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ARTICLE II.—(Continued.)

It is time now for us to direct our attention to

THE PROSPECTIVE CLAIMANTS.

As bearing upon this part of our subject there are only two points worthy of notice. 1st. The average ministerial age of the men composing the Conferences, and 2nd. The average age when retiring from the active work. This second point influences the discussion in three ways—(a) the number who will retire in a given time, (b) the length of time they will remain claimants upon the fund, and (c) the amount per annum that they will be entitled to draw. Lowering the standard will increase a and b, but diminish c. The two however far outweigh the one.

We introduce now the following table compiled from the minutes of the various Conferences for the present year. A few names have been left out of the lists, the date of entry into the work not being given—

	East Con.	West Con.
Ministers travelling 8 years	136	317
next Conference	22	218
from 8 to 18 yrs. next Con.	24	208
" " 18 to 28 " " "	14	49
" " 28 to 38 " " "	11	46
" " 38 to 48 " " "	14	49
over 48 years next Con.	5	18
Total No. over 18 yrs. next Con.	64	351
No. of these not in active work	24	120
No. in active work over 18 years	40	231

Here we find a most remarkable difference. More than half of our men have not yet attained to an 8 years standing, whilst only 40 above 18 are in the active work. This includes the three Conferences. In the West, on the contrary, more than 200 are between 18 and 28 to say nothing of those older, which when we remember that 27 is their average age for retiring, foreshadows very heavy burdens even in the near future. We will put it in another form. As our men retire at 31 we will have according to the law of averages, 40 men retiring during the next 13 years; or an average of 3 1-13 per year.

In the West on the contrary, they will have, during the next nine years, 231 retiring, or an average of 25 1/3. Extending the calculation to 19 and 23 respectively and assuming what is correct enough for practical purposes, that the men between 8 and 18 are all in the active work, we would have 4 in the one and 23 2-19 in the other as the number annually retiring. Taking in the whole number except supernumeraries and the whole term 27 and 31 years, it would give 6 24-31 and 26 22-28 respectively. That is roughly speaking, whilst the Western Fund may increase its income twice as fast as ours, the list of claimants will increase during the first ten years eight times as fast—during the first twenty years six times as fast—during the first thirty years four times as fast. If any one wishes to know what this means in respect to annual claims he may see by working out the following formulae—

231x8.66-9x27x10—Annual claims on Western fund.

40x866-13x31x10—Annual claims on Eastern fund.

For the first 19 and 23 years respectively it would be:

449x8.66 19x27x10—Western fund and 92x8.66-23x31x10—Eastern fund, &c.

The quantity 8.66 in the foregoing formulae is found as follows: In the Western Report before alluded to, it is stated that the average term of supernumerary relationship for men and widows who had died, counting a man and his widow as one, was 10 12-31 years. Taking this as a basis, and remembering that, as a rule, one-third of this number will be widows with half allowances, it will be equal to 5-6 of 10 12-31. The rest needs no explanation.

This calculation is made, however, on the assumption that our men will remain claimants as long as those in the West.

But it is evident that this cannot be the case unless we suppose them to be longer lived. There will be a great difference in this respect, between a body of men that retires at 27 years and one that travels 31 years. Now, for every year that should be taken from the supernumerary term of our men, in comparison with the other, nearly one-tenth (1-10 12-31) should be taken from the annual claims upon our fund.

Further: In estimating the burdens imposed by the present list of supernumeraries we have assumed that they also would continue claimants for the same length of time. But ours are 38 years men, the others 35; consequently supposing the aggregate imposed by their list upon our fund to be equal to \$6,178.55x6, then, that upon the other would be \$30,920.17x9, or thereabouts. If in addition to all this we remember that the 5 per cent reserve is always a first charge upon their revenue, it will be apparent that the balance is thrown very heavily against the Western fund; so heavily indeed, that the exact proportion it is, perhaps scarcely worth while to occupy time in determining.

