

Liquor and Tobacco Habits

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An Age of Dress.



WHATEVER attitude we may personally feel disposed to entertain towards the question it is nevertheless a condition that is here and which we must meet. It is no longer necessary for a woman to be a professional beauty, nor does it seem to be absolutely essential that she be intellectually as brilliant as the scintillating jewels which bedeck her form. The chief thing appears that she should be well dressed, for the art of dressing has been brought to such perfection that any woman can be brought to look beautiful by wearing the right clothes, and wearing them right. Of course, the art is not all the couturiere's. The woman must know how to wear her clothes and how to live up to them. But given the right costume, the one that brings out her good points and conceals her bad ones and accentuates her own personality, the plainest woman can hold her own with the beauty. These are times when no woman, even though she have beauty and charm and intelligence, can afford to be indifferent to her clothes. This is an age of dress. Young men devote themselves to the girls who are so well gowned as to attract the admiration of other men. A man marries a woman who can dress in such a way as to be a credit to him and his. The well-gowned, well-groomed woman dresses a room and rounds the corners. Plainness and angles disappear before her. But it is not a thing that is lightly acquired. It is as a woman's duty to be well dressed, appropriately and neatly so, in the family as in the social circle.

By "well dressed" I do not mean gaudily attired—far from it. The old Greek motto, "Modesty in all things" is a good one to apply. An article in a recent issue of Harper's Bazar by the peerless Worth of Paris, voices my sentiments on this point exactly. The gist of his discussion is that simplicity in dress is the highest art. She is best dressed who is equally so far removed from plainness on the one hand and from excessive show on the other as to attract least attention to her appearance.

Woman, if for no other reason than because she is a woman, expects, is entitled to and commands the chivalric homage of man only to the degree to which she recognizes and practices this principle of simplicity in her apparel. A wise woman will hide or put in the background everything that will detract from the beauty of her character or the brilliancy of her intellect by attracting undue attention to a showy gown. Let us see to it that this homage, justly ours, is paid rather to our personality than to our person. Simplicity does not mean commonality at all. There is such a thing as individuality though simplicity.

I suspect I am subjecting myself to the possible criticism of preaching poor professional doctrine, especially from a business standpoint, but this is exactly what I practice and endeavor to inculcate into the minds of my students. With those who may criticize, I have no issue, other than to cite them to the thousands, I am glad to say, who are now following my instructions. I heartily believe the decided majority will continue to endorse this idea of modest and becoming simplicity in dress. Dress reform will never take on very large proportions until the dressmakers themselves become its champions, and they will never become its exponents as long as women go to excess in dress.

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