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MUHLENBERG, WILLIAM  
AUGUSTUS  
ST JOHN-LAND: A RETRO-  
PROSPECTUS

Soc 950.7

*The gift of*

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Rev E. M. P. Wells DD -  
with kindest regards from the author

Rev. E. M. P. Wells

St. John-land.





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ST. JOHN-LAND:

A Retro-prospectus.

IN TWO LETTERS, SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN SOME YEARS HENCE.

"Your old men shall dream dreams."—Acts II. 17.

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ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL, Oct. 21, 1864.

RIGHT REV. HORATIO POTTER, D.D., LL.D.

MY DEAR BISHOP:—

Before circulating my pamphlet, I respectfully offer it for your perusal, and shall be very happy and grateful if it be accompanied with your approbation.

Faithfully yours,

W. A. MUHLENBERG.

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33 WEST 24TH ST., Nov. 1, 1864.

MY DEAR DR. MUHLENBERG:—

I thank you for allowing me to look upon your picture of St. Johnland. It fully answers all the expectations I had formed from your conversational sketches. Surely, the idea you present of a "Christian Industrial Community, a Rural Settlement, in which the worthy, diligent poor may have becoming abodes, with the means and rewards of diligence, together with the provisions of the Gospel"—(what a contrast to the crowded pestilential places, surrounded by moral infection, in which many of them now dwell in this great city!), will not be placed before the Christian minds of this community in vain. In saying that, however, I must not be understood to approve of all the religious features of your plan; but the good so largely preponderates, that I earnestly hope you will find favor in this, as you have found favor in the past. God put in it into the hearts of the Laity to help you, and give you length of days, and strength as well, to work for Him, His Church, and His poor!

Affectionately, your friend and brother,

HORATIO POTTER.

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To  
ROBERT B. MINTURN,  
The Poor Man's Friend, and Mine.

THESE PAGES ARE

Affectionately Inscribed.

W. A. MUHLENBERG.

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## ST. JOHNLAND : A RETRO-PROSPECTUS.

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### LETTER I.

NEW YORK,  
*June* —, 187—.

DEAR L—— :

YOU recollect that beautiful plain which we used to admire in our drives through the upper part of — county, gently sloping towards the south, with wooded hills on the north, diversified by groups of trees and a brook winding through it? I have lately been there. The few cottages then upon it have become a goodly village, with a pretty rural church in the midst. The houses, much like the original ones, are at intervals on wide avenues radiating from the church, and shaded by some of those fine oak and elm trees yet standing in their ancient grandeur. There are several larger buildings, and two of good size and proportions are seen a little distance from the town.

And now I am going to make you a letter, perhaps a long one, out of the visit of Cousin M—— and myself to the place, in which I have become greatly interested. They call it St. Johnland, and not inappropriately, you will agree with me when you know more about it. The object for which it was founded, and which it still accomplishes, is a most admirable one. It is to enable certain classes of the industrious poor to



exchange their wretched abodes in the city for comfortable rural homes, and, at the same time, to be sure of the means of support. How this is done will appear as I go on.

The whole property—the land and all the buildings—belongs to a corporation, managing its affairs by a Board of Trustees. The immediate jurisdiction of the place is exercised by a Pastor, a clergyman of our church, and a Superintendent, in their respective spheres. The Pastor is the Rector; for St. Johnland, you must be informed, is an organized parish, and all the inhabitants for the time being are his parishioners. This is understood by those who hire the cottages; and with most of them the benefit of pastoral care has been one of the inducements for their coming into the place. The Superintendent has the charge of its temporal concerns. An important part of his business is to secure employment for the people, which consists of work given out by clothing and other furnishing houses in the city, that pay their hands fair prices (facilities being established for the regular transportation of the work and materials to and fro), and lesser kinds of profitable handicraft. The cottages have been built by individuals for the purpose of furthering the enterprise, most of whom had also in view particular families which they wished to aid by furnishing them with separate homelike dwellings at much lower rents than they were paying for dismal rooms in the city. A number of the cottages have been put up by the corporation, the proprietor of them all, by whomsoever built. The revenue arising from the rents goes towards the support of the Pastor and Superintendent, and subordinate agents, often leaving a balance for local improvements.

The foregoing information we derived from the Superintendent, to whose office we had been directed at the house

of the Pastor, where M—— and I had first gone with our introduction, but had not the good fortune to find him at home. The former gentleman received us very courteously, and, after seeing our note to the Pastor, was pleased to say he would put himself at our service. The easiest way now of proceeding with my story will be to give you some of our further conversation with him, as well as what we saw, as I have jotted it down in my journal.

"Thus you see," he said, "our settlement, in its main feature, is a CHURCH INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY."

"Of course, then," I replied, "it is, at least, a very orderly community."

"It ought to be, independently of its professed Christian character, considering how much good order is in our power. The houses are hired monthly or quarterly, on condition of the tenants' good behavior and conformity to the published rules of the corporation. At the same time we are considerate in enforcing that condition, and, I trust, are never arbitrary. When a tenant proves really objectionable, he is admonished and warned in that spirit of brotherly kindness to which, in all our dealings, we acknowledge ourselves here especially bound. He is then allowed opportunity for amendment; if none appears, he is notified to leave. As to openly vicious characters, we have so few attractions for them, that we are rarely troubled with gross misconduct. The influence of the Church, with its schools and various agencies, is our great safeguard. Our Pastor is really the shepherd of his flock. He has some admirable co-workers in several excellent ladies, who have taken up their residences in houses of their own hard by, for the sake of such usefulness as they are peculiarly capable of among the people. We have also a society of young men, active in doing good.

All these working together, you see, we have a pretty effective moral police."

"Preventives," I added, "better than our detectives. Do you find the people generally contented?"

"The working people, almost without exception. They can live here only in habits of industry which forestall discontent; most of them having had experience, which teaches them to value their present circumstances."

At the invitation of our friend we walked through the town. Both M—— and I were struck with the neatness and appearance of order which marked the dwellings, as we noticed them through the open doors and windows, showing us varied and happy sights of busy hands and cheerful faces. Our eyes fell continually upon sewing machines, not idle, loaned to the tenants by the corporation, or given to them by their friends.

Stopping at one of the doors, we saw a woman knitting and listening to a pale girl reading at her side. After wishing her good-morning, we inquired whether that was the whole of her family. "The young ones," she said, "belonging here are at school." We then learned that she was one of several middle-aged women having the charge of orphan and destitute young children, of whom there is a good number in the place. Instead of being herded together in one great house, as in our ordinary institutions for such beneficiaries, they are committed in small companies to capable women unfit for active work, receiving every week enough for themselves and their little families. The children of sufficient age go out to school. "This family mode of caring for the parentless and forsaken young," our guide remarked, "is practicable only in a settlement like this, and is one of its many facilities. It is not the cheapest method of such charity (cheap-

ness is not a prime consideration in our benevolent operations); but it has peculiar advantages. Obviously there can be a more discriminating and less mechanical training, more of kindly individual dealing, more chance to counteract bad example, more of special teaching and influence, where a matron has ten or a dozen instead of two hundred for her charge. Besides all which, a maintenance is thus afforded to respectable indigent women, without putting them in a position of dependence upon charity. I ought to add, however, that the plan is an experiment. Some of the trustees are in favor of a general orphan-house."

You will be glad to learn that many of the female tenants are the widows of fallen soldiers in the late civil war. By the means here afforded, beneficence, in extending its hand to them, did not break up their families, but gave them homes where they can keep their children about them, with opportunities both for their education and for their acquiring useful branches of industry. Several of their sons are learning trades here. To make such provision for those who so richly deserve it, was, I understand, one of the original purposes in founding the colony, and has gained it many friends. Patriotism, stimulating philanthropy, has built a number of these houses; and many more might be built with funds which St. Johnland might justly claim of the State.

"Why, Janet, is that you?" exclaimed M—— to a woman who came running up to her from one of the houses; "is that you?"

"In truth it is; and is that your blessed self?"

"And how did *you* find your way here?"

"So the good Lord was pleased to have it; but come in—come in," and in we went to her domicil, the first she had

ever had, fit to be called a home. Its tidy looks were some sign that she deserved it.

"A very different sort of place this," said M—— to her, "from that where I once saw you?"

"You may well say so. That rear room in the attic, where the wind through the chinks kept us shivering in the winter, and the burning sun on the roof half-roasted us in the summer; where the most I could earn, sewing all day and sometimes nearly all night, scarcely fed me and my children, if I had to keep them in clothes; and as for the rent, the landlord would have put us into the street more than once, if good Mrs. Brown had not helped me pay it—and how is that dear lady?"

"As well as usual, I believe."

"When you see her, thank her for all her kindness to me, and tell her that now I can do as she used to bid me about the children. 'Mind, Janet,' she would say, whenever I went to see her, 'mind and bring up your children in the fear of the Lord.' Very good advice for her to give—very proper advice—but not so easy for one like me to follow. Dear Mrs. Brown, I could not help thinking to myself, with her large airy house, with study-rooms and play-rooms, with books and all sorts of amusements for her children, besides good teachers and good companions for them all the while, might indeed bring them up well; but what chance was there for me? It was hard to shut up my young ones in my little place, and, if I let them out, it was to mix with the rude children of the godless people in the next room; if I sent them over into the square to play, it was no better. They saw bad examples in-doors and out. They were a terrible set crowded together in that house. Drinking and fighting going on every night; and the shocking language we were

obliged to hear! What could I do but to pray the Lord to keep from harm them he had given me?"

