

The
Woman's Auxiliary
of
Central Pennsylvania,
from
1882 to 1894.
by
Mrs. M. A. de Wolfe Howe.

Original document located in The Archives of the Episcopal Church.

Read at the Annual Meeting held in Christ's
Church, Towanda, Nov. 2d, 1898.

WHEN the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania had passed its first decade, its first Bishop, the Rt. Rev. M. A. de Wolfe Howe felt that the time had come when the women of the Diocese should organize a Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions. Accordingly in 1882 he invited Miss Emery, the General Secretary of the Auxiliary to come to Mauch Chunk, where the Annual Convention of the Diocese was held in that year, and effect this organization. It was necessarily a small gathering and hardly representative of the Diocese, but those who were present responded cordially to the appeal, and the Central Pennsylvania Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary was formed.

The Constitution was simple in its structure, calling only for a President and a Secretary and Treasurer in one person. Mrs. M. A. de Wolfe Howe was elected President, and Miss Mary M. Stone, Secretary and Treasurer. She was instructed to ascertain what societies for women's work were already in existence in the Diocese and to urge them all to enter into connection with the Auxiliary, and to report all extra-parochial work done, and money given, to the Secretary. The time and place of the Annual Meeting was appointed to coincide with the sessions of the Diocesan Convention in June.

In June, 1883, a small number of women, mostly

from Reading, met in the Sunday School room of Christ Cathedral, Reading, and were addressed on the subject of missions by the Rev. Chandler Hare of Lebanon, Pa. I do not find any report for this year, but in the report for 1884, a comparison is made of the work done in the two years since the Branch was formed, and we are assured that though the attendance of the Annual Meeting was so small, there were at least the beginnings of life and activity in the Diocese. The money given was \$190.17 and the value of the missionary boxes sent out was \$1,265.99 and mention is made of two children's societies having been at work in Bellefonte and Shamokin.

In June, 1884, the Auxiliary held its Annual Meeting in the vestry-room of Christ Cathedral, Reading, and was scarcely larger than that of the preceding year. The interest of the women present at the Convention was diverted that afternoon by the election then in progress of the Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese. The few who were at the meeting listened to Miss Emery and Mrs. Thompson the wife of our veteran Missionary in China. It was then decided that it was useless to attempt to combine the meetings of the Auxiliary with those of the Convention, and it was agreed that the President should call a meeting at such time and place, as might be found most fitting, and that pains should be taken to secure representatives from all parts of the Diocese.

In February, 1885, such a meeting was held in the Sunday School room of Christ Cathedral, Reading. Sixteen parishes sent delegates and the meeting was

addressed by Bishop Howe, Bishop Hare of South Dakota, and the Rev. Mr. Powers of Pottsville. Eighteen parishes had taken part in the Auxiliary work, and the value of the boxes sent out had risen to \$3,470.71 and the amount of money given to \$262.63.

In January, 1886, the Auxiliary was invited to meet at St. Stephen's Church, Wilkes-Barre, and for the first time aspired to the dignity of assembling in the church. The afternoon meeting was addressed by Bishop Rulison, Bishop Brewer of Montana and Miss Emery. In the evening a large congregation listened with interest to the same Bishops, and to the Rev. Mr. Swentzel of Scranton. A pledge—the first made by the Auxiliary—to support a scholarship in one of Bishop Hare's Indian schools was made at the afternoon meeting. Those who were present at this meeting have not forgotten the elegant and beautiful tea served by the ladies of St. Stephen's Parish, or the graceful speeches by Bishop Rulison and the Rev. Mr. Jones on that occasion.

In November of 1886, was held the first Autumnal Annual Meeting—the first in a succession which has been unbroken to the present time. Other meetings had been held during the year, at Bethlehem, Pottsville, Harrisburg, and Lancaster. Miss Emery had addressed them and a quickened interest was felt in the neighborhood of all these parishes. This Annual Meeting was, I think, the first in which there was a morning service with the administration of the Holy Communion. The speakers at the different services were Bishop Robert Elliott of Western Texas, the

Rev. T. S. Tyng of Japan and Mr. Herbert Welsh of Philadelphia; our own Bishops were also present, and spoke. Mrs. Twing the Honorary Secretary of the Auxiliary addressed the afternoon business meeting in the Sunday School room.

It was in the year 1886 that the plan was adopted of sending to all the working branches of the Auxiliary, and to individuals not connected with any branch, envelopes for the collecting of money for Missionary purposes. They were accompanied by a leaflet setting forth the special objects for which money was asked. It became a habit of the officers of the Auxiliary to ask each year for some aid to the work of those missionary Bishops and clergymen who had spoken at the Annual Meeting of the preceding year, and the larger portion of the money received through the envelopes was so appropriated, after our pledges had been met.

