

SWING HIGH AND SWING LOW.

Swing high and swing low... While the breezes they blow...

"Swing high and swing low—the sea singeth so... And it walleth anon in its ebb and its flow..."

MY MOTHER'S SILK DRESS.

BY ELIZABETH STEWART.

It was after tea and we were sitting around the fireside, mother, Dick, Kate and myself. Dick sat on a low stool at mother's feet, with his curly head resting on her knee.

"Mamma, do tell us a story?" Mother laughed a low, sweet laugh as she said: "I should like to oblige you, Katherine," mother always called her Katherine, "but am afraid Dick might object."

"Mamma," and Dick's head rose very quickly, "if I am 20 and go to college, do you suppose I will ever tire of listening to the delightful stories you tell?" and having thus delivered himself Dick's curly head sank back to its resting place.

"Oh, Dick," Kate explained, "you ought to have been here the other day. Louise and I were looking through an old chest on the attic and we found the loveliest old fashioned dress you ever saw. The grandest crimson silk, trimmed in heavy lace. Just my favorite color, too. We carried it down to show mother and she almost cried when she saw it, and said there was a story attached to it and that some day we should hear it."

"The story is rather long and if I tell it you must promise not to get tired. It was the hardest but at the same time the most valuable lesson I ever learned."

"If you remember," my mother began, "I have told you that father was a physician in a small but prosperous country town. We had always been in comfortable circumstances, but the year previous to the one in which my story opens, father, for some reason or other, had been obliged to mortgage his home. In his efforts to pay it off, we were compelled to live in the strictest economy. I was attending an academy that was in the town where we lived and, in hopes of being able to assist father, was taking a two years' course in one year, so that I could teach in the coming fall."

"At this time we received a letter from brother Richard, stating that an epidemic was spreading through the college and, as most of the boys were leaving for home, he desired to know whether he should go or stay. Father wrote at once that he should come home. We were to have three weeks vacation in March and I was overjoyed when they told me Richard was coming home."

"The day before Richard came, my mother received a letter from my Aunt Ella begging that mother would let her spend a few weeks in the city with her daughter. Amy, feeling sure that mother would grant the favor, had enclosed a check for the amount that would cover traveling expenses."

hesitated. You are thoughtless, dear, but remember how father and mother trust you and let that keep you from doing anything rash, and, above all things, don't let the gay scenes turn your thoughts from more serious things."

"I laughed at what I called her foolish fear, but she only kissed me, and I noticed she still looked very grave when she left the room."

"That evening Richard came home, and when I saw how glad he was to be with us again, I was for the first time sorry that I was going away. But the letter was now beyond recall, and then I reasoned with myself that this was a grand opportunity for me to see the city and I had better take it."

"I did not tell Richard until the next morning, but I shall never forget how disappointed he was."

"Never mind, Richard," mother said, "father and I think she had better go, as she has been studying very hard this winter and needs a rest."

"That afternoon, as I was fixing over one of my old dresses, father came in and laid some money in my lap. 'That will buy you a new dress, daughter,' he said, 'and perhaps a few ribbons or a pair of gloves. It is all I can spare, Esther. I am only too sorry it is so little,' and before I had time to thank him he had left the room."

By Friday I was ready to start. It happened that a friend of father's was going to see that I arrived safely. I had never been from home farther than the nearest town, so the whole journey was a source of continual wonder to me. At the station I was met by uncle John I had never seen him before, but as he had eyes like father's and such a quiet expression that I knew I should like him. And I was not mistaken, for, by the time the carriage stopped before the elegant mansion, we were the best of friends."

Aunt Ella gave me a warm welcome and then called a maid to show me to my room. And such a beautiful room as it was! All blue and white. I stood still on the threshold, feeling almost as though I were in fairy land, but, seeing how the maid stared, I quickly regained my composure."

"I am to unpack the mademoiselle's trunk and assist her to dress for dinner," she announced. "Thank you," I said, "but if you will show me where I can hang my dresses I will not need your assistance."

"Is not the mademoiselle tired after her long journey? Can I not assist?" "No," I said, "if you will just tell me where to hang these dresses I will not need your assistance." Seeing that I was really in earnest, she pointed out the place and then after a some what prolonged stare, left the room. I locked the door after her and then, sat down on one of the dainty white chairs and cried.

"Oh, why had I come here?" I said to myself. Aunt had given me a warm welcome, but at the same time, I knew she had seen my shabby traveling dress and cloak. But I was here now and had to make the best of it, so getting up I bathed my swollen eyes and unlocked my trunk. I spread my dresses out on the bed so that I could decide which one to wear for dinner. There was my gray dress, a white cashmere, that mother had washed and done over, with some pretty silk she had found in an old chest, the pretty blue silk I had bought with the money father gave me, a plain, blue wrapper for mornings and a dark red dress that mother said would do nicely for a house dress."

ed coldly, "for, though I do not happen to be a city girl, I never discuss my private affairs with strangers." Then I shut my lips to keep back the angry words that would rise.

