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NUMBER 42

To the Memory

OF

EDWIN WILLITS

PRESIDENT

OF THE

Michigan Agricultural College
1885-1889.

Memorial Exercises held in the College
Chapel, Thursday Afternoon,
November 19, 1896.

A clean, strong, successful life is a precious legacy to posterity, and we cannot guard its proportions too jealously from the gnawing tooth of time, or seek too anxiously to transmit it unimpaired in fullness, beauty and truthfulness of form and lineament.

The Agricultural College has always taken an especial interest in the personality and pride in the career of the late Edwin Willits, and when the sudden announcement of his death came it was intuitively felt that we were only performing our official function toward the youth in our charge when we set apart a certain time for exercises in memory of him, and sought to put here in permanent form the loving tributes laid upon his bier.

The life work of Mr. Willits was wide and varied. He was a successful lawyer, an influential congressman, a resourceful and inspiring college president, and a statesmanlike cabinet officer. At his bier were gathered in common sorrow the student, the scientist, the man-of-affairs, the lawyer and the statesman. In our memorial exercises each of these classes found a fitting representative, and each presented the character as he saw it. It is a uniform testimony that they bear to the intense energy, the steady, cool, self-possession, the ready sympathy, the contagious hopefulness, the sturdy courage and the resourcefulness of the man they all loved.

We have given up our whole issue for this week to the reproduction of the papers read and the words spoken on this occasion. Thousands of Mr. Willits' friends will no doubt thank us for the unique memorial we offer, and all our readers will appreciate the feeling that prompts us. Republics are proverbially ungrateful to the memory of their great men. In our humble way we would desire to set a better example.

RESUME OF DATES IN DR. WILLITS' LIFE.

Dr. Willits was born in Otto, Cattaraugus Co., New York, on April 24, 1830. He came to Michigan with his parents in 1837. He was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1855, and for ten years thereafter he was editor of the Monroe Commercial. In 1856 he began the study of law, was admitted to the bar in 1858. In 1860

he became prosecuting attorney of his county. For twelve years from 1862 he was a member of the State Board of Education. From 1863 to 1866 he was postmaster of Monroe. He was a member of the constitutional commission of 1873, and from 1876 to 1880 was a member of congress. In 1883 he was made principal of the State Normal School at Ypsilanti, and he remained in that position until called in 1885 to the presidency of the Agricultural College of Michigan. In 1889 he was called from the College to the position of first assistant secretary of agriculture at Washington. In 1894 he was removed from this position by Secretary Morton, whereupon he opened a

of his eminent services for that institution.

It was expected that H. B. Cannon, '88, who was Mr. Willits' private secretary while the latter was assistant secretary of agriculture, would be present to speak of Mr. Willits from the students' standpoint, but a summons on the grand jury prevented, and his paper was read by Prof. Hedrick. President Snyder then read a letter from Ex-Governor Luce, after which he introduced the last speaker for the afternoon, Dr. Kedzie, who has been for many years an intimate friend of Mr. Willits.

Among the visitors present were Dr. Boone, principal of the Normal School;

came to the College as its president, and it was kept up by personal interview and by correspondence until the day of his death.

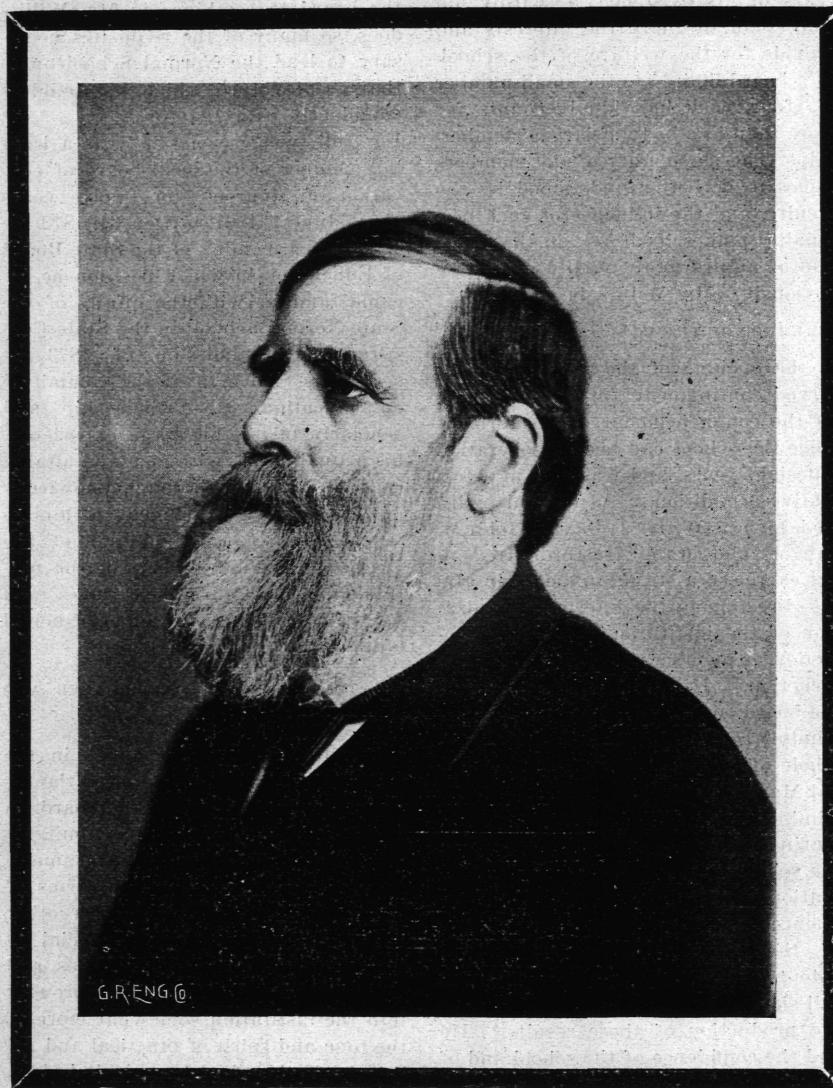
When Dr. Abbot, on account of failing health, desired to be relieved of the responsibility and burden of the presidency of the College, the Board of Agriculture seemed instinctively to look to Mr. Willits as his successor. The success of his administration of the affairs of the Normal School had been substantiated and known throughout the State, and his reputation as a successful, broad-minded educator had been well established. Col. McCreery, then a member of the Board, and myself were appointed a committee of the Board to interview him, and by appointment we met him at his home in Ypsilanti. At that time I became very much impressed with his personality. He at once entered into the spirit of the business in hand. I was delighted with his frankness and candor. Almost his first remark was, "Gentlemen, can I make the Agricultural College a great and useful institution, a power for good in the State? If I can't, I don't want to consider your offer for one moment. I am well situated at present. I believe I am doing some good, and unless you can invite me to a broader field, where I can do *more good*, I must not think of a change."

