

A SNOWSTORM.

Feather light and feather soft and feather flying swift,
The snow came down the livelong night and piled in heap and drift.
The barns were roofed with silver sheen, the fences glimmered white,
For far and near the barefoot elves had journeyed in the night.
The baby at the window clapped its dimpled hands in glee;
This was indeed a bonny world which he had come to see.
The sturdy boys were loath to wait, their eyes on fire to go
And fight and measure arms against the legions of the snow.

And feather light and feather soft the flying fleeces piled
Above the fields where food was sown for many a hungry child.
For while men sleep the great God keeps a watch for things to grow,
And his world's bread is always safe beneath his brooding snow.
The snow fell on the upland, on the lonely graveyard space,
And the snow fell on the lowland near many a dwelling place.
And everywhere 'twas pure and fair, and dropped its shining fleece
As if the angel of the Lord had hushed its heart to peace.
—Elizabeth Chisholm in Harper's Bazar.

SAVED THE TRAIN.

The bridge was a trestle bridge, long and lofty and very slender.
In Bar Island City life concentrated its life upon the bridge. There were painters and carpenters, watchmen and plate layers, smiths, signalmen and engineers.

These, with their families, a few hangers on and some railroad officers who had made the "city" their home, constituted the whole of the settlement.

And with all of them the bridge seemed to dominate every other interest. It was their great topic of conversation. They were proud of being connected with it. They felt a kind of proprietorship in the huge spidery structure.

It was a sociable little community, too; much given to hospitality and taking, as is the custom of all small communities, a profound interest in the private affairs of its individual members.

As the Widow Rockwell put it, in discussing with Mr. Shaw of the City hotel the marriage recently arranged between his daughter and Jeff Davis:

"It's just like if there was a wedding in every house all over town."

Had the old people witnessed a little scene which was even then being enacted down below in the valley they might have been less confident.

Along the river bank, where a rough track wound in and out with the windings of the stream, a man and a girl were strolling moodily side by side.

The man did most of the talking. He was a tall, handsome young fellow, with a fair beard and mustache and a face that would have been pleasant and good humored under ordinary circumstances. But it was clouded now, and he spoke discontentedly, almost querulously.

"Who is he, 'Thea, anyway?"

"I dunno. How should I?"

They walked on in silence until they found themselves immediately underneath the bridge, with the great network of beams and crossbeams towering above their heads.

"Thea, I don't like to see you an that fellow chummin' up so close together. Who is he? What's he doin' here?"

"There ain't no call for you to like him's far as I can see," retorted the girl. "An as for who he is an what's his business, he ain't told me, an I'm not goin to ask him."

"I'm sorry, 'Thea," the man answered humbly. "I didn't mean no offense to him or you, but I thought he might ha' told you somethin about himself. An he's had plenty o' chances o' telling you things, seems to me."

"S'posin he has, what then?"

"What then? Why, 'Thea, I'm frightened of this man; jealous of him, if you like. 'Thea, he hasn't been sayin anything—anything foolish to you?"

The girl was leaning against one of the supports of the bridge, her head thrown up and resting on the timber, her hands clasped behind her back. She just shifted the position of her head, so as to look the man straight in the eyes, and said in a quiet, dangerous tone:

"I dunno what you mean, Jeff."

"Then you dunno what they're sayin up yonder?"

"If they're sayin things 'gainst me'n Mr. Burton, they'll be precious careful not to say 'em to me, I guess, or they'd become trouble for some one before long."

"An if I tell you?"

"That's what I am waiting for now."

The young man hesitated before replying. The threat of "trouble" for some one, and a peculiar note of challenge in the girl's voice as she uttered it, told him that he was on perilous ground.

"I'm waitin to hear what they've got to say 'bout me'n Mr. Burton."

And at last he lurched out very clumsily and shamefacedly the cause of his complaint.

"They're sayin—mind, 'Thea, I don't set no store by sech talk—they're sayin as how he's been sparkin up to you an for you, an I—"

"And you believed them?"

