MRS. JOHN A. LOGAN CRITICISES THE MAN OF THE PERIOD

If Women Are Deteriorating, Men Are Doing So Still More Rapidly---Fatally Infected by Selfishness and Greed.

Mrs. John A. Logan.

Mrs. John A. Logan, whose interview on women attracted such attention, and who adds to it, to-day, an interview on men, as striking in its forcefulness of criticism, was, before her marriage Mary Simmerson Cunningham, daughter of one of the best families in Missouri. She was educated in the Convent of St. Vincent, in Kentucky, and married John A. Logan, afterward General in the United States Army during the Civil War and one of the most celebrated fighters in that dreadful struggle, and later United States Senator.

She shared his public life as few women share their husband's careers, and was and is one of the most notable figures in Washington herself. She has written several notable books, traveled in almost all parts of the world, gave a son to her country in the Spanish war.

She presented, not very many years ago, a marvellous collection of mementoes of her distinguished husband and her heroic son to the State of Illinois.

She is a deep thinker. There are in the United States few women who have given equal proof of their ability.

By Edward Marshall.

THE men of the United States are losing many of their finest qualities. They have, for many years, been money-mad, now they are becoming sport-mad. They are forgetting their famed chivalry.

"The word 'home' is, in these days, getting to mean to them merely a neglected place where wives and daughters live. Our men are selfish, and are growing more so. They are dissipating till they often are disgusting. Their far-famed and fine abilities are degenerating sadly."

This is from Mrs. John A. Logan who, a few weeks since, delighted men throughout the world and horrified all womankind by telling me some startling things in criticism of her sex—by mercilessly laying bare the weaknesses of modern women.

No interview with any woman which, in recent years, has seen the light, has roused more criticism from some quarters and more praise from others, than did Mrs. Logan's stern arraignment of her sex's vanities and vices, small and large. That first statement, which she made to me in New York City was a stern arraignment of her sex.

Waste of their husbands' money upon dress, automobiles, and a thousand needless things; the silliness of their modern fashions, which, she declares, verge often on indecency; vicious tendencies toward gambling among themselves at social functions; drinking, smoking, and, above all, a growing neglect of home life, were among the sins she charged to this and to the rising female generation.

That the charges all struck home has been quite plainly indicated by the flood of protests which they have brought forth. In almost every city of the land indignant answers have appeared in interviews with well-known local women, in floods of "letters to the editor" from women not known but no less indignant, and everywhere exultant editorials by men have voiced approval.

Mrs. William Birdsall, one of the most famous women in Massachusetts, is one of the many who has expressed strong views. Mrs. Birdsall said that what the famous critic charged to women as a whole might, possibly, be true of some, but that the sex in general is rising grandly to the meeting of its modern opportunities. And, she continued:

"She has evidently tried hard to be fair, and has devoted eight lines of one paragraph of her five columns of denunciation of women to the faults of men. How now? We had innocently supposed that a larger percentage of the blame than this for the ills of this old earth would be their share. She says their only fault lies in their not sharing their business troubles with their wives, and that this is because their wives do not really want them to. * * * How deliciously funny this theory of the perfection of man-kind must sound to the 7,000,000 American women toiling in stores, factories, fields, offices, kitchens; to the 5,000,000 or more who are just as truly earning their own livings by faithfully performing their own household tasks and raising their children and getting puckers in their foreheads in trying to make one dollar do the work of two! Her implication that all men are dear and lamb-like is interesting, but not at all convincing."

It was this and many other statements somewhat like it which started me toward Washington intent on getting Mrs. Logan's frank opinion of the men. I got it—oh, I got it!

"When I told you honestly what I believed about the women of the period," said Mrs. Logan, "I had no thought that anyone would twist it into a defense of modern men. If anything, his faults are much more glaring than his wife's, his sister's, and his daughter's. And many of them are silly—as silly as poor woman's most inane absurdity. I spoke of hobble skirts as one fair sample of the modern woman's idiocy. They make the progress of the girl who tries to board a street car a peril and grotesque. But still, that hobbling is about her ankles and the binding is outside.

