

Columbian Correspondence.

The Story of the White City of Towers.

An Experience of the Press Congress.

Mrs. E. J. Nicholson's Address Read.

(Letter Number Two.)

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A chief feature, or rather an adjunct to the exposition is the series of congresses that have been arranged to meet during the progress of the fair. These are called auxiliary congresses, and some are called exclusively of men, some solely composed of women, and some are general. On different dates there are to be health congresses, prison congresses, a vegetarian congress, a dress reform congress, and in fact congresses for every known project, philanthropy and aid under the sun. These are held in a huge building down the heart of the city, called the art institute. This building was in course of construction when the fair was projected, and the art people, in view of the coming congresses, which really are a great feature of the exposition, offered the Art Society \$25,000 towards the erection of their institute, provided they would let the congresses meet in their building free of charge.

Of course, the offer was snapped at. Intellectual men and women, at the invitation of the authorities, attend these congresses and speak on certain subjects. Last week, was the woman's congress—and at their sessions, women were present in all the walks of life, were among the lecturers and speakers. Here, in these halls, were heard Modjeska, Inez Morris, Lucy Stone, Susan Anticlea Morris, and all the phases of womanhood—each and every representative of the age and culture. It is said the most gorgeous dress ever seen in Chicago has been seen at this congress. One of the ladies wore a green velvet gown and a rose-crowned opera hat on the

do more good, and shine her little sun rays farther around this earth than forty persons could accomplish with the power of forty loggies. (Great applause.)

Endow a woman with a newspaper and persistently her endeavor will be to make it more fit for the home.

She will oppose fake or spurious journalism; she will oppose cheap sensation at the expense of truth; and her face will be firmly set against that deadly, malicious, vulgar, desecration of the home, the family and the private interest that has unfortunately come to be a chief commodity of the modern newspaper. (Applause.)

Nevertheless, a woman and a newspaper is an incongruous combination. In the first place it was never intended for a woman to work at all, except in those ways suitable to her



KATE FIELD READS.

physique and feminine nature. (Applause.) Utopia would be reached if all the men were taxed for the support of the surplus women. (Applause.) Least of all is it desirable for her that she become the editor and owner of a daily newspaper, with its uninterrupted, heavy drafts on her health, strength, nervous force, moral courage, sympathy, cohesiveness and judgment.

It is still somewhat sensational for a woman to work. It is still necessary in order to keep us in hope and courage for each newspaper to publish a sort of pitiful panegyric on our efforts and accomplishments. Therefore, the actual services of this woman newspaper editor is somewhat liable to be distorted in public belief.

It is thought by many that the woman who is editor and proprietor of a daily newspaper works with protean talent in every department, from typing copy to making the paper, that she is responsible for all the occurrences in the counting-room as in any other department.

This is not any more true of her than it would be of a man. Behind her, as behind him, must be good, true newspaper workers, friends, advisers. These are her chief elements for success.

To be the proprietor and editor of a weekly newspaper, a ladies' fashion journal, a literary magazine, is a serene, congenial and ladylike employment compared with the control and duties that must fall upon a woman who becomes the owner of a daily news or political paper.

Her life work then tends directly away from the greases that are dearest to her and best for her. While other women have time to discuss polite society, to read poetry, to buy new bonnets, to develop charities, to stay at home crocheting the international anthem, "Rock-a-bye-baby," and doing and being all the things every true woman loves best, this woman newspaper editor and proprietor is wading, perhaps, in the mire of politics, making acquaintances with greed and vanity, forced to a public expression of her opinion, and to take sides for or against all questions of the hour, from the petty affairs of the local ward to the vital affairs of the Sunday law, and the Chinese exclusion act. I protest that for a woman this is a perversion of her nature, the dying of a daily death.

Our great editors all over the country are not a particularly happy or serene-looking set of men. I am told that more than one is afraid of nervous prostration, and why should not this be true of workers in the most nerve-wearing, exciting, bustling profession that has yet been invented and perfected? The woman in a similar position must live mentally on guard. She must take precious care speaking for a people, and therefore of them, that her point of view is of a sufficient attitude to keep her justice just, her judgment fair, and her sentiments in abeyance to her sense.