"No, I say I don't take no 'count of their talk, 'Thea."

"Then why are you tellin me all this?"

The man was silent, not knowing how to answer. He felt himself to be no match for Althea in an argument.

"I didn't believe a word of it, only I—I didn't know what to believe, sech him always foolin around you, an you listen to him an all."

"Oh! Her voice trembled a little now. "An that's 'bout enough! I reckon you've believed 'em, an you believed 'em."

"I listened to him. Is that so, Jeff?"

"I s'pose so," he answered rather shamefacedly. And then for a time neither spoke. At last Althea broke the silence.

"An you think I'm goin to marry a man that can't trust his wife more'n that? You think I'm goin to marry a man that believes every word o' them gossip old women up town, an then down here what he believes an what he doesn't? You didn't mean no offense, did you?"

"Only there's no more talk of marryin between you an me, see?"

Jeff didn't see at all. Half dazed and not quite understanding what it all meant to him, he "loved's how it might be best that way, may be."

Althea had scarcely counted upon this. She expected something "altogether different"—protests, perhaps petitions for forgiveness, a final victory for herself.

She had never intended him to accept his dismissal at her hands in this way, and his blank amazement, which she took for indifference, annoyed her.

"So that's fixed; is it, Jeff?"

"I s'pose so," Jeff spoke shortly and, as she thought, sullenly. And again there was a long silence.

"I reckon I'll have to go away now," Jeff said presently, as though thinking aloud. "I'm on duty up to Mount Severn depot tonight, an tomorrow evenin I'll come down an take my traps an move 'em over there." Then, after a pause, "Good night, 'Thea."

Once she started and half opened her lips to call him back, but pride and the sight of his determined bearing as he strode away tied her tongue, and she let the opportunity pass.

After all, Jeff was only one among a whole townful of admirers, and if he didn't care why should she?

Besides, there remained the cause of all this trouble, the young engineer Burton, who had come down to inspect the bridge and had found the accommodation of the City hotel so much to his taste.

True, Burton himself would not have confessed to anything more than the most harmless flirtation—a flirtation laid upon rather bolder lines possibly than he would have followed with girls of his own class, but certainly nothing more serious.

The storm that had been threatening all the afternoon broke soon and suddenly—such a storm as the Bar Island valley had not known for many years. All that night it raged and well on to the next day, and Althea, sitting by herself at home, had ample leisure to think matters over.

Her feeling at first was one of freedom and consequent relief.

But this feeling was short lived, and when it passed it left her very lonely.

Burton was out, facing the storm down by the bridge.

But she did not think of him somehow. Her mind kept reverting to the thought of Jeff, puzzling over his strange indifference of the previous evening, wondering whether she had understood him rightly.

And by midday she found herself in a very agony of remorse and humiliation.

Yes, she had treated Jeff shamefully. She had dismissed him heartlessly, wantonly and without cause. And now she would have given all the world to be able to call him back again.

At last she could bear it no longer. The close atmosphere of the room seemed to suffocate and choke her. Rain or no rain, she must get out of the house and breathe fresh air if only for half an hour.

So throwing a shawl over her head and shoulders, she slipped quietly out and walked, alone and unnoticed, down the deserted street.

Insensibly her steps tended toward the bridge. In the old days—she thought of that time as though it had been years and years ago—she and Jeff used often to walk some way out along the bridge and stand enjoying the magnificent view up and down the valley.

Twilight had fallen before she stepped on to the bridge, but the way was so familiar to her that she did not notice this.

The rain had ceased, and the wind, though still strong enough at that great height, had abated considerably since morning. Althea faced it and drew long, refreshing breaths as each gust struck at her out of the darkness.

The cool air seemed to brace and exhilarate her spirits, and the novelty of her position, suspended between earth and sky, with blind, empty space on all sides of her, gave her a curious sense of detachment and mental exaltation. She forgot Jeff—forgot all her own troubles.

