

**THE WORK AND WORDS OF THE NATIONAL
CONGRESS OF MOTHERS: (FIRST ANNUAL
SESSION). HELD IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON,
D.C., FEBRUARY 17, 18, AND 19, 1897.
INCLUDING THE JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS,
THE ADDRESSES AND DISCUSSIONS, AND OTHER
MISCELLANY OF THE MEETINGS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649736874

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Cover @ 2017

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SERIAL

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF
THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS

R 371.103 N 217 v. 1 1897

230675 SEP 18 1919

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1897

SRLF
URL

HQ
769
N296
1897

THE Report of the Proceedings of the First National Congress of Mothers will be mailed on receipt of price—in paper, twenty-five cents, and ten cents additional for postage; in cloth, one dollar, fifteen cents additional for postage.

In response to numerous requests, copies, in pamphlet form, of all addresses delivered at the First National Congress of Mothers will be mailed postpaid for five cents each, or four dollars per hundred.

Checks for less than one dollar not accepted. Sums under that amount payable in postal money orders or stamps. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Treasurer National Congress of Mothers.

Price must accompany orders and be sent to

SECRETARY NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS,

WASHINGTON LOAN AND TRUST BUILDING,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

NOTE.—In the Addenda will be found information of interest to clubs, delegates, and to all organizations in sympathy with this national movement in behalf of childhood; also an explanation of the methods employed to meet the heavy expenses of this rapidly growing work.

No advertising matter of any character will be accepted.

PREFACE.

THIS Report of the Proceedings of the First National Congress of Mothers, held in Washington, D. C., February 17th, 18th, and 19th, is offered to the public with the statement that from this initial conference much that will prove of inestimable value to the work was learned which will doubtless inure to the greater welfare and wider influence of future Congresses. Truly grateful for the hearty response which was manifest by the large attendance drawn from all parts of our country, the report is printed as a slight token of our appreciation for the generous co-operation of the clubs, organizations, and individuals who came, some of them from great distances and at great expense, to attend the Congress. The enthusiasm and inspiration of the meetings were largely due to the constant presence and undivided attention of these delegates. Aside from their numbers, the large correspondence with those who could not come and yet who wish to know of the Congress, what was said, what was done, and what is *to be* done, furnishes us with still a second and larger audience.

For the benefit of all these the report has been prepared. The special essays and the extempore addresses have been gathered together and stand classified in this volume, that they may become a ready reference for clubs studying upon parallel lines. The programme as presented at the Congress is reprinted here, not omitting the appropriate and beautiful quotations which adorned its pages. In the Appendix may be found a commentary on the Congress, since it is impossible to enlarge the report sufficiently to include all of the excellent words delivered in the side conferences. Stenographic reports were not made at these branch meetings, but a few papers were submitted, which the Board of Officers may sometime decide to print as leaflets for distribution on demand.

There may also be found in the Appendix the resolutions which were adopted by the board and the delegates at the close of the Congress; the Declaration of Principles of the Congress and some plan of organization, with a promise of further details to be sent out on application in the early fall; the List of Delegates with addresses; also of clubs and organizations having departments of study germane to the purposes of the National Congress of Mothers.

The results of the first Congress of Mothers were more than gratifying. That the effort was a grand one all were agreed. If, in any particular, expectation was disappointed, if the report of proceedings be in any respect open to criticism, we ask the reader to remember that in each and every instance only the noblest and most disinterested motives have actuated all who have participated in this work, from the inception of the idea by the President, Mrs. Theodore W. Birney (who first presented the outline of her plan before the New York Chautauqua of 1895) to the last speaker on the programme of the Congress.

Miss Janet E. Richards, of Washington, D. C., at Mrs. Birney's request, read the first official call to the Mothers' Congress before the biennial of the General Federation of Women's Clubs at Louisville, Ky., on May 28, 1896.

A similar call was presented by Mrs. Ellen A. Richardson before the Home Congress at Boston in October, 1896.

In addition to these specific calls, circulars and press notices were kept constantly before the public until the Congress convened, when those who came to listen and to serve gathered in such overwhelming numbers that no one building in Washington could hold them all.

The power that worked this result was the power of love and the might of need. That same power still sways and the needs are yet unsatisfied.

In a spirit of love and helpfulness we therefore send forth this record of the First National Congress of Mothers, trusting that it may find a responsive echo in all hearts, and that a higher wisdom may guide us to a fuller fruition in the future work of the National Congress of Mothers.

May, 1897.

OFFICIAL CALL TO FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MOTHERS.*

THE First National Congress of Mothers will be held in the Banquet Hall of the Arlington Hotel, Washington, D. C., February 17, 18, 19, 1897. Washington has been selected as the most fitting place for such an assemblage because the movement is one of national importance, and because the city offers many advantages in other ways.

The originator of the present project, believing in the necessity for organized and earnest effort on the part of the mothers of the land concerning questions most vital to the welfare of their children and the manifold interests of the home, presented the subject at some of the Mothers' Meetings at Chautauqua in the summer of 1895. The earnest enthusiasm with which it was received made it evident that the thought needed only to be disseminated in order to be quickly accepted and acted upon by hosts of conscientious, thinking women throughout the world, and to result in a centralization of their power toward the accomplishment of great and necessary reforms in the interest of humanity.

It is universally admitted that feminine influence has been a mighty factor for good in all ages, and therefore incalculable benefit may be expected from the assembling of many women for the interchange of views and the study of home problems which can be solved by woman alone.

* The above contains the subject matter of a leaflet distributed throughout the country prior to Feb. 17, 1896, and is printed in response to many inquiries concerning the initial steps toward the organization of the National Congress of Mothers.