved in the arsenal of Venice, there is a key of which the following singular tradition is related: "About the year 1600 one of those dangerous men, in whom extraordinary talent is only the fearful source of crime and wickedness beyond that of ordinary men, came to establish himself as a merchant or trader in Venice. The stranger, whose name was Tebaldo, became enamoured of the daughter of an ancient house, already affianced to another. He demanded her hand in marriage, and was of course rejected. Enraged at this, he studied how to be revenged. Profoundly skilled in the mechanical arts, he allowed himself no rest until he had invented the most formidable weapon which could be imagined. This was a key of large size, the handle of which was so constructed that it could be turned round with little difficulty; when turned it disclosed a spring, which, on pressure, launched from the other end a needle or lancet of such subtile fineness that it entered into the flesh and buried itself there without leaving external trace. Tebaldo waited in disguise at the door of the church in which the maiden whom he loved was about to receive the nuptial benediction. The assassin sent the slender steel unperceived into the breast of the bridegroom. The wounded man had no suspicion of injury, but seized with a sudden and sharp pain in the midst of the ceremony, he fainted, and was carried to his house, amid the lamentations of the bridal party. Vain was all the skill of the physicians, who could not devise the cause of this strange illness; and in a few days he died. Tebaldo again demanded the hand of the maiden from her parents, and received a second refusal. They, too, perished miserably in a few days. The alarm which these deaths—which appeared almost miraculous—occasioned, excited the utmost vigilance of the magistrates; and when, on close examination of the bodies, the small instrument was found in the gangrened flesh, terror was universal; every one feared for his own life. The maiden thus cruely orphaned had passed the first months of her mourning in a convent, when Tebaldo, hoping to bend her to his will, entreated to speak with her at the grate. The face of the foreigner had been ever displeasing to her, but since the death of all those most dear to her it had become odious (as though she had a presumption of his guilt), and her reply was most decisive in the negative. Tebaldo, beyond himself with rage, attempted to wound her through the grate, and succeeded; the obscurity of the place prevented his movement being observed. On her return to her room, the maiden felt a pain in her breast, and uncovering it, she found it spotted with a single drop of blood. The pain increased, the surgeons who hastened to her assistance—taught by the past—wasted no time in conjecture, but, cutting deep into the wounded part, extracted the needle before any mortal mischief had commenced, and saved the life of the lady. The State inquisition used every means to discover the hand which dealt these insidious and irresistible blows. The visit of Tebaldo to the convent caused suspicion to fall heavily upon him. His house was carefully searched, the infamous invention discovered, and he perished on the gibbet.