"And how was it you came here?"

"Mrs. Brown heard of this place, and she knew one of the Trustees. He got me this house, and I pay less for it than I did for that garret. Now that Sammy is old enough to work in the shops, and his sister can take turns with me at the sewing machine, we get on right well, and all of us go to church on Sunday dressed as decent as other folks."

"Besides having enough to eat?"

"Aye; good bread, milk that *is* milk, fresh vegetables, with as much meat as is good for us."

"And no excuse now for not bringing up your children well?"

"No; they are growing up in the right way, thank the Lord! and I may thank our good minister, too. Every now and then he gives me a call."

We stopped at several of the houses where the Superintendent had a word or two of business with the people. We were pleased to observe the pleasant and familiar terms on which he seemed to be with them, convincing us he was no mere functionary in his office.

"What are the shops," I asked, "where Janet says her boy is at work?"

"A range of low buildings off yonder, where several branches of trade are carried on upon a moderate scale, but large enough to pay, and to be a good school for the boys in a variety of mechanic work."

"You have, then," I said, "a share of stout boys among your population, who may not be always the most orderly part of it?"

"Boys are boys; but as most of them have grown up with

us, they have had the advantage of teaching and training, and of living in a wholesome moral atmosphere; so that they ought to be better than your city boys in the same rank of life. After they enter the shops, they have the privilege of evening school and of familiar lectures in art and science. Those who are fond of reading find a good supply of books in our lending library, and a number of them attend a Bible class instructed by one of the ladies. The young men cultivate their acquaintance, often having them at their rooms; and it was through their good influences that, of about twenty persons lately confirmed here by the Bishop, nearly half were boys. We lay ourselves out to do our best with these juvenile but important members of our commonwealth, making it a practical school, from which we hope many will go out good men and useful citizens. We encourage them in healthful sports. Saturday is a half-holiday with them, when, according to their conduct at school or work, they have the playground, the woods, or the lake for their amusement. What with ball, boating, fishing, skating, etc., our lads have a good time of it."

"And what for the girls?"

They have their half-holiday on Wednesday for their rambles, etc., as on Saturday afternoon they help their mothers to get in order for the Sabbath. Besides their school learning, they are taught the various kinds of needlework. The ladies always have some of them in their houses teaching them to be good housemaids."

"Then you don't think it necessary to give them accomplishments?"

"We do not provide for it; but when talent or genius is discovered in a boy or girl, it is not left wholly unfostered. All learn to sing. The foreman of one of the shops has drilled

some of the boys into quite a respectable band. Occasionally we have concerts, and on a fine summer evening you will hear music of one kind or other in all directions.

“‘BESSIE’S MEMORIAL.’ What does that mean?” I asked, pointing to those words in old English, on a small tablet over the door of one of the houses—a remarkably pretty one, with a neat garden-plot around it.

“To tell,” he replied, “that the cottage was erected as a memorial of a child by a fond mother, the wife of a gentleman, one of our most liberal patrons. The little girl delighted to come up here and play with the children, and in her simple way, would sometimes wish that this were her home. She died suddenly of the croup, and her mother found a not unnatural consolation in putting up this as a token of her child’s affection for the place, and to be used for one of the little families of orphans. She attached to it also a small endowment for the benefit of the housekeeper. The whole probably cost less than many a proud marble to a departed darling in some of your cemeteries; but where among them all is a monument so Christian or so touching?” The mother comes every summer to see Bessie’s orphan-house and bring gifts for the children, who in turn fetch her flowers from Bessie’s garden.

“In three instances before this, parents had built cottages, with endowments to meet the rent, making them free cottages, calling them after their living children, in the hope of cherishing in them an interest in the poor; one of them we have just passed, on which you might have read ‘Harry’s Villa.’”

“I should think,” I said, “that many parents would do the same. It would not much hinder their enjoyment of their own country villas.”



"Knowing this region of country, I need not inquire about the healthfulness of your place, as far as the situation is concerned ; but you sometimes need a doctor ?"

"For a while," he said, "we had one living among us, but his experience had been so much among the poor of the city that he was unfitted for dealing with ours, with the consideration which we show them as our Christian brethren. He seemed to think they were *only* the poor, and treated them and his few more respectable patients with a marked difference of manner. Of late all our medical needs have been met by an excellent practitioner living midway between this and —ville. He comes every day ; goes first to the houses of the ladies, who have districted the place among them for a sort of hygienic supervision. From them he learns anything that may require his attention beyond what he knows. He makes his visits, leaves written directions in special cases, if he has any, with the lady in whose district they may be, and returns. Once a week he makes a general professional visitation of the place. For these services he receives a salary from the Trustees, which is made up more or less by a small amount assessed on each of the tenants—a health-tax we call it—as much for their being kept well, as for being treated when they are ill, including medicine."

"An economical arrangement," I observed, "on the principle that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

We now turned our steps towards the school-house. On our way the Superintendent was accosted by a little girl, saying that her mother wanted him to come right away to her house, where Mrs. Mac was carrying on awfully. Upon which he left us, showing us our way.

The school of boys and girls, in separate apartments, with separate play-grounds, under female teachers, you can ima-

gine without my description, provided you will fancy the scholars unexceptionably clean and giving pleasing indications of plentiful feeding; and the rooms with high ceilings, well ventilated, and with nothing of the school fragrance in their atmosphere.

The singing which the girls struck up for our entertainment was uncommonly sweet, showing some cultivation of the principal voices. They sang a lively rural ballad, which I told the teacher I was better pleased with than if they had begun, "I want to be an angel," or "I have a Father," etc.; adding that I thought it was unfavorable to reality and the cherishing of religious sensibility, for children to be uttering sacred words, often addresses to the Almighty, whenever they are called upon to tune up their pipes. She assented, and handed me a little book: *Our Hymns and Songs*. The hymns are simple, not childish, and meant for real acts of devotion; the songs are moral, sentimental, playful, full of country life; all in sympathy with boy and girl nature. We looked into the boys' department, where a young man, whom we took to be one of the society already spoken of, was teaching a class of the older scholars. He was evidently a novice at the business, trying to scold the boys into quiet and attention, while he was all in a fret himself. Perhaps he was disconcerted by our presence; at any rate, as it did not help him, we withdrew, and went again into the girls' school to see it "let out." The children stood perfectly silent for a minute or two. The teacher read a verse from the Book of Proverbs, repeated it twice, and said she expected them to remember it the next morning, and tell her why she had read to them that particular text. We supposed it had reference to something which had occurred during the day. A hymn was sung in reverent tune and time. "The grace of

our Lord" was repeated [by all, when, after a moment's pause, they hastened to equip themselves for departure. On inquiring whether the attendance of the scholars was regular and punctual, we learned it was secured by an item in the agreement on which the cottages are hired.

The Superintendent, as soon as he was with us again, was anxious to know how we were pleased; and we thought him a little disappointed at the terms in which we expressed our gratification. They were positive, but not in the comparative or superlative degree which I opined he rather expected. He wanted to know whether we had not noticed this or that boy or girl whom he minutely described and told us little anecdotes about, showing how much he was interested in these nurseries of St. Johnland. We were more curious to know what was the trouble he had been called to settle.

"One of our tenants," he said, "will tittle now and then; when she does, she is terribly abusive. I found her at her neighbor's, giving vent to her tongue at a worse rate than usual. I had to stand a volley myself before I could get her home."

"I thought you had no such characters among you."

"We do not altogether decline the work of reformation, though we do not formally propose it as one of our objects. Sometimes it is clearly a duty, as in the case of this woman. So long as she refrains from the bottle she is a steady worker, and her house and two girls are patterns of neatness. Some of her friends urged us to give her a trial, believing that when removed from the neighborhood of dram-shops she might be again the woman she once was. They have not been wholly disappointed. The change has been a great thing for her, though it has not yet done all it will. She is

so ashamed of herself after one of these outbreaks, which are becoming much less frequent, we are in great hopes of saving her. It was only yesterday one of the ladies, whom she calls her good angel, was giving her credit for keeping her resolutions so well—perhaps in language of praise that was too much for her.”

“I suppose you cannot get rid of the poison altogether?”

“A man’s house is his castle here as elsewhere. So we can’t go to searching; but an express stipulation with the tenants forbids their keeping liquor in their houses. We sometimes suspect visitors of being over-kind to their friends.”

“I can understand your forbearance,” I said, “in the instance you have just stated; but you would not retain a confirmed drunkard—a man, I mean?”

“No; and yet we have been sorely tried with one lately—a most industrious, capable fellow, ready at turning his hand to anything and doing it well—satisfactory in every respect from Monday morning until Saturday night, when, as sure as he gets the chance, off he travels to ——ville and has a jovial time of it at the grocery. He comes back late, quarrels with his wife, who at last gets him to bed, and then snores away the Sunday. With all his cleverness, we should doubt the duty of tolerating such an example; but his poor wife and children importune us so piteously whenever we threaten to eject him, that for their sakes we must still bear with him;—for his own sake, too, since there is so much to like in him. Maybe he’ll hear us begging him to add prayers to the vows he so often makes never to touch the vile stuff again.”

