

ST. JOHNLAND.



WILLIAM A. MUHLENBERG.

IN 1864 the Rev. Dr. William A. Muhlenberg wrote a little tract, which he dedicated to his friend and parishioner the late Robert B. Minturn, "the poor man's friend and mine," with the title, "St. Johnland: a Retro-Prospectus. In two letters, supposed to be written in the year 187-." "Your old men shall dream dreams," Acts, ii. 17." The first letter describes an imaginary visit to a peculiar community, and begins thus: "You recollect that beautiful plain which we used to admire in our drives through the upper part of — County, gently sloping toward the south, with wooded hills on the north, diversified by clumps of trees, and a brook winding through it? I have lately been there. The little cluster of cottages upon it has grown into quite a village, with a pretty rural church in the midst. The houses, much like the original ones, are scattered along broad and circuitous streets, shaded by some of those fine oak and elm trees yet standing in their ancient grandeur. Several large buildings are on the outskirts of the town." Then the writer proceeds to tell of the character of this place and its people, this St. Johnland, in its main feature a Church industrial community. The second letter describes a Sunday spent at this place and the method of the worship, the bearing and conversation of the population, and the kind of theology

that is encouraged there, etc. This letter is followed by a postscript beginning thus: "I have told my dream. And shall that be the end of it? Shall it be no more than a dream?" and closing with presenting the urgent demand on the part of the neglected and suffering portion of the people of New York, especially children, for such a healthful, industrial, and Christian retreat.

There was a speedy answer to this appeal, and in October the next year, 1865, a large farm was purchased on the north shore of Long Island, about forty miles east of New York. The buildings at the present date are the church, the Old Man's Home or St. John's Inn, the Boys'

House and School, the Children's Home, the Library and Village Hall, the Printing-office and Stereotype Foundry, the Children's Summer Home and Bible Woman's Rest Awhile, and several cottages, besides farm buildings. These surely are positive facts, and this farm of some six hundred acres, with its fields and forests, its meadows and hills and fine water-front and numerous buildings, shows the stuff that the good doctor's dream was made of. In speaking of him and this work of his it is best for me and most respectful to him to dwell upon the broadest and highest aspects of the subject, and try to interpret a noble charity more than to praise a noble man, who does not like to have his left hand know what his right hand is doing.

He dreamed this dream in his venerable years, at an age when men are generally thought to have given up bold aspirations and to have settled down upon some fixed routine of life—the man of pleasure to his cards and pipe and bottle, the man of business to his price-current and his investments, the devotee to his tracts and prayer-meetings.

There is probably something in the pulse and temper of threescore years and upward which unfits a man for sensational appeals, and which makes it hard for him to keep his place in a popular pulpit in a great city that exacts incessant excitement. The old cor-

rection for this state of things was a young colleague in preaching and a young partner in business. But of late the American pulpit has tended more to favor stirring young men, and a large number of the most scholarly and thoughtful of the elder clergy are upon the retired list. Let them take their lot cheerfully, and do their best with their time and opportunity. Some of them are altogether too diffident, and because they no longer win multitudes by their eloquence, they leave their pen idle and their influence languid. Some churches and denominations are wise in encouraging such men, and economizing their ripe fruits for the service of the press or the university, while others leave them to shift for themselves. How much we all gain by the continued activity of such venerable fathers as the Rev. Dr. William Adams and President Woolsey! How refreshing it is to have a word once in a while from the Rev. Dr. Orville Dewey, and find him still master of a style unsurpassed in simplicity, freshness, and force! Should not more account be made of keeping such powers in due fields of usefulness? and how delightful it is to see Dr. Muhlenberg, in his venerable years and delicate health, earnest as ever in his work, and bringing all the lines of his various and devoted career into unison! I have met him occasionally at the Church of the Holy Communion, which he founded; I have seen and conversed with him several times lately at St. Luke's Hospital, where he is the master-spirit; and I am just from St. Johnland, where I have seen the efforts to carry out the fond and final dream of his life, and to establish a community in which his previous works as teacher, pastor, and health-bringer shall have their consummation.

