

The Biennial Convention. / 1912

Nearly three thousand women registered as delegates, alternates or visitors to the eleventh biennial convention of the General Federation of Women's Clubs of the United States, which was held in San Francisco June 25-July 5.

The clubs of San Francisco had hoped to have had a beautiful auditorium in which to hold the biennial meeting, but finally had to be contented with the Sutter street pavilion, more familiarly known as Dreamland Rink.

It seemed impossible to make the big building look like anything but a barn, but to the fertile brain and deft fingers of Mrs. Mary Bates McLellan of Mill Valley, nothing was impossible, and a veritable fairyland greeted the vast audience. Colored electric globes and Japanese lanterns gave color and light. Wreaths of evergreen, pines and cedars, branches of the pepper trees and palms made the hall a bower.

Walls made of khaki formed a long corridor the entire length of the building. Here, as you entered, the restful feeling that comes with the breath of the hills, was given by the rustic seats, pine branches with their cones, and beautiful woodwardia ferns.

Passing on, another space, festooned with kelp and other seaweeds among which shone the reds and greens of abalone shells gave the thought of the blue Pacific.

Again the Indian blankets, rugs and baskets, with appropriate pictures and great branches of cacti, brought to all the thought of the original tribes that roamed our state, while heavily carved furniture, rugs and bamboos gave to another place the touch of the Orient.

Easy chairs, desks and tables made the entire corridor a rest room, while the emergency hospital and dressing rooms, telephone booth and post office were conveniences all appreciated.

Mrs. Philip N. Moore, of St. Louis, presided through the entire ten days with wonderful ability and poise. Not once did she lose her hold on her convention. Her rulings were always fair, and she never failed to consider justice to the minority.

The convention seemed like our very own with the discussion of civil service reform, the legal and economic status of women, the peace movement, social hygiene, industrial and social conditions. To these subjects were added some of which we do not hear in our conventions, but in which every one of

Childhood.

When the Lord of the great and the little,
The potter whose hand shapes our clay,
Sets a child in the midst of the market
Where the world peoples chaffer all day,

Sets a child with its innocent questions,
Its flower-face dimpled and fine,
In the very heart's core of the clamor,
A thought of the Maker Divine.

And men, in their lust for dominion,
Their madness for silver and gold,
Crush the beauty and charm of that spirit,
Make the flower-face withered and old,

Bind the hands and the feet with a tether
That childhood can never untie,
Deem not that Jehovah unheeding
Looks down from the heights of the sky.

us should be interested as closely related to our own work for total abstinence and prohibition; namely, household economics, conservation of water and forests, and the great play ground movement. The first and last especially are closely interwoven with temperance work.

The music of the convention was under the general direction of Madame Emilia Tojetti. The first evening a complimentary concert was given to the delegates and visitors by the local Biennial Board. This was conducted by Herman Perlet. One day beautiful music was given in the Berkeley Greek theatre; this also by the courtesy of the local Biennial Board. Music of Spanish dances, Zuni and American Indian songs, Hawaiian music and Allen Dunn's Yosemite legends, told by Dr. H. J. Stewart, and sung by Mrs. J. F. Birmingham, gave originality and western color that were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

A vesper service Sunday afternoon arranged by Miss Woolley, president of Mt. Holyoke, made every heart echo the words of the processional hymn,

"Hark! Hark, my soul! Angelic songs are swelling
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave beat shore.

How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling,

Of that new life when sin shall be no more.

Onward we go, for still we hear them singing,

"Come, weary souls, for Jesus bids you come!"

And through the dark, its echoes sweetly ringing,

The music of the Gospel leads us home.

Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,

The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea.

And laden souls by thousands, meekly stealing,

King Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee.

Rest comes at length: though life be long and dreary,
The day must dawn, and darksome night be passed.

Faith's journey ends in welcome to the weary,
And heaven, the heart's true home, will come at last."

Luella Clay Carson, president of Mills College gave the address of the afternoon, taking for her subject, Paul before Agrippa, when after telling his wonderful story, he says "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." As a fitting close to the beautiful service the words of the recessional hymn went with us as a benediction,

"Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life.
Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thy eternal peace."

Professor Maria L. Sanford, of the University of Minnesota, struck the keynote of the convention in her address on "Moral Power in the School-room," "Education," she said, "is not for a means of livelihood, but of life. Moral training in the school room should offend no sect, but whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," mothers wish to have instilled into their children."

