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Religious Miscellany.

BLESS GOD FOR RAIN.

"Bless God for rain the good man said,
And wiped away a grateful tear;
That we may have our daily bread,
He drops a shower upon us here.
Our Father! thou who dwell'st in heaven,
We thank thee for the pearly shower!
The blessed present thou has given
To man and beast and bird and flower.

The dusty earth with lips apart,
Looked up where rolled an orb of flame
As though a prayer came from its heart
For rain to come; and lo, it came;
The Indian corn with silken plume,
And tiny pitchers, with flowers filled,
Send up their praise of sweet perfume,
For precious drops the clouds distilled.

The modest grass is fresh and green;
The brooklet swells its song again;
Meshinks an angel's wing is seen
In every cloud that brings us rain.
There is a rainbow in the sky,
Upon the arch where tempests tred;
God wrote it ere the world was dry—
It is the autograph of God.

Upward where the heavy thunder rolled,
And clouds of fire were swept along,
The sun rides in a car of gold,
And soaring larks dissolve in song.
The rills that gush from mountain rude,
Flow trickling to the verdant base—
Just like the tears of gratitude
That often stain a good man's face.

Great King of peace, deign now to bless;
The windows of the sky unbar;
Shower down the rain of righteousness,
And wash away the stains of war;
And let the radiant bow of Love
In beauty mark the moral sky,
Like that fair sun unrolled above,
But not like it to fade and die.

—*Pen and Plough.*

THE ROLL OF THE DEAD.

There is no part of the proceedings of the Methodist Conference of more touching and solemn interest than that connected with the inquiry—"What ministers have died during the year?" The stir and murmur which during the transaction of ordinary business creep over a grave ecclesiastical assembly are hushed; the aisle are cleared of movers to and fro; and amid deepest silence the death-roll of the year is read out, and testimony borne to the virtues and services of the departed. Every annual Conference brings round with it its losses and its changes. Familiar forms venerable with age, or alert and blooming and sprightly with manly vigor, are no more seen; voices wise in counsel, or earnest in prayer, or eloquent in speech, are no more heard; the places of some who were honored for their wisdom, or reverenced for their goodness, know them no more; and we mark the vacant place, the deserted seat, and sigh that the occupant is gone. This year the unsparing hand of the mower has been busy; and some who were ripe for the scythe and ready for the garner, others in all the greenness and efflorescence of their youth, have been cut down; and whether young or old, we are called upon to catch their spirit and gather up their mantle—to snatch from their failing hand the torch, and carry it forward with inteneer lustre; to close up with firmer front the ranks that have been thinned by the inroads of death; and to lift high and yet higher the banner that has dropped from the grasp of those who have fallen in the fight.

In the Methodistic year now closing some have been taken away in mid career, in the midst of their days and their purposes abruptly broken off, their plans left fragmentary and incomplete, with no bluntness of edge on their weapons, and with no stain of rust upon their armor; and some have been gathered to their rest amid the wealth and ripeness and experience of years, to whom length of days was given, and a completed life-purpose, and a circle of usefulness fully filled up. But whether the Great Master was pleased to call his servants early or late—in the morning, with its sweet and dewy freshness and its genial inspirations, or in the evening with its waning power and fading light—in the spring time with its blossoms and its promise, or in the autumn with its accomplished hopes and perfected results—in each and in every case good and right was the will of the Lord, however inscrutable to us the dispensations of his providence. We bow beneath his chastening hand, and whether the tomb enshrine the dust of youth or age, we drop over it the tear of Christian affection, and place upon it the chaplet of a loving "In memoriam."