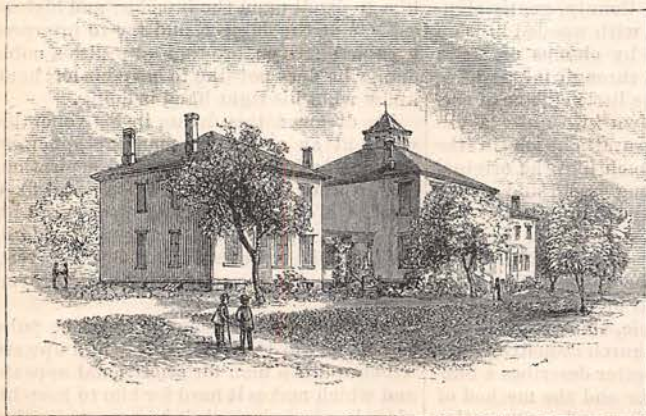
If we would understand St. Johnland, we must have in our eye St. Paul's College, at Flushing, where he labored for nearly twenty years, the Holy Communion Church, of

which he was rector 1846-58, and St. Luke's Hospital, where he has been pastor and superintendent since 1858, and through them trace the converging purposes and thoughts that have sought this new home on Long Island Sound.

The founder of St. Johnland lives most of the time still in the city, and from his residence in his great hospital he cares for the part of his flock that is in the country. If his health were more vigorous, he would more vary his life, and divide his time between the two homes. Perhaps his case is an illustration of the closer union that is to take place between the green fields and the paved streets, and that in the course of time there is to be no sharp separation between town life and country life. The rich are taking care of themselves, and even in their winter palaces they have milk, eggs, and flowers and many good things from their farms. Rapid transit may give the working people of cities homes and lands in the country, and entirely transform their condition and their temper. What may not enlightened humanity do with its hospital barges on the water, and its cottages, workshops, and churches in the fields? If there were no other reason for looking into the country for the Christian Arcadia, sheer necessity is reason enough. The city is already for the most part occupied, and in order to find house-room, capital is building in the air. Where on Manhattan Island or near it can we find six hundred acres for St. Johnland? And Mammon is beginning to find fault with St. Luke's Hospital for holding a single acre for God's suffering children on the stately avenue where wealth and fashion claim to be lords.

We reached St. Johnland on a pleasant Saturday evening in June, and after a short drive from the railway station, we found ourselves at the door of the Family Mansion, where the acting superintendent resides. It

was encouraging to find so much taste and comfort and so little pretension and outlay. Too much of our prevalent piety and charity goes into bricks and mortar, and monstrous debts are incurred that sadly slight the great precept, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." This settlement is out of debt, and one part of the explanation of this remarkable fact is that comparatively little money has



OLD MAN'S HOME, ST. JOHNLAND.

been spent upon building, and next to nothing upon ornament. Here we have no costly mediæval architecture as at Clewer, where, indeed, rich patrons can well afford it; nor have we even the solid stone-work of Müller's famous Orphan House at Ashley Down; but here is a cluster of simple cottages in the order of a quadrangle, with the impressive little wooden Church of the Testimony of Jesus in the centre of the upper line of the quadrangle, as if giving the Master's blessing to the disciples gathered at His table. We had a cordial greeting, and after a refreshing sup-



FAMILY MANSION, ST. JOHNLAND.

per, with genial conversation, we joined with the young farmers in the evening prayers of the family, to which they were called by the sound of the horn. The presiding lady, who is Sister Superintendent in Dr. Muhlenberg's absence, represents one of the most important institutions in the Christian Church, and while in zeal her order, the Sisterhood of the Holy Communion, is unsurpassed, its members are less conspicuous than others in externals of dress and usage. It originated in 1845, and I have the authority of the Rev. Dr. Henry C. Potter's book on Sisterhoods for the fact that it was the first Protestant association of the kind in this country, and anterior also to the first of the English Sisterhoods—that of Miss Sellon, which did not exist until 1848. The community was regularly organized in 1852, and in the spring of 1853 the corner-stone of the Sisters' House was laid adjoining the Church of the Holy Communion, which stands on the corner of Twentieth Street and Sixth Avenue. The Sisters, on removing into this house in February, 1854, opened an infirmary in that and the next house, which was the germ of St. Luke's Hospital. The rules of this order are few and simple. They require the Sisters to engage for the term of three years, with liberty of renewal. The term of probationers is not less than six months. The first Sister is the head of the community. The dress is simple and uniform, peculiar only in its plainness, and an adaptation of the ordinary attire of a gentlewoman rather than the affectation of

a foreign religious habit. These Sisters are to live where they do their works of charity when possible, without any conventual seclusion. They are to be provided for without funds of their own, while it is desired that when possible their personal expenses, except for board, should be met by their own private means or by their friends. Forty-seven practical, comprehensive questions, slightly altered from a series prepared by Pastor Fliedner with especial reference to deaconesses employed in hospitals, with a hymn and prayer, are a sufficient explanation of the spirit of this Sisterhood.

