

SNEERED AT.

It's a shame and disgrace to the graduating class that any one of us should be dressed so shabbily! said Edith Linton to a group of girls who were discussing the closing exercises of Lester Seminary, now near at hand. Of course it reflects on us to have a poor nobody with us.

Particularly since that poor nobody is to recite the valedictory poem, laughed good-natured Bessie Long. If we could keep her in the corner, or draw attention from her by our own better appearance, she might be overlooked; but if she is shabby, she will be conspicuously shabby that night.

When people can't dress their children as they ought, they have no right to send them to a school like this, said Edith.

Oh, I've heard Alga Rivers say her uncle in California pays her school bills, one of the girls answered. She says her father is too poor to send her here, and she's going out as a teacher next year.

Why don't her uncle in California give her decent clothes, then? Edith said. It's an insult to every scholar to send a beggar here, where the first families of the country send their daughters. Here's Blanche Armstrong. Blanche we're discussing Alga Rivers' dress. You sit next to her. How shall you like your elegant white silk grenadine to be cheapened by her coarse white muslin?

Blanche Armstrong was an heiress, and a leader among the girls. She was not quick in her studies, and was indolent, but she was not proud and she had very generous instincts. She thought very little of the money lavished upon her, but a great deal of the talent and genius which her money could not buy. Of late she had given great dissatisfaction to some of her companions by seeking the society of Alga Rivers.

How would I like it? she answered, in her slow way. Well I'd like it better if the scholarship covered by the white muslin could be communicated by contact to the white silk grenadine. If I could have written the valedictory poem, I'd be willing to make a bonfire of my wardrobe, and go in course serge, at least for a while.

Oh, my; what noble sentiments? sneered Edith. Now, for my part, I must confess that I think to dress well is as necessary to make a lady as her birth, manners, or anything else.

Oh, but Alga's dress is so awful coarse, Blanche! cried Susie Randolph. It's a muslin just as coarse as lining, and is made perfectly plain; not a ruffle or flounce on the skirt, or a shred of lace at the neck. Nothing but a narrow frill of the muslin. Why it is so shabby, one of our servants would be ashamed to wear it!

You know, said a gentle-looking girl, Alga's mother used to be a lady. Oh, I don't mean she isn't a lady now but she used to be rich; and, poor as she is, she will not let Alga wear imitation lace or jewelry. She says that it is vulgar, and that a clean plain, white muslin, no matter how coarse, is better taste than any imitation.

She's right, Blanche said, rousing up to animation. With Alga's fine figure and face, she can stand the severest simplicity. I only wish I could, for I am disgusted with finery.

I'd like to see you forced to wear Alga's dresses for a while! Edith cried. I don't think we'd hear anything more about simplicity.

Blanche seldom took the trouble to argue any question with her companions. She did not answer, but sauntered with her usual languid step to the extreme end of the play-ground. A girl sitting on a bench under the shade of a tree, with dark hair cut short like a boy's, and bright, eager, grey eyes, was reading intently in a large book she held on her knee.

I've come here for quiet, Alga, Blanche said, throwing herself on the grass. The girls are chattering like so many magpies over there and they have given me the headache.

Alga pushed up her short hair with an impatient boyish gesture.

Chatter, yes, I believe you, especially when dress is the subject. Of course, they've been discussing my coarse, mean muslin. That will give them enough to talk about until the end of the session. Don't deny it,

Blanche, I know my dress was the topic.

Why should I deny it? Blanche said, quietly. You are above such things as dress, I am sure, and can afford to be indifferent to their foolish talk—you who have so much else to think of.

But I do mind it, the girl cried vehemently. It hurts me to the very quick. I don't mind telling you this, Blanche, for I believe you are my friend; but, do you know, I'd willingly give up most of the prizes I expect, to be decently dressed, and know that duce, Edith Linton, wouldn't be able to sneer at me. Oh, of course, I'm ashamed to feel so, and I see you are ashamed of me for saying it, but it's a truth nevertheless.