While we have not this year to mourn the removal of those, perhaps, who filled the most distinguished and influential places in the ministerial ranks, or who were the recognised leaders and rulers in our Church, there are bright and honorable names in the roll of the departed which will be cherished in the grateful remembrances of thousands. George Scot, "of Sweden," as he was familiarly designated, represents a type of earnest, faithful, godly men, imbued with evangelistic fervour and power, who have ever been the strength of the Methodist ministry. There was nobility in his form, and voice and presence, and nobility of a high order in his character and life. He was a man of large and lofty aims, robust and vigorous in his intellectual structure, and morally and spiritually a man of might. His gifts of teaching and speaking and administration were of no mean character, and were faithfully cultivated and employed. The work which, by the providence and grace of God, he was enabled to accomplish in Sweden, was one which, in its direct and indirect results, few have the opportunity of doing. He was the honored instrument in the hands of God of leading multitudes in that northern land to Christ, of arousing the torpor and formalism of the Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia, of quickening them into spiritual vitality and activity, of diffusing evangelical doctrine and life where there was neither the substance nor the spirit of the Gospel, and of initiating a religious movement which has issued in the general revival and uplifting of a Church that had become paralysed with lethargy and disfigured with corruption. The enthusiasm with which he was received by all classes on his return to that country, from which he was driven by persecution, the testimonies borne to his great services and successes by representatives of various Churches and by men of the highest position in the State, sufficiently indicated the estimation in which George Scott and his work had come to be regarded in the kingdom of Sweden. In 1865 he was appointed the President of the Canadian and of the Eastern British American Conferences; and the efficiency with which he discharged the duties of that high position won for him the confidence and affection of those colonial churches, the interests of which he was ever ready in any and every way to promote. He took a broad, deep interest in public affairs, and in any movement which involved the welfare of the Church and nation—in the formation and maintenance of the Evangelical Alliance, in the furtherance of national education, and especially in the upholding in its sacredness and divine authority of that holy day of rest which he had been taught to reverence in his Scottish home. No one ever doubted the sincerity or questioned the consistent piety of George Scott; and in all the circles in which he moved—and it was his lot outside the limits of Methodism to be brought into association with many of the great and noble—he recommended by a blameless life the Gospel which he preached.

In a place of honour, scarcely second to any amongst the "working clergy" of our church, should be inscribed the name of John Stables Ridsdale, a man of choice excellence and rare powers, whose voice was seldom heard in district meetings or Conferences, who never achieved an eminent popularity, who presided over no Connexional departments, and filled no large place in public influence, but who was known in the limited circles of his friends and acquaintances as a thinker of original mental vigour and as a preacher of uncommon ability. There was in his character a singular combination of the strong and the beautiful, the manly and the gentle—an honesty, an independence, a courage which never flinched or wavered in its fidelity to the right and the true; coupled with a humility, a modesty, a generosity, and an affectionateness which attracted and endeared. His intellectual characteristics were strongly marked, and of a lofty order. His mind was essentially analytical, logical, discriminating, and wittual constitutionally and intensely practical; he had a clear, quick insight into character, and a keen, searching eye to read the mysteries of the human heart. He loved to battle with intellectual difficulties, and showed rare skill in mastering hard and knotty subjects. He had a fine faculty of logical and argumentative exposition, expressing the conceptions of an acute and vigorous mind in language clear, precise, and forcible. He was an accomplished theologian, surpassed by few in faithful and powerful dealing with the conscience and in the application of Divine truth to the daily business of life, presenting as a preacher a happy union of the didactic and the persuasive, the light of truth and the warmth of feeling. Physical weakness, feeble health, accompanied with irritating nervous sensibility, tended in some degree to obscure the more attractive features of his character; but underneath a somewhat austere and reserved manner there dwelt—as those know who know him best—a warm, and tender and sympathising heart, as well as an intellect of robust and masculine vigor. Many such men we can never have; may we always have some.