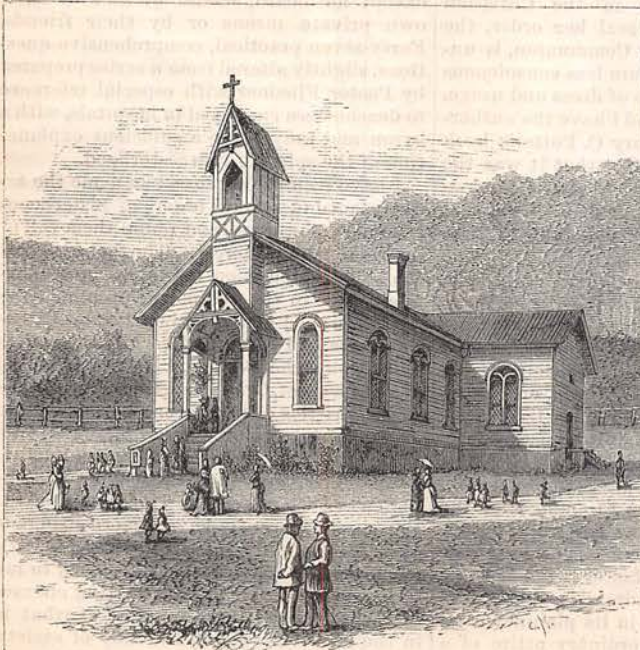
I have seen the services and made the acquaintance of several orders of Sisterhoods at home and abroad, and found them full of instruction and interest. The Sisterhood of the Holy Communion resembles in its simplicity and in the absence of peculiar vows the Sisterhood of the Bishop Potter Memorial Home, of Philadelphia, while the Sisters of St. John the Baptist, Clewer, and those of St. Margaret, Grimstead, have more of the characteristics of the Catholic orders. The confirmed Sisters of Clewer take the vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience for life, with liberty, however, to leave the institution when they see fit. The Sisters of St. Margaret apparently have a more stringent organization. All of these Sisters with whom I have conversed have seemed to me to be very positive and interesting characters, with a very large element of what is in the best sense called the lady of society combined with their devoted Christian wom-

anhood. I have never seen more charming manners than those of a Sister of St. Margaret, in her gray homespun and plain cap, and her frank acknowledgment of her love of the daily Communion, and her constant attendance upon the sick children in her hospital. There is a time for discussing rites and doctrines, but self-sacrificing piety and charity should stop our dogmatics and bring us all home to the one Gospel and Church. Certainly this has been the lesson taught me alike by the Anglo-Catholics of St. Margaret and of St. John the Baptist, and of these evangelical Catholics of the Holy Communion, who are so well represented by Sister Anne at St. Johnland.

The presiding Sister in the Family Mission made us at home at once not only in that house, but in the whole community. This home look is, indeed, the prominent and characteristic feature of the place, and in this respect it differs from most institutions of benevolence, which are generally administered in such a wholesale way as to lose the individual and the family in the multitude, and to sacrifice personal affection to routine method. Here there is organization, indeed, entire order, but not such as to interfere with the natural and reasonable relationships of blood and affinity. Here are cottages for families in the strict sense of the term, where parents may live with their children, or a widow may have a home for herself and her little ones; and there are houses on a larger scale, where vari-

ous inmates, properly chosen, live together under the same roof under a kindly supervision quite parental in authority and carefulness. Who can say too much of the benefits of such home arrangements, with the free range of the fields and forests, the pleasant associates, the opportunities for industry, and the access to school and church? Dr. Muhlenberg well proved the need of such homes in his *Retro-Prospectus* when he wrote thus: "Look at that sad woman, who the other day brought her emaciated boy to the hospital, needing food more than medicine. She had lost her husband in the war, had not got the bounty, had six other children whom she was trying to keep together by such work as she could get. 'But oh, the rear basement,' she said, 'where we stop, is always so wet!' Or that young man who lately sought admission to our wards with incipient phthisis, for which the doctor recommended to him the country. No wonder he was consumptive, for he had long been sewing early and late on the tailor's board, with fourteen others, in a close, dark room in the rear of the shop. Or that good brother of eighty-five, who in intelligence and piety might compare with the venerable one furnished in our sketch. He does not require medical or surgical treatment. He is a beneficiary of one of the hospital associations, who begged us to receive him, as his only home must be here or on Blackwell's Island. Shall we send him there? Or that other aged one of seventy-six, who

