

# Madame Sarah Bernhardt's "Letters on Life" to American Women

Famous French Actress Writes on Will-Power as Beauty's Aid, the Classical Dance, Advice to Stage Aspirants, Sports, Suffragettes and Fashion.

BY MME SARAH BERNHARDT.  
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 RECEIVED the other day a letter from a woman so touching, so beseeching and so charming in its form, asking me for a short interview and for my counsel upon that which the happiness of her life was depending. I replied by telegram, granting her the interview she had required.

On the day mentioned the woman came to me with her hands outstretched. She was one to whom it would be difficult to attribute any particular age. Her figure suggested youth, but her eyes, and the wrinkles in an undecided and heavy manner. Her hair was a brilliant, glossy black. Her eyes indicated anxiety, her complexion was leaden and light wrinkles about her eyes were evident. This woman, without any particular age, should have been young. And, upon looking at her closely, one might also have said she should have been pretty. I made her sit down and asked her to tell me in what way I could be of service to her.

## Advocates Classical Dance

IN PARIS, in Germany and in England dancing is fashionable and, truly, it is a most delightful pastime. Isadora Duncan was one of the first to challenge the grace of the classical dance by introducing a dance even more classic. Some prudish spirits tried to stir up public indignation against the bareness of legs and feet, but this really was too stupid, and, as is always the case, common sense has triumphed.

At the present moment aesthetic dances are everywhere the vogue in Paris. Young girls of the highest social standing will gather in beautiful groups, exhibiting bare feet and offering to the public the prettiest of spectacles.

Classical Dances Not Immodest. I was present at the first presentation of one of these new performances, which was not inspired by any consideration of profit. It was by private invitation, when one was asked to come and enjoy a couple of hours in an atmosphere of charm, grace and idealism. I can assure you that these agile groups with legs and feet supple as the flowers that balance on the ends of their bending stalks, conveyed no thought for a single second that a bare leg or a bare foot was any less modest than a bare arm or a bare hand.

It seemed to me rather the contrary, seeing the pretty feet tripping down the steps of the stairway. Afterward how different it was when I saw these same feet in high-heeled shoes, perhaps with diamond buckles glittering on the insteps, which certainly seemed to me to be much more suggestive than the delicate bare feet that I saw upon the stage.

New Dance Means Grace. Here, then, for the new generation is a new accomplishment, full of grace and one which would give suppleness to girls inclined to be rather stiff and impart ease of manner to those inclined to clumsiness. Moreover, it would give health to all, for the new dance is hygienic, and a professor, Monsieur d'Udine, who has commenced to use the method of Jacques Dalcroze, has at this moment more pupils than he can attend to because he teaches young girls the beautiful art of rhythmic dances, and at the same time, develops their lungs by breathing exercises that measure the step.

## Abolish the Black Butterflies

"Now, here is the counsel that I give you: Abolish from your mind all the black butterflies that haunt you. Do not think of anything except that yesterday has passed; that tomorrow shall be one day more. Say to yourself, 'Today is a day of happiness. My husband is here, he loves me and I love him.' Be glad of your good fortune. Do not cloud this hour of your joy with the hateful thought that it will not last forever."

"Let the vanished smile return to your face, and raise your head for the kiss of the one whom you love. Say to yourself, 'I will be beautiful. I desire above all things that my husband shall find me so; that he will find you exactly as you wish.'"

"But why have I this unhappy look?" she asked.  
 "Because," I replied, "you weep."  
 "That is true," she said. "I often weep thinking of the days that are to come."

"Look upward to the Sun." "Very well, dear madame, believe me and employ all the force of your being in the wish to be beautiful. Do not think that this can be the only end to your life. Brace yourself up. Don't keep your eyes upon the ground which is the last thing you ought to consider. Look upward to the sun which creates and gladdens."