The space at our disposal would fail to dilate with equal fulness on the excellencies of all who have recently passed away. Richard Ray, with a grand massive physique that marked him out for rule and government, gifted with untiring energy and perserverance, endowed with eminent powers of organisation and administration, faithful in trusts of great responsibility committed to him and in the critical exigencies of troublous times requiring exemplary tact and patience. His name will ever be honourably associated with the establishment of Taunton College, of which he was the originator. Nicholas Bishop, the gifted and the gentle, adorned alike with the accomplishments of the intellect and the virtues of the heart. He had a mind comprehensive, active, progressive, conversant with the advanced and cultivated thought of modern times, and addicted to habits of independent and original inquiry. His acquaintance with metaphysical studies was not pedantic and superficial, but accurate and extensive, and did not vitiate the simplicity or impair the evangelical warmth and efficiency of his ministrations, but gave to his mind a wider and clearer sweep of activity and usefulness. His book on "The Human Power in the Divine Life" is a valuable and permanent contribution to theological science in its relations to the philosophy of the human mind. The pulpit of the present day demands scholarly culture, a trained capacity of thought, force of personal godliness, associated with the simple, plain, practical presentation of scriptural and soul-saving truth; and such in a high degree was the ministry of Nicholas Bishop, so sadly and suddenly cut short when steadily increasing in power and effectiveness. Robert H. Hare, studious, thoughtful, of sensitive temperament, of great depth and tenderness of spirit, of exquisite refinement of feeling, which, while subjecting him to the occasional depression incident to a susceptible and emotional nature, gave a charm to his sermons and sweetness and beauty to his life, and qualified him to exercise a quick sympathy with the diffident, the troubled, and the doubting. It has been fittingly said that in the character of Robert Hare there was a beautiful and harmonious accordance between the principles and the graces of Christianity.

And then among those who have exchanged the service of earth for the rest of heaven, we can only stay to mention Adam Nightingale, a much enduring hard-working man, never able to satisfy himself that he was doing enough or suffering enough for his Great Master, who after forty years of ardous toil amid the privation and discomfort and exposure of a Newfoundland climate, could never hear any allusion to his service without shedding tears of poignant grief at its unworthiness and deficiency. Joseph Roberts, guileless in simplicity, childlike in spirit, the indefatigable pastor, a familiar and welcome presence in the homes of the poor, and by the bed-side of the sick and the dying. Richard Allen, eminently upright and devout, who encountered many hardships, and would have confronted any difficulty to save souls. Richard Heape, distinguished by his courtesy and kindliness, his catholicity of spirit, and generosity to the poor. James Allen, of a younger generation, intelligent loving, cheerful in temper, single in aim, pure in life, a good theologian, and deeply interested in the care and culture of the young. William Illingworth, in his best days a preacher with a soul of flame and a tongue of fire. Matthew Cranswick, whose earlier ministry was exercised in British North America, earnest and evangelical as a preacher, diligent and sympathizing as a pastor, considerate and faithful as a superintendent, of great simplicity and transparency of character, and specially useful amongst the young. A long and lovely evening-tide closed a well-spent life. James D. Brockelhurst, a man of taste and culture, and most kindly spirit, and popular gifts, and at the last more than conqueror. James Meadmore, plodding, pains-taking, of proved fidelity, and highly esteemed in all his circuits. Thomas Harding, sound in doctrine, unreprovable in practice, apt to teach, and possessing the true pastoral instinct, with a constitution sweetly-tempered, and happily balanced, who was summoned to his glorious home one Sabbath morning when discoursing upon "the calling of the God of all grace unto his eternal glory;" and William Seed and John Reddaway who, promised by painstaking industry and quiet power to render good service had their lives been spared.—*Recorder.*

