

Some French Books that Women may Read.

BY STEPHANE JOUSSELIN

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(Member of the Paris Municipal Council and of the General Council of the Seine.)

BY far the most agreeable of the recollections of my recent tour in the United States is the fine education and admirable intelligence of the American woman. I was particularly pleased with her knowledge of and her interest in the literature of France. I know of no other part of the world, with the possible exception of Russia, where the women speak the French language, and where the study of our literature is so closely pursued as it is in America. I must say here that I consider the education of the American woman infinitely superior to that given in France. This is noticeable in young girls, who, more often than not, are extremely well read.

Owing to the fact that the American man spends most of his time in business, traveling to his office early in the morning and not returning until late at night, and having in addition the attraction of his clubs, the American woman is left a great deal to her own devices. She has a large amount of time to dispose of as she likes. This time she occupies largely in reading and in keeping au courant with the events of the day. This fact is largely the cause of the prodigious success of

American magazines and reviews, a success which is certainly deserved. It is the American woman who buys and reads the periodical literature in the United States, and determines its tone.

The American woman is deeply interested in French literature. The number of women in the United States who speak French fluently, is considerable, and I can never forget the delightful hours spent in many charming American homes in the large cities of the country discussing art and literature. There is one fact, however, which I cannot explain—that is, the extraordinary collection of French books, which, as a rule, I find lying around in American libraries. Many times in positive amazement, I have asked my amiable hostess how she came to possess those copies of some of the most disgusting novels published during the year, the titles of which I do not care to mention for fear of advertising them further. The reply was always to the effect that the volume had been purchased at a bookstore as one of the latest Parisian novelties, the lady adding that her nature had revolted at its broad unhealthy tone.