

after sixteen years of moulding and teaching. Mr. BEECHER has made it wholly possible and practicable with this one. It is not stretching metaphor too far to say that he is the father of his people, and his church their mother.

If the new church project is a curiosity, it is still but an inferior curiosity compared to the plan of raising the money for it. One could have told, with his eyes shut and one hand tied behind him, that it originated with a BEECHER—I was going to say with a lunatic, but the success of the plan robs me of the opportunity.

When it was decided to build a new church edifice, at a cost of not less than \$40,000 nor more than \$50,000, (for the membership is not 350 strong, and there are not six men in it who can strictly be called rich,) Mr. BEECHER gave to each member a printed circular, inclosed in an envelope, prepaid and addressed to himself, to be returned through the Post-office:

[Confidential.]
It is proposed to build a meeting-house and other rooms for the use of the church. To do this work honestly and well, it is proposed to spend one year in raising a part of the money in advance, and in getting plans and making contracts.

One year, plans and contracts.....April 1, 1871 to 1872
One year, build and cover in.....April 1, 1872 to 1873
One year, plaster finish and furnish April 1, 1873 to 1874
One year, pay for in full and dedicate April 1, 1874 to 1875

It is proposed to expend not less than \$20,000, nor more than \$50,000, according to the ability shown by the returns of these cards of confidential subscription. Any member of the church and congregation, or any friend of the church, is allowed and invited to subscribe. But no one is urged.

T. K. BEECHER, Pastor.
To help build our meeting-house I think I shall be able to give
Not less than \$.....and
Not more than \$.....
Each year for four years, beginning April 1, 1871.
Or I can make in one payment \$.....
Trusting in the Lord to help me, I hereby subscribe the same as noted above.

Name.....
Residence.....
The subscriptions were to be wholly voluntary and strictly confidential; no one was to know the amount of a man's subscription except himself and the minister; nobody was urged to give anything at all; all were simply invited to give whatever sum they felt was right and just, from ten cents upward, and no questions asked, no criticisms made, no revelations uttered. There was no possible chance for glory, for even though a man gave his whole fortune, nobody would ever know it. I do not know when anything has struck me as being so Utopian, so absurdly romantic, so ignorant, on its face, of human nature. And so anybody would have thought. Parties said Mr. BEECHER had "educated" his people, and that each would give as he privately felt able, and not bother about the glory. I believed human nature to be a more potent educator than any minister, and that the result would show it. But I was wrong. At the end of a month or two, some two-thirds of the circulars had wended back, one by one, to the pastor, silently and secretly, through the post-office, and then, without mentioning the name of any giver, or the amount of his gift, Mr. BEECHER announced from the pulpit that all the money needed was pledged—the certain amount being over \$45,000, and the possible amount over \$53,000! When the remainder of the circulars have come in, it is confidently expected and believed that they will add to these amounts a sum of not less than \$10,000. A great many subscriptions from children and working men consisted of cash inclosures, ranging from a ten-cent currency stamp up to five, ten, and fifteen dollars. As I said before, the plan of levying the building tax, and the success of the plan, are much more curious and surprising than the exceedingly curious edifice the money is to create.

The reason the moneys are to be paid in four annual instalments—for that is the plan—is partly to make the payments easy, but chiefly because the church is to be substantially built, and its several parts allowed time to settle and season, each in its turn. For instance, the superstructures will be allowed a good part of the first year to settle and compact themselves after completion; the walls the second year, and so forth and so on. There is to be no work done by contract, and no unseasoned wood used. The materials are to be sound and good, and honest, competent, conscientious workmen (BEECHER says there are such, the opinion of the world to the contrary notwithstanding,) hired at full wages, by the day, to put them together.

The above statements are all true and genuine, according to the oath I have already made thereto, and which I am now about to repeat before a notary, in legal form, with my hand upon the book. Consequently, we are going to have at least one sensible, but very, very curious church in America.

I am aware that I had no business to tell all these matters, but the reporter instinct was strong upon me, and I could not help it. And besides they were in everybody's mouth in Elmira, anyway.