"There, you needn't take offense, for I only thought I'd warn you as you are so blunt." And then, with a "good night," she went out leaving me in anything but an enviable frame of mind. "I will tell her that I did not come here to be insulted," was my last thought before going to sleep that night. When Amy met me the next morning at breakfast she acted as though nothing had happened, so I wisely passed it over.

Then began a round of pleasure such as I had never thought of, even in my wildest dreams. We went to the opera that night and I wore my blue silk unque presented me with a lovely bouquet of red roses, and when I had fastened a few of them in my hair, Amy said: "Esther, never say again that you are not pretty."

"I am sorry to say that Amy's flattery was making me vain, but one night at a party my pride was laid low. I was sitting in the conservatory, waiting until my partner should come with me. Suddenly I heard my name mentioned. A little distance from me and almost shut from my view by a couple of tropical plants stood two ladies."

"Do you really mean to say she is a relative of the Gramms?" said the taller of the two. "Yes, who'd ever have thought that Amy Gramh would own such a dowdy looking cousin, for cousins they are. But I think they must have money or surely Amy wouldn't have her visit them. Will and I were at the opera the other evening and we saw her in a box with Amy and Fred Le Van. She looked real nice then. In fact Will seemed to think she was pretty, but I don't believe he would say that if he could see her in that dowdy cashmere dress she has on to night. Amy told Nell that her cousin was wealthy, but they lived in a country town where a fashionable dressmaker could not be had, so she came to the city to have her clothes made. To tell the truth I had my doubts about it when Nell told it." Then they walked away and my partner came with the ice.

It is needless to say that my pleasure for that evening was spoiled. I had decided to wear my white cashmere as much as possible and to save my silk for Amy's party. But now I would have to wear my silk on all occasions, and what I would do for Amy's party was a question to be solved.

A few days afterwards Amy asked me to go with her to the store where she intended buying her new party dress. I eagerly assented, for there was nothing I enjoyed more than looking at the beautiful things displayed in the stores and watching the crowds of richly dressed shoppers as they streamed in and out the doors.

While we were examining the silks the clerk laid before our admiring eyes the most beautiful crimson silk I had ever seen. Amy looked at it for a few minutes, and turning to her mother, said: "Wouldn't this be lovely for Esther, mamma? You know she has nothing to wear but that old blue silk, and if she wears it at my party all my pleasure will be destroyed." This was not intended for my ears, but I stood so near Amy that I could not help but hear every word she said. Aunt made no reply, but walked to the other side of the store.

"Esther," Amy said, "you would look grand in this silk, you are so dark, dear, that it is just the thing for you."

"Yes," I assented faintly, "but, of course, Amy, I could not buy it, for I really have no money." "But what will you wear at my party?" she asked anxiously. "My blue silk, of course," I answered impatiently. Why did she ask that when she knew it was all I had to wear? "Well, Esther, I think you might buy this, if only to please me, at least. Your silk dress is pretty, but you have worn it so often. Why, just the other evening I overheard Nell Fields say 'she guessed you only owned the one party dress.'"

During the time Amy was talking a severe struggle was taking place in my mind. "Don't do it," conscience said, "remember how fully your father and mother trust you. Sooner than cause them sorrow be willing to bear Amy's taunts." "Nonsense," my evil spirit answered, "this once will not make the least trouble and you can easily pay the money back to your father when you teach. Your blue dress does look too shabby to wear. Amy cannot help but feel disgraced if you persist in wearing it at her party."

paper among its folds. Opening it I read an amount written there for the making of the dress that, for a few minutes made me sick with dismay. Just then Amy came in to inform me that the Madame's servant was waiting for the money.

"Too proud to show my distress, I said as calmly as possible: 'Amy do you think she would be willing to send this bill to my father?'" "Yes, of course she will. I'll go down stairs at once and have mamma write a note to madame," she answered readily.

Once more I was alone, and not until now did I fully realize how far the thoughtlessness that mother warned me against had led me. But I was determined no one should suspect that I had any trouble. So that night, among a roomful of guests, none were gayer than I.

The time passed rapidly until the night of Amy's party came. I was to go home the next morning and had my trunk already packed. It was nearly a week since the bills were sent and during that time I had received no letters. Although greatly worried, I tried to lay aside all care and enjoy myself thoroughly this last night of my visit. I allowed Lisette to assist me in making my toilet, for I was so nervous I could hardly arrange my hair.

Amy, looking very elegant in the cream satin she had chosen for herself came into my room while Lisette put the finishing touches to my toilet. She held a small blue box in her hand and, when I was free from Lisette, she came over to where I stood and telling me to close my eyes, clasped something around my neck. When I looked into the mirror I beheld a most beautiful pearl necklace.

