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OUR SUPERNUMERARY FUNDS.

ARTICLE I.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Some time since I saw in your paper a letter from Brother Parker, asking for information in view of the proposed amalgamation of the two Supernumerary Funds belonging to our church. No doubt he but gave expression to the wish of all your readers who take an interest in this important question. No one, we presume, whether in favour of amalgamation or opposed to it, desires that any injustice should be done to either the Eastern or Western sections of our work, or that either party should decide in reference to a matter of so much importance without an understanding of the circumstances, as full and perfect as can be obtained. But time is hastening on. Conference, the time for action, will soon be upon us. No one seems inclined to take the pen, or in any way throw the needed light upon the subject. As a consequence, those who have no opportunity for examining the matter, will come up as ignorant of it as last year; whilst those who have examined it will have little time, probably, amid the rush of Conference work, to make known the grounds upon which they base their opinions. There is danger, therefore, that the result may be another illustration of the well-attested fact that hasty legislation is generally poor legislation, calculated to develop in after years to an unpleasant degree, the grace of repentance.

To say that our Supernumerary Fund is one of our most important interests, and should be dealt with most carefully, is unnecessary. If our Missionary Fund is the right hand of our work, the Supernumerary Fund is the left hand. It is necessary to support our men, whilst in the prime of life, and able, if support should fail, to turn their hand to other pursuits. On every principle of honour and right it is not less necessary to see that in the feebleness of age, when unable to cope with the hardships of life, they be permitted to sit in peace beneath the shadow, and to eat of the fruit, of the tree which their right hand hath planted.

It has, also, its economic value in the financial polity of our church. Methodist ministers, as a class, labour for less we believe, than the ministers of any other large denomination. Why? Because they cannot get more, perhaps. But because, also, many a man is satisfied to spend his best days in preaching the Gospel of Christ, upon a salary which every dictate of prudence and right would lead him to refuse, were it not for the knowledge that his old age will be watched over by a grateful church. One of the easiest and best methods therefore of supporting, in part, our ministerial host, even when in the active work, is to maintain an efficient Supernumerary Fund. This, with the Children's Fund, forms a sort of rear guard, a reserved force in our financial array; and when the battle wages hot upon the plain, many a cooling, struggling soldier is strengthened to fire his last shot, and to strike his last blow, by the thought that there are those who will, at least, carry off the wounded, and care for the widow and the fatherless.

I make no apology, therefore, for claiming, at your hand, a little space, and at the hands of your readers a good deal of patient attention, for the discussion of this subject. You will pardon me, also, if I do not hasten too rapidly to a conclusion. There are many points that should be touched upon, and some for which a touch will not suffice, and I am unwilling to neglect anything, the discussion of which any one might deem necessary to a full understanding of the question.

In attempting to write upon it, how-

ever, one has to regret that the sources of information are so few and unsatisfactory, especially in reference to our own Fund. This complaint would not be just against the Western one. They have a report, kindly sent me by the Treasurer prepared in 1871, giving, in tabular form, the fullest information on every point up to that date. There is also a brief report, published annually, in the Minutes of the different Conferences, and this is supplemented this year by a general statement in the *Christian Guardian*, of the condition of the Fund last year, and the demands made upon it for the present one. We have nothing of the kind, I believe, in connection with our own. Scarcely the scratch of a pen, so far as our printed records are concerned—except the lists of subscriptions and directions for collecting—would indicate that we had such a Fund. Even the Reports furnished by the Treasurer from time to time have not been deemed worthy of preservation. Other funds manage to have their reports inserted in the Minutes, or else published in full in separate volumes; but this, one of the most important joints in the backbone of our itinerancy, is left, in this respect, "almost without a local habitation or a name." Had we on record, and accessible, a succession of such reports as was furnished the Conference last year, it would be of great assistance in understanding the present condition of the Fund, and judging its prospects for the future. We trust that this oversight of our Conference will be removed in future reports. Ignorance may be the mother of devotion, but she is not the mother of financial success.

I would here acknowledge with thanks, my obligation to Dr. Pickard, in the absence of such records, as well as to the Rev. J. Douse, Treasurers of the Eastern and Western Funds, respectively, for information of importance to a full investigation of the subject, and not otherwise easily obtained.

