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Rev. A. W. NICOLSON,
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THE SUPERNUMERARY FUND.

MR. EDITOR.—It will be remembered that it was declared by us in our "articles of union"—(see Minutes of Conference for 1873, p. 145,) that it was "desirable to amalgamate the different funds of the united church, and to place them under the management of Central Boards, as soon as legal and other difficulties could be removed."

It was also agreed however, that "for the present the superannuated ministers fund of the Canada Conference and the Supernumerary Ministers' Fund of the Conference in Eastern British America should be kept distinct, each department being managed by its own laws."

At the first General Conference held in 1874, a large committee was appointed to consider the subject of a Superannuation Fund for the united church. On this committee the Eastern Conferences were duly represented, the Rev. A. W. Nicolson serving as Secretary. After much deliberation this committee submitted a report in which was contained a draft of a constitution for a fund to be called "THE SUPERANNATED MINISTERS' FUND OF THE METHODIST CHURCH OF CANADA." The report was adopted by the Conference, but as the Conference of E. B. A. had before its dissolution in 1874 determined that its fund should be kept distinct during the first quadrennium of the united church, and then made arrangements for its separate management, it was declared the fund which the General Conference made provision for establishing under the above name, "could embrace for the present only the interests hitherto existing in the Superannuated Fund of the late Canada Conference—and of a similar fund of the late New Connexion Church." But the hope was expressed that the fund of the Eastern Conferences would be soon amalgamated with the general fund. And, moreover, the General Conference appointed a special committee to confer with the committee of the fund of the late E. B. A. Conference, with a view of amalgamating both funds upon an equitable basis. (See Journal of General Conference p. 184.)

At the close of the Conference it seemed to be the common sentiment of the members from the East as well as from the West, that it was exceedingly desirable, if not essentially important, that the combination should be effected at the earliest practicable period; and it seemed to be the duty, therefore, both of the Genl. Conference-appointed special committee and the committee of our fund, to seek a solution of the problem—how the funds could be "amalgamated upon an equitable basis." The plan which, by the direction of the last named committee, has been now suggested for the consideration of the members of the Eastern fund, may, if it should meet with their approval, it is hoped prepare the way for an amalgamation satisfactory and advantageous to all parties interested.

Looking at the operation of the Superannuation Fund of the late Canada Conference and of the Supernumerary Fund of the late E. B. A. Conference prior to 1874, the following facts may I believe be discovered, viz. —

1. That the members of the Eastern Fund had personally paid to it more than twice as much as had been paid by the members of the Western fund, of the same standing. The annual subscription paid by ministers in the East had been \$10 whereas in the West it had been at first only \$4, and then for many years \$5, and finally for a year or two only \$6.

2. That the average contribution per member of society on the circuits in our Eastern work to the fund had not been near one-half as much as it had been in the West. In 1873-4—the circuits in the

East contributed to the fund less than eighty cents for each dollar paid to it by the ministers; whereas in the West the circuits paid nearly four dollars for each dollar paid by the ministers to their fund.

3. That while the members of the Eastern fund had been required to pay more than twice as much as the members of the late Canada Conference, the annuities which they received when they became claimant members, were only one-fourth larger than the superannuates of the late Canada Conference received; and the widows of ministers among us received considerably less than those in the West.

For illustration—a man who had a twenty years' claim on our fund was, on becoming a supernumerary, entitled to an annuity of \$200; a widow of a minister who had paid twenty years subscription to the fund was entitled to an annuity of \$100; in the Canadian Conference, a man of that standing becoming a supernumerary, received an annuity of \$180, but the widow of a minister of that standing was entitled to an annuity of \$128.

(Does it not appear in view of the difference in the premiums which had been paid as a basis in part at least for the claims, that the claimants in the West were quite as liberally dealt with as were those in the East?)

