



FROM THE BAG

Under the brightest and darkest of skies I have passed more than a half-century at the national capital, surrounded all the while by the most illustrious people of my own and other countries. I have been familiar with the great events and movements that have made America and Americans what they are, and I honor the men and women great and small who have had a part in the building of this peerless Republic, which guarantees to all men life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Mrs. John A. Logan

Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife 451 (1913)



THIRTY YEARS IN WASHINGTON

OR LIFE AND SCENES IN OUR NATIONAL CAPITAL

Mrs. John A. Logan

Mary Simmerson Cunningham Logan moved to Washington, DC from Illinois in 1867 as the wife of Congressman John A. Logan. She spent most of the next two decades supporting John's career in the House of Representatives and then in the Senate. After he died in office in 1886, Mary remained in the capital city for close to 40 years, during which she built a productive career as an author and editor – or at least that was when her work in those fields became known to the public. She “began her work [as a writer] when she was very young, but did not use her own name until after [Senator] Logan's death.” Carrie Earle Garrett, *First Attempts of Famous Literary Women*, Arthur's Home Magazine, Aug. 1892, at 713. Mary started work on her main editorial enterprise, *The Home Magazine*, shortly after John's death. It was a great success, with hundreds of thousands of subscribers at the peak of its popularity. The Bobbs-Merrill Company purchased it in 1906 and Mary retired from the editorship two years later. She also wrote a column for the Hearst newspaper syndicate and several well-received books, including *The Part Taken by Women in American History* and *Thirty Years in Washington*, a combination memoir and civics text. We have extracted a few sections from *Thirty Years* that give an intriguing view of life and the law in the capital city a century and more ago – the preface, a diagram of the Capitol, and the chapter on the Justice Department and the Supreme Court, which Mary calls “The Heaven of Legal Ambition.”

— *The Editors*

Mrs. Logan (1838-1923) was an author and editor based in Washington, DC.

Mrs. John A. Logan

THIRTY YEARS IN WASHINGTON

OR

LIFE AND SCENES IN OUR NATIONAL CAPITAL.

PORTRAYING

THE WONDERFUL OPERATIONS IN ALL THE GREAT DEPARTMENTS, AND
DESCRIBING EVERY IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF OUR
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT,

INCLUDING ITS

**Historical, Executive, Administrative, Departmental, Artistic, and Social
Features.**

WITH SKETCHES OF

THE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR WIVES

AND OF

ALL THE FAMOUS WOMEN WHO HAVE REIGNED IN THE WHITE HOUSE

FROM WASHINGTON'S TO ROOSEVELT'S ADMINISTRATION.

EDITED

By **MRS. JOHN A. LOGAN.**



Main Entrance to the White House.

Superbly Illustrated

WITH FIFTY FULL-PAGE PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS MADE BY SPECIAL
PERMISSION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT EXPRESSLY FOR THIS WORK.

A. D. WORTHINGTON & CO., PUBLISHERS,
HARTFORD, CONN.



IN presenting this volume, in the preparation of which the utmost care has been taken, and no expense considered too great, I have endeavored to meet the demand for a story of the birth and growth of our National Capital, and for a comprehensive and interesting description of the countless and mighty interests that center there. Few citizens of the United States really appreciate the number and magnitude of the Departments of the Government, or realize how marvelously the volume of business has expanded as the population of our ever-widening domain has increased. Many otherwise well-informed people are unfamiliar with the workings of the giant activities carried on in these Departments, and much of what I have written will doubtless be a revelation to them.

The sketches of the Presidents of the great Republic, from Washington to McKinley, together with those of the ladies of the White House, whose influence has often been "the power behind the throne," I am sure will claim the in-

(i)

terested attention of my readers. The lives and personality of these women have been overshadowed, historically speaking, by the more prominent careers of their distinguished husbands or relatives. Every woman will read with pride the record of these women who were called to fill the most prominent and difficult position in the gift of the people. In almost every instance they were lovely and admirable characters. Most of them were equipped by birth, education, and social acquirements to adorn this high position; and some possessed a rare combination of gifts and graces that made them pre-eminent as social queens, and made their reign, as mistress of the White House, a part of our National history.