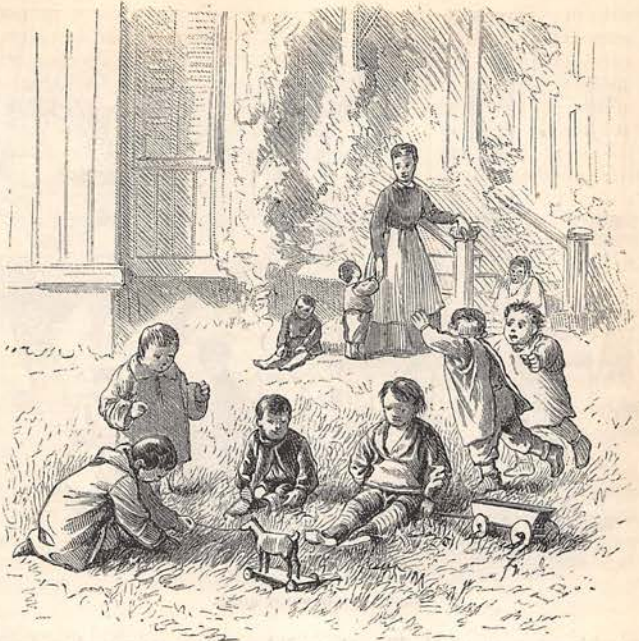
has been a consistent communicant of our Church since he was thirty—a well-informed, reading old man, driven by sickness from his sky parlor, where his bed has sometimes been drenched with rain. Or that sweet-faced young girl, waiting for the last agony of a heart-disease contracted by bending over the needle sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, to support her enfeebled mother. Or that hard-working woman, who was sent here by a dispensary physician, hoping we might give her work while she was being treated for her eyes, which could never be better while she lived on tea and broth. Or, in an-



CHURCH OF THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS.

other direction, look in at the factory where I lately saw children who, the overseer told me, are confined there thirteen and a half hours every day, allowing half an hour for each of their meals. In the winter they come along before light, through frost and snow, and are not free until eight at night."

Think of these pictures of suffering, and of the dismal tenements and degrading associations and scanty living and precarious employment of a large class of well-disposed families in the great city; note the ready access of their children to bad company, and the difficulty of finding chance playmates without corruption, and what light is thrown upon the Christian Industrial Community, with its homes and workshop and fair and school and church! These photographs of the most characteristic of the buildings and the inhabitants show better than any words of mine can do the genius of the place. I was glad to be there on Sunday, and to see the whole population in its Sunday face and attire. It was really an interesting and cheering sight. The neat and impressive little Church of the Testimony of Jesus was well filled alike at the regular morning service and at the afternoon service, which is more adapted to



YOUNG BOYS.

the instruction of children. The two extremes of life, childhood and age, were represented most conspicuously, with a fair proportion of youth and middle age. A larger company of children than we usually see in a parish church gave a bright look to the assembly, and their tidy dress, pleasant expression, and reverential manners were a goodly sight, that the great apostle of love would have rejoiced to see in the place consecrated to the testimony of Jesus in his name. St. John's Inn, that was so nobly endowed by the late John David Wolfe, had a goodly delegation, and these old men had all the air of habitual and substantial



GYMNASTIC EXERCISES.



GROUP OF YOUNGEST GIRLS.

worshippers, very much like the solid men that sit at the head of the pews in the leading country churches, and seem to carry the wisdom and the influence of the whole parish in their heads.

The building, the gift of Mr. Adam Norrie, is spacious, light, and airy, with a large open platform for the readers and the preacher, without even the restriction of the usual chancel rails, whose place is supplied at the Communion season by temporary arrangements for kneeling. The inscription over the chancel is this: "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." The usual morning service of the Protestant Episcopal Church was read, with considerable abbreviation and with some additions, especially in the Litany. The singing was hearty and congregational, with the accompaniment of a good organ and a cheery chorus of young voices. The sermon, by a stranger, was given without notes, and presented in a direct manner, with many illustrations from the fields and forests, the need of living not by bread alone, but by the bread of heaven, and it was in decided contrast with the sermon lately given by the same preacher to Dr. Muhlenberg's old congregation on the life and thought of St. Augustine—a carefully studied Lent lecture, an hour long, to an audience quite as different. In both cases, however, the popular element was not neglected, and in the city church an especial service for working-men was advertised for the next Sunday evening.