With these preliminary remarks, Mr. Editor, I will plunge in *medias res*, promising that I do not enter upon this discussion as opposing or advocating any scheme proposed, or to be proposed. My object is a more general one—to state such facts as I may have at command, and to indicate, perhaps, the conclusion to which, in my opinion, they seem to tend, in order that all who wish may be enabled to think, and judge, and act intelligently in reference to any scheme that may be presented. Neither do we pretend to be specially qualified to deal with this matter—we are simply attempting to do what others will not do; let those do better who can. If errors are made, as doubtless there will be, let them be corrected; that, not only by our knowledge, but still more, perhaps, by our ignorance, the cause of truth may be served.

The order of treatment which we have marked out for ourselves, will be somewhat as follows:

- (1) The two Funds—their sources of income and present efficiency, in view of the demands now made upon them.
- (2) Their prospective income and efficiency, so far as can be inferred, for a period of, say, 15 or 20 years.
- (3) Principles which should, and principles which should not, underlie any scheme for Amalgamation of said Funds.

THE TWO FUNDS.

The Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund of the three Eastern Conferences was established in 1855, and has sources of income as follows: 1st. Interest on investments. 2d. Annual subscriptions (\$10) from each of the ministers in the actual work. 3d. Profits of the Book Room—no payments as yet. 5th. Special donations and Legacies which have always gone, we believe, to account of Capital Stock.

It has been through good management, a prosperous fund. It engages to pay each claimant, \$10.00 annually for every year he may have been a contributor to the Fund, which period must now extend over the active part of his ordained ministry and may also include his probation. Widows receive one-half this amount. Besides paying these claims in full, its endowment has been constantly accumulating until now it reaches the handsome sum of \$63,498.30. Last year its income was \$7,852.29, and its surplus \$1,473.64.

The Superannuated Ministers' Fund of the three Western Conferences was established in 1837, and remodelled in 1874, at the General Conference. (See Jour. Gen. Conf., p. 180 et seq.) As it now stands it is an amalgamation of the Superannuated Ministers' Fund of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Fund connected with the Superannuated Preachers' Annuity Society of the late M. N. C. Church. Endowment of the former at time of Union \$31,850.54; of the latter \$12,016.48—total \$43,873.02. This amount has increased until it stands at \$48,845.43. Its income is derived from the same sources as that of the Eastern one, except that it receives, justly or unjustly, we do not stop here to enquire—a large grant from the Missionary Society, amounting in three years to about \$17,000. It derived also last year \$1,000 from its Book Room, the capital of which should, perhaps, be included in estimate of capital stock. Total income last year \$30,920.71.

This Fund proposes to pay men who have travelled over 14 years, 12 dollars per year for every year of active service—those between 10 and 15 years, 12 dollars a year for five years. Those serving a shorter period are referred to committee. Widows receive four-fifths of the above amounts. The claims have been so large, however, that it was only able in 1875-7 to pay three fourths, and in 1876-7 two-thirds of what was due from it. This failure of the Western Fund, it must be remembered, however, is in part, only nominal, when compared with our own; arising, largely, from the very generous promises which it makes—promises more generous, indeed, than any such society can reasonably be expected to fulfil. And, as on the other hand, the ability or value of a Fund is not what it promises, but what it actually does, or can perform, we have, in order to make it right all round, reduced the scale of payments to the same standard, that of the Eastern Fund, unless otherwise noted. Reduced to this standard, the Western Fund last year, instead of paying only two-thirds would have paid nine-tenths.

It will be better, perhaps, for the purposes both of comparison and reference, to put the foregoing items and other facts connected with this part of the subject in tabular form, adding such explanations as may seem necessary.

