Leadership

When a hundred and fifty thousand women take the trouble to put down in writing their judgment as to the qualities essential to the woman leader the result cannot be treated lightly.

Remember that women in this Republic from the days of Abigail Adams and Mercy Warren on have had opportunities to test the leadership of other women. Today everywhere in this country women belong to something. They get from these somethings contacts, outlets, which help them through the hard task of daily living. They are called upon in all of these various organizations, religious, educational, social, economic, political, to choose leaders, so that any expression of this multitude on the qualities of leadership has the backing of experience.

That is here are one hundred and fifty thousand women speaking who know more or less of what they are talking about. They have set down their judgments. Not one of these hundred and fifty thousand judgments but has had an interested scrutiny by women of experience, sympathy, understanding. And what is the result? What does it boil down to, as we say?

What do these hundred and fifty thousand women want in a woman they are to follow?

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First, they want a pioneer in better things. They call this pioneering by various names. The favorite one seems to be vision.

They ask that the leader have faith, that the upward way to which she points can be travelled, that is, that she be an idealist - one of the frequent words they use.

Always they insist that she be unselfish, that her passion be to help others and in various terms they demand integrity in carrying out what she has undertaken.

And always they talk of courage. That is, summed up they want a leader who is willing, bravely, honestly, unselfishly, to go after some high aim, something not yet attained but which she believes to be attainable.

It is worth note that there is scarcely a word of skepticism of finding these qualities, scarcely a word of criticism of leadership as they have known it and as we see it in the world today. They do not recognize the part that selfishness, ambition, ruthlessness, the sacrifice of integrity in the name of the cause, vacillation, the divided mind, plays in the great leaders of the world - men and women - as we have known them. What they do recognize is that in all leaders there must be and is something of the qualities which they believe essential. And they are willing to ignore that which is not pure gold.

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In reporting the names of the winners in this contest I should like to remark that if these qualities in anything like the purity with which these women believe it is possible that they be exercised, had been the controlling motives of the leaders of the world in the last twenty years the situation in which we find ourselves today would be very different one from what it is. And I want to add as my personal judgment that we are going to come out of our difficulty in proportion to the way in which we exercise the faith, the unselfishness, the integrity, the courage for which these women call.

And now I have the pleasant task of reporting the names of the winnerss-

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