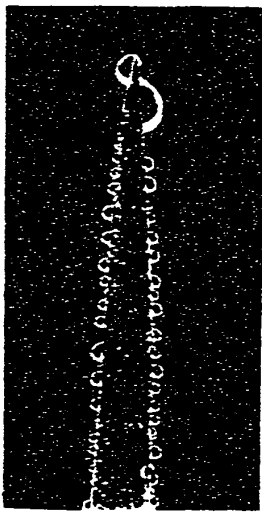


GLORIES OF THE DEWDROPS CAUGHT BY THE CAMERA

Sunrise Reveals the Magnificent Jewelry of a Summer
Night in a Thousand Iridescent Patterns



A Blade of Grass Becomes a Sceptre.

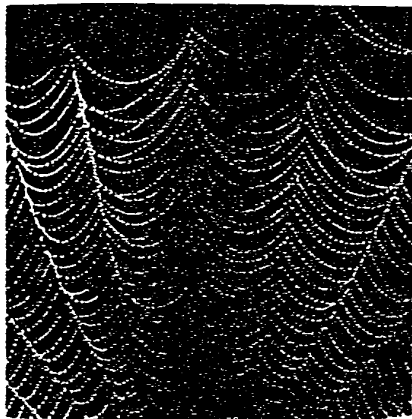
By WILSON A. BENTLEY

THE beauty of the dew has been chronicled by poets since time began, but it has remained for the modern art of photography to capture and display the amazingly intricate patterns that the fluid moisture can create. Spears of grass and leaves of clover, even crickets and grasshoppers laden with drops of dew and photographed against a dark background, are metamorphosed into surprising jewelry. The range of patterns is infinite. In fact, the whole history of jewelry, from the simplest to the most elaborate creation is recapitulated in these pictures taken on a Summer lawn.

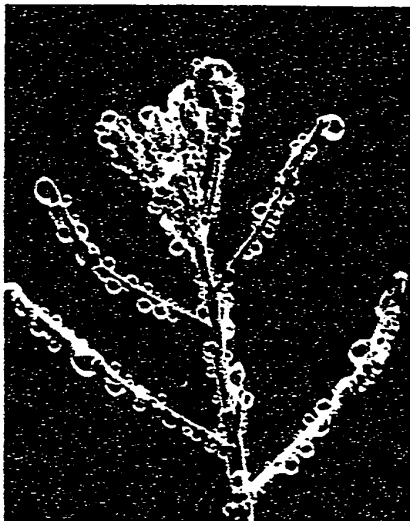
Nature, generally given credit for supplying precious stones only in the rough, for man to cut and polish and set in his own way, is capable of giving, herself, demonstrations of unique ideas of design. The elaborate perfection of snow crystals is familiar to every child, who finds them presented in primary textbooks. But the more imaginative patterns that lie within the heavy dampness of the outdoors on a July morning are less

generally known. They are harder to see, for one thing, because they are not thrown into relief. Late Spring and early summer, before the first vivid colors of growing things have faded, are the best times to see the patterns. Then if ever, as Longfellow has pointed out, come perfect days. While "heaven tries earth if it be in tune," and so on, the dew is heavy and resplendent.

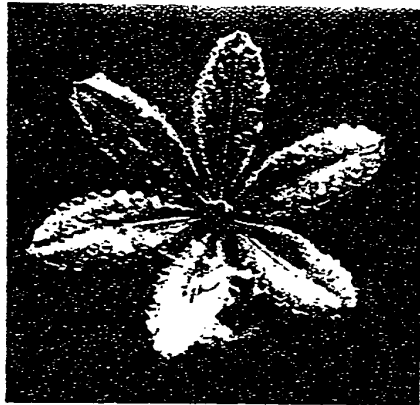
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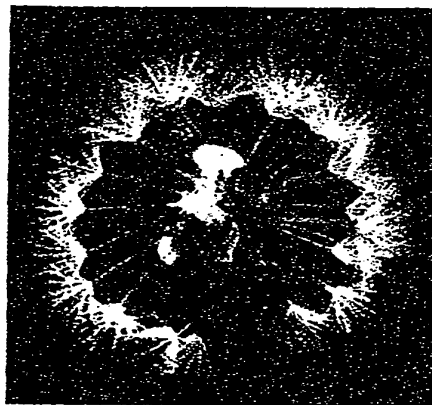
Above
A Spider's Web Transformed into a Necklace.