"The man of Now is putting, very often, hobbles on his brain, which halt his mental and his moral progress, and make it quite as hard for him to climb the stairway of advancement as the less important hobbles of the girl make it for her to climb a street car's steps.

"The man of this day and generation is a moral and a mental sluggard, and he cannot be these two without becoming also spiritually stagnant. One thing alone he thinks about, and that is money, money, money, and while, as I remarked before, much of this craze may be resultant from the mad extravagance of his womankind, yet more of it is due to his own foolishness or, very often, his own wickedness. I am told that physically, nowadays, men average higher than they used to average. It is the only way in which they have advanced, I fear.

"I have been amused by the great flood of criticism of the interview I gave you about women. I may not have been, perhaps, sufficiently explicit in differentiating between the wise and foolish women of our country, but it seemed to me to be unnecessary. If one is wise, one's self, one does not criticise the wise. I had no intention of arraigning the whole sex. Any fair-minded reader must have seen that. Most of the sensible and worthy women, I am sure, understood my criticism, and I have had many of that class assure me that they quite indorse my condemnation of the faults and follies of the women whom I aimed my charges at.

"The class which Mrs. Birdsall rises to defend was one against whom not the slightest criticism was extended. I agree with Mrs. Birdsall that such women are to be the saviors of our sex. To the millions of noble women in our land who are working for the uplift of humanity I am ever ready to pay homage. They do not drink cocktails, smoke cigarettes, gamble, wear hobble skirts, or practice any of the lamentable things to which I called attention. They do not need defense. Their deeds and their examples are all sufficient to exonerate them from any charge which I made bold to bring against their weaker sisters who do all these things and more.

"My critics are all wrong in thinking I am blind to the grave faults of men. It is with deep regret that I admit that many men fall far short of even low ideals. What I meant especially to call attention to was that deterioration among womankind is doubly dangerous because women are supposed to be men's guardian angels; this makes it doubly sad that many of them have been forfeiting their claim to moral superiority over men and placing themselves upon a level with the less worthy of the other sex by participating in those habits which are by no means any credit to the men themselves.

"Men's privileges are and always have been higher than the privileges which they vouchsafe to women, and to say that they live up to them would be absurd. Humanity is very frail, and among all ages and all classes of men there may be found examples of those who have degenerated. If they were not greatly in the minority society would be utterly demoralized and civilization not more than a name.

"I do not hold all womankind as subject to the criticism which I made of certain classes, and all men are not chargeable with all the faults which some are guilty of, but man, of this day and generation, is very far from perfect. The whole sex should not be held responsible for the sins of the few, any more than the whole female sex should be required to bear the contumely which the recklessness and weaknesses of some women led me to put upon a certain class of women; but I cannot say that anything in modern life has led me to believe that men of this generation are in any way superior to the men of old. If women are not improving, then men, I fear, are definitely degenerating.

"Selfishness is, undoubtedly, man's most egregious weakness, and to this quality may doubtless be traced the greater number of his most preposterous and cruel deeds. I am afraid the modern man is far more selfish than the man of the last century. If the craze for automobiles, cards, and hobble skirts is, in the woman, a bad sign, the craze for money-getting, by no means always traceable to a man's desire to please his womankind, is a worse sign in him. Men of this day are stark money-mad. And it is truer of the man of the United States, I fear, than of the man of any other country. If women sometimes, through their vanity, neglect their homes, men neglect them much more sadly and much oftener, through greed or through those worse traits which come with living at too high a pressure. Not very often in these days do we find the fine old feeling of family responsibility which animated the normal family man a century ago. Selfishness, as I have said, often dominates men now till they become oblivious to the promptings of their nobler natures.

"If there are women who do not, by study and that best companionship which they could offer to their husbands, truly learn rightly to play the part of helpmeets, there are far more men who, for one selfish reason or another, never give their wives the opportunity. Wisdom and weakness have ever gone hand in hand in the characters of many of our greatest and our ablest men, for no man ever has been perfect; but there is less of wisdom and far more of weakness in the so-called great men of to-day than in the truly great of the past century.