We spent the evening with him talking over the prospects of the College, presenting our side in the best light we could, and left him with the promise on his part to consider the matter favorably, and after consulting with Mrs. Willits, and giving the matter thorough thought, would see us again by appointment.

After much thought and thorough investigation, he came to the College as its president. He at once won the confidence and respect of the Board of Agriculture, the faculty and students. While he was a man of great ambition and untiring energy, his zeal was tempered with justice and discretion. He felt that much good might be done to a class of young men in the cities and towns if they could become interested in the mechanical lines connected with the College course, and he at once set about reaching this class, hence his great interest in the development of that department, which owes its present importance as a department of the College as much, more, perhaps, to him than to any other cause.

When called to the Department of Agriculture at Washington as assistant secretary, he left the College, but I am quite sure regretfully. On his receipt of the telegram asking him if he would accept the appointment, I received from him a telegram saying, "What shall I do?" He has never lost his interest, and in all our correspondence has expressed his love for the institution and manifested a great desire for its success.

Although he had passed the meridian of life, he was strong in body and mind, and to all appearances had a long and useful future before him, but he has gone, not lost, only gone on before to another and better country.



THE LATE EDWIN WILLITS.

law office in Washington. He died there Oct. 23, 1896.

EXERCISES IN THE COLLEGE CHAPEL.

Thursday afternoon College duties were suspended, and at the appointed hour the Board of Agriculture, faculty, students and visiting friends of the deceased assembled in the chapel to pay a last tribute to his memory.

President Snyder presided over the exercises, and, after an opening hymn and prayer by the Rev. Dr. Jordan, he introduced Hon. Franklin Wells, president of the Board of Agriculture, who made a very brief address on behalf of the Board. Governor Rich was unable to be present, and Prof. Babcock read his paper. This was followed by an address by Prof. Daniel Putnam, of the State Normal School, who spoke

F. E. Skeels, '78, of Grand Rapids Charles B. Collingwood, '85, Lansing and Jason E. Hammond, '86, Lansing.

Following are the addresses as given:

Address of President Wells.

We are assembled here today to pay our last tribute of affection and regard to the memory of a *good man*.

It was my good fortune to have known Edwin Willits for nearly a quarter of a century. I first became acquainted with him in the city of Lansing in 1873, at which time he was attending the Constitutional commission of that year. During the session of Congress of which he was a member, I met him occasionally, but our acquaintance became more intimate and close after he

Paper by Governor Rich.

It was my good fortune to know Hon. Edwin Willits well. Like many another man in this country he owed his success in life to his own exertions. While not born in Michigan he was practically a Michigan product, as he came here when only 6 years of age. He came of good stock, from the Empire state, to which Michigan is indebted for many a man whom she has delighted to honor, as well as being honored by them. Mr. Willits did what he attempted well. In all the positions of trust and honor which he was called upon to fill he acquitted himself with honor; and in all these positions his work was done in such a manner as to make his administration more than ordinarily conspicuous.

Personally, I did not know of his services as prosecuting attorney, or member of the state board of education, but all reports show that his services were conscientiously performed, with more than ordinary ability, and to the satisfaction of his constituents. The same may be truthfully said of his work as member of the constitutional commission of 1873.

In congress his services were of a high character. He was intelligent, industrious and painstaking in all he did. Ever faithful and diligent in performing the numerous errands and detail matters for his constituents, yet unlike many others he never considered these the principal duties of a member of congress. He studied hard and endeavored by every means in his power to ascertain what legislation and what general policy was best for the country, and having made up his mind, urged the adoption of such measures vigorously and intelligently, not only on the floor of the house, but in committee rooms, through the press, to which he was an occasional contributor, and in private conversations. He had a high ideal of what a politician should be, and would never stoop to anything he deemed dishonorable. While he was a dyed-in-the-wool republican, and believed fully in its great cardinal principles, yet, in some of his convictions he showed some of the characteristics of the other belief. His studious life and his conscientious defense of the constitution and laws of his state and country made him a strict constructionist to some of his colleagues who, from their standpoint, believed it better to be more practical and less technical. While he was a protectionist, he was conservative, and never took extreme positions on this question. He was firm and steadfast in his views and had the courage of his convictions, but was always tolerant of the opinions of others.

As president of the Normal School and Agricultural College I only know by the universal approbation which all those thrown in contact with him gave of his work in these positions, which require so much knowledge, skill, tact and good judgment to fill successfully and satisfactorily. He was called to the position of assistant secretary of agriculture by President Harrison because of the personal knowledge of the president of his true worth. Owing to the ill-health of Secretary Rusk, and the demands made upon his time by other duties, Mr. Willits was called upon to perform the duties of the secretary much of the time. So well were these duties performed that Secretary Morton was reluctant to dispense with his valuable services. The world is better for his having lived. He did much good while living, and his life is an inspiration to the young men who knew him either as a teacher or in per-

forming the various duties of his busy life, showing that industry, integrity and perseverance are the cardinal principles of life, in the exercise of which any position in life is possible.

Edwin Willits and the Normal School.

PROF. DANIEL PUTNAM, YPSILANTI.

The faculty of the State Normal School desire through me, as their representative, to unite in this public and appropriate recognition of the valuable and faithful services rendered to our State by the Hon. Edwin Willits. In the natural division of duties in these memorial exercises it properly falls to me to speak only of his relations to the Normal School and of his services in connection with that institution.

