

bring up breakfast till I ring," is the magic spell which smooths the only crumbled rose-leaf of the "slug-a-bed," as Herrick, who clearly had an evil conscience (he looks in his bust like Heliogabalus turned parson) called a lady who was not such a fool as to get up on May morning, but stuck to the sweet security of her own blankets. Seven to nine has no real pillow-problems, and is the only piece of unspoiled life left us by the mad pursuit of duty to which this generation has abandoned itself.—*The Spectator*.

THE LITERARY CONFERENCE OF CHICAGO.

The Literary Congress held at Chicago from July 10 to July 15 was divided into five departments or sections, named respectively after the Authors, the Librarians, History, Philology, and Folk Lore. All these separate conferences were held simultaneously at the Art Institute, a large and convenient building in the city itself, and not in the buildings of the Exhibition itself, which, as everybody knows, is seven miles distant from the city. There were many advantages in this arrangement. The Congress, although an integral part of the programme of the World's Fair, belonged to the city rather than to the Exhibition; it could hardly be expected that the general run of visitors at the latter—as yet mainly Americans from the Mississippi Valley and the West—would care to assist at discussions on copyright, on realism in Art, or on the relations of literature and journalism. Moreover, a Congress must have its social side, and in a mere summer camp, such as that created by the temporary hotels round the World's Fair, there can be no social side at all. Therefore the librarians and authors and folk lorists met quietly and peacefully in the halls of the Art Institute; their papers were read before an audience largely composed of Chicago ladies, and their proceedings were only interrupted by the bells of the tram and the electric trolley and by the horn of the railway train—noises which in an American city must not be considered as any interruption, because they are part and parcel of the city itself, just as in mediæval times London boasted of its mingled roar of many industries, church bells and rumbling wheels, which could be heard as far off as the slopes of Highgate.

The project of a Literary Conference was first formed in the autumn of last year, when a rough draft of the proceedings was drawn up and sent about tentatively to literary men and women of America and Great Britain. At first the response was extremely disappointing. Very few writers took up the scheme at all; still fewer offered to send papers; none, at first, proposed to be present in person. It seemed as if the proposed Conference must fall through because there would be no authors to confer. Two fortunate accidents saved it. In London, the Society of Authors thought that good might come out of such a public Conference and offered to send papers on some of the more practical subjects proposed, leaving the ornamental part to the Americans themselves. Two members of the society also offered to attend the Conference as delegates, if possible. At the same moment it occurred to a few literary men in New York, for much the same reasons, that the Congress ought to meet with the support of American authors. They therefore formed themselves

into a committee, of which Oliver Wendell Holmes, in order to emphasize the importance of the occasion, was invited to become nominal chairman. On the list of the committee are the well-known names of Aldrich, Cable, Furness, Gilder, Howells, Higginson, Stedman and Dudley Warner, while Professor Woodberry, of Columbia College, acted as secretary. The result of their labours, together with those of the English society, was that the Congress became a truly representative meeting, and that most of the papers produced were written by men whose experience in the subjects treated and whose position in the world of letters entitled them to at least a respectful hearing. The editor of the *Dial*, a literary and critical paper of Chicago—Mr. Francis F. Browne—was the chairman of the local organizing committee, and there was appointed a women's auxiliary committee, on which, among others, was Miss Harriet Munroe, the author of the ode spoken on the opening of the Exhibition.

What is the good of holding such a Conference? A certain English man of letters has asked this question, adding, as his answer, that the author has nothing to do but to sell his wares and have done with it. But suppose he will not sell his wares and so have done with it. Suppose he understands—what many men of letters seem totally unable to understand—that his wares may represent a considerable, even a great property, which is going to yield a steady return for many years; that he ought no more to sell his property "and have done with it" than he would sell a rich mine, or a mill, or a row of houses, and have done with it unless for a consideration based on business principles. To such as understand this axiom—i. e., to all who are concerned in the material interests of literature—such a Conference may prove of the greatest possible use.

For instance, among the questions to be considered were (1) all those relating to copyright, international and domestic; (2) all those which relate to the administration of literary property; (3) all those which are concerned with literature itself—its past, its present, its tendency. In this paper I purposely keep the third branch in the background, because, unless a Congress is to attempt the function of an Academy, this must be either an ornamental section or the battleground of opinions and fashions of the day.

It is manifest that the first two branches may be most important to those concerned with literary property—too often any one but the producer and creator of it. There is, however, another point. It is greatly to be desired that those who belong to the literary profession should from time to time gather together and recognize the fact that they do belong to a common calling. Hitherto the author, though he calls himself a man of letters, has been too apt to refuse the recognition of a profession or calling of letters. He has sat apart—alone; nay, in many cases his only recognition of his brethren has been a cheap sneer or a savage gibe. To this day there remain a few of those of whom Churchill wrote, who can never speak of their brethren but with bitterness or derision. Such a man at such a Conference is out of place; much more important, his very existence comes to be recognized as an anachronism; he will no longer be tolerated.

Another kind of literary man is he who is continually inveighing against the baseness of connecting literature with lucre. He ap-

and who would not, if they could, place the line parallel to the base of the triangle. These are subjects on which they very much prefer to remain ignorant—subjects which reduce in their minds a horror akin to that of those who find themselves somehow or other in company with a chart devoted to morbid anatomy, "the dimensions in the diameter being multiplied 10.368." Even homely problems such as, "A bag contains two counters, as to which nothing is known except that each is either black or white: ascertain their colours without taking them out of the bag," are, to most unmathematical minds, a source of unrest rather than of quiet. They raise awful doubts in the plain man's mind as to whether somebody mightn't be able to find out by the Calculus that it was he who blacked his wife's sister's second husband when he came up at the Euroclydon. What, then, is the resource of the man whose mind is not suited to triangles, square-roots, bags with black-balls, A's who give B's two shillings and get back three farthings, and men who walk eight miles an hour the first day and seven the next, and so on, till they are overtaken by other men who "walk at a uniform pace of three miles an hour, including lunch?" Must they toss in agony beneath the silent stars? Not a bit of it. If they will only exercise a little ingenuity, they may find plenty of safe diversions. If they are fond of architecture, let them design a perfect gentleman's residence with pineries and hot-houses connected therewith by a commodious and artistic iron structure in the nature of a winter-garden; or lay out a flower-garden. If they are artists, let them incline the pictures in the National Gallery, which shall include a room for the masterpiece, after the model of the *salon carré* of the Louvre. Sleep will come long before the fifty best pictures are selected. More practically-minded men can suggest schemes for reorganizing the army and navy, for making new lines of railway communication east and west in England, or for taxing ground-rents in an equitable and efficient manner. Every man has a certain number of abstract phantasies. He can utilize them, he will find, sleep. He need not be afraid of getting too much interested: the moment his mind bites, and he loses sight of Mexican railways, sleep will overtake him. The rearranged pictures of the National Gallery will grow dimmer and dimmer, will at last disappear in mists of sleep.

It is a curious fact that though nothing is more detestable than the borderland between sleeping and waking at night, nothing is more delightful than that borderland in the early morning. Dr. Johnson feelingly said that the happiest moments in his life were those which he passed lying awake in bed in the morning. Let me be a very wicked person who would utter the truth of this saying. It was Sir Walter Scott, if we remember rightly, who gave a name to these delicious moments. He called such happy wakefulness "simmering;" and it was while simmering that the plots of his novels were spun. No one wants what the young lady called "tangents and things." The only pillow-problem of the morning is how to strike the best balance between the joy of lying on another ten minutes and a breakfast which has got a little cold. And even this problem can be solved. "Don't