But home and everything in her past life seemed so distant, so vague and insignificant, that she easily dismissed the matter from her mind and pressed on again. The bridge swayed slightly in the wind. She must be just above the river now, she thought.

Suddenly the hand rail by which she had been guiding herself slipped from her grasp. The speed at which she was walking carried her on a pace or two, and then she stopped, struck with a momentary fear, and groped after the rail with her hand.

Not finding it she stepped cautiously backward and touched it just at the point where she had let it go. The rail was broken off short, the wood jagged and splintered. And at the same moment a squal shook the bridge and sent Althea down on her hands and knees, clutching at one of the foot planks and straining every muscle to hold herself against the wind.

She was not frightened in the least. Slowly for perhaps 10 or 12 feet she crawled along in this manner, and then one hand put out very cautiously before the other missed the plank and found only empty space.

Again she stretched out the hand, this time to right and left as far as she could reach, and again it found nothing. There was no more bridge!

Althea raised herself into a sitting posture, drawing her feet up under her skirts and resting upon one arm. She must consider this thing that had happened.

She tried to realize Bar Island City without the bridge. No daily arrival or departure of the trains to lend a little interest to its quiet existence. No train to-morrow morning.

No train. Good God! There would be a train tonight—the train that was due to cross the bridge in about an hour's time, and Althea's heart stood still as the remembrance came to her—and Jeff was coming back by it. In that moment all her heroism, all her false sense of security, passed and left her weak, dizzy and trembling.

In that one moment there had flashed into the girl's mind the knowledge that

upon her and her only depended the safety of that train, with its living, unconscious freight, among them the man whom she herself had sent to face this hidden danger, to meet an almost certain death.

But there was the work to be done, and she must do it somehow. Further, the must do it unaided. The time was too short to allow of her getting back to the city and sending a messenger across the valley. And of course the telegraph wires had broken when the bridge gave way.

No, there was only one way open to her, and its chances were all against success.

The sky had cleared a little, and it was just possible now to see the point at which the bridge came to an end and the stream that lay beyond. The darkness that projected the end of a long pole, which had been horizontal, but which now rested at a sharp angle, wedged tightly among other beams that crossed it far below out of sight.

Althea took a firm hold of this pole, leaned all her weight on it to test its stability, and then with a terrible sinking at her heart swung off into the darkness. Almost immediately her foot struck another beam, and to this she lowered herself cautiously.

It was also firm enough to bear her weight, and she found a whole stack of loose timbers resting against it, by which she was able to drop lower still.

The ruin, which had fallen toward and not away from her end of the gap, now lay piled so close that the descent was not really difficult.

It was the darkness and the uncertainty that she feared. Once or twice a timber gave away beneath her weight and fell, dragging a number of others down with it.

And once the end of a beam to which she was hanging swung sawsaw fashion, and lowered her gently 10 or 12 feet before it overbalanced itself and swung off from its central pivot, landing her almost miraculously on firm footing.

And so down and down scrambling, swinging, falling, she kept on her way until at last, after what seemed to her an interminable length of time, she saw the glimmer of broken water below her, and knew that she had almost reached the stream.

She checked herself, and leaning forward peered down into the darkness. There was a sheer drop, though of what distance she had no means of judging, between her and the water, and she could find no means of getting either to right or left. So, shutting her eyes tightly and swinging to the full length of her arms, she let herself go.

The signalman on the farther side of the Bar Island valley bridge had just finished his supper and settled himself comfortably by the stove to enjoy his evening pipe when he was roused by the sound of footsteps stumbling up the ladder that led to his box.

A moment later he saw the figure of a girl framed in the doorway. Her dress was torn, drenched with water and thickly plastered with mud. Her long, dark hair, tangled and dripping, hung about her shoulders, and a thin stream of blood was trickling down her face from a cut on the forehead.

For an instant the man sat and stared at her, dazed and silent. Then he recognized Althea and leaped to his feet.

"The train!" she gasped. "The train! Has it passed yet?"

"No; train's half an hour behind time, but she's about due now, I reckon."