“It may be right and necessary,” I said, “for you to dis-

miss a disorderly tenant after you have exhausted upon him your efforts for reformation. But if he is obliged to pack up and remove his furniture to he knows not where, it may not seem quite right to *him*. He would call it putting him and his family into the street, and complain of damage and loss. Would he not?" I asked.

"If there was any show of reason on his side we could afford to compromise matters, as such troubles could occur but seldom. In cases where we have any doubt what sort of people the applicants for houses may prove, whom nevertheless we dislike to refuse, we recommend them not to bring their goods and chattels, but to hire from us, for a while at least, what they require. Of course there are difficulties and troubles of various kinds in carrying on our establishment—but what good can be done without them?"

"As long as your population," I went on to remark, "is of its present size, or not much greater, your government and management of the people will be easy, and the rights of the corporation not disputed; but if you should grow and come to be a town of any magnitude, will not a new order of things arise? Will not the people begin to think of their own rights, and to ask for a voice in the conduct of affairs? Will not your St. Johnland catch the spirit of our Yankee and?"

"Our population," replied the Superintendent, who by this time you will see was a thoughtful, sensible man, "is likely to grow but moderately from within. Most of our young people as they come of age, and sooner, will leave us, regarding this as the place of their education for wider and more stirring fields of labor. With that we are content. Our mission will in great part be fulfilled, if those whom we have snatched from the world in its depths, return to it in

the persons of their children or themselves, for its posts of usefulness and respectability. The Trustees," he continued, "have looked at the future of their enterprise. They do not contemplate it as culminating in a great town. They see that, to retain its character and accomplish its original objects, it must be kept within moderate bounds. Recollect it is a parish. As such it should not be too large for the pastoral care of one man, with an assistant. Our comparative smallness is our safety. All overgrown parishes deteriorate in Christian spirit, and have less of moral power in proportion as they become powers of the world. With regard to church-settlements like this, the policy will be to multiply small ones in various directions, instead of allowing any one to become very large. Alas! for St. Johnland, should it ever become a wealthy church establishment! To save it from such a calamity, it had better be limited by legal enactments to its present size. For my part, I wish this were already done."

Our obliging friend, on whose time we had drawn so largely, was now called off again on business. Before parting with us, he said he would be sorry that we should leave without seeing two of their institutions, with which he knew we would be particularly gratified—St. John's Inn and the Infirmary. As the latter was the nearer, he directed us to it, saying it was sufficient for us to mention his name at the door. We found it somewhat removed from the more active part of the place—a kind of *Hotel Dieu*—a shelter for a class of helpless ones which, until this establishment, had not come within the provision of our charities. I mean chronic invalids and incurables—persons discharged from hospitals or not eligible to them, as disabled in various ways, yet too comfortable in health to need treatment or

nursing. They cannot pursue the occupations on which they once depended for support, and yet may live on for years, with destitution all the while staring them in the face. They are a class peculiarly to be compassionated. You recollect there were always some of them in St. Luke's Hospital, which departed from its rules in retaining them as long as there was room enough to spare in the wards. When it was filled with proper patients, several of the friends of the hospital started the infirmary here, which has now something of an endowment. It is a large, square building, in the midst of pleasant grounds, and ingeniously adapted to the peculiar condition of its boarders; having broad and easy stairways, low, deep-seated windows, wide, sunshiny halls furnished with lounges, wheel-chairs, and other appliances for the assistance of the chronic invalid. Not that all have nothing to do but lounge and wheel themselves about. "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat," is the universal condition of place in the settlement so far as it is practicable, and it is not dispensed with here. Accordingly, we saw a number of them at different kinds of light work. Among the women, whom should we see but Dr. B.'s old cook, Molly, now stone-blind, knitting away for life! They are classified according to their ability; and by industrial arrangements, as considerate of their condition as conducive to their happiness, they are enabled collectively to do not a little towards rendering the house self-supporting.

We could not stop longer to visit the Inn, an asylum for destitute Christian old men, as we had now to be leaving to be in time for the train at the station, a little more than a mile off. We called again at the house of the Rector. We found him a fatherly, kind-looking man, about the age of forty. He regretted he had not seen us in the morning, and

had been kept by a press of engagements from going in search of us. He hoped we would visit St. Johnland again. I felt inclined to do so, and gave him a hint that I should be pleased to spend a Sunday in the place, that I might see it in its more religious aspects. Upon this we received a cordial invitation, the sequel of which I will give you in another letter.

Yours affectionately,

K—.



## LETTER II.

NEW YORK,  
*June—, 187—.*

MY DEAR L—— :

As you assure me that my last letter was not too long, and that you are waiting to hear about my Sunday in Churchtown, as it might also be called, I will resume my story without fear of trespassing on your patience :

Last Saturday evening found me (M—— remaining at home to hear her old pastor, on a visit to the city) at St. John's Inn, the asylum mentioned in my last, for destitute Christian old men. It is a spacious and comfortable house, the largest in the settlement, and admirably planned for the comfort of its guests. Several of its rooms are reserved for the accommodation of visitors like myself. From the windows of that which I occupied there is a lovely land and water view—a grateful prospect, I thought, for those who must have so much leisure to sit looking at it, and amuse themselves with discovering new objects in the scene. This, I dare say, was thought of in choosing the site of the house, for old men, especially such as were formerly used to visits from their friends, might find their time, in such seclusion, hanging heavy on their hands. Those here, I understand, who are able, and not particularly fond of books, lend a hand in gardening, have some care of the grounds, etc.

I rose early and went out on the piazza in front of the

house, where I found one of the sojourners of the Inn up before me, and enjoying the "sweet hour of prime." From his snowy, flowing locks, clear complexion, time-worn but genial countenance, he looked as if he might be the ornament of the house. He at once saluted me, wishing me joy of such lovely weather for a Lord's day morning.

"One could wish," I said, "that we had always so sweet a sky on the Lord's day."

"We shall have it," he replied, "on the everlasting Lord's day."

"Yes, that glorious *Sunday* when the Lord himself shall be the Sun."

Finding ourselves thus in sympathy, we fell into pleasant and discursive conversation. In the course of it, he informed me of the order of the family, the kindly spirit and good temper that pervaded it, with an occasional murmur from one or two of those complaining mortals who you know, he said, have got into the way of it without meaning much by it, and are really grateful at heart. There are about thirty in the house, but a number besides are scattered through the cottages, where they feel more at home, finding things more in accordance with their former modes of life. This suits the Trustees, who prefer keeping the house for those who have seen better days, and who can thus pleasantly consort together. One such was my old friend, whose story, as he gave it to me in brief, was this :

He was once prosperous in business ; had held a respectable position in the mercantile world, and was hoping to retire on a moderate capital, when, drawn into some unfortunate speculations by his son, for whom he largely endorsed, he was completely ruined. After many efforts, he was never able to retrieve himself. He had become a widower, and

his only son, having gone abroad as an adventurer, had never been heard of. He maintained himself for a number of years writing as a clerk in one of the houses with which he had formerly done business. Happily his misfortunes led him to seek and find the treasures which are beyond the changes of earth. "My eyes were opened," he said, "to see how I could still make my fortune without danger of ever losing it again." He became a communicant, and was a regular one in — Church, of this city. Increasing years and repeated attacks of illness disqualifying him for his office, he was at length obliged to resign it. On parting with him, the firm made him a handsome present, on which he lived at the cheapest boarding-house he could find, in a little fourth-story room, getting a small deduction from his board for taking but two meals a day. When he was well enough, he went to the church he had been accustomed to attend ; but, no longer rich enough to pay pew-rent, he made his way to the free seats in the gallery, where nobody knew him. He went to the sacrament, but nobody spoke to him afterwards. His clothes had grown shabby, and he had become so changed in his looks that he passed for some poor stranger, to whom, of course, none are very likely to speak, notwithstanding he has been with them at the table of the Lord. His means exhausted, his landlady gave him significant hints that she was herself too poor to give bed and board *gratis*. He had not the heart to let his extremity be known to his former benefactors, but he summoned courage to pen a letter to one who had once been a favorite boy in his store, and whom he had helped forward in the world—then a well-to-do country merchant. The letter was immediately answered with a remittance, which satisfied the landlady for several weeks, by the end of which his boy had come to

town on purpose to see him, and to take him to his own home ; but, as he had already a large family of his own, the old man would not consent to become an additional burden, and declined the generous offer. The grateful apprentice then spent some days in the forlorn hope of collecting a few debts long given up by his master. While engaged in this effort, he fell in with a friend who gave him a note to the President of the St. Johnland Trustees. That gentleman saw at once that this house was the identical *desideratum*, and here (to go no more into detail) the old man expects to end his days, repenting of the struggles of pride which for awhile made him averse to entering such an asylum, but for which he now overflows with gratitude ; and where good food, the comforts due to his age and worth, and a mind at peace with God and man, have been restoratives to his enfeebled frame, and make him almost forget his years.

