

shaken from the folds, as they are often very sharp, and, if allowed to remain in the garments, will cut them badly.

If possible, and the room can be spared, take an extra suit of gossamer underwear in the hand-bag, as that just worn may be too damp to be safely put on for hours. It is an excellent plan for ladies who travel alone and do not wish to be burdened with heavy hand-luggage, to express home, from their first stopping-place, the outfit of underwear, together with other superfluities with which they began the journey. The expense is but trifling, and relieves of a great amount of worrisome tugging at heavy packages. One experienced traveler has an outfit awaiting her at the hotel where she halts midway on her journey.

For short trips where it is not worth while to take trunks, it is an excellent idea to put up a compact package and express it to the address of the family to whom a visit is intended. With this arrangement, a trip may be made with simply a shopping-bag, parasol, and a fan, if desired; and, if the journey is long enough to require it, a lunch-box, which should be of pasteboard so that it may be thrown away when empty. For a three or four days' visit among intimate friends or one's own family this plan is an excel-

lent one, and saves all the trouble and vexation so often attendant on the handling and delivery of heavy trunks. The express company receives the package at the door and delivers it to the number addressed, thus saving all worry and attention as to its safety. The cost is but little,—less, than the cartage of the trunk at both ends the line.

Everybody takes little day excursions to various suburban resorts, and for this purpose the ordinary street costume is sufficient, provided it be not too dressy. At such places ostentatious dressing may subject ladies to severe criticism and unnecessary annoyance. Carry a light wrap, an umbrella or parasol, and a fan. A couple of extra handkerchiefs will not be out of place, and a few toilet-pins and a small dressing-comb may come very handy, particularly if the dressing-rooms are crowded. It is not a good plan to carry a shopping-bag, as in the sometimes almost unmanageable crowds that throng piers and railroad platforms, such articles are likely to be wrenched out of the hand in spite of the greatest care. An extra pocket, either in the dress or skirt, will be found very convenient, the latter especially so, in case it is desirable to carry a pocket-book.

Our Girls.

Mildred's Graduating Dress.

It was just previous to the Commencement at Monte Vista Seminary, and the minds of the twenty-five "sweet girl graduates" were about evenly divided between their essays and their dresses for that auspicious occasion: if anything, there was a slight leaning in favor of the dresses.

Jean Hildreth and Louie Laurence were in a nook of the school-room by themselves—the former was the poorest girl in the class, the latter belonged to a family in moderate circumstances; for this particular class embraced almost every grade of wealth—talking, as girls do, over the coming commencement.

"I do not sigh," said Jean, "for Essie Taylor's cream moire, for I think that material is unsuitable for girls, and especially so for a commencement dress; but I do long for one of those dainty marvels of lace and fine lawn that Mildred Leslie will be certain to wear, and that will make her look more than ever

"Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,—
Queen lily and rose in one."

"It is so mortifying to look poor and mean and dowdyish, when you know you could display elegance and good taste if you only had the wherewithal to do so. But it is difficult for me to pinch out even twenty-five cents a yard, when Annie has been sick so long and needs so many delicacies that we can hardly afford. If it were not for mother, and for the danger of lessening my chances of getting a school next fall, I would not graduate at all."

"I am downright sorry for you, Jeanie," replied her friend; "and if I were rich, I would wear calico for a commencement dress, just for your sake. But we are betwixt-and-between people, that can't do anything; we are not rich enough to do anything *outré* and have it passed over as 'a freak of dear Louie's,' 'one of her naïve impulses,' and all that sort of thing by which the fashionables excuse an eccentricity in one of their own circle: we must fain make a pretense of being millionairesses, have the sashes and flowers, kid gloves to the shoulders, white shoes, a carriage, etc., etc., and

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then wear last season's dresses all summer to pay for being a 'swell' on one occasion for a few fleeting hours. But let us go out on the lawn, Jeanie; and console yourself that you have carried off second honors, if Mildred has first."

