

THE WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

By "VERITY"



Women and Books.

"It is better to read one good book several times," said Mr. Lloyd George the other day, "than to read several good books once."

But was this remark of his, says Phyllis Megroz in the "Morning Post," which obviously contains an element of truth, based on due consideration of such a subject, or was it uttered casually on the spur of the moment? For though it cannot be denied that to learn, mark, read and inwardly digest one good book is infinitely more profitable than to skim a dozen works of equal merit, the perusal of a single book, however careful such a perusal may be, will hardly give the persevering reader a very wide mental outlook on life.

Mr. Lloyd George's comment on the reading of books is, however, of especial significance to women, for the epoch when they were content to sit by the hearth spinning and embroidering is definitely at an end, and they are now, in all probability, more voracious readers than men.

But, "Ars longa, vita brevis est," runs the ancient saying, and this has become doubly true in these rapidly-moving times when practically every minute is accounted for, and the day seems at a close almost before it has begun.

Yet if we are to live satisfactorily we must read; we must read not only one good book, but a hundred good books which will broaden our minds and sharpen our intellects.

What Shall We Read?

SO the problem resolves itself into the complex one of what are the books that women must read if they are to be equipped for the battle of existence?

Perhaps the most characteristic attribute of woman is her love of children, and the time is past when this same love was no more than a blind and instinctive impulse. Nowadays the modern woman identifies herself with her children, and devotes herself as much to the study of their mental development as to their physical well-being.

Does it not follow, therefore, that the most essential of the books she must read are books about children, and books that are written for children?

There is something incomplete about a woman who is unable to enjoy fairytales and the classics of the nursery; not only does she miss the charming simplicity of the age of innocence, but she is also unable to give her children their first appreciations of literature. For this reason, children's stories must be put at the head of the list of books that every woman must read.

As has been said, woman's era of mental idleness is at an end, and with

the throwing wide of so many different gates of activity and opportunity, there comes the need for a greater knowledge of every facet of existence. She must be conversant, not merely with the idyllic, the imaginative, the dream-aspect of life, but she must have a fundamental understanding of the sterner side of things, and what she cannot gain from practical experience she can find in books.

Open Pages.

THEY must be her indications and her guides. The thoughts and views of those already initiated are open pages for her to scan.

The intimate letters of great men and women of the past and present, the outlines of history, the conflicting opinions and philosophies of writers with a definite standpoint of their own, explorations into the realm of fact and the region of thought—she must have some true realisation of all these if she is to fill her niche in the sphere of womanhood.

Nor must she overlook the wonders of the earth or lose her appreciation of the everyday miracles of the world of nature. A primrose growing in the hedge must be more to her than the primrose was to Peter Bell, and she will look with a more farseeing eye on the wonder-world of her own garden, find "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones," if she has walked in the spirit with such great lovers of nature as Henry Williamson and Richard Jefferies.

Value of Novels.

LAST on the list comes the recreative side of reading. Novels may perhaps be regarded as the friandises asorties to be enjoyed after the more solid and substantial literary fare, but who shall say that a carefully written, conscientious work of fiction is valueless? It is, on the contrary, a palatable form of presenting life and its diverse and complicated situations to the intelligence. She who runs may read, and through the unravelling of imaginary problems, the cutting of fictitious Gordian knots, may come upon some solution to her own perplexities.

Lighting Effects.

MANY rooms which would otherwise be lovely are ruined by indifferent lighting effects, yet good lighting is not nearly so difficult nor so expensive to arrange as people are inclined to think. Electric bulbs placed inside bowls and vases have been rather overdone, though they can be very successful, but it is a very simple matter to place a bulb behind a semi-opaque vase filled with water. If the vase itself is good and the wall behind it pale in colour the light produced will be excellent for reading and will enhance the beauty of the vase and flowers.

Women's International Conference.

IN April a Conference of International Women's Institutes will be held for the first time in England, when representatives of women's rural organizations will meet together from all parts of the world. The Women's Institute Movement is now spreading so widely that the world co-operation of rural women has become essential for its future success.

From May 28 to 31 the International Association of Lyceum Clubs will meet at The Hague. Founded in London in 1903, this association now has Lyceum Clubs in 24 countries, with a total number of over 10,000 women. In many of these countries these international clubhouses are more often than not pioneer centres for the emancipation of women.

From August 7 to 15 the International Federation of University Women will meet at Geneva for their fifth triennial conference. The keynote of the conference will be a discussion on the unemployment of university women students in the different countries.

A Luck Stone.

FAITH, Hope and Destiny are symbolised by the three rays of light that move mysteriously in the heart of the star sapphire, a gem regarded throughout the East with peculiar reverence, for it is believed to be the home of a good spirit of peculiar power.

Sir Richard Burton, the great orientalist, carried one with him on his travels in Arabia, and it assured him safety and every attention wherever he went, for no harm could be done to a man under such powerful protection; indeed, he was a man to be propitiated, and sometimes he might be persuaded to grant a sight of the magic gem as a reward for especially good service.

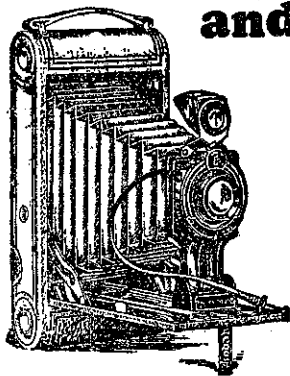
It is said that the influence of the gem is so great that it will continue to protect a former owner even after he has parted with it.

Actually the asteria, as the stone is also called, is a sapphire containing foreign matter that interferes with the free passage of light so that when the stone is cut cabochon and exposed to a single light three rays of light arranged crosswise appear, so that the gem appears to hold a source of glimmering shifting light.

True sapphires range in colour from light blue to deep blue, but the star sapphire is seldom of a fine sapphire blue, nearly always it is deeply tinged with grey, and it is in stone of a rich bluish-grey hue that the star is clearest and most beautiful.

Of the freaks of nature the star sapphire is one of the rarest and most beautiful, and really fine specimens are costly.

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