A bell rang us to breakfast. I might have taken mine in private, but it suited my purpose and feelings as well to go to the refectory. Some twenty of the venerables gathered there in their best habiliments. One of them, an *emeritus* clergyman, revered as the senior of the household, read a chapter and a few appropriate prayers in so faint and tremulous a voice that he could scarcely be heard. As a compliment not ungrateful to him, he was asked to do that service on Sunday mornings, one of the young men living in the house officiating on the other mornings of the week. The table and utensils were clean to brightness. The meal was plain and abundant, and very nicely prepared, from which portions were sent up to several who could not leave their rooms. After breakfast my old friend of the piazza directed my attention to the pictures which covered the walls of several of the rooms and of the hall—a variety of good prints

from Scripture and history. He made intelligent remarks about their design and execution, and said he often entertained his brethren with conversational lectures upon them. In the library, too, where he detained me for some time, he showed himself quite at home with the books.

It being within an hour of church-time, I proposed going to the Sunday-school, when I was told there was none, but children's church in the afternoon instead. Good, thought I; glad that there was one place where, because of Christian day-schools, it is not necessary to exact twice as much of the junior as of the senior Christians on the day of rest. The poor children you may sometimes see after their lessons, for an hour and more, in a crowded school-room, marched to church up two pair of stairs, and there packed away in a loft for nearly two hours more, and carried through the same process in the afternoon, are not likely to have a very appreciative sense of what they sing:

"I have been there, and still would go;  
'Tis like a little heaven below."

As I made a tour of observation through the streets, I observed a lady—one of those good matrons I supposed—stopping for a moment in houses, at intervals, hurrying up new-comers in the place, who might else be laggards at church, to which the bell was now giving its invitation in tones peculiarly sweet to my ear, and to my eyes what a beautiful sight it called out! The Johnland folks, all in their clean Sunday attire—"young men and maidens, old men and children,"—moving along from various directions towards the central House of the Lord. I will not stop to describe the edifice any further than to say that it is a pleasing structure, oblong, with transepts and a tower with a cross-tipped spire.

The interior is simple, with windows ample enough to let in more than "a dim religious light." There are no pews, but open and free seats, on benches unusually wide apart. The semi-circular chancel, including the organ, is arranged much like that in the chapel of St. Luke's Hospital, having over the Lord's Table, in illuminated letters, the words : THIS IS HIS COMMANDMENT, THAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS HE GAVE US COMMANDMENT. I had observed the same hung up in frames in a number of the houses, as the great St. Johnland text. The church might hold some six or seven hundred people ; but there were hardly so many as that then present. The congregation, however, did not appear to leave much empty space in the church, and certainly they did not leave it empty of sound when they opened their mouths in the *Venite*, and seemed indeed "heartily to rejoice in the strength of their salvation." There appeared no listlessness in the service, but a sympathetic earnestness throughout. The responses were loud and full, and in prayer all the congregation were on their knees. At the reading of the lessons they looked at the minister, listening to him, thus encouraging him to read so as to gain their attention, instead of losing part of the chapter while finding it in their Bibles and by closing them before it is done. Led by the organ, which sustained but did not drown their voices, and by a choir of men and boys near the chancel, their antiphonal chanting, and still more their chorale in psalm and hymn, were the most animating I ever joined in ; and not to join in was impossible. A collection was made in plates carried around by some of the choir-boys, which the people were informed was half for the support of the church and half for the orphan-cottages.

I felt some disappointment at seeing another than the

Pastor take his place in the pulpit, but I forgot it as I became interested in the sermon, from the words of St. John : " Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." The preacher showed that, partakers together of the same salvation, we shall be drawn together by a common yet peculiar affection in proportion as we know what that salvation is, and consider the unspeakable and unmerited love from which it flows. The saved are bound together as the saved, in the bonds of the love evangelical. The filial heart towards God, he further showed, constrains the brotherly heart towards all his adopted children in Christ. Charity he made inseparable from faith. He concluded his discourse by reminding his hearers, although a stranger in the place, what especial cause they had for feeling the truth he had been setting forth, and how the providence of God had seconded His grace in favoring them with extraordinary privileges and advantages, which called for extraordinary measures of gratitude towards Him, and of good will and kindness towards one another. He was happy in visiting the settlement, rejoiced in its prosperity, thought it a beautiful application of Christianity, which he thanked his Episcopal brethren for inaugurating, and took pleasure in stating that his own and other Christian bodies were in several places doing the like. " Let us," he said, " have our St. Johnlands of every communion that holds the faith of John. They will all be so much alike that we shall have in them new grounds of inter-communion, and new bonds of fellowship. Finding ourselves so entirely one in the Faith, we shall keep in due subordination the doctrines in which we are apart. Our love to one another on account of the glorious whole will absorb all jealousy and invidious comparisons touching the minor parts. The discords of discre-

pant views and feelings will be solved in the harmonies of Faith, Hope, and Charity. We shall have no *ifs* or *buts* when we say: Peace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Amen, and amen, cried the Pastor, who offered up the Collect for charity, and went on to pour out his full heart in further effusions responsive to the sentiments just delivered, and imploring the Holy Spirit to spread and deepen them in all Christian hearts. On coming out of church the people were full of the sermon, the fervent delivery of which interested those who did not take it all in. Most of them, however, evidently did, as it was expressed in exceedingly simple and forcible language, of which my report of it in the abstract has given you no idea.

I accepted the invitation of the Rector to a place at his table, where I met his wife and son and daughter, and where I expected to become acquainted with the preacher we had just heard. It seems he had relatives in the family of one of the cottagers, and had gone to take his meal with them. In our conversation at dinner, in reference to the excellent discourse of the morning, I remarked: "You may not always be so fortunate in opening your pulpit to strangers."

"Mr. S—— is a stranger in the place, but not to me personally. He is a man of enlarged heart and mind, and lovely Christian spirit, Pastor of the Presbyterian church at—— bury. He has been long promising to make us a visit, and as there are several Presbyterians among us, I was glad of the opportunity of their hearing one of their own preachers—but he preached nobly to us all, did he not?"

"No one," I replied, "heard him with greater pleasure than myself. I should be pleased to know him."

"With all his liberality of sentiment, you would find him



as firm a Presbyterian as I am a Churchman. Neither of us could conscientiously exchange his ecclesiastical position, but that does not hinder his preaching the great truths in which we both agree in my pulpit, any more than it would hinder my doing the same in his. A few of my people labor under the former prejudice on the subject. To help them over it, I now and then let them hear sermons when I know they will be profitable, from some of my non-Episcopal brethren, especially those of churches to which others among the people have belonged. These latter are gratified, while it increases their good will towards me, and certainly does not lessen it towards the church. You saw how all joined in the service this morning. I have some Methodist parishioners, and I have promised them to invite Dr. B—— of New York. A number of my best people are Germans, to whom a sermon in their own language is a treat, so I occasionally open the church of an evening for a Lutheran or Reformed brother, when I can induce one to come up here."

"Do you think," I asked, "a great variety of preachers desirable?"

"By no means; it would not be edifying; but *occasionally* a fresh voice from an earnest heart does us good. I am sure it does *me* good. I can write a better sermon after it. It expands and liberalizes the mind to hear the truth in some diversity of dialect, as we do in hearing men of different theological schools, yet scholars with us in the school of the one Faith. Besides, having brethren from around coming among us with a brotherly spirit, cherishes our view of the Church as the great Evangelist sets it forth—the Brotherhood in Christ. St. Johnlanders, as we were told this morning, we cannot be strangers to any who are one with us in the Faith of St. John. We accept as prophets and evangelists

all who declare the 'testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy.' You noticed that text on the pulpit? It was placed there at the desire of our founder, who meant that here should be that CHURCH OF THE TESTIMONY which at one time he planned to have in the city. He designed to show in it one form of advance on the part of our Church towards union with other Christians, without giving up any of her principles."

"Do members of other churches come to the communion with you?"

"Certainly; for how could brothers refuse to meet at the table of their Elder Brother?"

"What proportion does the number of your communicants bear to that of your whole adult population?"

"About two-thirds, which, though large, is not surprising, considering that the whole place is a church."

"And with so many Christian agencies," I rejoined. "Your Superintendent, when I was here the other day, spoke of some ladies—three, I think he said—who have taken up their abode among you solely for the purpose of doing what good they can among the people."

"Not solely, but mainly. They had their own good also in view. Being earnest Christian women, they resolved to escape from the conventionalities and distractions of city life, which, after long experience, they found so detrimental to the spirit of their calling, and to interfere so much with the satisfactory discharge of its duties. They hoped for more progress in the divine life in a retirement from at least many of the vanities of the world; and where, by a plainer and less expensive style of living, they could use more of their means as well as of their time in works of charity and usefulness."

"Then they are not recluses flying from the duties of life for a sentimental piety?"

"Far from it. They are most useful auxiliaries in my work, especially among the mothers, showing them what so many of them need to learn—how to manage their children, and to be frugal and tidy housekeepers. I can't begin to tell how much they have done in improving the condition of families wanting to do right, but unused to any method or order in their living. The marked cleanliness of the houses and of the place generally which you noticed, is very much owing to the supervision and influence of these excellent persons. In visiting the old men; in advising the orphan-mothers; in comforting and directing how to nurse the sick, and sometimes acting the nurse themselves; in looking after the boys of the shops—in all service of that kind, I don't know how I should get along without them."