Blanche sat almost astounded at this revelation. She who had believed that people who possessed talent lived habitually in lofty regions, where such pretty things as dress never intruded. It was the first time her friend had ever spoken of her personal feelings in such matters, and she was confounded at the revelation.

I never thought—I never dreamed you were hurt by such feelings, she stammered.

Why, they are constant pin-pricks and often make me cross and irritable. I shall be glad to get away from here; but then I suppose I shall be obliged to endure the same vexation wherever I go. Of one thing I am certain; a poor teacher won't be expected to dress like rich people, she added bitterly.

We're such intimate friends, you know, Blanche said, hesitatingly, and we are about the same size. Now, why can't you wear one of my dresses that evening?

Alga put her hands over her friend's mouth. Don't say any more, Blanche. I know I am very foolish, but my dear mother has given me some lesson of independence that I can't forget. My dear, I don't think it would mend matters for me to show myself ashamed of my clothes by flaunting in borrowed finery. I only wish poor mamma had been able to get me a few yards of lace; a muslin frill looks so cheap and dowdy. You see I'm cursed with a taste for delicate toilet accessories.

I wish you'd let me help you, Blanche sighed.

You do help me, Alga cried, throwing her arms around her friend's neck. Your friendship gives me a better opinion of girls, and helps my better nature; but you shan't help my frivolous, groveling tastes. It's all over now, Blanche, raising her bright face where not a shadow remained. My dark hour has passed. I had become demoralized by dress, talk and spitefulness, but I've weakened to my nannies, as good old Mammy Dinah used to say. It's among my 'nannies' that kind Uncle John has given me an education, and my grumbling is over until I get back home and begin to practice the 'minor economies,' as Prof. Allen calls them.

This was brave talk, but Blanche who was a silent observer, and in a little way a philosopher, noticed that as the eventful day drew near, Alga grew very grave, and was often foolishly irritable. If by any chance she came upon a little knot of girls discussing dress, she would turn from them with a flushed face; her sharp wit was unsparingly used on her companions, and, of course, inspired in them a feeling of intense dislike. They whispered to each other that she was so cross and envious that they hated the very sight of her, and hoped she would lose the prizes.

She did not, however. She took them with a defiant air, so unlike her usual calm dignity that her teacher stared with surprise. A few hours before the evening exercises, Blanche, who was alone with her, said. You are not yourself, Alga. What is the matter with you? You are so nervous I'm almost afraid you'll break down this evening.

I shouldn't be surprised if I did, she answered, gloomily. When I am angry, I lose my memory, and if I forget a word of the poem I am sure then to become so confused that I shall make a failure. Oh, you don't know all that I have undergone; the hidden taunts and insults that have met me at every turn. To-day I got a caricature of myself in the cheap muslin I am to wear. A frightful thing with a hideous motto that I won't repeat. Do you know, Blanche, I've a great

mind to go to bed and say I'm too ill to appear. I've lost all courage.

You must not do that in justice to yourself and friends, Blanche said; gently. Your uncle would be grieved, and I shall be so mortified that I shall not dare to raise my head. Think of your mother, too, and forget all these annoyances.

I'll try, Alga said, with a faint smile. I certainly am nervous from overstudy, I suppose, or I shouldn't be in such a frame of mind. Blanche, you don't know what it is to feel that you are so disliked that your schoolmates are all watching eagerly to see you fail, and if you do, they rejoice. If I could only forget them.

Toward night the graduating class appeared, dazzling in their embroidered muslins and grenadines, made in the most fashionable manner.

How do you like my dress? Oh, it's perfectly lovely! What a stylish fit! How beautifully your hair is dressed! What exquisite flowers! were whispers on every side.

Carrying her head very high, a hot flush on her cheeks Alga entered the room. She did not know that her coarse, plain muslin fitted her perfectly; and in the absence of all trimming showed off the lines of her fine figure to the utmost advantage.

She seemed taller and finer for the classic simplicity. It suited her style, and with a pang Edith Linton recognized the fact. But she did her malicious best. She threw as much contempt in her glance at the despised muslin as her eyes could express, and gathered up her costly lace flounces as if she was afraid the muslin might touch them.

