

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

MONROE ENQUIRE

Our good friend, Rev. J. A. Bivens, asked us some time ago to prepare an address on "The Women of the Bible." We promised him to "not about it," and it has been a delightful diversion from the daily grind to spend some spare moments and Sunday hours in studying the characters of "Bible women." But, after all, what is the use of going back to the days when the Bible was written to find womanly characters? Today the same kind of woman is on the earth that was here in Bible times.

When the angel appeared at Abraham's tent and put the question to the old father of a great race, "Where is Sarah, thy wife?" The reply was, "Behold, she is in the tent." Today in millions of homes in Sarah, who like Sarah of old, can cook a real entrée to perfection, make butter fit for a king and keep the milk pail so clean and fresh that she would not be ashamed to put it out before an angel from heaven, like old Sarah in the long ago. The home-keeping old Sarah has many daughters who "take after her." Never heard of old Sarah trying to run the government. The angel who came to bring her a great message did not have to hunt through club rooms or suffragette meetings to find her. "She was in the tent." Her hands were busy with the household affairs, her thoughts were for those under her roof. Noble old soul was Sarah. The world could not get along without her kind.

And there is Ruth, the lovely little Moabitish widow. A man has got a cocklebur where his heart ought to be if he does not warm up to industrious and loyal Ruth, who went out into the fields and gleaned the grain that she and her mother-in-law might be fed. We saw Ruth just the other day. Her husband had died and the young widow did not have much to live on, but the brave little woman had gone out and was piling trash and burning it preparatory to planting a patch of corn. Yes, Ruth is with us still. Out in the fields she labors. Husband dead, no money, nothing but muscle and high character left her, but with these she earns her living and wins a large place in the world's great heart. Ruth, laboring, strong-hearted, loyal Ruth, the world has never been so sad that it did not lift its hat to her.

Her wickedness was, Scolding, and hearted old Jezebel. She has not gone from the earth. She is still here and ever and anon she sticks her old pointed face out of the window. She is still playing the prophets and doing her deviltry. The meanest thing outside of hell is a mean woman. Jezebel out-generated all the men of her day when it came to deeds of bloodshed and other high crimes—and Jezebel, the old painted beauty—lives today and is doing her diabolical work. Sooner or later old Jezebel falls and is trod by horses and torn by dogs until there is nothing found of her but her skull, her feet and the palms of her hands—just like those parts of Jezebel of old were found outside the wall.

Little Miriam, left to watch where her little brother, Moses, had been left in his ark of bulrushes on the river Nile. Faithful, alert little Miriam, she is with us still. We saw her last autumn picking time. The family had gone to the field to pick cotton, all except the little fellows too small to work, and little Miriam was left to care for them. She was mothering the little fellows, watching with all the alertness of her soul the baby in the cradle—and the little Miriam on the sands on the banks of the river Nile in Egypt in the long ago was not more faithful in the discharge of her duty than was the little Miriam in the humble Union county home. The little mother, the little oldest girl, who, uncomplaining, cares for the younger brothers and sisters, denies herself and watches over and works for them—God bless her. Miriam by the banks of the Nile has her counterpart in many a home in this land today.

Feithar's wife—the old she reproach who raised hell in Egypt—did not take her spirit along with her when her sinful old body went to the grave some thousands of years ago. She rolls along in her automobile in every park. In the high places of the world—the wall social circles—there is Feithar's wife. And the men—well, they are not all Josephs, not by a long shot.

