

RIGHT METHODS OF READING.

"Concentration is the secret of strength."—Emerson.

"Lack of concentration" is a trite phrase, to be sure, but as I heard an Inspector use it the other night at a high school concert it impressed itself on me with very much more meaning than I had ever put into it in my school days.

I remember years ago in the public school hearing a teacher talk a whole period on "Concentrating," but we girls thought it was particularly tiresome and partook something of the proverbial "tempest in a teapot." Indeed, when he finished, I doubt if we had any clear idea of the real meaning of the word. Of course we knew we should apply our minds to our lessons when we opened our books to study — that is, we knew it in a vague, indefinite sort of way; but the knowledge didn't keep us from dawdling two hours that same evening over a history lesson which could have been well digested in twenty minutes.

There is such an appalling amount of time and energy wasted by students of all ages. The average public or high school pupil will begin studying at seven or eight o'clock in the evening and sit bent double over homework until ten or eleven. Tired and dissatisfied with the night's work they will drag themselves off to bed, knowing full well that the next day's lessons are poorly prepared. And why? Simply because their minds have been wandering to last week's baseball or next week's hockey as the case may be. The main reason for lack of concentration is lack of interest. The boys and girls are not interested in their studies in the same way that they get enthused over other things. Take for instance Field Day. Is there one able-bodied boy or girl in school who is not most wildly enthusiastic over the footraces, basketball matches, etc., that are booked for that day? Not one. And that is as it should be; but it is also right that they should carry the same enthusiasm into their class rooms and this they do not do. Why? The reason is not hard to find. Their work is not made interesting; it is not practical enough, it is too theoretical. If instead of six hours studying and listening to lectures they could be given three hours of that and three hours of manual work how much more interesting it would all be! The putting into practice the principles they have learned would add a zest that is conspicuous now only by its absence. As an example, if a lecture in botany could be followed by an hour spent gardening wouldn't there be more

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interest shown in the lecture? Without any doubt, yes.

Again, when high school is done with, the same methods of half-interest are carried — perhaps unwittingly — into the university and the work there, and often with disastrous results. Later on in life how much time is spent in undue dawdling over books and how little is really learned just because there is a lack of interest!

Also, the benefit gained from re-reading a lesson or article is seldom estimated properly by those who have not given it a fair trial. As for myself, I am naturally a rapid reader and am inclined to skim over an article, only grasping the main outline while the vast detail (which may be far more important for my particular purpose) is as if it had never been, for all the impression it has left on my brain. If, however, I lay the book down and come back to it in an hour, a day, or a week, and re-read it carefully I find that I derive infinitely more benefit from it than I would have believed possible at first reading.

T. D. McGregor, a modern American writer of considerable note, has well said — "A man of average ability, *with concentration*, can accomplish more than a man of unusual talents without it."