We know that this result will be surprising to many, so surprising indeed that they will be unwilling to accept it. We ask none to accept till they have rigidly scrutinized. The facts have been sought for, and given as found. Our object has been to find the truth, and to

Extenuate naught
And nought set down in malice.

There is of course, abundant room for errors, but we doubt whether the figures can be materially altered; and, if they cannot, then, neither can the conclusions, which are as follows:

1st. Our Fund, although with continually increasing burdens, will with generous support be a good fund, we might say, a strong one, for 20 or 25 years to come—perhaps longer.

2nd. The Western Fund will need the most careful management and the most vigorous efforts at support to prevent the necessity either of complete reorganization, or the formation of auxiliary societies to keep its men above actual want. We wish it were possible to speak more encouragingly, but we cannot see otherwise.

3rd. The amalgamation of the funds would result, simply, in swallowing up ours, without tending materially to raise the other from its position of insolvency.

4th. Under amalgamation the common fund would be in a better position at the present, than in the future—at least than for many years to come.

In reference to the formation of auxiliary societies as suggested above, it will be readily understood that great caution would be necessary. No Conference could, of course, organize such a fund, unless it should be purely ministerial in its character, without the consent of the other Conference concerned with it in the general fund. Such a step would interfere too materially with the general interest. On the other hand, if each of these Conferences should institute a local society, appealing to the membership as well as to the ministers, the result would be, eventually, the establishing of separate Conference funds instead of a general one; the local, probably, in time, absorbing all the interest which would be taken in such a fund.

We may simply add, that in the preceding calculation we have aimed at general, rather than, absolute correctness. Fractions have often been dropped, and a number of unimportant points not touched upon, thinking that it would seem too final to spend time in discussing these, when at the best, only general results could be secured. None of them, so far as we know, would have materially affected our conclusions. These conclusions we now submit to our financiers, both in and out of the Conference ranks, and thus close the discussion of the second part of our subject.

NOTE.—Since the above was sent to the paper, a letter, received from Mr. Douse, enables me to hint at an explanation of the fact previously referred to that the term of service in our Conference has been much longer than in the West. The reason given may not account for it altogether, but small things sometimes exercise great influence. Their scale of pay is different from ours. At first it was a certain annual sum irrespective of the term of service. Afterward it was regulated by the ministerial standing, but no one could draw for more than

thirty years. It is only recently that they began to pay for the full term, if this term was a long one. As a consequence their system has really been one of premiums upon early retirements, whilst our has always been one of premiums upon long service. The greater wisdom of our plan is seen in the results, because whilst it seems to foreshadow heavier burdens it practically effects a natural saving. The Western fund has, however, been acting upon our plan for the last eight years, and consequently, it is probable that Mr. Douse is right in his opinion that, notwithstanding the crowding of the Conference with young men, the term of service with them is becoming longer each year. If this idea is correct, the fund will, of course, in time, derive this advantage, and the preceding calculation should be modified to a corresponding extent.

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

THE WYCLIFFE COMMEMORATION.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—The strong Protestant feeling of the Churches has lately been expressed in commemorating an event in the life of Wycliffe which transpired just 500 years ago. This was his release from the grasp of his persecutors, and from the tribunal before which he had been summoned to give an account of his writings and doctrine. The Queen-mother was in his favor, the brave John of Gaunt stood by him, and the citizens were on his side. He lived to accomplish his great work, and at the recent celebrations, due honor has been paid to the grand and zealous man whose labours have produced gracious fruit, which is largely blessing the world to-day. Churchmen and Nonconformists took part in the services. Sermons were preached in many places in town and country, a public breakfast in London, lectures and speeches from able and prominent men, drew public attention to the subject and fittingly commemorated an important incident in the life of one who has been called "The Morning Star of the Reformation."

LOST FEAR HOME.

