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Lessons of Marie Curie

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I recently read a fascinating book, *Leçons de Marie Curie, Recueillies par Isabelle Chavannes en 1907(1)*. Some of you are probably wondering why I chose to write about a book that reproduces the notes taken by a 12-year-old schoolgirl in French during her physics classes in 1907. Three reasons: It's charming. It's fascinating. It made me think. What more can one ask of a book?

This little book provides a window into a fascinating experiment in education undertaken by a group of French academicians who were dissatisfied with the curriculum available in the schools, which did not offer girls the subjects needed to pass the examinations required for entrance into the Universities, and with the educational approach of the schools, which emphasized lectures and memorization over experience and independent thinking. They organized classes for their children, boys and girls together, with each...

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