

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN.

MEHITABLE'S MUSINGS.

WHAT do you do with old letters that accumulate? There are very few persons who have the determination necessary to burn a letter once it is answered and its value absorbed. These messages of pleasure, business and formality heap up on a writing table until some day they are gathered into a packet and thrown into a trunk or box. With some persons an occasional burning up of old letters occurs, which creates quite a bonfire in their grate, and brings on a reminiscent mood in which to watch the fire's glow, and the odd forms in which it dies. Some persons never burn letters. They collect them through life, and leave a curious jumble to the heirs of their effects, who are puzzled how to dispose of such a legacy.

I knew a woman once whose letters would have made an interesting book. She was a strangely fascinating woman in a quiet sort of a way. Her hair was threaded with gray, her face furrowed with cares which had long since been forgotten, and passions which had smouldered into ashes. On a certain rainy day we were sitting together and she was lonely as well as I. She proposed a visit to the garret, and I accepted with alacrity. The garret on a rainy day is as inviting as the woods in late spring. Into a big dormer window we pulled an old fashioned sofa, which had been rejected from the parlors years ago. And then she drew an old trunk up before this seat and threw it open. I was amazed to see the harvest of manuscript which her busy life had gathered to herself. They were arranged in bulky packets, their envelopes yellow from lying there so long. There were letters written by school friends, a boyish sweetheart, friends in the world, and friends of the soul. There were Bohemian letters, letters touching on social problems, and others dealing with the problems of the hereafter. Some revealed the enthusiasm of a friend who believed the receiver a saint, and others the cynicism of a friend who believed her to be a heartless woman. After perusing those she handed to me I looked at her and she smiled alike at the closing of each. Smiled, and like one who says calmly, "I have tried it all you see." In Kipling's "Light that Failed" is a description of a picture of Melancholia, which was made smiling. Fancy melancholy smiling! And yet true sorrow is that which cannot help but smile at the things of earth which fret a littler soul. "I shall never burn these papers," said their owner. "They are an excellent epitome of the lesson of life. Some younger woman may glean from them the experience which I have wasted youth in acquiring, and will not be too old to put into practice some of their truths."

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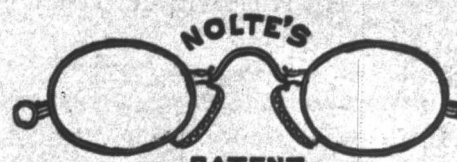
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