Where on earth is Blanche! she cried, affectedly. Oh, girls, I'm just dying to see that lovely dress she received from Paris. It's an elegant costume, gloves, fan, shoes to match. Here she comes now. Oh, good gracious!

This exclamation drew all eyes to Blanche. Where was the magnificent toilette? A plain, white muslin made very much like Alga's neither flounces, laces, ribbons nor even a breastpin but a white rose at her neck standing in lieu of one.

It's a Cinderella reversed, isn't it, girls? she said smiling. I was so disgusted with my finery, I wanted a change, and I thought Alga's dress looked so nice. But I've surprised her as much as anybody, I see, crossing over to Alga and taking her hand. I only wish I looked half as well as you do, dear, she said looking at her with frank admiration. We're such plain birds we shall, I think be obliged to keep together to-night, and I am glad of it.

It was as much as Alga could do to keep from bursting into tears.

I know what you've done this for, you dear, noble girl, she whispered, her eyes shining through repressed tears. Yes, and you shan't make this sacrifice for nothing. Do you think I could fail with you before me? I'll do my best, for you've made me forget my own foolishness and the petty malice of the other girls.

She did her best and her best was good, indeed. Her poem was applauded, and Blanche heard more than one person ask eager questions about that handsome girl who repeated the valedictory poem so exquisitely. Such a beautiful dress actually classic, you know.

Blanche and Alga were close friends through life. Some years afterward when one day they were talking about their school life Alga said: If it had not been for that kind act of yours Blanche, I don't know what would have become of me. I was so bitter at that wretched little Edith and the others that I did not care what became of me, to be sure, it was foolish and wrong, but I could not help it. When you restored my faith in others you restored me to myself. I've never forgotten the lesson.

I learned one too, Blanche said laughing. I found that the simpler the dress, if it only fits well, the more it is admired by gentlemen at least; I don't answer for the ladies. You are able now to wear what you choose, but I have never seen you look half as well as in that coarse plain muslin.

I keep it as an heirloom Alga said with her old impetuosity. When I married, I told my husband the story and when my children are older, if I see them embittered against any one,

they shall hear how silly their mother was, what a wise, good friend she was blessed with. Ah, Blanche, was there another girl in the world who would have been willing to sacrifice an excellent toilette just to an act like that.

A REMARKABLE TRIP.

Hon. Wolfe Rahill of Chicago looking for all the world as though he had just issued from the proverbial band-box, was stumbled over last night at the Windsor Hotel, where he was engaged in searching the tape line for the last quotation for July wheat. The set of Mr. Rahill's claw-hammer coat was faultless; his shirt bosom, from the centre of which a lustrous opal shot forth moonlight rays, was immaculate and unrumpled; while his trousers, marked by that latest freak of gentlemanly folly, the Prince of Wales crease, fitted him in a way that at once filled with envy all the heavy swells of Gotham who were buzzing about the wide corridors.

It beats the world, Mr. Rahill remarked, looking up from the paper ribbon that he held between his thumb and fore-finger, it is the greatest accomplishment of the century.

The Chicago wheat deal? queried his listener in a vain effort to catch his drift.

Nonsense! he returned, dropping the line, and thrusting both hands in to his trousers pockets. The Chicago wheat deal is an old story. The same thing has been done over and over again. No, sir; I was speaking of the train on which I left Chicago last evening, and on which I came into Jersey City to-night—one of the new Vestibule Trains that the Pennsylvania Railroad Company has just put on between the two cities. Its novelty of the age, it's the— but stop, let me tell you about it and you yourself will have to hunt for terms sufficiently glowing to describe it. I came back to Chicago yesterday afternoon after a business trip west as far as Omaha. I was dusty, dirty, and weary, and I longed for nothing so much as a bath and a good sound sleep. I was tired of the rattle and the rattle of the cars, the flying cinders, the cramped sitting posture, the dust over everything, the railroad lunch-rooms, and the railroad sandwiches. I made up my mind that I would settle down in Chicago and never stir out of it again until I had to. Well what do you suppose happened? When at four o'clock I rushed into my office in State street and dropped into my chair, there among the letters on my desk before me I found an invitation to a friend's wedding in New York. Time: to-night; 7:30. I railed at my unlucky stars. Much as I despised railroad travelling I would have gone double the distance to have seen that man married. In days gone by we were as were Damon and Pythias. I stated the case to my partner, and growled six-seven beers because I had not come home a day earlier.

