

Editorial Release

"TOE HOLD ON THE LADDER" - Address given by N. Myra Glazier, President of Sheppard Envelope Company, Worcester, Mass., at General Federation of Women's Clubs Convention, June 26, 1947, Commodore Hotel, New York, N.Y.

N. Myra Glazier, president of Sheppard Envelope Company, Worcester, Massachusetts, recently chosen by the National Association of Manufacturers as one of the four outstanding women industrial leaders of the country, advised women in industry today to climb and keep climbing up the ladder of success. She gave this advice before three thousand delegates to the General Federation of Women's Clubs Convention Thursday afternoon at the Commodore Hotel in New York, N.Y. Her address follows:

How many of you alert-looking ladies can climb a ladder? I don't mean a stepping stool the same as Good Housekeeping recommends for household safety usage - I mean a real, wooden or steel, upright ladder. It's wonderful training. No one can help you. You are utterly dependent on your own ability. No one can give you that body-lift from rung to rung except yourself. Very often a helping hand is extended from above, or you get a boost from the rear - but your foot-hold security and hand by hand up-pull is yours alone. And when you make that last rung at the top, a grunt of satisfaction comes, "Well, I made it!" - and so our ladder of success is scaled.

How long have women been attempting to climb up our ladder? Forty thousand years, according to H. G. Wells - most of that time as

slaves or property items of man. Even a hundred years ago, in England no rights or recognition were extended to a woman. If she committed a crime, she did not stand trial or receive punishment - her husband or father did because she was his property. Oh yes, we had a few who emerged - Sappho - Joan of Arc - Cleopatra - Catherine the Great, but these have been trifling exceptions to the prevailing masculine state of affairs. These are historic facts which point up to the historic question, "Why haven't more women reached the top?" Everyone knows the answer, but because the condition itself persists, namely, the comparative fewness of women who have scaled the top rung, yes, the top level of business and public affairs -- the question continues to be, in a sense, unanswered.

Briefly and simply, there are two reasons why more women have not reached the top. One reason is men -- and the other, women. Men have prevented women from reaching the top. But women have not only stood in their own way, but also in the way of other women who might have tasted success.

Not until World War I, did man and our modern industrial society learn and admit that an all-out war could not be fought without the support of women. Only then, did Britain and the United States give women the status of citizens. These nations, and Finland and Norway before them, were to give women a participation in public affairs that the world, from recorded time, had denied them.

For several thousand years of civilized history -- as far back as Aristotle and Plato, at least, men have been listening with varying degrees of impatience to this feminine plea for equality.

What finally won them over was not reason, but violence and militancy.

Reluctant old England gave her women the vote after the ladies had set fire to public buildings, poured tar in the mailboxes, and smashed thousands of London windows. Men had resisted argument, but they gave way to nagging and noise!

These historical facts justify the slowness of philosophers to recognize the intellectual faculties of women. I am not a historian. I refer you to these records to prove my statement that it's been a man's world for rather a long time. W. L. George, who wrote "The Story of Woman", says it still IS a man's world - a Madame Curie, an Amelia Earhart, a Frances Perkins or a Clare Booth Luce to the contrary, notwithstanding.

Says Mr. George, "If we consider each rank in business, in the professions, and in the public services, we find a ratio of less than one woman on an equality with 27 men. One may imagine, therefore", he adds, "what extraordinary capacity women must still show to obtain, not superior, but merely equal rank with men."

But if it seems to be a man's world, I scarcely think the future of women lies in revolt. Rather, I think does it lie in co-operation with men. A woman is not less a woman because she has brains, initiative, imagination, and a sense of humor. These are qualities that have always made women interesting -- and made her valuable -- whether she was saving a throne for the Dauphin of France or isolating radium or building a successful business.

When men extend the helping hand, and they will and do, to give you a lift up to the next ladder rung, take the hand, but then let go, make good, and don't slip off. Many promotions are withheld because men fear they will jeopardize their own positions by women

failing to make good on their own. They are suspicious, too, of woman's emotional stability.

Reason No. 2 for the difficult climb to the top -- woman, herself -- is less easy to talk about, because this obstacle lies in the woman, herself, deeply entangled in that welter of small feminine follies which have been caricaturized for centuries as the tragic - comic aspect of the feminine personality. If you have ever seen Cornelia Otis Skinner interpret her own sex, you know what I mean.

Our preoccupation, sometimes with trifles, while we miss the bus, our inability to be impersonal, our frequent lack of generosity to other women, our original sin of pettiness, our want of humor, sometimes all these, we may as well admit, have hurt us in the difficult climb to the top.

What will help us up the climb? Let's name a few of our rungs:

Energy - not nagging

Stick-to-it-iveness

Aptness for Detail

Intuition

Education

Generosity - negative approach

Vision

Biology

Tolerance

Emotional stability

When men get together for relaxation, what do they usually talk about? Baseball, golf, politics, their grandchildren, their new cars. They may get into a controversy, yet shortly afterwards, you'll

see them walking off to lunch together, arm in arm.

But when women disagree violently, what happens? When women as eminent as Clare Booth Luce and Dorothy Thompson got into a nation-wide argument over their respective candidates, what did they talk about? The political issues? They did not! When Clare and Dorothy got through appraising each other, Walter Winchell said: "Ladies! Ladies! Please remember -- there are gentlemen present!" Yes, it's hard for us to be impersonal.

Strangely enough, along with the courage and sacrifice which have been characteristically associated with womankind since the Book of Genesis, have gone these blind spots that keep us from greatness. And at times, even our best qualities - our sympathies, our loyalties, and our enthusiasms -- have betrayed us. And ever and anon, we've made the greatest of all mistakes! We've humiliated men by being right when they were wrong.

I don't think it's ever going to be a woman's world, in the odious sense of that phrase. I am wholly sure that women, themselves, would not like it. But it can be a world of Men and Women, of Greater Equality between them -- of greater co-operation -- and still be a very good world, indeed. And some of the wisest observers seem to think that is what's going to happen.

Of one thing you may be sure; an ever-increasing number of women are going into careers. That, because in the first place, there are more and more of them. Secondly, "Contrast this with 1950, when," -- the U. S. Department of Labor says, -- "between

50 and 60 percent of all American women, married or single, will be permanently self-supporting."

Every year our schools and colleges are turning out thousands of well-trained young women for jobs in business. and never, you will note, was the emphasis upon personality greater.

The most conservative women's colleges in the land know and teach that tolerance, friendliness, and wisdom in one's human relations cannot be made second even to the greatest skill.

If men have learned sportsmanship and good humor, women can learn them, too. And as they grow in wisdom and experience, you'll find more and more of them at the top. Nor need that be a cause for alarm. Women do not want to rule men - certainly in any obvious or obtrusive way.

You may remember what Candida says in the last act of Shaw's great play: "I build a castle of comfort and indulgence for him and stand sentinel to keep his vulgar cares out. I make him master here -- though he does not know it!"

And that, I suppose, is what every woman knows. If her brains help to make man master, she must not let him know it. That would break the spell -- for both of them.

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