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**Clever Essays by South End  
High School Girls on "Dress"**

Competition Under Auspices of Home and School Association. Miss Betty Dowsett Wins First Prize With a Thoughtful Essay on "When a Girl is Harmoniously Dressed." Essays Show Remarkable Literary Gifts.

Reference was made some time ago in The Advance to the essay competition under the auspices of the South Porcupine Home and School Association. This competition was for the young ladies of the South Porcupine High School, the subject of the essay being "Harmonious Dress for Girls." Last week the results of the competition were announced. The prize winners were:—  
First, Betty Dowsett, Dome Mines.  
Second, Irene Wilson, South Porcupine.

The judges were: Mrs. Bowles, Mrs. Orr, and Dr. Cameron-Smith. The judges say they had a task deciding the prize winners, so many of the essays being cleverly written and the subject especially well handled. This would indicate that South Porcupine has considerable literary talent in its high school, together with a noteworthy ability for the presentation of a case, for the prize winning essays are outstanding examples of very able work in the line of essay-writing. If the general run of the essays approaches the high standard set by the prize winners, then South Porcupine and the Dome are assuredly to be congratulated on their talent.

The Home and School Association merits the thanks of all for the encouragement given to the literary talent of the High School.

The Advance will publish the three prize-winning essays, the first prize essay being published herewith, and the other two to be printed in following weeks. This essay by Miss Betty Dowsett would do credit to any trained writer. It has interest, originality, thoughtfulness and sound literary talent.

**FIRST PRIZE ESSAY.**

**When a Girl is Harmoniously Dressed.**

(By Betty Dowsett, Dome Mines)  
The word, "Harmony," is defined as: "the quality of being pleasing to the ear; unison; just adaptation of parts to one another so as to form a connected whole; accord in feeling, sentiment, etc."

Harmonious dress then must be pleasing to the eye. It will show accord between costume and wearer, and there will be adaptation of the parts of the costume to make one satisfactory whole appearance.

How does a girl achieve this ideal in dress? There are four chief tests which she must apply and when all these have been met she is certain of complete harmony. These four are:—appropriateness, art of dress, colour and style. We shall consider them in order.

First in importance is the test of appropriateness, which applies to the age, height and complexion of the wearer, the occasion on which the dress is worn, and the accord between the wearer's station in life and her dress.

Girls from fourteen to seventeen years should be careful to choose simple dresses and comfortable since they dress chiefly for school and play. It is a very common mistake for girls of this age to offend against good taste by wearing what would be suitable only for a young woman of twenty. The younger girl has so much the advantage of her older sisters in the choice of bright colours and gay patterns that she should not yearn for older styles. Her clothing must be as youthful as her years, or there will be discord at the outset.

To accord happily with height, the tall girl's dress must not be so close-fitting as to accent her thinness, or so short as to emphasize her tallness, nor should its pattern be in long straight lines. Plaids, or other large designs are suitable for her while the short, plump girl must forego them. How much food for laughter is there in an inch or two of hem! How ridiculous sometimes may be the effect of a line going around, when it should have gone up and down! These matters of length and width are very important in the harmonious scheme!

It is not so difficult a matter for most girls to preserve harmony between their complexions and their raiment, for a suitable colour accents the beauty of the eyes or hair or skin so plainly that almost every girl knows which colour to choose to appear at her best. There are a few, however, who must be told that reds and pinks do not accord with red hair, that deep shades of blue are best to bring out the beauty of light-blue eyes, that soft subdued colours

tone down florid complexions, and that sheer materials have a softening effect on the skin.

An old-time poet appreciated the harmony of his lady's dress and said so in his little verse:—  
My love in her attire  
Doth show her wit  
It doth so well become her.

For every season  
She hath dresses fit,  
For Winter, Spring and Summer.  
His lady must have had a nice sense of fitting the dress to the occasion to call forth such admiration. Every girl would do well to imitate her wit, for a costume might have all the requirements we have already mentioned and still be completely out of harmony if it did not fit the occasion. Play dresses must be designed, for play,—comfortable, simple, washable. School dresses should also be simple, never elaborately trimmed and always of material easily cleaned. It is the party dress that may be as gay and as bright as a girl chooses. Delicate fabrics, vivid colours, ornament and decoration are all in harmony with the party spirit.

Now the question arises, "How can every girl afford to dress in accord with every occasion?" Perhaps, she can not afford it. It would be very much out of accord for a girl to try to appear other than what she really is. If she obeys the law of good taste as far as she can, within her means, she need not be disturbed. To be simple, to give attention to detail, is the law of dress, as it is of all art. Since the simple and the artificial do not harmonize, a girl must never appear artificial, regardless of what common custom demands. She should avoid everything that is striking in effect. The fewer her ornaments the better. The fewer aids to complexion she uses the better. There has never been such an aid used yet which deceived any observer or produced a truly beautiful effect. Far better for every girl to study other ways of emphasizing her good points rather than to resort to artifice to cover her blemishes. If she will only work as hard to aid nature to make a pleasing effect as she often does to disguise or mutilate nature, something worth while could be accomplished. Fastidious cleanliness of the body, inside and out, is the real beauty producer. Nature herself does a great deal for youth to make it pleasing to the eye. It is a great pity that so often her harmonious effects are spoiled by abuses of her gifts.

As simplicity is the keynote of harmonious dress, attention to detail is the master touch that makes the perfect accord. Sometimes it is the easiest thing in the world to secure a beautiful effect. Where there is the sameness of colour in dress, shoes, gloves and hat, a ribbon as a belt or a string of beads or a pin of vivid contrasting colour, or a small decoration on the dress itself will turn an uninteresting costume into a thing of beauty.