THE REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

The Right Rev. Bishop Cheney, D. D., of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Chicago, now on a visit to this city, preached yesterday afternoon in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wellington Street, to a large and interested audience. We give elsewhere a report of his sermon, which we exceedingly regret space does not permit being published *verbatim.* The Rev. Dr. Morley Punshon was perhaps accustomed to greater flights of fancy, perhaps painted brighter word pictures; but his style was less vigorous, his language less fervid, his manner less impassioned. There is an originality in the ideas of Dr. Cheney which is refreshing—all the more so that originality is a rare quality in the average modern preacher. It would scarcely accord with our refined folks' idea of etiquette to fling the Bible at the head of a persistent slumberer and tell him if he refused to hear the word of God there was a way of making him feel it, as a Scotch minister of the olden time gets credit for having done; nor yet are there many who would be satisfied with Spurgeon's style of illustrating things. The latter gentleman upon one occasion preached to his vast congregation on the easiness with which a man glided down to hell, and the comparative difficulty of climbing up to heaven, and in order to give them an illustration of both, he first slid down the pulpit railing on the palms of his hands, saying, "This brethren, is how people go to hell," and then he hauled himself back again the same way, hand over hand, saying "This brethren is the way men get to heaven." They would look upon the Scotch divine and the Baptist orator as vulgar and buffoonish, although of course they not do deny the striking originality of the idea which prompted both. But Dr. Cheney's style is singularly free from rant or declamation, and characterized by no unnatural or ungraceful muscular exertion. His English is sufficiently pure to please the most fastidious lover of "English undefiled," he refuses to make use of even the more pardonable and convenient Americanisms, and his accent it not as pure as his English is at any rate pleasing and far from marked. If the cause he has espoused does not succeed, it will not be for want of able advocacy on his part. He confirmed three young men and ten young ladies (there's surely hope for the cause in this preponderance of sex,) thus administering the rite under the Reformed Episcopal dispensation for the first time in British North America. Whatever may be result of the movement in the future, there can be little doubt that yesterday will be looked upon as an important period in the history of its operations in Canada. If persecution be an element of success in any new religious agitation, it cannot be said to exist in this case, for what may be called the great initial proceeding in the establishment on an acknowledged basis of this new denomination in Canada was accomplished under the roof of one of the most most magnificent churches in this city, and was witnessed with approval by a large concourse of respectable and influential citizens The Bishop, in the evening spoke in the Court House, regarding the differences between the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Prostestant Episcopal Church of the United States, the latter corresponding in most respects with the Church of England. Having no desire at present to enter into that controversy, of course we forbear commenting upon the explanations offered of these differences, which will be agreed to or dissented from exactly according to the favor or disfavour with which the reader looks upon the new movement.—*Ottawa Times.*

THE THREE Rs.—Dr. Ryland's advice to his young academicians was: "Mind, no sermon is of any value, or likely to be useful, which has not the three Rs in it:

Ruin by the Fall.
Redemption by Christ.
Regeneration by the Holy Spirit."

Of himself, Rev. Rowland Hill remarked: "My aim in every sermon is, a stout and lusty call to sinners, to quicken the saints, and to be made a universal blessing to all."—*Sidney's Life of Rev. R. Hill.*

General Miscellany.

A WONDERFUL ENTERPRISE.

The name of M. Lesseps, made famous by the gratifying success which followed his great undertaking of cutting a channel from the waters of the Mediterranean to those of the Red Sea, thus rendering unnecessary the long and dangerous voyage round the Cape of Good Hope, and shortening the road to India, bids fair to achieve a still greater lustre from the other great enterprise with which, from time to time, it is associated. The energy and ability which must have been required to carry through to a successful completion a work pronounced impracticable by the engineer of such eminence as Stephenson, could not long rest content with the laurels won in one great achievement. It is characteristic of the man, too, that every scheme which has emanated from him has been built upon the same immense scale. The ideas formed in the brain of this wonderful Frenchman are giants compared with which the thoughts of other men are as pigmies. Were he to plan a church it would be a St. Peter. His every task is something that ordinary men would shrink from, yet their vastness is not their best feature. The latest project which M. Lesseps has given to the world is nothing less than adding a new sea to the continent of Africa. It has been made tolerably certain that the vast deserts which disfigure the interior of Algeria were at some distant period covered by the waters of the Mediterranean. In a long course of years, by gradual accretion, the channels through which the waters were supplied became choked up, and the intense heat of the sun, together with the peculiar character of the soil, speedily changed the aspect of the country to what it now is. The proposition of M. Lesseps, which is endorsed by the Geographical Society of France, is to re-open one of these long-closed channels, a work of a much less onerous character than the construction of the Suez Canal, and of comparatively trifling expense, and so allow the waters to flow in again over their old bed. The benefits which will result from the consummation of this project it is difficult to forsee. It is believed, however, that the connecting of these great deserts into an inland sea will have such an effect upon the productiveness of the country to which its waters will give an easy access, as will abundantly repay the French Government for the outlay with which it will be attended. The lack of any means of access to navigable waters in the interior of Africa has long been recognized as the principle obstacle which stands in the way of the opening up of that country to the trade and civilizing influences of Europe. If M. Lesseps has devised a means of overcoming this difficulty, and of opening up a field for commercial enterprise, as well as of solving many Geographical problems, he will have earned the gratitude of the whole human race.—*Citizen.*

(From the Christian at Work.)

BIGOTRY—AN OBITUARY.

