

## THE SWARTHMORE CONFERENCES.

(From the Public Ledger.)

8th mo. 19th.

The "cool wave" came just in time for the Friends' Conference that opened here to-day. Several hundred Friends, chiefly from other Yearly Meetings, arrived last evening, and hundreds more came on the early trains this morning. The large audience tent, containing 2750 chairs, occupies a prominent place on the campus in front of the college, while the tents occupied by private parties are placed modestly in the background. Many of the visitors are entertained by Friends in Swarthmore and vicinity, but about 1500 are the guests of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Meals are furnished in the college dining room and in a large tent.

The audience tent was well filled by the hour for opening, and promptly at 9.30 o'clock Robert M. Janney read the opening minute of the twentieth session of the First-day School General Conference. This was followed by a period of solemn silence, during which John H. Shotwell, of New York, offered prayer.

In his address of welcome Robert M. Janney alluded feelingly to the death of Joseph A. Bogardus, who for so many years has been the efficient clerk of the Conference. The assistant clerk being absent, Florence Hall was appointed in his stead.

The Executive Committee reported that they had held four meetings, which were devoted chiefly to the preparation of Lesson Leaves. They suggested that in future the committee be left at liberty to select a different set of subjects for Primary Lesson Leaves, as subjects suited to older classes were often not adapted to the needs of little children. They also proposed that the lessons on the Gospels, now completed, be published in book form for permanent use. They recommended to meetings to give a more prominent

place to adult conference class work, aiming to include in this all the adult members of the Meeting, and acknowledged the great need for teachers to prepare themselves more thoroughly for their work. After an animated discussion the Committee was left at liberty to prepare such Lesson Leaves as they think best for intermediate and primary classes.

A paper on "First-day School Extension" was then read by Cornelia J. Shoemaker, of Loudoun county, Virginia. She said that it is too much the custom in the study of the Bible to take detached passages or isolated texts and interpret them according to our own theological views. What we should do is to study the evolution of the Bible, that we may have a true appreciation of its literary, ethical and spiritual greatness, and learn its great lesson of unending growth.

The discussion was opened by Thomas W. Sidwell, of Washington, D. C. He thought it would promote the growth of our First-day schools if the rooms were made more attractive, the seats more comfortable and the exercises more varied. He believed it would be a good thing to introduce singing into the schools.

The next speaker was Arletta Cutler, of Canada, who spoke of the religious liberty enjoyed by Friends and the general broadening of their views.

In the general discussion which followed, Walter Laing, Frances J. Williams, Daniel Gibbons and Mary R. Livezey bore a strong testimony against the introduction of singing; Thomas H. Speakman spoke in favor of it. John William Hutchinson said that one way to secure First-day School extension is to enlist others in the work. Jesse W. Holmes thought that each school should be allowed to judge of its own needs; reading in concert is as much a set form as singing in concert.

Alice M. Robinson testified to the good results of interesting children in mission work; it helps their spiritual