



# MY EXPERIENCES AS A PROGRESSIVE DELEGATE

BY JANE ADDAMS

*A year ago McClure's Magazine began the publication of "A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil," by Jane Addams — a series of articles which were read and discussed by thinking people in every English-speaking country in the world. It is significant that the greatest social reformer in the country to-day — the one whose influence is most democratic and far-reaching — is a woman. And it is significant that Miss Addams was one of the delegates to the first great national convention in which women have ever participated, and that she was influential in forming the platform of a leading political party. What she herself felt to be the significance of her position in the Progressive convention is told in the following article.*

**D**URING the convention of the Progressive party in Chicago, one constantly encountered members of the American Economic Association, the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, the Civil Service Reform League, and similar bodies, until one feared that a few students of social conditions were endeavoring, through the new party, to secure measures which, although worthy, have after all recommended themselves to only a very small group out of all the nation. To an incorrigible democrat this was, naturally, very alarming. I was first reassured when I met a friend, whom I had last seen at the earlier Chicago convention before the Resolutions Committee, where he was presenting a plank which later left a slight residuum in the compressed labor paragraph adopted by the Republican party, and where I was presenting an equal suffrage plank which left no residuum at all. I remarked, in passing, that we were both getting a better hearing than we did in June, and he replied that we were not in the usual position of bringing men around to a new way of thinking, but that we were being met more than half way by men definitely committed to progress along all lines.

I gradually discovered that the situation was, in reality, the very reverse of what I had feared. The dean of a university law school acted as chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, and men conversant with the later developments in social legislation supplied information concerning similar legislation abroad; but these men, with the so-called practical members of the com-

mittee, were not representing the opinion of any individual, nor the philosophy of any group. They were trying, as conscientious American citizens, to meet that fundamental obligation of adapting the legal order to the changed conditions of national life — in the words of a Kansas member, "to formulate our own intrinsic, self-vindicating laws." The members of the committee had all experienced the frustration and disappointment of detached and partial effort. They had come to this first national convention of the Progressive party, not only to urge the remedial legislation which seemed to them so essential to the nation's welfare, but to test its validity and vitality by the "inner consent" of their fellow citizens, to throw their measures into the life of the nation itself for corroboration.

The program of social legislation placed before the country by the Progressive party is of great significance to the average voter, irrespective of the party which may finally claim his allegiance. Aristotle is reported to have said that politics is a school wherein questions are studied, not for the sake of knowledge, but for the sake of action. He might have added that politics are most valuable as a school because the average man has an inveterate tendency not to study at all unless he sees the prospect of action ahead of him. During the present campaign, measures of social amelioration will be discussed up and down the land, as only party politics are discussed, in the remotest farm-house to which the rural free delivery brings the weekly newspaper; certain economic

principles will become current, and new phrases will enter permanently into popular speech.

*The New Kind of Voter Created by the  
Progressive Party*

The discussion of the Progressive party platform will further surprise many a voter into the consciousness that the industrial situation in America has developed by leaps and bounds, without any of the restraining legislation which has been carefully placed about it in Europe. He will be told, for instance, that although twenty-nine European countries prohibit all night work for women, only three of our States have taken such action. He will learn of the long hours and overstrain to which the working-women of America may be subjected. If he is convinced that a girl who pushes down a lever with her right foot eight or nine thousand times a day is making so poor a preparation for motherhood that her work reacts in an "impaired second generation," he will be quick to see that it is the business of government to protect her, certainly in a republic whose very continuance depends upon the intelligence and vigor of its future citizens.

Such matters, doubtless, have a technical aspect, but they are in essence human, and intimately allied to the experiences of the average voter. But it is only when such needs are discussed in politics that he sees "where he comes in" and begins to be "worried."

The members of the Resolutions Committee were possessed of knowledge which it is, after all, a great responsibility not to submit to the nation. If a man knows, for instance, that fifteen thousand of his fellow citizens are killed in industry every year,—as if every adult male in a city of seventy-five thousand were put to death,—and that half a million of men are crippled,—as if every adult male in a State the size of Minnesota were annually maimed,—it is not sufficient for his peace of mind to know that a small group of public-spirited citizens are constantly agitating in various State legislatures for a system of industrial insurance, and that a yet smaller group of manufacturers successfully oppose such effort because their interests are threatened. The members of the committee knew that such problems belong to the nation as well as to the State, and that only by federal control, through the Inter-State Commerce Regulations, can great corporations be made to assume the injury of workmen as one of the risks of industry; only when human waste shall automatically involve a reduction in profits will a comprehensive system of safeguards be developed, as Germany has clearly

demonstrated. Such facts should be made public to the entire country, for it is no abstract theory which would lead one State after another to act upon this knowledge; it is self-preservation. Legislation forced by actual conditions is like the statutory laws, which in the first instance were reactions to felt needs.

