



A LONG-FELT WANT.

THE preachers strive and jostle,
And each exploits the true;
But oh, for some apostle
To teach us something new.
'We look before and after,
And pine for what is not,'
We long for something daffier
Than anything we've got.

We slummed; it was a blunder,
One quickly tires of slums;
One tires of blood and thunder,
And Hallelujah drums.
The Ewigkeit embraces
Each day some favoured cult;
We seek with earnest faces
Some fresh *Quincunx* outfit.

With tawdry ecclisism
We are no more in touch,
And even Eusebism
Does not amount to much.
The faithful soon were sated
By false, deluding spooks;
Those spooks can be created
At Maskelyne and Cooke's.

No more of spirit rapping!
That creed is out of date.
We've caught the rapper napping,
We understand his slate.
'We look before and after,
And pine for what is not,'
But give us something daffier
Than anything we've got!

EDWARD BLANKET.

THE world has been ungrateful enough to one of its truest benefactors, the inventor of the blanket, to leave even his bare existence in doubt. (One may search the dictionaries of biography in vain for the life of Edward Blanket, sometime Mayor of Bristol. In most of those encyclopedic productions that profess to inform the ignorant about everything, but in truth do little but mislead them, we are airily told that the myth that blankets take their name from that of the Mayor of Bristol must be dismissed as possessing no foundation. And we are offered a choice of derivations. It comes, we are told, through *Banquet*, the printer's blanket which he lays between the types or machine cylinders, from *blanc*, because, says Menage, 'étoit originairement d'étoffe blanche,' so to which it might be added, one would not have thought it. But we may ignore the etymologists if we can accept the fact that Edward Blanket is interred at St. Stephen's Church, Bristol. The name of Blanket figures on the civic roll five hundred years ago. But the story of his life, to say the least, is involved in not a little obscurity. There is no doubt whatever that Bristol was at that time a seat of the woollen manufacturers, for Leeds and Bradford as yet were not. The Bristol weavers, too, were, no doubt, a flourishing community. Edward Blanket must, however, have been in a very small way of business, and, as the story goes, it was owing to his poverty that he hit upon the happy idea which made him a benefactor to mankind. One cold night, finding the hard, unyielding covers of camlet, which were all that was known in the way of bedclothes in his day, singularly unsatisfactory, Mr Blanket, we are told, thought of a piece of soft, untrimmed cloth, and conceived the happy idea of using it as bedcovering. We may judge of the results, for the next day he set his looms working to manufacture cloth to keep folks warm by night instead of by day. It is easy to imagine the revolution that followed. A new luxury was offered to the world at the time when luxuries were rare. 'Blankets' were, it is said, at once in demand for the Royal palaces, and the noble castles, and even the Welsh, as we may well believe, hastened to give over sleeping under their goat skins. Thus Edward Blanket achieved, if not fame, at least wealth and honour. There are legends of politics and Parliament, but if true he did not eclipse his reputation as a manufacturer. But all that remains to remind us of him to-day is a tomb in the north aisle of St. Stephen's Church, on which are two figures lying on their backs (though we do not know whether they are actually covered with a blanket), which represent, it is said, the worthy clothier and his wife.

The story as it stands is not without a certain dramatic interest of its own. And it may be said to be *si non verum, ben trovato*. But we doubt whether the use of blankets had not originated long before the time of the Worthy Mayor of

Bristol. The manufacture of woollen goods is one of the most ancient on the face of the globe, and is said in the school books to have existed in Babylonia. But, it may be remarked that if we can believe the arch-ologists there are very few things which did not exist in Babylonia, or were unknown to the Assyrians, with their purple and gold. And it is not a little remarkable that their discoveries (for doubtless, the manufacturers of Babylonia took out patents) should have all been so totally forgotten. But did not Jason go in search of the Golden Fleece? Long before Jason's time, however, we have on the highest authority evidence that woollen coverings were regarded as a dangerous luxury, for did not Moses prohibit the Jews from wearing clothes woven of woollen-wool. Coming down to later times, we know that England was famous for its woollen goods from the earliest period; and even during the Roman occupation Winchester was noted for its cloths, if not its blankets. The annals of worsted in Norfolk show that that branch of the industry was introduced by Flemish weavers. But where did they get it from? And where did the woollen weavers of Flanders, who headed by John Kemp, were received with open arms by Edward III., get their knowledge from? Holland, again, which was so famous for the dexterity of its artificers engaged in this manufacture, is at least as likely to have invented blankets as a Bristol clothier.