We have heard of the death of a veteran of world-wide fame. His beard and hair were very white, and, we are sorry to say, white with sin; we mean Bigotry. He took a bad cold standing in the door of the Evangelical Alliance last October. Since then he has been lingering on, sometimes better and sometimes worse, until now he is dead. You may think you see him again, but it will be only the ghost of his former self. The fact is that he has been for a long while failing in health. He has had some very bad falls on the platform of the American Tract Society, and American Sunday-School Union, and American Board of Foreign Missions. In these places old Dr. Cox, George H. Stuart, William E. Dodge, and others, have rather delighted to trip him up. Besides this he has been very much reduced in strength by a spare diet. Refusing to take the strong meat of the word and the bread of life, he has confined himself to creeds and liturgies and catechisms. He got weaker and weaker until now he is dead.

A *post mortem* examination revealed the fact that his spleen was very much enlarged, and his liver was surcharged with bile, and the two alarming protuberances on his head turned out to be a couple of horns in state of embryo. No public announcement was made either of his disease or his burial. The overseer of the poor took charge of his remains, as he did not leave enough to pay his funeral expenses. Bishop Cummins, J. Hyatt Smith, Father Hyacinthe, and old Dr. Tyng served as pall-bearers, not because they had any affection for the departed, but because they thought it better to get him out of the way. The funeral sermon was preached from a text in the Old Testament: "Buried with the burial of an ass; drawn forth and cast beyond the streets of Jerusalem."—*Requiescat in pace!*

THE NATIONAL DEBT OF ENGLAND.—The following figures came to us through the Montreal *Gazette*:—

A blue book lately issued by the Treasury Department of the British Government gives some valuable information concerning the national debt since the year 1857. On the 1st of April of that year, according to this return, the funded debt, with stock held on account of unclaimed dividends and capital value of terminable annuities, stood at £839,519,326. Since that year the total has steadily contracted until it now amounts to £785,761,761, being a decrease of £53,757,565, on an average of about £2,067,600 per annum for twenty-six years. But the wohle of this decrease is not due to actul payments, about £8,000,000 being on account of diminished capital value of terminal annuities. Including the amount paid off on the first of April, 1857, the debt has been redeemed to the extent £81,562,570. Against this gross total must be set the stock created for the purchase of telegraphs, for fortifications and army localisation, as well as certain creations of unfunded debt. Altogether these charges amount to £21,026,489, which, deducted from the gross total, gives £60,236,081 as the real decrease of national debt during the period specified, including the amount paid off in the year ending the 1st April, 1857. During the same term £34,384,523 taxes were remitted in the aggregate, each year except four showing reductions. Continuous national prosperity and development of trade have enabled England to pay off a large amount of debt, while the burden of taxation has been immensely lightened.

CONFERENCE NOTES.

A sprightly writer who furnishes to the *West Briton* a weekly batch of paragraphs under the headings, "Observed" and "Not Observed," gives the following as "observed:" "That Penzance has taken the initiative with respect to the temperance meetings to be held in the county during the session of the Wesleyan Conference. A monster meeting is to be held in St. John's-hall in the early part of this month. Seven ministers (including the Revd. Charles Garrett,) of high repute in Methodism, are to take part in the meeting, and Mr. N. B. Downing is to preside. What about the promised meetings at Truro, Falmouth and other towns? I have not seen any announcements, nor heard of any arrangements being made."

The same writer gives a curious instance of Cornish hospitality: "That I have a very serious complaint before me of the conduct of one of the hotel-keepers at Camborne. A few days ago some sixteen ministers attending the preparatory meetings of the Wesleyan Conference called at his hotel to get some refreshment, and after waiting for nearly an hour a few chops and steaks, with a small quantity of potatoes were set before them. The supply of each viand was of a very meagre description, but when the rev. gentlemen called for the bill, to their astonishment they found they were charged, as they considered the exorbitant sum of 3s. 3d. each. This looks like carrying the thing a little too far. I always believe in paying a fair price, but anything approaching extortion or imposition I heartily detest.