"And themselves," I added, "as happy as any of the happiest they make so?"

"Aye; especially when they have the children for little parties at their villas. On Christmas, Easter, and other festive days, the old folks as well as the young know them, I can assure you. The eldest of them, a widow of considerable property (the others are single ladies of about middle age), is our Lady Bountiful; and seldom has bountifulness, as judicious as it is generous, found a sphere in which it is so largely rewarded in seeing its fruits."

While the Rector was telling me this, I was thinking, Why couldn't Aunt Hatty come and live here? She would find Dorcas committee business and parish visiting to her heart's content, and of a kind less disappointing than that she is accustomed to; and there would be work for her leisure, too, besides crochet and netting; and something to

satisfy her kind nature better than loading her rich nephews and nieces with more toys and jewelry than they know what to do with. Do show her my letter. She can bring her dog Gyp with her if she will.

I then asked about the society of young men, some of the members of which I thought I saw in bluish-grey frocks sitting with a squad of boys.

"You did," he said, and then gave me an interesting account of them, which I will condense for you in as few words as possible. It appears that they have been united for several years as a brotherhood, under the style of *The Christian Brothers of St. Johnland*, the leading but not exclusive object of which is the self-trial of its members as to their fitness for the ministry of Christ. The most of them are aspirants for that holy office, but consider themselves strictly on trial during the period of three, five, or seven years, the term for which, according to their education and other circumstances, they enter. At the end of it, if they are persuaded they have a divine call to the ministry, they will present themselves for an examination of their intellectual ability, their acquaintance with and understanding of the Holy Scriptures, their learning, general information, etc. Should any not be found qualified, they will probably have provided against that contingency by fitting themselves to become teachers, or for some business which they can learn here, and in which they can be virtual ministers in the lay ranks, or they may continue in the Brotherhood.

"I see," I remarked. "They are probationers for the ministry, rather than candidates becoming ministers of course, unless chargeable with some positive moral delinquency. This strikes me as wise and prudent, though not always necessary. A young man may be sufficiently sure of

himself at the outset ; but ordination considered always and from the first, as a settled thing on condition of success in intellectual and literary studies, and of general good conduct, is one cause of our having clergymen who have mistaken their calling. It may increase the quantity, but not improve the quality of the ministry. I like this self-imposed ordeal of your Brothers. It is at least humble and modest. Of course they are in earnest in it ?”

“They are,” rejoined the Rector. “They lead simple, self-denying lives, making a reality of taking up the cross. They have set times for study and devotion, spending a while every day in gardening or farming, in teaching, or in the workshops. They assemble in the evenings as a community, but they do not all live together. Some have apartments in the Inn ; others live with the cottagers, partaking of their homely fare. Five or six have each the care of ten of the elder orphan or poor boys in separate cottages of their own. As the boys are all day at the shops, where there is a refectory for their meals, the Brothers having charge of them are not overburdened by it, and have time for their own duties.”

“How are they supported ?” I asked.

“They have funds supplied by their friends outside, so that they ask of the corporation only the accommodation of house-room, though some of them pay for that. Two of them are the sons of rich men, who at first opposed their joining the community, but now furnish them with the small pecuniary means they need, besides adding something, it is believed, to their general treasury. They have a library, of which several hundred of the most valuable works were given them by Dr. C——, the beloved friend of our founder. It is in a commodious room of the Inn, where

they make their recitations and hold their evening meetings. For their instruction they have the pastor of the place, to whom they are subordinated as his parishioners, and his assistant, a Moravian Brother; two clergymen who come for a day every week from the city; and their Senior Brother, who is a good scholar in the ancient languages."

"Then, among your other good things here, you have a school of theology?"

"An humble one—of *Christology*," he remarked, "we should prefer saying. The Brothers profess a supreme study of Christ both for their lives and their doctrine. The Gospels are their text-books from the beginning to the end of their course, with the Epistles as their great expounders. With constant prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit (so the rules of their community enjoin upon them), they are learners of the teaching, the spirit, the character, the offices, the perfections, and glory of Jesus the Christ. It is their axiom that, independently of all other proofs, He is self-evidencing to every mind taught by the Spirit. By His light they interpret all Scripture; and their very belief of Scripture rests ultimately on their faith in Christ. But this is more than a theme for conversation. I only wished briefly to explain why the Brothers, so far as they are students, are young Christologists more specifically than Theologians."

"Such a peculiar Christianity of their studies," I remarked, "ought to have a Christianizing effect upon their lives."

"I think it has. They aim to be Christ-like Christians. Their rules for their daily life, going into the particulars of eating and drinking, dress, recreation, etc., and their holding themselves always ready for any service of charity, help

them to a near following of their Lord. Some of them I call my sub-deacons, and send on Sunday afternoons to do missionary work in the neighborhood. Of course, there is a difference among them in their earnestness; sometimes there are faults and inconsistencies which call for reproof, or even discipline."

"Are any of them already candidates for orders?"

"Five or six, I think, are in this diocese, with the understanding, however, that their candidateship is the ordeal we have been speaking of. Some have come from different orthodox Churches, in which they may continue when they enter on their missionary life, for it is that which they generally look forward to rather than the parochial ministry. Several of them are young Germans, full of zeal to labor among their countrymen in New York. In fact, they go there already on lay missions. These will probably be ordained for the Lutheran or Reformed Ministry. Thankful shall we be to send forth heralds of the Cross, whatever be their name, as long as they are true and loyal men to our God and His Christ. After the trial of the Brotherhood, we should have good hopes of their never proving false."

Would, I thought with myself, that cousin Frank would come and try himself here. You know he talks of being a parson. He is a lovely youth, of studious habits, well posted in church matters; but sometimes I fear his notion of a parson's life, or that of his doting parents, does not get much beyond a nice church and a genteel congregation.

"From what I have told you of these Brothers," continued the Rector, "you must not fancy them a sort of monks. They are not that. They are unmarried for the time, but are not bound by vows of celibacy, or even to continue in

the society. They are expected to complete the term for which they enter, at the end of which matrimony will be with them a matter of choice. If, as missionaries, they shall judge a single life best, for awhile at least, the discipline to which they have been used will have been a good preparation for it. Our place is thoroughly pervaded with the idea of family life. The monastic or ascetic spirit is foreign to its genius. Nothing here is in violence with God's appointments. Roman Catholicism may have its convents; it is for Evangelical Catholicism to make St. Johnlands."

I had further pleasant and instructive conversation with my kind host and his family until it was time for the children's church in the afternoon. That, I found, was not wholly a juvenile affair; a number of the parents and other adults being present, whom the Pastor has in his mind in his catechising and familiar lectures as well as his younger hearers. He depends mainly upon these afternoon exercises for the sound indoctrination of his flock, preparing himself for them, he told me, as carefully as for his sermons. I thought him exceedingly happy, engaging and not merely entertaining the children; thus affording a good specimen of such teaching to those of the Brothers who were present to witness it, as well as to have some eye to the boys. The subject was the promises at Baptism, as that sacrament was going to be administered; and most effectively and affectionately did he bring it home to the parents before him who had made those promises, some perhaps with too little thought, and to the children who had just been saying in their catechism that they believed themselves bound to keep them.

A youthful couple, followed by some elderly people, came up to the font, with their first-born dressed in the plainest and purest white. When the questions were put slowly and



distinctly, the congregation seemed to hearken how the sponsors, after what the minister had been saying, would answer them. They did it audibly, and as if they meant what they said. With a smiling interest all gazed at the little one enfolded in the surpliced arms, listening for the name—*Johanna*. As soon as the sacred act was done, and the infant replaced in the arms of the mother, washing it again with her tears of quickened love, the hymn was sung—"Saviour, who Thy flock art feeding." After the service there was a lingering in the church to get a peep at the new St. Johnlander. Many a baby had been born and baptized in the colony, but in this instance the young parents had come there when boy and girl, and were universal favorites with the people.

I took supper with the ancients of the Inn. One of them, who had been at church in the afternoon, said "that the young fellow who had had his baby christened was a sort of great-nephew of his; that he had lost his mother when very young, and was left by his father, a miserable idler, to the chances of the street, infested by vicious urchins that would have made him no better than themselves; that he (the old uncle) had succeeded in getting him from his father, and placed him here, where he has turned out a promising young man, very much from one of the Brothers taking a great liking to him; that he was now a smart journeyman carpenter, and had had a hand in putting up some of the cottages. The place has been the saving and the making of him."

"Aye, and of a lot more," added a voice.

A company of us sat out on the piazza, my friend of the morning keeping at my side. "The sun," he said, "will set clear. It is getting through the clouds. So may it be with us. We have had clouds overhead in our afternoons. I

know I have. And some of us have weathered rough storms. Never mind, if it is clear at last. Can't some one strike up that verse, 'And at my life's last setting sun.'"

"Wait until the boys come," said another; "they'll be here presently." It seems that the choristers of the church came every Sunday evening to sing for the old men.