Nor did the invention of blankets, if it be rightly attributed to Edward Blanket or not, lay the foundation of the English woollen trade. Foreign competition may have had something to do with it, for we know that the woollen workers were busy in France and Flanders, and we know that a number of English manufacturers emigrated and established important centres at Leyden and Alkmaar, which shows that the outlook was not promising in the old country. The real truth appears to be that blankets were not invented by anybody so much as developed by a process of evolution. The primitive man who covered himself with skins of animals, instead of like, as some will have it, his first progenitor, the baboon, encouraging a growth of natural covering, laid the foundations of that luxury for which we, his hapless descendants, have now to pay the penalty. It makes one shudder in these regenerate days to think of the Oriental camel, that was made of camel's hair. It must have been a covering fit for a hermit, or for an anchorite anxious to do penance. But the camel itself underwent changes of a curious character, coming to be made of hair of Angora goats, and then later this was mixed with silk, or with the warp of silk and wool twisted together with wool or hair. Our blankets to-day would have made our ancestors stare. One is tempted, indeed, to think that the wares vended by Edward Blanket 500 years ago must have been very poor affairs after all, for all the fuss that, as the story goes, was made about them. But, although it sounds strange, the finest blankets, it appears, find their way into the American market. In the States they will have, as everyone knows, things as luxurious as they make them, and the wealthy New Yorkers insist upon blankets being manufactured for them at about a hundred dollars a pair or so. The trade is quite enthusiastic about the quality. But this is not to be wondered at, and we hope that the fact will be of some comfort to the British manufacturers, now that they are depressed by a study of the McKinley tariff.

SMART CHILDREN'S FROCKS AND WRAPS.

FOR a child of about ten, a soft brown cloth, with a pointed yoke of velvet attached to which was an accordion-pleated shoulder cape and long fronts reaching almost to the foot of the cloak, was very stylish. With this, a soft brown velvet picture hat with bent-about brim and soft full crown, was to be worn. For a tiny mite of four there was a rough chevot cloth, in fawn and grey broken checks, double-breasted to the waist, and fastening with big horn buttons, and below the waist ending in a kilted skirt, the top of which is covered by a silk cord girdle knotted in front into loops and ends. A slightly gathered movable cape, with high collar, is made for this cloak, to be worn in very severe weather. A jaunty little Tam o' Shanter cap of scarlet velvet, edged with a band of the soft plaid, and with a plume, completes this costume. For an older girl of about twelve, there was a semi-fitting plain cloth coat of myrtle-green, with double-breasted fronts, and double capes, slightly flared on a round yoke of velvet, and pinked out at the edges, a deep turn-down collar of brown fur and deep gauntlet cuffs of the same, made a very cosy little garment. The hat to be worn with this was a dark green tarantard felt, with brown and fawn pompons. A great objection to the wearing of the short smart frocks which are so distinctive a feature of childhood was always, in the minds of fidgety people, the evil consequences of so much exposure of the little legs to the biting winds and keen frosts of our winter, and this objection is now entirely removed by the introduction of the neat little gaiters of fur-trimmed cloth and ornamental leather so much in fashion for children. For tiny children of two or three to six nothing looks prettier than white cloth gaiters trimmed with swansdown, the cloak, hat, and gloves being also of white cloth trimmed with swansdown, but for older girls the gaiters should be darker in colour, or match, if possible, the colour of the cloak and hat.

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SOCIAL AND COURT CLIPPINGS.

THE Princess of Wales is not only one of the most ornamental, but most useful of women. When her daughters were still in the school-room, at nine o'clock punctually every morning she appeared to examine their exercises of the day before, and made inquiries generally as to the progress of their studies. Besides her arduous public duties, the Princess undertakes an exceptionally large private correspondence, and is in almost daily communication with her brothers, sisters, and other members of the Danish royal family. Indeed, so numerous are the calls upon her time, that when in London, the great lady is rarely able to retire to rest till one or two o'clock in the morning. Every member of the household is ready to testify to the extreme generosity of both Prince and Princess, and of the kind consideration they display, more particularly towards those in any way connected with their children. Not so very long ago, the Prince chanced to overhear a little conversation passing between two of the Court ladies, who were agreeing to re-arrange their yachting costumes of the previous year for the then impending Cowes season. Not a word was said by H.H.H. on the subject, but a few days later a boat arrived from Itzehorn's, addressed to each lady, containing the smartest of new gowns and coats, chosen for them by the Prince himself.