"So, in the indulgence of their selfishness, men not infrequently deprive themselves of the counsel and help of their best friends—their womenfolk—in the struggle for the accomplishment of their dearest desires and loftiest ambitions, and, through this, fail. Few modern men tell their wives all that might be told about their own affairs, and this is by no means always due to any fear that the wives, if they were told, would fail to understand. The feeling that if they should confide to them their hopes and aspirations and, after having so confided, should succeed, the wives whom they had trusted might claim some credit for the victory, or might claim more of victory's fruits than they were willing to share with them is, undoubtedly, the reason for much reticence. Many, without reason, doubt the discretion of their wives, and thereby deprive themselves of what might be the wisest, most unselfish counsels.

"And the selfishness of modern men drifts into egotism constantly. They are dreadful sufferers from it—the men of this day and generation. It is the most insufferable of all propensities. The capital 'I' is, to many men and, it sometimes seems to me, a growing number, the beginning and the end of everything they think about. The egotist has no sympathy with anyone, nor is he willing to give anyone their due—least of all will he give credit to a woman for the help which she has rendered him. In the home the modern man is, therefore, but a petty tyrant, recognizing merit in no one but himself.

"Men in these days, too, evade as much responsibility as they can shirk, especially in the training of their children. How many fathers of to-day take any real and worthy part in the training of their sons and daughters for the duties of life? Not many. They seem to think that if they provide a proper support for those dependent upon them they have discharged their total duty. The modern father fails utterly to comprehend that his companionship and guidance in all the first affairs of life is by far the most important contribution he can give his family. The sense of duty certainly has shrivelled in the modern man—shrivelled till it scarcely is existant.

"Many children need especially intimate association with their fathers in order to learn properly how best to fight life's coming battles, but few get it these days. Is it that too often fathers actually shrink from letting sons and daughters know the inner workings of their business methods, knowing that, should they reveal them, they would lose their progeny's respect? It may be so. The fathers of the olden days imparted principles to their sons' minds as carefully as they now put spending-money in their pockets. The modern father who is rich or prosperous seems to think that if his son has money from him in his pocket he has done his duty by him; the modern father who is poor thrusts his boy out in the world to earn as soon as he can work, and gauges the poor lad's success by what he earns. This establishes in the boy's mind a bad ideal—the same ideal, however, which now fills the father's mind. Greed, greed, greed only.

"The rich man piles up riches for his children, but does not show them how to use them. That they dissipate them, often, is not reason for surprise. The foolishness, the sinfulness of rich men's sons is now proverbial. Men sneer at them, the newspapers are full of criticism of them, a hundred articles a year are printed showing that the second generation, offspring of the men who have built up the nation's greatest fortunes, are mere weaklings. Whose fault is this? The boys' fault? Scarcely. In nine cases out of ten it is the fault of those same fathers—far more the fathers' fault than it could be the mothers'. The rich man's son today goes out into the world with a fine 'education,' but untrained. He has had not the slightest actual guidance from the one who should have made it his life's business to supply it.

"Commercial life in these days is, not so infrequently, piracy disguised. And pirates' sons—what wonder is it that they spend the money which their fathers have obtained by questionable methods, without regard for their own welfare or the welfare of their kind? If mothers nowadays too often do not give their daughters time enough, the case is rare in which a father gives any time at all to his developing son. There are sons of rich men in this country who have grown to manhood with less attention from their fathers than would be shown by savages to their male progeny. Of course, such sons go wrong. Why shouldn't they?

"And, living at high pressure, engaged in business which is, in its intensity and unscrupulousness of competition itself a dissipation, what example do these men set to their sons? Of what avail would wise and moral counsel be from such men? No man can safely calculate that his shortcomings are unknown to his family. It is a trait of human nature that children very quickly learn the faults of grown-ups, and are more likely to copy them than to emulate their virtues. What sort of principles are likely to obtain in a boy's breast if his father is the modern rich man, rich through an oppression of the poor more vicious than that of old Rhenish barons?

