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## NEW ENGLAND WOMAN'S PRESS CLUB

BY MRS. ABBY MORTON DIAZ

THE homely saying, "Be not only good but good for something" covers a universal truth. Everywhere the different forms of existence not only exist but exist for purpose, or, rather, we may say that existence is purpose made manifest. This purpose or end is necessarily twofold. First, as regards the individual separately, and second, as related to others. Of women's clubs in general it has already been shown that for the individual they bring the higher powers—mind forces—into activity and in many ways stimulate to noble endeavor; also, that this increase of intelligence and enthusiasm has endless possibilities for good in woman's special relations as mother, wife, home-maker, and as a member of the community.

A press club, in taking wider range than others, has larger op-

portunities. It has, we may say, the one opportunity beyond all others, greater than that of royalty itself, the power behind thrones, congresses, legislatures, boards of education, and the social dictum,—the power of shaping and controlling thought.—"The power of thought, the magic of the mind."—"Thought is the parent of the deed."—"In every epoch of the world, the great event, parent of all others, is it not the arrival of a thinker in the world?"—*Carlyle*.

"Every thought which queries and poetry throw into the world alters the world. Thought takes man out of servitude into freedom."—*Emerson*.

"It is curious to mark the old sea-margins of human thought."—*Longfellow*.

"Thought by thought is piled until some great truth is loosened."—*Shelley*.

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MISS HELEN M. WINSLOW,  
President N. E. W. P. C.

Thus we see that what rules and guides is but thought formulated as customs, as laws, as political economy, and as systems of education and of religion.

Thoughts are like seeds. Implanted in mind they germinate and come up into all that shapes the conduct of human affairs. Far-reaching results may come from just a single thought. Thus the press, in scattering thought-seed in every little nook and hamlet wields a power absolutely incalculable.

If this is a privilege it is also a responsibility and one which club opportunities can greatly aid in sustaining, for these mean interchange of experiences and of ideas,

mental stimulus and keeping pace with the progress of the times; also knowledge, gain, and in these days the press to a remarkable degree is made a conveyancer of knowledge. Why, a few weeks reading of a daily journal will give more and newer information of earth, seas, and skies; of the world's thought; of matters occult and physical; of religions; of the universal forces, applied, in process of application, or suspected, than a whole school term of book education! It will give you knowledge fresh from the mower; and while it is waiting to be bound up into books, the press will have told it far and wide. For instances,

take some marvels of electricity ; recent interesting experiments in showing sand-forms as geometricaly changed by tones of different pitch ; also showing how naturally, by vibrations, as quite recently expounded, mind-power can accomplish healing, thought-conveyance, and other seemingly wondrous results.

It was doubtless a sense of their responsibilities, and their possibilities and the consequent need of mutual aid and enlightenment, that induced some of the earlier women journalists to seek power in unity. "Unity is power," because thereby is gathered in for the advantage of all what each can furnish.

The suggestion for a permanent organization came from Mrs. Marion A. McBride. Her "call" brought together six newspaper women, all of Boston. By invitation of that pioneer press-worker, Mrs. Sallie Joy White, they met in her rooms in the office of the *Boston Herald*.

This was in November of 1885. Besides Mrs. White and Mrs. McBride, there were present Miss Helen M. Winslow, Miss Grace W. Soper, Mrs. Cora Stuart Wheeler, and Miss Estelle M. Hatch (now Mrs. Merrill, president of the well known Cambridge club, the *Cantabrigia*.) An organization was formed with Mrs. White as president, Miss Hatch was chosen secretary, and those who remember say that she saw or wrote to every New England newspaper woman of whom she had knowledge, and that the rapid growth of the Association was largely due to her efforts. A later meeting, numbering twenty, was held in her rooms, and in January of '87 the Association was made permanent by constitution and by-laws. It outgrew, first the secretary's parlors, then the *Woman's Journal* parlors, un-

til the rapid increase demanded the spacious accommodations of the Parker House, which has greatly added to its celebrity by having



MRS. A. E. WHITAKER, Secretary N. E. W. P. C.

been the regular home of the N. E. W. Press Association for so many years.

