

## 1834 - 1984 . . .

scene we shall not soon forget, for it was full of religion, charity and philanthropy. We could not help cherishing the hope that the erection of this chaste, elegant building might form the commencement of an era of good will among all religious denominations."

### Benefactor One of a Kind

Indeed, it was an Episcopalian, Gouverneur Kemble (1786-Sept. 16, 1875), who, as we have mentioned, donated the land, provided most of the funds and, obtained the architect, to make the chapel a reality. Kemble came of a mercantile family in New York City, graduated from Columbia College in 1803, became a member of the brilliant coterie of young men that surrounded Washington Irving, who assembled at the Kemble Passaic home, celebrated in Salmagundi as Cockloft Hall. Irving, after he had seen Kemble for the last time, said, "This is my friend of early life, always unchanged, always like a brother, one of the noblest beings that ever was created." (Life and Letters IV, 290). Kemble died at Cold Spring. He never married.

Kemble was a great human being, an American of enterprise, a patriot, with a depth of charity and ecumenism, a breadth of soul that added to his stature and contributed to his greatness. Of him, we can say, "He went about doing good." Of such men Americans can boast.

One of the missing men in the history of the erection of the Chapel was its architect. Through the assiduous research of a Mrs. Joseph Domas, founder of a museum in Ringoes, New Jersey, entitled "Religious Americana," who attended a few of the early meetings of the recent Restoration Committee, Thomas Kellah Wharton, artist and architect, was so identified. His picture of "Cold Spring in the Morning" is familiar to those who have seen the cover of the Cold Spring Centennial Booklet, 1946, honoring the incorporation of Cold Spring as a village in 1846. He was only sixteen years old when he drew the design for the Chapel. Kemble, history tells us, provided the architect. Wharton is remembered as the architect of the Custom House in New Orleans. A native of Columbus, Ohio, he came to New York and made many influential friends. Walter Knight Sturges, the architect of the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Shrine at Battery Place, New York, the architect of our Restoration in 1977, is presently working with the University of Ohio in publishing "The Life and Works of Thomas Kellah Wharton."

The Chapel, 30 x 40', in width and length, respectively, had a portico with four magnificent unfluted columns. It was built in the order of classic Tuscan architecture, noted for its simplicity, a rarity in churches of the period. It was of brick, colored light yellow. It was no more than 25 feet above the shores of the Hudson River and about fifteen feet from the edge of the promontory on which it stood.

The Chapel was historically outstanding. It was the first Catholic Church in the Archdiocese to be built above the southern tip of Manhattan Island. The first in the Archdiocese in the Hudson River Valley. Only St. Mary's in Albany, in 1815, predated it in the whole Hudson Valley.

The Church at Cold Spring was the first answer to Bishop Dubois' deputation to Father Philip J. O'Reilly "to erect churches and found missions wherever his zeal would urge him." In a real sense, it was the gift of Fr. Philip O'Reilly, of the people of Cold Spring, and of Gouverneur Kemble, to God.

The name of the Chapel has a varied history. The early Catholic Miscellanies simply mention "Church at Cold Spring—Reverend Philip O'Reilly." Contemporary references such as the New York Mirror of 1834 refer to it as "The Chapel of Our Lady." And "Letters About the Hudson River" (1835-37) pays this compliment, "Our Lady of Cold Spring is the name of a classical and beautiful little Catholic edifice situated on a high rock overlooking the Hudson."

### Chapel Renovated Several Times

By the Civil War certainly, after the Chapel had been renovated and enlarged, St. Mary's had become the official name of the parish; at best, this title in over-sized letters—for Hudson River visibility, perhaps—were carved across the frieze of the arched portico. In the Chancery files there is a certificate of incorporation, dated February 28, 1886, filed with the Secretary of State, which reads, "Now, Therefore, know all men by these presents, that we do certify that the name or title by which we and our successors shall be known . . . is the Church of Our Lady of Loretto." The presence of another St. Mary's Church in Cold Spring—the Episcopalian church on Route 9-D and Main Street—may have made this formal statement necessary and helpful.

The order of pastors who served in the First Church of Our Lady of Loretto are as follows:

Fr. Philip P. J. O'Reilly	1834-1844
Fr. Felix Williams	1844-1852
Fr. John E. Comerford	1852-1855
Fr. Thomas Joyce	1855-1861