NEXT WEEK'S CONFERENCE

It is an Event of Widespread Importance to Methodism.

MANY QUESTIONS PENDING

The Admission of Women, the Abolition of the Time Limit and the Question Popular Amendments Are Some of Them.

From the Buffalo Express.

Cleveland, O., April 27.—Cleveland is the mecca of Methodism this year. The twenty-second delegated general conference of the Methodist Episcopal church will meet here the first week in May, and devote a month to legislation which will affect nearly 3,000,000 of members. Delegations are expected from all sections of the United States, and from Norway, Germany, Italy, China, Japan, Mexico and South America. Fraternal messengers will represent English, Irish and Canadian Methodists, the Methodist Episcopal Church South and other evangelical denominations. There will be over 500 delegates in the general conference. Since this conference is the great quadriennial event of this denomination, it is safe to assume that the visiting preachers and laymen will be numbered by the hundreds, and possibly thousands. The numerous vital questions to be settled and the accessibility of Cleveland increase the probability of a large attendance of visitors. The entertainment committee, of which Dr. A. J. Palmer, of New York, is chairman, has secured from the hotels a promise that the usual rates will not be increased during the conference. The expenses of delegates will be paid by the church, but, of course, visitors will be required to pay their own expenses.

The sessions of the conference will be held in the auditorium of the new armory. Indeed, it was the promised completion of this auditorium that led to the selection of Cleveland as the place for holding the conference, because there was no other place of meeting in Cleveland large enough for the purpose. Early in the winter the auditorium was ready for the floor, and was being hurried to completion when a decision of the Supreme court put a stop to all work. It was found that $10,000 would finish and furnish the auditorium and committee rooms. Permission was obtained from the commissioners, Methodist laymen of Cleveland gave the money, and the work was resumed. The auditorium will be ready for use when wanted, on May 4.

AN INTERESTING AFFAIR.

A general conference of the Methodist Episcopal church is as interesting in many ways as a national political convention or a session of congress. It attracts numerous visitors who are more or less interested in the matters up for consideration and who are eager to be present at each session. The finance committee this year has decided to charge $100 for a box and $10 for a chair, and the momentum of interest among the visitors will doubtless cause them to pay the amount asked without a murmur, and thus help replenish a treasury badly in need of funds. Visitors from what is known as the "third house," or the lobby. While the visiting preachers would scorn the methods of a trained lobbyist, nevertheless they are not averse to practice the seductive art of suggestion and persuasion on delegates whom they desire to pursue a given course at the conference. Their methods are subtle, refined, interesting and often successful.

The coming conference is one of peculiar interest because of the various constitutional questions to be settled, if possible. For years women have claimed the right to assist in making the laws of the church, but the men have denied them the right on the ground that it was unscriptural and inexpedient for women to have the rule over men in the church. By a large majority the church at large has expressed itself in favor of the admission of women to the general conference. Four women have been elected and will present themselves for recognition. Those opposed to women contend that the vote in favor of admitting them will not be a law until ratified by the general conference. Since the women were elected several months ago, it will be claimed that they cannot come in at the present session. Their friends will undoubtedly endeavor to seat them by a direct vote. They have the power and may exercise it, but such a course may lead to a serious disturbance of ecclesiastical harmony.

THE TIME LIMIT.

Next in importance to the woman question is the proposed removal of the time limit regulating the length of a preacher's stay in charge of one church. The bishop fixes the appointments at the session of the annual conference, but cannot reappoint for more than five years. At the end of five years the law of the church requires the removal of the preacher. During the past quadriennium there has been considerable discussion of this question, particularly among the city pastors. The circuit riders and men appointed to small stations are not much in favor of a removal of the limit. The argument urged by those who want the limit removed is that a metropolitan church cannot be developed to a high degree of efficiency by a pastorate of five years. The removal of the limit places the whole responsibility on the bishop, who must continue to reappoint a pastor as long as he wants him to stay at one place. Early in the history of the denomination there was no time limit, but the limit was enacted at the earnest solicitation of a pioneer bishop, who found that there were some things that even a Methodist bishop could not do. It was a hard thing sometimes to move a preacher by mere authority, and it was considered more desirable to have a law that would create vacancies at stated intervals. At first the limit was two years. Four years ago it was extended to five years, and now the demand is made to have it removed altogether. The matter will doubtless provoke considerable discussion.

AS TO AMUSEMENTS.