The school, as you know, is under the immediate control of the State Board of Education. In fact this Board was originally created mainly for the purpose of locating the institution and managing its affairs. Gradually its functions have been enlarged, but for several of the early years of its existence it hardly did more than to guard the interests and provide for the welfare of the school. In a board limited to the small number of four, each individual counts for more than in a body of larger membership. The personality of the members comes to be better understood by the faculty, and the influence of such personality makes itself felt in the direction of affairs more readily and more obviously. Mr. Willits became

A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

at the opening of the year 1861, and served continuously for twelve years. At the commencement of his term of office the school had been in operation but eight years, and was still in a formative condition. Associated with such men as Witter J. Baxter, John M. Gregory and Oramil Hosford, Mr. Willits exercised a strong influence in giving direction to the internal organization of the institution, and in the selection of members of the board of instruction. His period of service on the board covered the last years of the administration of Principal Welch, the whole of the administration of Principal Mayhew and the first years of the administration of Principal Estabrook. During these years the character of the school became established: its reputation steadily increased; and its influence upon the educational interests of the State grew more and more potent. Mr. Willits contributed his full share of energy and effort toward the production of these results. He had the confidence of the school and of the faculty, of the people and of the successive legislatures upon whose appropriations and good will the institution depended for its means of support and progress. The teachers, who remained for any length of time, in the school came to know him, not only as an official of the governing body, but also as a personal friend and a wise and valued adviser. Without exception they regretted that other duties compelled him to decline a third election and six years of additional service on the board.

After the severance of his official relations with the institution, and while a member of the national House of Representatives, he still retained and manifested a warm interest in its prosperity, and remembered it in the distribution of valuable public documents and in other substantial ways.

PRINCIPAL OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

At the close of his two terms of

service in Congress, and ten years after his retirement from the Board of Education, he was elected by that board to the principalship of the Normal School, and was inaugurated in June, 1883. The considerations which influenced the board in inviting Mr. Willits to take executive charge of the institution are thus stated in their report:

"In appointing to so important a position as the principalship of the Normal School one whose life work had been in other callings than the profession of teaching, one who had not through experience and study a systematic course of pedagogy behind him, the board were mindful that they were departing from the ordinary course of procedure; but they desired especially to emphasize that clause in the legislative action of this State, which, in instituting a Normal School for the preparation of teachers, required that the State Board of Education should also provide for the instruction of its pupils 'in the fundamental laws of the United States, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens.' With this in view, no one seemed to the board to combine, as Mr. Willits does, so many of the requisites necessary to lead the Normal School on to that great future which its founders confidently expected for it. * * * For full twenty years he was a leading member of the local board of education of Monroe; for twelve years (from June 1, 1861, to Dec. 31, 1872) he served as a member of the State Board of Education, in which position he became familiar with the affairs of the State Normal School; in the State Constitutional Commission of 1873 he served as chairman of the committee on education. His scholarship and scholarly tastes, his large experience, his acquaintance with men and affairs, coupled with his thorough knowledge of the subjects assigned to him to teach, justify, in the opinion of the Board, their going outside of the profession of teaching in selecting a man for the responsible position of principal of the State Normal School."

HIS TEACHING WAS FOR BROADER AND BETTER CITIZENSHIP.

In entering upon his duties in the school Mr. Willits kept in mind the department of labor which the board, in effect, had marked out for him. He gave instruction in civil government, in constitutional law, in the forms of congressional procedure, and in other subjects which touched upon social relations and upon the rights, duties, and obligations of citizens. He brought into the institution somewhat more of the tone and spirit of practical and political life than had been in it before. He emphasized the fact that the teacher is also a citizen, and, in common with his fellow citizens, should be concerned in the management of public affairs.—should be, in the highest and best sense of the word, a politician and a "man of affairs." There was some room and some occasion for teaching in this direction, for affirming that one does not forfeit his rights as a freeman and a citizen when he enters the school room as a teacher: that freedom of speech and freedom of political action still remain to him; and that with this freedom there remain also the responsibilities which rest upon men in other positions and in other employments. These responsibilities the teacher is not at liberty to refuse or to evade. His manhood is concerned in cheerfully assuming them and conscientiously discharging them.

While thus emphasizing the political and social aspect of education Mr.

Willits recognized fully the transcendent importance of the moral element in the curriculum and instruction of the school.

IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS HE SAID,

"The time is coming when we must choose between the policeman and the moral sense. In all ages the best policeman has been a well-regulated conscience—and this implies intelligence combined with moral sense. It is cheaper in the long run for men to govern themselves. In a republic, its citizens must govern themselves, must be their own restraint; if not, it ceases to be. How then is this self reliance, this self restraint, this well-regulated conscience to be secured? Manifestly the pathway to it lies through our education. And of what shall this education consist? An education that includes only intelligence may foster crime, may sharpen its tools. Lieber appreciated the distinction fully when he declared that, 'A widespread and sound education is indispensable to liberty. But it is not liberty itself, nor does it necessarily lend to it. * * * Education is almost like the alphabet it teaches. It depends upon what we use it for. Many despotic governments have found it their interest to promote popular education, and the schoolmaster alone can not establish or maintain liberty, although he will ever be acknowledged as an indispensable assistant in the cause of modern freedom. Liberty stands in need of character.'

"Let me," said Mr. Willits, "repeat it; liberty stands in need of character. Let us write on the walls of our school room, liberty stands in need of character. Let us write the words on the door-posts of our habitations. What we want is character; what we must have is character. And what is character? It is that something so subtle that laws cannot define it, nor constitutions evolve it. It exists above them both and behind them both. They exist themselves only because of character, and manhood, and right. It is this intangible something that stands by the side of the pulsations of our hearts, and construes all law, and obeys justice, and right, and truth: that is so sacred that in the end it will stand in the presence of Divinity, in his likeness.

"Now, how is this character to be developed? The education Lieber refers to includes only the intellect. The education we want must include the moral sentiments as well. * * * The generation now on the threshold, and the generations to follow, should be taught morality as affirmatively as arithmetic—not negatively, but affirmatively, that sin is sin; that drunkenness and lust, and profanity and lying, and theft and murder, are all wrong, and lead to a bad end; and that good order, respect for law, and temperance, frugality, honesty, purity, and reverence for the good and true, are all elements of a perfect manhood and womanhood."

I have quoted this language of the Board of Education to show as clearly as possible what was expected of Mr. Willits in his position at the head of the Normal School; I have quoted from his own words, when entering upon his duties, to show the spirit of the man, and his conception of the nature and quality of the education needed by the young men and young woman who go out to fashion the minds and inspire the hearts of the children of our State. He believed that the best preparation of the teacher for his work was intelligence permeated by moral principle. He did not undervalue the technical

utterances of the science of education or of the art of teaching, but he recognized the great truth that these, unless animated by a living soul, were of little worth.