"Thank God! I'm in time, then. Stop them! Stop the train, for God's sake! The bridge—the bridge is gone!"

The man looked incredulously at her. Then, beginning to grasp the truth, he snatched a red lantern from the wall and without a word rushed down the ladder and out onto the track.

Ten minutes later the cabin was invaded by an eager, curious crowd of passengers and officers. Jeff, who had been traveling in the car in the rear of the train, was among the last to enter.

Coming out of the darkness into the lighted room he only saw the signal man standing in the center of an excited throng and trying vainly to answer all their questions at once. Snatches of conversation reached Jeff through the buzz of voices.

"Brave girl."

"All owe our lives to her."

"Splendid heroism."

And, while he wondered what it all meant, a hand was laid timidly on his arm, and a tired, pleading voice whispered:

"Take me out of this, Jeff. I can't stand it any longer."

And Jeff looked around and saw her and began to understand.—Daniel H. Conner.

A Bachelor's Reason.

The people of Wyoming who permit women to vote are apparently not in sympathy with the English bachelor of long ago who got himself into a controversy on the subject of women's rights with his vis-a-vis at dinner. After pro-ing and con-ing for a few minutes the lady asked, "Candidly, sir, why do you oppose giving the franchise to women?"

"You will excuse me for saying it, madam," he replied, "but I have not sufficient confidence in their capacity to conduct government affairs."

"But what evidence of woman's mental inferiority to man can you advance?" persisted the lady.

The bachelor thought a moment and then answered slowly, "A simple fact is enough to satisfy my mind, and that is the frightful way in which they do up their back hair."—Harper's Bazar.

The Odor of Flowers.

What unsung poems hide in the smell of dried lavender flowers! Poems of sweet and sheltered maiden life; of quaint gowns and stately dances; of old presses packed with fair linen; of resignation and fading twilight and forgottenest. With the odor of the lilies comes upon the sense the white glory of Easter dawn. Something sensuous, snake-like, hides in the breath of Roman cyclamen. The brave red clover, so small it is to realize New England, sturdy, homely, faithful.—Boston Commonwealth.

HOME DRESSMAKING.

SOME PRACTICAL HINTS THAT ARE OF TIMELY VALUE.

The Cloth for Waist Lining and the Way It Should Be Cut—The Importance of Basting, Ironing and Rebasting—How to Get a Perfect Fit.

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NUMBER I.

In presenting to our lady readers this series of articles on our class dressmaking as it is done abroad and by the best modistes of this country we believe we are doing them a lasting favor and one which will assist them in becoming accomplished dressmakers, so that, no matter how remote from the seat of fashion, no lady need wear garments that bear the unmistakable seal of "country" about them, and they may, if occasion requires, earn a respectable livelihood at home. These directions and diagrams are substantially the same as those employed by the great man dressmaker of Paris, and the fundamental principles are exactly the same. The lady who reads this series of six articles is advised to cut them out and paste them in a book for reference, and she will have something which would cost her twenty dollars to buy—the price of the "systems." No mechanical "system" can approach this in simplicity and practicability, and all so-called systems fail if the waists are not tried on and managed after this plan, as no two women are formed alike, nor is any one woman precisely alike on both sides.

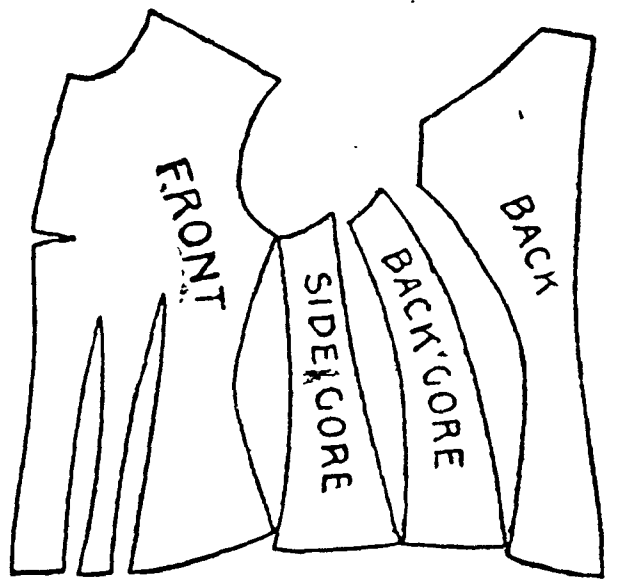


DIAGRAM OF MODEL BASQUE.