Then, one must be careful of sizes and shapes of hats and boots. The small face must never be overburdened with the wide brimmed hat. The too-tall girl should never choose a high crowned, and as a rule the brim for her should have considerable width. The girl with the long slender foot should avoid pointed shoes and lightcoloured fabrics that would have the effect of increasing their size. She should choose her gloves with the same care. If she carries a bag it should be a part of her colour scheme, or contrast pleasingly with it. So should any other accessory of her costume.

Colour is, of course, the dominating influence of dress. It requires, therefore, the closest study, but does not always receive it. How often do we see fair-headed, colourless people wearing neutral colours that make them appear faded, and how many dark-eyed, dark-skinned people show an unfortunate leaning toward black and dark brown. Complexions require contrast to bring out their good points: warm and brilliant colours for the dark; deep and strong for the light. The brown-eyed girl may safely choose golden browns, reds and warm yellows, or variations of these colours. The blue-eyed girl should choose the blues, greens, grays or purples. One is not always guided in one's choice by complexion alone; the seasons influence us considerably. Those colours that are cold and faint seem most suitable in the warm seasons, and those that are warm and intense are a pleasing contrast to the gloom of winter. But whatever the choice be, that colour should be

used throughout the costume. If a contrasting colour is desired it must contrast harmoniously, as tans do with brown, or light and dark shades of the same colour, or black with light colours. Such a combination as red with green would be most in-harmonious.

Now, we come to that feature of dress that we call style, which is so much influenced by the prevailing fashion. To some girls style means only fashion, but it should mean something more. It is quite plain from all we have said of the many things that must be considered in the harmonious costume that a girl must modify and adopt the prevailing fashion to her own requirements. It is quite necessary, of course, that a girl should adapt the current fashion. If she did not she would be a discordant note in her surroundings, no matter how harmoniously in itself her costume might be. A poet in giving advice about fashions in speech once wrote this:

In words as fashions the same rule will hold,  
Alike fantastic if too new or old.  
Be not the first by whom the new is tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

No girl should be fantastic in her dress, of course. She should not call undue attention to her costume by the oddity of its fashion. Neither should she slavishly follow every fashion without altering it to make it suitable for herself. We have already seen that there may be disastrous effect of lines, lengths and patterns on the harmony of a costume, according to the height and width of the wearer. So, a girl considers her own feelings and sentiment first, and the current fashion afterward, if she desires harmony in her appearance. After all, it is the person herself that should count with the observer. Her costume should never overwhelm herself.

It should always be an expression of the best traits of her mind: intelligence and good judgement.

It might seem that a great deal of time is misspent in the consideration of mere coverings for our bodies. But it can be proved that one's mind may be acutely affected by the harmony or lack of it, in one's dress! It is important enough to influence the mind, then it deserves due consideration. The fact that we all often have harrowing dreams in which we find ourselves with a garb most unharmonious with our surroundings and wake in a perturbed state of mind is one instance of this strange dependence of the mind. Then, who has not seen a girl fail in recitation in the class room because she was so conscious of all eyes being focussed on something peculiar in her dress? How many children suffer real distress in the knowledge that they do not make fit playmates because their clothing condemns them. On the other hand, we know how confident we always feel when we see we have made a favourable impression by our good appearance. As Stephen Leacock, of McGill University, writes in "Literary Lapses":—"On the one hand we remark the bold carriage and mental vigour of a man attired in a new suit of clothes; on the other hand we note the melancholy features of him who is conscious of a posterior patch, or the haunted face of one suffering from internal loss of buttons." There are stores of people of genius in the theatrical world who struggled long for recognition, because their rags of poverty repelled the great managers to whom they applied. The old adage, "The clothes make the man," had its origin in numberless cases like those. Since dress is so powerful for the success or failure of people, it is very worthy of the considerable time spent in the study of it.

It is not to be assumed, however, that every girl is obliged to make a special study of the art of harmonious dressing. Many have made such a study, and are giving the results of their work to the world constantly, through the fashion publications. Every girl is profiting by the knowledge and experience all the time, unconsciously at first, and, perhaps, consciously, as she grows older. But she is gaining her knowledge as well without giving any special time to it. All the lessons of one kind and another that a young girl learns, she may apply to dress as she applies them to other needs and experiences in her life. So, then whatever she learns that teaches her to observe and compare will teach her how to achieve appropriateness in dress. The lessons in honesty that she learns from her parents will teach her that there is true harmony in dress only when it is befitting the station or means of the wearer. Every lesson she learns in school and at home about herself as a social creature is helping to teach her the harmony between a costume and the occasion on which it is worn. Her lessons on the art of drawing in school teach her the laws that control colour combinations and give her an appreciation of the value of

simplicity that should always influence both her manner and her dress. As her intellect and character are developing under all her training she is gaining a power of judgment that will select what is harmonious for her particular self in current fashions and will give to her dress that valuable feature of style. It is plain then, that while harmony in dress is well worth consideration and study, it need not require that a girl should spend undue time on it; or that it should inspire in her a frivolous vanity. All the principles that control her ordinary conduct may be applied to this, as to any other need of her daily life. Good taste in dress is as much a matter of education as good taste in the choice of one's companions, on one's pictures, or one's books.

From all the foregoing we may conclude that a girl is harmoniously dressed when her costume is entirely appropriate when it is simple, when its colour is in accord with her own, when its style is an expression of herself rather than a mere imitation of fashion, and when she has achieved this perfection through no sacrifice to vanity.

A laugh is worth one hundred groans in any market.

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