My first introduction to life in the city of Washington was in 1858, General Logan being then a member of Congress, and for more than thirty years I have lived there almost continuously, an interested observer of passing events. As the wife of a Senator, I may say that I enjoyed unusual privileges and opportunities to see and know the inner life and activities of the Capital City. I have had my share of the favor of the powers that were, and the honor of being included among the distinguished guests at both private and official entertainments; and I have known the pleasure of personal acquaintance with prominent statesmen, courtly diplomats, gallant commanders of our Army and Navy, famous scientists and authors, and beautiful, winning, and gifted women, filling with grace and dignity the highest social positions that the people could bestow. In these years there have been stormy political times, and troubled years of cruel war,

Thirty Years in Washington

PREFACE.

iii

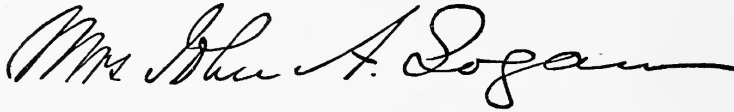
when the very existence of the Nation was threatened, and many happy, prosperous years of peace. Through all, our great Republic has steadily advanced to the highest station among the ruling powers of the world.

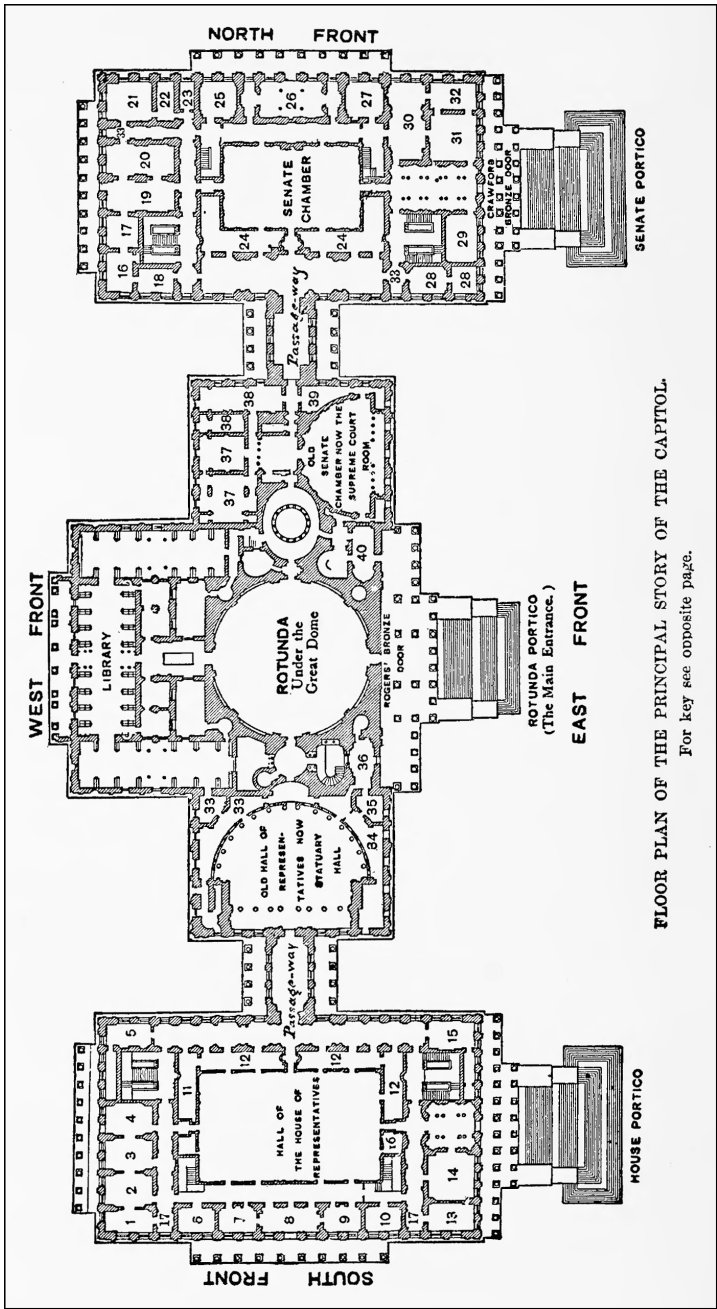
What I have written has been without prejudice, and with no striving for sensational effect. I know whereof I affirm, and this volume may be looked upon as reliable, whether in its historical review of the birth and development of our National Capital; its presentation of the official duties and responsibilities of those who occupy high or humble positions in the government service; its account of the marvelously interesting workings of great administrative forces; its biographical sketches of famous characters; its descriptions of remarkable events; or its portrayal of everyday life in a city that, from a straggling village in the woods, has grown to be one of the most stately and magnificent of capitals, vying with those of the Old World in picturesqueness, majestic and splendid architecture, artistic decoration, unique and manifold government industries, and surpassing all of them in its collections of relics and curiosities from every part of the world.