BUFFALO, June, 1871.

A NEW BEECHER CHURCH.

BY MARK TWAIN.

If Rev. Mr. Smith, or Rev. Mr. Jones, or Rev. Mr. Brown, were about to build a new church edifice it would be projected on the same old pattern, and be like pretty much all the other churches in the country, and so I would naturally mention it as a new Presbyterian Church, or a new Methodist, or a new Baptist Church, and never think of calling it by the pastor's name; but when a Beecher projects a church, that edifice is necessarily going to be something entirely fresh and original. It is not going to be like any other church in the world; it is going to be as variegated, eccentric and marked with as peculiar and striking an individuality as a Beecher himself; it is going to have a deal more Beecher in it than any one narrow creed can fit in it without rattling, or any one arbitrary order or architecture can symmetrically enclose and cover. Consequently, to call it a Congregational Church would not give half an idea of the thing. There is only one word broad enough and deep enough to take in the whole affair and express it clearly, luminously and concisely—and that is *Beecher*. The projected edifice I am about to speak of is, therefore, properly named in my caption as a new "*Beecher Church*."

The projector is Rev. THOMAS K. BEECHER—brother of the other one, of course—I never know but one BEECHER that wasn't, and he was a nephew. The new church is to be built in Elmira, N. Y., where Mr. BEECHER has been preaching to one and the same congregation for the last sixteen years, and is thoroughly esteemed and beloved by his people. I have had opportunity to hear all about the new church, for I have lately been visiting in Elmira.

Now, when one has that disease which gives its possessor the title of "humorist," he must make oath to his statements, else the public will not believe him. Therefore, I make solemn oath that what I am going to tell about the new church is the strict truth.

The main building—for there are to be three, massed together in a large grassy square, ornamented with quite a forest of shade trees—will be the church proper. It will be lofty, in order to secure good air and ventilation. The auditorium will be circular—an amphitheatre, after the ordinary pattern of an opera-house, without galleries. It is to seat a thousand persons. On one side (or one end, if you choose,) will be an ample raised platform for the minister, the rear half of which will be occupied by the organ and the choir. Before the minister will be the circling amphitheatre of pews, the first thirty or forty on the level floor, and the next rising in graduated tiers to the walls. The seats on the level floor will be occupied by the aged and infirm, who can enter the church through a hall under the speaker's platform without climbing any stairs. The people occupying the raised tiers will enter by a dozen doors opening into the church from a lobby like an opera-house lobby, and descend the various aisles to their places. In case of fire or earthquakes, these numerous exits will be convenient and useful.

No space is to be wasted. Under the raised tiers of pews are to be stalls for horses and carriages, so that these may be sheltered from sun and rain. There will be twenty-four of these stalls, each stall to be entered by an arch of ornamental masonry—no doors to open or shut. Consequently the outside base of the church will have a formidable port-holed look, like a man-of-war. The stalls are to be so mailed with "deadeners," and so thoroughly plastered, that neither sound nor smell can ascend to the church and offend the worshippers. The horses will be in attendance at church but an hour or two at a time, of course, and can defile the stalls but little; an immediate cleansing after they leave is to set that all right again.

There is to be no steeple on the church—merely because no practical use can be made of it.

There is to be no bell, because any ignoramus knows what time church service begins without that exasperating nuisance. In explanation of this remark, I will state that at home I suffer in the vicinity and under the distracting clangor of thirteen church bells, all of whom (is that right?) clamor at once, and no two in accord. A large part of my most valuable time is taken up in devising cruel and unusual sufferings, and, in fancy, inflicting them on those bell-ringers, and having a good time.

The second building is to be less lofty than the church; is to be built right against the rear of it, and communicate with it by a door. It is to have two stories. On the first floor will be three distinct Sunday-school rooms—all large, but one considerably larger than the other two. The Sunday-school connected with Mr. BEECHER's church has always been a "graded" one, and each department singularly thorough in its grade of instruction; the pupil wins his advancement to the higher grades by hard-won proficiency, not by mere added years. The largest of the three compartments will be used as the main Sunday-school room, and for the week-day evening lecture.