"We ask for college degrees, and scholarly attainments, but do not ask for teachers of moral power." She spoke of Mary Lyon and Alice Freeman, who taught no new doctrines but demanded truth and honesty. Of college girls, she said, "bring back to their homes only ideas of ease and comfort, then their education has failed; better to graduate from the cross-roads school house, than from a university that counts as puritanic the teaching of the great Master"

Civil Service Reform in its various forms received much attention. Mrs. Frank White, of North Dakota, in a talk on "Junior Citizenship" said if boys had proper exercise in the daytime, they would have no time for dissipation at night, and one half the boys in the reformatories could have been saved if this had been given them.

Dr. Clark Hetherington, one of the lecturers at the summer school of the university, spoke along the same line, and explained the aims of the playground movement, what it strives to prevent, what should be avoided and the benefits to be attained, urging as an incentive to playground work the thought previously brought out by Mrs. White.

(Continued on page 8)

endorsed the principle was apparent to all, yet a resolution to that effect was killed in committee out of deference to the opinion of the leading suffragists, who felt that the time was not yet here for the clubs with their varied interests, to unite on this vital question. Mrs. Moore, although a suffragist, when the resolution came from the floor, ruled it out of order, as the convention had ordered that all resolutions should come through the committee.

It was a source of deep grief to all, that Sarah Platt Decker should have been stricken with her fatal illness. She spoke once on the helpfulness of the enfranchised woman in civil service reform. Her short talk was heartily applauded.

Among the resolutions passed was one endorsing the erection of a colossal statue of Peace on the isthmus of Panama, and also the following.

First—To establish good roads, to include a Lincoln highway from ocean to ocean.

Second—To establish a national park, to include the Mammoth cave of Kentucky.

Third—To establish a bureau of national parks.

Fourth—To teach sex hygiene in normal schools.

Fifth—To train boys and girls after they leave school.

Sixth—To encourage employers' liability bills.

Seventh—To appoint women immigration inspectors at all ports of entry.

Eighth—To establish women police.

Ninth—To aid the families of convicts through the results of the prisoners' labor.

Tenth—To urge the using of the bible in literary clubs.

Eleventh—To maintain higher ideals of the stage.

Twelfth—To establish medical inspection of schools, school nurses and outdoor schools.

Thirteenth—To enforce to a letter the pure food and drug act.

Fourteenth—To indorse the white slave laws and protest against the light sentences passed on white slavers.

Fifteenth—To protest against the imposing of any legal disability on women not imposed on men.

Sixteenth—To pass uniform marriage and divorce laws.

Mrs. Tabor of Massachusetts spoke of the helpfulness of the merit system which she defined as "putting and keeping in office those best fitted for the places." She asked that greater publicity be given civil service examinations, and reform legislative laws.

Mrs. Cole, of Nebraska, spoke of the merit system as it affected institutions of charities and corrections, saying it was impossible to believe that women could be indifferent, when they saw criminality on the increase.

Home Economics, a subject always near women's hearts, was ably treated by Mrs. Olaf N. Guldin and Mrs. W. E. Miller of Indiana, and Mrs. Hessler of Illinois. The latter treated the subject of reform in dress, saying the standard should be primarily comfort; then harmony, which includes beauty; this does not mean complicated decoration, but attractiveness of material, simplicity and individuality. She spoke forcibly of the dress of the girls of the present day which lends itself to the growth of immorality.

Mrs. Miller told of practical work along social lines that had been done in South Bend, Indiana, by interesting girls in literary work as well as pleasure.

Mrs. Guldin followed with the thought that true civilization must write its own history in the development of man, and this must be done by making the best use of the agencies of domestic science, and permanent standards of health that grow out of a well developed body, mind and spirit through vocational guidance which should be taught in our schools.

Miss Helen Varick Boswell, of New York, in speaking of "Industrial and Social Conditions" urged the pensioning of widowed and aged mothers by the government.

Mrs. Frances Squires Potter, one of the best speakers of the convention, from her experience in library and English work, made an eloquent plea for the study of the Bible in our schools from a literary viewpoint. In defining a book suitable for a library, she said it should do one or all of three things. It should improve, inspire or refresh. She also gave a fine address on "The Declaration of Peace," and Baroness von Suttner emphasized the necessity for international arbitration.

Conservation of water and soil, betterment of farm conditions and goods roads were discussed in an interested and intelligent way. Among the speakers was Mrs. E. S. Greene, of our own organization.

The "Silences of the Statutes" by Mrs. Carpentier of New York City was an eloquent plea for equal suffrage. In fact, the necessity for political equality was advocated by nearly every speaker who spoke along the line of public work. That the the convention heartily