"There is no father quite astute enough to hide the evil that he does from the inquisitive eyes and sensitive ears of wife and family; be the modern business man never so careful in his efforts to conceal his vicious methods from his offspring, it will none the less be almost certain that his secret lack of principle is known and understood within the family circle, if it is not elsewhere. And, of course, 'like father, like children' is the rule, not the exception.

"And there are other admirable traits than proper fatherhood which seem, lamentably, to be disappearing in the modern man. Bravery, alas! is one of them. I am amazed by the timidity of men of the present generation. They are afraid of everything, including their own shadows. What is manhood coming to, I sometimes wonder? The employer fears his workingman in these days, and the workingman fears his employer; investments are afraid of capital and, far too often, capital has dire reason to be afraid of the investment. The workingman must organize to save himself, and, in their turn, the men who hire him band themselves together in defense. Where, where has courage gone to in the modern man? That fine, old self-reliance which built up this country is lacking in the men who cast their votes to-day. All must be led, and the few leaders too frequently are far from worthy.

"When I talked to you of women, I said much about their vanity. I spoke about their hats, their hobble skirts, their foolish fashions generally. Men, in their way, are quite as vain as women are, and few of them have half as good excuse for vanity. I am not speaking now of the vanity which men who have achieved feel over their achievements. They would be better off without it, but there is a shadow of excuse for it. But few men have achieved, and all men are vain. Many men devote more time to clothing than they do to the development of their manhood, and the result is instantly apparent. Their clothing is elaborate, their manhood non-existent. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap, and sharp creases in their trousers are what many of the rising generation seem to reap exclusively. Creases in their trousers!

"What did the men who founded this Republic and gave it a great start in its first years care about their trousers, so long as they were whole and clean! Watch the crowds on Broadway in New York, on State Street in Chicago, the outpouring daily from the great departments here in Washington, and see which is in preponderance proportionately, the dudes or girls in hobble skirts. You will find as many signs of silly vanity among the trousered throng as you will among the petticoated multitudes. The vanity of college boys is quite as great, and infinitely more disgusting, than the vanity of college girls. A woman, properly costumed, is often a real thing of beauty and that gives the labor which the costume has required a fair excuse. No man can make himself a thing of beauty by his dress. For him to try is far more inexcusable than for the woman, for, often, she can really succeed. The foolish woman who is vain is often, in a way, a thing delightful to the eye; the foolish man who panders to his vanity is not delightful to the eye nor to any of the other senses of mankind. He merely is a stupid, vapid thing, which irks all the right-minded of his species. When have we ever had a woman half as famous for her nonsensical display of gowns as Berry Wall, "King of the Dudes," became through his display of waistcoats? There are vain and stupid women, beyond question, but there are also vain and stupid men, and there is less excuse for vanity in men.

"Men, too, are unjust to women constantly, and are ungenerous. Continually they belittle her and thrust her back, deerying her demonstrated ability. Men do not give their wives due credit for a reasonable comprehension of subjects which, very likely, they could see further into than the men themselves can see, for there are certain problems at which women's brains are better far than men's. And the woman, after one or two unappreciative attempts to help, ceases to express herself, fearing that she will be suppressed. But there are women who help greatly and are still considered ordinary by the outside world. Nowhere is that oftener evidenced than here in Washington.

"I have known and know now many women who claim nothing and who get no credit who are, none the less, the real brains behind a statesman's reputation. And there are others who assist their husbands in such secrecy that the fact that they are helping is hidden, even from the husband. In his egotism, if he dreamed that his wife was really helping he would shut himself away from her assistance. Many a woman who would not let the world know, for a fortune, that she is capable of serious thought at all, is really responsible for almost every clever thought her husband gets the credit for. Of course really great men admit their wives's assistance to themselves, their wives, and to the outside world, but there are few men who are really great. Gen. Logan used to practice arguments on me. Often, for the sake of the debate, he would take positions which he knew I would oppose. The practice did us both good. Many men who sneer at women might resort to it with benefit, not only to themselves but to their wives. A woman who earns credit does not always demand that it be publicly acknowledged. If men better understood this some of the more egotistical of them might get more help from their wives."

I had gone to Mrs. Logan for something which would appease the angry women of the country; I had received, instead, an arraignment of my sex which was beginning to appall me. I strove to stem the tide, to find something Mrs. Logan would approve of in the modern man.