The whole upper story of this large building will be well lighted and ventilated, and occupied wholly as a play-room for the children of the church, and it will stand open and welcome to them through all the week days. They can fill it with their playthings if they choose, and besides it will be furnished with dumb-bells, swings, rocking-horses, and all such matters as children delight in. The idea is to make a child look upon a church as only another home, and a sunny one, rather than as a dismal exile or a prison.

The third building will be less lofty than the second; it will adjoin the rear of the second, and communicate with it by a door or doors. It will consist of three stories. Like the other two buildings, it will cover considerable ground. On the first floor will be the "church parlors," where the usual social gatherings of modern congregations are held. On the same floor, and opening into the parlors, will be a reception-room, and also a circulating library—a free library—not simply free to the church membership, but to everybody, just as is the present library of Mr. BEECHER's church (and few libraries are more extensively and more diligently and gratefully used than this one). Also, on this floor, and communicating with the parlors, will be—tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askalon!—six bath-rooms!—hot and cold water—free tickets issued to any applicant among the unclean of the congregation! The idea is sound and sensible, for this reason: Many members of all congregations have no good bathing facilities, and are not able to pay for them at the barber-shops without feeling the expense; and yet a luxurious bath is a thing that all civilized beings greatly enjoy and derive healthful benefit from. The church buildings are to be heated by steam, and consequently the waste steam can be very judiciously utilized in the proposed bath-rooms. In speaking of this bath-room project, I have revealed a state secret—but I never could keep one of any kind, state or otherwise. Even the congregation were not to know of this matter; the building committee were to leave it unmentioned in their report; but I got hold of it—and from a member of that committee, too—and I had rather part with one of my hind legs than keep still about it. The bath-rooms are unquestionably to be built, and so why not tell it?

In the second story of this third building will be the permanent home of the "Church missionary," a lady who constantly looks after the poor and sick of the Church; also a set of lodging and living rooms for the janitors (or janitresses?) for they will be women. Mr. BEECHER holding that women are tidier and more efficient in such a position than men, and that they ought to dwell upon the premises and give them their undivided care; also, on this second floor are to be six rooms to do duty as a church infirmary for the sick and poor of the congregation, this Church having always supported and taken care of its own unfortunates, instead of leaving them to the public charity. In the infirmary will be kept one or two water-beds (for invalids whose pains will not allow them to lie on a loss yielding substance) and half a dozen reclining invalid-chairs on wheels. The water-beds and invalid-chairs at present belonging to the church are always in demand, and never out of service. Part of the appurtenances of the new church will be a horse and an easy vehicle, to be kept and driven by a janitor, and used wholly for giving the church's indigent invalids air and exercise. It is found that such an establishment is daily needed—so much so, indeed, as to almost amount to a church necessity.

The third story of this third building is to be occupied as the church kitchen, and it is sensibly placed aloft, so that the ascending noises and boarding-house smells shall go up and aggravate the birds instead of the saints—except such of the latter as are above the clouds, and they can easily keep out of the way of it, no doubt. Dumb-waiters will carry the food down to the church parlors instead of up. Why is it that nobody has thought of the simple wisdom of this arrangement before? Is it for a church to step forward and tell us how to get rid of kitchen smells and noises? If it be asked why the new church will need a kitchen, I remind the reader of the infirmary occupants, &c. They must eat; and, beside, social gatherings of members of this congregation meet at the church parlors as often as three and four evenings a week, and sew, drink tea, and g—g—. It commences with g, I think, but somehow I cannot think of the word. The new church parlors will be large, and it is intended that these social gatherings shall be promoted and encouraged, and that they shall take an added phase, viz.: When several families want to indulge in a little reunion, and have not room in their small houses at home, they can have it in the church parlors. You will notice in every feature of this new church one predominant idea and purpose always discernible—the banding together of the congregation as a family, and the making of the church a home. You see it in the play-room, the library, the parlors, the baths, the infirmary—it is everywhere. It is the great central, ruling idea. It is entirely consummate such a thing would be impossible with nearly any other congregation in the Union; but