Of the last service at the old chapel at Falmouth a correspondent of the *West Briton* gives an excellent account. He says: "We saw a large and attentive audience around us, and the interest felt in the object for which they were assembled was clearly depicted in the faces of many. We noticed that Mr. D. J. Jenkins, occupied the chair, and that he received an enthusiastic reception. It was whispered in our ears that he came from London for the express purpose of presiding at the meeting. From what we heard him say, it was evident that his best sympathies were enlisted in favour of the new chapel. He gave an excellent address, and heartily promised to help the undertaking by every means in his power. We saw representatives of the past and present generation on the platform, and heard them utter earnest and thrilling words. The respected superintendent of the circuit, the Rev. John E. Coulson, who has labored with an unfaltering faith for the promotion of the new chapel scheme, told how the work had progressed, and cheerfully surveyed the future. His association with Methodism in Falmouth will never be forgotten. He has inaugurated a noble work, and when completed it will be for him an abiding memorial. We saw another venerable worthy at the final service who received a tribute of well deserved respect. Mr. Studden represented the Falmouth society. His memory carried him back over a period of nearly seventy years, and we could see that he was deeply affected as he unrolled the chronicle of the past. We also saw the Rev. Samuel W. Christophers (now of Redruth) upon the platform, and what old and memorable associations did his presence there recall to us! We had seen him in the pulpit of the old chapel long years ago, and heard him proclaim with eloquence and power the Message of the Master to perishing sinners. He gave an interesting record of his early association with the place. Nearly forty years have elapsed since he bade farewell to Falmouth circuit to open his commission as a regular minister.

"Preparations for building new Wesley Chapel proceeded space. We hear that the most earnest efforts are being put forth to obtain the necessary funds, and these engaged in the undertaking are confident of success. The Rev. Ebenezer E Jenkins, M.A., who will be sincerely welcomed by many in remembrance of the past, with others, will take part in the services of the day, and their presence will tend to make them deeply interesting. We have heard that Mr. Jenkins conducted services in the old chapel just thirty years ago under peculiar circumstances. With two colleagues he was on his way to labour as a missionary in the East Indies, and the ship in which they sailed happened to put into Falmouth harbour, where she was windbound for several days. In their youthful ardour the missionaries came on shore, and each night during their stay they held a public service. The remembrance of their visit is retained to this day. We have a copy of a favourite hymn sung by Mr. Jenkins and his friends. It was obtained at one of the meetings, and has been carefully preserved. Here is the first stanza:—

Come, let us all unite to sing—
God is love!
While heaven and earth their praises ring,
God is love!
Let every soul from sin awake,
His harp now from the willow take,
And sing with us for Jesu's sake—
God is love!

Within the past twenty-five years some excellent and well-beloved ministers have laboured in the Falmouth Circuit. It is proposed during the session of Conference, which several of these ministers are attending, to hold a public meeting on behalf of the new chapel, at which they are to be invited to deliver addresses. Mention has been made of the names of Thomas Hardy, Levi Waterhouse, John Ryan, Philip Fowler, and others."

Snow yourself to be a great lover of truth so that the greatest credit may be given to your simple word.

THE NEW PRESIDENT.

Before our readers get a sight of this article the electric telegraph will have flashed the tidings of Dr. Punshon's election to the Presidential Chair along many a wire to most of the daily papers. Eager as the district representatives are to get their stations off by the first post, they cannot keep pace with the electric wire, and many ministers in various parts of England will have read their appointment in their morning paper before it could be possible for them to be supplied with the "stations" by their representatives. Times are changed during the last twenty years, and the journals which in former days passed by Methodism with a sneer are now glad to have their daily report telegraphed from the Conference. The name of William Morley Punshon has long been familiar as a household word in Methodism. He came into public notice very early, as any minister with his extraordinary gifts would have done. Within Methodism he has rendered most valuable service. Perhaps no man ever raised so much money in so short a time for the various Wesleyan funds. His singularly attractive eloquence has given him an influence over rich and poor such as few other men have ever possessed; nor has he ever abused his power None can charge him with tyranny or haughtiness; he has always proved brotherly and kind in his intercourse with his brethren. It is the first duty and privilege of the Methodist preacher to be useful in his own Church; but he need be no mere denominational Christian There is a great world outside Methodism in which many Wesleyan ministers are unknown. This cannot be said of Dr. Punshon. His name is more widely known than the name of most other Wesleyan ministers of the nineteenth century. It is known wherever English preachers are cared for, and the force of his talents has won for him favour and honour in quarters where specialities of Methodism are neither cared for nor admired. With oratorical powers Dr. Punshon combines business aptitude in a very rare degree. Orators, generally speaking care little for details; but Dr. Punshon is as much at home in schedules as he is in poetry, and excels as a financial secretary as much as he does as an orator. He is not unused to the Presidential chair, and the frequency with which he occupied it in the Canadian Conference must have made him apt and easy in the business procedure of such assemblies. After five years' absence Dr. Punshon returned to England to find that the sympathy and prayers, the esteem and confidence of his brethren were with him still. His official year will bring upon him duties and trials to grapple successfully with which he will need the talents and experience by which he is distinguished. But he will never be left to himself; the President has an interest in the prayers of a host of believing people. It is not for us to forecast the future, but all appearances seem to warrant the belief that Dr. Punshon's year of office will be one of peace and prosperity. New schemes are in embryo; new plans are just starting, while old ones are being worked on the ancient lines of success; and while we are thankful for the established and germinant forces of our Church, we expect more from its Divine Head than from these.

