

I.—THE HOME WORK.

The Department of Home Missions has continued to show, from year to year, good results in the extension of the work, the proclamation of the glad tidings to the needy, the conversion of sinners, the upbuilding of believers, and the maintenance of Gospel ordinances in localities where they would be unknown were it not for the help extended by the Missionary Society. The one drawback to the satisfaction of the Board is the fact that the resources of the Society do not keep pace with the actual requirements of the work, and that, in consequence, the stipends of the missionaries have been far below the modest minimum which we have sought to reach. Four years ago attention was called to this matter, and the hope was expressed that by due prudence in the multiplication of missions, the classification of dependent fields, and the institution of a sustentation fund, something would be done to relieve existing pressure, and give promise of brighter days to the toiling and sometimes discouraged missionaries. Although the hope has been realized only to a small extent, partly through the operation of Conference Sustentation funds, the Board is convinced of the possibility of still further improvement, and would earnestly invite the attention of the Conference to methods whereby this may be accomplished.

With regard to the Domestic or Home work, the power of extension is very properly committed to the Annual Conferences. The general policy embraces two objects—first, to provide Gospel teaching and ordinances wherever the need exists, and which the people are unable to provide for themselves; and secondly, to advance the various missions, as quickly as possible, to the status of self-sustaining circuits. But this policy, so excellent in theory, is greatly hampered in practice. Extension of the work is not always measured by the needs of the people. Sometimes it is the outcome of a spirit of denominational rivalry, whose only justifying plea is that others are doing the same thing; and sometimes it is due to the mere desire of occupying more territory, without waiting to consider its effects upon missionary income, or the just claims of other parts of the field. The evil is further aggravated by a premature division and subdivision of missions, sometimes of independent circuits, without sufficient cause. It is not proposed that the authority of Annual Conferences to establish new Domestic Missions shall be interfered with, but as the exercise of the right by all the Annual Conferences, to the extent of only three or four missions each in one year, means a serious *pro rata* reduction in the stipends of those ministers who are now stationed on Domestic Missions, it is evident some general regulation should be adopted by which the increase of dependent fields shall be kept within safe and reasonable limits.

A subject closely connected with the foregoing is the development of self-support in many of the Domestic Missions. The amount of missionary money expended upon missions well able to support their own ministers, and upon others able to double or largely increase their contributions, would startle any one who took the trouble to inquire into the facts. And this money virtually comes out of the meagre stipends of men stationed upon purely missionary ground, where sparseness of

population or the poverty of the people makes present self-support, or even a near approximation thereto, an utter impossibility. It is believed that a careful classification of all dependent fields, the visitation of those fields by duly appointed deputations, and the establishment of a Sustentation Fund either for the whole Connexion or in the several Conferences, would greatly promote the spirit of self-support, relieve the Mission Fund of many unreasonable claims, and at the same time raise the general average of stipends on the Domestic Missions to something much nearer the recognized minimum than obtains at present.

II.—THE FOREIGN WORK.

The hitherto bright outlook of the work in Japan has been shadowed by the tragic death of one of our faithful missionaries, the Rev. T. A. Large, B.A., who was killed in his own house by armed burglars on the night of the 4th of April last. During a five years' residence in Tokyo, Bro. Large had endeared himself alike to natives and foreigners by his kindly spirit and courteous demeanor, while by the other missionaries he was regarded as a faithful worker and a trusted friend. His death under circumstances so painful is greatly deplored, and we can but trust that He who has commanded the light to shine out of darkness, will overrule this seemingly dark providence to the furtherance of His own cause in Japan. Another calamity, though of a very different kind, has befallen the mission, in the destruction by fire of the new Central Mission Hall, which was rapidly approaching completion. This occurred in connection with an extensive conflagration by which several hundred houses were swept away. The walls of the Tabernacle suffered but little injury, however, and the work of reconstruction is progressing rapidly.

The chief event of the Quadrennium, in connection with the Japan work, was the formation of an Annual Conference under the special provisions of the Discipline in regard to that country. This step, which had been greatly desired by the brethren, both native and foreign, was taken on the occasion of a visit of the General Secretary in the summer of 1889. The liveliest satisfaction was expressed by all the missionaries at this consummation of their wishes, and the result has been a decided impetus to the work, especially on evangelistic lines. It was hoped that the question of Methodist Union in Japan would have been ripe for action by this time, but although the missionaries on the ground seem to be quite ready for the step, we regret to observe that the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South have decided to postpone action for the present. The Basis adopted by the Union Committee in Japan will be submitted with this Report, and should it commend itself to the Conference, it might be advisable to affirm the principle, and give authority to the General Board to take final action, if necessary, at any time during the coming Quadrennium.

During the past four years repeated communications from Japan have urged the importance, or rather the necessity, of extending the work into provinces yet unoccupied. This matter was fully inquired into by the General Secretary during his official visit, and