

Reformed Church Gleanings

A Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of the New Holland Charge, New Holland, Lancaster County, Pa.

Vol. I.

NEW HOLLAND, PA., MARCH, 1908.

No. 6.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH.

By Frank R. Diffenderfer, Litt. D.

My recollections of St. Stephen's go back more than sixty-five years, only there was no St. Stephen's then, only Die Reformirte Kirche, by which name it was universally known. Connected by family ties with the congregation that has worshiped at the New Holland church since the church was built, and with its predecessor, Zeltenreich's Kirche, for four generations, I very naturally became an attendant on the church services from my earliest youth. In fact, I cannot recall a period of my childhood when I did not go to church there.

My earliest recollections go back to the period when the Rev. Daniel Hertz served the congregation as pastor. I remember him well, a tall, slender man with a resonant voice, easily heard throughout the audience room. For many years he was accustomed to stop at the house of my parents. He resided on the farm at the Bethany charge, and made his journeys on horseback. I think I can see him yet as he came riding up, his nether limbs carefully covered with warm, green felt leggings, in very cold weather or when the roads were muddy. Father Hertz was the compiler of a collection of German hymns, still to be found in German Reformed families.

In those early days the church had not been remodeled. The galleries still extended on the east, south and west sides, with the wineglass pulpit on the north. So long and so often did I see Father Hertz occupy that quaint perch affixed to the north wall, that as often as I pass within the portals of the modernized St. Stephen's my eyes involuntarily turn northward as if either Father Hertz or Father Schory was to be seen in his accustomed place in that quaint old pulpit.

How the Church Was Heated.

The church-goer of today cannot even by a stretch of the imagination conceive what going to church in that single roomed, high-ceilinged church meant. There was no steam heat, no warm air furnaces, but two large "cannon" stoves near the center of the audience room were supposed to keep the worshipers warm. They failed of their mission. How often did I sit in those straight, high-backed seats,

with a projecting molding over the top to cut into the shoulders or neck, until from very pain one was fain to sit as erect as a statue. The pew in which our family was accustomed to sit was toward the northwest corner of the church to the right of the pulpit. Some little heat must as a matter of course have reached the upper part of my body, but my feet were numb with cold. How was a young boy to derive benefit from sermons preached under such circumstances, even if he had been able to understand them?

How the Stoves Were Paid For.

But I am not yet done with the great cast iron stoves. I have lying before me a paper which perhaps no living member of St. Stephen's has ever seen. It is a sheet of foolscap paper with the following heading on the first page:

"A True Copy of a Subscription paper for the stoves in the Reformed Church in New Holland, kept by John Esterly, and Charges himself with the sums subscribed Except one Dollar Received by D. Diffenderfer."

Then follow the names of 140 persons with the amount of their subscriptions attached. The entire sum collected was \$90 29½ cents. The sums subscribed ran in amounts from ten dollars to 12½ cents. Here is the classification:

1 subscription of	\$10.00
2 subscriptions of	3.00
7 subscriptions of	2.00
5 subscriptions of	1.50
25 subscriptions of	1.00
1 subscription of75
39 subscriptions of50
55 subscriptions of25
1 subscription of17
3 subscriptions of12½

It is a satisfaction to me, even at this distant day, to know that one of my ancestors headed the list with a \$3.00 subscription, and that my family name occurs no fewer than seven times on the paper. The largest single amount was given by Jacob Stone, of whom I never heard. The wealthiest man in the congregation gave only three dollars. The stoves were purchased of George Mayer, of Lancaster, and with "sundries" cost \$39.65. It is also a satisfaction to me that the entire sum collected was receipted for by the trustees, inasmuch as the collector was my uncle. There was no graft connected with the transaction. One cannot help but wonder how

the large room was heated, or tried to be heated, prior to the purchase of these stoves. I do not remember even having heard and do not know. Doubtless it was by several of the large ten-plate wood stoves that were invented by Dr. Franklin and cast by the so-called Baron Heinrich Wilhelm Stiegel, long anterior to that period.

Father Daniel Hertz.

