

Editorial and Contributed.

The General Conference and Missions.

BY the time this number of the *OUTLOOK* reaches its numerous readers, the General Conference will be assembling in London. In some respects this will be one of the most important sessions that has yet been held. True, there are no exciting questions to be discussed—nothing that stirs the Church as it was stirred by the Union and Federation movements; but a number of topics of great practical importance, which for the past eight years have been overshadowed by more exciting themes, will now receive attention, and the decisions that may be reached will likely be permanent, and will shape the policy of the Church for years to come. Great wisdom and grace will be needed, and there should be much prayer throughout the whole Church on this behalf.

Among the important questions to be considered may be reckoned the proposed changes in Annual Conference boundaries, thereby reducing the number; the proposed new Constitution for the Superannuation Fund, a subject that is likely to cause more friction than any other; proposals for a Sustentation or Home Mission Fund, distinct from the Missionary Fund; proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Missionary Society, reducing the membership of the General Board, and changing the mode of election; the extension of the pastoral term, which will doubtless be introduced, although there has been no agitation of the subject lately; the duties and powers of the General Superintendent, which need to be both extended and defined; the general revision of the Discipline; proposed changes in the composition and powers of the Stationing and Transfer Committees. These questions, apart from the thousand and one "notices of motion" which will be showered upon the Conference, indicate the vast amount of work to be done and the need of great care and wisdom in doing it. There is one circumstance of hopeful augury—the probability that the coming Conference will be much better tempered than were the last two. The strong feelings engendered by the Federation debates have died out, personal antagonisms are far less marked than before, and hence there are good grounds of hope that the various questions coming before the Conference will be considered on their merits, free from partizan and personal bias.

While each of the foregoing topics are important in their place, it is altogether probable that the chief interest of the approaching session will gather around those matters which relate to the Missionary Society. Confessedly this is the most important department of the Church's work at the present time, and its scope and importance will increase with every revolving year. Within the circle of what is called our Missions, there are interests not only diverse but even conflicting. In the former days, when the whole interest of the Church centred in the Home work; when as yet there was no "foreign" work, and the Indian work

was limited; when the income was small, and was administered by a single Board; when there was but a single Conference, and every minister knew every other minister—and his field of labor as well—any difficulties that might arise were easily adjusted. But now, with an income approaching a quarter of a million; with a dozen Annual Conferences, each with its local interests and its local Missionary Committee, as well as its representation on the General Missionary Board; with numerous Indian missions, widely separated from each other; with a foreign work already large, and steadily growing; with a hundred questions of policy, of finance, of jurisdiction, of discipline, arising almost daily, and demanding prompt settlement—surely it is not difficult to see that the oversight and management of our Missionary interests is a very different thing from what it was a quarter of a century ago, and necessitates modifications, which at that time were unthought of. It is not for us to indicate at this time the nature of these modifications, but we call attention to the subject, with the hope that the General Conference will give the whole question most careful and prayerful consideration, and adopt such measures as will secure economy with efficiency of administration, the safe and rapid extension of the work, and especially that firm and judicious oversight and control of all our missionary operations which their growing magnitude and vast importance demands.

Editorial Notes.

MISS FANNY MEYER goes out to China this fall, under the auspices of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as a self-supporting missionary. She will be accompanied by Miss Helen Galloway, whose entire expenses will be borne by a young lady at home, who sends her as a substitute.

The new Metlakahtla, established by Mr. Duncan in Alaska, promises to outstrip the old Mission in British Columbia. About eight hundred British Columbia Indians joined Mr. Duncan in the exodus, and are so contented with their new home that they never speak of going back to the old. Some of the industrial results may be inferred from the fact that men trained by Mr. Duncan are in great demand, commanding from \$2 to \$3 wages per day.

For some years there has been a spontaneous Christward movement among the Jews of South-eastern Europe. The human leader of this movement is Joseph Rabinowitz, of Kiohnev, Bessarabia. This new reformer aims at the organization of a national Jewish Church, in which the Jew shall retain the characteristics of his race which do not conflict with a full confession of Christ. Among these characteristics he counts the observance of the Sabbath day as the day of fast and worship, also circumcision in addition to baptism.