

# The Well Dressed Woman Considers Art Principles

By ANNE PRANG



In this Group the First Figure Illustrates Formal Balance While the Second Shows Informal

**T**HE well dressed woman knows WHAT TO PUT ON, HOW TO PUT IT ON, AND WHEN TO WEAR IT.

She has studied her own features and figure, as well as her personality, and knows exactly what lines, materials and colors, will help to bring out her best points. Still more important, she knows her personal defects, and then carefully seeks to obscure or disguise them as far as possible.

Having decided what suits her, she invariably adheres to that particular type of hat, dress or coat, merely modifying it to satisfy her desire for variety, and to keep within reasonable harmony with the changing fashions.

In this way she is never uneasy as to whether her new costume is a success; she knows it is, and she wears it accordingly. She keeps herself clean and well groomed; she dresses with modesty and sincerity; she does not buy clothes beyond her means at the expense of other necessities of life, nor does she stoop to imitations. She does not seek to outshine other women; rather she prefers to be distinctly herself. Whether her costume is of costly fabric or of calico, she presents a unified picture of beauty, the central interest of which is her personality. The consciousness of being well dressed frees her mind from all anxiety and self-consciousness on that score, which leaves her free to enjoy herself and to devote her undivided attention to other matters.

A beautiful costume is judged by the same laws of art as a beautiful painting or a splendid structure in architecture. Each is a design. In each are considered

the relationships of areas, lines, and colors, and their conformity to certain laws.

It is from the big out-of-doors, from nature itself, that the human race has learned to appreciate true beauty. The proportions and arrangement of masses, the ever-changing color harmonies that nature holds before us have such a strong human appeal that no one has ever tired of them. When these same truths are applied to the things that man makes, they too have the same human appeal—they are truly beautiful.

A brief outline of the most important principles upon which costume design is based, is herewith given; together with examples, to show the practical application to the costume.

**UNITY**—A unit in design has been defined as "that to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, without interfering, materially, with the beauty and the meaning of the whole." Every costume expresses an idea—when it has said enough then it is time to stop. Often a dress is spoiled by introducing too many ideas—it is overloaded with trimming, jewelry, drapery, contrasting materials and colors, so that the whole effect is confusing.

To secure unity in a design one seeks, first to LEAD THE EYE THROUGH ALL THE DETAILS OF THE DESIGN. This is done by means of rhythm which is manifested in the simplest way through the regular repetition of certain shape of line or color. This type of rhythm is often spoken of as the "principle of repetition."

By repeating similar spots of interest in costume by means of line, color or value contrast, the eye of the observer may be caused to move consecutively from one thing to another, leading to the face, hands, feet, general coloring, or to any part where emphasis is desired.

A peculiar characteristic of a line is that the eye, once having rested upon it, tends to follow the direction of the line; this is why the most skillfully designed curves seem to grow out of each other. Such lines are said to have rhythm, like a flowing melody in a song. Curved lines should seem to flow into one another or grow out of one another; they should not come to abrupt stops but go on invisibly in the imagination.

The second means for securing unity is to impart to the design A SENSE OF BALANCE AND REPOSE. The repose or rest that results from equal attraction on each side of an axis is called **FORMAL BALANCE**. Example: If a dress is exactly the same on one side as it is on the other, trimming and all, it is said to be symmetrical. This type of balance, especially if carried out in straight lines, suggests dignity, strength and positiveness. **INFORMAL BALANCE** is a balance of feeling resulting from spacing and importance of large and small masses. By a well balanced dress is meant one in which the weight or mass on one side balances that on the other. The two sides of this dress are not the same, still there is a feeling of balance. The "surplus" line of the waist at the left, together with the decorative material set in the skirt, is balanced at the



Here the First Figure Pictures Poor Spacing and Proportion While the Second Depicts Good Proportion

right by a repetition of the same material in the lower part of the skirt.