Another question of more widespread interest among the laity, and especially the young people, is the proposed elimination from the church discipline of the specific rules against popular amusements. Dancing, card-playing and theater-going are named particularly, and provision made for the expulsion of any indulging in these amusements. A rigorous enforcement of these rules would have a bad effect on the membership of some of the city churches, where there is a superabundance of wealth, society and young people. These specific restrictions did not emanate from the mind of John Wesley, the founder of the church. They were incorporated in the discipline as a sort of interpretation of a clause in the general rules which forbids amusements that cannot be taken in the name of Christ. They have given preachers endless trouble, because a literal enforcement arouses resentment and fails to accomplish the desired object. Preachers who are opposed to the amusements named urge the removal of the specific restrictions because they feel that the proper way is to make the amusement question a matter of conscience, and not of arbitrary restriction. The matter has been freely discussed and there is a strong probability that the rules touching amusements will be considerably revised.

ADDITIONAL BISHOPS.

A matter of deep concern to the more advanced Methodists and the leaders in all sections is that of the election of additional bishops to particular geographical stations. At present there are eighteen bishops, two of the number being designated as "missionary bishops." The distinction is that a missionary bishop is in power only while in a particular territory, while a "regular" bishop is in full authority anywhere in the world. Bishop Thoburn, of India, and Bishop Walker, of Africa, are missionary bishops. There will doubtless be a move to abolish the distinction and make missionary bishops bishops indeed. Closely related to this question is the one of episcopal residence and geographical restrictions. Methodist episcopal bishops are not limited at present the same as Roman Catholic or episcopal bishops. They travel all over the world and exercise a general superintendency over the various annual conferences, according to a mutual understanding and agreement. Bishop Bowman resides in St. Louis, yet he exercises Episcopal functions in all parts of the United States. Bishop Goodsell has his Episcopal headquarters in San Francisco, but has recently been assigned to duty in Europe. All bishops are equal, but Bishop Bowman presides at their semi-annual meetings by virtue of his seniority. A bishop has no authority aside from that given by the discipline, which is the crystallized enactments of the general conferences. A number of prominent preachers and laymen have been urging a plan of episcopacy requiring each bishop to look after a given territory for a term of four years. This movement also includes the quadrennial location of a bishop in China, South America, Africa, India and Europe, the remaining bishops to be stationed in various parts of the United States. It is claimed that this plan will enable each bishop to gain a more intimate and accurate knowledge of his field than he can possibly gain under the present system of dependence in presiding elders and preachers.

The consolation of the book concern is under consideration. At present the publishing interests of the church are carried on by two establishments, one in New York and one in Cincinnati. Branch offices and depositories are located in the leading cities. This movement toward consolidation also carries with it the proposition to elect laymen as agents instead of preachers.

A LEGISLATIVE BODY.

The general conference is purely a legislative body. It makes all the laws of the church. In a general way it corresponds with the national congress. Ministerial and lay delegates are sent by the hundred or more annual conferences. Four years ago there were 315 preachers and 189 laymen. This session there will probably be an increase. Ministerial and lay delegates meet in one body and have equal powers, although not equal in numbers. Separate votes can be taken on questions before the conference if demanded. The bishops preside in rotation one session each. They are not allowed the privileges of the floor. Unlike some legislative bodies the bishop cannot call a substitute to the chair, take the floor and make a speech no matter how much he may desire to do so. Like congress, most of the work is done in committee. There are twelve standing committees, viz.: Episcopacy, itinerary, boundaries, revivals, temporal, economy, state of the church, book concern, missions, education, church extension, Sunday schools and tracts, freedman's aid and work in the south. Each member of each delegation, beginning with the chairman, selects a committee, and so on through the list until the delegation is represented on each committee. None of the standing committees are appointed by the presiding officer. Each delegate will be on several committees, and each committee will have about 100 members. The names of the committees indicate the class of legislation referred to them. The committee on episcopacy stands first in importance. It is formed of the chairmen of the various delegations. The committee inquires into the character and behavior of the bishops. The name of each bishop is called in turn, and if any delegate has any complaint he presents it when the name is called. All recommendations relating to the election of additional bishops and changes in the episcopacy come from this committee. The committee on boundaries is final in its conclusion, but the remaining committees are merely for reference. The order of business of the conference is to hold a general session in the forenoon, committee meetings in the afternoon, and anniversaries and receptions to fraternal messengers at night.

GOOD ACCOMMODATIONS.

The new armory where the general conference will meet is a massive stone building in the heart of the city, and only one block from the lake. It is within five minutes of the Union depot, two blocks from the postoffice and two blocks from the noted public square from which all the street-car lines radiate. Visitors who have attended other sessions of the general conference say the internal arrangements of the armory are far superior to any place where sessions have been previously held. There will be ample room for the delegates, and thousands of seats for visitors. Ample provision has been made for cloak-rooms, waiting-rooms, editorial-rooms of the Daily Advocate, private rooms for the bishops, postoffice, telegraph offices, wash-room and press representatives.

The committee in charge of arrangements has secured a written contract from the hotels to entertain delegates for $1 a day, and to make no discrimination because of color or nationality. The committee will assign delegates to places of entertainment, and each hotel, including the finest in the city, will have colored delegates to entertain, on an equal footing with whites.

