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Second of the Prize-Winning Essays on Harmonious Dress

Miss Irene Wilson, Winner of Second Prize in Competition Conducted by the South Porcupine Home and School Association. An Essay Showing Marked Ability and Originality of Thought.

SECOND OF THE
Last week The Advance published the first prize essay in the competition inaugurated by the South Porcupine Home and School Association. Below will be found the essay winning the second prize. Interest, originality, thoughtfulness and marked literary gifts are evident in this excellent essay. No wonder the judges said they found difficulty in placing the winners in the competition. In publishing these essays in full The Advance has a double purpose. First, it is desired, of course, to encourage ability such as that displayed by the young ladies at the South Porcupine High School. Second, The Advance believes that to a great many readers these clever and thoughtful essays will prove of special interest and value.

This is the winner of the second prize.

HOW CAN A YOUNG GIRL DRESS HARMONIOUSLY? (By Irene Wilson).

How can a girl dress harmoniously? That is a question which the girls of this twentieth century seem to have answered for themselves, for surely the majority of our girls of to-day are harmoniously dressed. They have drifted from the hoops and bouffant styles of their grandmothers to the slender silhouette so popular to-day. They have flirted with period frocks, played with the Spanish basque and coquetted with the tiers of flounces, but they have turned back, in a body, to the war-time coat and dress.

Students of progress claim that the was taught man nothing; that after the toll of lives and property taken by four years of devastation, they have learned nothing for their salvation. If that can be said of man, it is not true of woman, for she has learned anew, the benefits of simplicity in raiment. After four lean years of war, woman responded heartily to the cry of dress for show. They tried the vagaries of Catherine de Medici and lent themselves to the vogue of Marie Antoinette, but now they turn their back on everything artificial in raiment. They demand the straight line, the convenient garment, the slip-on, the step-in. It is harder now to be well dressed than in the days when knighthood was in flower and lords and ladies fair thronged the palace courts of France. Artificial dress reigned supreme in those olden days and artificiality covers defects; simplicity covers none.

In speaking of harmony let us find what harmony means. The Concise Imperial Dictionary with its cold calculating words says harmony means "in accord," or "music-like." "In accord" expresses well our idea, for, were we always dressed in accord, we would always be dressed in harmony. "Music-like," too, expresses the exquisitely and harmoniously garbed woman. As Longfellow said of Evangeline, we might truly say of the girl harmoniously dressed, "When she had passed it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music."

Formerly each year there was a decided change in styles, but now each year the change is slight. The retention of fashions, however, is not a barrier to the accumulation of new apparel, for woman is like nature. The flower of every tree is, each summer precisely the same as it was the summer before, but it is a new flower. So it is with women, they insist upon renewal with the changing seasons.

If each and every woman had the leisure, and necessarily the wealth to attend the fashion displays in Paris, the home of fashion, or in New York, its American rival, then we would all be harmoniously dressed. The daughters of the idle rich roam aimlessly through carpeted halls of marble with deep velvet hangings, artificial trees, and broad stairways. There in a rendezvous-room with inviting deep cushioned chairs, and mystic hidden lights, dainty mannequins promenade to and fro, and there no aggressive colours are allowed. Who could not be harmoniously dressed with the famed designers to choose their wardrobe?

Unfortunately, or fortunately, we are not all children of luxury, and so we must depend upon and cultivate our own sense of harmony, that we may always feel we are in harmony to whatever occasion presents itself. Fine feathers do not make fine birds. That oft-quoted adage is not wholly true. Literally speaking fine feathers do not make fine birds, but

by our clothes we are judged by the world. An entire stranger has no other means of judging us, except from our appearance, and so after all it remains to our "feathers" to make or mar us.

"Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy" were words of wisdom indeed, uttered by Polonius in "Hamlet." As he suggests, let us dress up to our income, but never above it. Our wardrobe should be planned on a well balanced scale, lest we have an excess in some articles and a scarcity in others. We should generalize in choosing our clothes, so when the inevitable question, "what shall I wear?" arises it is immediately answered.

One must not appear in the drawing-room dressed for a mountain hike, or still more ridiculous would it be to attend an evening ball attired for golf; a picnic costume would be sadly out of place on a motor trip. Just as we would not think of taking our bathing suits from the beaches, so we must leave all our costumes each in its allotted place. To appear harmoniously dressed, two things are absolutely essential and equally important. First, you must know what you intend to do, where you intend to go and dress accordingly. Then, you must study well and know your own type and having learned it adhere to it always.