Last Sabbath afternoon, during a brief squall of wind and heavy fall of snow, H. M. S. *Burydice*, was capsized, and her entire company of upwards of 300 souls, with but two exceptions, were drowned. The ocean trip from Bermuda had been accomplished during very fine weather and in great safety. The ship passed the extreme Western point of the coast of England a few days previously, and was expected in port on the evening of the day when the sad calamity took place. Passing the Isle of Wight she was seen pressing on under a full amount of canvass, and all promised well for her arrival at Spithead in another hour. The crew were in the act of assembling for Divine worship, when the fierce gust of wind struck the ship, which immediately capsized and carried down with her, the terror-stricken and hapless crew. There was no time to relieve the ship by reducing the pressure of sail, and no opportunity of launching the boats, and the ship's company, consisting mainly of young men in training for service in the Royal Navy, perished almost in sight of port, and their loss has sent a thrill of sorrow and lamentation over the whole of England. Their arrival was so confidently expected, and fears were all dismissed, when this most distressing event occurred to plunge so many hearts and homes in deepest grief and mourning.

SIR GILBERT SCOTT

is now to be numbered with the distinguished men who have died during this year. He took very high rank as an architect, and more especially in the restorations of the cathedrals and churches which have of late been carried out on a very extensive scale. His latest and best known work, only recently fully completed, the memorial in Hyde Park for the Prince Consort, is a magnificent specimen of modern art, and is unequalled in its kind, or other lands as a monument to departed worth and greatness. For this work he received the honor of Knighthood, and he remained to the close of his busy life the foremost man in his profession.

THE RESIGNATION OF LORD DERBY

has been one of great event of the fortnight. The Government came to the conclusion that it was needful to issue a Proclamation calling out the reserve forces of the country. These amount to about 40,000. The decision looked so much like a further threat to Russia, and tended needlessly to complicate the negotiations in regard to the Con-

gress, that it was looked upon with deep regret by vast numbers of people, and compelled Lord Derby, who strongly dissented from the proposal, to resign his place in the Government. When this became known, it created a widespread alarm, and caused almost a panic in the money markets of the world. It was feared that the last pacific element in the Government was leaving it, and the war party would now have it all their own way.

THE PRESENT ASPECT

of affairs is very unsatisfactory and in some respects ominously threatening. Serious difficulties arise upon the question of the Congress, and many despair of its even meeting. Warlike preparations are heard of in every direction, and on the 19th of this month, the reserve forces are commanded to join the regiments to which they belong.

THE RUSSIANS

are strengthening their positions in Turkey, and maintain that England wants to rob them of all the legitimate results of their protracted conflict. They appear determined not to yield much further, or to wait much longer for Turkey to fulfil the conditions of the peace. This is the condition of the great question at the time of closing this letter.

ASSASSINATION IN IRELAND.

This morning's paper contains particulars of an outrage in Ireland, resembling those of which we heard in years long gone by. Lord Leitrim, a nobleman of high rank and large possessions, was involved in disputes with many of his tenantry, to whom he had to pay compensation under the Irish Land Act, and numbers of whom were under notice to quit. He has been shot dead in his carriage, in open day, and two of his servants fell with him. It has been deliberately planned, and there must have been many concerned in the diabolical plot.

DEATH IN THE MISSION FIELD.

Painful reports have reached England of a sad calamity to the agents of the Church of England mission to the interior of Africa. Lieut. Smith, with Mr. O'Neil, and a number of their native followers have been attacked and slain. Much anxiety is felt for the safety of the Rev. C. T. Wilson, but it is hoped that he has escaped. The men who are left are not dispirited, but evidence a strong determination to abide at their posts, and accomplish the ministry for which they have already risked so much. "B."

April 3, 1878.

CELEBRITIES IN THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE.

Two in particular may be named. First, Dr. Hascall, or, as his name stands on the Conference minutes, Jefferson Hascall, Presiding Elder—a swarthy, bright-eyed, laughter-loving man of some sixty years, a terrible man to "sit down" on anything or anybody, with his two hundred and fifty pounds adipose, cellular tissue, to say nothing of his other and greater weights, mental and moral. With exception of a short sojourn in Wilbraham, where he learned so much of chemistry as to be able to distinguish the difference between carbon and carboy, he was educated in and by the itinerancy. He is a pleasing, pungent speaker, quaint, and of ready, overflowing wit. He will probably die in the harness covered with glory.