While doing this man's work at an office desk, she is also doing her woman's work in some sort of home, whether she be maid, wife or widow. (Applause.)

The woman never lived, who in addition to her work, as a mere toiler in the sun, did not also have to do her woman's work as well. Whatever else her duties, she may not evade the duties of her sex.

Sixteen years of this sort of service, in which I have been upheld by my husband and a good business manager and a gallant staff, have taught me what I know of woman as the proprietor and editor of a daily newspaper in a particularly live section of the south.

It was, perhaps, when children came into the home my views became the most pronounced.

But I may say, truthfully, that although I may sometimes have neglected the business, I have never neglected the babies. (Applause.) The lesson I learned, is, that trying to conduct a home with one hand and steer a newspaper with the other, is like trying to rub the head with one hand and pat the breast with the other.

But you may be assured of one thing, any newspaper a woman conducts will be honorable, moral and clean. She will direct it up, not down, and her leadership will be toward the highest hill tops and the farthest skies.

It is nothing to exclaim that a woman directs a newspaper. It is everything to know, that whether her sanctum is the top of a sewing machine or a rosewood desk in an electric lighted office, she will bring to that service an unconquerable courage, American grit, and an untarnishable integrity and honor. (Applause.)

Many of the women who spoke at the woman's sessions claimed that the sex would revolutionize the press and make more than mortals of the women writers. It is my belief that the moderate tone of Mrs. Nicholson's speech won the compliment it got from Mr. Wm. Penn Nixon that "it was one of the best papers read at the congress."

At one of the afternoon sessions a fine essay was read by my dear little, bright little, sweet little Jennie June Croly. How the people stood up to look at her, and how they applauded her, even before she had opened her mouth. It is a great thing for one to have one's dear public; to feel that together you and it have been getting on in the world, and getting on in years. Jennie June cannot have written many things she is yet sorry for and there are thousands of whom she has been a dove bearing and olive branch telling them all they could know of the outer world.

One day brilliant Kate Field was set to read at the congress a scholarly paper by Lillian Whiting, but the bonnie Kate put into it or around it so many jolly

good comments of her own that made so many laughs, people quite forgot Miss Whiting, who would probably have wished Miss Field flayed had she known it.

One night the Chicago Press League gave a reception to the Press Congress at the Auditorium. It seemed the league had spared no expense to make it brilliant. The salons were ablaze with gay tulips and sweet with carnations, which are just now worth a small fortune. The receiving party included Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Henrietta and local press women. It was a sort of bazaar of nations. A chief toly-poly, red apple sort of a figure was Governor Peck, author of "Peck's Bad Boy," and looking precisely like the pictures of "Pa." Near him was an oriental lady in her white veil and sandals—and not far off, holding a little court, the languishing divorcee of Russell, the great Delserre teacher. She wore a pink gown and no stays and was pinned together with pink corals. Here and there the gown gave way and the fat lady behind it bulged out. She carried a bunch of plinks and gave one to each man as a souvenir of herself.

As I was presented to the ladies of the receiving party each one in turn took my hand and said, ecstatically: "Is it possible! I have been so anxious to see you," and I walked off in a state of numbing bliss. "Well, this is fame," I thought, and I retired to a corner, where a looking-glass was, to see if the powder was all right on my nose. If my gown was all right, and if I did proper honor to my distinction. Then, as a moth to its candle, I strayed back again to the scene of my triumph, thinking they might say it over again to me, and say it slow, or that even one of them might refer to some article I had written. So I leaned benevolently on a white marble column and fell to watching the reformed dresses and the dresses that needed reforming, and taking note of girls in Greek gowns and old aesthetes wearing—yes—chignons! mixed in with silver-gay makers—and long-haired poets—and newspaper men in full dress, with here a scumple from the Ottoman empire, and there a relic in the way of woman from our own exposition, when all at once I heard the receiving party saying over, like a well-modulated series of echoes: "Is it possible! I have been so anxious to see you!" I'm blessed if they didn't say the same thing to all the newspaper people! You need not talk to me any more about the hospitality of Chicago. The very cream of hospitality is recalled when every guest is made to feel as if it were all for his sake, and his alone.

By and by we made our way to a buffet and had frapped coffee and wafers.