The connection of Mr. Willits with the Normal School was too brief to allow him to establish any new policy for its management, or to seek to change, in any radical way, the character of its instruction or the curriculum of its studies. He labored honestly and earnestly to advance its interests, to enlarge its sphere of usefulness, to give greater efficiency to its work, and to give it a stronger hold upon the confidence and good will of the people of the State. In these directions his administration was eminently successful. The school prospered under his direction, increasing in numbers, in general character, and in the extent of its professional instruction.

He commanded the respect and confidence of his associates in the institution, and carried with him, when he resigned the principalship, their affection and kindly remembrances.

The faculty of the school and the students who knew him gladly unite in these services in his honor, testifying in this way to his nobility as a man, to his integrity and uprightness as a citizen and public officer, and to his worth and worthiness as an associate and as a friend.

President Willits from the Students' Standpoint.

H. B. CANNON, '88.

When Mr. Willits came to the Agricultural College the student body almost at once recognized in him a master hand in administration. There was an atmosphere of hope about him. He came with splendid plans to execute; his eminent attainments and honors captured our imaginations. We felt that the old college was at the dawn of a new era. The students were proud of their President, and felt sure that his influence with the great world outside would bring again to the doors a stream of students. Our hopes met with realization; more students, more departments of instruction and more buildings we saw as time went on.

To the students Mr. Willits stood as an example of a great man. He had made a name for himself and won reputation in the hard school of the statesman and law giver. He now essayed feats in executive lines. His judicial fairness and firmness brought him respect. His sympathy with the victims of disorder or his hatred for its perpetrators was such that he won our love. The venerable look of the man, his fatherly ways, his eagle's eye—all impressed us and moved us. We believed in President Willits; and I am sure he knew it, and that the thought did him good.

He had been a poor boy and his sympathy was quick to note the struggles of the poorest of us, and come to us in ways of helpfulness. He had made sacrifice for an education, so understood the meaning of a thirst for knowledge. He gave praise and counsel as he might. The President's "Well done, my lad," rang in one's ears for weeks, so hearty and stimulating was the tone of his voice. Not only did President Willits believe in the College and the students, but he trusted to the good sense of the people to support the College when it could be properly brought to their notice. The farmers' institutes afforded him a chance where his skill as a speaker

might do great good. The result was that he captured audience after audience to the great satisfaction of his student admirers who believed so heartily in his prowess and wisdom.

Through all the four eventful years there was not an hour in which the good man felt quite at peace. While College was in session there was always danger that the restless spirits might give trouble and then the "Institute" season or the Legislative session with its burden of care followed. "I never slept without fearing that something might go wrong," he once told me. And many a night when we were sound asleep our noble President was pacing the campus, keeping watch and ward.

We knew him as a man of method. He tried to encourage order and cleanliness in every way. I recall his house-cleaning day plans, and his dust bin arrangements as examples. He knew, too, that clean walls and fresh paint inspired respect, and how tidiness in person made for order. "You never heard of a mob in good clothes," was a saying I recall.

He had no need to run a card catalogue of his friends; he could remember them whenever he might help them; and they do not forget him now.

"Whether one met him but for the day, or came to know him intimately he could not fail to be impressed by his friendliness and power," testifies one of the Detroit alumni.

HE REMEMBERED HIS M. A. C. BOYS.

When he was called to be Assistant Secretary of Agriculture we found that he could remember his M. A. C. boys and that in his new post of honor and influence he could add to the reputation of our College. As an officer he was careful, courteous, patient; yet the same largeness of plan marked his work as had been the case at M. A. C. For this view he often gave Professor Bailey the credit (doubtless also shared by others of the new school of scientists), The thought of the relation between the created thing and its environment seemed ever with him. He hoped to see a competent man monograph the cereal and textile exhibits which were collected for the World's Fair by the government. This work of making an exhibit which should illustrate the function of the Department of Agriculture, was placed in his charge. He also was named as chairman of the Government Board, and a great deal of his energy and thought did he put to this task. He held the plow to mark the site where the Government building should stand, and that established the Jackson park site. No one not familiar with it can judge of the work required at his hand before the task of preparing, installing, exhibiting and taking down again of that Government Exhibit was over. There were various inharmonious elements to keep within bounds, to hasten the necessary labor.

The work done at the Department proper, while more in the nature of routine business, had a breadth of scope and called for its proper management so large an amount of knowledge that the ordinary run of public men, congressmen and others, would have felt uncomfortable in the place for months, had Pres. Harrison been careless in the calling of a man to the post.

In the administration of his office Mr. Willits won confidence and love. "His leading trait is sympathy" one officer said to me, and perhaps that was a correct statement. "But," he added, "confound it, he will sympathize with both sides. He won't take

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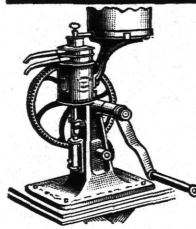
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NOTES FROM W. A. TAYLOR.

In response to request, Mr. W. A. Taylor, '88, now Assistant Pomologist in the Department of Agriculture, sends me some notes. I am very glad to give them. They cover certain periods much more accurately than I can do; and none could speak more lovingly.

"The incident," says Mr. Taylor, "which doubtless is most clearly remembered by the students then in attendance, was the occasion of Mr. Willits' first appearance at the College in the capacity of president. The student body was in a quiver over the mistreatment of one by others, at the time unknown; wild rumors of intended severe and sweeping punishment of suspected students were in circulation and many were of the opinion that affairs had reached a stage where it was useless for young men in search of education to longer remain at the institution where quiet and continuous work was out of the question. The crisis was upon us—would the man be equal to it? It was a crucial test of the new president, but the outcome of it was a most complete and prompt restoration of the confidence of the students in the wisdom and intent of the faculty. The first chapel exercise settled the whole question whether there would be co-operation or rebellion and though proper regard for the future caused the suspension or expulsion of several students, even their warmest friends acquiesced in and admitted the justice of the action taken.

"I have not known another man of such strong views as his who was at heart so tender and merciful. The culprit sentenced by him recognized this and rarely resented the punishment which justice made necessary.