**BALANCE UP AND DOWN.** A design which is lighter at the top and darker and heavier toward the base is restful and well balanced. This order of arrangement in nature is illustrated by the light sky, the darker trees and mountains and finally the still darker color of the ground. For this reason white shoes with a dark skirt or dress are not good.

As a third means of securing unity, one should GIVE TO THE VARIOUS PARTS OF A COSTUME SOME COMMON FACTOR. Two or more things are said to be in harmony with each other when they have sufficient likeness to seem to belong to each other and if at the same time there is enough difference to give interest. Example: The skirt of a dress might be trimmed with five rows of braid, the sleeve with one row and the neck with three rows. Since the braid is all of the same kind, there is enough likeness, and the fact that a little different arrangement is used in each place gives interest. Colors are harmonized in the same way.

To produce an arrangement of lines, masses or colors so that one dominates, so that there is a leading thought or dominant mass—this is a fourth device for securing unity. It is called **SUBORDINATION**. All lines, colors and contrasts in costume should be kept subordinate to the wearer, so that she will be the most interesting part of the whole.

To produce a pleasing relation of the parts of an object to each other and to the object as a whole, is **PROPORTION**.

Equally with unity, it is essential in the successful costume. The charm of pleasing proportion is in its quality of interest. Interest is gained through variety and by: First, line arrangement or spacing which divides the object into parts which have sufficient likeness to enable the mind to recognize their proportion. Second, the division of the object into parts or the combination of shapes and sizes whose proportion is not

recognized too easily. There must be enough difference to give interest. Example: Mathematical divisions, such as division into two, three or four parts are detected at once, as illustrated by the first figure. This is monotonous and not pleasing. In the second figure the same pattern was chosen but the braid is spaced and grouped in such a way that there is variety and interest. Variety in the width of the braid also helps to make

a pleasing effect. Although the application may be unconscious, a costume that is truly artistic is always based upon these principles.

Our interest and efforts do not cease however, when a dress or suit or wrap has been produced which is beautiful in itself—it must be in harmony with, and bring out the best points of the wearer from a standpoint of personality, line, color and texture.

## Tell Me a Story Mother

By MILDRED ELDER

"COME tell us a story!" It is the familiar plea of childhood. Unhappy, she who has not been assailed with it again and again. Thrice miserable, she who is confronted with the scathing criticism, "she doesn't know any stories." And thrice blessed is she who is recognized at a glance as a person sure to be full to the brim of them. She is the Person with a Story.

If you would be the Person with a Story, you must not only have one to tell, but you must also be willing to learn the art of story telling. The story teller, unlike the poet is made as well as born, but she is not made of all stuffs nor in the twinkling of an eye. If you would tell your children stories, make a definite study of the task.

Well chosen stories can be made of definite educative value in the nursery. They give the child a love of reading, develop in him a taste for good literature, and teach him the art of speech. A well told story is an object lesson in English.

Stories are the child's first introduction into the world of ideal and character. Thru them he understands his own life and sees his possibilities and personalities reflected in them as in a mirror.

Opinions differ regarding the value of fairy stories, but the consensus is that the some spiritual truth underlies the old fairy-tale, there is little educative value in them, since the most of them are merely a jumble of incidents, often impossible and are frequently varnished deceit or cruelty.

Stories offer a valuable field for pleasing instruction concerning the laws of plant, flower and animal life.

There are a few prerequisites for good story telling, and first of these is have a genuine appreciation for the story. The individual and personal interest is more than half of the appeal to the child. Second, know the story, and third, tell it simply and in the child's own terminology.

It is well to remember the details surrounding the story in its first telling, and hold to them strictly in retelling it. The children allow you no privileges in this matter. Woe unto you if you speak of Jimmy when "his name was Johnny," or if you lose the disobedient Mary in the neighboring cornfield rather than in the woods.

Wandering attention can usually be won back by illustrating with sketches or by questioning the children.