It has been my aim to show my readers, both by word and pictorial art, the wonders and the workings of the elaborate machinery of the Government in motion, by leading them through the great national buildings and explaining what the army of busy men and women workers do and how they do it; to show them the works of art, and the architectural glories and priceless treasures of the Capital; to portray not only daily life at the White House, past and present, but its brilliant social and official functions as

well; in short, to present every interesting phase of life in Washington.

My desire is to be remembered as an intelligent guide, leading the reader on from one scene of interest to another, awakening the mind to a finer comprehension of our country's greatness, and inspiring all with a higher and more devoted patriotism.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mrs John A. Logan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the main body of text in the preface.



FLOOR PLAN OF THE PRINCIPAL STORY OF THE CAPITOL.
For key see opposite page.

KEY TO THE PRINCIPAL STORY OF THE CAPITOL.

The diagram printed on the opposite page was reproduced from the government plan. All the rooms now occupied are numbered, and are devoted to the following uses :

HOUSE WING.

1. { Appropriations.
2. {
3. Committee on Rivers and Harbors.
4. Journal, printing, and file clerks of the House.
5. Committee on Naval Affairs.
6. Closets.
7. {
8. { Members' retiring room.
9. {
10. Speaker's room.
12. Cloakrooms.
13. Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House.
14. Committee on Ways and Means.
15. Committee on Military Affairs.
16. House Library.
17. Elevators.

SENATE WING.

16. Office of the Secretary of the Senate.
17. Executive Clerk of the Senate.
18. Financial Clerk of the Senate.
19. Chief Clerk of the Senate.
20. Engrossing and enrolling clerks of the Senate.
21. { Committee on Appropriations.
22. {
23. Closets.
24. Cloakrooms.
25. Room of the President.
26. The Senators' reception room.

27. The Vice-President's room.
28. Committee on Finance.
29. Official Reporters of Debates.
30. Public reception room.
31. Committee on the District of Columbia.
32. Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate.
33. Elevator.

MAIN BUILDING.

33. House document room.
34. Engrossing and enrolling clerks of the House.
35. Committee on Enrolled Bills.
36. Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives. It was in this room that ex-President John Quincy Adams died, two days after he fell at his seat in the House, February 23, 1848.
37. Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court.
38. Robing room of the Judges of the Supreme Court.
39. Withdrawing-room of the Supreme Court.
40. Office of the Marshal of the Supreme Court.
- The Supreme Court, formerly the Senate Chamber.
- The Old Hall of the House of Representatives is now used as a statuary hall, to which each State has been invited to contribute two statues of its most distinguished citizens.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE — THE PRESIDENT'S LAWYER — THE SUPREME COURT AND ITS BLACK-ROBED DIGNITARIES — THE HEAVEN OF LEGAL AMBITION.

The Majesty of the Law — The Department of Justice — Duties of the Attorney-General — The President's Lawyer — Claims Involving Millions of Dollars — The Highest Legal Tribunal of the Nation — The Supreme Court-Room — Giants of the Past — The Battle Ground of Clay, Webster, and Calhoun — Wise and Silent Judges — Where Silence and Dignity Reign — The Technical "Bench" — Illustrious Names — Why the Bust of Chief-Justice Taney Was Long Excluded from the Supreme Court-Room — The Famous Dred Scott Decision — Its Far-Reaching Effect — A Sad Figure — Death Comes to His Relief — Sumner's Relentless Opposition — Black-Robed Dignitaries — Ceremonious Opening of the Court — An Antique Little Speech — Gowns or Wigs? — Jefferson's Comical Protest — The Robing and Consultation-Rooms — Salaries of the Justices — A Great Law Library — Suggestions of a Tragedy.