Looking at the condition of the two funds in 1874, we find that the "capita stock" of our fund was very nearly twice as much as that of the Canada Conference, although the number of the members of our fund was but a very little more than one fourth that of the Western fund. So that if the excess of the payments of Western subscriptions had been returned according to the plan under consideration—the balance of the capital stock of the Eastern fund would have sufficed to give an average to such members more than five times as great as that of the West its members. We should have had upwards of \$40,000 remaining with 147 paying members, the Canada Conference less than \$32,000 with about 575 paying members.

1. That if the 575 active members of the Canada Conference Fund had paid the subscription of ten dollars each, the income of their fund from the three ordinary sources of income, ministers subscriptions, circuit collections, and interest on invested money—would have amounted, in 1873-4, to \$21,617.68 or an average of upwards of thirty-seven dollars for the 575 active members; whereas if the income of our fund for that year from the same source \$6292.01 had been reduced by deducting the interest of the amount of the excess of subscriptions which the plan proposes to return, the balance would have scarcely amounted to an average of thirty-seven dollars for our 147 active members. So that if the amalgamation had been effected in 1874 upon the proposed plan the average income from the three ordinary sources would have promised to be just about equal East and West. Again if we look at what has been done for and by the funds, during the two connexion years completed since the General Conference, we shall find, 1. That during the first of those years the superannuates of the Western Conferences received ten per cent. more than was paid by our fund, and the widows seventy-six per cent. more. 2. That during the second year the superannuates received ten per cent. less than our superannuates of the same standing, but the widows' claimants on our fund. 3. That taking the current income as made up from the above three named ordinary sources, the average income per man does not differ essentially East or West.

Having been summoned into the witness-box by "Prudentia" in this week's WESLEYAN—I have very hurriedly run off the above lines, which I have time neither to correct nor copy, as in justice to myself and your printer and proof-reader, I ought to do. I trust the facts, which I have so crudely stated, may somewhat help my summoner "Prudentia" and other interested members of our fund in intelligently making up their minds about the mooted questions of amalgamation. Perhaps, "Prudentia" may obtain some further light upon some of the matters about which he has inquired by referring to the Methodist Discipline pp. 113-117; and by examining

the annual statements of the account of our fund which are always laid before our Conferences. I may just say before closing my letter—that although I am entirely satisfied with the principles and working and prospects of our Eastern Fund, I am willing that the amalgamation should be effected upon the plan suggested as necessary to form an "equitable basis;" being satisfied after a careful consideration of the whole subject that an amalgamation of the funds upon such a basis will be likely not to damage the interests of myself and my Eastern brethren, but rather to conserve them.

TREASURER.

Sackville, N.B., May 19, 1877.

ENGLISH MAY MEETINGS.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The Rev. S. B. Berge read an abstract of the report. It stated that from the first rumour of hostilities in Serbia the committee were in communication with their agent, Mr. Edward Millard. It was soon discovered that strangers would not be allowed to follow the army, and that therefore it became necessary to await the consequences of the strife and minister to the sufferers. Two experienced Christian men were detached for the work. Sixty-five hospitals were visited, and upwards of 4,000 copies of the Scriptures distributed gratuitously to Turks and Slavs. The circulation of the Austrian agency had been raised to 144,000, or 37,000 above the issue of 1875. In Bulgaria the colporteurs were for some months enabled to travel with safety to their lives. During the last sixty years 50,000 copies of the Scriptures had been circulated in Bulgaria, and 100,000 in Serbia. Operations had also been carried on in Bosnia, Montenegro, Herzegovina, and almost every part of the Turkish Empire, as well as in Greece, Palestine, and Egypt. The present circulation for the Turkish agency was 28,000; and in Russia 270,000 copies were purchased last year. Within five weeks upwards of 18,000 volumes were sold among the Russian troops in Bessarabia. Active preparations had been made to ensure due prominence for the word of God at the Paris Exhibition next year. There were now 62 colporteurs in France, and the entire circulation was 98,000. In Germany and Switzerland the increase for the past year was upwards of 40,000. 28 colporteurs were engaged in Italy, and 44,000 copies had been disposed of. In Africa, the Canary and Cape Verde Islands, and the Seychelles, new work had been undertaken, while operations were being extended in Persia, Japan, and China. The total issue for the year was 2,670,742 copies, making a grand total during the 73 years of the Society's existence of 79,103,465. The income of the year was £206,978, while the outlay was £212,408.

