

THE LADY OF THE CAPITOL.

Mrs. Ames, in her last Washington letter to the New York Independent, describes some of the female lobbyists and their ways. The following sketch is thrillingly interesting:

Leaning back in a deep chair, no one near her, you see a fair woman, whose beautiful presence seems at variance with the many anxious and angular and a few coarse women around her. The calmness of assured position, the serene satisfaction of conscious beauty, envelope her and float from her like an atmosphere. We feel it even here. Pale plumes droop above her lovely forehead, velvet draperies fall about her graceful form. We catch a glimpse of alluring laces, the gleam of jewels glittering on dimpled, ungloved hands. Look long into this face; its splendor of tint and deflection of outline can bear the closest scrutiny. Look long, and then say if a soul saintly as well as serene looks out from under those penciled arches, through the dilating irises of those beguiling eyes. Look! and the unveiled gaze which meets yours will tell you, as plainly as gaze can tell, that adulation is the life of its life, and seduction the secret of its spell. This beauty would not blanch before the profanest sight; it is the beauty of one who tunes her tongue to honeyed accents, and lifts up her eyelids to lead men astray. She comes and goes in a showy carriage. She glides through the corridors, haunts the galleries and ante-rooms of the capitol—everywhere conspicuous in her beauty. All who behold her, inquire: "Who is that beautiful woman?" Nobody seems quite sure. Doubt and mystery envelope her like a cloud. "She is a rich and beautiful widow," "She is unmarried," "She is visiting the city with her husband." Every gazer has a different answer.

There are a few deep in the secrets of diplomacy, of legislative venality, of government prostitution, who can tell you that she is one of the most subtle and most dangerous of lobbyists. She is but one of a class always beautiful and always successful. She plays for large stakes; but she always wins. The man who says to her, securely appointment, make sure my promotion, and I will pay you so many thousands. Does she wait like a suppliant? Not at all. She sits like an empress waiting to give audience. Will she receive her subjects in promiscuous assemblages? No. If you wait long enough, you see her glide over these tasseled floors; not alone. Far from the crowd, in some anteroom sumptuous enough for the Sybrites, this woman, as beautiful as nature and art can make her, will dazzle the sight of a half demented and wholly bewildered magnate, and then tell him what she wants. With alluring eyes and beguiling voice, she will besiege his will through the outwork of his senses, and so charm him on to do her pleasure. He promises her his influence; he promises her his power, her favorite shall have the boon he demands. Thus some of the highest prizes in the government are won. Unscrupulous men pay wily women to touch the subtlest and surest springs of influence, and thus open a secret way to their public success. No longer the question is, shall women participate in politics; shall they form a controlling element in the government? But as there are women who will and do exert this power, shall they remain covert, equivocal, demoralizing, base? or shall it be brave and pure, and open as the sun?"

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