I have had the privilege and the pleasure of knowing all the pastors, personally, of St. Stephen's from Father Hertz's incumbency down to the present time. This is not the place to recall the circumstances that led to Father Hertz's resignation in 1844. Suffice it to say it was the same question that vexed so many Lutheran and Reformed congregations around that time—the effort to introduce more (and perhaps better) English preaching. At all events he resigned, but the congregation was divided; a portion was as anxious for him to remain as the other portion was anxious to have him leave.

Rev. P. D. Schory.

His successor, the Rev. P. D. Schory, I well remember. He was a young man, foreign born I believe, but well educated. He had not shaken off his German accent and the adherents of Father Hertz twitted the friends of Mr. Schory with being no improvement on his predecessor; but that was unjust, for his English, if it had a "burr," was at least grammatical. I remember a peculiarity that characterized Rev. Schory. He refused to disclose what names the initials P. D. affixed to his family name stood for. It was discovered in a roundabout way, but unwillingly by him. The oldest member of his congregation asked him one day, in the course of conversation. The pastor could not refuse to answer the question and his reply was overheard by another member of the family not far away. But his secret was preserved and to this day I do not know what his full name was. I saw the announcement of his death a few years ago in Ohio, where I believe he had long resided.

Pastor Helfenstein and Dr. T. C. Porter.

Pastor Schory's successor was the Rev. Albert Helfenstein, Jr., whom I also knew, although not so well. The German and English question was still unsettled, and Mr. Helfenstein

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Rev. John G. Noss, Editor.

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after a few years' service resigned his pastorate. Even before Mr. Helfenstein had taken up his labors an effort had been made to secure the services of Thomas C. Porter to preach English and teach a village High School. I mention Dr. Porter here, although he never accepted the place intended for him, because he became later one of the best friends I have ever known. I saw him for the first time on a sick bed at Marshall College, at Mercersburg. The acquaintance then formed remained unbroken until his death a few years ago at Easton. Dr. Porter was a highly cultured man. For years he was professor of natural science, first at Marshall College, then at Franklin and Marshall, and still later filled the same chair in Lafayette College, at Easton. He was a man of highly cultivated tastes. His diction was exceptionally pure. German was to him as his mother tongue and one of his favorite recreations was the translation of Heine's poems and the Odes of Horace. But he was greatest of all as a botanist. No man has lived who knew the botany of Lancaster county so well as he. He was even fonder of the fields and woods than of the class room, and he added a number of new plants to our local flora, undiscovered before. His labors in this field received recognition from the great botanists of both hemispheres.

Pastors Gast, Gerhard and Noss.

Of the more recent pastors, two, Dr. F. A. Gast and Rev. J. G. Noss, are still living, and it is not seemly that I should make more than a general allusion to them. With the former I have been on terms of unbroken intimacy and friendship for more than fifty years, and there is no man living with whom the writer spends a more agreeable hour, recalling boyhood memories and the weightier matters of the present time. Often and often did the writer take him out to preach at Heller's church, while he was serving the two congregations. The present pastor I have also known for some years, and am informed of the good work he has done and his strenuous endeavors to promote the interests of St. Stephen's.

With the late D. W. Gerhard my acquaintance began more than thirty-five years ago. I believe I knew him well. He was a hard worker in the

Master's vineyard, and his life was full of good and faithful labor. From his long occupancy of the offices of stated clerk of the Lancaster Classis and secretary of the Alumni Association of Franklin and Marshall College he was widely known throughout the Reformed Church. Able, industrious and faithful, he was recently called to his reward.

(To be continued in the April number)

CONGREGATIONAL ITEMS.

Zeltenreich.

A meeting of the Building Committee was called for Thursday, February 20, but unfortunately only Harry Diller, Charles S. Good and the pastor were present, less than a quorum, so that no business could be transacted. Those present adjourned to meet again at 2 P. M., February 27, when it is hoped all the members may be present. It is time to make arrangements for resumption of the work on the church, as the spring is not far off. The representative of a glass firm was present, and displayed some very attractive designs for the windows. All those who expect to put in memorial windows will please think over the matter, so that when they are called upon they may be ready to give their subscriptions. In all probability the committee will enter into a contract for the glass at its next meeting.