THE BIBLE IN MADAGASCAR.

Said a speaker from that Island:—When the first missionaries landed in Madagascar, the King at that time said, pointing to his breast as he spoke, "My Bible is here." He needed no written Word; he had an inner light sufficient for his needs. He treated the Bible with supercilious contempt. Then came a Queen who was a bitter opponent of God's Word, and she caused numbers of copies to be publicly destroyed. But what have we seen in recent years? I was present at the coronation of the present Queen. She sat beneath a beautiful canopy of velvet and gold, and around that canopy was inscribed the words, "Glory to God, peace on earth, goodwill to men." (Loud applause.) Just below where the Queen sat was placed a small ornamental table, and upon that table was laid a handsomely bound Bible, the gift of this Society to the former King. The Queen thus declared, in the presence of thousands of her subjects, that she had done with idolatry, and that her faith was in the word of God. (Applause.) I am also happy to tell you that the Queen reads the Bible in private; she hears it read and preached from in public; and more than that, I have seen her acting as a distributor of the Word of God. (Applause.) About three or four years ago I was present at a large school examination, when the Queen made presents to some of the more diligent scholars;

and those presents consisted chiefly of hymn-books and New Testaments. In that way the Queen of Madagascar engages in the great work of Bible circulation. (Applause.)

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The Rev. C. Bailhache read the annual report, which stated that the year's work was more than ordinarily encouraging. "In France there is less political interference than usual; in Italy a spirit of earnest inquiry is abroad; in Norway, to use the words of the missionaries, 'God has wonderfully worked;' the West Indian stations though quiet have not been without their blessing; and in India the prospects are full of hope. The native churches were in a flourishing condition, and the principle of self-support was gradually strengthening among the churches. Zenona work was almost doubling the field of operations in India, and was gradually securing on behalf of Christianity, the influence of the women of India—pothent there, as everywhere else. The receipts of the year amount to £38,359, and the expenditure to £38,330, showing an increase in the general receipts of £4,470, and a decrease in expenditure of £1,102. To these receipts should be added £591, specially contributed towards the liquidation of last year's debt, and £94 increase in contributions for the Widows' and Orphan's fund. Mr. Tritton, the treasurer, then read the balance-sheet for the past year.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The seventy-eighth anniversary meeting of this society took place on Tuesday morning at Exeter-Hall, the Earl of Chester, the President, in the chair. The report, read by the Hon. Secretary (the Rev. H. Wright), showed that the expenditure of the past year had been £210,859; the receipts, £190,693. The number of missionary candidates accepted during the year had been 55, and there were now 81 under training. The work at Sierra Leone and the Niger Mission in East Africa, North India, Ceylon (where there were 208 more communicants than last year), China (where there was also a good increase, and several native ministers had been ordained), and in North-west America (where there had been a large ingathering) was then sketched.

FAREWELL TO MR. HENRY VARLEY.—Services, with the special object of saying farewell to Mr. Varley, who is about to start on an evangelistic tour to Australia—in fact, round the world—were held last week at the West London Tabernacle, Notting-hill, a building which was erected in 1872 for a church under the pastorate of Mr. Varley. Addresses were delivered by the Rev. Dr. Raleigh, Adolph Saphor, and Chas. Graham. Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., presided at the evening meeting. The Rev. W. Jerrold, vicar of St. John's, Notting-hill, was one of the speakers. A purse of gold was presented to Mr. Varley.

The Religious Tract Society is doing a grand work. Its total receipts for last year—£152,529—represent a vast amount of assistance rendered by grants in the distribution of Bibles and Testaments, sales of books, and tract circulation.