"This was, I think, the chief secret of his personal hold upon students and alumni. He felt strongly and admired strongly marked personality. In his own words in the address before the College Y. M. C. A. in 1886, on 'Affirmative Religious Principles,' which, by the way, is worthy of preservation by every M. A. C. student, 'I have no sympathy with a negative. I do not like negative men or women. The world may make something out of a rascal, but out of a fool, never.' And yet I doubt if ever a weakling found a more sympathetic or more helpful friend than he.

"He never permitted the larger affairs of College management to blot out the remembrance of small things, which were essential to the welfare of students, and often risked his health and encroached upon his stock of reserve force in order that he might give his personal attention to little matters which most of us thought at the time unimportant, but which we have since then come to realize the necessity of. If a student was ill at the College, Mr. Willits seemed to charge himself personally with the responsibility for his proper care and attendance, and if, as sometimes happened, death entered the student family, no more sincere mourner followed the bier than he.

"One of the most vivid pictures of him in my own mind is connected with the death of Gilbert in '88, when at midnight with the aid of two or three whom he had notified, he carried the body of the dead boy down from the top floor of Wells Hall [to Taylor's room], and after preparing it for burial watched with the rest till day dawned. It was not more than any one of us would do for his comrade, but how

many of us, bearing the heavy responsibility of head of such an institution, would be found at hand in such an emergency!

"It has always seemed to me that it was this thoughtfulness for others that gave him such a strong hold upon the affections of his students. It did not cease when the student left College, as many of our fellow alumni can testify. Nor was it confined to his students, for among his associates during his last years, in church, business and political as well as in the many and varied educational and scientific organizations with which he was connected, the same grief is felt at his death.

"He was a man whom his students could respect without fearing, and whom they loved for his own sake. The thought that we shall not look into those kindly eyes again nor feel the hand clasp of our friend brings up so many recollections of his merit and goodness that the pen fails to keep pace with memory."

I recall one sentence from a sermon of his, "Tell me what a young man does with his leisure and I will tell you whether the blazes along his life's pathway lead to the pestilential swamp or the mountain height." This is a characteristic statement; yet I think the lines apply to him—

"His life was gentle; and the elements So mixed in him that nature might Stand up and say, This was a man."

Edwin Willits by the grace of God was a Christian gentleman. His memory is sweet. Remembering the beauty and goodness and blessing of his life, who may not with reverence exclaim of it, "What God hath wrought."

Letter from Cyrus G. Luce.

I am in receipt of your invitation to attend the exercises to be held at the College in memory of Hon. Edwin Willits on the 19th inst. It would afford me a melancholy pleasure to join with others who knew the worth of our departed friend in doing honor to his memory.

Some men do well in some one line of life's work. Mr. Willits did well in all lines. He was a success as an attorney. As a member of Congress he won high rank. At the Normal School his memory is treasured for his many excellencies. At the Agricultural College he won high renown. But the best work of his life was performed in the department at Washington. He brought to a discharge of his duties all of his powers of body and mind. He walked here in untrodden paths. He was the strong man who upheld the arms of the secretary.

Largely through his diligence, skill and ability the new department was made a success. Mr. Willits was not only a great man, but in all the relations of life he was a good man. He was, in the broadest and best sense, a Christian.

He is gone, but his friends can well rejoice that his many good works will live after him.

Personal Recollections of Edwin Willits.

DR. R. C. KEDZIE.

My acquaintance with Edwin Willits began by letter in the latter part of the sixties. He was then prosecuting attorney for Monroe county, and as such it was his duty, among others, to prosecute for violations of the law in regard to the sale of adulterated liquors. He asked for my opinion in regard to the nature of the adulterants used, saying that some persons

supposed that many poisonous materials were used in making these liquors, such as arsenic, strychnine, prussic acid, etc., and wanted to know if there was good foundation for such opinion. I replied that I had never found these poisons in liquors and doubted about their presence; that there were several kinds of alcohols, differing in their effects on the human body, that the alcohols were the injurious materials, and when these were removed, the poisonous materials remaining would be insignificant in quantity and power to injure.

I made his personal acquaintance in 1873 when he was a member of the Commission of 18 appointed by Gov. Bagley to revise the state constitution, said revision to be submitted to the next legislature for their approval, to be submitted by them to the vote of the people for ratification or rejection. In this commission Mr. Willits was made chairman of the committee on education. He had been so long time a member of the Board of Education that it was eminently fit and proper that he should take the leadership in the important matters of education in this state. This was the first committee to report on amendments to the constitution, and its report was adopted, constituting Section XIII of the proposed constitution.

During all the deliberations of the commission the people were pleased with the broad and statesman-like views of this body of eminent men, and especially delighted with the liberal views of the committee on education, providing for all the educational interests of the state.

The revision of the state constitution by this commission was excellent in principle and form, but when it fell into the hands of the next legislature it was torn to pieces, and when its mangled remains were submitted to the people, they mercifully buried them out of sight by an overwhelming adverse vote.

ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THIS COLLEGE.

In January, 1885, he was elected President of the Agricultural College, but as he was then Principal of the State Normal School, he did not enter upon his duties till the following July. In the preceding November President Abbot had tendered his resignation to the Board on account of broken health, but continued to discharge the duties of President till his successor should arrive.

During the interregnum between the outgoing and incoming President, such irregularities of conduct on the part of students had crept in as would not have been tolerated when President Abbot was in his prime. It was a gloomy hour: Secretary Baird was on his death-bed, and the members of the faculty did not "see eye to eye" on questions of discipline, and there was much disorder among the students.

When President Willits arrived on the grounds he placed the hand of a master upon the disorderly elements, expelled some, suspended others, and made it distinctly known that law and order would rule at the College. From that day College discipline took on a healthier tone, like the bracing air that follows a thunder storm. The boys had found a master, and they respected him accordingly. No similar period of disorder has since afflicted the College.

HIS WORK AT THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

President Abbot has been appropriately called the formative President of the Agricultural College. Under his hand the Agricultural School be-

came the Agricultural College, and the agricultural course received its enduring features under his administration. In like manner it must be said that PRESIDENT WILLITS ORGANIZED AND PUT INTO ACTIVE WORK THE EXPERIMENT STATION; AND THAT HE WAS THE CREATOR OF THE MECHANICAL COURSE IN THIS COLLEGE.

THE EXPERIMENT STATION.