"But the tricks of beauty which artists use—what of them?"  
 "I burst out laughing.  
 "Oh, be persuaded, dear madame, that all women use almost the same artifices. But come with me, and I led her into my dressing-room."  
 "Look here. Here is rice powder for the skin and rouge for the lips, and black for the eyes, and rose for the cheeks."

"And then? and then? But, is that all? I use a little of all of these!"  
 "Oh, yes. Only these are not the things that give you youth. They only hide a little the traces of the anxious years. In them there is not the reflection of the soul shining through the countenance."

"With these adjuncts there is not to be had the conscious pride that makes you hold your head erect. There is nothing but the suggestion in these things to incite you to gain for yourself the end that you so desire. Remain quietly at home and try to invest your spirit of these fears, and, as you have the chance to love, say to yourself, madame, that you really do possess the most beautiful and the most profound and the most noble wealth of all wealth—love. And if you are not the happiest of women it is simply because you deceive yourself, and that you do not really love after all."

Happy in Helping Some One. When my visitor had left me I lingered a short time, dreaming, my forehead resting upon the window-pane. Suddenly I saw her departing, silhouetted in the gathering twilight. It was the figure of a young woman, with eyes raised happily towards the last flush of the setting sun, and I thought with joy that my day had not been wasted, because I had performed one good deed.



Sarah Bernhardt.

hopeless ever to expect movement that are graceful and distinguished.

Arms Should Be Flexible. "The arms of a woman should be, beyond all else, flexible as a silken scarf. If the neck is too short the shoulders will appear to be too high. Rarely is a neck ever too long. Feet and hands might be large without diminishing their beauty if the articulations of wrists and ankles are slender and fine. But the most beautiful individual with ugly knuckles and wrists is at once unattractive."

"Find out for yourself now, Mademoiselle, if you are well proportioned. It is impossible for me to tell you more precisely, because your photograph shows only your bust. And when you have assured yourself that you have these qualities of form, do not be more than half contented, for there is another indispensable necessity in our career—it is the voice. It is necessary that this should be pure and without flaw; that is to say, it should have the full range of the register. It is not necessary that it should be strong, but it is essential that it should be homogeneous and slightly—very slightly—nasal."

"If the voice is not a little nasal

then it is throaty. It does not come except from the chest. It is obscure; if it comes only from the throat it is atrocious.

"As of those in whom you have confidence to listen to your voice and to give you their opinion. If you have the real love of your art you might become a great artist. And it is this that I wish with all my heart, for our art is the most beautiful, the most noble and the most interesting of all arts, since it contains within itself all others."

## Favors Sports for Women

I CERTAINLY am not one of those who think that women should not indulge in sports.

Quite to the contrary, I am of the opinion that modern education, that develops the body as well as the brain, is the best and wisest of innovations. But the girls should not (because they cannot) enter into the same sports as do the boys.

Nothing is so disagreeable in my opinion as a young girl with masculine mannerisms. The gymnastic swinging

rings certainly produce development of the bust and aid the respiratory organs, but they must be exercised with prudence, otherwise they will enlarge the arms, wrists and hands and roughen the voice.

Riding Gives Women Confidence. Riding horseback is an exercise that is altogether delightful for women. It gives them audacity, decision, presence of mind and courage. Riding permits a woman to exhibit her personal grace and it develops in her a sense of self-confidence—a sentiment very rare, far too rare, indeed, in our sex.

Fencing also is a very pretty exercise without danger, but at the same time strengthening. Only one must be careful to exercise an equal measure with the right and left hand.

Tennis and golf are sports of stimulation and of grace which also invigorate the feminine will power without spoiling the harmony of a woman's form.

One can also indulge in canoeing and boating, but with much caution, because this, also, is a form of exercise that spoils the voice.

Violent Breathing Harmful. Violent breathing of moist air is caused by the somewhat brutal strength

habit with inexperienced sailors and amateur boatmen who deceive themselves with the illusion of greater speed to pant in measure with their strokes.

Well, now, this panting nearly always spoils the voices of those who practice too much boating.