RUNNING through everything pertaining to the government is the inevitable network of Law. In every department the executive head acts strictly by Law; the work of every division is mapped out to conform to the Law; soldiers are recruited, sailors are instructed, patents and pensions are granted, money is printed, birds are dissected, and seeds are distributed by Law. On the desk of every official of importance lies a digest of the Law, and he works with one eye ever upon it. If you suggest that in any particular case the end can be accomplished much sooner and better in a cer-

tain way, he opens his book and points to the Law which says it must be done so and so, and that settles the process even if it never settles the case. The Law is the warp and woof of everything, and naturally the Department of Justice has operated from the first.

The Supreme Court was provided for in the Constitution, but the same act which established and defined the jurisdiction of the courts of the United States provided for an Attorney-General, who from the first became a member of the President's Cabinet. But while thus ranking fourth in that official body, his duties were few during the first years of the government; he attended to his private practice, and it was not till 1814 that he was required by law to reside at Washington, and not till 1870 that the Department of Justice in its present form was established, with the Attorney-General as its chief officer.

His duties are best summed up by saying that he is the President's lawyer. The President is charged with executing all laws, and the Attorney-General gives his advice and opinion, when asked, either to the President or to the head of any executive department. He represents the government where questions of land or rents are concerned, and determines the validity of titles to real estate purchased by the government. Either House of Congress may call upon him for information on any matter within the scope of his office. While it is always understood that neither the President nor his Secretaries are necessarily guided by his opinions, in practice they are. It is a settled rule that he has no right to give an opinion in any other cases than those in which the statutes make it his duty to give it. He is as much controlled as anyone by the laws he interprets.

His official force consists of a Solicitor-General who is next in rank, and in his absence the acting head of the department; four Assistant Attorney-Generals and ten assistant attorneys, all having their offices in the Department of

Justice building. In addition, there are the following officers who, though belonging to the Department of Justice, serve also in other departments:—A Solicitor and Assistant-Solicitor of the Treasury, a Solicitor of Internal Revenue, a Solicitor of the State Department, an Assistant Attorney-General of the Post-Office Department, and one for the Interior Department.

Much of the work of the department is before the Court of Claims, which was instituted in 1855 to hear and determine claims against the government and to report the facts to Congress. In 1863 this court was authorized to render final judgment with right of appeal to the Supreme Court. It has five judges, and there are always pending before it claims involving millions of dollars. In all these cases the government is represented by the Attorney-General.

The Department of Justice is but a section of the executive branch of the government, but the Judiciary ranks with the President and with Congress as one of the great branches of the government, and unlike them it is removed as far as men can be from the influence of human and political passions and prejudices.

The Supreme Court is the highest legal tribunal of the nation. After the completion of the Senate wing of the Capitol, the old Senate Chamber was converted into the present Supreme Court-room; one of the few rooms in the Capitol wherein harmony and beauty meet and mingle. Here Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, and other giants of the past, once held high conclave. Defiance and defeat, battle and triumph, argument and oratory, wisdom and folly once held here their court. It is now the chamber of peace. Tangled questions concerning life, liberty, and the pursuit of personal happiness are still argued within these walls, but never in tones that would drown the sound of a dropping pin. Every thought is weighed, every word measured, that is uttered here. The Judges who sit in silence to listen and

decide have outlived the tumult of youth and the summer of manhood's fiercer battles. They have earned fruition ; they have won their gowns — which they can wear until they reach the age of 70, when they become eligible for retirement, a wise provision for their comfort after the infirmity of age unfits them for the weighty responsibilities of this high tribunal.

In the court-room itself we seem to have reached an atmosphere where it is always afternoon. The door swings to and fro noiselessly at the gentle touch of the usher's hand. With soundless tread the spectators move to their cushioned seats ranged against the inner wall over the rich, well-padded, crimson carpet which covers the tiled floor of this august chamber. A single lawyer arguing some constitutional question drones on within the railed inclosure of the court ; or a single judge in measured tones mumbles over the pages of his learned decision in some case long drawn out. Unless you are deeply interested in it you will not stay long. The atmosphere is too soporific ; one wearies of the oppressive silence and absolute decorum.