In the first place it requires one yard and a half of strong silesia or drilling for waist lining. This should be cut into the form shown by the diagram, but the darts should not be cut until it is fitted. To get the proper dimensions put the material, doubled lengthwise, on a table, and having the diagram before you measure the length of the waist from the neck to the bottom. Make dots at these places along the doubled selvage. Measure the length from shoulder to waist and the distance from the straight line from shoulder to front, keeping the same distance to bottom; then mark the darts, which must vary according to the figure of the person. If very stout they must be about two inches across at the waist line, if slender, one to one and a half, and a reference to the diagram will show the form. The back and side body pieces are to be measured from top to waist line.

When the lining is cut, allowing at least three inches margin beyond the seam, it should be basted and tried on, the seams being left on the outside. The fitter should then "take in" the seams and pin them until the whole lining fits perfectly, snug in all parts, but binding in none.

When the model waist lining has been thus fitted to the figure, take it off and iron it, so that the pins will make marks and show just where the seams should go. Then the lining should be rebasted, following the line of the pins on the outside of them and the pins then pulled out. Try the lining on again, right side out. When the fit is perfect the lining should be ironed again, the seams being laid apart this time, and after this the basting stitches should be clipped so that the different pieces will fall apart without being pulled.

The lining, with an allowance for seams of at least one inch all around, can now be laid upon the outside material and pinned so that it cannot slip and be cut. Care must be taken that all the figures run one way if the goods are figured or the nap if of wool, and that the selvage edges come straight with the front of the waist. The outside should be allowed a trifle larger than the lining, as it is often of goods that will fray.

Baste the lining to the outside with great care, so much of the beauty and smoothness depends upon the basting. The lining should be held upward so that it may be just the least bit looser than the outside. The basting stitches should follow the outline of every separate part of the basque and up both sides of each dart. More depends upon care in basting than people usually appreciate.

When all the outlines are properly basted with stitches not more than one-fourth of an inch long, turn the front over and baste as designated by the pins. A very full bust will require a V shaped plait in front, as per diagram, in the lining only, and sometimes for quite stout ladies the front line will need turning in quite deep at neck and waist line, but the pinholes will show just how much is required.

The buttons go on the left side and the buttonholes on the right, and the lap for these should be deep enough to have the buttonholes cut in the doubled place. Leave the under lap flat and sew a strong piece of tape along for the buttons.

When this is done, baste the darts, beginning the seam from the top, tapering from an imperceptible point. The darts should never be very high, the back one being an inch higher than the front, and this about two inches below the under arm.

The seams must always be commenced from the top and carefully basted before sewing, care being taken to keep from puckering the seams. Baste the two darts first, then the side gorges, beginning at the arm line. The two middle backs should be then basted together, beginning at the top; then the side pieces, which are the most difficult of all.

If the waist now proves to fit perfectly the seams can be sewn firmly and neatly, but always on the outside of the basting, next the edge, as the basted seams are elastic and sewing them tightly makes a couple of inches difference. When they are sewn lay the seams open and trim the edges neatly with the scissors and overhand or bind with lustring, if preferred. At the waist line two darts should be cut in the seams nearly to the seam, and after the edges are bound or overcast they should be pressed carefully with a hot iron before the bone casings are sewn on or the ease-basted, and before it is finished off. If the goods are woolen, they should be slightly moistened; if of silk, the iron should not be too hot nor the silk moistened. The press board should have one piece of muslin and one of mull.

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