All the world knows that Lord Harris, the present Governor of India, is an excellent cricketer, but I think Englishwomen in general had no idea that Lady Harris also (for a lady) is a player far above the average.

I suppose men will tell me that it does not take much to be that, because the ordinary lady cricketer is a very feeble person, but still I do not think there is much to be ashamed of in a record of forty-six runs, and that was Lady Harris's score in a recent match played at Mahabeshwar.

Each side consisted of six ladies and six gentlemen, which was a much fairer arrangement than that of men on one side and women on the other. The men played left-handed with a broomstick, bowled and fielded with the left hand, which sounds a severe handicap. The captains on both sides were ladies, Lady Harris and Mrs Von Donop respectively. The match was practically won by the governor's wife, whose play was pronounced quite brilliant.

The fashion for gorgeous sunshades was introduced by the Hereditary Princess of Lobkowitz, at the May Festival in the splendid Prater Park of Vienna, at which the aristocracy of the Austrian capital have their annual spring dress parade. Why they should be called 'sunshades' is really a mystery, for the peculiarity of them is that they are practically transparent, and consequently do not offer the least protection against the rays of Phoebus. Some of these novel parasols have their seams edged with gold or silver thread. Another kind of sunshade, which is fashionable for driving in showery weather, is made of light surah silk to match the dusk cloak. Many of them, as well as the heavy grey silk *en tout cas*, are adorned with flights of swallows, embroidered cross-ways from the top of the stick down to the edge.

In a scrap book in Belvoir Castle the Princess of Wales recorded her sentiments on sundry subjects not very long after her marriage. Here is the full list:—

Her favourite king and queen are 'Queen Dagmar' and 'Richard Cour de Lion.'
Her favourite hero, poet, and artist are 'Wellington,' 'Byron,' and 'Sir Joshua Reynolds.'
Her favourite author, 'Charles Dickens.'
Her favourite virtue, 'Charity.'
Her favourite colour, 'Blue.'
Her favourite dish, a 'French tart.'
Her favourite flower, the 'Rose.'
Her favourite name, 'Mary.'
Her favourite occupation, 'Reading aloud.'
Her favourite amusement, 'Driving my ponies.'
Her favourite motto, 'Dieu et mon Droit.'
Her favourite locality, 'Home.'
Her chief ambition, 'Not to be fast.'
And as for her chief dislike, she has 'None.'

Somewhat unfavourable comment is made in Berlin because the Emperor's boys have a very English appearance, as far as their clothes are concerned. They are usually seen in grey tweed suits, white waistcoats, knickerbocker yellow shoes, and now and then in Eton jackets and high hats, such as are to be seen on the little fellows in fashionable London. This dressing *à l'Anglaise* is said to be due, in the first place, to the English predilections of their Imperial grandmother, and in the second place to the known partiality of their uncle and aunt, Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia, for English clothing. It is a well-known fact that Princess Henry once told a countess that she would advise her never to purchase any but English-made socks for her children, as the colours never hold fast on German-made hosiery. Prince Henry is said to have remarked when the Princess showed him a lot of blue socks which had arrived from England, that 'Patriotism was all very well in its way, but it must not be allowed to dye one's legs.'

The Empress for in-door wear is fond of 'Florentin,' a material like batiste, in blue, pink, or violet. Her Majesty has each of her 'Florentin' dresses richly trimmed with Madeira embroidery. The Royal lady last week on the terrace of the Schloss at Potsdam was wearing one of the dresses of pretty shade of lilac. The skirt was arranged in broad pleats, and the front of the bodice was covered with Madeira work, through the pattern of which the hue of the dress beneath was visible. Her Majesty had one of the little Princes clinging to her gown, and both looked in the best of health and spirits.

It has been said that women rule the world. The latest acknowledgment of this comes from China. Miss Lucy H. Hoag, M.D., has for some years been carrying on a most successful medical work among the Chinese of Chinkiang. She has lately it appears, been appealing for funds to help her to continue her good offices, and if possible to extend the usefulness both of her hospital and dispensary, and Tam glad to say has been liberally responded to. It is a Chinese paper which goes on to say, 'Benevolence of this kind will go more towards keeping down riots than the biggest gun which Herr Krupp ever cast.'