The Hatch bill providing for Agricultural Experiment Stations in connection with the Agricultural Colleges in the several states was passed in the early part of 1887. A meeting of representatives of the Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations was held in Washington in August of that year to determine upon the scope of the Experiment Stations, and their relations to the Agricultural Colleges. In this convention there was a powerful clique that strove to give the Experiment Station such a trend as would divorce it entirely from the College. They maintained that the Experiment Station must have no connection with the College—separate buildings, apparatus and experimental farms; that no professor giving instruction in the College should have anything to do with the Station. They strongly intimated that the Director of the Station was the important person and about the only one of much importance; and the remuneration for his great abilities and continuous service through the year must be borne in mind in fixing his salary.

A committee of nine was appointed to formulate plans, largely made up of persons who held these extreme views of the supreme importance of the Director. President Willits was the minority in this committee. When the greatness and dignity of the Director were urged in the committee, President Willits raised this query: "There are 39 Experiment Stations: where will you find 39 men of such worth and experience as will properly command a salary of \$5,000 a year?" One of the committee glanced around the room and smilingly answered, "I think there are nine such men in this room."

The committee reported their plan for the entire separation of College and Experiment Station, and the members urged on the floor of the convention the impropriety of any person holding office both in College and Station—that no man could serve two masters, etc. Dr. D., of Tennessee, was eloquent in urging this plea. President Willits exposed his hollowness by asking, "Dr. D., who is Director of your Experiment Station?" "I am, sir." "Who is President of your Agricultural College?" "I am." "Which do you propose to be, Director or President? Which?" Dr. D. wilted, but did not reply! So far as I can learn he is still Director and President, also Assistant Secretary of Agriculture—a trinity of offices not often seen in this wicked world.

President Willits argued that the Experiment Station was the corollary of the College—that the two were parts of a whole in the educational system of the state; that the theoretical instruction in the class room should be carried into the laboratory, the farm and the garden, there to be verified or refuted, and the results then given to the public in the bulletins of the Station. So clearly did he present this logical connection of the College and the Experiment Station that the convention rejected the plan of the committee by a decisive vote, and adopted the plan of co-operative work carried out in this College and in most of the Agricultural Colleges of this country.

As evidence of the favor with which Michigan regards this combined work of College and Station I simply call attention to the fact that the yearly issue of 12 bulletins of 20,000 each scarcely supplies the popular demand. There is no part of the work of the College that brings it so completely in touch with the people of the state as the investigations and bulletins of the Experiment Station. In starting this work and giving it the right direction, President Willits did much for the state and the whole country.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MECHANIC ARTS.

This institution was originally established as the Agricultural School, and for many years the trend of instruction was entirely in the line of agriculture in its broad sense. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided a fund "for the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts." When President Willits took charge of the College he announced that it was time that the mechanic arts should come to the front on a par with agriculture. His aim was to add the mechanical course to the College curriculum without impairing the efficiency or lowering the attendance of the agricultural course. The results justified his assumption, for there was an increased attendance in the agricultural course at the same time with the influx of a large number in the mechanical course. The average attendance for five years in the agricultural course before this change was 193; the average attendance on the same course for five years after the mechanical course was introduced was 227, an average gain of 34 for this course, while the attendance on the mechanical course reached an average of 120 when it reached all the College classes. The average total attendance by five year periods passed from 193 to 328. This shows an advance all along the line, and not the crippling of one course to build up a rival.

President Willits took hold of this work of building up the department of mechanic arts with energy. He visited the shops in Detroit and other manufacturing cities to place before this constituency the advantages of the course of scientific and practical training at the College and inviting the shop boys to secure the advantages here offered. There was soon a large influx of students; the College halls were soon filled to overflowing, and his own house—"the castle on the hill"—was crowded with enthusiastic students. This was no sudden boom, to flare up in sudden blaze and go out in more painful darkness, but the impetus then imparted to the College has continued to this day. It is not too strong language to say that he made the new course and planted it upon an enduring basis, yet strengthened and enlarged the old course. He did not build up by tearing down.

PERSONAL CHARACTER.

The personal character and influence of President Willits were strong elements in his success. He knew every student, could call them by name and recognize them wherever found. He visited them in their rooms, knew their history, and recognized their individual peculiarities, difficulties and temptations. By a wonderful intuition he seemed to enter into the life of every student, and his care over them was almost sleepless. He once told me that he never retired for the night without first going the rounds of the halls to

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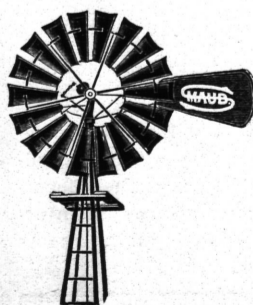
One element of his success was his religious character. Edwin Willits was a whole-hearted christian. A staunch Presbyterian, he let his light shine before men. During his presidency there was no line of street cars from the College to Lansing by which students could attend divine service in the city churches. For many of the students the morning hours of Sunday were aimless and idle. To remedy this he instituted a series of Bible talks for 9 o'clock Sunday morning, which were such a treat, intellectually and morally, that the chapel was soon crowded with delighted listeners. The Sunday afternoon services by the clergymen of Lansing were continued, not because 2:30 p. m. was an ideal hour for worship, but because the ministers of Lansing could not be secured for other hours. Attendance was not compulsory, yet the chapel was well filled; the Sunday school and Bible classes were well attended and the moral and religious atmosphere at the College was healthy.

In recalling the history of those who have been pillars in the College edifice but who have passed away, one is painfully reminded of the evanescence of human life.

"One by one the roses fall."

One by one the oaks come down. President Williams, Secretary Howard, Judge Wells, Secretary Baird, President Abbott, President Willits. How fast they pass away. Yet June returns with its roses, and though the oak must fall the forest lives on. So the College. Though the great leaders pass beyond, the College remains—a beneficence for the present and a hope for all coming time.

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For various reasons THE M. A. C. RECORD is occasionally sent to those who have not subscribed for the paper. Such persons need have no hesitation about taking the paper from the postoffice, for no charge will be made for it. The only way, however, to secure the RECORD regularly is to subscribe.

Beal's Grasses of North America.

The second volume of this important work is now before us. It is ten years since the first volume appeared, and during these years the author has been busy at intervals from his college duties in preparing the material for this second and larger volume. Volume one was prepared especially for "farmers and students," and contains chapters on the botany of the grasses, management of grass lands, and the more important grasses and clovers of cultivation. Volume second is a work of reference for the student and specialist, and contains, with the exception of a few of the Mexican species, a description of every known native and introduced grass of North America, with an illustration of one species in each genus. There are described in this volume over eight hundred native grasses and over one hundred species introduced from other parts of the world.