"But men," said I, "are just as brave as ever, aren't they?"

"Emergencies will produce their heroes, always," she replied, "but men are not as brave as they once were. Every day shows signs of their timidity, and of all the abominable creatures on the earth's face the coward is the most abominable. My men have been brave, thank God, both morally and physically, and all men should be. The man who flinches in his soul or in his body is no man, to me. I remember one time when I was a girl my father did not come home at the usual time for supper, which, in those days, was the evening meal we now call dinner. An hour later he came in, smiling, happy, casual.

"'Where in the world have you been?' my mother asked, for he was not the man to keep his family waiting at meal time.

"The day before the editor of the local paper had come out with something scurrilous about him, as some editors are prone to do about men in public life with whom they do not agree.

"'I've just been up to Edwards' office to give him a good trouncing,' said my father, pleasantly, 'and then I had to go, of course, and pay my fine!' There are no episodes of that sort nowadays."

"What is the worst fault of the American man?" I asked the question very timidly.

"It's not a fault, alone, it's a disease," said Mrs. Logan. "He is suffering from commercialization of the brain. We see it here in Washington continually. The complaint is general throughout the Nation—it has been a fierce contagion which has spread from sea to sea, unfortunately. We have not enough men in America who have not been the victims of it to make up a congress of real competence to handle public business upon broad and fitting lines. Both the House and Senate suffer from it. The craze for making money has so swept the land that we are handicapped in choosing lawmakers. A young man cannot give to the big problems of existence the time and study necessary to fit him to become an able legislator and still carry on a business with success in these days. The result is that we have, in the United States, no fitted class to draw from when election time comes round.

"That is one of the important causes of the present lamentable state of things in Congress. There is in House and Senate a preponderance of commercial brains. There are few members of either branch who cannot tell you instantly whether or not a proposed project will be profitable; there are few in either branch who can express intelligent views on the effect of the same project on the State, or of its real republicanism. They have not the least idea what impression of what they do will have on foreign governments or on any detail of the people's welfare which is not carried in the people's pocket. They understand investment perfectly, but know little of the true conditions most beneficial to advancement and the perpetuation of our institutions. They will sacrifice their nation to their money-god, even as most of them, or many of them have already sacrificed (often without knowing it) their family life to the same idol.

"I don't despise money. I know money to be very great and necessary. I have no sympathy with all the wild attacks which from time to time are made on capital. I know them to be bad and very dangerous. But I hate to see our men as utterly engrossed in money, as they are, so worked up in its contemplation that they forget all else, including home and country—their paternalism and their patriotism.

"It is their greed for money, this servitude to the Great Dollar Sign, which is ruining our men. Our women may be victims of the spending mania, our men are victims of the getting mania, and of the two there is more generosity and common human decency in the spend-thrift than there is in the gold-glutton. It is this which makes men leave home-management, home-preservation wholly to the woman. She is incapable of doing the whole task. No man, no woman, can do it alone. The demands which public men in Washington make on their wives are dreadful. A woman cannot properly attend to home and children and do what is required in the way of entertaining. The dinner evil is a mighty one in Washington. It overtaxes hostesses, it overfeeds their guests. It is not so great a show of gluttony as one may see in England, but it is becoming worse with each new year. They really accomplish nothing, these great dinners. There is no actual interchange of real ideas at the boards whereon they are so elegantly and elaborately served. The talk is all small-talk, and small-talk is entirely useless.

"And that brings me to another sin of which the man in the United States is guilty. Without excuse he seems to think, and it's a grave mistake, that women, when in conversation, care for nothings only. Men won't talk sense when in society and therefore women get the notion that they don't like sense, that they want them to be silly. I heard one young woman say, not very long ago:

"'I'm going to be as big a baby as I can; I'm going to be as clinging as I can. The babyish and clinging women are the ones whom husbands seem to care for most, whereas women who will take responsibilities are allowed to shoulder them and then forced, presently, to carry them without assistance.'

"There was a lot of truth in what she said, and, when you come to think of it, it was a sharp arraignment of American men.

