

General Assembly.

DR. HUMPHREY'S ADDRESS ON CHURCH ERECTION.

DEAR BRETHREN:—The undersigned was directed, at the recent meeting of our General Assembly, to prepare an address to its churches, setting forth the nature and the reason of its last action upon the subject of church erection.

PREVIOUS ACTION.

During the years 1854-6, a fund of \$100,000 was collected for the purpose of aiding feeble churches in erecting houses of worship. The policy adopted for the administration of this fund was as follows, viz.:

- 1. The fund was to be permanent. 2. Aid was to be rendered, (a) by loans, (b) by donations. The loans were never to exceed \$500 to any church; the donations were limited to \$200. Loans were to be returned to the trustees of the fund "in four equal annual instalments, the first instalment becoming due in three years from the date of the loan," with interest in case of default. The donations were to be given without other condition than that the church aided thereby should take an annual collection in behalf of the fund. The fulfilment of the conditions upon which such aid was to be afforded, was, in each case, to be secured by a bond of the trustees of the congregation, and a mortgage on their house and lot, made in favor of the Board. The details of the plan it is unnecessary to state. Its central idea was the permanency of the fund. It was supposed that the payment of loans, and the annual contributions from churches receiving donations, would maintain the capital in the hands of the Board, at its maximum. The mills would return to the fountain.

WORKING OF THE PLAN.

For a few years, while buildings could be cheaply erected, and while the pay-day was in the future, the fund was largely used, and with happy results; but as loans became due, and as the country underwent financial revolution in the progress of civil war, it became gradually evident that the plan required alteration. Many churches found it difficult, if not impossible, to meet their obligations to the Board, yet were seriously embarrassed by those obligations. Churches needing aid were restrained from applying for it, by unwillingness to subject themselves to similar embarrassments. As a consequence, the fund was, at last, almost entirely unrecalled for. That part of it still in the hands of the Board increased by investment, until, in 1866, the whole amount in the treasury, and pledged to it by churches aided, was over \$127,000. It had become evident that some change must be made in the plan, by which the system of loans should be discontinued, and that of donations upon an increased scale of liberality made prominent.

MODIFYING THE PLAN.

To make the requisite change was found to be difficult. Legal advice was sought, with the following results. First, The permanency of the fund could not be destroyed. Second, The amounts loaned, or donated, could be increased, or diminished, or their proportions could be altered. Third, Any change could be made in the administration of the fund which would not affect its permanency. In these particulars the legal opinions, various upon subordinate points, generally agreed. The fund could not, therefore, be distributed by gift, without guarantee of return; nor could it be loaned, except upon such security as would be deemed sufficient in a civil court. Some plan must be devised which would afford the greatest amount of assistance to feeble churches, and on the most liberal terms, without diminishing the fund.

PLAN ADOPTED.

The features of the plan agreed upon by the Assembly are these:—First, The policy of loans is abandoned. Second, That of gifts without pledge of return is adopted. Third, Gifts are to be made, (a) from the interest of the permanent fund, (b) from contributions annually made by all our churches.

The Assembly directed that the fund remaining in the hands of the Board, together with the interest collected and added thereto, up to the date of the Assembly, should be invested as trust funds usually are. All loans now due the Board are in like manner to be invested when they are paid; also any contributions which may hereafter be made to the permanent fund. The accruing interest of the fund, as thus contributed and invested, is to be distributed among the churches by donations upon such conditions, and in such proportions, as the amended plan specifies.

EXPLANATIONS.

The "accruing interest" is the interest which will be yielded by the fund, subsequent to the 1st of May, 1866. The interest which had accumulated up to that date is added to the permanent fund.

2. The permanent fund is, by the conditions of the charter, to be invested under the laws and decisions of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, which require trust moneys, not otherwise specified, to be invested in real security, or in the public stocks of the State, or of the United States, or on bond and mortgage on unencumbered real estate in the State of New York. This was not thoroughly understood by the Standing Committee of Church Erection, possibly not by all the General Assembly, when the plan was under discussion. The effect of it is to restrain the Board from making any loans to churches, outside of the State of New York, except upon United States securities, or stocks of the State of New York.

3. The amount derived from the permanent fund each year will be comparatively small. For the present, it will not exceed from \$5000 to \$7000. The annual contributions called for from the churches, are to supply the means which this fund, under this amended plan, will not afford. These contributions will not be added to the permanent fund. They will be distributed each year, upon the same conditions which govern the distributions of the accruing interest of the permanent fund.