*No One Should Regret that Women Were  
Among the Delegates*

It did not seem strange that women were delegates to this first convention of the Progressive party, and it would have been much more unnatural if they had not been there, when such matters of social welfare were being considered.

When a great political party asks women to participate in its first convention, and when a number of women deliberately accept the responsibility, it may indicate that public-spirited women are ready to give up the short modern rôle of being good to people and to go back to the long historic rôle of ministration to big human needs. After all, our philanthropies have cared for the orphans whose fathers have been needlessly injured in industry; have supported the families of the convict whose labor is adding to the profits of a prison contractor; have solaced men and women prematurely aged because they could find no work to do; have rescued girls driven to desperation through overwork and overstrain. Remedial legislation for all these human situations is part of the Progressive party platform; and as the old-line politician will be surprised to find during this campaign that politics have to do with such things, so philanthropic women, on their side, will be surprised to find that their long concern for the human wreckage of industry has come to be considered politics. When we develop the courage to commit our principles to reality, we will not only enlarge our concept of truth, but we will give it a chance to become humanized and vital. It is as if we thrust a dry stick of a principle into moist, fruitful earth, and as if it returned to our hands so fresh and blooming that we no longer have an impulse to use it as a chastening rod upon the evildoer, but, wondering, hold it as a new-born pledge of the irresistible power of life to quicken and to heal.

In spite of many reassuring experiences on the part of the women who identified themselves with the Progressive party, during the three days of the convention there were inevitable moments of heart-searching and compunction. But, because one felt curiously at home, there was the utmost freedom of speech and a quick understanding of hidden scruples which one was mysteriously impelled to express.

*Why I Voted for Two Battleships a Year*

We were, first and foremost, faced with the necessity of selecting from our many righteous principles those that might be advocated at the moment, and of forcing others to wait for a more propitious season. To illustrate from my own experience: For many years I have advocated international peace; to that end, I have been a member, sometimes an official, of various international, national, and local peace societies, and have zealously written and spoken upon the stirring theme of international arbitration. But, when I sat as a delegate in the convention of the Progressive party, I voted to adopt a platform, "as a whole," which advocated the building of two battleships a year, pending an international agreement for the limitation of naval forces.

I confess that I found it very difficult to swallow those two battleships. I know only too well the outrageous cost of building and maintaining them — that fatal seventy cents out of every dollar of federal taxes which is spent indirectly for war; and I would fain that the Progressive party had added no more to this preposterous and unnecessary burden, that it had been ready to commit the future to arbitration.

It was a serious matter even to appear to desert the cause and the comrades with which I had been for so many years identified. Believing, however, as I do, that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by an infinite series of minor decisions we have previously made, and that our convictions are, after all, determined by our sincerest experiences, I read over the documents of my long advocacy of peace, to find that I had consistently pursued one line of appeal. I contended that peace is no longer an abstract dogma, but that marked manifestations of "a newer dynamic peace" are found in that new internationalism promoted by the men of all nations who are determined upon the abolition of degrading poverty, disease, and intellectual weakness, with their resulting inefficiency and tragedy.

*Better to Preserve Human Life than  
Merely Not to Destroy It*

It is therefore not surprising that I should have been attracted to a party which pledged itself to work unceasingly for "effective labor legislation looking to the prevention of industrial accidents, occupational diseases, overwork, involuntary unemployment, and other injurious effects incident to modern industry." The men in every-day contact with the economic conditions of our industrial cities have estimated that the total number of casualties suffered

by our industrial army is sufficient to carry on perpetually two such wars, at the same time, as our Civil War and the Russo-Japanese War; that the casualties in the structural iron trade, in the erection of bridges and high buildings, bear the same percentage to the number of men engaged as did the wounded to the total number of troops in the battle of Bull Run. After all, when a choice was presented to me between protesting against the human waste in industry or against the havoc in warfare, the former made the more intimate appeal, and I identified myself with the political party which not only protests against such waste, but advances well considered legislation to prevent it.

