

EDITOR'S TABLE

EDITORIAL CHIT-CHAT.

THE SECRET OF THE ART OF DRESS is to wear only what is individually becoming in both style and color, and not to be tempted into unbecoming eccentricities, however fashionable they may be. Thus, for example, a blonde must never be led away into any dark and heavy colors, however popular they are. Nor should she wear, as is too commonly the case, washed-out and faded hues, but should choose bright, light tints, which assimilate with her complexion, and heighten its effect. She can, however, wear black, especially if her hair be one particular shade, with very good results; and, indeed, with regard to that color, people of all complexions look well in it, except brunettes without vivid complexions. Even a dark-haired person with a bright color can wear black with impunity, and in combination with white, it is at once effective and fashionable. A brunette should avoid, on the other hand, all pale colors, and can wear, according to tone of complexion, dark-blues, reds, and the like, and a certain shade of dark violet. People with red hair, now so popular, owing to the artist mania for it, should be especially careful. Violet and purple should be eschewed. A medium shade of green is, perhaps, the most effective, and black, as a rule, is becoming, but inasmuch as this color of hair is of so many different tones, and allied to such very varied complexions, it is exceedingly difficult to lay down any strict rules.

No matter what the complexion or color of hair, there should always be one prevailing tint in a costume, and large masses of different colors should be avoided, except in the case of black and white, or where the tones are merely gradations of the same tint. Two or three bright colors, not assimilating, are far too commonly worn among us; a purple dress, with a pink or red rose in the bonnet, for instance, is a popular offence against taste, and so are curious mixtures of brown and gray, and analogous colors. Trimmings and similar accompaniments to a dress should, as a rule, be some gradation, preferentially a darker one of the prevalent tint, especially in costume dresses; or else a contrast, such as brown with blue or green, or gray with scarlet sparingly used. The choice of texture also is very important, and should be exercised with due discretion. Every part of a lady's dress should be chosen with reference to the other, and to her means and position in life. And yet we see women sacrifice large sums of money on some special part of their apparel—say a jacket—and then constantly wear a heavy and handsome one over a threadbare dress of some flimsy material. Thus, one part of the attire kills the other, and the beholder is impressed with a painful incongruity. Again, it would seem almost unnecessary to warn ladies to dress in a manner becoming their ages. This is the more to be deplored, as the older a woman gets the less she can afford to dress with carelessness or eccentricity.

Moreover, a lady should adopt the prevailing fashions only so far as they suit herself. Whatever is not suited, no matter how fashionable it may be, should be discarded, or, at all events, considerably modified; for surely it is the height of absurdity for ladies to disfigure themselves by adopting a fashionable color or style of costume that happens to be utterly unsuitable to them. Thus, for instance, there is at present a rage for elaborate horizontal trimming of all kinds. This, exceedingly effective on a tall and commanding figure, or even sparingly used on ladies of medium height, makes a short person look much shorter, and adds, moreover, very much to the breadth of figure. And yet how few little people remember this, and how many of them pile on flounces

and ruches till a figure, passable, though small, becomes what we can only stigmatize as "dumpy." How many, by wearing too large a panier, make themselves ridiculous.

It is that ladies may be able to select the style most suited to themselves, that we give so many costumes every month, and such various ones. Among our many patterns it is always easy to find the suitable one. Taste and refinement, we repeat again, may be exercised with only the humblest materials at command.

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