In November, 1887, the Annual Meeting was again held in Christ Church, Reading. The speakers were Bishop Garret of Northern Texas, the Rev. Dr. Langford, General Secretary of the Board of Missions, the Rev. Mr. Cleveland of the Indian Mission and the Rev. Geo. C. Foley of Williamsport.

In November, 1888, the Annual Meeting was held at Pottsville, and was addressed by Bishops Howe and Rulison and Bishop Thomas of Kansas, the Rev. Dr. Osborne of Chicago and the Rev. Thomas B. Angell of Harrisburg. In the course of this year, the first Organizing Secretary, Mrs. Wm. H. Graff, was ap-

pointed by Bishop Rulison for the Archdeaconry of Williamsport.

On Oct. 30th, 1889, the Annual Meeting was held at Trinity Church, Bethlehem, and was generously entertained at her house by Mrs. James Wiley. The speakers were Bishop Talbot, then of Wyoming and Idaho, Bishop Brewer of Montana, the Rev. Panlus Moort of Africa and the Rev. Mr. Locke of China, besides our own Bishops and Miss Emery. The extension of our work was reported in the appointment by Bishop Rulison of Mrs. H. F. Warren, Organizing Secretary for the Archdeaconry of Scranton, Mrs. Katherine B. Ramsay for that of Harrisburg and Mrs. F. W. Boyer of Pottsville, for that of Reading. The claims of the Enrollment Fund, the completion of which the Managers of the Board of Missions had assigned to Miss Sybil Carter, were urged at this meeting.

In November, 1890, the Auxiliary met in St. Stephen's Church, Harrisburg. The speakers were Bishop Rulison, Bishop Leonard of Utah and Nevada and Miss Spencer from one of the Chinese schools. At this meeting an alteration was made in the Constitution, (Articles IV and VII) in relation to the appointment and duties of the Organizing Secretaries and giving the appointing power to the acting Bishop of the Diocese. The result of the special effort for the Enrollment Fund was reported and one Branch was found to have contributed \$436 to the fund. An additional pledge was made to send \$180 annually

toward the salary of a teacher in a colored school in Virginia.

In November, 1891, the meeting was held in Christ Church, Reading. The speakers were Bishop Johnston of Western Texas, Bishop Brewer of Montana, the Rev. Mr. Gring of Japan, our own Bishops, and the Rev. Mr. Blanchard of St. James Church, Philadelphia. Another pledge was made of \$50 per annum, towards the life insurance of the Rev. Mr. Gring who was about to leave the country for work in Japan.

In November, 1892, the annual meeting took place in Scranton and was addressed by Bishop Talbot, Bishop Walker of North Dakota, and Mr. F. H. Pott of China.

In November of 1893, the Annual Meeting was held in Christ Church, Reading, and was addressed by our own Bishops, Bishop Ferguson of the Cape Palmas Mission in Africa, the Rev. Mr. Chapman of Alaska, Prof. Gardiner of Tokio, Japan, the Rev. Mr. Israel of Scranton, and Mrs. Brierly of Africa. An additional pledge was made at this meeting of \$100 per annum to the Church Home at Jonestown.

In November, 1894, the meeting took place in Christ Church, Williamsport. The speakers were Bishop Rulison, Bishop Brooke of Oklahoma, the Rev. Jules Prevost of Alaska, the Rev. Mr. Yen of China, the Rev. Mr. Sterling of Bethlehem and Miss Emery.

In making this incomplete résumé of the work of the Diocesan Auxiliary, it has not been possible to give accurately the dates or the times of service of the several Organizing Secretaries. The first Secretary, Mrs. Graff, was faithful to her work till 1895, when she removed from the Diocese. The first Secretary in Scranton, Mrs. Warren, was soon obliged to relinquish her work and was succeeded by Mrs. Palmer of Wilkes-Barre. Her term of service was not long and her work was taken up by Mrs. Sophia C. Hall of Honesdale, who labored efficiently till her removal from the Diocese in 1892, when the present Secretary Mrs. Rogers Israel was appointed.

The Harrisburg Archdeaconry remained under the charge of Mrs. Geo. B. Ramsay till 1895, when she was succeeded by Mrs. Neal of Harrisburg.

The Reading Archdeaconry was faithfully served by Mrs. Boyer till family cares obliged her to resign and her work was energetically taken up by Mrs. James Wiley of Bethlehem, to whom also was given the office of Vice-President. Her long illness and her death deprived the Auxiliary of a most valuable officer. She was succeeded in 1894 by Mrs. Sterling of South Bethlehem.

It may be interesting to add to this record of the work of the Central Pennsylvania Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary, from 1882 to 1894, the amount contributed in Missionary Boxes and in money during the twelve years.

Missionary Boxes, . . . \$ 46,541 74.

Money, 14,957 57.



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