	HART CON.	WEST CON.
Date of Organization	1855.	1837.
Amount of Capital Stock, not incl. B. R.	\$63,498.30	\$48,845.43
Whole No. Ministers stationed, incl. Sup.	267.00	902.00
Amount of Capital per man	247.00	54.15
Ministers' Subsep. (\$10) each	1,932.33	7,053.00
Subscriptions from Circuits	1,648.95	14,836.52
Average subs. per member	.061	15.44
Book Room	—	1,000.00
Grant from Miss. Board	—	4,750.00
Total income for last year	7,652.19	\$30,920.00
Sup's present yr. per Minute	28	104.00
Widows, say one-half	14	52
Av'ge minister's leg' of sup's yr	384 yrs	35 yrs
Average term of supernum'ys relationship*	71	8
Av'rage term of active service	31	27
Full claims for full service on basis of E. Fund for pres. yr.	10,850.00	35,100.00
Actual claims on basis of E. F. last year	6,178.85	34,430.00
Ability to pay in face of full claims†	7.05	8.81
Ability to pay in face of actual claims	12.40	8.98
Per centage of Sup'ys.	.09	.09

The points necessary for comparison are easily noted here. It will be seen that the back-bone of the Western Fund is its large circuit subscription, about 2½ times greater than ours. The most important item in our income is the interest from our noble endowment, nearly five times as large as theirs, per man and yielding more in the aggregate. The income from Mission Fund and Book Room we have nothing to offset.

* This is but an estimate, but it is based upon the report sent me by Mr. Douse. I find there, that in 1871 the average term of Supernumerary relationship was in their Conferences 7.59-65 years. This is not the full term of Supernumerary life, but simply the length of time they have been claimants upon the Fund. I have put 7-14 for ours, as, being older, the average would be less. I do not know what explanation could be given of the shorter term of active service in the Western work; but I find that in 1871 it was only 24-7-72 years. I wish the reader to note carefully the period of active service, as it is of great importance in future calculations.

† In this statement, I assume this year's income to be the same as last, with both Funds. Some of these calculations being tedious, I have not, perhaps, reviewed them as often as I should, but, I think, they will be found, in the main, correct.

BISHOP HAVEN recently alluded to the death of a friend of his in one of his letters to the newspapers. By some mistake the name of the deceased was changed, so that Rev. Mark Trafton, D. D., seemed to be the name actually involved. Dr. Trafton, who is a living man, and a living genius, could not allow the occasion to pass, but thus writes to *Zion's Herald*—

A LETTER FROM A DEAD MAN.

My old friend in the mundane, you are doubtless startled on the reception of a letter from a dead man; but be not alarmed! "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy." And for myself, I was not so much surprised at finding myself in this land of shadows, as at the manner of it. Most people have some little warning of the event, some premonition of its approach; but to me it came in an instant, giving me no time, even, to bid farewell to my family. I was there—I am here! I was reading the (always to me) racy sketches of my young friend, Bishop H., when I came upon the startling announcement of my demise, and at once, with no pain or spasmodic shock, I was in the region of shadows—a vast space, yet filled with diversified scenery of hill, and vale, and running brooks; groves of magnificent trees crowned with richest foliage, and vocal with mellifluous bird-notes. Crowds of shadows were moving about, not walking, but seemingly gliding. Some were gathered in groups, engaged in animated discussion; others moving along in profound thought; while others still were engaged in reading and meditation. But what struck me as most strange, was that none seemed to notice me, or to be aware of my presence. I had been quite used to being cut and slighted by animals in my former lower condition, but here, where petty jealousies and envious could not come, it was a puzzle. I soon came to what seemed a court, or a sort of office, where sat a venerable personage, with benignant aspect, and surrounded by shades, coming and going. I approached him, and making a low obeisance, asked to be directed to my "prepared place."

"Your name, young man?"
I gave it, he turned the pages of a huge folio, and appeared mystified, but at length said, "Your name is here all right, but your 'place' is not yet ready. The truth is, you are not dead!"
"Not dead?" I replied. "How can that be?"

"What led you, O mortal, to suppose yourself to be dead?"
"One of our Bishops announced it," I answered; "and not only so, but he has prepared and published an elaborate funeral oration over my remains."

He smiled, and replied, "There is some mistake here. Your Bishop is in error, and you should have waited the decision of higher authority."
"But," I replied, "I have been educated to rely upon Episcopal dicta, and into a belief of the truth and wisdom of their decisions; and therefore, as soon as the Bishop announced my appointment to 'Hades,' I stood not on the order of my going, but went at once."