In its banquet-halls was given the Club's first large reception. The guest thus honored was the well-known author and journalist, Mrs. Croly (Jennie June), now editor-in-chief of the *Women's Cycle*, a monthly magazine, representing the federated women's clubs of the country, both State and National. At their next reception they were so courteous and so bold as to invite the Boston Press Club, and others, of what has sometimes been called our opposite sex.

After that came the breakfast to Miss Amelia B. Edwards, noted as a novelist, but more especially as an Egyptologist. Then followed a breakfast to Mrs. Henry Neville, of London. After that came, and most fittingly, a banquet in honor of Mrs. Sallie Joy White's twenty-first anniversary as daily journalist ; since then receptions for Mme.

Modjeska, Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Mrs. General Custer, Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, Miss Wilkins, Mrs. Margaret Sangster, editor of *Harper's Bazar*; and Julia Marlowe.

As gentlemen's clubs have ladies'

presence of many distinguished women, among them Mrs. Frank Leslie, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, Mrs. Howe, Mrs. Koranz (of Syria), Mrs. Magnusson (of Iceland), the members in general furnishing papers on topics especially



MRS. BARBARA N. GALPIN,  
Treasurer N. E. W. P. C.

nights, so the N. E. W. P. Association has had gentlemen's nights, when the brilliancy of the occasions was shared and heightened by the presence of professors, editors of note, and Governors!

Its "Third Wednesday" literary meetings come suitably into the proceedings of professional writers and caterers for the press. These have been graced by the

bearing on journalism. The power of unity was effectively used by the N. E. W. Press Club in the long struggle made by Boston women for police matrons to have the official care of arrested women, men then being in sole charge of them, night or day, whatever might be their condition or their needs. By persistent effort, in the way of Legislative hearings and of public



MISS MARION HOWARD BRAZIER  
One of the Reception Committee

meetings, the needed law was at last secured. But, as no penalty was attached, the officials who had always opposed, put obstacles in the way, so that its application was a long time delayed. The Press Club came to the rescue. Their opportunities were exactly fitted to the situation, and the concerted and persistent use of them greatly aided the so-much-desired result,—establishment of police matrons.

This instance of concerted action by no means shows leadership. Indeed, it is said by those who know, that this is especially not the case; that a free expression of individual opinion, and absence of leadership, are rather distinctive features of this particular association. The members agree to differ. And sure-

ly this understood freedom has the very great advantage of showing up all sides of any matter under consideration, and thus aiding in bringing to light the all-important end of all debate—*truth*.

Further proof that philanthropy has not been left out in the cold is found in the Authors' Reading given by the Club at the Hollis Street Theatre, in February of 1894, for the benefit of the unemployed. The larger part of the one thousand dollars thereby secured was bestowed through the city charities. The remainder was made the nucleus of a fund which gives aid to journalists in special need who are worthy of receiving it, whether or not belonging to the Association. This fund was further aug-

mented in 1895 by a performance at the same theatre entitled, "Long-fellow's Dream."

Speaking of the fund in a general way, Miss Winslow says, "It has been of great benefit to its members, not only in keeping alive the spirit of modern progress and thought, but in bringing into closer social relations its members, who, in the main, lead more than commonly busy lives. The ruling idea from the start has been to unite in a common bond of sympathy and acquaintanceship that rapidly-growing class of workers whose labor is chiefly confined to periodical publications, consequently it is not an authors' club."

Nevertheless, journalism is an aid to authorship. Dickens speaks of the exacting demands made upon him in his early journalistic days as of inexpressible advantage in his after-literary career. These demands were for industry, perseverance, power for work, and especially for concentration of thought, and a rapid and correct expression of it. Mr. Hale has borne testimony to the same kind of advantage, which, in his case, was derived from work on his father's paper, the *Boston Daily Advertiser*.

