

BOOKS THAT MAY HAVE ESCAPED YOU

1. *"Through the Wheat"* by Thomas Boyd (Scribner). The best realistic picture of the war, from an American who knew it.

2. *"Wild Cherry"* by Lizette Woodworth Reese (Norman, Remington). Charming lyrics from the woman who wrote "Tears".

3. *"The Puppet Master"* by Robert Nathan (McBride). Light fantasy of love and disillusionment.

4. *"Letters and Religion"* by John Jay Chapman (Atlantic). Gives us the depth of a rich and varied search for beauty.

5. *"Stephen Crane"* by Thomas Beer (Knopf). One of the most unusual and illuminating of American biographies.

The Rights of Women and Saints

PERHAPS I had almost forgotten how stimulating a writer G. B. S. is. Whatever the reason, when I picked up his preface to "Saint Joan" (Brentano) I passed a couple of hours filled with even more enjoyment and thrill than I experienced at the play. Again the entire march of civilization is meat for Mr. Shaw's axes, hooks, and choppers. He hacks and hews! He pricks and tears! It was inevitable since the days of "Man and Superman" that Mr. Shaw should write a play about Joan; obviously, she would be his ideal—she and Queen Elizabeth and, possibly, Great Catherine. I suspect he likes dominating women. I suspect Shaw and the Maid of Orleans would have got on famously. There were no frills and furbelows

about Joan, according to Shaw. She would have made a jolly good companion; and she would never have been coy. We need quote only one paragraph to show exactly why it is that he likes her. She is not like other women—

We may accept and admire Joan, then, as a sane and shrewd country girl of extraordinary strength of mind and hardihood of body. Everything she did was thoroughly calculated; and though the process was so rapid that she was hardly conscious of it, and ascribed it all to her voices, she was a woman of policy and not of blind impulse. In war she was as much a realist as Napoleon: she had his eye for artillery and his knowledge of what it could do. She did not expect besieged cities to fall Jerichowise at the sound of her trumpet, but, like Wellington, adapted her methods of attack to the peculiarities of the defence; and she anticipated the Napoleonic calculation that if you only hold on long enough the other fellow will give in: for example, her final triumph at Orleans was achieved after her commander Dunois had sounded the retreat at the end of a day's fighting without a decision. She was never for a moment what so many romancers and playwrights have pretended: a romantic young lady. She was a thorough daughter of the soil in her peasantlike matter-of-factness and doggedness, and her acceptance of great lords and kings and prelates as such without idolatry or snobbery, seeing at a glance how much they were individually good for.

As usual Mr. Shaw flings insults at his critics and his audiences, and as usual he can do it with grace because his play is successful both in New York and London. In part, he says:

Thus from the stalls and in the Press an atmosphere of hypocrisy spreads. Nobody says straight out that genuine drama is a tedious nuisance, and that to ask people to endure more than two hours of it (with two long intervals of relief) is an intolerable imposition. Nobody says "I hate classical

tragedy and comedy as I hate sermons and symphonies; but I like police news and divorce news and any kind of dancing or decoration that has an aphrodisiac effect on me or on my wife or husband. And whatever superior people may pretend, I cannot associate pleasure with any sort of intellectual activity; and I don't believe anyone else can either." Such things are not said; yet nine-tenths of what is offered as criticism of the drama in the metropolitan Press of Europe and America is nothing but a muddled paraphrase of it. If it does not mean that, it means nothing.