

WOMEN DISCUSS GOSSIP.

"Gossip is a rehearsal of opinions or conjectures, wandering from one subject to another in desultory fashion," says Mrs. S. F. Nicholas.

"Gossip means to run about and tattle; to tell tales," says Webster.

One or the other definition is right; perhaps both are. However, either authority will do when it comes to describing a "gossip fest" of four dozen self-styled "gossips" at the Great Northern Hotel, recently, who got pointers on the so-called feminine accomplishment from Mrs. Nicholas, who filled the role of "gossip-in-chief."

And maybe this gray-haired "orator of the day" didn't refute that moss-grown charge that old women and aged cats are always associated in the mind when the subject of gossip is broached! And perhaps she didn't create the inference that men are not total strangers.

It's a pity the story has to be confined principally to the remarks of Mrs. Nicholas. But there's a reason. The "count" was lost when she declared the discussion "open." Confusion is one of the terms that might fit the situation. It ran into "the tea" that followed, and gossip was still being gossiped when the meeting was adjourned to reconvene the following Tuesday.

All About the Gentle Art.

When conversation among those seated about was reduced to the whisper stage, the speaker started out with: "Gossip tends to advance civilization," gave some choice morsels about the police force in days gone by, then said: "The efficiency of the police force now depends upon the amount of 'water' (strong emphasis) displacement."

"Men gossip just as well as the women," argued Mrs. Nicholas, "although popular opinion specially connects women with the word. The mental picture drawn generally makes it elderly women, characterized as idle and malicious, accompanied by numerous cups of tea and one or more cats, also elderly."

"But gossip is by no means confined within the limits of our atmosphere. Men are just as bad. Men are quite at home in trade gossip; they gossip about the presidential nomination, about Carnegie's troubles with his money, housecleaning, on the 'back yard beautiful,' the suppression of unnecessary noise, and a great many things which don't concern them."

Talks of President Roosevelt.

Mrs. Nicholas next "gossiped" about the Panama canal, said she was "surprised at the ignorance of people regarding South America," and discussed President Roosevelt's scheme of sending the fleet around the world, and then mentioned men and roosters, complimenting Mr. Roosevelt in these words: "It reminds me of Josh Billings' saying that 'first he likes the rooster because he can crow, and second because he has the spurs to back up his crow.'"

Mrs. Nicholas entitled her talk "Gossip of the Western Hemisphere," and attributed our growth and prosperity from the time Columbus landed on these shores down to the present day to the gossip and discussion of leading men.

The candor of the women in admitting the purpose of the gathering was only equaled by their wisdom in seating about the room. They came as near forming a hollow square as possible, the evident purpose being to prevent blocking a view of the speaker. It was the first time many of these ladies had met since getting their Easter headgear.