"Another growing trait, and one which is not admirable, is evidenced continually here in Washington. I suppose Department clerks are normal samples of the young man of the period. Well, there is a practice common among Department clerks which seems significant of real degeneration to me. Plenty of them marry young co-clerks in secret, so that the girls may keep on working, retain their clerical positions, and continue to draw salary. If the marriages were public the girls would lose their clerical positions. Young men, it seems to me, are more and more willing to let their wives earn money, and to accept the half-home of a boarding-house, or the no-home of an ill-kept flat in consequence, for the sake of the salaries they draw. It is another and a striking symptom of chivalry's decline in the United States. The boy in high-school takes it for granted that his girl sweetheart is to learn stenography, or something, by which to earn a living for herself. Yes, you men are rapidly forgetting all the chivalry of your grandfathers. The man who lets his wife earn money shows by doing so a definite deterioration peculiar to the time. He, himself, by doing so, has made a long step toward becoming a mere weakling, and such weaklings are getting to be as characteristic of American men, as the fine and chivalrous type was in the days gone by. There was a time when the American man would have been horrified, as long as he was strong and well, at the mere thought of letting his wife go out to earn, but that time has, apparently gone by.

"This has had a most unfortunate effect on the male character and has increased the American woman's desire for independence. The Creator intended women to be dependent; people should not marry if each does not expect to take a rightful share of the responsibility—the man's to earn, the woman's to keep up the home.

"The American man has lost ground, also, in yet another detail, and this loss is very serious. It may, I suppose, be but a part of his sad loss of chivalry. He is no longer even fairly faithful to his home. That men are feeling home-responsibilities less keenly and observing them less rigidly, is a melancholy truth.

"Oh, there are counts enough in the indictment against man. His tendency to drug his sorrows into somnolence with rum is constantly becoming commoner with the American, and, by the attempt he doubles them. More Americans each year are drinking when they find things going wrong.

"Men, too, are losing their high sense of leadership, which may possibly be why the women are attempting to assume it by an entry into politics. I'm greatly in favor of men being leaders, but, in many things, they seem content, these days, to sit back and let their womenfolk proceed in precedence. Who build the churches? Women. Who look most carefully, in these days, after schools? The women.

"The American man, of these days, is demoralized, not benefited by his sports. In old days men raced horses, but it was good sport among true gentlemen. They got real pleasure from it and it helped real horse-development. Now what has horse-racing become? It is the 'sport of kings' no longer, but the deadly dissipation of the dastard and degenerate. Gen. Logan's father was a great horseman, but he never swore an oath nor drank a glass of liquor in his life. Find a horseman like him nowadays and bring him to me. I should like to shake his hand. All modern sports seem to be demoralizing. Look at football, even baseball. Aviation, mankind's newest, is mere dare-devil jockeying with death. Men say that women wear too many feathers on their hats. Well, the hats are on the outside of the women's heads, and men, when I consider them with care, seem to wear the feathers on the inside of their own. Which is more to be, in justice, criticised—women's high respect for pretty fineries, or man's for portly financiers? How many fathers carry their investigations of their daughters' suitors further than a study of their bank accounts? Not many think a study of their morals necessary. Mothers sometimes do not heed these things; fathers almost never do. Men, to my mind, should be required to be as pure of mind and soul as women are—as high-idealed and moral. How many of them are? A great injustice is done here. Stop and consider for a moment the resounding hue and cry which rises when a man is married to a 'woman with a past,' and then stop and wonder just how many men there are who marry without pasts of their own. The 'double-standard' is all wrong, and it is men, not women, who most adroitly foster it."

"Then those who judged from what you said in the first interview, that you thought the American man more worthy than the American woman, were entirely wrong?" I ventured.

"Wrong? America has produced some wondrous men, and it has been my pleasant fortune to know, possibly, a greater number of them than most women have. But if its men have been superb, at times, its women have been marvelous. And if, in one detail, these women are deteriorating, the men are failing in a dozen. I do not fear to tell my sex what I consider is its faults; I find myself incompetent even to start upon the catalogue of men's."

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