The chamber itself is semi-circular, with windows crimson-curtained. It has a domed ceiling studded with stuccoed mouldings and skylights. The technical "Bench" of the Supreme Court is a row of leather-backed arm-chairs ranged in a row on a low dais. The chair of the Chief Justice is in the center ; those of the eight Associate Justices are on each side. Over the chair of the Chief Justice a gilt eagle perches upon a golden rod. Over this eagle and parallel with the bench below, runs a shallow gallery, from which many fine ladies of successive administrations have looked down on the Solons below. At intervals around the walls are brackets on which are placed marble busts of former Chief Justices: John Jay of New York, 1789-1795 ; John Rutledge of South Carolina, 1795-1796 ; Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut, 1796-1800 ; John Marshall of Vir-

ginia, 1801–1835; Roger B. Taney of Maryland, 1836–1864; Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, 1864–1873; Morrison R. Waite of Ohio, 1874–1888. Chief Justice Taney's bust for years was left out in the cold on a pedestal within a recess of one of the windows of the Senate wing. It was voted in the Senate that it should there wait a certain number of expiatory years until in the fulness of time it should be sufficiently absolved to enter the historic heaven of its brethren.

Roger Brooke Taney was a prominent Maryland lawyer and an active democratic politician, and was Attorney-General in Jackson's administration. In 1835 Jackson, who was extremely friendly to Taney, nominated him as an Associate-Justice of the Supreme Court, but his nomination was opposed by the Senate. On the death of Chief Justice Marshall, in the same year, Taney was confirmed, but by a very small majority of votes. For twenty-eight years he sat in the Chief Justice's chair and proved himself to be a jurist of learning and ability. Indeed, it has been asserted that he would rank next to the great jurist Marshall in the pages of history but for his decision, in 1857, in the "Dred Scott Case," a decision that shocked the humanity of the civilized world.

Dred Scott was a negro slave then living in Missouri, and was owned by an army officer. On one occasion his owner had taken him into a Free State, which act, it was claimed, entitled the slave to his liberty. Subsequently Scott was taken back to Missouri, and he thereupon sued for his freedom. The case created intense interest, was desperately fought in the lower courts, and finally carried up to the Supreme Court, then presided over by Taney, who was himself a slaveholder. In his decision, which was adverse to Scott, Taney declared that persons of African blood were not regarded by the Constitution as anything but mere property; that they had no status as citizens, and could not be sued in any court; that prior to the Declara-

tion of Independence, negroes were regarded as "so far inferior that they had no rights a white man was bound to respect." After this cruel decision the Abolition party grew with amazing rapidity, and three years later the Civil War followed.

"There was no sadder figure to be seen in Washington during the years of the Civil War than that of the aged Chief Justice. His form was bent by the weight of years, and his thin, nervous, and deeply-furrowed face was shaded by long, gray locks, and lighted up by large, melancholy eyes that looked wearily out from under shaggy brows, which gave him a weird, wizard-like expression. He had outlived his epoch, and was shunned and hated by the men of the new time of storm and struggle for the principles of freedom and nationality. He died poor, and two of his daughters supported themselves for years by working in the Treasury Department. After his death, and during the years that his bust was excluded from its place among the Chief Justices on the wall of the Court-room, Charles Sumner watched every appropriation bill to prevent an item being included to authorize its purchase. When Sumner died, there was no further opposition to paying for it and giving it its proper place."

During the session of the Supreme Court, the hour of meeting is at noon. Precisely at that hour a procession of black-silk-robed dignitaries may be seen wending their way from the robing-room to the Supreme Court-room. They are preceded by the Marshal, who, entering by a side-door, leads directly to the Judge's stand, and, pausing before the desk, exclaims:

"The Honorable the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States."

With these words all present rise and stand to receive the Justices filing in. Each Justice passes to his chair. The Judges bow to the lawyers; the lawyers bow to the

Judges; then all sit down. The Crier then opens the Court with these words:

“Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All persons having business with the Honorable the Supreme Court of the United States are admonished to draw near and give their attendance, as the Court is now sitting. God save the United States and this Honorable Court.”

At the close of this antique little speech, the Chief Justice motions to the lawyer whose case is to be argued, and that gentleman rises, advances to the front, and begins his argument.

The chairs of the Judges are all placed in the order of their date of appointment. On either side of the Chief Justice sit the senior Associate Justices, while the last appointed sit at the farther ends of each row. In the robing-room, their robes and coats and hats hang in the same order. In the consultation-room, where the Justices meet on Saturdays to consult together over important cases presented, their chairs around the table are arranged in the same order, the Chief Justice presiding at the head. Both rooms command beautiful views from their windows of the city, the Potomac, and the hills of Virginia. In the robing-room, the Justices exchange their civic dress for the high robes of office.