The election in its general aspect was substantially in accordance with general expectation. Mr. M'Aulay's name was supported by a respectable number of votes. The Secretary of the Conference and the accomplished Theological Tutor of Didsbury were not far behind, and the Chairman of the Cornwall District was not forgotten. Above these, however, the second place was allotted to Rev. Wm. Arthur. Re-elections to the Presidental office are far less frequent than in former days, when the choice of men eligible to fill the highest positions was more limited. The vote of Wednesday showed that no rule against re-elections should be made absolute. Nor can it be supposed that such a rule will ever receive the sanction of Conference.

We offer our respectful congratulations to the new President, not only upon his own election, but upon the re-election to the office of Secretary of his friend Mr. Gervase Smith. After the manner in which the duties of that office were discharged last year, it was impossible to look forward to any other result than that which to-day we have the pleasure of recording; and no man in the Methodist ministry knows how to value such an expression of his brethren's confidence better than Mr. Smith. The election of President and Secretary will be popular everywhere, and the voice of the churches, it may be ratified throughout the year, by abounding tokens of the Lord's blessing, in the peace and edification of Zion, and in the addition of thousands upon thousands to our Israel.

THE RETIRING PRESIDENT.

The Rev. George T. Perks, M. A., is no longer President of the Methodist Conference. He has given up his official seat to another, and taken his seat to the right of the Presidential chair. A great change has taken place in his circumstances, involving all the difference between being the responsible chief of a great Church and the responsible adviser of a new chief. It could not have been ungrateful to him to be placed in office by so many of the votes of his brethren, and, considering his modest shrinking from prominence in public affairs, and the many anxieties which fall to the lot of all Presidents, it can scarcely be unwelcome to have the rest which he has so fairly earned, and which we hope he will long live to enjoy in the tranquility of his study, and in the active service of the church. His year of office, so far as its current of events has depended upon himself, has been marked by those features which we knew his character and habits would stamp upon it. He has had, as all Presidents must have, difficulties to encounter, but he has been prudent and prompt, mild and gentle amid them all. A more aimiable man never filled the Presidential chair, and, whether presiding in Committee or in Conference, he has everywhere and under all circumstances shown himself to be what he always is, the Christian gentleman. Those who have had most intercourse with him will be among the first to say that he has paid them the most prompt attention, and that his quick and methodical habits of business have prevented unnecessary delays all over the Connexion. When, hereafter, he looks back to the enormous amount of ecclesiastical business through which he has had to pass, it must be some comfort to him that his brethren, both of the clergy and laity, are more than satisfied with his ability and despatch. No matter how spiritual men may be, the affairs of a well-regulated Church involve a good deal of ecclesiastical business, and it does not always happen that the best ecclesiastical statesman makes also the largest contribution to the spiritual life of the Church. But in the case of the Ex-President the whole Connexion knows that his spiritual fervour and usefulness have increased rather than diminished during his year of office. His pulpit labors have been abundant—in fact, too abundant for the vigor of his health, and in the hundreds of pulpits from which he has delivered the glad message of the Gospel he has exhibited, in connection with the highest intellectual qualities, intense religious fervor and deep devotedness to God. He would rather be, unless we altogether misread his soul, a successful preacher of the glorious Gospel than exhibit the highest qualities for church business. During the year the calls upon the Ex-President for public services have been incessant, and it is said that, during his year of office, he has opened, on average, two new chapels every week.