Let us look at some of the different types most common to-day. Foremost among them is the ever popular athletic type of girl with her bobbed hair and dashing spirit entering every field of athletics, breaking all bonds of propriety after years of suppression by her brothers. She is found at the sea-shore, on the golf links, on the tennis courts, at riding meets, yes she even enters and excels in Marathon track events. All sports costumes are for the Athletic girl, but she can dress for social functions as well as her milder, and, as her ancestors would have said, her more lady-like sister.

Then there is the slender tailor-made girl who has invaded the business world. To her belongs the sedate lines of suits and one piece dresses. She goes to business always immaculate and faultlessly dressed. Her wardrobe should consist of at least two skirts, several smocks and blouses,—the more the better,—two or three dark office dresses, one with removable collars and cuffs. Her shoes are cut on a sensible last and she wears hose the colour of her shoes in harmony with her dress. The attire of the business girl might well be applied to the school girl too, simplicity prevailing in both. On the street, the business and school girl dress simply also. A long coat entirely covering the dress, a fur choker and small, tight fitting hat. Some of our more prosperous business and school girls are able to afford fur coats; these are also suitable and in perfect harmony to her position. When the business girl dresses for a formal dance, she dresses to her heart's content, always, of course, remembering her colour scheme and the colours she wears best. Her hose and dainty slippers match her dance frock. Perhaps an ornament adorns her hair, but the girl who is pretty and youthful needs no decoration. When the senior high school girl dresses for the evening, simplicity accentuates her dress. Her colours are in accord and are becoming to her. To assure colours becoming one, they should strive to match the hair and eyes. When the Co-ed graduates, simplicity should mark the dress for graduation, but her Prom frocks may be more elaborate. Dance frocks are made of light or heavy silks, velvets or metal cloths. Hose for the dance are always silk and shoes are high heeled. The fan is a necessary accessory to the dance. The fan is usually in harmony with the dress but sometimes it is brilliantly coloured, standing out in direct contrast to an otherwise dark, colourless picture.

Another type is the delicate, cream puff girl, with her fair Saxon hair and snow-white complexion. For her were made all the ruffles and fluffy designs in pastel shades. The boyish clothes are not for her and she would do well to adhere to dainty feminine apparel. Miss Cream Puff's clothes are made to order. In choosing a style, she must decide which will look best on herself, and having chosen it, she must choose a suitable material for the style.

Now let us look at Athletic garb, whether it be for Miss Athlete, Miss Tailor-made, or Miss Cream Puff. Masculinity asserts itself in sports

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clothes. Flannels, broadcloths and tweeds prevail. Sports coats are slim affairs of three quarter length with narrow collars and belts and resemble those worn by the opposite sex. When a girl lays aside the clothes so delightfully feminine, and dons the mannish hiking or camping clothes, she should be carefully dressed from the top of her soft felt hat to the toe of her heavy oxford. When she intends to live out-of-doors she should be dressed for the out-of-doors. Let it be understood that Knickerbockers and a Stetson do not make the outdoor woman. Not very long ago American women wore unbecoming and inappropriate sports clothes, costumes wrongly cut, at the wrong time. Sports clothes worn at the wrong time are very ludicrous. To-day women's sports clothes are fashioned after English sports clothes, and there are styles for every occasion. Women now enter sports in a workmanlike manner; they consider weather and comfort too, but they are always attractively dressed.

Were Milady planning a mountain hike, she would wear a short circular skirt or knickers, a heavy tweed jacket, chamois lined, a small felt hat, high top boots and gauntlets, and, of course, she carries a cane. If she were going riding she would wear a tailored habit, and heavy riding boots, or she might wear eord breeches, boots laced at the ankle and a shaggy camel's hair sweater. Her head is scarf-bound lest the high jumps disarrange her hair. On the golf links Milady wears a full skirt and a fancy pullover sweater, golf hose and sturdy oxfords and her head is banded.

There is a time for every costume and every costume should be worn in its time and only in its time. The sports woman has learned what to wear and when to wear it. The girl of to-day receives infinitely more ease and enjoyment from her clothes than did her sister of yester-year. Steadily, slowly but surely, our dress has changed until it seems to have reached the pinnacle of comfort, but we are not stopping, we are passing the pinnacle going onward, ever onward, to the goal of harmonious dress.

A silver dollar and a one-cent started an argument, which deteriorated, as so many disputes do, into the purely personal. At this stage, the big coin thought it would squelch its opponent beyond resuscitation by declaring:

"I am one hundred times as good as you are—one hundred times as good as you are."

But the insignificant cent came back with:

"The hell you are, and I go to church every Sunday."—Everybody's

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