

Know Your VALUES



WE all know the woman who walks in the rain to save a taxi fare, although her shoes will squeak afterwards, her velvet coat and her stockings will be spotted, and her hat droop from the dampness. We laugh at her false economy and go, ourselves, to buy cheap chintz curtains that fade in the sun before they have been up two weeks. There isn't a woman in the world who hasn't a pet economy that, in the end, turns into an extravagance—such as buying puppies cheap from unknown sources in the belief that they will turn into blue-ribbon winners, says "Vogue."

Perhaps there are a few mortals who don't have to practise economy somewhere; personally, we feel that they must miss a lot of fun. The excitement of having to scheme for what you want adds a zest to life that is equal to nothing else. The important thing is to know what you want, to have your personal values straight, and to apply your economies where they hurt the least. If, for instance, you are the type of woman who spends a good deal of her time at home and whose centre of interest is there, indulge your extravagances in your home where they will give you the most pleasure, and economise on other things. If, on the other hand, you are the type who lives and breathes for the impression you make in the first-night audience or at a race meeting, lay your extravagances on your back and economise in your home. An expensive dress in the latest mode and the finest quality is overflowing with value if it adds proportionately to your self-confidence and your personal

satisfaction in life. It isn't worth a thing to you if you don't care particularly how you look and if you are taking the money away from something that will give you a more lasting pleasure.

The woman who is consistently economical in everything may be very admirable, but she is not apt to be very interesting. No woman can say that she has lived until she has committed some wild, unreasonable extravagance and balanced it with drastic economies. This was more or less the spirit behind our early Christian martyrs—and they seemed to get quite a lot out of life.

Regardless of all personal values, however, there are certain things in your wardrobe and in your household that only serve their purpose if they are of the best quality: wool, leather, furs and silk are the outstanding things in clothing; rugs, furniture, curtain and upholstery fabrics, bedding and linens, and all permanent fixtures, in the household. We might take wool as a shining example. What you look for in wool is warmth, softness, lightness and durability—whether it appears in blankets, coats, or underwear. If it is mixed with cotton for economy's sake, or if it is shoddy, or heavy and hard, its efficiency at its job—keeping you warm and comfortable—is diminished. If you can get twice the warmth with half the weight from a fine woollen blanket, it is poor economy to buy two heavy, coarse ones for the same price.

There is no place where this quality argument applies more than in country clothes. We shall say the same thing about town clothes in a minute.

Your country things should be an accumulation of years. There is something a little vulgar about glaringly new sports clothes; you can't be equipped overnight without looking like a walking sports shop. However, if you are going to make a mellow collection, the staple clothes must be of a quality worthy of being kept. Economise on your light washing dresses or your evening dresses, if you must. Your tennis and golf clothes needn't be expensive, and your accessories can be simple—good, plain, leather bags and gloves, felt hats that will stand the rain. But your woollen clothes must be good.

A woollen sweater that shrinks and gets hard the first time it is washed is a poor investment, no matter how cheap it is, since the wear to which it is subjected necessitates continual laundering. A tweed top-coat that won't stand up under rain, or can't be sat on, on the ground, or tossed into the dickey of a car, isn't worth its salt. The better the coat, the worse treatment it will stand. We know one very smart lady who has an old tweed coat to which she is inordinately attached—so much so, in fact, that when she went for a sail one day, wearing it, and the boat capsized, nothing could induce her to abandon it, despite the difficulty in swimming ashore. After a cleaning and pressing, the coat came out none the worse for its ducking. The moral of this story is that the coat must have done a good job of making her comfortable or she would not have regarded it as a faithful best-quality friend not to be replaced easily.

Leather, whether in boots, saddles, luggage, shoes, or whatever, is a commodity on which there should be no stinting. Country Oxfords, when made of the best quality of leather, are possessed of nine lives, only demanding a little brushing and polishing to rejuvenate them from time to time. But you can't expect inferior leather to stand up against cross-country wear—or town pavement wear for that matter.

Granted that your shoes are of the best quality, you can economise by taking care of them and making them last. You should have a healthy respect for leather and remember that it won't thrive unless it is nourished—actually nourished, for it has pores just the same as your hands and face, which should be kept clean and open. You are not doing your best by your shoes, no matter how good your intentions, if you leave them to the mercies of a bootblack who puts on a quick-drying polish and brushes them until the friction dries out the leather. A proper shoe cream should have plenty of oil in it. It may make the shoes harder to polish but it will guarantee them a longer life. A final hint—shoes should never be polished when they are wet.