Although Mr. Perks has retired from the Presidential chair, he has not passed out of the sympathy and fellowship of his brethren. He has drawn to himself the prayerful good wishes of both ministers and laymen wherever he has gone, and the Connexion is bound to him in bonds of esteem which will never be broken. At the Mission-house there is a fine opportunity of usefulness, and we hope that in the foreign department he will continue to render valuable service to Methodism for many years to come. The fields are white unto the harvest, and Mr. Perks will guide and help the foreign reapers as they gather in the golden grain.

The incoming President will have no jealous subordinate in Mr. Perks. It is not easy for some men to lay aside official habits which have been practised for only a year, but it will cost Mr. Perks no effort to become an Ex-President; and in him the new President will have a firm supporter, a wise adviser, and a faithful friend. In Methodism the Lord changes the workmen, but the work goes on—goes on in the growing devotion of its ministers, in the increasing intelligence of its people, in the fullness of spiritual life, in the salvation of souls, and in providential openings all over the world.—*Recorder.*

THE NEW CONNEXION CONFERENCE.

The adjourned Conference of the New Connexion Methodist Church met at Milton, on Wednesday, the 12th inst., to receive the report of the deputation which had been appointed to visit the English New Connexion Conference. The Rev. W. Williams and R. Wilkes, M.P., reported the action of the English Conference, which had withdrawn it opposition and finally consented to the Canadian union without approving of the terms on which it was based. After considerable friendly discussion of the subject, final ratification of the proposed union was adopted by the vote of the Conference without a single hand being lifted against it. Even the remarks of Rev. J. H. Robinson and Rev. J. Medcraft were of a most conciliatory spirit. Both these gentlemen, though resisting the union as long as they thought it could be successfully opposed, when they found that the desire for union only grew stronger, withdrew their opposition; and they deserve much credit for having helped to make the union more peaceful and unanimous on the part of the New Connexion, than without their co-operation it would have been. A tea-meeting, in celebration of the union, was held on Wednesday evening in the Wesleyan Church. The Editor of this paper had the pleasure of being present, and was much gratified at the kindly and brotherly feeling that pervaded the assembly. We were glad to learn that one or two circuits that had held out for a time against the union, are likely, now that the English Conference has acquiesced, to offer no serious opposition. The general harmony with which the measure has been at last accepted by the New Connexion ministers and laity must be gratifying to all who sincerely desire to see the healing of the divisions that have so long separated brethren of the same religious faith. Let all our readers pray fervently that God may ratify and bless this union by the rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all our congregations.

The following are the names of the delegates appointed to the General Conference:

Ministerial Delegates.—Revs. D. Savage, W. Tindall, H. Wilkinson, James McAllister, D. D. Rolston, W. Williams, James Caswell, George Richardson, E. Holmes, Geo. Brown, Joseph R. Gundy, Edward Kershaw. *Alternates.*—Revs. D. M. McKenzie, J. C. Seymour.

Lay Delegates.—R. Wilkes, M.P., B. Hopkins, James Evans, J. Zimmerman, M. McAllister, Josiah Hampton, A. B. Walker, T. Michell, Robert Irmia, G. W. Rife, Joseph Brownbridge and Wm. Latimer. *Alternates.*—J. Armstrong and A. Ferguson.—*Guardian.*

Smoking is now so common among persons of unformed constitutions, says the "Builder," that the ascertained facts of the effects of tobacco acquire a grave importance. If juvenile smoking continues and extends, we may look for generations endowed with weaker brains, and duller intellects in a continued series of degradation. Let those who would not have our brave, bright lads degenerate into a race of dyspeptic dullards, warn them, as they wish for the exercise of that power to think which is their greatest privilege and glory, as they hope to keep clear heads and unclouded brains, to resist the dreamy seductions of tobacco.