Well, said my partner, after a moment's hesitation, if you'd stop growling and hustle about a little you might get there yet. Man alive! I exclaimed you're crazy. The Pennsylvania Railroad's New York and Chicago Limited, which makes the fastest time of any train east, leaves in less than an hour, and does not arrive in New York until seven o'clock to-morrow night. The wedding takes place in a church somewhere up Madison avenue. Now how in the name of Heaven could I get shaved, put on a dress suit, and ride to the church in half an hour?

You're behind the century, said Tom—Tom's my partner, you know. Trust this matter to me, and I'll have you there before the organist strikes up the wedding march, or you can call on me for ten thousand bushels of July wheat at 70.

Well, I just put myself trustfully into his hands. The first thing he did was to start a messenger off to my house with my satchel, and instructions to put in my dress clothes and two changes of underwear, and to be at the Union Station by five o'clock sharp. The next thing he did was to secure a section for me on the Pennsylvania Vestibule Train for that afternoon; and it was only by luck that he got it. Everything, I believe, had been engaged for days ahead, but somebody, who couldn't go, brought back his ticket, and so I was saved. At five o'clock, still dusty, dirty, and

wearily, I climbed into the most luxurious car it has ever been my good fortune to ride in. I found that the section of which I was the lucky possessor for the trip, was a little deliciously upholstered drawing-room, with cushions and hangings of a tint that I think I have seen described somewhere as crushed strawberry. The fittings were of satin wood, and the ceiling was decorated in silver. There were silver lighting arrangements too. Not gas brackets my friend, for that whole train is illuminated by electricity. Well, I found that there was a toilet room connected with that section of mine which together with the section, could be cut off from the rest of the train, and so if I wanted privacy I could have all I wanted. I did want it, because I had a number of letters that I had found at the office and that I had no time to read carefully before I started. I shut myself in for a while with my letters after washing my face and hands, and getting the porter to give me a thorough brushing.

Then I became aware of the fact that I was hungry, and so I made inquiry as to the dining car. It was forward, I was told, and I strolled thither, passed through another car on my way. Although we were running at the rate of fifty miles an hour, there was no necessity of catching hold of the seats to steady myself as I went. The train glided along as smoothly as a sleigh on polished runners over hard-packed snow, and I walked from one end of it to the other as I would walk through this corridor. I found the rest of the sleeping car in which I was located was upholstered in *gendarme* blue, with wood-work of Hungarian mahogany, and the way in which the two colors harmonized was a delightful change from what I had been used to on the western roads. The vestibule arrangement I found a most charming innovation. In passing from car to car, there was no banging to the door with one hand, holding one's hat with the other to keep it from flying off, and then making a grab for the handle of the door of the next car, in mortal terror of being swung from the platform. No, sir! It was a step over a carpeted vestibule, between velvet curtains which hid from view the rubber joints that connected the two cars.

Did I dine? Well I should say I did, and sumptuously too, in as pretty a little dining-room—excuse me, car I mean—as man ever sat down in. The table linen was spotless, and the service unexceptionable. There were flowers in a little vase in front of a mirror over the table between the windows, and whenever I raised my eyes they fell upon a most ornate *bouffe*, that fairly shone with silver, glass and polished brass. This dining car was fitted up in old oak, with blue-green velours hangings and upholstery generally. The dinner cost me a dollar, and was better than the best dollar-and-a-half dinner I ever ate in a hotel. I had a pint of Pommeury too, for which I paid the usual two dollars. I smoked a cigar after dinner in the smoking car, which, with its stained oak book cases and brackets, its bric-a-brac on the shelves and its softly cushioned wicker chairs was more like a comfortable library in some city house, than the interior of a car running across the country at a speed that a few years ago no railroad dared even to attempt. I had some letters to answer, and so I sat down there at a desk and answered them. If I was at a loss for the spelling of a word, a dictionary was at hand, and if I wanted an address, all I had to do was to ask the porter for a directory of the city in which the lost party resided. Before I had finished writing, it was after nine o'clock and we had passed Fort Wayne, and were thundering on towards Crestline, our next stopping place.

