

Editorial and Contributed.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

IT will be gratifying to all friends of our mission work—and they are legion—to know that notwithstanding a winter of unusually stormy weather, and the almost universal prevalence of “la grippe,” by which our congregations were depleted at the very time when missionary anniversaries were being held, the missionary fund shows no decline, but, on the contrary, a slight gain. Some will remember how, at a critical period of the year, the fund was threatened by attempts to excite animosity, on political grounds, against the management, and we are sure every loyal Methodist will rejoice to know that the dastardly attempt has resulted in conspicuous failure.

It is sometimes said that our missionary anniversaries have lost much of their old-time enthusiasm, so much so that it is difficult to secure even a moderate attendance at a week-night meeting. As a matter of fact this is true, but we do not think it is due altogether, or even chiefly, to declining interest in missionary work. The familiarity of average congregations with the aspects of the question usually presented in missionary speeches have much to do with it. They say—and justly—that they have heard all the stock arguments and illustrations over and over again, until they have ceased to have any interest. If those who have to address missionary meetings would take the trouble to study the missionary literature, now so abundant, with a view of preparing sermons and speeches on new lines, interest in our anniversaries would soon revive.

ANOTHER cause of diminished congregations at missionary meetings is to be found in the almost endless multiplication of Church meetings of other kinds. When we remember the steady run of class-meetings, prayer-meetings, young peoples' meetings, ladies' aid meetings, socials, Church and Sunday-school anniversaries, educational meetings, etc., etc., not to speak of the thousand and one union meetings for charitable and religious objects, the wonder is that any considerable number of people can be got to attend any one of them. But while we would like to see our missionary meetings as crowded and as enthusiastic as in their palmyest days, perhaps a steadily swelling stream of liberality in sustaining the work is a better evidence of interest than crowded meetings and meagre collections would be.

AT the same time we would rejoice to see a revival of the old-time feeling in connection with these anni-

versaries, and this might be accomplished if they were not regarded so much as a matter of course. It would be well if, in arranging for the missionary meeting, an attempt were made to get out of old ruts, and introduce new features. We would not rule out the time-honored sermon on Sunday morning, though we could wish that some of them were more “missionary” in text and treatment than they sometimes are. But in regard to the anniversary meeting, the stereotyped arrangement of extracts from the report, followed by two speeches, with singing of anthems between, is apt to grow monotonous, unless the speeches are full of missionary facts and missionary fire. In these things “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”

WHILE touching on this subject, we would venture to suggest that it is none too early, even now, to plan for the coming year's missionary campaign, and if this were done with a united purpose to make this the best missionary year in the history of the Church, we are persuaded the results would astonish and delight us all. What a grand thing it would be if we could agree upon a “missionary month,” some time before the holidays, in which every church within the Connection would hold its missionary anniversary! what a tidal-wave of missionary enthusiasm it would send rolling from one end of the Dominion to the other! And how much money would be saved by having all the contributions paid in before New Year, instead of waiting till Conference time or after, as is now so much the fashion!

MISSIONARY LEGISLATION.

THE approaching General Conference will be an occasion of great interest on many accounts, not least in regard to its influence on our missionary policy. Doubtless all aspects of the missionary question will be carefully considered in committee, and a report submitted to the Conference that will outline what the policy of the Church shall be in the future. The carrying on of so extensive a work, involving so many interests, is by no means an easy matter, and sometimes it is difficult to avoid a degree of friction between different parts of the work. Brethren on Domestic Missions, where stipends are very inadequate, can hardly be blamed for thinking at times that too much money is spent on the Indian and Foreign fields. Those on the Foreign and Indian fields, in turn, where the demand for extension are so urgent, find themselves cramped by lack of means and men. In the French work there is a not altogether groundless jealousy that that part of the field receives scant sympathy and support. And now another element will come in,