We sat looking over the fading landscape. The village in the foreground was in strong light and shade from the golden horizon. The half moon above us shot its silver rays through the foliage of the trees, and the evening-star began to sparkle in the west. My old friend expatiated on the glorious scene, when the singers appeared.

"Now, youngsters," he said, "let us have 'The spacious firmament on high.'"

"Why, sir, that's just what we have been practising for you," cried a little fellow; "Brother Henry said it would be so nice on such an evening as this."

Sweetly they carolled Addison's lines, then some chants, ending with Bishop Ken's never-failing vesper lay, "Glory to Thee, my God, this night."

We were in a musing mood. The boys sat making the most of the cakes brought them by the matron, and then watching the moon-white sails on the water. Two of the aged ones leaned over the far end of the railing, solacing themselves with their pipes. My friend had one of the boys between his knees, with his hands on his head, as if breathing a blessing on the child. A swell of psalmody from a neighboring co age, where one of the Brothers was holding a prayer-meeting, came softly wafted to our ears. The tree-frogs and katydids mingled their notes with the woodland hum. "Good-night, good-night," said the boys politely with a bow, then sprang down the steps, and ran singing over the

lawn. A good night I had, and next morning bade good-day to St. Johnland, thanking God for what I had seen and heard in it.

Yours always,

K—

I have told my dream —.

And shall that be the end of it?

Shall it be no more than a dream?

Before answering the question, my Christian reader, to whom I beg to address it, allow me to ask you to look at that which is no dream. Let me turn your eyes to that which exists in no aerial regions of the brain, but in regions earthly enough and not miles away from your own doors. Look at those quarters of your city where the people herd by fifties and hundreds in a house, street after street. Look at them huddled together in narrow rooms with surroundings and effluvia where a half-hour's stay would sicken you. See places which might rather be stalls or sties than human abodes. Look at the swarms of children in the streets, on the stoops, at the windows, half-naked or in unwashed rags. See the crowds of rough, half-grown boys in knots at the corners, quick at all sorts of wickedness, loud in foulness and blasphemy, the ready and the worst element of your riots. Mark the looks and the talk of the populace of the dram-shops, and then the exhibitions of godlessness, drunkenness, and licentiousness on the Lord's day, turning it, I had almost said, into Satan's day. And why do I ask you to look at such a revolting state of things among those thousands of your neighbors? In the hope that aught which you or I can do will better it? To propose any scheme for its mate-

rial improvement? Alas, no. The evil is too gigantic for any grasp of reform at all conceivable. It calls for legislative interference; and that, could any practicable mode of melioration be shown, would call for more public virtue than exists. This massing of human beings, prolific of those vices and miseries, is profitable to too many pockets. The exorbitant rents of the smallest dens or of the larger tenements swell the gains of landlords, who have the plea for any amount of rapacity, that they only meet a demand. Their receptacles overflow with those who must have stopping-places where they can get their bread. The insular city cannot be expanded into space for any fit or healthful housing of the poor in those quarters of it where they must consort.\* This stowage of souls and bodies—our municipal disgrace—is, I fear, a necessity—in view of its terrible evils, a dire necessity—how dire we have not yet seen.

Our benevolent, reformatory, and religious agencies do not stand aloof. They work on with a persistent zeal, encouraged by the least success; but anything like the elevation of a whole locality is beyond their hopes. They cannot change circumstances and their inevitable consequences. They cannot remove causes, and, of course, not effects. What they do to-day is undone to-morrow, to be done again the next day, and then again undone. The good seed is perseveringly sown, but the field is already rank with tares. The means of salvation are proffered and urged, but amid overpowering means of destruction. The noxious physical and moral are ever acting and reacting with cumulative force. The cleanliness which is next to godliness,

\* Unlike Philadelphia, with innumerable separate domicils for its laboring and mechanic population—the chief beauty of that beautiful city.

among the degraded poor finds no place. In filth sin is in its element, and has its most disgusting outgrowths.

Again, then, why do I ask you to look at a state of things confessedly so hopeless? Hopeless in the aggregate, but not in the particulars. It would be sad, indeed, if in our dark delineation it was all dark; dreadful, if in those masses of humanity it was all vile. But it is not. There are green spots even in those deserts, and doubtless far more than we see. The forbidding aspects do not indicate universally corresponding facts. There are exceptions, and often most interesting ones. Every here and there are individuals and families having a keen sense of the wretchedness of their condition, but powerless to escape it. Many of them once used to other modes of life, while they submit to their lot, yet for its worse than temporal ills cannot be reconciled to it. Strangers to aught of domestic comfort, they are unrepining, yet not without longings for the sweets and decencies of home. They are parents, and cannot be indifferent to the perils of their offspring. They are hard workers. They are above begging, and to keep above it they must live as and where they do. For the sake of these it is I show you those hapless multitudes—these among them, yet not of them; these toiling, suffering poor; these Christians steadfast amid unchristian influences and antichristian forces which would try a more enlightened faith than theirs; these fellow-members of the household of faith, perchance of your own particular communion. To the rescue of these and theirs, whom they love as you love yours, I invoke you. For these I beg Christian homes and privileges, and some little share of family enjoyments, to which you cannot think they have forfeited every right. You will not say that their poverty is their righteous excommunication. To show how

they may be rescued, I have dreamed of them, transplanted by your bounty, to where they can live, and not merely exist. I have pictured their colony, with its accessories, such as I have long pleased myself with imagining, and as time might bring forth. Whether it is *all* likely to be realized, whether some of the forms of the vision are not fond fancies rather than probable future facts, matters not. Set down as much as you please to the score of imagination; amend, change, curtail as you will, only saving the one main idea—a Christian industrial community, a rural settlement in which the worthy, diligent poor may have becoming abodes, with the means and rewards of diligence, together with the provisions of the Gospel—will that be dismissed as a dream?

It cannot be. It is not to be conceived of Christians who are in the midst of plenty, encompassed by a gracious and bountiful Providence, having scarce a wish within the wide limits of their means ungratified, and acknowledging their responsibility for the use of their manifold gifts and opportunities, that they will turn aside from a practical philanthropy commending itself, so entirely as this must, to their minds and hearts: a scheme not to increase, but to lessen the numbers of dependents upon alms-giving; not to encourage and so multiply the indolent poor, but to help them to help themselves; to lift them up to an honest independence; to give them what on any scale of Christian justice is their due; to save them from ever struggling in vain; to extricate them from necessities binding them hand and foot, a prey to wretchedness, sorely tempting them to seek relief in sin; to give a brotherly hand to them, amid all their homeliness, as to brothers and sisters in Christ. A scheme not for to-day or to-morrow, but to make virtuous and happy generations of those who else would swell the generations of

vice and misery in this metropolis, where they are already so frightfully augmenting.

Or do you, or you my reader, yet hesitate? Let me come down from generalities to actual every-day sights, and those immediately around myself. 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, which 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 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 old brother of eighty-five, who, in intelligence and piety, might compare with the venerable one fancied 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 here by sickness from his sky parlor, where his bed has been sometimes drenched with rain. Or that sweet-faced young girl, waiting for the last agony of a heart disease, contracted by bending over her needle sixteen hours out of the eighteen, 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 would never



be better while she lived on tea and bread.\* Or in another direction, look in at the Factory, where I lately saw children who the overseer told me are confined there thirteen and a

\* On asking the Superintending Sister of the Hospital for some further instance among ourselves, she penned me the following, which had occurred that day. It is too long for the text, but it is so much to the point, that, rather than omit or abridge it, I insert it here:

Mrs. M., the mother of one of our little patients in the Children's Ward, came to my room this morning, looking neat and respectable as usual, but with a more worn and anxious face than is common with her. She is a favorite with us for her tidiness, her tenderness to her children, and the courage and industry with which she turns her hand to any honest employment that may help support the family, left by the feeble health of her husband almost wholly to her care. A message had been sent her, to say that Johnny was cured of the long and tedious sickness for which he came into the Hospital, and that we should like her to take him home, to make room for one more needing it. I supposed that her visit had reference to this; and after we had talked together a little of her husband's health, and the beauty of the new few-weeks-old baby, so delightfully clean and nice, which she had brought with her, I thought nothing remained but to bid her and her boy good-bye. But she lingered near me as if unwilling to leave, and then (she is not used to begging) said, hesitatingly:

"Would it be a thing not to be thought of, Sister, that Johnny should *stay* another month or so?"

"And why do you ask that?" I inquired.

"Well, you see, my husband's worse nor common, and this little young one hinders me from doing as much washing and house-cleaning as I did afore he was born—and everything's so dear, I don't know at all how to give the blessed boy the food he'll be looking for, after living here so long. We've got a poorer way of getting along than ever, these times—just one room and a bit of a bedroom; sometimes a fire, and sometimes not; sometimes a good meal, and more times not. But that isn't the worst; Johnny's getting so good now, and learning so good; and if he comes home he'll grow to be just as bad as he was afore you took him; for the children in our alley are an awful wicked lot, and I can't keep him always shut up in our close place; and when I'm out working I can't watch him."

"I know how that is," I said; "and it is very sorrowful."

"Oh, Sister, indeed you don't begin to know what it is! You can't think what

half hours every day, allowing a half-hour for each of their meals. In the winter they come long before light, through frost and snow, and are not free until eight at night.

