

travel on the *Thunder Cloud*, or the *Cyclone* through the ambient upper atmosphere of the earth, light freight will travel subterraneously per pneumatic tubes, &c. We have no idea, however, of waiting ourselves, to see all these marvels consummated. We leave that luxury to our successors. We have lived to see the pneumatic railway, the tunnel railway, the electric telegraph, and the steam cow-milker. That is glory enough for our day. We only promise to put on record the other "improvements" which will be added to the list of social comforts in obedience to the law of progress and to indicate how they come after us may enjoy themselves.—N. Y. Sunday Times

Provincial Wesleyan.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 2, 1868.

The British Conference.

From the reports of Conference proceedings, furnished in our English exchanges received by last mail, we make such extracts as we believe will be interesting to our readers generally, regretting that we are unable to do more than to omit very much that we would like to transfer to our columns. From the *Wachman's* sketch of Preparatory Committee business, we give an address by an influential lay-gentleman on the Home Missionary question, and which is worthy of consideration by Methodists everywhere. In acknowledging the kindness, courtesy and wisdom of the President:

Mr. Bowden (Newton Abbott) rose to support the Resolution, which he did very cordially. At the same time he wished to have an opportunity of finishing the speech which he had begun on the previous day. It had to do with the work of God in connection with Methodism. If he had been allowed to say what was very valuable to say at the meeting of the Home Missionary and Contingent Fund Committee, it would have been this, that those glorious resolutions of theirs at those Committees were very nice things, but the next thing was for them to go to their homes and carry them all into practice. A great many of their lay-brethren were great friends of Methodism, and very liberal sympathizers as far as the pocket was concerned, but he thought there were a few things in which they required a little mending, and until these things were mended they could not expect such a revival as they anxiously wished and prayed for. He was confident of this, that if such a revival of the work of God was to take place, they must support the hands of their ministers. Was it not true that a great many of the respectable families in Methodism were never found in the house of God on a week-night from one end of the year to another? They would say, perhaps, that business interfered. It might do so in some cases, but he made it a point of conscience (and he had as much business to attend to as most men) never to have a dinner party, or a tea party, or anything else of that kind on that night of the week when there was preaching. He and his family made it a point to attend the Lord's house on that night, and what was the consequence? A larger week evening congregation in the village in which he resided than in any other place in the Circuit. He should like to know how many of their lay gentlemen were found at their quarterly love-fests. The same remarks would hold good with regard to class-meetings, and emphatically with regard to their prayer-meetings. He maintained that if they intended the work of God to advance they must not only attend the Preparatory Committee of the Conference to make Resolutions from time to time, but they must in their own respective homes keep up their personal attendance at their week-night preachings and the love-fests, and speak when they were there. He maintained they must go back to the old thing; they must pray and sing and sing and sing, but which clothes and as to their lady friends, he feared that very few were found as teachers in their Sabbath schools. This work was left to an inferior class of females to a great extent. There was another thing to be observed. The ladies belonging to the Wesleyite congregations were beating the ladies of Methodism hollow in the every-day work of the Church. In the village where he resided, if one of their members had a headache, the Wesleyite lady would call upon her the next morning to ask how she was. What did their own ladies do? He feared they were doing nothing comparatively in the active duties of the Church of Christ, whether male or female; and if they only wanted to know why there was not an increase of 50,000 instead of 5,000 to their churches they had only to "inquire within," and they would find it.

From the *Recorder's* sketches we select the following—

THE PRESIDENT.

The President is not, perhaps, one of the most widely known of our Ministers. When Methodists were told that Mr. Rattenbury was elected, there immediately rose before them a face and form familiar to them. Mr. Hall has not travelled so widely, and is not personally so extensively known. Short in stature, but firmly set; a little inclined to corpulence, though not at all a fleshy man; his head is massive, and his hair, blacker than that of most men of his age, is thin, thrown back, and hangs rather long behind, as though utterly devoid of any fashion. His features are not very regular, but mobile and instinct with intelligence; and the eye, rather small, is keen and bright, and now and again flashes, when in debate or preaching, like King Richard with his mace. On his features, and in his whole deportment, there is as he speaks a wonderful look of self-command—exactly the look of a man who watches and weighs every word before he lets it rise to the lip, and then criticizes it, so that it may be withdrawn for a better, should it not express the exact shade of meaning required. And behind all this, giving its character to all, is a conscience almost over-scrupulous, and an honour which would resent as a deadly insult and in the faintest attempt at trickery. This is the man. Of the Christian it would not seem to say one word in the past, at present, or in the future. The most perfect freedom of speech extends amongst us. If a man do not speak, it is either because he has nothing to say, or because he dare not say it. Not only does the President with rigorous impartiality try to secure to every man a hearing, but the Conference itself listens with respect to any wise and appropriate words, from whatever quarter they may come. Of course, if a man talks away from the subject, or persists in repeating what has been said, the brethren soon show their impatience; but good sense, well said, is always welcomed, whether it comes from a young man or an old; and more than once the Conference has cheered by its applause a young man who has found the first step to address so august an assembly more formidable than he anticipated.

The President has introduced a mode of voting which is new to the Conference. It is the Parliamentary mode by "Aye" and "No." The volume of sound which often ascends when a vote is given speaks well for the lungs of the Methodist preacher, and it is not at all difficult, even when both sides are numerous, to distinguish between the majority and the minority.

ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN.