This church of St. Johnland is in some re-

spects quite peculiar. Although the pastor is required to be an Episcopalian, and the Episcopal Prayer-book is to be used, the full liberty of Christian conscience is recognized as the right of the minister, who is not bound to any form of words that he believes to be contrary to Holy Scripture. Liberty of prayer is also recognized, either in allowing precomposed prayer, according to the Directory, or other prayer. Liberty of ministerial fellowship is also recognized, and the minister is not to consider the principles of the Prayer-book of his Church, wheth-

er expressed or implied, as prohibiting the preaching of the Gospel in her places of worship by ministers of other reformed and evangelical churches whenever the same is deemed expedient, in due allegiance to the Head of the Church and due fellowship with His ambassadors. The good doctor seems sagaciously to avoid all points of ecclesiastical casuistry in these matters, by claiming the right of the head of a household or of an institution to prescribe its devotions and religious instruction. But there is evidently no disposition to push him to the wall or to interfere with his remarkable good works on the part of the Church authorities. He can go to a Presbyterian Communion, or preach in a Presbyterian pulpit, or invite a Presbyterian to his own pulpit, without being disturbed. It is understood that the great-grandson of the founder of the Lutheran Church in America can not part with the Lutheran blood, and that he has at heart the completion of the movement which the Church of Cranmer and Latimer so mightily began, the union of Protestant and Catholic in one Evangelical Catholic Church. With all its conservatism, our American Protestant Episcopal Church evidently does not wish to be ungenerous, and the Bishop of New York but showed its essential spirit when, not long ago, at the convocation of clergy, he invited the elder Dr. Tyng and Dr. Muhlenberg to join with him in the office of the Holy Communion, and to repeat the old call for Calvin and Luther to come in and bring their people.

Dr. Muhlenberg often meets with an association of clergymen who in various ways

represent the comprehensive spirit of his Church, and they always welcome him almost by acclamation. These men are not radicals, but positive believers and constructive workers; but they do not believe in a fossil religion or an exotic clergy, and they are friends of generous thought and reasonable progress, and especially of our American nationality. They started the Church Congress,

which promises to bring out so much ability and strength, and to correct the clanishness of the merely sectional diocesanism that forgets the whole in the parts; and their pen and voice and practical work are making a mark on public opinion, little as they court public notice. They seem to be good friends of St. Johnland, and the most practical men among them speak hopefully of its prospects. They probably care less for any of the doctor's peculiar notions than for his dominant purpose and his great catholic heart, and they are apparently content to keep within the liberty and order of their Church institutions, and leave the leaven of progress to work itself out in God's own time. They take no party name, and they have not lost their humility since several of their number have been asked to be bishops and presidents.

Certainly there is a growing feeling among thoughtful men that religion must be more wisely and vigorously applied to life, and that Christianity must have its social science and art, not behind but before the march of secular civilization. How the end is to be won we can not know till we try. The problem of this industrial community, with its union of homes, workshops, schooling, and religion, still needs careful thought and wise economy; yet the results thus far are encouraging. The farm is thrifty, and the 16,600 quarts of milk last year well served 150 young mouths. The foundry does well, and Sister Anne's handsome volume of the doctor's *Evangelical Catholic* papers is a specimen of its work. The recent accession of a rector who is proverbially known as a master economist promises well for the future. Of old the tribes gathered around the wells dug by their fathers, and our Lord taught memorable lessons at a place of which it was said, "Jacob's well was there." Such a spring will always flow with healing and refreshing waters where the founder of St. Johnland taught with power and is to rest



LAME CHILDREN'S DONKEY CARRIAGE.

in peace. He has given his whole substance to this place, and his body will rest where his heart has so long lived.

I looked from the little tower of my country home last Sunday evening across the Sound toward the shore of Long Island, in search of St. Johnland, and I soon identified it with the help of a tolerably good glass. On one side stands Port Jefferson, which is opposite Bridgeport; and on the other Huntington Light, which is abreast of Norwalk, and between the two is Smithtown Bay. I discovered in this bay the cliff of St. Johnland and the stairway down to the water, to which I had so recently walked with the goodly company of children and youth, who very properly were encouraged to take a pleasant ramble on the shore after their two church services. Between that port and that light-house appeared that Christian settlement, which is both a haven to the weary and a light to the benighted. It was a good lesson for Sunday evening, and one that will not be studied for a single time. Thirty-six years ago, January 13, 1840, near that spot, Charles Follen perished in the burning *Lexington*: and so one good man's memory shines upon the dark waters with another good man's life.

Allow me, in writing this simple sketch of a good man's enterprise, to acknowledge gratefully, in behalf of the class of men whom I in my poor way represent, the worth of your Magazine to our community. Your Monthly is one of the memorial works of our twenty-five years of metropolitan life, and it is a power in the country and the world. As an old contributor, I salute you, the house and family of Harpers, as I close, and with the brother now living I respectfully name the three who have gone, whom I well knew and affectionately cherished. The brother who went last is nearest now at heart, and his name, like his character, is not out of place here in this notice of St. Johnland.

SAMUEL OSGOOD.