"A present from mamma," she explained, laughing at my surprise. "But don't stop to say anything about it now, for she sent word that we were to come down at once."

I felt greatly elated over the admiring glances cast at my rich costume and especially over those from the two young ladies who had so severely criticised my white cashmere. The lights, the music and the flattery that were poured into my willing ears made me fairly giddy. "I shall be gay to-night, come what will," I said thinking of the bills. But I was not prepared for what did come.

It was as I was coming from supper that I heard a servant say: "Sleep tight in here, sir, and I will call Miss Graham." I wondered whether "Miss Graham" meant Amy or me, but I did not long to wait until the servant entered the room, and, coming directly to me said: "There was a young gentleman in the library who wished very much to see me." Excusing myself, I followed him from the room. When I opened the library door and stepped in I started back, pale with fright, for there sat Richard. What had happened? I felt sure it was something dreadful. Then I thought of those wretched bills.

"What is the matter?" I cried, for Richard had started toward me and then stopped. "Esther! Esther!" he said, "then it is true." I knew what he meant and swinging my hands as I said, "yes, it's true, Richard, it is true."

"But what did you do it for especially when you knew how hard father is involved trying to pay off that mortgage?" he asked, reproachfully. "I don't know, Richard, I really couldn't have known what I was doing when I bought it. But what did father and mother say?" I was fairly sobbing by this time and Richard, seeing how deep my repentance really was, gently drew me on a sofa by his side to wait until I had become calm.

frightened. "Don't, dear, don't," he pleaded. But it was quite a while before I could gain my self control. "Did you say father could not pay this for some time?" I asked at length. "Yes," he said, "it may be several weeks before he is able." "Well, then I must go to Uncle John and ask him for the money, as I know these people will not wait," I said decidedly.

As we passed through the long hall we could hear the merry voices and I wondered with a dull, sort of a pain, if I could ever laugh and be gay again. When I reached the door of uncle's room my courage failed me. How could I tell him that I had betrayed the trust father and mother had reposed in me? But it must be done for father's sake. So I opened the door and we entered. Uncle stared in surprise, and it was no wonder. Surely I must have made a strange picture, with my tear stained face, crushed flowers and rich, but rumpled dress. "Why Esther, child, what is wrong?" he asked.

In a few words as possible I told my miserable story. "And, uncle," I added, "Richard tells me that father cannot possibly pay this now and I hardly think these people will be willing to wait. So is it asking too much of you to buy this dress? I feel as if I never wanted to look at it again, so I don't mind giving it up."

"You will wish to leave here on the earliest morning train," he said, turning to Richard, when I finished. "So I will pay these bills myself and send the receipts to your father."

"Thank you very much, uncle," Richard said gratefully, "you have taken such a load off my mind." Then, laying his hand on my shoulder, uncle said: "Esther this has been a hard lesson to you, but I hope you see its value. Remember this, that the little word 'no,' with only two letters in it, some people find very, very hard to pronounce. But I believe the next time you are called upon to say it you will be able."

"Then, uncle, I shall regard this as a loan," I said after I had thanked him. "Just as you please, Esther, about it," he said kindly, "but you may take your own time in paying it." I had no desire to go down to the parlors again that night, so I went to my room, leaving uncle and Richard together. Uncle explained Richard's presence to aunt and Amy by telling them of mother's illness, thus making no mention of the bills, for which I was very grateful. When I left Amy cried and begged me to visit her soon again.

When we reached home, we were met at the door by father. "Mother," I gasped, "how is she?" and then I could endure the strain no longer, but with a little cry fell, senseless, into my father's arms. When I became conscious I was lying on the sitting room couch, the lamp burned very low, casting a dim shadow over the room. On a chair at the other side of the room, with his head resting wearily on his hands, sat father. I could not but see how much whiter his hair was than on the morning I started for the city.

"Father," I called softly. He came to the couch and laid his hand on my brow. "What is it, daughter?" he asked. "Can you forgive me?" I cried. "I know I am not worthy. But, oh, father, I have been so miserable." "Hush, daughter, you must not worry yourself to-night. But rest assured your mother and I have fully forgiven you."

"Will mother die?" I asked, choking back a sob. "No, no, Esther, to-day we had reason to hope for the best. But I fear it will be some time before she is well. Now you had better retire, and tomorrow morning we will talk about this." Then he stooped to kiss me and left the room.

The next morning father and I had a long talk. I felt I had never loved or honored my father half enough. He was so gentle and so forgiving. But he took me to mother's room. Then he was not until I had looked on her dear face that I fully realized what a costly bargain my dress had almost proved to be. It was weeks before mother was down stairs again, and one day I heard her say to father, "The lesson was hard, but it has changed Esther from a thoughtless girl into an earnest, thoughtful woman."