And there is Esther, the potted queen in the palace Shushan. Dressed in the splendid garments of a queen, she was. She did not have to lift a hand to do a bit of work, every luxury was hers. Esther did not show her nobility of soul until adversity came. While she was having a "royal good time" and nothing else, while she was all dolled up and was just living the life of a potted queen, the world did not hear much of Esther and apparently she was not of

much use to it. But one day Esther found that the lives of all her people were in danger. Then it was that the little Jewess proved to all the world that she was a real woman as well as a queen. She staked her life—she made herself a world heroine. She forgot all about her fine clothes, her jewels, her palace. She was just a noble-souled woman, ready to give her position, her wealth, her life for her people. Esther is with us yet. She may put on "glad rags", many of them, and put on jewelry until it looks like she is a walking advertisement for a jewelry store, and she may wear silk stockings with dollar marks all over 'em, and silks and hoes and all that lingerie that we do not see so much of in real life, but see a plenty on the pages of the fashion books; she may ride in bus wagons and hit 'em high generally, but when her old man comes home some day and falls in a heap, and tells her that he is down and out—"busted" has hit the ceiling hard enough to go through the plastering—then comes Esther. She puts her hands on his shoulders, looks him in the eye, and tells him to brace up and be a man. And then she gets out of those "glad rags", puts off that metal stuff, sells it, goes into a smaller house and buckles down to work and helps her husband to get on his feet again. Esther just needs some adversity, to be up against it, to meet hard times to show what grit she is and she shows it, too. Yes, many an Esther is in this land of ours standing between her husband and ruin.

Mary and Martha are with us still. Mary who wanted to be with the Master and Martha who would rather cook a dinner for him than to converse with him. Mary has her counterpart today in the woman who wants to go to hear the preacher rather than stay at home and cook his dinner, and Martha has her counterpart in the stay-at-home old sister who would rather get up a dinner for the preacher than to hear him preach any old time.

Tamar, the long-headed Tamar—Tamar who believed that she had not been treated right, and her father-in-law, Judah, was not giving her a square deal according to the manner and customs of that day and in that country. Now, if Tamar didn't put her over on old Judah, then we have read the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis wrong. If ever a man had his lips completely sewed up and was left silent in all languages that man was Judah when he came out, rolled his eyes toward heaven and made out that he was so righteous that he would have a woman in his household who stepped aside from virtue's path turned to death, and Tamar put up as "Exhibit A" some bracelets, a signet, and a walking stick and calmly made some remarks about them being the property of the author of her trouble.

Mr. Man, you may believe that Tamar will suffer and bear her disgrace alone, you may think she will not expose you, that she will hold her tongue, but you are mistaken, for one day you will find that wronged Tamar has put up a walking stick, a signet ring and some bracelets for public inspection, although your name is engraved on them. No, Tamar is not going to suffer in silence and you cannot blame Tamar, for not bearing alone her troubles.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, virtually said, "Timothy, you ought to be a good man; your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice, were such good women you ought to be a good man." The Lois and the Eunices, the good grandmothers and mothers are with us, have come down to this day as a priceless heritage, and they are the balance wheels in life's machinery.

Old Mrs. Job in the long ago gave her husband some bad advice—tried to get him to go entirely wrong—and right now Mrs. Job is nagging at her husband in ten thousand homes trying her level best to get old man Job off on the wrong track.

Let's wife let her curiosity get away with her and at this writing Mrs. Lot is with us with curiosity unabated, and she is prying and delving into affairs in no way concerning her and is still putting herself and all others in a pickle by that everlasting curiosity.

Dorcas, the big-haired, generous seamstress, is not in any way related to the present day woman who sits in idleness and "orders on" for every stitch of clothing she wears. Dorcas is still here. Last night Dorcas was up until a late hour in many a room in this land of cure stitching away, and today many a little waif and many a poor person is clothed because of Dorcas' busy fingers and her big and generous heart. The best thing outside of heaven is a good woman.

Rahab was a bad woman in some respects and a good one in others.

She surely did those Israelites a good turn. And Rahab is here today. She will go as far as the furthest dimensionally in doing a good deed, and sometimes in helping the "down and out" she does things away yonder surpassing some of the old seat-warmers in the synagogue.

Somewhere today Pharaoh's daughter is hugging some little Moses to her bosom, sheltering him, protecting him just like the women on the banks of the Nile did ages ago.

This day some foolish Samson is laying his head on the lap of some Delilah and Delilah, as of old, is snipping off his locks, leaving Samson in his weakness and in his folly.