"I do not envy her the honor, because she has earned it; nor her sweet disposition, nor her face like a rare old Venetian painting, nor her lovely things: but I *would* like to have some *like* hers, and surely there is no wrong in that."

So soon as the school-room door had closed upon the two, a tall, graceful girl rose from a seat where she had been an unseen listener to the two girls.

"What opportunities we rich have, and let them slip through our fingers!" said Mildred Leslie to herself. "I am the wealthiest girl in the class, and there are half a dozen that are absolutely poor; and yet I never thought of causing envy or bitter feelings among them. Perhaps it is not too late, yet, to do something, even in this matter of commencement dresses, to which I have given, probably, less thought than any other girl in the class."

Possibly you imagine that, having an independent fortune of her own, besides being the only child of wealthy and indulgent parents, and also a charitable, sympathetic, Christian girl, Mildred immediately purchased a handsome dress for each of her poorer class-mates; but in fact she did nothing of the kind, nor would it have been wise for her to do so.

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It was the night of the Commencement exercises at Monte Vista, and already the great hall was filled with the waiting audience. In the room set apart for a dressing-room, the class of bright, expectant girls were gathered.

There was Essie Taylor, gorgeous in her white moire; there was Louie Laurence, in a costly "all-over" Swiss embroidery gown; there was Jean, looking very pretty in her cheap lawn and flowers; there were one-and-twenty others: but where was Mildred Leslie?

Soon the sounds of carriage wheels were heard, and Mildred entered, looking like "a daughter of the gods" in her creamy gown.

"How sweet you look, Mildred!" "What a charming

dress!" "Is it imported, Mildred?" "What is the name of that lovely stuff?" were among the cries that greeted her.

The waist of the dress, that suited well her slender figure, was a mass of fine plaits, and the plain elbow sleeves were trimmed with creamy satin-ribbon bows, and a fall of lace. The neck was open in V-shape, and filled in with lace. The corsage bouquet was of lilies of the valley, and there were the same flowers in the ribbon at her belt. The skirt was made with a knife-plaiting at the bottom. The back of the overskirt was a plain breadth, tucked to the waist, and the front was drawn to the right side in simple graceful folds; it was finished with soft lace, four inches in depth. At the left side were two box-plaits, the space between containing half a dozen bows and ends of satin ribbon, irregularly placed, the loops and floating ends gracefully arranged.

The soft hair was dressed high and ornamented with a pearl dagger, and the perfectly plain hoops of gold on the round wrists were the only ornaments she wore.

"What a *distingué* costume!" exclaimed Essie Taylor. "We knew you would have something awfully elegant, you have been so very mysterious and close about it."

"Well," said Mildred, smiling, as she seated herself, "I will tell you about it. This lovely stuff is *unbleached muslin* of rather loose texture, and it cost just nine cents a yard. There are eighteen yards in the dress, making the cost of the material one dollar and sixty-two cents. There are five yards of Oriental lace in the flounce around the overskirt, and for the finish of the sleeves, at twenty cents per yard, making one dollar. Three yards of narrower lace for the throat and corsage, at fifteen cents, cost forty-five cents; and fifteen yards of satin and gros-grain ribbon, twenty cents a yard, were three dollars.

"My slippers are perfectly plain white kid, and cost one dollar and a half. My kid gloves—I like gloves better than mitts—were one dollar and seventy-five cents. My flowers are from our conservatory, so cost nothing. My fan was a plain white one, for which I paid one dollar, and I painted it myself—bees on clover-blossoms. Don't you think the design rather pretty? We are the bees, you know, as eager for knowledge as they for sweets.

"Then there were thirty cents for three spools of white sewing-silk,—I would have no cotton,—twenty cents for two spools of twist, thirty cents for buttons; and eleven dollars and twelve cents cover the entire cost of my graduating costume, for I made it myself. Perhaps you don't know it, but I sew beautifully. Moreover, I am vain enough to quite agree with you. It *is* lovely stuff, and it is, I think, a *distingué* costume. With a white chip hat, trimmed with white moire, a little lace, and some Maréchal Niel buds, all to cost three dollars and fifty cents, it will constitute, after to-night, my church dress for the summer."