TROLLEY CARS IN ROME.

How They Are Equipped to Mount the Hills of the Eternal City.

From the Buffalo Commercial.

The eternal city, "Rome of Caesar, Rome of Peter," has been invaded again, this time by the trolley car. The road connects the main railway station with the center of the city. It starts from the Piazza S. Silvestro and goes up the Vio di Capo de Case and then through the Ludovisian Quarter to the Piazza di Termini. It is a double track and is located on the slope.

The power station is located on the slope of the Sabine Hills, and the electricity is generated from turbines placed in the waterfalls about eighteen miles out of the city. Power is conveyed to the city by four large cables that run into a transformer house near the Porta Pia. The cars, like all rolling stock on European trolley lines, are model vehicles. They are flooded with light at night, and instead of signaling the conductor when one wants the car to stop, all he has to do is to press a button on the seat behind him.

Some of the hills on the line are so steep that special brakes are necessary. Both hand and feet brakes are used, one acting on the wheels directly and the other on the rails. In addition there is an electric emergency brake, which will stop the car in a few yards, even when going quickly down hill. The principle of it consists in short-circuiting the motors, which are then driven as dynamos by the momentum of the car, which is thus rapidly stopped.

An American company strung the overhead wires and equipped the cars.

Affection Not Too Ardent.

Caller—"I suppose you love your new sister very dearly, Tommy?"

Tommy (eyeing the baby coldly)—"Yes. But I'd a good deal rather have a dog."—Somerville Journal.

The Nickel Plate Road is the shortest line between Buffalo and Chicago. **

SCRANTON OF YESTERDAY

A Glimpse at Some Things That Prophesied Her Greatness.

A FEW RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

Interesting Episodes of Long Ago—Foreigners Then and Now—Frank Beamish and His Marvelous Ability as a Political Leader.

Written for The Tribune.

The Scranton of a quarter of a century or more ago gave sign and promise of the greater Scranton of today. It was a hustling, bustling baliwick then with every citizen a true blue shouter for the town. The problem of the city's progress was involved in the intense local loyalty that manifested itself. Though litigants were forced to go to Wilkes-Barre with their cases, the dream of a new county with its needful accommodations, inspired the hearts of the wideawake men of the early 70's, who only bided their time to break away from old Luzerne and there were giants in those days—wonderful workers in the field of politics. There was the late Frank Beamish, for instance. And Mike Philbin, of WilkesBarre, and Mike Reap of Pittston, and Doc. Trimmer, of White Haven, and a host of others, for it should be remembered that Luzerne in those days rolled up Democratic majorities amounting anywhere to from 3,000 to 4,000. The fights were in the conventions and there are those in this city today who will recall that hey were frequently of a sanguinary hue, as a nomination meant an election. The Scranton end of campaigns was always left in the hands of Mr. Beamish, and he never betrayed his trusts. Tricky? Well, what of it? Did you ever know of a first-class political fighter who wasn't? A trick in politics is only another name for good generalship. You certainly will subscribe to that, you who are pulling the wires today and who hae just returned from Harrisburg. When a man tells me that a politician is as "straight as a die," I begin to suspect that political general. I don't mean that it implies that he is dishonest, but I think you will agree with me when I say that conscience in politics is as conditions now stand, an unpromising factor. But I digress.

* * *

Frank Beamish in his palmy days was a marvelous man. He never lost his temper and yet he could whip his weight in wild cats. He had the faculty of winning men to him by the force of his powerful magnetism. On one occasion at Archbald, or somewhere up that way—Phil Coyne will remember—when 2000 Democratic voters stood listening to the eloquence of Democratic orators who spoke from thet high balcony of a "hotel," Beamish noted the presence of a disturbing element. Ex-Judge Stanton, who had met misfortune in the convention, was out on an independent ticket. He was a warm favorite in the section invaded that night by the "straights." As the speakers succeeded each other with their ardent appeals to stand by the men named by the convention, and before the last one had been called up, in the distance were heard the echoes of horses' feet flying fast toward the little town, and soon out of the shadows and into the moonlight that brightened the black surroundings of the hotel, rolled a buggy containing two men, Phil. Coyne and "Billy" Stanton. Then there were signs of agitation. Brawny miners pulled out of the crowd which stood listening to the regular speakers on the balcony, to make another around the vehicle that had brought the two new-comers to the scene. For a time there was a deep hush, followed quickly by low murmurs which suddenly broke into a roar.

