

A BEAUTIFUL CHURCH

GEORGE M. PULLMAN'S GIFT TO THE VILLAGE OF ALBION

It is an Elegant Universalist Church as a Memorial to his Father—
The Dedication of the Church Edifice To-day

Albion, Jan. 31 (Special.) The Pullman Memorial Church, the finest Universalist edifice of its size in the country, was dedicated in this village to-day. The beautiful architectural structure of which a picture is herewith presented was erected by George M. Pullman, the palace car magnate of Chicago, in memory of his father and mother. Those bodies lie in picturesque Mt. Albion Cemetery on the outskirts of the town. A deed of the church and lot was given the Universalist Society here to-day by Mr. Pullman. Two facts lend importance to this event. One is that the church dedicated to-day is magnificent and costly; the other, that its establishment celebrates the victory of a single poor man's religious convictions in a village where Universalism was bitterly antagonized. James Lewis Pullman, the father of the donor of the church, resided in Albion for years, and was the only acknowledged disciple of Universalistic principles. When urged to affiliate himself with some popular church and smother his religious belief, Mr. Pullman replied, "I can succeed nowhere except as an honest man; I have the courage of my convictions."

George M. Pullman was then only a lad, but he remembered his father's stand for his religion, and so here in the very place where he struggled so long and faithfully and where he was made to feel most keenly the loneliness of unpopularity, this monument to his name and that of his wife has been built and dedicated by his son. All the circumstances providentially conspiring have made this possible.

The church is cruciform, of the low picturesque Gothic style that might have been suggested by some quaint and pretty rural English church. It is erected on a slight eminence and is admirably located to set off to advantage its charming architectural effects. S. S. Beman, of Chicago, is the architect and J. H. Porter, also of Chicago, the superintendent of construction.

The building occupies a corner bounded by Main and Madison streets, the front facing Court House Square and the west side facing Main street. It is constructed of brown Medina sandstone, with a red English tile roof. On the interior one is particularly impressed with the beauty and harmony of color and proportions. The vestibules are in Mosaic tile. Entering by the main portal, on either hand in niches in the wall are bronze medallions of Mr. Pullman's father and mother, whose memory the edifice is to perpetrate. On a wall in the west transept is a tablet setting by a simple inscription the fact of the dedication of the church to father and mother by a son, omitting, however, the name of the particular son whose generosity and veneration it expresses. The crowning glory of all is the memorial window, which fills this transept with a soft and hallowed light. The window is an original conception and was designed by Tiffany, of New York. It is strikingly beautiful, about ten feet in height, and is a life-sized figure of Christ. He stands with outstretched arms as if in the act of teaching. The design avoids the more effeminate qualities pictured by so many artists and bring out the stronger features of the Nazarene. He appears as if walking through the fields, with the lilies and grass about his feet, while one seems to hear, as if spoken to the accompanying disciples, the words inscribed at the base, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

A BEAUTIFUL CHURCH

The church is finished throughout in quartered oak, highly polished, and the frescoing in terra cotta is rich and artistic. The walls are also in warm terra cotta, stippled and blended into a light gold color. The windows are genuine colored glass, and the light and shade is produced by the varying thickness of the glass. Both frescoing and glass are by Tiffany, of New York, and are really superb creations. The church is carpeted in heavy body Brussels in terra cotta. The upholstering is in light pea green, in exquisite accord with the surrounding features. A beautiful dome surmounts the main audience room. In the apex hangs an electrolier with 45 incandescent burners. This serves to illuminate the church brilliantly; although there are side fixtures of electric and gas. In addition to the main lecture room there are classrooms, library, vestry, parlors and pastor's study. When all are opened together the seating capacity 700 and 800. The pulpit is opposite the main entrance, and the organ and choir loft directly back of it. The organ, which is pronounced by capable artists to be one of the finest in the country, was built by C. Johnson & Son, of Westfield, Mass. A Ross motor pumps the bellows.

A feature of the church is the dining room. This is really a separate building, joined to the main edifice by large entrance ways with an open court between. In the basement, which extends under the whole structure, are store rooms, boilers for steam heat, cisterns, kitchen and cupboards, besides toilet rooms and other accessories.

Mr. Pullman's generosity has provided everything necessary for the equipment of a church from the communion service to the table linen and kitchen utensils.

The services to-day were of an elaborate character. Every one in Albion and surrounding country was in attendance. The dedicatory sermon was delivered by Rev. Royal H. Pullman, of Baltimore, Md. The Rev. James M. Pullman, of Lynn, Mass., made the address of the afternoon, installing the new pastor, Rev. Charles Fluhrer, D.D. Both the Pullman ministers are Universalists and brothers of George M. Pullman. The pastor of the new church is Dr. Fluhrer, a friend of the Pullmans, and a classmate of Rev. James M. Pullman in college. Dr. Fluhrer came from Grand Rapids, Mich. He has, however, preached in this State before. He is a very gifted and talented man, a dignified and eloquent orator.

The musical programme was without doubt one of the finest ever rendered in this part of the State. A picked quartet of the most talented singers was secured to render it. They included Miss Tyrell, soprano, Miss Griswold, contralto, Philip Fried, tenor, and W. S. Brace, basso, with John W. Force organist, all of Rochester. The church was thrown open to the public in the evening, and a grand reception tendered the donor, George M. Pullman and his friends, who accompanied him.

W. E. T.

Utica Observer, Utica NY, Thu. 31 Jan 1895

Transcribed on 3 Mar 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY