

THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST.

For about three months to come, the United States will be greatly convulsed with political agitation. The Presidential contest between the respective supporters of Grant and Greeley is likely to prove unusually severe, and to excite almost universal interest. The office contended for is one of the most splendid in the world. The man from time to time permitted to occupy it is in a position to make history. It is possible for him to influence the course of civilization, and to affect the condition of very many millions of the human race. In short a President of the United States is weighed with the gravest responsibilities, and entrusted with an amount of power scarcely exceeded by any other earthly potentate. Grand and important already as is his position, it daily becomes more and more so, as the United States rise to a still higher status in the international scale.

The struggle for the Presidency between Grant and Greeley has more than common interest for Methodists generally. General Grant is the first Methodist adherent that has possessed the Chief Magistracy of the American Union. He is not, it is true, in full communion with the Methodist Church. But his wife is, and he himself is avowedly Methodist in religious sentiments and sympathies, an habitual worshipper in Methodist Sanctuaries, and a hearty supporter of Methodist enterprises. That he is so, has probably in various respects proved of advantage to the Methodist cause in the United States. And there seems reason to believe that a vast majority of Northern United States Methodists are anxious for his re-election to the first place in the Republic.

To an impartial outsider it would seem that there is something to be said for and against each of the competitors in the great contest. Against Grant it may be said that whatever may be his capacity for the conduct of military affairs, he has displayed scarcely ordinary talent for statesmanship, that he has the gifts neither of the good writer nor of the attractive speaker, that under his administration first-rate men have not been called to the service of the State, that he has had the felicity to alienate from his Government a considerable portion of the most estimable and most influential leaders of the party which elected him nearly four years ago, that his San Domingo policy has been of a doubtful character, that to secure his re-election he played a dangerous game with the indirect Alabama claims, that he has stretched the prerogative of his office unduly in executive interference in the Southern States, that many members of the rings that have flourished under his patronage are political commentators gorging themselves with public plunder, and that he has used the means at his disposal very freely for the enrichment of his relatives, and to reward those who have bestowed gifts upon him.

Against Greeley it may be asserted that he is crochety and unreliable, that he would become the tool of strong-willed, crafty designers, who would use him for the promotion of their own crooked purposes, that as a journalist he has often been influenced by narrow prejudices, and has indulged in the unworthy passions of certain classes, and that a few months ago a serious proposal to elect him to the Presidency would have been met with a burst of derision on all sides from Maine to Mexico, so general and deep was the conviction among friends and foes that he was utterly unfitted to be entrusted with the grave responsibilities connected with such a supremely important political office.

In behalf of General Grant it may be affirmed that he is a man of strong good common sense, that under his administration the Federal revenue has been much more faithfully collected than under the regime of Lincoln and Johnson, that he has favoured the reduction of the Federal debt and the rigid maintenance of the public credit, and that, above all, he has proved himself to be a friend of peace and anxious to bring about a perfectly good state of feeling between the people of the United States and those of Great Britain.

In favour of Greeley it may be asserted that he is possessed of much mental vigour, has a reputation for honesty and sincerity, and has all his life long been in sympathy with the suffering and down-trodden among his fellow-men.

Taking everything pertinent to the case into consideration one can scarcely help concluding that the important interests at stake, national and international, would be better served by the re-election of Grant than by the election of Greeley. Grant may fairly be regarded as a safe man. Greeley's warmest admirers must, we should suppose entertain some misgivings as to whether he would not prove an unsafe one should he succeed in winning his way to the White House.

It is difficult at this moment to forecast the result of this to-be fiercely conducted contest. The chances of the two competitors seem now not to be greatly unequal. Some time ago Grant's prospects were much the brighter. But the recent course of events has run strongly Greeley-wise. The acceptance of Greeley as their candidate by the Democratic leaders and masses, the defections in the ranks of the regular Republicans of noted representative men such as Sumner and Banks, who have rallied to the Greeley standard, and the issue of the North Carolina conduct, have together told heavily in Greeley's favour. Should the pro-Greeley movement make much further progress, Grant's defeat would be ensured. Whether that movement will advance much farther or whether a re-action will set in to Grant's advantage will shortly

be determined. Meanwhile one can only hope that Providence will guide the contest to the issue most favourable to the best interests of humanity.

J. R. N.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE.

*The Irish Conference—Conference in London, anticipations and arrangements—The improved weather.*

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—The Irish Conference has just concluded its sitting, having been attended as usual, by the President of the English Conference, and a body of able and distinguished ministers from our side of the Channel. There is a close and most intimate connection between Irish and English Methodism. It does not diminish with the increasing compactness and power of the smaller Body. Less financial help is needed, nearly all the institutions of Irish Methodism appear to be in a progressive and most hopeful position. A project is being earnestly worked for the payment of all debts on Methodist Trust property in Ireland. The scheme for the enlargement of Circuit income, and consequently the better sustentation of the able and devoted body of ministers, is being crowned with success. The old missionary fields are in many instances, being taken into regular circuit working, and the undiminished mission zeal of Methodism finds new centres of toil in the midst of dense masses of Romanists, and wide outlying districts of neglected Protestants.

The ordinary business of the Irish Conference strongly recommends the recent great Bod. The reception of candidates, the ordination of those who have travelled the required number of years, the searching investigations of character, the work of the Stationing Committee, and the miscellaneous business pertaining to all departments of the work of Methodism are very similar. Little new legislation now and then crops up, and this year there were some indications of the spirit of change and adjustment, which is certainly acquiring growth and power in our Church in the old country. The subject of Lay Delegation was brought forward from last year, and received a pretty full consideration. The action of the Conference was on the whole favorable to the principle, and the decided decision doubtless would have been even more emphatic, had not the way been barred by the raising of the legal aspects of the question. It was felt that there was at least a case for careful examination upon the legal points raised, and that nothing must be done hastily. But all these matters will receive careful attention before the present, and the time for the Conference to reassemble, and the question will come up again, and time will only tell in its favor.

Irish Methodists have determined that the English education act of 1870, with which so many Methodists in England are so much in love, is not the thing for their country, and do not desire its adoption. This was perhaps as much as was polite or prudent to say in the presence of the brethren from England, but nevertheless it is an expression of a deep seated conviction, and will tell more powerfully with our people, if School Boards, compulsory attendance, and National schools, under Episcopal supervision, prevail throughout three-fourths of England. On the whole, the recent Conference in Ireland has been greatly prosperous, a time of much grace from on high, and evident tokens of real advancement.

Next Wednesday, July 31st, is the day appointed for the English Conference, at City Road Chapel, London. It was in London more than a century and a quarter ago that Mr. Wesley held the first London Conference. It was truly a day of feeble things, for the preachers present including the two Wesleys, numbered only ten. Many Conferences have been held in the metropolis since then, and each with increasing numbers and enlarged spheres of action and supervision. The gathering of next week is estimated at about 800 ministers, and in addition thereto, hundreds of leading Wesleyans from the country will throng up to London, and to the great ecclesiastical court of Wesleyan Methodism. Yet all these, the representatives of the many millions of family of Methodists, will be scarcely noticed in the immense populace of the great city. There will be a little extra excitement in the neighborhood of City Road Chapel, but in London, where the Conference never commands the attention, or raises the tone of public feeling, as it does in a Provincial town. The important public services which are connected with the Conference will necessarily be distributed among many chapels, and over a wide area, and will carry the good news into the remotest parts of the metropolis. We cannot expect the metropolis to be moved as Manchester was last year when the 700 ministers were present.

Preparations are being made on a large scale, and commensurate with the greatness of the occasion. The Temperance gathering is to be held in Mr. Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle, a worthy place for so grand an object. Queen Street Chapel has been selected for the devotional meeting, which last year was held in the great Free Trade Hall in Manchester. Two special services are to be held for the especial benefit of the young people, that they may not only remember the great gathering of their fathers at this Conference, but may be led under the Divine blessing to consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord. A further speciality is announced which has in it the ring of old Methodist action. A "seven days out door mission," for services in twelve or more places of London. The outdoor exercises conducted by ministers and laymen, will occupy about an hour, and then an adjournment will take place to the nearest chapel for a prayer meeting and such further religious exercises as may be required. While these things are being written the Stationing Committee is in session, and preparing its First Report, which will rapidly find its way throughout the whole Connection. Some claim that their work is by year becoming less arduous on account of the great number of pre-arranged contracts between preachers and people. Others assert that this very thing is the occasion of ever increasing difficulty, and that the Stationing Committee is in a very difficult position. However this may be, it is evident that the practice is gaining, and Circuits will insist upon making provision for themselves. Your Correspondent feels less direct concern in the forthcoming document than he may possibly experience one year hence. He expects (D.V.) to be reappointed for a third year's labour with his present charge. The way has opened for a brief sojourn in London during the most interesting portion of the approaching Conference, and he hopes to have opportunity for writing a letter or two for your columns, while he is at head quarters. Since my last was written, the rain has been stayed, the floods have passed, and very bright and appropriate weather has been given to the people; we believe in answer to much prayer.

July 27th.

ENGLISH CONFERENCE SKETCHES.

The desks of improvised carpentry; the green baize of the upper house; the President looking as if his presidency had been taken as other men take a trip to Hastings or Scarborough; the Secretary looking as if he had not just going to be made President; the officials of the year looking just as if they had been mesmerized twelve months since, and were just about to dip their pens; as if the Ballot Bill had never passed; or the Alabama claims been heard of; Mr. Farrar, Dr. Osborn, Dr. Waddy, Dr. Johnson, and the Rev. W. W. Stamp, D.D.; with all these familiar phenomena around, how easy to believe that only a ghastly passed since our year as a tale that is told, "We spend we were last in Conference." "We spend we were last in Conference." "We spend we were last in Conference."

Yet twelve months are gone, and in their passage have carried away a year, where there is no distinction of lay and cleric, where all worthy souls are robed alike in white. The Committee on the Schools for Ministers' Children, held on Friday morning, was not very largely attended. During the year an influential Committee, appointed by a Committee nominated at the last Conference, has done work of uncommon worth in eliciting information and framing recommendations for the improvement of the schools at Kingswood and Woodhousegrove, a movement inaugurated by the trenchant speech of Mr. H. H. Fowler last year. But as these recommendations were to be presented to the Conference as such, they formed no part of the business of the Committee, the members of which gave themselves to the superfluous toil (considerable in the state of the weather) of listening to reports already before them in print.

The tedious of the reports was greatly relieved by the appearance of the first draft of the Stations. The representatives appeared, like "nursing mothers," carrying bundles of unconscious power in their arms; for before twenty-four hours are passed, these pieces of printed paper will have become messengers of grief or joy to thousands. A glance at the stations will furnish a sensation or two. Gentlemen who feel deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of the young men of the city of London will be glad to see that the chapel in Jewin St. is now made a solitary station. Mr. Gibson, so long our resident minister, is put in charge of the station. It is hoped that this arrangement will be followed by re-education of our work in the City. But is not this the beginning of new arrangements for the supply of other chapels in the metropolis? City-road, Queen-street, and Hyde-street would be none the worse for a leaf borrowed from brethren from a distance. 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