* * *

Before the speakers, standing out in the bright light of a full moon, were three thousand scowling men. Suddenly somebody yelled out, "Hurrah for Stanton!" which was supplemented by a fierver if more profane proclamation of "To —— with Stanton!" It was a moment of supreme excitement. The orators backed off the high porch into the apartments behind them. Those who carried pistols pulled them out and examined them carefully. Those who did not, pulled out their flasks and took something" to steady their nerves. Then in the air there arose a co-mingling of shouts from the myriad hoarse and angry throats outside the tavern. Just at that moment, when a bloody fight of tremendous significance seemed imminent, and when two men who stood in the centre of the great throng, apparent leaders of the disputing factions, were prparing to savagly attack each other, the form of a gray-clad man was seen wiggling his way through the thick mass of humanity, like a Titan forcing the biggest giants to one side as if they were mere babes. This man reached the wrangling leaders, and taking each by the throat, he commanded the crowd to fall back and make a ring for these two to settle their disputes in. And the crowd moved by some mysterious instinct, parted, until the moon revealed a bare space big enough for the fighters to exploit their science if they so desired. For a moment they hesitated but then came together with a clash and ringing oaths at the command of the little man in gray. The fight of the faction leaders quieted the faction troubles for that night, and the man in gray who brought it all about was Frank Beamish.

* * *

To be sure, there was a foreign element in Scranton thirty years ago as there is now. But it was of a very different kind than that which we recognize today. The "Laddybucks" of '70 disputed over their beer and broke each others heads occasionally, but every mother's son of them loved the bonny flag that bore the stars and stripes and was willing to fight or die for it in a minute. The toiling foreigner of that day, whether he was an Irishman, a German, a Welshman or a Scotchman, recognized the bountiful blessings involved in the free school, and worked harder that his children might secure all the advantages of a good education. And where are those children today? Not in the mines. Not roystering with maniacal fury at christenings. Not engaging in fierce and bloody contests with knife and bludgeon on the occasion of wedding festivities. No indeed. They are among the school teachers, our lawyers, our doctors, our merchants, and occupying places in every honorable walk of life. Will it be possible to say as much thirty years hence of the children of the chief foreign element that has been pouring into Pennsylvania, like a polluted stream, of recent years? Time alone will reveal.

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The newspapers in the early '70's, though much smaller than the mammoth products of today, were none the less interesting. There were some lively pens engaged on the Scranton papers a quarter of a century ago. The Republican occupied meagre quarters on the second floor of a building on Lackawanna avenue, with a bookstore on one side and a faro bank on the other. Norton ran the one and Jim Maury the other. But "Joe's" paper then as now, was hotly aggressive at times, while the exciting features of local life made it possible to make the city page a conspicuously thrilling one. The Times, whose ownership was involved in mystery, which continued until not very long ago stood boldly out for Democracy and the trenchant pens of a Walsh, a Merrifield and a Williams, were applied with a vigor and force that attracted attention. The Democrat, the only aternoon representative was manned by little J. B. Adams, spitting fiery paragraphs with a tenacity rarely equalled by his ability to spit tobacco juice. And last, but by no means least, was the Sunday Frees Press, with Frank Beamish and Jim Coon at the head, firing broadsides into the enemy on each Lord's day, and sending its issue out over the hills by pony express to many thousands of interested readers. And though the men who dipped their pens occasionally in gall and wormwood against each other in bitter tirades of abuse were supposed to be at sword-points socially, the few who saw them gathered in the "Marble Palace" of Coyne and Stephens, on Penn avenue at night, hobnobbing like princes and tossing the "ruby" with equal freedom, were covinced of the fact that newspaper men are the queerest people in the world.

E. A. N.

MEANING OF STATE NAMES.

Alabama is believed to mean "the land of rest," though one authority claims the name means a glade or thicket of trees.

California bears the name the Franciscan monks gave to Cortes and is explained as meaning calida fornex, "hot furnace." It is probable the name was taken from a romance published in 1510 describing California, an imaginary island abounding in gold and jewels.

Illinois took its name from the Illinois tribe of Indians, who in turn were really the Illini or Illiniwok, "the men."

Kentucky is a native name and means bloody ground. Many conflicts took place there in early days.

The name Oregon is derived from the Spanish oregano, "wild marjoram" or "wood sage," which grows abundantly in that state.

Rhode Island may have taken its name from the ancient island of Rhodes or from the name of an early settler, but it is probable the name came about because of the fine anchorage or roadstead between the island and the mainland.

Wisconsin takes its name from the Wisconsin river, which was derived from Miskonsing, "wild rushing channel," bestowed on it by Joliet.

Montana means land of mountains.

Maryland was named in honor of Queen Henrietta Maria, being called Terra Maria in the charter first given.

Experienced.

Sarcastic Reader—"I noticed that you had a communication in the first number of your paper signed 'Old Subscriber.'"

Editor—"Well, that was all right."

Sarcastic Reader—"How so?"

Editor—"Why, that communication was written by a man who began subscribing to different papers and magazines more than thirty years ago."—Somerville Journal.

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