

INTRODUCTION.

THE Congresses held in the Woman's Building were inaugurated under a resolution unanimously passed by the Board of Lady Managers on September 7, 1891, which read as follows:

Resolved, That a special committee of seven be appointed who shall have charge of arranging for Congresses to be held in the Woman's Building during the Fair."

The president of the board appointed the following committee: Mrs. James P. Eagle, Mrs. Helen M. Barker, Miss Laurette Lovell, Miss Eliza M. Russell, Mrs. L. M. N. Stevens, Mrs. Susan R. Ashley and Mrs. Jennie Sanford Lewis (now deceased). Mrs. Jno. J. Bagley and Mrs. L. Brace Shattuck were afterward added to the committee, and Mrs. Bagley was elected vice-chairman.

On August 5, 1893, the board adopted a recommendation to publish the Congress papers in book form to be sold for the benefit of the Woman's Memorial Building fund. The chairman of the committee having conducted the correspondence necessary, and arranged the entire program for the Woman's Building Congresses, having also been present and presiding at each of these daily meetings, except on three occasions, when the executive committee, of which she is a member, was in session, was regarded a suitable person to edit the work of the Congresses which is herein presented to the public: Mrs. Potter Palmer, president of the Board of Lady Managers, made the nomination, which was confirmed by the unanimous vote of the committee at a meeting held November 7, 1893, when only one member of the committee was absent.

It was considered in the interest of the Board of Lady Managers and the publisher, that this work should not be delayed longer than three months after the close of the Exposition. A contract was entered into with the publisher to that effect. No pains, or money, or diligence has been spared in our efforts to secure the complete representation in this volume of each contributor to the Congress. It is sincerely to be regretted that there are a few women, whose articles should appear in this work, that we have either been unable to reach or unable to secure contributions from on account of previous disposition having been made of their papers, proposed individual publications or the difficulty of reproducing satisfactorily addresses delivered without notes. Over one thousand letters and dozens of telegrams have been sent out in this interest since November 10th.

With much gratitude we acknowledge indebtedness to the hundreds of women with whom we have had correspondence, for their unflinching courtesy and particularly to those who appeared from time to time on the Congress platform. This intercourse has been altogether pleasant and harmonious throughout the entire Exposition, and has been a most flattering revelation of woman's attainments in grace, culture, thought and literature.

To Mrs. Potter Palmer, president of the Board of Lady Managers, and to many of the members of the board, we tender special thanks for their counsel, encouragement and co-operation in the difficult and laborious task assigned to this committee.

The plan of the committee was to have a leading address, followed by free dis-

cussion whenever the nature of the subject invited debate. We publish only the addresses.

The courtesy of these pages has been extended to women who prepared papers and were prevented from appearing at the appointed time by bereavements and other good causes, and in a few instances has been accepted.

One of the objects of this work has been to mirror the women of the Columbian year—faithfully reflecting their purposes, plans and powers as they stand the chosen representatives of the various states of this Union and of the nations of the earth. As we succeeded in presenting representatives from thirty states and twenty nations we feel justified in believing that this object has been attained.

Other purposes were to provide for communion and interchange of thought between women engaged in the same and diverse lines of work and the compilation of valuable literary and historical papers to serve as stepping stones to future progress which has also, to the minds of many, been realized.

We have not assumed to direct or dictate the utterances, and will not be expected to indorse all articles admitted without discrimination.

The one thought of the president of the Board of Lady Managers and the entire membership of the board, whether acting as a whole, as individuals or committees, has been to serve well, the women of the present and the future. To the charity of the public we trust the imperfections of our work.

EDITOR.

