

**ST. JOHNLAND: A RETRO-
PROSPECTUS IN TWO
LETTERS, SUPPOSED TO BE
WRITTEN SOME YEARS HENCE**

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St. Johnland: A Retro-prospectus in Two Letters, Supposed to be Written Some Years Hence by
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W. A. MUHLENBERG

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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.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
THOMAS WHITTAKER,
No. 3 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK.
1864.

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. MUELENBERG.

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

MY DEAR DR. MUELENBERG:—

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.

To

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

THREE PAGES ARE

Affectionately Inscribed.

W. A. MUEHLBERG.

ST. JOHNLAND: A RETRO-PROSPECTUS.

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 handiwork. 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.