Rachel is somewhere putting up her maidenly and virtuous lips for Jacob, her future husband, to kiss—but the modern Jacob does not lift up his voice and weep like old father Jacob did in that olden time.

Lydia, the purple seller, busy, business-like Lydia, at work selling cloth. She did not let her exacting and unsatisfactory customers knock her out of leading a clean Christian life. In stores innumerable in this land of ours the Lydias stand behind the counters selling purple and other colored cloth. Lydia often has enough to vex her soul to desperation, but she keeps her temper, smiles sometimes through tear-bringing perplexities and is true to the interests of her employer and keeps faith with her customers. Yes, Lydia is with us and to take her out of the commercial life of the world would mean much.

Hagar went out from Abraham's tent, was driven out to wander in the desert, and by the hand she led Ishmael, Abraham's son—and here. Today many a Hagar walks this old earth, heart-sore and weary, leading her illegitimate Ishmael by the hand while the father dwells in the tent of opulence and sits in the seat of the dignity.

Herodias, the unspeakable Herodias, of whom no redeeming trait or virtue is recorded. She was a murderer at heart. She did not have the nerve to commit murder with her own hands, but she whispered into the ear of her nimble-footed, corrupt-hearted and weak-headed daughter, Salome, and Salome got into the good graces of the old libertine, Herod, and John the Baptist was beheaded.

You can read of Herodias in the newspapers as well as in the Bible, and almost every daily paper you read has an account of how some man has lost his life by the scheming of some evil-hearted Herodias.

The Bible's nameless woman. You have read how a certain woman of the mission met in Jerusalem. A woman of the red light district was to be tried—and how those old hypocrites, guilty as the devil himself, played to the crowd that their hands were clean and their garments were white and demanded that she be stoned to death. You have read how the loving Christ, when the question as to what should be done with her was put to him, wrote upon the ground and calmly said, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." And you have read how the oldest he-sinner on that reform committee got up and sneaked out and how all the rest of them followed him and the nameless woman and the forgiving Christ were left alone, and He said unto her, "Go and sin no more." This day the reform commission still holds its sessions and many an old reprobate, wanting to stand in with the better element, and get more votes at the next election demands that the nameless woman be stoned and for the reasons above stated plays up to the church folks that the red light district be cleaned out. Ringing down the ages is the voice of the tender and compassionate Christ saying to the nameless woman, "Go, and sin no more."

Mary, the mother of the Christ, was the model mother. She fled with her little son by night, went into a strange land, among people the enemies of her race, in order to save the life of her baby. Mary, the mother of the Christ, followed her son in spite of the howling and murderous mob, in spite of guarding soldiers, through the streets of Jerusalem in that early morning hour when he staggered under the weight of the cross upon which He was to die. When other friends deserted and denied and failed to play the friend, His mother stood by Him in all the three hours of death-agony. How the mother braved the mob and guards in order to be by her son whose life was going out by slow and agonizing murder cannot be understood except by a mother-heart. The spirit of Mary, the mother of the Christ lives today in the heart of every true and devoted mother. No sacrifice is too great for her to make in order to save the life of her child. It is recalled that Mary, the mother of Christ, stood near the cross of her son. We will write and write truly of you that today your mother, if she is living, is standing by your cross.

We got the women of the Bible so mixed up with the women of today that we will have to tell our good old friend that we cannot make an address on the "Women of the Bible."

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While Arthur Manney, a farmer of Woodland, Del., was digging up an apple tree he found, wrapped in the roots of the tree, a glass can filled with brandy and with a peach in it. The can was wrapped in tin and the roots of the tree had grown around it. The peach was as firm as the day it was picked. The apple tree is known to be at least 70 years old.

John T. Murphy, of Superior, Wis., while in Los Angeles, Cal., presided by long distance telephone over the annual banquet given by the Commercial club in Superior. He introduced John S. Mitchell, president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and F. L. Weaver, president of the Rotary club, who addressed the banqueters over the telephone.