A story may be a work of art just as a painting may be but not every mother has the correct training in this art. Nearly all mothers can take time for a little preparation brushing up on the stories

most suitable to her needs in order to answer the appeal, "Please, mother, tell us a story."

Organization makes the story. There are four elements here that appear in every well-told story. They are—a good beginning, action, suspense and the solution. The best beginnings introduce the hero first—"Once there was a little girl who went to visit her grandmother,"—this simple sentence when uttered quickly will interest the children and cause them to listen for more. Action must follow quickly, for action is the element differentiating the story from a sermon or oration. The action must eliminate all traces of tragedy, for sorrow has a small place in a child's experience.

Directness in telling is a long step towards holding attention. Relate the incidents in logical order, with the explanation and description necessary. Nothing more quickly destroys interest than the "cart-before-the-horse" method.

The dramatic quality of story telling depends chiefly upon the clearness and power with which the events and characters are visualized. Hold the image before the mind's eye, and make the child see what you say. Get in the mood of the story and tell it simply, vitally and joyously, weaving in bits of your own personality.

The art of story telling is no longer a pastime, it is a means of molding character, of teaching truths and of smoothing over the rough spots for children.

I know a story which a mother tells to her little girl when she combs her tangles for she is apt to wiggle and squirm. She starts by saying, "I know a story about Tiny Tangles." Then, "They are little tiny folk with long, thin legs and long, thin arms and they live in little girl's hair. They like best to live right over the ears or in that little place in the neck, for there they can hold on the tightest. I tell you, they are clinging now with all their might, but when mother comes along with the comb they run and hide. When Mister Comb says, 'Go,' they know they have to go and so they do." When the child's attention is attracted to the story her fussing promptly stops.

In the same way a younger child loves to hear and mimic animal sounds. A crying spell may often be turned into a jolly laugh by imitating some familiar animal. Little stories giving these sounds can be invented. Stories accompanied by action as in "Pat-a-cake" or "Ride a Cock Horse" are always a diversion to tired little children.

Little children, old enough to understand anything, like stories with a strong

sense of appeal, in which rhymes and phrases are repeated such as the "trip-trap, trip-trap" of the goats walking over a bridge, in the Billy Goat's Gruff; the colorful stories of ethereal lands or those full of touch sensations or of good things to eat. As they grow older they like fairy tales, fables, myths, legends, and parables. These stories picture for them characters that take on a real meaning and appeal to their quickly developing minds. In these legends honored heroes and valiant deeds take the place of fairies and animals.

A mother of several children has said, "Stories give both pleasure and information. They are better for wounds than kisses and they are a never failing lure for the restless child who might otherwise forget how happy a home he has. Stories strengthen the love, between parent and child. They clear up misunderstandings and enable the two to travel together frequently into that best place for comradeship, fairyland. They help the child over hard places and reward faithful tasks and make up for many childish disappointments."

### HEALTH BOOKLETS FOR CHILDREN

Did you know that some very interesting booklets on health, just for children, are published by different health associations and concerns which are interested in public health? Some of them are free and the rest are priced very reasonably. Many of them make delightful reading matter for children and at the same time teach good health and health habits.

The following is a list of book sets and publishers:

Child Health Organization, Penn., Terminal Bldg., New York City.

Cho-Cho and the Health Fairy, 15c.

(Child Health Alphabet cards, 15c.

Rosy Cheeks and Strong Heart (Third Reader) 30c.

Happy's Calendar School year 1921-1922, 25c.

Rhymes of Cho-Cho's Grandma, 20c.

Cho-Cho Health Game (Something like Authors) 25c.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., New York City:

Child Health Alphabet, free.

Metropolitan Mother Goose, free.

Magic Health Book, free.

Iowa Tuberculosis Association, Des Moines, Iowa:

Story Telling for Health, 8c.

Health First Reader, 7c.

Silent Reading, 7c.

—By Eleanor Murray.