As I was tired I turned in early, and I slept as soundly as though I were in my own home. I slept far into the morning, and when I awoke and went into breakfast, we were somewhere between Pittsburg and Altoona. After breakfast I went into the barber shop and—

The barber shop! interrupted his companion. Where did you find a barber shop?

On the train of course. O, I didn't speak of it before, did I? Well, that's another feature exclusively the property of the Pennsylvania's New York and Chicago Limited. Yes,

There is a barber shop there, and a good barber, too. I was shaved without a scratch, had my hair trimmed, and felt as fresh as a field daisy in June. I found a book in the library that interested me until lunch time, and just as I got through luncheon we arrived at Harrisburg, promptly on schedule time—1.55. There I got the New York papers, looked over the grain markets, wired an order to my partner to buy 5000 bushels of July wheat for my account, and settled down with a cigar between my teeth for an hour or two with the news of the day. About four o'clock I took my satchel, made my way to the bath-room—O! yes; there's a bath-room, too—had a delightful refreshing bath, put on clean clothes, and donned this black and white attire which you now see. Before I had finished, we had stopped at Broad Street Station, in Philadelphia, for five minutes, and were shooting out over the Schuylkill on the last stage of the journey. Another delicious dinner occupied another hour and more. When I went into the smoking car, we were somewhere between Trenton and New Brunswick, and though there was no perceptible swaying of the train or jolting either, I was told shortly afterwards that we had made the run of twenty-five miles between those two points in exactly twenty-seven minutes. Pretty fast going that eh? Before I had finished my second cigar we were in Jersey City. I took the upper ferry, arrived on the New York side at sharp seven o'clock, jumped into a cab and walked into the church to-night in time to get a good seat forward from which I witnessed my friend's marriage from start to finish.

My verdict consequently is, that the Pennsylvania Railroad Company's new Vestibule Train beats the world. There's not another road on the face of this globe that could have afforded such a service as that, and I am willing to make any bet on it that you choose or propose.

Then the Hon. Wolfe Rahill made the announcement that he intended to take the Limited back to Chicago at nine o'clock this morning, and bade his friend good-night.

TRICKY DIAMOND DIGGERS.

Few persons except those who have lived at the Cape, have any conception of the loss to the legitimate owners and workers of the diamond mines caused by the traffic in stolen diamonds—stolen, that is, by the native diggers employed in the mines, and sold by them to the illicit diamond buyers, commonly known at the Capes as the "I. D. B." Pursuing this subject, a writer in the New York Tribune says:

Before entering claims in the morning every native is obliged to pass through the dressing sheds, where he must doff the garments of civilization which the common law compels him to wear in the streets of the town, and don the regulation working-dress consisting simply of a breechclout and a light straw hat. Clad in this airy garb he labors throughout the day, excavating the diamondiferous "blue ground" and shoveling into huge iron tubs, which transport it by the aerial tram lines to the upper edge of the vast crater-like pit of the mine, whence it is carried to the sorting tables, and spread out in thin layers, moistened, pulverized, sifted and examined by the sorters or diamond seekers proper. All this work is carried on under the supervision of watchful and experienced guards, quick to detect any suspicious movement on the part of the native digger; yet so adroit has the latter become in his special branch of *legerdmain* that it was early found impossible to rely solely on the guard's watchfulness; and accordingly every native, after his day's work is finished, and before he is allowed to leave the mine, he is compelled to pass through the searching sheds, where he is submitted to a personal examination more minute and complete than is undergone by the most desperate criminal in the prison of any civilized country.

On entering the searching-sheds the digger is first stripped to the skin, and his hat and breech-clout are carefully examined. Next he stands before a window in a strong light, and the surface of his body is critically surveyed, special attention is giv-