4. The design of this plan is, to place the cause of church erection upon the same plain with that of home missions. The former simply has the advantage—such an

advantage as is possessed by the A. B. C. F. M., American Bible Society, and other benevolent institutions—of a small endowment. The Assembly has directed the appointment of a General Secretary, that the cause may be efficiently presented and prosecuted.

CLOSING CONDITIONS.

It is manifest that, if we are to succeed in this line of Christian endeavor, it will be by the same spirit of earnest consecration which we invoke when we present the highest calls of privilege and duty.

The demand made upon us by feeble churches throughout the land, for houses of worship, is almost as pressing as for ministers. We must not be behind other denominations in understanding and meeting that demand. The General Assembly desires the adoption of a most enlarged and generous policy in this particular. The permanent fund is not to be depended upon. The churches should give, as if there were no permanent fund. The Assembly calls for \$35,000 this year. The sum is only too small for the exigency. Let no church fail to contribute at least its proportion of that amount. Should there be differences of opinion as to the wisdom of all the features of the plan adopted by the Assembly, let them not interfere with a fair trial of the plan. The large majority by which it was adopted indicates that it was deemed the best adjustment that could be made of a difficulty that has been increasingly felt for years. Let there be a hearty and general co-operation in it, and it will succeed. Let it be understood that the Presbyterian Church has abandoned the system of loaning that which should be given as freely as the root gives to the branch the leaf, and let us vindicate this new and better policy, by the vigor which shall soon be apparent in every vein and fibre. The day fixed for simultaneous contribution is the third Sunday of December next. Do not forget. Do not fail!

Z. M. HUMPHREY, Chairman of Committee. CHICAGO, July 12, 1866.

Rural Economy.

WINTERING FARM HORSES.

Some farmers treat their horses in winter much as they do their fattening cattle and sheep; they give them abundant food, and but little exercise, keep them in a warm and dimly-lighted stable, and if they do but grow fat, with their cattle and sheep, they deem it convincing proof that the proper course has been pursued. Now, horses in good working condition, at least, should always be seen on the premises of a good farmer, but his gratitude toward these faithful servants should not induce him, at any time of the year, to stall feed them. The butcher wants thick meat and plenty of tallow in the cattle and sheep, but the plowman looks for strong muscle, spirit and endurance in his team. The food and care of the different animals should be consistent with the ultimate purpose they are to serve. Fat horses that have been wintered mostly in the stable, without much exercise, are not fit for hard service at the opening of the working season in the spring, and a prolific source of disease is the hard work they are frequently compelled to do when they are not in proper condition.

The ordinary winter business of the farmer does not call for much exercise of his team, and if he have several, most of them may be entirely idle. In such cases, it is an excellent plan to have a yard for their especial benefit, well littered and safe, and let them have access to it several hours each day. The horses should be unshod, and if any are vicious they may be turned loose at different hours from the others. The horses will show by their playful actions how much they enjoy this temporary relief from the stall. Another very important thing, often neglected by farmers, is the grooming of their teams. In the summer time the horse, by rolling in the pasture, to a certain extent cleans himself; besides, the rains have some effect. But in the stable he relies on the care of his master, and the keen enjoyment the curry-comb and brush evidently give him should be ample reward for the labor. A well-lighted stable, thoroughly ventilated yet free from currents of air, should also be provided.

In regard to the feed of horses, most farmers, we think, will agree to the proposition that it is always good economy to grind or mash all kinds of grain before feeding. It is well established that oat straw, cornstalks or other coarse fodder fed with some grain, is cheaper than to winter the horses wholly on hay. Without stopping to assign reasons, we think they also come out in the spring in better condition than when fed on hay alone. Good wheat or oat straw, fed with bran, strengthened with corn meal, has been found excellent. When the weather is not too cold, it is preferable to dampen the cut hay or straw and sprinkle the meal on it.

The wintering of horses should begin with the first approach of cold autumn nights. No work horse should now be left in the pasture except in the daytime. Exposure to a single autumn storm might cause damage enough to the farmer's teams to have paid for years of timely care.

KEEPING SWEET POTATOES.

Mr. A. Baker, of Booneville, Indiana, describes in the Country Gentleman, the following method of keeping sweet potatoes during the winter:— Two or three plans are practised in this community. One is to build a small cellar, say twelve or fifteen feet square, under the family-room of the house, only entered by a trap-door through the floor—the cellar walls fitting up to the floor of the room snug, so that no air can get through. The potatoes are dug and allowed to dry, when they are let down into the cellar without bruising. Through the winter the cellar is ventilated once or twice a week by opening the trap-door for half an hour, during which time the outside doors of the room above should be kept closed. I have kept sweet potatoes in this way till the middle of April.