For and About Women.

Said a saucy little Maple To her cousin, Willow Tree; "Miss Fir has no new mantle This Spring, like you and me."

"She wears the same old garment That's worn since I was born; I should think she'd feel so shabby With no new bonnet on."

As she tossed her head and nodded At the Fir Tree's old-style clothes, Willow laughed—she couldn't help it—At the turned-up, pea-green nose.

The Fir Tree, staid and modest, Answered Maple not a word; "Though I'm very sure, yes certain, Everything was overhauled."

She only softly murmured, As she rearranged her clothes; "I'm glad my friends don't leave me With every wind that blows."

Methodists throughout Great Britain were surprised to hear that the Central Church, Hastings, elected Miss Dawson, of Redhill, as a district representative to the forthcoming Wesleyan conference at Birmingham. Hitherto no lady was allowed to enter the Wesleyan conference and whether this will now be permitted remains to be seen.

Skirts are almost universally made plain now. This is the mark of the really smart gown, for any purpose. There may be the contrast of dropping sash ends, or velvet tabs, with big buttons or buckles, but there should be no interruption of the downward line of the cloth. Flounces may hide bad cutting. In a dozen gowns of faultless workmanship you shall not see more than one such flounce about it. And the menace of the overskirt is removed. We are a good deal nearer the panier than the overskirt now, though last Spring we were groping timidly toward the useless draperies. Paniers, by the way, are equally useless.

But when we get hold of the wrong thing it's best to drop it quick, isn't it? Miss Samantha King, a pretty school teacher at Inland, Ohio, with a wagon and team recently worked out the poll tax which had been levied upon her.

Even the plan of using fancy pins to hold the skirt and belt together at the back, does not work always satisfactorily. A very pretty woman has a number of belts that completely overcome the skirt difficulty. The belts do not always match the skirts by any means. She usually has a stock and belt to match, however. The belts are made either of muslin, linen, silk or ribbon, and in the middle of the back a piece of the belt ribbon is ruffled on to the lower edge of the belt for about three inches each side of the point exactly marking the centre of the back of the belt. This can be caught to the skirt at the corners with a couple of pins, and not only conceals the entire strip where the skirt sags and shows the dress belt under that of ribbon, but it was rather ornamental as well, and the woman hasn't any patent on the idea which originated in her own brain.

Every botanist knows that Spring begins while yet 'tis Autumn, and surely every costumer knows that Autumn begins upon the hither verge of Spring. It is never safe in fashions to prophesy more than one month ahead. Two months is a guess, three a conjecture, all beyond that the limbo of the unknowable. The wise in such matters say that we shall have the sleeve for the present nearly stationary in size, and unhidden by caps or collarette; that waists will shorten grow and skirts more scant, and that you must buy right away two little side combs and one high one, to assist in training the hair low over both ears and high in the back after the manner of long ago. This is pleasant news enough, for no more lovely manner of coiffure was ever devised. Further, Napoleonic features of the 1805 period will be less agreeable to short and dumpy women. Not every one can wear the garb of the Empress Josephine with equal advantage.

Mme Carnot, widow of the murdered French president, is not only given to deeds of philanthropy, but she is a model housewife. There is no work in her home which she is not as competent as her own servants to do.

A tall, brown jar with a slender neck, filled with long stemmed daisies and set on an oak table, makes a study in color which may well delight the eye of an artist, and the golden hearted blossoms will make a speck of beauty in a dull room which is worth 10 times the expense and trouble of arranging them.

Most women overdress themselves. They wear too much clothing. The symmetry of the figure is destroyed by the collection of bands, bones and gathers about the waist; grace of movement is destroyed by the overlapping and ill-draped skirts, and not only comfort, but health is destroyed by their weight. Corsets of clumsy construction and ridiculous length make caricatures of the women who wear them, and the average woman stands accused. With the big sleeves, the full skirts, the coats and shirt waists, the undershirts and petticoats the little women suggest rag bags and the big women are monstrous.

Mrs. Elizabeth A. Haines went to Washington D. C. 12 years ago, a widow, with about \$1000, and started a small notion store. She now has \$40,000 invested in a stock of general merchandise, and keeps about 60 clerks employed. She owns the building in which her store is located, known as the Haines block, the third story of which is used as a city hall.

Tailor-made shirt waists of silk Madras are worn with duck or linen skirts in the morning in the country, or in town when one is belated there for a day or two, says Harper's Bazar. A white duck skirt with a pale blue shirt of the glossy Madras is cool and youthful looking. A pink Madras waist is especially pretty with brown or gray linen skirts. This material is very similar to silk gingham, and is preferred in solid colors than in stripes. It is made up in French blouses that droop over the belt in front, and in the simple yoke shirt. Instead of a crushed collar of the Madras, and sometimes a wide ruffle is added down the front.