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The New Executive in Feminine Clubdom

By Elizabeth Whitford



Mrs. Emily Hoppin.
(Photo by Bushnell.)

THE RECENTLY elected president of the Federation of Women's Clubs of California is a clubwoman of long standing, but she is far more than that. No idle city woman is she, seeking but another diversion in club life, no dilettante in the world's strenuous workshop, but rather a real industrial factor, a woman who has for years successfully managed a large ranch; and who is, through natural endowment as well as experience, mentally and physically capable of large things; an efficient ex-

ecutive whose well laid plans are not apt to remain only pleasant visions.

Mrs. Emily Hoppin has the forceful personality which distinguishes the leader, and her intelligent face holds much of cheerful friendliness. Eminently cordial, but without disagreeable fulsomeness, she seems of the best Western type—Californian, we like to call it, and why not, since Mrs. Hoppin's years of maturity have all been spent in the Golden West, and her interests have been identified with those of the State for full forty years?

She was born in Michigan and was educated at the Kalamazoo branch of Mt. Holyoke Seminary, for four Mt. Holyokes there were all imbued with the same atmosphere as that original New England one which was a pioneer in woman's education. Her father was favorably known throughout Michigan as Judge Bacon, he having been judge of the Circuit Court for seventeen years at the time of his death. Her mother came of the Lord family of Maine, and was a sister of Dr. John Lord, whose "Beacon Lights of History" is known to every lover of readable books which are also authoritative. Always of a literary turn, always interested in educational matters, the Lord family has furnished many well known teachers to the country, including one president of Dartmouth College and one executive head of Harvard University.

The best of sturdy Englishism, dating back on the mother's side to ten hundred and sixty-six—to the time of that Norman conqueror named William, and on the father's to the sixteen hundreds, was transmogrified into an

even more sturdy and hardy *New Englandism* in the first quarter of the Seventeenth Century.

Shifting the view point to the newly acquired territory of California, we find that with the early Argonauts came to the land of promise Charles Rossiter Hoppin, his brother John, and Mat Harbin—true forty-niners. "The fierce rush for wealth" had carried them along in its course to the golden shores of their dreams; but, wiser perhaps than many of their comrades in adventure, they did not confine their efforts to panning for dust and digging for nuggets. Such treasure is all too easily squandered in any primitive country, and particularly in a mining country, where generosity and open-handedness are the accepted virtues. Land is not quite such a universal medium of exchange, not quite legal tender. Harder to acquire, it is also a thought harder to exchange, therefore a little easier to retain.

The beautifully rolling and forested lands of the Sacramento River Valley attracted the attention of the young pioneers, and in eighteen-fifty they were made happy by the grant of a tract of land three leagues square on picturesque Cash Creek. This tract, called "El Rancho Rio de Jesus Maria," proved to be of the finest and deepest alluvial soil, and now boasts the prosperous towns of Woodland and Yolo. It was one of the few old grants of that period the title to which has proved good, and the present Hoppin ranch of six hundred and fifty acres is part of the original grant.

To this ranch came the bride, Mrs. Emily Hoppin, some forty years ago, a mere girl in years and in experience. We can imagine with what pleasure her vigorous young mind recognized the large opportunities of this Western land, and with what willingness she entered upon its exacting duties. Not daunted by the novelty of farm life and of California conditions, the young matron took up her cares and dedicated herself with entire heart to her family and to California. Four children were born to her, and many

happy years rolled by before her husband's failing health unmistakably foretold his passing. Thereafter, the Rancho Rio de Jesus Maria became a school, in which the husband, Chas. Rossiter Hoppin, was the teacher, and the wife, Emily Hoppin, was the pupil. There was not a branch or detail of farming in which the wife and mother was not instructed, so that when the sad parting came, she was amply qualified to safeguard her own and her children's interests.

How infinitely wise was this preparation for stewardship! How broad the father's mind, how tender the mother's heart that conceived it! How foolishly inane it makes those women who pride themselves on knowing nothing of business, how wanton those men who deliberately keep their wives in ignorance! We trust that the new awakening of woman, which is preceding and attending her enfranchisement, will teach her that she is an equal partner with her husband in each business emprise, and has a right to know its proportion of risks—its chances of success. For she "stands for" failure as well as he, and indeed failure and the incident poverty are apt to bear more heavily on the wife than on the husband. Hers usually must be the retrenchments; hers the economies; hers the task of keeping up the standard of living no matter how shrunken the budget.

Mrs. Hoppin disclaims having run her ranch with "success," for she says the unpreventable chances in farming are too great. I judge she means by her disclaimer *unqualified success*, for it is admitted that the ranch is in better shape now, as to equipment, as to productiveness, and as to finances than it was when she took up her stewardship. The ranch is now considered a very valuable property. The State University, in fact, thought seriously of taking it for its experimental farm, and the Davis farm was selected in the end, almost entirely because of its better railroad connections.

That Mrs. Hoppin has for many years been frequently called on to

contribute papers to all manner of Farmers' Institutes is proof that she is generally accorded the very success which she modestly disclaims. Her new club duties will not be allowed to interfere with her interest in farm matters, and she expects to read a paper before the State Horticultural Convention to be held at Stanford University in June.