ANOTHER CELEBRITY.

There is not a member of this Conference that looms up higher than Mark Trafton, author and poet—lithe, agile, commanding in figure and form, straighter than any arrow, leaning a little the other way! He has eyes which in the weakness claimed for them, but which no one sees, flash fire, and which in their strength must have shot forth lightnings. No man in his senses would take this brother for a Methodist preacher at first glance. He might easily be taken, if met on the streets of Washington, for the colonel of a regiment of Arkansas riflemen, in undress, and hunting for an appropriation—a kind of sublimated, well-washed, first-class Col.

Sellers. He should be sent to the Paris Exposition as a specimen of what American institutions and the culture of the itinerancy can do for the average American, without the intervention of college or court. If ever there was a typical, not to say model, American, Mark Trafton is the man. His autobiography is so interesting that it is no wonder that Sunday-school superintendents looking into it by accident, sit up all night to read it. The Church makes a great mistake that she does not keep this man at work on some kind of roving mission demanding immeasurable vim, the broadest kind of self-confidence, and inexhaustible *bon homme*.

MIDDLE-AGED MEN.

Of these the Conference has more than the average number. They have just such a cultured look, and are just as radiant with what Joseph Cook calls "solar light," as we might naturally expect to find in men who have enjoyed the advantages of collegiate cities, of extended travel, and of long continued communion with God. For thorough scholarship there is no Conference, at home or abroad, that can present such a proud array of men distinguished in every department of literature and learning. There sit on the floor of this Conference, men whose names as men of genius the Church will never let die. The writer's eye rests on Cummings, Prentice, Pierce, Steele, Warren, Lind say, Huntingdon, Townsend, and several others of like fame. No other Conference has such a phalanx of college presidents, professors, editors, and authors—men distinguished in both ancient and modern lore. More anon.—*Reynard in Zion's Herald.*

The position of Joseph Cook in his Monday lectureship, that monogamy rests upon one of the strongest natural laws written by a divine Hand, upon the universal human heart, finds constant confirmation even in lands where polygamy is practiced. We asked one of our cultivated lady missionaries, who spent twelve active years in Northern India, if she ever found intelligent companions among the wives of the Hindus. "O, yes," she responded, "occasionally." "Do you ever find," we asked, "a revolt against the polygamic system?" In answer, she related this touching incident: She formed, she said, an intimate acquaintance with the wife of a native physician—one liberally educated in the institutions at Calcutta, and in many respects a superior man. The wife, although without the education of the school, had much natural refinement, and had become cultivated to a degree by her associations since her marriage. The doctor was much attached to his wife, and she was bound up in him. But they had no children, and the amily friends of the doctor insisted upon his taking another wife, according to his custom, to preserve the family name. The new wife was brought to the house. The loving and broken-hearted woman, who had lived only in the smiles and love of her husband, could not endure the sight. Dressing herself in her richest garments, she glided out of the house, and passing before the residence of her beloved missionary friend, she threw herself into the tank near by and was drowned. Married love was stronger than death. The two, as far as least, as the wife was concerned, had been made "one flesh" by a divine Hands and when the bond was sundered, he; could not survive.—*Zion's Herald.*

SOUTHERN GENERAL CONFERENCE.—We are asked on what day the General Conference Fraternal Messengers will be received. The last General Conference failed to designate any particular day. We have no authority to say when it will be—the Conference alone has that right—but it has been suggested to us that Thursday, May 9, would be a suitable time. It cannot well be earlier, because some of the Messengers live in Canada, and may need that much time to reach Atlanta. It ought not to be much later, as we wish the brethren to spend as much time as possible with us, and there is generally a pressure of business at a later period.—*Nashville Advocate.*