I do not speak of the bicycle, which in my opinion, is not a sport, but a mere means of getting about unpretentiously and to execute rapid commissions.

The bicycle is a means of agreeable locomotion for men, but ingracious and unbecomingly for women.

## "Don't Be a Slave to Fashion"

MY opinion is that all women should revolt against blindly following the fashion.

Nothing is more stupid than to be a slave to it.

A husband, however tenderly beloved, cannot dictate to his wife what hat or gown he thinks best for her, whilst the very first dressmaker she consults can influence her to try some new and absurd style.

The dressmaker, in order to advertise her idea, takes some silly little scheme and puts this idea on her in the form of a gown, and immediately other women follow suit.

The fashion is nearly always introduced by her figure or to her face. The big hats best suit large and heavy figures. Turbans are best adapted to tall, thin people. The toque is the best head-dress one can imagine for one's fresh face, and so also is the little tricorn.

The large hat turned up at the side best suits the dashing woman—tall, slight and a little sharp. The boat-shaped straw hat is a horror for any woman. Long gowns best suit large women. Small women are ridiculous with trains. A big woman in too short a gown has an awkward air. A thin woman should wear soft, flowing draperies. A large or fat woman should wear her things loosely.

Stout women can never understand that the tighter they pull themselves in the fatter they appear to be.

What Colors to Avoid. Dark women should never wear violet or green, and fair ones should fly from yellow. The fashion has been, and still is, short sleeves coming only to the elbows. These are not pretty except in summer for girls or very young women, but generally speaking, the short sleeve is ugly for day wear.

A pretty arm, round and dimpled, is beyond anything beautiful. Beginning at the shoulder and continuing down to the graceful and a supple curve to a well-turned wrist. It is, therefore, preferable to have long sleeves, which cling to the form of the arm, and slightly enlarge just above the hand, which should appear as nestling in it with the fingers emerging from it like the slender petals of a lily.

## "Women Have Right to Vote"

I AM often asked if I am a suffragette.

In reply to this question, I ask one myself: "What is a suffragette? I do not know what you mean. Tell me, and I shall reply."

For the moment I can only say one thing. That is, that I do not think women are made for active politics. I believe the ingenious intuition of a woman might often be of use to a politician. The delicate tact of a mother, a sister, a wife, or even of a friend, might be a great help to a man.

Suppose, day and night, a man has been oppressed with the difficulties of a political crisis? The delicate touch of a woman is capable of untangling the most knotted thread. But I claim that our role should stop there.

But women who would like to be deputies, ministers or presidents of republic seem to me to be foolish. The functions of our brains are productive, but the limitations of our sex are a barrier that we should not try to scale.

Right to Vote a Just Claim. That a wife claims the right of disposing of a fortune gained by herself, is perfectly understandable. Suddenly the bomb bursts in such a matter, and when she claims the right to vote she has a just claim because the women of today take a very large part in the public life. She knows as much as the men of the politics of her country, and it is truly comic that her servants, who

live and work under her direction, and for whom she is responsible, are able to vote, while she is excluded from this intellectual and generally advantageous office.

And it appears to me that the votes of women are all the more necessary because they serve to balance the naming of incapable deputies elected by patrons of the bar-rooms.

Have Same Right as Men. Therefore, women have every right to claim the same privilege as a man in all those things controlled by legislation.

She is subject to the same punishment that is meted out to a man when she commits a crime. One must, therefore, recognize the same rights because she is made responsible in the same way for her acts.

The law at least should be logical.

## RADIUM THROWN IN FIRE

Valuable Metal Will Be Recovered From Ashes.

LONDON, Oct. 12.—(Special.)—From Birmingham it is stated that a doctor has lost \$500 worth of radium by throwing it into a fire among bandages. It is further said that a chemist had promised to recover it from the ashes.