The selection of a court-dress agitated the minds of public men when the first Justices of the court had been named by Washington. Sentiment was divided; and whether the Justices should wear gowns, and, if so, whether they should be those of the scholar, the Roman senator, or the priest, and also whether they should wear the wig of the English Judges, became burning questions. Jefferson protested against any unnecessary court-dress, and especially against wearing a wig. He said: “For Heaven’s sake, discard the monstrous wig, which makes the English Judges look like rats peeping through bunches of oakum.” Hamilton advocated both wig and gown. Finally, after much debate, the

gown alone was adopted, as tending "to preserve in the Court-room that decorum and sense of solemnity which should always characterize the place of Judgment." The gowns are made of black silk or satin, and are almost identical with the silk robe of an Episcopal clergyman. The gown worn by Justice McLean still hangs upon its hook as when he hung it there for the last time—years and years ago.

Nine Justices now compose the Supreme Court, all appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Chief Justice presides in court, and receives a salary of \$10,500 per annum. Melville Weston Fuller, of Illinois, appointed in 1888 to succeed Chief Justice Waite, is the present incumbent of the office. The Associate Justices receive \$10,000 each per annum. The Constitution distinctly says that the Justices of the Supreme Court, as well as all the Judges of the lower United States courts, "shall hold their offices during good behavior." But it is commonly understood that they shall hold them for life unless removed from office by impeachment. But inasmuch as old age does incapacitate, and a judge might hold on to his office after he was unable to perform his duties, Congress passed a law providing that any justice or judge who has served ten years and has reached the age of 70, may voluntarily retire, and in that event shall receive the full salary of his office during the remainder of his life.

The consultation-room is across the hall from the Law Library, whose books are in constant demand by the lawyers and Judges of the Supreme Court. The Law Library consists of 85,000 volumes. It contains every volume of English, Irish, and Scotch reports, besides the American: an immense collection of case law, a complete collection of the statutes of all civilized countries since 1649, filling one hundred quarto volumes. It includes the first edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, an original edition of the report

of the trial of Cagliostro, Rohan, and La Motte, for the theft of Marie Antoinette's diamond necklace — that luckless bauble which fanned to such fury the fatal flames of the Revolution. The nucleus of this Library, conceded to be the finest in the world, was the Jefferson collection of a little more than 600 volumes.

The quarters of the Law Library are in the basement-room of the Capitol, a beautiful room, of which the arches of the ceiling rest upon immense Doric columns. The spandrels of the arches are filled in with solid masonry — blocks of sandstone, strong enough to support the whole Capitol, fill the space between the arches. There is the suggestion of tragedy in their strength, when we are told that the arch above fell once, burying and killing beneath it its designer, Mr. Lenthal. The plan of his arch in proportion to its height was pronounced unsafe by all who examined the drawing. He insisted that it was sufficiently strong, and to prove his faith in his theory he tore away the scaffolding before the ceiling was dry. It fell, and he was taken out hours after, dead and mangled, from its fallen ruins.

Mary's long service to her husband's political career at a time when she had no chance to pursue a similar career of her own is a classic of sexist injustice. Her work did, however, pay a dividend that most women of her day had no chance to earn: She had a network of powerful advocates for her own work after John was gone. It was a small return on her investment, certainly, but a return nonetheless. For example, subscription-only bookselling was big during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Endorsements — celebrity endorsements in marketing materials and local endorsements by subscription-takers — were highly valued. The ten pages that follow this one are from a subscription marketing booklet for *Thirty Years in Washington*. After reading the names (and orders) on the first nine of those pages, wouldn't you want to put your name (and order) on the tenth?

— *The Editors*

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PORTRAYING THE WONDERFUL SCENES, DAILY LIFE AND OPERATIONS IN ALL THE GREAT DEPARTMENTS, AND DESCRIBING EVERY IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF OUR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, FROM THE WHITE HOUSE DOWN, WITH SKETCHES OF ALL THE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR WIVES, AND OF EVERY FAMOUS WOMAN WHO HAS REIGNED IN THE WHITE HOUSE FROM WASHINGTON'S TO McKinley's ADMINISTRATION.

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Thirty Years in Washington

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