A few years ago, however, this accomplished woman rancher resigned the active management of her ranch, wishing to devote more time to work for the betterment of country life conditions. She is now, as it were, "rancher emeritus," and only ex-officio chairman of a farmers' institute, which is comprised of her four children, each of whom now manages a quarter of the ranch. And here again we see that wise look into the future, for the sons and daughters are getting most practical training, and Mrs. Hoppin is now only the head of the advisory board, which is the family conclave, but here she still has the deciding vote on questions of large moment to the board.

One of this capable woman's many activities has been the editorship of the "White Ribbon Ensign;" another, a vice-presidency of the Farmers' Protective Association; still another, the holding of a position on the Country Life Commission, together with one other woman, a number of practical farmers, and such noteworthy men as Professor Hyatt, Dean of the University Farm, and Prof. Ware, of the Chico Normal.

"I attended every meeting of the Commission," said Mrs. Hoppin, "and helped by my appreciation, if not by my ideas." When asked if she thought the Commission had accomplished anything, she said they had made a beginning. "Some remarkably clever ideas were expressed and we listened to a number of very good talks, but it is almost impossible to do anything without funds; and that is the reason that I am so determined our Federation shall keep on working for an endowment fund. The Federation as-

sessments are purposely kept small, and it is impossible to accumulate a sinking fund from them; therefore, we are continually hampered by lack of capital. Fifty thousand dollars does not seem an impossible sum to raise among all the Federated Clubs of our great State, and it would make us independent."

The new Federation president thinks the expenses of attending the conventions should be paid for the Chairmen of the Departments, for many of the women most capable of handling these departments are not financially able to attend the meetings, a fact that seriously hampers the President in making appointments.

This brought us directly to the subject of "patronage." Mrs. Hoppin laughingly says that she knows just how a new president of the United States must feel with so many hundreds of appointments to make, so determinedly anxious is she to put the very best possible woman in each place.

"No," she replied, in answer to a question, "there are no salaried positions in my gift, but that makes the competition no less keen, and me no less anxious for wisdom in the choosing."

And, with some dozens of women to appoint as the heads of departments ranging from Education to Legislation, from Philanthropy to Public Health, from Home Economics to the Conservation of Forests and Waters, a conscientious president may well feel the responsibility.

"I do not," added the new executive, "intend to be guided entirely by my own judgment—still less by my own inclination in making these appointments. I expect to have the advice of those who know the work and the abilities of the individual women. I am looking for experts along these lines, and I do not intend to be content with less than the best possible chairman for the head of each department."

Mrs. Hoppin has for years, almost as many as the years of her life, been

a worker for temperance. So thoroughly consistent is she that it is said she had all the wine grapes on the Rancho Rio de Jesus Maria uprooted many years ago, although they had been a profitable crop. It is not her intention, however, to endeavor to force her convictions upon the club women of California, who have not, as yet, taken action in this matter, although the General Federation of Women's Clubs at its last Biennial meeting, which was held in Chicago, adopted a resolution "for the controlling and eradication of the drink evil, both in State and nation." Although these words might be susceptible of slightly varying interpretations, they are still strong enough to satisfy even an enthusiast. In fact, there seems little danger, when the aroused conscientiousness of the nation is pronouncing the consumption of spirituous liquors a great evil in the most strenuous terms and measures, that the educated women of our progressive nation will be anywhere but in the van of the reform movement.

"You may quote me as saying," said the new Federation President, seriously, "that I mean to endeavor to work along the lines of industrial and economic reform, and at the very bottom of all evils lies the factor of drink.

"I believe that the women of California are taking the franchise seriously and that they are trying to inform themselves in matters of State economics. I am proud of the women of California, for they have accepted the franchise intending to make their vote an influence for good. I believe that the women of the State stand for fairness; for straightforwardness in politics; for measures—not party lines; for moral principles—not men."

Mrs. Hoppin's forty years' experience on the farm, her temperance work throughout the State, and her investigations while a member of the Country Life Commission, make her supremely recognize the needs of the country woman. She wishes, therefore, to emphasize this department,

hoping to bring the country woman to the front.

"The country woman greatly needs the city woman's viewpoint, but no more strongly, perhaps, than the city woman needs the country woman's. It is my ambition that they shall become mutually helpful."

Another department in which the State president is particularly interested is that of conservation both of waters and forests.

"Water is the very foundation (perhaps I should say the very fountain-head) of California's prosperity. Our waters must be conserved to the people. This I should like to have brought home to the consciousness and the conscience of every woman in the Federation especially, and to every woman in the State, if possible; for the franchise that will make women a power with knowledge may make them a menace without it.

"This is very close to my heart—this, and the carrying out of the ideal of the Federation, which is service. The Federation tries to serve not only its own members, but is a practical sisterhood united for service to the world at large."

Mrs. Hoppin is an optimist, as one could but know when looking into her countenance, so cheerfully animated; and even in the face of the greatest war of all ages, she still hopes that work for peace, which she feels must be largely woman's work, will not—cannot—be in vain. She anticipates that the condition we pray for, the prevalence of an effective sentiment for universal peace, may come about suddenly and unexpectedly, likening it to the movement for the abolition of slavery, which seemed a far, Eutopian vision in the minds of its supporters. Practically all they dared hope for was the restriction and limiting of the traffic—and then, of a sudden, Emancipation!—more glorious than their fondest dreams! And so she prays it may be with the peace sentiment.

Let us all join with this gracious optimist in a heartfelt "So be it"—a sonorous "Amen."