

Why I Would Rather Not "Be a Beauty"



The Ill-Fated Lantelme, the "French Queen of Beauty," Whose Loveliness Brought Her Only Unhappiness Through Life and Caused at Last Her Tragic Death.

By Lillian Russell

IF the privilege of being born again were granted me I should ask to be a plain woman.

My life would be a more comfortable one. I believe I should be happier. I should be spared a thousand irritations which the woman who is said to be a beauty must experience. I would not have to spend one-tenth of the money I have been forced to in "living up to my reputation."

The woman who has a reputation for beauty lives in the wake of a brass band. She does not own herself. The public appropriates her. It maintains its ownership as long as she lives and even her funeral becomes a public function. From infancy to death she lives as though in a glass house where all may see. She lives in the atmosphere of publicity. The quiet joys of a modest existence are not for her.

Next in rank in the sorrows of a beauty's life is the fact that she may be as wise as Minerva, but since she has beauty the world writes her down as brainless. In fact, the world expects her to be. It doesn't like to have its attention distracted from her appearance. Men who are ordinarily tactful will say during a conversation with her, "I had no idea you were so clever," and they will look at her as they do at a precocious child or a freak.

Having Beauty She Does Not Need to Develop Her Brains.

This is trying to the temper, yet I am enough of a philosopher to understand it and to grant that there is good reason for it. The brain of a beauty is more than likely to be stultified because she is not called upon to use it in her youth. If she is beautiful her lacks are forgiven her. She soon discovers that she need not study as hard as the other girls in school do. "Teacher" will excuse her. She does not need to apply herself so diligently to learning the art of housekeeping for "Mother won't mind." She doesn't have to exert herself as plain girls do to be entertaining. Her looks provide sufficient entertainment.

The result is that she is constantly in danger of becoming a mental sloven. Her brain, that may have been good at the beginning, becomes atrophied because it does not have to exercise. Therefore beauties earn the reputation of being stupid, and many of them deserve it.

Does it surprise you to learn that the beauty is not as much beloved as the plain woman? It is true. Again there is a good reason. There are several reasons. First, consider that grade of love which is called friendship. The beauty does not inspire such deep friendships

in women because the friendship is tinged with envy. Even a broad natured, big hearted woman who is plain may feel twinges of envy because she does not measure up to the physical standard of her friend. She feels a shade of resentment toward the beautiful one for that reason. By so much as she feels that resentment something is subtracted from their friendship.

The beauty may not know this of her own accord, but some one of her friends or family will be sure to tell her. If she is sensitive she will be deeply hurt. If combative the knowledge will make her angry. It is a callous person, indeed, who can rejoice in the envy she has inspired. Envy is too nearly allied to hatred, and hatred, every one knows, is a mental and character poison.

The beauty is no more fortunate in the love she awakens in men than in the friendship she inspires in women. The famous beauty does not attract, as a rule, the best kind of men. Silly youths or foolish old men are likely to join her train from no better motive than that they like to "put it over on the other fellows."

Addlepates are proud to be seen with a well known beauty. They want to stir the envy and wonder of other men. Intellectual men do not seek beauty—or if they do it is only briefly. The heads that have been lost over beauty are not generally worth finding.

The beauty who is receiving marked attentions may well ask herself whether those attentions are for her or are offerings to the man's vanity. Who hasn't heard some foolish fellow say, "I like to go around with a looker"? Or if a beauty is so lucky as to land a man worth having she is by no means sure of holding him.

I grant that beauty is a bait. But it is no fortress of the affections. A page of any newspaper might be filled with the

Lillian Russell, the Most Conspicuous American Beauty, Who Tells Why Beauty is Such an Unpleasant and Unprofitable Gift.



Rosa Bonheur, the Greatest Woman Painter, Whose Career Miss Russell So Envis and Which Was Made Possible, She Thinks, Because Rosa Bonheur Was Never a Beauty.

names of the beauties who have lost their husbands to some one not so obviously attractive.

Life is a long struggle to live up to her loveliest photographs, probably retouched by some kindly artist. Otherwise the public will note the difference and will not spare its criticisms.

The beauty may not be satisfied with a good grooming. There must be extra touches in her toilet. She must live up to the standard she established yesterday. I cannot twist my hair up loosely as my sisters do and start with them for a brisk walk through the park. Some one will notice that my hair is not dressed as it was when she saw me at the opera and will say: "That's Lillian Russell. She's not at all beautiful when you are close to her!" I cannot put on a rainy day skirt left from last season, as my sisters joyously do, for that walk in the park. Some one will look me over, up and down and around, and say: "She may be beautiful. I like her nose. But wouldn't you think she would keep herself smart?"

It costs money to be beautiful. The art of looking your best is an expensive one. You cannot wear your old clothes and your new ones must be the smartest. And so the beauty's dress bill is always away ahead of her plain sister's. It is expensive to be a beauty. Instead of settling down for two hours with a book you are dying to read you must spend those two hours among the shops to study the modes. One dare not become a frump, dare not even be charged with being one.

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Lillian Russell Explains the Hardships of Being a Professional Beauty and Why She So Seldom Can Possess Either True Love or Brains



The Unbeautiful Profile of Polaire, the Famous French Actress Who, Because She Makes No Claim for Beauty Has, According to Miss Russell, a Real Advantage Over the Woman Who is Conspicuously Beautiful.