It was long past midnight when I climbed the stairs to my bedroom and sat down to look at the deck of cards I had accumulated during the evening. Here at a public or semi-public reception if you so much as look at a person he or she hands you a card. It seems very sensible, and then it is very satisfying to one who has much curiosity. I found I had the cards of poets, cards of editors, cards of contributors, cards of correspondents, cards of reformers, cards of agents, of artists, of inventors, of exhibitors, and a bushel from those dear, sweet women to whom any literary person is a sensation and a wonder.

But it was a grand reception and attended by many famous men and women. All the Iowa people were there speaking lovely things of New Orleans. I saw Susan Anthony, Helen Winslow, one of the brightest of Boston journalists; Mrs. Sorosis Thomas, May Rodgers, of Iowa; May Wright Sewell, Rachael Foster, in a divided skirt of satin; Sally Joy White, another real Boston newspaper woman; Eugene Field, and a score of other men not so well worth remembering.

CATHARINE COLE.



JENNIE JUNE CROLY.

platform at 10 o'clock in the morning, and it made her so pretty that all the other women only recollected to say it was very bad form—as bad form in fact, as diamonds in the street, or a dress suit before 6 p. m.

This week the art institute has been occupied by newspaper people who held a press congress. It was not a junker for "fair contributors" and "our life," but a real meeting of real newspaper men and women, who, when they were to speak, according to the prestige of their names, drew large audiences of an unprofessional cut, to say nothing of hundreds of journalists from all over the country.

At this press congress the day sessions were filled by the newspaper women, the night sessions by the newspaper men. Mrs. Antoinette V. Wakeman, a beautiful and intellectual woman on the staff of the Evening Post, was chairman for the day sessions and Wm. Penn Nixon, a handsome gentleman and a journalist of note belonging to the Chicago Inter-Ocean, was chairman of the night sessions.

I am this particular because it is my belief that it is high time we waked up, just as the Chicago people have done long since to the value and importance of newspaper people.

The gentlemen had paid Mrs. E. J. Nicholson, of the Playmate, the distinguished honor of asking her appearance and her address as a feature of their evening's programme, and as I had the honor on that occasion to represent the only woman in the world who is at the actual head of a great daily news journal, I felt handsomely referred to by Mr. Nixon. His polished little speech of introduction, I was not a little interested to find myself cited by name, as it were, with such banalistic big words as "Colonel McClure, of the Philadelphia Times, Mr. Murat Halstead, the only Joe Howard, and William Henry Smith, of the Associated Press."

Most all of these gentlemen had speeches as long as the moral law, speeches such as none of them would print without getting down, and none of them talked out in the meeting so that they could be heard. I therefore felt distinctly complimented on being told that Mrs. Nicholson's address was the only one yet given of which the packed audience lost not one word! Dozens of southern people came to me after it was over to say they had attended the congress just to hear Mrs. Nicholson's speech, and that having heard it they were more proud than ever of the southern woman editor, and of her fine, womanly and just line of argument.

The newspaper men particularly commended it for its unselfish justice to newspaper men, and when I came to the sentence "I may sometimes have neglected the business, but I have never neglected the babies," there was a great big outburst of applause, in which everybody joined save a couple of short-haired branks, who really looked as if their plan of life meant salvation for themselves and damnation for all the rest of the world.

Mrs. Nicholson's speech, as it was read, is here given in full for the benefit of the Playmate's readers:

It seems a frank of people justice that from the so-called slow-moving and conservative south should be selected the woman who is to represent her sex in one of the most difficult and profound professions.

There is more than a suggestion of schismatical satire in the fact that this woman is one who was constructed before the period of reconstruction.

I am therefore doubly proud to say that behind me is an old south whose exponents are still fitting socks for the soldiers; but instead, a sturdy, brave new south, whose wholesome women are sneering in whatever they undertake. (Applause.)

It was Bishop Whately who said of us: "They never reason, or if they do, they either draw correct inferences from wrong premises, or wrong inferences from correct premises, and they always poke the air from the top." (Laughter.)

It took that bishop forty years to write the small logic. In one tenth that time a good live newspaper woman, hatched to read the newspaper, would right more wrongs, educate and thurst more people,