The first volume of this book has now been for some time the standard work on grasses of this country, and is in use in all of our leading Agricultural Colleges and stations and by many seed firms and progressive farmers in all parts of the United States. It has called forth numerous words of praise from scientific and practical men and has done much to familiarize the people with the appearance and character of our cultivated grasses.

At the time of its publication the following, among other notices, appeared: "There is nothing half so good of the kind in the English language. You have taken room to cover the ground thoroughly and well."—Prof. F. L. Scribner, of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"I cannot express to you how glad I am to see this book which fills such a want in our literature. I shall recommend it whenever I can to our young farmers and others. No one else in America could have given us a book on grasses equal to this by Prof. Beal."—W. A. Henry, Prof. of Agriculture, Wisconsin University.

"Two books have appeared within a few days of each other, and are by far the most noteworthy contributions to agricultural literature that have been made of late years. One of these is 'Grasses of North America,' by Dr. W. J. Beal."—Dr. H. P. Armsby.

This work was chosen by the authorities of the World's Fair as one of their select list of representative books of the time. The first edition of this volume is nearly exhausted, and a new and revised edition is now in press

and will shortly appear. The two volumes together will form a complete, practical and scientific account of our American grasses, and should, if possible, be in every educated farmer's library. Both volumes are published by Henry Holt & Co., New York, and may be purchased together or separately. Retail price of volume I, \$2.50; of volume II, \$4.00.

Minutes of the Board Meeting,

HELD AT THE COLLEGE, WEDNESDAY,
NOV. 18, 1896.

The resignation of G. C. Davis, Entomologist, was presented, to take effect Dec. 8, 1896. The resignation was accepted.

The Field Agent of the College was authorized to advertise the special courses in his discretion.

H. W. Mumford was made Assistant Professor of Agriculture, with the salary attached to that position.

The Secretary and Prof. Weil were authorized to purchase a dynamo in their discretion.

The purchase of a valve tester was authorized for the Mechanical Department.

The President and Secretary were authorized to make repairs and changes in the dairy room of the agricultural laboratory in their discretion.

A request of the State Dairy Association for co-operative institute work was referred to the committee on institutes.

Mr. F. E. Skeels, the agent of the Board for the examination of College lands, made a report of work done to the present time. He finds a large quantity of good timbered lands still on hand, but reports considerable trespass by timber thieves.

Mr. Garfield presented the following relating to the death of ex-President Willits:

"The following statement in memory of ex-President Willits was unanimously adopted as the sense of the Board, ordered spread on the minutes of this meeting, and the secretary instructed to send an engrossed copy to Mrs. Willits:

"The sudden death of Dr. Edwin Willits, for four years president of this College, takes away from earth a strong and able man whose impress upon the College will always be recognized as of great importance in developing broadly the purposes outlined in its organic law, and in building thoroughly the foundation upon which will rest a system of education that promises to be of untold value in the evolution of our State. In his intercourse with this Board and his relation to the educational force and student body of the College, his leadership was acknowledged to be wise and far-seeing. His kindly spirit and warm sympathies touched the heart of all with whom he was associated, and his honesty of purpose, earnestness of manner and thoroughly Christian life, awakened in all who knew him admiration, respect, and affection. It will be a source of pride and satisfaction to the Agricultural College of Michigan to keep fresh the memory of the life of Edwin Willits expended in behalf of the institution as its honored president."

At the College.

Our eleven will play foot ball at Kalamazoo on Thanksgiving day.

Miss Amy Vaughn, '97, received a visit from her father last Tuesday.

Prof. Barrows' mother, of Reading, Mass., has been visiting him for a week.

R. W. Clark and A. E. Wallace, of the class of '99m, have been ill for several days.

Mrs. Ray Ellis, of Flushing, and Mrs. E. D. Allen, of North Lansing, visited the College Wednesday.

D. L. Arney, of Sturgis, spent Saturday and Sunday, November 14-15, with his son, W. H. Arney, '00.

Lost: In the vicinity of College Hall, a gold breast pin. Finder please leave the same at the President's office.

In order to give a complete report of memorial exercises we have crowded nearly everything else out this week.

The Y. W. C. A. and Y. M. C. A. are preparing one of W. D. Howell's farces to be given Friday evening, December 11.

The Y. W. C. A. and Y. M. C. A. will hold a prayer meeting in the rooms of the latter association on Thanksgiving morning at 8 o'clock.

The King's Daughters will meet with Mrs. Gunson, Wednesday, December 2. Lesson, the first chapter of James; text, "Temptation;" leader, Miss Julia M. Baldwin.

Friday the various boarding clubs elected stewards as follows: Club A, I. L. Simmons; club B, D. McElroy; club D, J. W. Rigterink; club E, H. L. Becker.

Prof. L. P. Breckenridge, formerly professor of mechanical engineering here, but now of the University of Illinois, spent Saturday and Sunday at M. A. C.

Messrs. and Mesdames Barrows and Weil have issued invitations for an "at home" at the residence of the latter, this evening, from half after seven to eleven o'clock.

Prof. P. B. Woodworth was one of a committee of three experts selected by the city council of Grand Ledge to test their new municipal electric light plant and waterworks.

B. A. Bowditch, with '96, and C. F. Herrmann, '97, will attend the national convention of Phi Delta Theta fraternities in Philadelphia, November 24-25-26, as delegates from the M. A. C. chapter.

There was a good attendance at the conference of institute workers last Friday afternoon and evening, most of the regular institute workers employed by the College being present. A full report of the meeting will appear in the next issue of the RECORD.

Prof. B. E. Fernow, chief of the forestry division of the department of agriculture at Washington, visited the College on Monday of last week for the purpose of seeing the work being done here in forestry, and to make arrangements for certain co-operative experiments.

She had a lovely neck,
And everybody said,
Who, indeed, might doubt?
That that's what turned her head.

—Ex.

Circus man (hunting for a stray elephant—"Have you seen a strange animal around here?" Irishman—"Begorra, Oi have that; there was an injur-rubber bull around here pullin' carrots wid his tail."—Ex.

