

Art in Dress.

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Outline.

Introductory.

Object of Art - Beauty.

Beauty a quality of dress.

True object of dress seldom been reached.

Why tight Clothing?

What constitutes beauty of dress.

Proper expression of limbs in structure, form and elasticity.

All lines and folds of dress should be in natural curves.

Color a factor in dress.

Selection and use of proper materials.

Causes of absurdities in dress.

Tendency for reform.

Need of a more systematic way of cutting and fitting garments.

The thought that art is something altogether outside of the common things, and affairs of life and that it is an entirely separate branch of human endeavour is erroneous. The object of art, is beauty, and this should be a quality of the simplest and most common object. Ever since the dawn of history man has been groping in a blind and helpless way for beauty.

Beauty should be a quality of dress. Man is the image of God, and should make the most of himself, not only mentally and morally but also physically, and here dress may enhance beauty of form or it may destroy it, and certainly we would not want it destroyed. Beauty has been the illunderstood object of the dress maker of the past and will be the well comprehended object of the dress artist of the future. The savage, when he daubs his face with vermillion, braids his locks and adorns his braids with feathers, has the same object in view as the modern member of the "Four Hundred" when she dons her laces, ruffles, and jewels.

and appears in all her grandeur. But the true object of dress has evidently but seldom been reached, because the mere whims of some eccentric madame in high society has been considered as the standard, and said such and such must or must not be. The history of the past is full of such illustrations; - there have been times when the head was enlarged much beyond its natural size, when the skin was not of its natural purity, when the heels were not at their proper level, nor the waist at its proper proportion, when the throat could not be found for the ruffles and puffs, or the arms shape be known from the enormous sleeve, and all this because of some dictator.

Why have our ancestors so long insisted upon one of the most barbarous of customs, - that of tight clothing? - for aside from all the aches and pains that it brings, it is not what we desire to see from the standpoint of beauty. Then too I would ask, Why do we not abandon such a habit? Perhaps it is because many of us feel its need as a support, but is

there any reason why our brothers should stand erect, and feel at perfect ease in his loose clothing and we must needs have some stiff support to lean upon?

No, woman was not born in a whale-bone jacket, nor did Heaven create Eve without ability to hold her body erect without the help of Mrs. Ford's latest patent.

What constitutes beauty in dress? The answer is much the same that would be given were the question to be asked concerning architecture. It is:—

The proper expression of the limbs in the structure, form, and elasticity of the different parts of the dress. The sleeve dresses the arm, now what is the function of the arm? Surely it is not to be enclosed in a sleeve much too small for its size. Neither should there be an overabundance of material to flap around the arm. Then the arm should be perfectly free, that we may extend or rotate it much as desired and so keep it in a perfectly healthy condition. And what is true of the sleeve is true of any other part of dress, hence the absurdity of a stiff or too

high neck wear, a pinched up waist that is not becoming to any one.

All lines and folds of the dress must be in natural curves. This is a matter that was well understood by the ancient Greeks. If we study the art of the Greeks in dress we find that it is here that the graceful lines will be found. To be sure their climate required a light dress, hence no close fitting clothes, but why need this require a different principle? We surely can find the way to plan our garments that will be graceful and artistic and yet furnish the necessary comforts.

We may learn from modern sculptors as well as of the Greeks. This is a matter that is greatly overlooked by our dress makers even by those à Paris. The Americans are often very careless with regard to true beauty in dress. We often see the folds running across the dress or around the body instead of lengthwise — as if the human body was passing through the third metamorphosis of the six legged tribe, — instead of being the most complete organic being of all nature.

Color is an important factor in all artwork, and it is important in dress. It is here we see some of the worst mistakes made. Little attention is paid by many persons to color harmony, and color temperature. Although the shade of hair and skin vary, they may be reduced to certain varieties. It may say the hair is black, fair, red or chestnut colored. Along with these colors we usually find varieties of complexion and these will require certain varieties of color in dress. A soft and deep black will set off the freshness of the blonde or red haired person, but a brunette in this color would look melancholy. In general a brunette may wear a yellow or red, a blonde a blue, and some can wear either. Some people can wear many varieties of color but most have some one possibility which can not be improved upon.

The power that color has in modifying appearance can scarcely be overrated. It is thought by many that high colors are out of harmony, but the artist in dress knows how to make these high colors beautiful by

selection of tints and combination with other hues. A color that is moderately dull in tone is an artistic color and will blend well with other artistic colors. A dress article should not be judged by itself but should be considered a part of the whole garment together with its wearer.

Another point is the selection of proper materials for dress articles. Here of course we must consult economy, wear, purpose, etc. but certain rules may be stated. A travelling dress should not be like a home dress; neither should a home dress be like an evening or ball dress; but each has its necessary qualities and peculiarities, and the material that should be used will depend on its purpose. Much has been said of the extravagance of woman's dress but when woman dresses gracefully, she will not necessarily dress extravagantly. Extravagance is not necessarily grace. Health of body leads to health of soul, and modesty shuns display.

Absurdities of fashion are undoubtedly to a great extent, the result of speculation on the part of manufacturers of goods and

dresses. Every change of fashion dictated at Paris means the throwing away of millions of dress articles from Constantinople to San Francisco. Millions of dollars were made by these cunning inventors of such absurdities as the mutton leg sleeve, the pinch back, the hoop skirt, the poke hat, the high heeled shoe, and the choking collar. Even the stronger sex is not free from inexplicable freaks of the fashion dictator, the French tailor, with his plug hat, stiff collar, starched bosom, dress coat and kid gloves.

There is, however a tendency toward true reform in dress. Whenever the new woman will become a reality, there will be true art found in dress. She will dress in a hygienic, clean, neat and artistic manner.

But we can never expect to attain true art in dress until we have a more perfect way of cutting and fitting. A way that instead of the body fitting the dress the dress shall fit the body. Upon the dressmaker depends not only the adornment of the body but the perfection of her form, the phancy of limb, and in

fact the well being of her physical self. There is no beauty in a body that has not been perfectly developed or where there is no pliancy in limb. Beauty consists in grace of movement and such grace is not in a stiff encased body, but in one free to move.

Artistic effects have entered into nearly every branch of industry in the land and art authority assert that the dress makers are behind the times. All should know that what will fit one woman and be becoming to her will not do for another and that it is inartistic to take a very few general measurements and cut and plan one dress much the same as another regardless of the difference in persons. To have true art in dress then, we must have a change, a change, that means health grace and comfort for all.