

were substantial edifices. But, for all that, to let the imagination dwell on what is yet to come has its uses and may be a valuable help to conduct.

Castles in the air and dreams too hopelessly extravagant ever to be realised have brightened many dull and monotonous lives, and for that reason alone, within bounds, are to be encouraged. Besides this there is an important gain resulting from our projecting the imagination into the future—we are thereby prepared for many events which now find us quite unprepared.

The grasshoppers were wanting in imagination who danced and sang all summer-time. They should have pictured to themselves the snow on the ground, the pools frozen over, and the wind whistling through the bare branches.

A well-to-do man once said to us, "I have all my life had a vision of a workhouse door open to receive me if I did not plod on, rising early and working hard. It is that which has made me saving and prosperous."

A similar vision might work a change on some people we know. Bring your own self forward, Louisa, in the glittering hall of that imagination of yours, picturing yourself as old and disinclined for work, and see if ever after you will not be industrious, wise, and prudent.

"For age and want save while you may,  
No morning sun lasts a whole day."

A little more imagination may often be recommended to the good looking, not forgetting all who think themselves so. Perhaps we should rather say a little more of the right sort, for they indulge in flights of fancy enough when it is a matter of picturing those brought into captivity by their charms. They

should leave considering their conquests and captives and make an effort to realise what they themselves will be, say, at fifty or sixty, if they live so long. The beauty and attractiveness of youth will then be over, and unless they have something else to recommend them, their place will be on one of the back seats of human life.

This should set them furnishing the inside of their heads as richly as Nature has done the outside. Beauty vanishes, but mental culture endures and is found attractive, and even charming, to the very end of the chapter. There are few sadder sights than that of a beauty in ruins with an untrained intellect and none more refreshing than that of a bright old wrinkled face, with a mind behind it stored with information and animated by shrewdness and good nature.

There is danger in all things, for all—yes, even the best—may be misused. Imagination is a friendly help to elevate, direct, and brighten our lives as we have seen, but that does not happen with the foolish. Instead of occupying this wondrous faculty with what is profitable and beautiful, they devote it to what is degrading and mean, and thus become a great deal worse with imagination than they would be without it.

And, even where its subjects are not positively objectionable, imagination sometimes wastes its energy on whimsicalities and runs riot in the broad fields of extravagance and nonsense. Of such a nature was the fertile fancy of an old friend of ours who, to the end of her days, showed great reverence for dogs and cats because she believed them animated by the souls of her ancestors.

A very silly use of imagination is to picture to

ourselves suspicions, dangers and misfortunes. Some of us have a great deal of ability in this line, and endure torments daily over evils that never arrive.

"Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you" is a safe rule, and only a stupid girl will set her imagination working so as to make herself miserable. Caroline, we fear, is of the stupid class—no doubt, Caroline, it is on this occasion only—or she would at once get rid of the dreadful thought she imparted to us last Tuesday that the letters sent to her by her sweetheart were detained at the post office and read. As if the postmistress, even in her country place, had not something better to do!

Another danger of the imagination is that we are apt to take refuge in it against the duties of real life. In real life there is friction, and there is nothing of that in dreamland. We can make that pleasant country to suit ourselves, without irritation, without contradiction, without mishaps, everything coming just right. Our business, however, in the world is not to dream but to act, for which reason this great gift of imagination must be kept in its proper place. It is a good servant, but, by foolish indulgence, may become a very bad master.

But, after making all allowances for dangers—those we have named and others that might be stated—the fact remains that to the greater number of us a little more imagination would not come amiss. It would make our lives richer, and happier, more useful, more kindly, more sensible. It is only a "little more" that is wanted. That any of us are entirely destitute of it is improbable. To be "dry sticks" is not common for girls.



## AN EMBROIDERED BABY'S CARRIAGE COVERLID OF HOUSE FLANNEL.

I WAS recently asked by a lady friend to design her a simple piece of embroidery for her child's pram. The chief thing was, that the design was not to be elaborate, as there was very little time to work it.

The illustration here given is the design I made, but it has a very different appearance in black and white to what it had when worked in two tones of blue worsted on house flannel. Still, those readers who do embroidery will know what allowances to make.

I sketched the design right away in charcoal, and anyone at all accustomed to using a pencil will have no difficulty in doing this. Divide your material in half, and then draw a line in the middle horizontally, and others above and below this. These lines will guide you in getting both sides fairly alike, for, so long as the principal lines are symmetrical, it is enough. I found you can easily sketch in vine charcoal (that is the fine kind) on flannel and it easily dusts off afterwards.

The whole of the forms were produced in outline, and to show the sort of stitch, I have given a leaf full size. The ground is soon covered in this way, and it hasn't a cheap look either. The fault many embroiderers make in carrying out a design is that they miss the "swing" of the lines, get broken-

backed curves and clumsy-looking details. To obviate this you ought to keep looking at your work as a whole. Dwelling too long on any part of the design is likely to upset the balance of the whole.



It is obvious that in the design given the stems are the first features to be worked, as the leaves and flowers merely grow from them and are of secondary importance. It will add

to the grace of the design to get the lower part of the stems gradually thicker, say two strands wide towards the base, just as in nature we find a plant gradually thickening as it nears the root.

It will be noticed that a separate border is designed for the piece at the top which turns over. The coverlid should have a worked edging, and to get this even a few niches should be spaced out and drawn on a piece of tracing paper and then pricked over with a coarse needle.

All you have to do is to rub a little crushed charcoal, tied up in a piece of coarse linen or muslin, on the reverse side, when the powdered charcoal will pass through the holes leaving an impression which can be worked over at once.

Where a border is distinctly geometrical, it should be done evenly, and the eye is not quite correct enough if left to itself, and much of the workmanlike look of the whole would be marred if this edging were badly done. The right initial or name can be added or left out if desired. In the latter case put in a flower and a leaf or two.

Those readers who have never worked on house flannel will find it a pleasant material, and for portières and short curtains very excellent both in effect and for wear.