This happened in a crowded railway station. It was at a reception that a woman pinched my neck to see whether it was as firm as it looked!

"But," you may say, "it is your beauty that brought you fame and fortune. Without it, what would you have done? You might have been a mere 'house frau,' or have had to work in a store."

And so might all other women who have been called beauties. All very true. That is not the point. What I am telling you is that the woman who is not a notable beauty has more chance for true love, for happiness, and self-expression than has the beauty. And there are many women who, not lulled into security by your beauty, have made conspicuous successes in art, in business, in life and love because they have had to fight to overcome the handicap of their appearance. Such women have a real advantage over the woman who is conspicuously beautiful. Cleverness and brains last longer than beauty.

If I had been born homely I would have been an artist. I used to draw well, and had a knack with the brush. I painted flower pieces and sold them, too. I sold enough of them to pay for my singing lessons.

A critic visited our class, and said of my work: "It is broad. She does things in a large way."

"That is high praise," my teacher said. I painted "The Monarch of the Forest." You remember the deer with the spreading antlers, that hung on so many walls? I copied him and felt a strong impetus toward animal pictures. Maybe I might have become a Rosa Bonheur pettie. I do not know what I would have attained, but I am sure I could have made a living at it. And I should certainly have been happier in the life of the studio.

The girl who has escaped beauty escapes many of the temptations of life. Every woman of charm meets some temptation, but for the woman who has a pretty face they are legion.

Beauty is always a target for criticism. It calls attention to imperfections of mind, of art, of character. Any stage beauty will tell you how seriously her good looks handicapped her in the beginning of her stage career.

"Look at that pretty girl," a looker through a lorgnette will say. "Isn't she frightfully awkward?" And she acts atrociously!

The plainer girl might have passed more or less unnoticed until she had learned the fundamentals of her art. Beauty is a loud voiced challenge. It says, "Look at me. See how dreadful I am! See what I cannot do!" As beauty calls attention to the imperfections of youth and inexperience, so it accentuates the passing of the years. The beautiful woman is not permitted to grow old gracefully. She hears, "She is not looking as well as she did," and "I do believe she is going off," or, "What a pity she is getting fat!" She is spurred on to harder work than ever to remain a beauty.

On the other hand, those who are nearest and should be the best friends deceive one. The beauty's family and friends so steep her in adulation that she thinks the chance remarks she has heard from strangers may be untrue after all. Her husband tells her that she is the loveliest of women, and she tries to believe him because she wants to. Then if youth enters into the arena as a rival and she learns at last of his devotion to some young girl her heart breaks.

The broken heart is after all the end of beauty, unless it has been fortified by an active brain.

Why Amber Glasses May Ruin Your Eyes

MANY people nowadays wear amber glasses on the street. Such glasses, they will tell you, agreeably modify the glare of bright daylight on sunny days and "save the eyes."

The idea is correct—to some extent. Such glasses are good for sick eyes. They are beneficial in the light-glare of the seabeach or when the sun is shining brilliantly on snow. But for anybody with normal eyes, under ordinary conditions they are a mistake.

Amber glasses shut off the irritating chemical rays. That is why they are good for sick eyes, lending protection against such rays. But the normal eye is made by nature to endure bright light, which is a stimulant to the health of the seeing organ. Why, then, shut it out?

Such glasses, habitually worn, have a tendency to render the eyes delicate and over-sensitive to light. The wearer, in a sense, is walking about in the dark. If he dispenses with them after getting well accustomed to their use he is apt to find bright daylight painful.

There is a commonly accepted belief that near-sightedness improves with age—that the vision of near-sighted people grows better with advancing years. It is not true. Perhaps the oddest thing about this trouble is that nobody is born with it.

It is a condition due to a disease that begins very early in life, and which is progressive, the eye, normally spherical, becoming egg-shaped. The tendency seems to be due to the habit among civilized people of using the eyes over-much for Great Britain Rights Reserved.

short-range vision. Reading is an accomplishment never contemplated by nature. Among savages near-sight is practically unknown.

Speaking of reading, it is commonly supposed that the eye while thus engaged moves steadily along the line of print. This is not the case. It moves in a series of jumps—say six jumps to a line of an ordinary book. The reading is accomplished through a series of successive visual impressions, like those of a "movie" picture.

The area of distinct vision at the ordinary book-reading distance does not much exceed the size of one's thumb-nail. Thus it is impossible to see clearly so near at hand a whole line of print. Accordingly, the eye makes a series of hops, about one-fifth of a second being required for such skip-along.

Another interesting fact is that in reading one follows the letters along their tops and not the middle of them. If one would be convinced of this let him clip out a line of fair-sized full-faced type from a newspaper or magazine, and cut it in two horizontally—i. e., midway between the tops and the bottoms of the letters. He will then find that the slices containing the top halves of the letters is almost as easily read as if the entire letters were in view, whereas the lower halves are very hard to read.

Of course, when one reads one is constantly winking. But the opening and closing of the eyelid occupies only one-fiftieth of a second, so that one is not aware of any interruption of vision. One winks every three seconds, or 1,200 times an hour. From 18,000 to 20,000 winks are a day's work for the eyelids.