

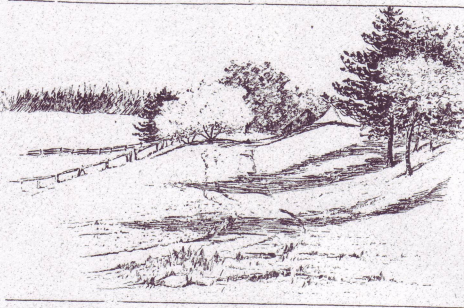
In this respect Florence has been singularly fortunate, and the business career of Samuel L. Hill and others gives signal proof that this combination is practicable and that the union of wisdom and love helps to the best material results, as well as to the best life for all. Fraternity and self-respect are better stimulants to skilled and faithful labor than a blind and chilling selfishness.

The Community was short-lived. Its errors have died away, its influence for good is still felt, for the right outlives the wrong and so the world moves upward.

WHAT I FOUND AT THE NORTHAMPTON ASSOCIATION.

BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

OF the great mental wave of reform that passed over New England fifty years ago and gave rise to the Florence, Brook Farm, and Hopedale Communities, others can tell you more and better than I. The religion of good will to man ; of fervent desire and courageous determination to put aside the old and to venture boldly upon the new ; to change and improve conditions of human existence ; to liberate mankind from the bondage of time-worn custom ; to curb and fix limits to individual selfishness ; to diffuse wealth among the lowly ; to banish poverty ; to harmonize conflicting interests, and to promote the happiness of mankind generally, had at that time such a revival as, perhaps, New England had never seen before, and has certainly never seen since.



"Far from gay cities and the ways of men."—*Pope*.

This high thought of the time took deep hold upon men and women, and led them to dare and do startling things in contradiction to the common sense of the period. Many who thought themselves reformers were not ready to embark in the wild, or what seemed to them wild, and fantastical measures of these radicals ; who, in their war against old forms and social arrangements, sometimes seemed to assume that whatever was new, was true, and that whatever was old, was erroneous. With them, the old way was the wrong way, and the new was the right, or at least had within it the promise of the right.

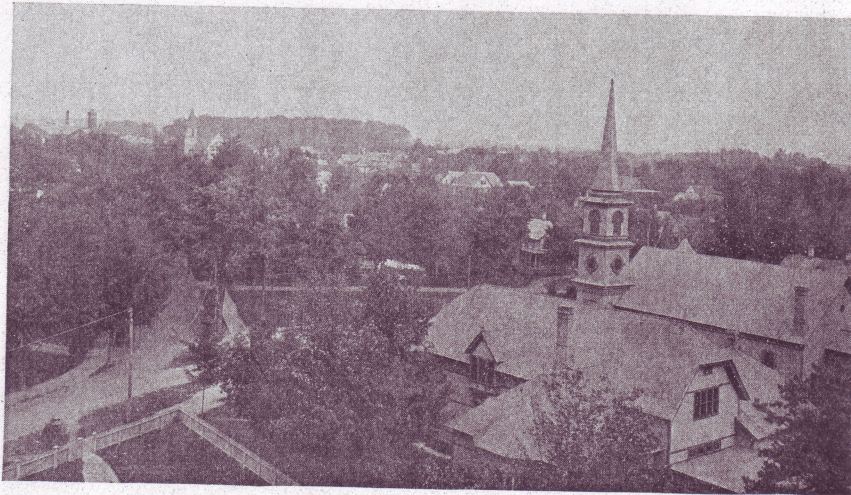
The period was one of faith, hope, and charity ; of millennial foreshadowing. The air was full of isms—Grahamism, mesmerism, Fourierism, transcendentalism, *communism*, and *abolitionism*. Fresh from slavery at that time, and keenly alive to its horrors, my mind was mainly occupied with the last mentioned ism, and yet with a strong leaning towards communism as a remedy for all social ills. I found, too, that the men and women who were interested in the work of revolutionizing the whole system of civilization were also deeply interested in the emancipation of the slaves ; and this was enough to insure my sympathy to these universal reformers.

Of the various attempts to give form and substance to the broad and beneficent ideas of the times, Florence and Hopedale seemed fullest of promise. For harmony, Hopedale had a decided advantage over Florence, in that its leaders were of one religious faith, while Florence was composed both of men and women of different denominations, and of those of no religious bias or profession. It was from the first a protest against sectism and bigotry and an assertion of the paramount importance of human brotherhood.