Such work does, indeed, demand high qualifications, and for all the fault-finding with the busy notetakers, and even allowing some of it to be just, there is still room left for wonder at the quantity of good English put together so hastily, and often at the sleepy time of night by these devoted ingatherers for the *Press*. It is always interesting to get the significance of a word by tracing it to its origin. An old-time story-teller was fond of imitating an older-time Sabbath-school teacher who used to ask his class, in a drawling way: "Why—was—Saul—of—Tarsus—called—Saul—

of—Tarsus?" The answers he got, or gave, if any there were, never came into the story, and we were left to wonder whether the strange name, Tarsus, might not have had some occult significance; or if, being the birthplace of Paul, the teacher might have spoken of this prominent person as a small boy, playing boyish games and climbing about, as, being a boy, even he must have done, irreverent as it may seem to mention it; or to think of him as ever having been an infant in arms. Now, as to why a Press Club is called a Press Club, or why the Press is called the Press; to say that it is closely connected with a printing-machine seems an altogether inadequate answer, and luckily the dictionary, always instructive and interesting reading, supplies meanings which come squarely and queerly up to the situation.

*Press*, "to influence, to inculcate strongly,"—exactly what it is doing, and at all times. "To smooth." Often found expedient! "To crush with calamities." How true! "To crowd into smaller place." Illustrative of this, it is said that many a reported speaker opens tremblingly the paper, which, in abstracting his speech, has made both its ends meet most disastrously for the sense! The ludicrous fitness of some other meanings will readily suggest itself to those most concerned, whether seekers or sought: "To solicit," "to obtrude," "to be urgent," "to come unseasonably," "to encroach," "to go forward with perseverance towards any object," "to plead pertinaciously."

Those who daily read with such interest personal items regarding celebrities have small idea of how much of all the above is necessary for its furnishing.

The records of the Chicago



World's Fair Congress show that numbers of the N. E. W. Press Association were moved to "go forward with perseverance," not only for recording the proceedings, but for participation therein; original papers having been read there by Miss Helen M. Winslow, Mrs. Sallie Joy White, Miss Armstrong (now Mrs. Dr. Whitney), Mrs. Barbara N. Galpin, Mrs. A. E. Whitaker, Mrs. Sutherland, Mrs. Emma Sheridan Frye.

Journalism was an undiscovered country to New England women until Mrs. White's enterprise opened up the way. Curiously enough, this came through the suffrage movement, which has made possible for women so many of their present opportunities, professional and otherwise. In 1870, the *New York Tribune* sent a woman to report the proceedings of a suffrage convention held in Boston. This event was a very effective object-lesson to Mrs. White, who thought, quite naturally,—if one woman, why not another?—and when circumstances made it necessary that a series of suffrage meetings be held in Vermont, then came her opportunity. Herself a Vermont girl, knowing all about the various localities and their prominent people, she applied to the *Post*—Mr. Nathaniel Green, editor—as being the only Boston paper which then treated the cause of equal suffrage with respect. At the end of her conversation with Mr. Green she came forth with her railroad "pass" and a hundred-dollar check in her pocket for expenses through the entire series of meetings. The results must have proved satisfactory, for Mrs. White was chosen a regular member of the *Post's* staff, and continued such for

a period of four years. Her next engagement was with the well-remembered Mr. Delano Goddard, of the *Advertiser*. At his death she accepted what she still holds,—a prominent position on the *Boston Herald*.

The present secretary of the Club, Mrs. A. E. Whitaker, is but four years the junior of Mrs. White in newspaper work, hers having been chiefly editorial. She is at present one of the editors and part owner of the *New England Farmer* and *Our Grange Homes*. For a number of years Mrs. Whitaker was one of the Executive Committee of the National Editorial Association, and was the only woman on the program of that association at its convention in St. Paul. She is also one of the three women members of the N. E. Suburban Press Association. Her paper at the World's Fair was on "Three-fourths of a Century in Agricultural Journalism." Miss Helen Winslow, the present president of the Club, stepped from literature into journalism, and seems to enjoy the change. She was duly appointed by the Governor as one of the Massachusetts Commissioners to the recent Atlanta exhibit.

Mrs. Barbara N. Galpin, treasurer of the Club, is a well-known writer and for years has been connected with the *Somerville Journal*.

The N. E. Press Club women are especially favored in that their money-earning occupation is likewise a progression. This can hardly be otherwise, since it necessitates the use of *mind*, and brings them to familiar acquaintance with ideas and ideals, these being the real, back of what is merely appearance.