A pleasant little incident occurred on Tuesday morning, two o'clock on the first day of the Conference, in its open session, had resolved to prepare. It was read, and after one or two verbal alterations had been suggested, the President requested those who approved of it to stand up. Instantly every man sprang to his feet, and there were calls for the National Anthem. The Preceptor led off the well-known air, and never was the stirring composition sung more heartily by the Methodist Conference. It was afterwards stated in private that a republican visitor who happened to be present did not stand when all the rest were voting; but as common courtesy demanded that every person present should stand on such an occasion, this mode of course had been a mistake. Certainly all the British rejoiced to show their loyalty and affection to the throne.

INTEREST EXCITED—VARIOUS SERVICES.

The Conference appears to have created great interest in Liverpool. Indeed its very presence makes an impression in every town except London. There the Methodist Conference is a drop in the bucket, but in the other towns of 500 Ministers in Hall or Newcastle, even in Manchester or Liverpool, is a noticeable fact. But the interest felt by the Liverpool public has been greatly increased by the large number of special services and meetings held in connection with it. Besides the Ordination, the Open Conference, Public Examination of Candidates, and the Recognition of Returned Missionaries, there have been this year an additional Ordination Service, the Conference Love-feast, and a great Temperance Meeting, which was not one of the official services, but was promoted by members of the Conference, and mainly attended by Methodists. And another innovation is worthy of note. On Sunday afternoon there were great meetings of children; and on Tuesday evening there is to be a large gathering of Sunday-school teachers, which also will be addressed by members of the Conference. These are happy tokens that the Conference can recognize every good movement for the elevation of the people, the better with the affection which it is regarded, and the greater the influence it will possess.

Letter from England.

DEAR SIR,—The attention of your readers has already been directed to the very unusual weather which has lately prevailed in England. That well-known individual, who is so frequently referred to on your side of the Atlantic; "the oldest inhabitant" does not remember a season so warm, and so destitute of cooling showers. We have really had no rain worth speaking of for at least four months; and on every hand, this country generally so beautiful in its almost perennial greenness, presents an appearance of drought, and of bare, dry and brown pastures. Grass is very scarce and great scarcity is experienced in finding food for the cattle and sheep. So dry has the surface of the earth become from the protracted heat, and the absence of rain, that in many places, on heaths and waste lands, there have been extensive fires consuming the grass and destroying every vestige of vegetation. In some localities valuable fields of corn, and plantations of trees have been destroyed. Sparks from the railways engines, have most frequently originated those fires, yet in a recent journey, far from the lines, yet in a place where there are no railways, I have seen traces of this destructive agency. Water is becoming scarce, nearly all the ponds have dried up, and there is much suffering in consequence.

THE REV. W. M. PUNSHON'S LETTERS.

DEAR SIR,—I was much amused by an opinion which was volunteered by one of the passengers on board the *Scotts*, touching the Methodist Revival in the West. He was a shrewd, rough-looking American, who was generally regarded, and who evidently regarded himself, as a smart man. "So you're going to the West, I hear. Those Western Methodist preachers are a roaring set. My word, they do go off strong on muscle, they do." Well—strong-lunged and stout-hearted, they have won many triumphs for Christ, and they are laying the foundations of a spiritual temple, whose top-stones shall be brought on joy. The congregations in America swelled like a record-breaking river. I have heard more responses, both in prayer and preaching, in two months than I heard in two years at home. The last General Conference related the rule about the class-meeting as a test of membership, so that their present numerical increase is perhaps not wholly composed of members in our sense of the word. A minister may return those who steadily attend the services of God's house, and who walk consistently in the way of holiness. We are not prepared, I think and hope, for this method of solving a confessedly difficult problem. It is easy to cut the knot, but our modern Alexanders are at home in the use of the word. They do things on a large scale in America.

By-and-by, the broad stream of the Mississippi was reached and crossed, and we were in the state of Iowa. Many of the Americans were agitated with strange excitement at the first sight of the "Father of Waters." They took wonderful pride in the benignity of every stream they flow and glisten, and with personal pleasure, in the recesses of the territory in which their every speech, or rebuke, or word, would be audible. "We are a great country, and we are coming of course, like a Doxology. The number of our excursion was the city of Clinton, numbering 7,000 inhabitants, with handsome stores, shops, hotels, club-houses, &c., all of stone.

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1854 just fourteen years ago, it was all praise! In 1850 the first road was turned for the building of the city. The rail now extends 800 miles beyond Clinton, and they are pushing it rapidly along, that they may have communication, complete and unbroken, between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. On the arrival of the excursion train at Clinton, we walked in procession to the hotel, where an *impromptu* representation had been prepared by the united effort of all Christian denominations in the city. Three hundred and six sat down at once, and there was enough and to spare for all. After partaking of refreshment, the company constituted itself a meeting, and as there is a wonderfully formal aspect of the American mind, nothing could be done until a President had been chosen and surrounded by about a dozen "vice"—each of them being formally nominated, elected, and conducted to the platform by his proposer. Our cousin laugh at some of our unmeaning pageants—the backward stumbling of a Commons messenger, at the gorgeous foolery of a Lord Mayor's show, at the rank impetuosity of a full-dressed Beefeater, but it is amusing to witness their exaggerated formality in their own transactions of business. In the Republican Convention for the meeting morning, they nominated a temporary President, and appointed two others a committee to conduct him to the chair. His only duty was to make a speech and declare the meeting adjourned. When it again a permanent president had been chosen, and as if he were either lame or lay, or as if they apprehended that he would be likely to abscond unless strongly guarded, a committee of two was appointed to strip the vest of any possible authority for the meeting managed itself, called upon their own speakers, and finished everything greatly to the satisfaction. About four p.m. the cars started on the return journey, and after witnessing a gorgeous sunset on the prairie and begging the travel by many sweet songs of Zion, the party arrived safely, weary but thankful, about ten at night in Chicago. Thus ended an episode in Conference history which furnished many a new experience, and which on our side would be difficult to parallel.

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