I visited Florence almost at its beginning, when it was in the rough ; when all was Spartan-like simplicity. It struck me at once that the reformers had a tremendous task before them. I knew that many of them were people well to do in the world, and I naturally wondered how they could content themselves to leave the smooth and pleasant paths of life to which they were accustomed, for the rough and thorny ways they were now compelled to tread. The site of the Community was decidedly unpromising. The soil was poor and had little or nothing upon it but stubby oaks and stunted pines. The most hopeful thing I saw there was a narrow stream meandering through an entangled valley of brush and brier, and a brick building which the communists had now converted into a dwelling and factory. The place and the people struck me as the most democratic I had ever met. It was a place to extinguish all aristocratic pretensions. There was no high, no low, no masters, no servants, no white, no black. I, however, felt myself in very high society. I met there Samuel Hill, Seth Hunt, George Benson, Hall Judd, William Bassett, James Boyle, Giles B. Stebbins, Elisha Hammond, his wife, Miss Sophia Foarde, and a number of others, all people from the upper walks of life, and yet fraternizing with the humblest members of the association of which they formed a part.

My impressions of the Community are not only the impressions of a stranger, but those of a fugitive slave to whom at that time even Massachusetts opposed a harsh and repellent side. The cordial reception I met with at Florence, was, therefore, much enhanced by its contrast with

many other places in that commonwealth. Here, at least, neither my color nor my condition was counted against me. I found here my old friend, David Ruggles, not only black, but blind, and measurably helpless, but a man of sterling sense and worth. He had been caught up in New York city, rescued from destitution, brought here and kindly cared for. I speak of David Ruggles as my old friend. He was such to me only as he had been to others in the same plight. Before he was old and blind he had been a coworker with the venerable Quaker, Isaac T. Hopper, and had assisted me as well as many other fugitive slaves, on the way from slavery to freedom. It was good to see that this man who had zealously assisted others was now receiving assistance from the benevolent men and women of this Community, and if a grateful heart



VIEW OF FLORENCE—LOOKING NORTH FROM SCHOOLHOUSE TOWER.

in a recipient of benevolence is any compensation for such benevolence, the friends of David Ruggles were well compensated. His whole theme to me was gratitude to these noble people. For his blindness he was hydropathically treated in the Community. He himself became well versed in the water cure system, and was subsequently at the head of a water cure establishment at Florence. He acquired such sensitiveness of touch that he could, by feeling the patient, easily locate the disease, and was, therefore, very successful in treating his patients.

David Ruggles was not the only colored person who found refuge in this Community. I met here for the first time that strange compound of wit and wisdom, of wild enthusiasm and flint-like common sense, who

seemed to feel it her duty to trip me up in my speeches and to ridicule my efforts to speak and act like a person of cultivation and refinement. I allude to Sojourner Truth. She was a genuine specimen of the uncultured negro. She cared very little for elegance of speech or refinement of manners. She seemed to please herself and others best when she put her ideas in the oddest forms. She was much respected at Florence, for she was honest, industrious, and amiable. Her quaint speeches easily gave her an audience, and she was one of the most useful members of the Community in its day of small things.

It is hardly possible to point to a greater contrast than is presented by Florence now, and what it was fifty years ago. Then it was a wilderness. Now it blossoms like the rose. Though the outward form has changed, the early spirit of the Community has survived. The noble character of its men and women, and the spirit of its teachers, are still found in that locality, and one cannot visit there without seeing that George Benson, Samuel Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Hammond, Sophia Foorde, William Bassett, and Giles B. Stebbins, and the rest of them, have not lived in vain.

THE HUTCHINSONS' VISIT.

BY JOHN W. HUTCHINSON.

THE glorious principle of the "Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man" is a legacy to humanity from primeval times; it was the spirit that pervaded the day of Pentecost, and actuated the early Christians, who "held all things in common." From out the dim vista of years, to the believers of a later generation this spirit came once more, as though ordained to awaken anew the cherished idea advanced by the Master, the rule of love—that mighty, controlling influence which was to be once more promulgated to lift the struggling world to a realm of confidence in God and man.

It was this vital principle that made itself visible in the spirit that shone forth and the motives controlling the dear cluster of believers gathered in the Northampton valley, on the banks of the picturesque Mill River, coming thence from the homes of New England to form the "Northampton Association of Education and Industry." They sought to establish a community. For reasons that it is no part of my task to state, their experiment, like that at Brook Farm in Roxbury, the "North American Phalanx" in New Jersey, and the community of my own loved brothers and sisters in Milford, N. H., was short lived, but the idea is immortal, and some day will receive its successful demonstration.