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born in September, 1896, out of College Rosa Bonheur, a daughter of Rosa Bonheur Fifth with a record of 106 lbs. of milk in a day. College Rosa gave 50 lbs. of milk a day for seven consecutive days in October, containing nearly twelve pounds of butter. The sire of the calf was Maurice Clothide, for several years at the head of the Holstein herd at the College. This calf will develop into a bull fit to head any Holstein herd in the country.

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News from Graduates and Students.

George Davis, '92, of Tekonsha, visited at M. A. C. last Tuesday. He is still farming.

It is reported that Walter J. Good-enough, '95m, is working in a draughting office in Chicago.

We see by the *U. of M. Daily* that D. F. Pagelsen, '97, plays right end on the class team of the '98 laws.

C. H. Briggs, Ann Arbor, and J. T. Berry, Cass City, both of '96, will spend Thanksgiving at M. A. C.

A letter from Prof. U. P. Hedrick, '93, Corvallis, Oregon, says that D. W. Trine, '92, is very ill with peritonitis.

C. B. Charles, '79, Bangor, is one of our institute workers who was in attendance at the conference of institute workers last Friday.

W. P. Hawley, 92m, is employed as mechanical draughtsman by the Cox Typesetting Machine Co., Chicago. Address 1015 Park avenue, Chicago.

A neat circular has been received announcing the opening of an industrial school for the colored race at Huntsville, Ala. Arthur F. Hughes, '96, is one of the instructors.

In addition to his regular day work in the Lewis Institute, Chicago, Prof. P. M. Chamberlain, '88m, has been given full charge of the night school which is carried on in connection with that school.

H. Arnold White, '92, Decatur, Ill., in a letter to President Snyder, pays high tribute to the memory of Dr. Willits. We quote a portion of the letter: "Edwin Willits was the inspiration and uplift of hundreds of M. A. C. boys. Wherever he was known and during the years it was his fortune to preside over the affairs of M. A. C. he was always respected, his counsel followed, his example emulated. For the cause of education, higher plane of living, he always exerted a most powerful influence, and with the boys of my class and those who associated with him during the years of able administration of the affairs of office as our president, I know a deep sense of public and personal loss must be felt. His taking away is a bereavement to all who knew him. Personally he was a friend I shall never forget, as was his successor, President Clute. President Willits always had a word of encouragement for the struggling student and was the warm friend of all the boys, and was always ready to assist by word or deed every aspiring boy who came to him. I am sure we will all grieve over this sad event, and through life each one of the students who came in contact with him as an executive officer or as a teacher, will feel the ennobling influence of this good man's life."

Financial Report of the Union Literary Meeting of Societies and Fraternities.

RECEIPTS FROM SOCIETIES.	
Columbian Literary	\$0 75
Delta Tau Delta	20
Feronian	1.31
Feronian	68
Hesperian	1.17
Olympic	1.00
Phi Delta Theta	32
Union Literary	1.34
	\$6.77

EXPENDITURES.	
Thompson & Van Buren, printing programs	\$2.00
L. A. Baker, rent of piano	4.50
Cash on hand	27
	\$6.77

C. F. HERRMANN, Treasurer.

Official Directory.

Sunday Chapel Service—Preaching at 2:30 p. m.

Y. M. C. A.—Holds regular meetings every Thursday evening at 6:30 and Sunday evenings at 7:30. S. H. Fulton, President. C. W. Loomis, Cor. Secretary.

Y. W. C. A. regular weekly meetings for all ladies on the campus Tuesday evenings at 8 o'clock, in the ladies' parlors. Meetings on Sunday evenings with the Y. M. C. A.; Miss Edith F. McDermott, President; Miss Alice Georgia, Cor. Secretary.

M. A. C. Grange—Meets every three weeks on Tuesday evening in the Columbian Society rooms. Prof. C. D. Smith, Master. H. W. Hart, Secretary.

Natural History Society—Regular meeting second Friday evening of each month in the chapel at 7:00. H. C. Skeels, President. W. R. Kedzie, Secretary.

Botanical Club—Meets first and third Friday of each month in the Botanical Laboratory at 6:30. T. Gunson, President. W. R. Kedzie, Secretary.

Dante Club—Meets every Wednesday evening at 7:30 in Prof. W. O. Hedrick's office, College Hall. Prof. A. B. Noble, President.

M. A. C. Athletic Association—C. B. Laitner, President. G. B. Wells, Secretary.

Columbian Literary Society—Regular meeting every Saturday evening in their rooms in the middle ward of Wells Hall, at 7:00. E. H. Sedgwick, President. C. F. Austin, Secretary.

Delta Tau Delta Fraternity—Meets Friday evenings in the chapter rooms on fourth floor of Williams Hall, at 7:00. E. A. Baker, President. C. P. Wykes, Secretary.

Eclectic Society—Meets on fourth floor of Williams Hall every Saturday at 7:30 p. m. C. D. Butterfield, President. Manning Agnew, Secretary.

Feronian Society—Meets every Friday afternoon at 1:00 in Hesperian rooms. Miss Sadie Champion, President. Miss Marie Belliss, Secretary.

Hesperian Society—Meetings held every Saturday evening in the society rooms in the west ward of Wells Hall

at 7:00. J. D. McLouth, President. R. H. Osborne, Secretary.

Olympic Society—Meets on fourth floor of Williams Hall every Saturday evening at 7:00. H. W. Hart, President. C. J. Perry, Secretary.

Phi Delta Theta Fraternity—Meets on Friday evening in chapter rooms in Wells Hall, at 7:00. W. G. Amos, President. F. H. Smith, Secretary.

Union Literary Society—Meetings held in their hall every Saturday evening at 7:00. E. A. Robinson, President. S. F. Edwards, Secretary.

Tau Beta Pi Fraternity—Meets every two weeks on Thursday evening in the tower room of Mechanical Laboratory. G. A. Parker, President. E. H. Sedgwick, Secretary.

Club Boarding Association—I. L. Simmons, President. H. A. Dibble, Secretary.

Try and Trust Circle of King's Daughters—Meets every alternate Wednesday. Mrs. C. L. Weil, President. Mrs. J. L. Snyder, Secretary.

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Special

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**In Dairy Husbandry, Live Stock Husbandry, Fruit Culture,
Floriculture and Winter Vegetable Gardening.**

For particulars write **PRESIDENT J. L. SNYDER**, Agricultural College, Mich.

These courses were planned especially for those who can only leave the farm for a short time during the winter. They are practical.

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