This is by no means the first time that the precious metal has been lost and recovered. The metal itself has never been seen, excepting in Mme. Curie's crystal tubes. What is known as "radium" is a radium salt, either radium bromide or radium chloride, even radium sulphate. Tiny grains of these salts are extremely precious, and are usually sealed up in little glass bulbs. Nowadays some of these glass bulbs are used for treating skin diseases, but as a rule their contents are spread over cloth or other surface and fitted onto "applicators."

When one of the first little glass bulbs was received in London it had a curious history. A physician in Portland Place was applying it to a patient when he inadvertently let it fall, and a moment later crushed it under his foot. The carpet was very valuable; so was the sole of his foot; but the radium salt was far more valuable than both together. In fact, the value of radium is not easily reckoned in dollars and cents. A small portion is in the hands of those who can sell or buy, but by far the greater quantity is beyond the reach of the merely wealthy. Gold may control it some day—not yet. The value to the physician was, therefore, very great. He took off his boot and cut out a square of his carpet. He had both burned, and out of the ashes refined the original radium salt. This has been placed in a new "applicator" and is in use today.

## 1500 OFFICES CREATED

German Government Establishes an Elaborate Insurance Policy.

BERLIN, Oct. 8.—(Special.)—Owing to the extension of the German National Insurance scheme to employees of private offices, which comes into operation January 1, 1913, new officials are to be created by the government to deal with this branch of the work, of whom 500 are to be women. These 500 women are not much good, although they will not have to pass a government test of efficiency, are to be discriminated against, inasmuch as they will not be considered under the direct employ of the government, will receive no pension upon retiring, and can be discharged at the pleasure of the head of the department.

The Commercial Union of Women Employees has entered a vigorous protest against this differentiation of treatment.

## OLD BOMB WRECKS HOUSE

Russian's Contempt of English Is Cause of Accident.

PETROPAVLOVSK, Russia, Oct. 12.—A citizen of this town was wont to show his friends a bomb which was thrown into the town when the British attacked it during the Crimean War, and to laughingly remark that English bombs are not much good, as this one failed to explode.

The relic was kept in the bathroom. A servant put it into the empty Russian stove of huge size. Suddenly the bomb burst, the other day, wrecking the house, but causing no casualties. It had the best of the joke after 58 years.

The incident has caused much amusement here, one local wag remarking that the English bomb burst to seal the Anglo-Russian friendship.



# Operations Avoided

Thousands of surgical operations are performed every year in our great city hospitals upon women afflicted with serious female troubles. Sometimes the operations are successful and sometimes

they are not; sometimes they are necessary, many times they are not. It is safe to say that a very large percentage of surgical operations for female troubles may be wholly avoided. This statement is amply proven by hundreds of letters constantly being received by the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., of Lynn, Mass., and the following letter from Mrs. Orville Rock of Paw Paw, Mich., relates her sad experience, which is only one of thousands that are constantly occurring. Had she taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound at first, as she finally did, her dreadful hospital experience would have been avoided.

Here is her own statement: PAW PAW, MICH.: "Two years ago I suffered very severely with a displacement. I could not be on my feet for a long time. My physician treated me for several months without much relief, and finally sent me to Ann Arbor for an operation. I was there four weeks, and came home suffering worse than before. My mother advised me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and I did. Today I am well and strong and do all my own housework. I owe my health to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and advise my friends who have any female complaint to try it."—MRS. ORVILLE ROCK, Paw Paw, Mich.

If you are ill don't drag along until you are advised to have an operation, but remember that for thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been the standard remedy for female ills and has saved a vast army of women from surgical operations. No sick woman does justice to herself who will not at least give this famous medicine a trial.

## A HANDSOME REWARD WILL BE GIVEN

to any person who will prove that any of our testimonial letters constantly being published in the daily newspapers are not genuine and truthful, or that any of these women were paid in any way to give their testimonials or that the letters were published without their permission or that all the original letters did not come to us entirely unsolicited. THE LYDIA E. PINKHAM MEDICINE CO., Lynn, Mass.