

RUTH, RUNAWAY AT 11, SUCCUMBS TO AILMENT OF ALL NORMAL GIRLS: WANTING TO BE SEEN

BY WINONA WILCOX

Ruth Lewis, 11 years old, of Hugo, Okla., has run away from home four times. She wants to be a movie queen. She says her home is happy but it isn't getting her anywhere in her career.

Probably Ruth's researches in modern literature have not yet led her very deep into the study of suffrage theories. The economical independence of woman with a career has no lure for Ruth. It doesn't really attract many women.

What "gets" Ruth is glamor—just as it is getting hundreds of other girls who are older than she is.

Ruth wants to be seen. So does the greater part of the youngish female population. Now that this contagion has attacked a little 11-year-old in Oklahoma, it probably has completed conquest of the country.

Fortunately, few mothers find the disease afflicting primary school girls, but few escape the ordeal in the high school period.

Then mothers suddenly discover the symptoms—the lip stick, the rouge pot and an absorbing interest in the shape, size and color of shoes.

These things are as catching as the measles and not so easily cured.

They generally develop into a chronic trouble—extravagance. And a few years later, an unsuspecting bridegroom will find himself in for bills his salary was never intended to cover.

Serious persons all over the land are trying to stop this plague of bold and expensive dressing among school girls. Some private academies limit the cost of a pupil's wardrobe. Some adopt a standardized costume like the middy.

Mothers' clubs deplore conditions and suggest remedies. Some talk of athletics and art. Some fancy that

"by getting a daughter's confidence" they can make wisdom persuasive. But the observant know that mothers and girls are never so far apart as at the high school age.

All proceed on the assumption that girls can be separated somehow from the great feminine desire to be seen, to be set apart from others, to be different, distinguished, conspicuous, to be observed of men.

They also assume that this is an immodest and an immoral desire.

Upon that kind of a mistake they can never base a cure.

There is nothing immoral about the wish to be lovely; the girl's need to have her beauty noticed is as natural as breathing and therefore it cannot be immodest.

It is seldom a girl's fault when she is stricken with the modern malady whose symptoms are atrocious taste in dress.

Mothers know that if they fail to air and sun the house, tuberculosis may develop in one of the family. If they tolerate the housefly, they may expect typhoid.

Home sanitation prevents disease. And home influence forms a girl's taste.

If we build up bodily resistance we can run the risk of catching germs. If we build up mental resistance to false standards of taste in dress, we can set a girl adrift in a gaudy world and she will always look like a lady.

There's none too much beauty upon the earth. Every woman ought to be not only permitted, not only expected, but commanded to contribute as much loveliness as she can to existence!

And what this sad world needs just now is more natural beauty:

There's some difference between the blossoms of a rose garden and those of a milliner's "shoppe."