That was a cold, windy day for our union communion on February 2. Only a few, comparatively, of the members of Zeltenreich were present, and still fewer of the St. Paul, Vogansville. Our next communion will be on Easter Sunday, when St. Stephen's and Zeltenreich will again unite in the observance of this holy sacrament. After that Zeltenreich ought to be in condition to hold its communions in its own new house of God.

At a meeting of the spiritual council before the service on February 2, Mr. Andrew J. Bowers was received into full communion with Zeltenreich congregation by letter from the U. B. church, New Holland.

St. Stephen's.

In this issue of the *Gleanings* will be found a delightful communication from the pen of Mr. Frank R. Diffenderfer, Litt. D., of the *New Era*, Lancaster, a former member of this congregation. It is, without doubt, the most interesting feature that has so far appeared in the *Gleanings*, and its appearance alone justifies the publication of this parochial paper. This reminiscent communication will be especially appreciated by the older members of the congregation. It is to be hoped that Dr. Diffenderfer will give us some more of his recollections of the days of yore in New Holland in future issues of this paper. The second half of his paper will appear

in the April number of the *Gleanings*.

The Sunday School is still growing in numbers and interest. New faces appear almost every Sunday.

St. Paul.

At the service on the morning of February 9, the officers elected last fall were all present and were installed by the pastor. Elder, A. V. Walter, M. D.; Deacons, Charles E. Seldomridge and John M. Good. Mr. Good was ordained, having never before been chosen to this office.

Offerings for Foreign Missions.

The envelopes for special offerings for Foreign Missions have been distributed to those who have attended the services the last two Sundays. The contributions are coming in quite encouragingly. Among the rest two of ten dollars each have been given so far.

DEATHS.

Mrs. Susan Blair Mentzer, wife of Mr. Henry Mentzer, New Holland, died after a brief illness on January 28, aged 56 years, 5 months and 26 days. Mrs. Mentzer was baptized and confirmed August 6, 1905, by the pastor at her home, she being ill at the time. After she recovered from this illness she attended church as regularly as was possible and attended every communion that was held in St. Stephen's up to her death. She was retiring in disposition, gentle and kind, always looking well to her own household. A large circle of relatives and friends, as well as the bereaved husband and children, sadly feel her absence. The congregation has lost in her death a devoted and loyal member. May the Father of mercy and compassion comfort the bereaved household.

Annie Louisa Diller, daughter of Mr. Isaac Diller, died at her father's home in Intercourse, February 13, aged 40 years, 3 months and 11 days. She was the only daughter of her father and kept house for him since the death of her mother some years ago. She is survived, besides her father, by two brothers. She was ill since the first of the present year and after suffering much her release came. She was buried at Zeltenreich on Sunday, February 16. The services were held at the house and were largely attended by relatives and friends. May the bereaved father and brothers find their comfort in Him who doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

Names neither do nor can alter things, but ill things will in the issue certainly foul and disgrace the best names.—Robert South.

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Perhaps if we could penetrate Nature's secrets we should find that what we call weeds are more essential to the well being of the world than the most precious grain or fruit.—Hawthorne.

How many are unworthy of the light! And yet the day dawns.—Seneca.

That experience which does not make us better, makes us worse.

Christ alone, like His emblem, the light, passed through all things undefiled.—Horne.

To whosoever the holy dead are of no consequence, to him the living are so, too.—Richter.

There is no service like his that serves because he loves.—Sir Phillip Sidney.

CHURCH CALENDAR.

The services for March are as follows:

St. Stephen.

Sunday March 1st, 10:30 a. m. and 7 p. m.

Sunday March 8th., 7 p. m.

Sunday March 15th., 10:30 a. m. and 7 p. m.

Sunday March 22nd., 10:30 a. m.

Sunday March 29th., 10:30 a. m. and 7 p. m.

Sunday School at 9:15 a. m. and Catechism at 6 p. m. every Sunday.
Mid-week service at 7:30 p. m., each Wednesday.

St. Paul.

Sunday March 8th., 10 a. m.

Sunday March 22nd., 2 p. m.



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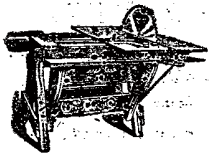
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