

What Shall Middle-Aged Women Wear

THE wonderful transformations that Fashion has decreed, and our "younger set" has so assiduously resolved to adopt in its exaggerated modes, leave the older generation very undecided as to what its attitude towards Fashion should be. The middle-aged woman obviously must be somewhat more conservative in her dress than her daughter. For this reason, the matron of today has not found a style of her own. The strange thing is that the coutueurs and dressmakers give little help in this perplexing situation. They prefer to model and make for the young and lithe rather than for the elderly and set. Still, a woman of middle age should evolve a style to suit herself, because it is in the prime of life that she should dictate and not be dictated to.

There is no reason, for example, why a middle-aged woman should have to wear sombre colours always, yet there are so many who fall back on them as "safe." When they do go into colours they make such unhappy mistakes that lookers-on who recognise them take vows never to fall in the same way. Yet colour expresses something of the

Are they Neglectful of their Appearance

character and should be used. Frenchwomen know how to use purple and mauve very well, and they excel in the manipulation of browns and golds. With black they can put colour, too. Frenchwomen do not mind cutting out trimmings and hiding their favourite colours. They know so well how to practise restraint in dress, have learned how to be subtle in their taste and how to make grandeur look like simplicity. Again, they know how to wear their clothes as if they were unconscious of them, whereas Englishwomen so often look painfully self-conscious.

IT is, indeed, in the wearing of her clothes that the middle-aged woman fails most. She looks bold in them, or femininely shy, monumental or masculine, or as if she had bathed in her bandbox and come out of it covered with in-

numerable bits of finery. She rarely walks well, sits well, or seems as if she enjoys what she wears. Frenchwomen always look as if they liked their clothes, no matter what they may be.

Americans know how to dress, too, and their middle-aged women have created a style of their own. They wear such neat clothes and have such trim collarbands. They dress their hair well, and have such well-shod feet. They move with such deft assurance and give you the impression that they have a right to look their best and know how not to abuse their rights. South American women dress amazingly. They go one better than the Parisiennes. Italians have a lazy grace which does not always go with their voices, but they dress to suit their figures and their faces. Russians, who now help largely to populate Paris, have adopted the Parisian

chic and added to it a bit of Slav barbarism.

It is the middle-aged Englishwomen who least express dignity and beauty. There are, of course, some brilliant exceptions, but, speaking generally, the Englishwoman has most to learn about dress, and there is no reason why she should mind learning it since she needs only to express herself in a better way. No one who loves her wishes her to change her nature or become anything but what she is. All that is asked of her is that she shall look as nice as she feels. Her daughters have realised the necessity of looking their best if they are to hold their own among the daughters of the world.

IT is, again, not so much to the few as to the many that the appeal is made. The few have always dressed well. The many have only just begun to. Dressing well is a habit and becomes second nature with practice. There is no need for middle-aged women to be fashionable. They can follow fashion at a distance if they like, or they can adopt a style of their own which is not too marked, and keep to it.



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