Or if you must see with your own eyes, go to the places where so many of the youth of the lower classes spend their working hours, the upper floors of mills and factories, horse-hair workers, artificial flower makers, and other of the lighter departments of our various manufactures where young women, especially, are congregated. Visit some narrow, ill-ventilated workroom at the back of a second class milliner's store. From twelve to fifteen young girls are employed there, collected without reference to morals, manners, or any other qualification than the skill with which they can ply their needle and shape to the fashion of the day the gay fabrics given to their hand. They

the poor children hear and pick up! Why, my youngest little girl, not three year old, curses dreadfully; and the more I say about it the worse she does it."

"Curses! She can't know the meaning of the words?"

"I can't tell," said the poor mother; "only I know she is always ready with some bad word when anything angers her, and what to do I can't tell. Johnny's so sweet and good spoken now, wouldn't it be a pity for him to come back to the like of that?"

Surely it would, and what could I say to comfort the distressed mother? Your St. Johnland naturally came to my mind.

"Wouldn't it be good," I said, "if you could have a little home in some quiet country place, with work enough, and godly people to help you bring up the children rightly?"

"Oh, Sister, sure it would; but what's the use of the like of me thinking of that?"

"That's true; but some one else might think of it for you, and by-and-by, perhaps, bring it about; and then it wouldn't grieve you to have Johnny home again."

"Ah, no!" she sighed out, incredulous of the possibility of any such boon to her and hers. "But what about Johnny now, Sister?"

And she did not leave me until it was agreed that, for the present at least, he should remain with us.

work together from ten to eleven consecutive hours, with a brief intermission at noon for the cold, scanty meal they have with them. Their occupation is in itself conducive to vanity; light thoughts and words spring up almost naturally where it is carried on, and a moral atmosphere is engendered which few can breathe without deadly hurt. Not that this is a picture of all such establishments, but it is a type of too many. And now see the homes to which many of them go when they leave their work. What wonder if their dreariness and dullness drive them to the theatre, the dance house, and still lower haunts. Most of these, sad to think, may be doomed to such a life, having learnt to love it. But some, to the joy of their parents, might be transferred to a better, and how many others we know not might be saved from it beforehand, by giving them employment in such a colony as we have imagined.

Spare a morning to accompany to his district a visitor of The Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor. Go with him around his accustomed beat. Passing through scenes varied, but alike in cheerlessness, stop with him at a room, forlorn, yet not untidy, where the inmates receive you with mingled courtesy and shame. You see at once they are worthy of far other circumstances. Hear their past, see their present, and for their future will you say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Pursue your exploring with the visitor in foul and dingy rears, in blind alleys, in walled up courts, where the sun has not leave to shine, nor the air to stir; see pale weavers in damp earthy cellars, seamstresses in closets, mothers with babies in stifling pens, friendless widows in attic cells, children with white faces and bright eyes crawling in the dirt—among them wild flowers of beauty that you would fain transplant, to grow and bloom in a gar-

den of the Lord\*—So use a few hours, and then, returning to your own goodly mansion, survey it with the sights through which you have just passed still in your eye. Look through your suites of apartments with all their apparatus of comfort and ease, their adornments of luxury and elegance—see how much might be taken away and still superfluities remain—consider your daily mode of life, your table, your dress, your equipage, your entertainments, your domestic and social pleasures—see them in the light of those contrasts which it pained you to behold, and methinks you too must have dreams of a St. Johnland;—God grant you may not only dream.

Will it be said, that these are not the times in which to expect the means for such an enterprise? But the times supply the means for new enterprises of every kind, and for all that people desire to the last extremes of indulgence. Rather these are the very times for turning money, now of more uncertain value than ever, into foundations of permanent good. Now, when the stocks of the market are so fickle, is the opportunity for investments in the stocks of charity and benevolence, of which the rates of interest never change.

\* In representing the condition of the poor in the overcrowded districts of our city, I have drawn but a faint picture of the reality. The last Report of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor—a document full of practical thought and wisdom, which deserves to be pondered by every citizen, says of Cellar Residences: "It is the reproach of our city government, after all the startling developments which have been made on this subject, that not *less than six thousand families, consisting of about eighteen thousand persons, continue to live in these unhealthy underground habitations.*" These, of course, would not be likely families for our colony, but one in a hundred might—and sure they are worth the saving. The cellar missionaries must sometimes wish for such a place.

Especially are these the times for making provision for those who are the greatest sufferers by the times—the bereaved families, the widows and orphans of the fallen defenders of our country. To make homes for such, is one of the objects of St. Johnland.

Let us now consider the scheme in a practical light.

Turn not from it as one of too great magnitude. While admitting it to be excellent and in every way desirable, set it not down as beyond the bounds of practicability. It would be so, were it proposed to be accomplished at once—of course it is not; no one would think of it, except as a thing of growth and gradual development. Its beginning may be comparatively small and easy. In our retrospect we have looked at it in its maturity, and as what it might come to be at the end of some eight or ten years. Besides, in that range of anticipation there are adjuncts which would be valuable but not integral parts of the plan. For instance, the Church of the Testimony and the Society of Christian Brothers.\* In determining the feasibility of the project, let it be considered simply as a plan for providing homes, work, and the Church, in the country for the deserving poor, including the Old Men's Home, and leaving other desirable things to come about as they may.

The first requisite, in order that the scheme may go into

\* These have been long cherished hopes of my life. As I may not see them realized, and wishing to give them an ideal existence, I took the opportunity of exhibiting them as I have done in the letters. Some such organization as the Christian Brothers we must have in our large cities, if we are ever to deal effectually with their poor. Should that come to pass fancied in our colony, and the latter be not too distant, it might do good service working in our city, for which the Brothers might be detailed in companies, and by turns, according to a system having due regard to their studies.

effect, is that it be adopted by a number of gentlemen, who in due time shall be incorporated as the Trustees of St. Johnland, —to secure which is the primary object in the circulation of the present pamphlet. Supposing it accomplished, the enterprise will come before the public under the auspices of names which will show that it is no longer a dream, and that it is really to have a place on *terra firma*. The measures to be taken at its outset, the raising of money necessary for a beginning, the finding of suitable land, will be the initiatory business of the Trustees;—accordingly what here follows is only suggestion on my part, offered with the view of showing how the work might proceed.

The site of land, chosen with regard to comfort in winter as well as in summer, nigh to woods and water, of some two or three hundred acres, should be about thirty miles from the city of New York, within the State, and not distant from a station on a railroad, the Harlem or Hudson River Road to be preferred. It would greatly facilitate the undertaking if the land had upon it a house commodious and large enough—or capable of being made so—to serve for the Old Men's Home, with which part of the plan it would be desirable to make a beginning, not because it is the first in importance, but because the want of such an institution is very generally felt. I have already several thousand dollars contributed towards it, in view, too, of its being located in the country rather than in the city. The house for a while might be the residence of the pastor, and its hall, or one of its apartments, the place of public worship. In the event of the enterprise going no further, the house with a few acres could be set off as a separate establishment, complete in itself, and the remainder disposed of at the option of the trustees. But waiving that contingency, trusting it would not

occur, and supposing the funds to be secured for the erection of a number of cottages, double ones, perhaps, to begin with, attention should then be turned to the selection of the right sort of families to occupy them. This should be done with great care. A vast deal would depend on the character of the first settlers. They must be pattern people to give the right tone to the society—the leaven to leaven the lump, and that to be gradually added to with homogeneous materials.

With respect to employment for the people at the commencement, there would be no difficulty. I hear of women in the country getting a living by sewing caps, garments, upper leathers, carpet bags, &c., and sending their work regularly to the city. An extensive manufacturer, on my mentioning the scheme to him, said he could supply a large number of female hands with work, who could do it without inconvenience to him, at a moderate distance from the city. Various employments would also be found for men, especially as the settlement increased.

One desideratum, of prime and early importance, remains to be mentioned, and that is the devotion to the work of some capable minister of the Episcopal Church, who shall feel drawn towards it by what is said in the foregoing pages, and be willing to give himself to it without reserve. Considered as a domestic mission, it would be a most promising one, and as such well worthy the labors of almost any clergyman calculated for it. I hope to enter upon it myself (not resigning for the present St. Luke's Hospital), but at my time of life I cannot expect to do much beyond a beginning. I should at once need a coadjutor qualified to become the principal; a man with his heart in the pastoral office, a plain and earnest preacher, affectioning the poor, and conversant with them, of some experience in life, with energies still fresh, and now

in exercise in some field of active Christian work. Happy shall I be to hear of such an associate, who at first would have more or less of the duties of Superintendent.

In conclusion, I beg earnestly to commend the undertaking to the consideration of my Christian brethren, especially those who have the means to carry it into effect, with the prayer that they may be disposed to do so by Him, whose good Spirit I humbly trust has put it into my mind.

Communications offering aid, or naming suitable land, or touching any point in the letters which may excite interest or inquiry, may be addressed to the subscriber,

W. A. MUHLENBERG.

\*ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL, NEW YORK,  
November 18, 1864.



CORRESPONDENCE.