He fairly laughed aloud at this declaration, and then said, "But you are not dead. Do you not observe that no one notices you here? The fact is, you are not yet disembodied; the bond between your spiritual and material body is not separated; and until that takes place you cannot become a resident here. And as to the fiat of what you call your Bishop (we know no titles here) he is but a man, and fallible. Why, there was an old fellow who has just arrived here from Rome, called a pope who, in the weakness of old age, imagined himself infallible. You see him yonder in that group, made up of his predecessors, and they have not yet got over their laughter at his folly. He seems to take it all in good part, simply saying that 'it answered his ends.' But I fail to see what motive moved your Bishop in your taking off. You were not in his way—not envy, eh?"

"Oh, not at all! He has reached the highest point of his ambition. We have no pope or cardinals in our Church."
"Could it have been personal animosity against you or your family?"
"Oh, not at all; he has been a tried and fast friend for many years, and especially of my family, expressing the warmest admiration of my unhappy relict, whom I have left behind."

I saw a sly twinkle in his eye as he

asked, "Is this bishop a married man?"
"No," I answered, "single."

"You must return, my young friend, to your sphere, and fulfil your course, and in due time you shall be released, and find your place."

"But I dare not return," I said, "without the consent of my chief minister, as it will be regarded as a case of malfeasance, and I shall be punished. I long since promised to go where I was sent. They will not give a dead man work, and I shall come to want. I prefer to remain here."

"Fear not," said he, "to return and put the case thus: 'That while you promised to go where you were sent, you did not bind yourself to stay. And as to punishment, let them beware how they oppress the laborer in that field, as all these matters are here righted, and many who there oppress the hireling in his wages, will be required to pass some cycles here in vain efforts to meet arrears. Do not be troubled that you are called a dead man. Such mistakes are often fallen into, in your world. Many are here before their time, because too indolent to live; while many others, whose time has expired, are too obstinate to die. This very man, who sent you here, I see by the record, was killed in Africa by malaria; but he is too willful to give it up, and toils on. Farewell! Watch the coming of the great ozonic wave that sweeps back and forth between the visible and the invisible! It is coming now. Leap upon its crest, and it will bear you home!'"

MARK TRAFTON.

Hades (no dates here.)

SCHULTE ON "THE POPE, THE KINGS AND THE PEOPLE."

MR. ARTHUR'S GREAT WORK.

Von Schulte, the most celebrated living canonist of the Continent, who, ever since he drafted the Concordat for Austria in 1854, has stood foremost among the ecclesiastical lawyers of Germany, but who, since, in 1860, he declared himself against Papal Infallibility, has become more known to our public, has just written in the literary journal of the University of Jena—*Jenaer Literatur Zeitung*—a review of "The Pope, the Kings and the People." Beginning with a statement of the authorities on which the work is founded, he describes its leading idea as being that of enabling all to see how the project of the Roman Curia was to establish a world-wide lordship of the Pope over reconstructed society, and how the Syllabus and the Vatican Council were at the entrance and the issue in the path leading to the goal. Then, giving a singularly full and exact analysis of the plan and of what he calls the "rich contents" of the work, he proceeds thus to describe its place among writings on the subject: "The book yields much more than its title says. It contains a *History of the Vatican Council*—a history which, as to the inner and outer features of the Council, leaves nothing more to wish for, so far as concerns the subjects falling within the scope of the work. The treatment is in the highest degree clear, calm and comprehensive; and of histories which have as yet appeared it is the one which pictures not only with the most insight, but is at the same time the most objective. We are glad that through the author England receives a work by which she is made so thoroughly acquainted with the bearings of the question. Having respect to the political and ecclesiastical position of those countries in which, and for which, the Curia either hopes or can hope to give effect to its newly-acquired omnipotence, the book presents to the English public, certainly but little acquainted with the subject, the correct view; and, going deep in, supplies the proofs which justify that view. We know not of any work which, drawing together its materials from the literature of four languages, handles its subject with equal accuracy, and in that respect we may declare it a model."

The review is signed Von Schulte.