Another, and I think the best, plan is to build a house within a house, filling the space between the walls with clay. Two doors are hung—one to the inner, and one to the outer wall. The space above the

potatoes is filled with clay or saw-dust. The potatoes are dug and hauled to the house. The floor, or rather the ground, is covered with dry chaff. A layer of potatoes is carefully laid on, and another layer of chaff, and the process continued till the pile is about three feet high. A thick layer of chaff is then spread over the top, and the process is completed. A box, two by six inches, is placed in the wall opposite the door for the purpose of ventilation. This is kept closed in cold weather, and only opened in the middle of the day on warm days.

Will it pay? One of my neighbors, whose name I might give if it was necessary, planted two acres to sweet potatoes last year, and did all the work of cultivation himself, and he is sixty years old. He has two potato houses, built after the plan given above. In the spring he sold out of the two houses and off of the two acres, five hundred bushels at three dollars per bushel. Other cultivators in this country are doing as well, and perhaps better; but I give this man's crop as an example because I know the facts. Sweet potatoes generally sell for one dollar in the fall, and from two to four in the spring.

Sweet potatoes are not affected by drouth like Irish potatoes, and are not eaten by the potato-bug.

HEAVY SHOES FOR THE LADIES.

Winter is coming, and we desire to say a word or two to our lady readers about clothing the feet.

When the celebrated physician Abernethy died, report said that, beside a will of some interest to his heirs, in a pecuniary point of view, there was found among his effects a sealed envelope, said to contain the secret of his great success in the healing art, and also a rule of living, the following of which would insure longevity.

A large price was paid for the sealed envelope. It was found to contain only these words:—"To insure continued health and a ripe old age, keep the head cool, the system open and the feet warm."

Dry feet are warm feet, generally, if the system is healthy. To keep the system healthy the circulation must be good. The circulation is not good without exercise, and exercise can only be really valuable when walking. Riding in a carriage is no exercise at all; it is merely inhaling the air. This is very well as far as it goes, but the lungs are not in full play without the individual is walking. Horseback exercise is very good, and is an improvement on carriage riding, but it is not the kind of health-creating play of the muscles nature demands. It is action—action of the entire body—and walking only will procure it.

Now, the ladies of Europe, particularly those of England, understand this thing. They walk miles per day, and if any of our pale beauties desire to know how the English ladies keep their fine color, clear complexion and superb busts, we tell them it is by out-door exercise; walking in the open air; filling the lungs with pure oxygen, by rapid movement on a sharp October day, when the sun shines brightly and the clear blue sky is above. This is the secret of the rich blood of the English women, and their almost universal fine looks and manly beauty at fifty, when at that age American women are pale, sallow and wrinkled.

To enjoy a walk, thick soles are needed. Stout, well-fitted calf-skin high gaiters, neatly laced, will always "set off" a pretty foot, and improve a homely one. To guard that sensitive portion of the human frame (for the sole of the foot is keenly sensitive to the changes from heat to cold, or dryness to dampness), the boot sole should be thick, and as well made as human ingenuity can do it. Then, even in moist weather, or in a rain storm, the foot can be protected; that insured, all is well in the body.—Moore's Rural.

RANCID BUTTER FOR COOKING.

Many persons sneer at the common notion that butter too rancid to be eaten raw upon bread, may be used without objection in cooking; but this notion, like many other popular ideas, is more in accordance with the truth of the matter than the imperfect knowledge which ridicules it.

All fats are compounds of acids with glycerin. Butter is a mixture of several fats, and one of them, constituting however only a small portion of its mass, is butyric; this is a compound of butyric acid with glycerin. Butyric, like other fats, is a neutral substance, but when it is decomposed—in other words, when the butyric acid is separated from the glycerin with which it is combined—we then have the two substances, the acid and the glycerin, exhibiting each its peculiar properties. Butyric is a very powerful acid, caustic and sour, and having that peculiar strong odor which is characteristic of rancid butter. One of the early steps in the decay of butter is the decomposition of the butyric, which is made manifest by the odor of the butyric acid set free, and by the sour and biting taste of this acid.

Now, at a temperature of 315 degrees, butyric acid is evaporated, hence it is only necessary to raise the temperature of the butter to this point in order to drive off the acid which makes it rancid, and to leave the remainder perfectly sweet. If rancid butter is mixed in cake, a portion of the butyric acid will be absorbed by the water in the cake, and it may not be all expelled by the heat in baking; but if the butter is used for frying in an open pan, it is pretty certain that the butyric acid will all be evaporated. With a knowledge of the properties of butyric acid, a skillful cook ought to be able to use rancid butter in such ways as to retain none of the rancidity in the cooked articles.

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