

## The Great International Congress of Women at Berlin.

In giving a brief survey of the great International Congress of Women which has just taken place in Berlin, it is well to state briefly the objects of the International Council with which the German National Council which convened the Congress is affiliated. The Ideal Aim of the Council, in the words of its Founder, Mrs. May Wright Sewall, is **THE UNITY OF HUMANITY**. In every large country there is a danger that the feeling for the village, the city, or the province in which one resides may be stronger than the feeling for the entire country. Therefore, from childhood, the duty of patriotism is inculcated in every country, because patriotism is the life-blood of a nation. In the International Council, in which the different parts represent entire nations, a feeling much larger and nobler even than patriotism must be cultivated, a feeling which, until a better name can be found for it, may be called "**FAITH IN THE UNITY OF HUMANITY**." This love for the unity of humanity, the belief in humanity's unity, is a love greater, more dazzling, more alluring, more sufficing to the heart than even the love of one's own land.

The *ideal* side of the work of the Council is to cultivate everywhere this feeling, to inoculate everyone with whom we associate with the conviction that in its heart humanity is one. The *practical* side is to express this love through sympathy, through admiration, through esteem for others who are unlike ourselves, and in a noble effort to understand them and to make ourselves understood by them. The Council is a democracy which includes within itself all circles of society. Here may come ladies with the greatest titles, but here they may not come *on account* of their titles. Here may come women of the simplest social position, but here they may not come *because* of their simple social position. All must as women who work for humanity, who have consecrated their talents, their time, their wealth or their poverty, to the unity of the human race. Here, within the International Council, we are in a new world—a world of labour where only consecrated labourers have a place, where she is most welcome who will give the best example of truth, of integrity, of uprightness, of justice, and of love for her kind.

### WELCOME TO THE DELEGATES.

None of those privileged to take part in the magnificent function in the Beethoven Saal at the Philharmonic on the evening of June 12th, at which the delegates and members of the International Congress of Women were welcomed by the National Council of Women of Germany, will ever forget the spectacle. It was magnificent, wonderful, inspiring. Three thousand women of all nations, gaily attired,

speaking to one another—if in unknown tongues—then with smiles and signs and sympathy.

The lovely Saal, the predominant tone of colouring tender green, with cream and gold decorations, around which the portraits in semi-relief of the great masters of music are placed, was transformed into a veritable bower, with garlands of greenery and flowers. From the platform magnificent palms waved to the ceiling, and hydrangeas, geraniums, roses, lilies simply embowered the string band of girl performers, conducted by Margarethe Toeppe, who rendered such exquisite music as only the German people can evoke. From the centre of this platform Frau Marie Stritt, the President of the Congress—looking wonderfully charming in her classical mauve gown—welcomed us in the most simple and gracious manner, amidst the most enthusiastic applause, and then Frau Hedwig Heyl, the President of the Local Committee, stepped forward and said:—

Dear Guests,—I accept with great pleasure the invitation which the President of the Women's Council has given me to say a few words to you.

May enthusiasm strengthen my voice as it has accelerated my work.

The women of Berlin welcome all their guests from north and south, east and west, most heartily within their halls, and especially within this hall.

We feel the charge given us to make the local arrangements for the Congress to be an honour, and in the carrying out of the same we have fulfilled a duty of gratitude.

Large communities, our children and our poor, our sick and unhappy ones, our workwomen as well as our laws, all profit by the brave perseverance and diligence of the representatives of the Woman's Movement.

What a joy it is to be able to help all our fellow creatures in Berlin, and to give our guests a worthy and life-long remembrance of their reception. The duty which is entrusted to us is one which is incumbent on every lady of a house: it is in keeping with her motherly talent for carefulness and foresight, as well as for skill in housekeeping.

If even some of our fellow-workers thereby learn to know a little of the Woman's Movement in quite a primitive way, perhaps only from a bodily point of view, we shall rejoice; the thorough work of detail is always the first and most necessary foundation to a healthy woman's work, even to its most distant limits.

Therefore our smallest practical actions are closely related to the great spiritual work of the Congress, and are in reciprocity therewith.

If the result of our preparations should have attained the measure of your wishes, then we must emphasise the fact that our success is largely due to the help which was so willingly given to us by the men.

We have been just as effectually assisted by the heads of the State and of the town as by the citizens of Berlin. In order to strengthen the great intellectual effect which the Congress will certainly leave behind it, we have endeavoured to show the culture of Germany and Berlin, in which so many things of general interest are embodied, to our guests.

The Congress badge is the fairy wand, which will make the double-locked doors spring open and display the most secret treasures. The German house, the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)