

CHURCHES

(By Harry H. Greene)

The voice in the old village choir of radio has turned many a wanderer in distant parts of the world to return by way of memories lane to the old village church that for sixty-five years has filled the spiritual needs of Hillsgrove's citizens and opened the pearly gates to many a wanderer from the fold.

The church's white walls have echoed the sacred rites and its old bell tolled the last sad requiem for many of our loved ones. It is not strange, that a visit to its portals fills us with feelings of longing that are not akin to pain for its associations hold for many of us recollections that endear, memories that are gay or sad, for it was a social as well as a religious center.

Of the pastors, able and otherwise, little need be said, they came and were gone but the noble Christian service to the community rendered in its name by the mothers in Israel and the sacrifice made for its maintenance by our fathers make of this landmark a proud monument.

Let us listen in fancy to the voices in the village choirs that come through the haze of our childhood days and we recognize the musical talents of numerous members of the McBride family, the Jackson girls, Vernon and Nettie Hull, Mrs. Dan Graffius, the Galough and Harrison families, Peter Whitacre, Bill Haynes, the Moulthrop family with many others of later date, including the Gambles and Brongs.

Historically, the first religious services were held in the old school house. John Hill had willed the land for the erection of a church which was to be dedicated for the free use of every Protestant sect except the Mormons. A building was erected in the year 1871 which carried out the Friends idea, it had no vestibule and there were two outside entrances, one for men and one for women. Boys were supposed to occupy two raised seats in the rear where the sexton stood to ring the bell and many a boy was chastised

when he arrived home from church for having pulled the bell rope during services. The exterior of the building shaded by large walnut trees was a favorite trysting place and could those old trees talk they could tell many sacred secrets that would not mar the sanctity of the ancient building which through the years has guarded the entrance to God's Acre, the silent city of the dead.

The Church of Christ built in the center of the village is a monument to the dead past and represents, labor and sacrifice to many former residents. It was a labor of love and this church which was erected in 1895 prospered for a quarter of a century doing the Master's work. The flock was scattered and the building is fast falling to decay but the seed planted here has found fruition in distant cities.

Its work is carrying the missionary spirit, which its teaching engendered in the hearts of the members and its influence will never be lost. This church too, has its sacred memories and its ruin is to many of us a shrine in which we can live over again the zeal or youth.

MEET HILLSGROVE

(By Harry H. Greene)

Wandering son, far from your native hearth, cease your daily grind and meditate for a brief season upon pleasant scenes in the land of your nativity.

Imagine yourself at the sunset hour where "Old Round Hill" keeps her eternal guard and the "Gooseberry", "Hog's Back", "School House Point", "Old High Knob", "Jackson Camp", and "Speaker Mountains" rear their massive walls round a fertile valley cradled in the lap of the Loyalsock and lovingly girdled by her mighty arms.

Gaze in the measureless depths of yon azure sky, knowing that no bright aurora of "Southern Cross" or scintillating beam of Borealis can rival its turquoise blue or equal the tints and shades of its fleecy clouds; when twilight drapes gossamer