

Country Girl's Ideas

Did you ever reflect upon the science of spending money? When I started out in the world, at the age of eighteen, I didn't know there was any science in it. Up to that time I had very little money to spend and whatever I had I spent haphazard and as the spirit moved me. Usually, it was a very indiscreet spirit and it grieves me now to think of the happy-go-lucky conglomeration of clothing I used to assemble about me—for, as with most young girls, it was on clothing that the most of my income was spent.

There are those who will tell you that good clothes don't cost any more in the end than poor, but I think this is a fallacy. Above a certain price, a large part of the cost of anything that is good is in the beauty of it, with a smaller proportion in the extra durability. However, granting that it often pays to buy moderately cheap clothing, there is room for discretion in the purchasing of it.

To secure the best results in dress, one should lay aside a certain sum to spend on it and then sit down with pencil and paper and see what will give the most satisfaction.

It is impossible to give a set rule for dress since each person's needs depend upon the circumstances in which they are placed, but with many people the tailored suit is coming to be the foundation stone, as it were, of the wardrobe. A neat fitting suit, with one fancy and one tailored blouse, fills a thousand wants. In the summer one is apt to need also a dainty washable white dress, and if one has to go driving a dress of some soft material like marquisette, which will not crush, is preferable to lawn or linen. In the winter, when the cloth suit is hung away in the closet, besides some cotton house dresses, all that most girls in the country require is one cloth and one silk dress, and even the silk dress can be dispensed with unless one goes to rather formal parties.

Then there is the great and momentous question of a hat. A hat must harmonize with all the outdoor clothing one has to wear, so it is wise to select some one color scheme for the season and adhere to it religiously. If one's suit should happen to be navy blue one must not go off at a tangent and buy a green blouse and a cardinal cloak, because no hat that was ever created by a milliner can harmonize them.

I didn't know this when I started out in the world and when I went into a store and saw a piece of material for a waist that took my fancy, I did not stop to think whether I needed another waist as badly as I needed a pair of shoes or whether that particular piece of goods had any relation to my other garments, I just bought it regardless. The result was a terrible hit-and-miss wardrobe, having always a preponderance of one thing and a conspicuous lack of another.

Just here I might mention also the temptation one has to buy things that are reduced in price, merely because they are reduced and not because we want them. I wonder how many bureau drawers are filled with remnants of dress material and laces and embroideries that were bought at a reduction with the vague idea that some day they would come in useful. In the meantime, it is the merchant who is making a profit on the capital invested in them, while the person to whom it should belong is the one who loses.

Another leak in many households is the habit of buying in dribbles instead of in quantities. A striking example of this came to my attention last autumn. My sister, one day, bought twenty-five cents worth of carrots and got just a small paper bag full. About a week later she bought a whole peck and paid for it the modest sum of sixty cents. I know too, of many women in this city who never think of laying in a supply of butter and eggs in the fall, when they are comparatively cheap, but who buy them from day to day as the need arises.

So by a dozen leaks our pocket money is depleted and we often get meagre satisfaction from the spending of it instead of having the fullest enjoyment out of every cent. I might have been spared many of the mistakes I have made if someone had taught me to buy rationally

and according to my needs, instead of being guided by every passing caprice; but I had to learn what I have learned by leaving behind me a long and weary trail of mistakes. What is true of buying clothes is true of all the departments of life and of clothes in their relation to other things. One should stop to consider that if they buy this, they cannot buy that—assuming that the readers of this department are girls of limited means.

I remember very distinctly that in the old pioneer days it would have been accounted an evidence of insanity to spend ten dollars on a book, and even yet the idea clings to us that books and pictures are the luxuries of life and rich clothes and automobiles the necessities.

So I have a presentiment that, if buying were more carefully and conscientiously considered, life would become fuller and saner. We would get a better sense of proportion and in time we would buy only those things that it seemed best worth while to have about us.

The Country Girl

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