"How odd!" "Who would have thought so pretty a dress could be got up out of such cheap things!" were the exclamations that greeted her when she had finished.

"Inexpensive, not cheap," corrected Mildred, smiling. "Everything is good of its kind; there is nothing tawdry, I think, about them."

"But what made you do it, Mildred, when you can afford any kind of a dress you wish?"

"For two reasons: first, I wanted to work out a theory of mine, for very simple materials are frequently the most effective; and secondly, because I think in a class where we are all on a level, on an occasion like this it is unkind, unjust, and a positive sin for one who is more fortunate, to place at a disadvantage, by a rich toilet, those who are not able to afford one similar, or to cause even one of her companions an uncomfortable feeling. I am certain of one thing, that my dress has cost less than that of any girl in the graduating class of Monte Vista Seminary this year."

"If you were a boy, and we horrid boys, I should cry 'Three cheers for Mildred!' But being girls, I shall just kiss you for being so lovely and unselfish," cried one enthusiastic girl.

The whole class pressed around her, but just then the tinkle of the bell called them to the hall to take their seats upon the platform.

As they passed, Essie Taylor seemed a little ashamed of her elaborate silk, and Louie Laurence confessed to Jean, "If I only had some of Mildred's spirit, and had not been afraid of people's remarks!—but here I must pinch for months on account of this dress, which I can have no chance to wear again—for I am never invited to parties—unless I am lucky enough to get married before it grows old-fashioned."

Jean made no answer, but there were tears in her eyes.

The graduating essays of the young ladies of this particular class of Monte Vista Seminary were more than ordinarily thoughtful; but the most signal success was attained by Mildred Leslie, who had chosen for her theme "The Possibilities Within Reach of American Girls."

She spoke of the new range of employments opened for girls; of industrial schools and classes; of girls in the counting-room; of girls as designers, as metal-workers; of girls studying and becoming trained nurses, physicians, dentists; of girls who had homesteaded land in the far West, and were successful fruit-growers, bee-keepers, etc.

But especially she dwelt upon the need of a simpler training for the daughters of the wealthy, less aping of foreign customs, less display. She spoke with pride of Mrs. Cleveland as a representative American girl, filling her exalted position with an ease, a dignity, a grace, and sincerity of purpose that makes her respected and loved by thousands of women who have not seen her. And last, she spoke of the power that rich American girls have to check the rising tide of display, vulgarity, and extravagance, by setting a finer and higher example each in her own circle.

Rarely does a young girl's essay evince such earnestness and power; and the audience thrilled to the words of the reader,—the graceful young girl who seemed made of "spirit, fire and dew,"—not knowing of the added inspiration that had been given to the girl's manner by the little scene in the dressing-room.

Seldom does such applause greet a débutante as Mildred received when she stepped down from the platform. And when each of her classmates received among their flowers a handsome bouquet, and found in the center a plain gold ring, with the inscription, "From M. L., June 4th, '87," they knew in what way the money saved by her simple dress had been expended.

But the happiest moment of all, to Mildred, was when her father called her into his study, a few days after, and said:

"Millie, I've heard all about your graduating dress. If I were a father in a novel, I should at once go off and buy you a diamond bracelet; but as I am not, I think your own consciousness of having done a commendable deed, and, looking at it in the light of a girl's eyes, a great deed, is a much higher reward. I want to tell you how proud I am of my daughter. I was a poor boy, and worked my way through college, and graduated in homespun in a class where many wore broadcloth. I know a poor boy's feelings, and can guess a poor girl's; and I am prouder of you to-day than ever I was, though you have always been my comfort and my pride."

But when the story grows old, by another year, will there ever again be in Monte Vista Seminary another lesson taught by another such inexpensive graduating-dress, I wonder?

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