

A Beautiful Face or A Beautiful Figure which is the more important



It is more important for a woman to possess a beautiful figure than to have a beautiful face. This is the consensus of opinion among the stage beauties of Paris, as expressed in a symposium held by a leading French periodical for women.

Such a statement from such a source has peculiar interest. Nowhere in the world are to be found closer students of the art of feminine beauty than among the actresses of France, who are expected to please the public by transcendent personal charm, as well as to impress it by the superior quality of their dramatic talent. Besides, it is the French woman's superb figure, and the importance it holds in her elaborate and finished coquetry, that give to the brilliant avenues of Paris that distinction of elegance and charm which makes this city an unchallenged leader in fashion and the delicate artifices of the toilet.

Fine Figure is Rarely Found.

"There is no doubt that a beautiful face is more common than a beautiful figure, and may, on this account, be considered more generally pleasing," said Cleo de Mérode, the actress. "A really fine figure is rare indeed, and should therefore be highly prized. It has this inestimable advantage over beauty of face: it is easier to preserve its youthful lines. By observing due care in exercise and diet, one may retain a rounded slenderness of form long after it is necessary to burnish up one's faded locks with dye, and freshen up one's tired skin with artificial bloom. For the woman who would retain her queenly past the springtime and the early summer of life a handsome figure is more desirable than a lovely face."

"The figure is by all means more important," asserted Dorgère, who is saluted by admiring Paris for the child-like freshness of her bewitching face, as well as for the grace of her exquisitely modeled form. "A woman's figure expresses her personality so completely," she claimed. "Is she aristocratic, distinguished, elegant; it is written on every outline of her figure. In the pose of her head, the turn of her shoulder. It is expressed in every motion, every gesture that she makes. You do not need to see a woman's face to read her character. You have only to study her back."

Either is Gift of the Gods.

"Beauty of either face or figure is a gift of the gods," said Suzanne Avrie. "The woman who has both is exceptional, but she does exist, and when you behold her you find that you cannot decide which of these great attractions of hers you prefer—or, to put it more accurately, with which one you could more readily dispense. Shut out the face from view, and you regret its absence. Shut out the figure, and the face, however fair, does not fully compensate. And so, when you see a woman who has only one of these charms you experience a sense of incompleteness. You long for the absolute perfection which the beauty which is present inevitably suggests. Yet, of the two attractions named, beauty of figure is for the actress more important, for it is easily possible, if her features are passably good, for her to create an illusion of facial beauty. Many means are at her command to brighten her eyes, add luster to her hair, freshen her complexion, and give to her countenance a pleasing expression. But the figure is more difficult to change, though it may be improved through the dressmaker's skill, and attention to Désharte. It cannot be made, however, to give an appearance of perfection if nature did not originally so intend."

Kara Praises Grace of Figure.

"I regard grace of figure as the spirit of coquetry," affirmed Kara enthusiastically, "of that coquetry which marks the woman of Paris as different from all other women, which gives her that indefinable air of a princess, which is the secret of her surpassing elegance, and of her magnificent distinction of bearing. It is the French woman's fine figure which has enabled her to develop dress into an art, giving it power truly to embellish beauty."

"O, the figure, by all means the figure," declared

Miss Yahné. "A pretty face is only one detail in the picture. A head that is well shaped, and well set, is more distinctive; but a graceful, sinuous body, capable of eloquence in the expression of emotion, is all that one really needs to make a notable appearance, and to hold an audience spellbound beneath an overwhelming sense of the actor's charm."

"The figure, by all means the figure," echoed Rogers, and De Toledo did not hesitate to agree that a fine figure was a richer fortune to its possessor than a pretty face, nor did Aldercon—whose faultlessly regular profile is camellike in its chiseled fairness—fail to vote in the affirmative.

Grecian Costume Beauty's Aid.

De Vère had something interesting to say about the classic costumes of ancient Greece, which of all styles of raiment she believes to be the one most becoming to perfect feminine beauty. "It is at once the simplest, and the most beautiful," she declares. "Indeed, it is poetry itself, and posits the human form which it adorns, making it truly divine. The play of light and shade upon its pure white folds gives all the effect of color to the senses. It suits all ages, whether its wearer is as girlish and youthful as a Daphne or a Psyche, or if she has the ampler proportions of Venus, of Juno, of Melpomene. Of course, the modern figure differs from that of ancient models," she admits. "In general it is smaller, and more feminine. It is slender, devoid of angles, exquisitely symmetrical. It hardly suggests that there is a framework underneath, it is so round, and molded with such delicate variation of line. But the Greek garb becomes it well, and gives it that freedom which is essential for eloquent expression of the soul within."