Industrial Insurance Acts to protect the thousands of young immigrants who each year take the return journey across the Atlantic, maimed and crippled because the republic to which they have given their young strength failed to protect them as they would have been safeguarded at home, may but precede the successful conclusion of arbitration treaties.

Perhaps that ancient kindliness which "sat beside the cradle of the race" can not assert itself, in our generation, against warfare, so long as we stultify ourselves by our disregard of the shocking destruction in industry. The federal government through its own recent experience is leaning to the new humanitarianism. The wonderful sanitary system and daily regimen which preserved the life and health of the workers who dug the Panama Canal ought to make it very difficult for the same government to build upon the same spot huge fortifications whose very existence threatens with destruction that same human stuff which it has so painstakingly kept alive.

During the three days of the Progressive convention, one felt not only the breakdown of the old issues which had furnished both parties with their election cries for half a century, but the inevitable emergence of a new position.

A new code of political action has been formulated by men who are striving to express a sense of justice, socialized by long effort to secure fair play between contending classes; men who have learned that it can not be done by *a priori* reasoning, but must be established upon carefully ascertained facts.

Through the action of the Progressive party, remedial legislation is destined to be introduced into Congress and into every State legislature, by men whose party is committed to the redress of social wrongs and who have promised their constituents specific measures adapted to the changing and varied conditions of our industrial life.

# A LETTER TO A GENTLEMAN

BY

SAMUEL MERWIN

AUTHOR OF "CALUMET K," "THE CITADEL," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. M. CROSBY

*"A Letter to a Gentleman" is one of a group of remarkable stories of love and adventure along the China Coast, by Samuel Merwin, which will appear from time to time in McClure's. Probably no American writer of fiction knows inside conditions in China better than Mr. Merwin. He knows the coast of China as Perceval Gibbon knows East Africa—as Jack London knows the Klondike—and writes of it with wonderful truth and fascination.*

**A**N American judge was sent to the China Coast to furbish the somewhat tarnished name of his country. He found that, if you place a few thousand white men and women at a spot on the map five or six inches distant, by your ruler, from the European and American areas of civilization, they will live even more queerly than they lived at home. Which appears to support the socialistic theory of environmental influence as a determining factor in human development. The bad man is, of course, bad; the good man is doubtless good: if you can be sure about either. But are you going to hold Jimmy McDevitt (whose army name had been Blaney) responsible for Shanghai? Or for himself?

In any event, there was one episode, during those months of wandering before the arraignment of Jimmy for his part in the job at the Alcazar gambling-house, that perhaps appears to his credit in a big book that has no standing whatever in our courts of law. The woman's side of the story came to me through a curious inadvertence. Jimmy, poor devil, I would have known under any alias. And I tell it as it must or might have happened.

I

There was an unusual noise at the inn gate. Jimmy McDevitt started nervously, and straightened up, hypodermic in hand. Had they come for him?

Obviously not. The new and meddlesome American judge was altogether too busy holding court in three treaty ports at a time, and inci-

dentally in running down Bing Anderson at Yokohama, and Charley Merts at Tientsin, and the big fellow, Tex Connor, who had dashed for Singapore at the first word of trouble over the Alcazar job. That new judge would learn a thing or two before he was through with Tex Connor and Charley Merts.

Somewhat relieved, Jimmy measured out a small dose of the "white stuff," opened his shirt and undershirt, and with a quick pressure of his thumb shot the drug under the skin of his abdomen. After which he splashed his dusty hands in the basin of hot water that John, his interpreter, had set out for him. And he hummed blithely:

"Give my regards to Broad-way,  
Remember me to Herald Square——"

Again that confusion of voices at the inn gate. He dried his steady hands, poked a hole in one of the paper squares that served for a window, and listened. Suddenly he tore the paper away and looked. There was a woman out there, and she was speaking English — excitedly but unmistakably.

He went out across the court, adjusting his necktie and dusting off his clothing as he walked. To show himself was doubtless indiscreet; but you didn't often hear a woman speaking English in a Shansi village. Probably, he reflected, it was only a missionary sister. Even at that, the moment had a bit of a thrill in it.

But it was not a missionary sister. It was a distinctly beautiful young woman — beautiful despite her white face, and her crumpled hat, and her dusty, rather elaborate gown. A bit elaborate for any sort of traveling, that gown