NATIONAL TEMPERANCE LEAGUE.

Mr. J. Barlow, J.P., said he had been at work in this direction for more than forty years, and it was encouraging to him to see so magnificent a meeting. Forty years ago, he remembered, they were ridiculed as maniacs. Working men then were taught to regard beer as a necessity, and even ministers of religion looked upon them as so many infidels. They were not allowed to advocate their principles in places of worship or in Sabbath-schools, without being regarded with suspicion. But now there were thousands of ministers on their side. The Wesleyans were taking hold of this movement and turning it to good account. (Cheers.) Amongst Wesleyan ministers there were between 600 and 700 pledged abstainers, and various other denominations were becoming more and more alive to the importance of the cause of temperance. (Cheers.) Some eighteen months ago, he was asked at a dinner table—Is not the

temperance reformation a failure? He felt that was a poser for a moment. (Laughter.) He had never been asked the question, and he had never thought of it in that light. But presently he was led to ask—Is not Christianity a failure, seeing that it has been in the world for 1800 years, and has not done all that it promised to do? Is it a failure because there are still wicked men in the world, and even more wicked than in the time of Jesus Christ? Has Methodism been a failure? Has the Sunday-school been a failure? What should we have done in Lancashire if we had not had our Sunday schools? (Cheers.) Thank God Methodism had not failed, nor had the Sunday school failed. If all had been done, much had been accomplished. And though strong drink was a powerful enemy, they were not discouraged, although turn which way they would, it was making fearful havoc. It was sometimes his duty to sit on the magistrates' bench, and he could not but feel deeply pained at the increase of female drunkards. He might say, however, that in the north they were trying to do their duty as vigorously as their friends in the south; and he hoped ere long they would be able to sing the song of victory. (Cheers.)

AN IRISH KISSING CASE.—In the Dublin police court, a young woman named Connor, summoned Dr. Lynch for having damaged a silk dress. She had been bridesmaid to a cousin, and the defendant was one of the wedding guests. He several times attempted to kiss her, and in their struggles her dress was torn. He also spilled some tea on it. The dress was worth £4, and he promised to replace it, but did not. She said she complained of his conduct to her aunt, who only laughed, and said "she should get used to it." For the defense, it was pleaded that he only took the recognized liberties with a bridesmaid; but the magistrate said that, not being "best man," he was not privileged. Ultimately, the magistrate told all parties to "go way out of that."

SYMPATHY.

An eminent clergyman sat in his study, busily engaged in preparing his Sunday sermon, when his little boy toddled into the room, and, holding up his pinched finger, said, with an expression of suffering, "Look, pa, how I hurt it!" The father, interrupted in the middle of a sentence, glanced hastily at him, and, with the slightest tone of impatience, said, "I can't help it, sonny." The little fellow's eyes grew bigger, and, as he turned to go out, he said in a low voice, "Yes, you could; you might have said 'Oh!' " Alas! how many of us "children of a larger growth" have gone away hugging our hurt, with a sadder hurt in our hearts for lack of one sympathizing word. To most of us, in the great trials of life sympathy comes freely enough; but for the small aches and hurts, the daily smarts and bruises, how many a heart hungers in vain for the most meagre dole! "It is such a briery world!" as a little girl said the other day, while making her way through a blackberry thicket. The briars meet us at every turn, and there is nothing like sympathy, to ease their pricks and sting.

It was an American who said: "We use two stones to grind the flour of liberty. The lower is the School, the upper is the Bible."

O, how we neglect the ordinance of baptism! treating children in the Church just as if they were out of it. Ought we not daily to say to our children, "You are Christian children, you are Christ's; you ought to think, and feel, and act as such?" And on this plan being carried out, might we not expect more early fruit of grace than by always keeping them looking forward to a point of time at which they shall have new hearts and join the Church? I am distressed, with long labored misgivings on this point.—Dr. W. Alexander.