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I have great pleasure in subjoining the following letter from Robert M. Hartley, Esq., Secretary of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor in this city :

39 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK,  
September 30, 1864.

REV. WM. A. MUHLENBERG, D.D. :

*My dear Friend:* I have met with interruptions, or you would have heard from me sooner. It now affords me sincere pleasure to comply with your request in giving you my impressions of the embryo enterprise you have so happily delineated in the manuscript you read to me.

As I listened with deepening interest to your graphic account of "St. Johnland," with its various assemblages of kindred objects harmoniously adjusted into a system for beneficent ends, I was delighted with the picture, and discovered nothing incongruous or incoherent in its parts, or impracticable in the plan so ingeniously projected.

Your dream is not all a dream. It develops a new method of doing good, and invests that method with peculiar attractions. If I correctly apprehend the scheme, it involves no action at variance with the philosophy of philanthropy, or the principles of social science, so called ; and certainly none that are unsanctioned by the Gospel. On the contrary, it appears to be based on sound practical views which are fitted, when carried out, to produce in a good degree the results you anticipate. Judging your plan,

therefore, in the light of its own principles and objects, it should commend itself to the confidence and patronage of all who care for these things.

What are the objects referred to? I may not from memory enumerate them all; but, if I recollect correctly, it comes within their scope to discriminate between honest poverty and imposture; to elevate and not debase by injudicious kindness; to reclaim the intemperate; sympathize with the suffering; counsel the erring; stimulate the indolent; give work to the idle; thrift to the thriftless; instruction to the ignorant; an asylum to the aged; moral and industrial training to the young—and, peradventure, reformers to the world; to make, in fine, all influences—sanitary, social, physical, moral, and religious—subservient to the elevation of a class which abounds in the crowded purlieus of this great city—the poverty-stricken and the tempted—who are suffering, sinking, perishing, in the absence of such a provision as it is the design of your enterprise to secure.

It is neither undervaluing the importance nor the efficiency of Christianity to affirm that it acts not in opposition to the laws of nature, but in accordance with them; success, therefore, can only be predicated of such agencies and operations as harmonize with these laws. Reason and Revelation both teach that the spiritual is no first, but the natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual. Nor should this order be reversed. Physically constituted as man is, such regard should be had to his physical condition as shall have a favorable bearing on his discipline and development. His senses being the inlet to those influences which either exalt or degrade character, it is necessary to his improvement that such influences be of a kind which shall neither corrupt the soul nor neutralize good impressions. Exceptional cases do not invalidate, but establish the rule. If it were a gratuitous mockery of wretchedness to tell men to live by faith who were famishing for food, would there be greater consistency in expecting purity of heart and cha-

racter among those whose physical circumstances were utterly incompatible with the common decencies of life! Such methods of reform are as contrary to nature and the dictates of experience as to the teachings of Christianity, and can only result in disappointment. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles; neither should we expect social elevation from the depths of physical degradation, nor yet moral purity from the hot-beds of vice and corruption. Without more effective exertions than have yet been made to improve the wretched domiciliary condition of large masses of our population, it is to be feared that most other efforts for their benefit, however faithfully prosecuted, will signally fail of their object. The direction of your thoughts, therefore, to this subject is most opportune; and I think I do not misjudge in saying that, to the extent your vision of "St. Johnland" is practically realized, it will aid in meeting a great public necessity.

Although this letter is unexpectedly lengthened, allow me to refer very briefly to one feature of your scheme, which is so peculiar as to merit notice. Your enterprise once in operation, though purely beneficent, will be mainly self-supporting. And this result is secured by avoiding the too common mistake of making that a charity which should be the earnings of prudent industry. As no gratuitous benefits are designed for your tenantry, self-reliance will not be undermined, nor improper motives be presented to induce any to seek your establishment. On the contrary, the prospect of a healthful and comfortable home for less rent than is paid for miserable city tenements would stimulate exertion, while its possession would exert a very salutary influence in reforming and elevating character. Commercial remuneration, in a word, so far as practicable, with benevolent results, is the only sound principle, either on a large or smaller scale, of improving the domiciliary condition of the poor.

If, in conclusion, I may venture to touch another topic, it would be the denominational character of your enterprise.

Your preferences attach you to one branch of the Church militant, mine to another. "Is, then, Christ divided?" Nay; if we are His, are we not one in Him? Why not, then, forget our differences, and labor together in His work as brethren of the same household? If (as you believe) less exclusiveness would actually impair its harmony and efficiency, then, I say, it should come under the jurisdiction of one denomination. To some this may prove an objection; but to me it matters not whether of "Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," if all be of Christ.

That you may be divinely guided and prospered, is the wish of

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT M. HARTLEY.

NEW YORK,

October 8, 1864.

MY DEAR MR. HARTLEY:

I thank you for your letter. Your cordial approbation of the scheme submitted to your opinion, with your philosophic examination of it, gives me increased confidence in its success. The endorsement of one who is known to have devoted himself so long and so ably to the true interests of our city poor, and who so well understands their wants and how they should be met, will secure for me the attention of many who otherwise might take me at my word, and set me down for a dreamer.

Allow me to say a few words touching the last paragraph of your letter. I think you seem to prefer that the proposed settlement, in its religion, should not be what we call denominational; but if you keep in view one main feature of the plan, you will perceive that that is both necessary and desirable. The people are to have pastoral care and supervision. That is to be one great means of their spiritual and moral improvement, and a main security for the general good order. Now the Pastor will necessarily be of some one denomination of Christians, according to the order of which he will

conduct his ministrations. This implies conformity on the part of the people, else there could be no faithful or effective pastorate; and without such a pastorate, the place, in its religious or ecclesiastical character, would be quite another thing from that contemplated. Were the people to depend for their Church-services upon a succession of ministers, they would look up to no one as their spiritual teacher or overseer. They would be sheep without a shepherd. The only practicable course, if the religious element is not to be secondary, is to have one church, and one pastor, with such aid of his own choosing as he might need—a Pastor, however, who would have regard for the religious predilections among his people in the spirit of charity, but not of indifference to vital error.

St. Johnland originating with Episcopalians, its Church would of course be theirs. But probably others than Episcopalians would be more or less among the inhabitants. Certainly there could be no exclusion of them. Suppose that some of these should proceed to set up a place of worship of their own, separating themselves from the charge of the Rector, that is from the Church jurisdiction of the place. This would be a violation of the understanding on the subject, and, more than that, might be the beginning of unhappy dissensions. Yet to forbid it might look like intolerance. It must be *prevented—forestalled*; and how? Not by not establishing one particular form of Christianity, but by administering that form in the spirit of a wider Christianity. In other words, by having a Rector or Pastor acting and feeling like the one sketched in the prospectus—a man true to his own Church, but not ignoring her sister Churches, and pleased to show his fellowship with them by a practical recognition of their preachers as fellow-evangelists with him in the testimony of the Gospel. This would be good policy on his part; but it must be more. It must be an enlarged Christian spirit, and a conciliatory temper which would also allow the indulgence of religious tastes and preferences in private ways, not interfering with the Church order of the place.

Still, some might not be satisfied. If so, they would have the spirit of schismatics, and should find their abodes somewhere else.

In this, however, I have been anticipating a state of things not likely to occur in a community of no greater size than that projected. I have endeavored to state sound principles of general application. Thus, should you set on foot a Church Industrial Settlement, it would of course be Presbyterian—not excluding, I well know, all non-Presbyterian preachers of the Gospel. But if some Episcopalians among your settlers should separate from your Pastor, and attend only services of their own, you would remonstrate with them; showing them how unbrotherly, and therefore unchurchlike, their conduct was in refusing to worship with their fellow-Christians. If they persisted, you could convince them that they were out of place in *your* St. Johnland.

The multiplication of such denominational institutions of industry and benevolence, and so conducted, would not increase among us the denominational spirit. It would lessen it. Working in and for them, we should realize the oneness of our common faith. Conscientiously maintaining our respective forms and doctrines, yet looking at one another less through their disguising medium and more through the clearer and higher atmosphere of charity, we shall see more and more of our family likeness in the one household of the Lord.

With these explanations, in which I have been more diffuse than may have been necessary, I am sure you will allow that while my St. Johnland must be “denominational,” it will not be exclusive; and that consistently I may join you in asking with the Apostle, “Is Christ, then, divided?”

With great esteem,

Yours sincerely,

W. A. MUHLENBERG.

39 BIBLE HOUSE,  
October 12, 1864.

REV. DR. MUHLENBERG :

*My dear Sir :* After reading your favor just received, I do not regret writing the last paragraph of my letter, since it has drawn from your pen so lucid and satisfactory an exposition of your views on the matter there referred to.

Allow me, however, to say, that I neither misapprehended that important feature of the plan which you have now more fully unfolded and explained, nor, for myself, conceived the least objection thereto. On the contrary, such a denominational connection and pastoral oversight as your enterprise suggests and provides, appeared to me, as you have expressed it, "both necessary and desirable." And if, on a first view of your organization, other minds, as I feared, might be differently impressed, such impressions, I now rejoice to believe, will soon disappear in the clear and convincing light your letter has shed upon the subject.

Accept the renewed assurance of my high regard,

Yours very truly,

R. M. HARTLEY.





















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