A Plant Strung With Sparkling Gems.



A Blossom Set With Brilliants.



A Bediamonded Dandelion.

jewels; the settings are living or inanimate things that are still while the dew jewels form. No one (except some drowsy insect that is more grateful for the coolness than he is interested in the demonstration of the laws of physics) sees the process. But in the morning, in that short space of daylight before sunrise, the completed designs lie in their myriad splendor across the landscape. The scale is minute in detail, stupendous in range.

It is a lavish and profligate creation, for the whole is destroyed in an hour or two. The heat of the ascending sun evaporates all, and before that the movement of living things—birds and bugs and men—have rudely broken many of the patterns. But the sun at first plays an esthetic rôle, adding color to the



Caterpillar Grass Turned Into a Glittering Jewel.

simulated jewels. First the drops of dew are mostly pearls and emeralds, or round diamonds; but in the sun's rays they take on the hues of rubies and amethysts and turquoise and opals and sapphires and all the glittering catalogue that lapidaries know.

The effects achieved are infinitely varied. The gamut is run from stark simplicity to a rococo crustiness that might be described as ostentation. Strings of matched pearls, imperial in their splendor, lie carelessly strung along a thread provided by an industrious spider. Below it are intricately jeweled shrubs that might bring the sensation of grandeur to an Abyssinian potentate who wished to display his riches tangibly in a head-dress.

Nature satirizes the foibles and vanities of men and women in the discarded jewelry modes of the past. Here is one of those gaudily jeweled bees, considered so fine in the gay '90s, when no Gibson Girl could possibly exist without one. There is a scarfpin mounted with one huge and improbable pearl—such as gentlemen of the race-course, in the same period, used to esteem so highly. Diamond stomachers, which would have outshone all in the boxes at the Metropolitan when Melba sang, are profusely scattered about, and there are jeweled fans fit only to cool the brow of the King's favorite as she strolled through the gardens of Versailles. The most modern note is touched as well.

Perhaps the most beautiful of all the designs that the iridescent

drops of the dew can form is the adornment of a spider's web. The beads are strung with amazing regularity along the bright strands, forming loops of shining precision. From the leaves of strawberry plants they hang as pendants, and the edges of the leaves are lined in pearls. The light down of the dandelion is adorned with diamonds, giving it an unwonted magnificence—one strange to the dandelion's humble birthright. Blades of grass are sceptres crusted with stones from Ophir, or blades of Damascus with glittering hilts.

Another interesting thing about dew drops is that they serve as mirrors and reflect their surroundings. Sometimes the larger ones reflect a picture that may be caught in a photograph. One of the pictures on this page, for instance, shows the



Above
The Shamrock Scintillates With Jewels of Dew.



A Fern Becomes an Ornament for a Queen.



A Common Fly Gleams Like Rare Jewel.

reflection of the author, taking the photograph.

Photographing the patterns of the dew can be accomplished without great difficulty, although it requires skill and a good deal of patience. Almost any one-fourth size photo lens, well stopped down, will do; but one must have an extension camera, or attachment. And the best results are obtained by using a dense black background.

The time must be early in the morning, at or as soon as possible after sunrise. Some objects can be photographed without previous preparation in their natural environment. If the object be a strawberry leaf, or some similar leaf, it is often best to photograph it in its natural environment, first removing the dry, bare, undesirable surrounding objects that might mar the view or cast a shade.

Rather small leaves or objects should be selected, so that they will bear considerable magnifying and so that the dew drops will be relatively large as compared with the size of the leaf or the object.

Having selected the subject and placed a black background behind

it, with the camera centred and focused on the subject, you are prepared to take a perfect picture—provided early morning breezes do not arise to shake and distort the images. A morning breeze is the nemesis of the dew photographer. One may have found a marvelous study, may have got everything ready for an exposure, and then may have vainly to wait for a moment of still air.