WILMINGTON M. E. CONFERENCE.

An Interesting History of the M. E. Church, Chestertown, and its Present Efficient Pastor—Bishop Walden and His Life, Etc.

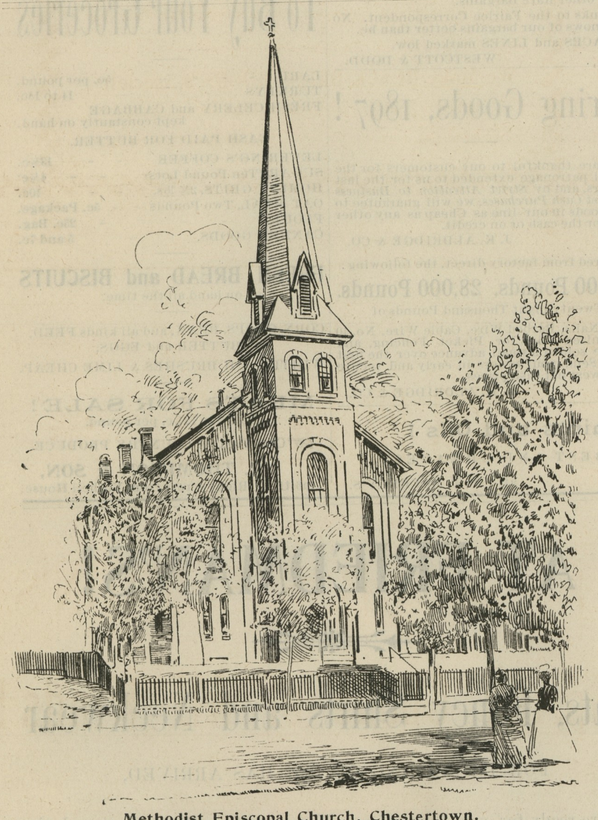
BISHOP JOHN M. WALDEN.

Bishop John M. Walden, who by the arrangement of the Episcopal Board presides at the conference this year, was born in Lebanon, Ohio, Feb. 11th, 1831, and is consequently sixty-six years of age. But having naturally a strong frame and a body well developed in early life by the out-door exercise of a western farm, and having through his later experiences been temperate in all things though actively engaged, he looks like one in the maturity of early manhood rather than on the down grade of life. Like many another farmer's boy, he was fond of reading and using advantageously his leisure hours, he passed through his preparatory course, entered Farmers' College, Ohio, and graduated with honors in 1852. He was immediately appointed to a tutorship, which he filled with credit to himself and advantage to his pupils for two years.

This position he filled with such distinguished ability that the successive General Conferences of 1872, 1876, 1880, in each of which he represented his own conference, almost unanimously re-elected him, the latter conference further honoring him with a vote for the episcopacy, almost sufficient to elect him.

At the General Conference of 1884 he was one of the four elected to that high office, his associates being Bishops Ninde, Mallalieu and Fowler, he being elected with Bishop Ninde on the second ballot, and receiving 214 votes out of a total of 403, or twelve more than was necessary to elect him.

Since then he has traveled extensively, visiting a large number of conferences in the United States and Territories, and also spending several months abroad supervising the work of the Mission Conference in Europe, including Bulgaria, Italy and Switzerland, Germany and Scandanavia. In 1872 he presided over the Philadelphia Conference. A



Methodist Episcopal Church, Chestertown.

Subsequently he acted as correspondent for the *Cincinnati Commercial*, entering heartily into the campaign of 1856 in favor of Freemont. In 1857 he went to Kansas and established a paper in advocacy of free State principles, being elected in the meanwhile a member of the Topeka Legislature, and also State Superintendent of Public Instruction. But having been converted in 1850, and licensed as a local preacher in 1854 he felt that the call of God was upon him to devote his life and energies to the work of the church rather than that of secular life.

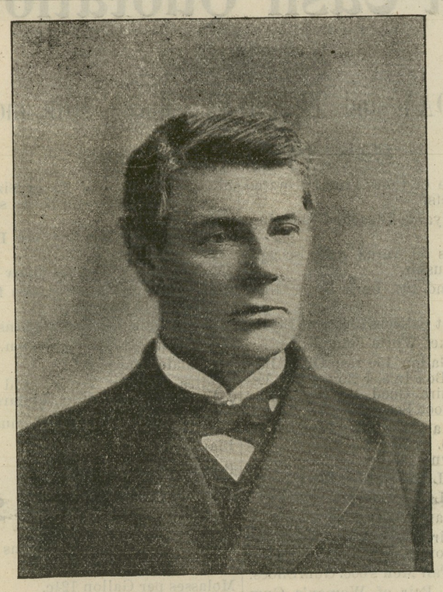
Admitted to the Cincinnati Conference in 1858, he soon took rank as one of the most laborous, popular and successful preachers, becoming particularly noted for his interest in city mission work, and also on the breaking out of the war for his work among the contrabands, as the freedmen were then call-

very interesting account of the bishop's conversion, from his own pen, appears in the New York *Christian Advocate* of February 13th, 1897.

Sketch of M. E. Church, Chestertown.

The trumpet of Methodism was first sounded on this beautiful peninsula by Robert Strawbridge, who, constrained by the love of Christ, came to the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1769 or 1770, and first preached the gospel at the home of John Randle, in Worton, Kent county. From this beginning has grown, under Divine favor and guidance, the strongest religious organization on the peninsula — the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The first Methodist Church in this section was built in 1783, and called Queen Anne's Chapel, though it has long been known as Dudley's. A century ago this was a Methodist rallying



Bishop John M. Walden.

ed. He then became corresponding secretary of the Western Freedmen Aid Society, which merged into the Freedmen Aid Society of the M. E. Church, a society with which he has been actively associated as corresponding secretary and a member of the board of managers ever since.

While presiding elder of the East Cincinnati District and member-elect of the General Conference, that body, meeting in Chicago, knowing his superior business ability, elected him as assistant book agent with Dr. Luke Hitchcock of the Western Book Concern.

Continued on Sixth page.

point. From Fogwell's and Dudley's in Queen Anne's, says Lednum, "The pioneers of Methodism moved down through the eastern counties; that section lying toward the Chesapeake Bay was not visited by them until a few years afterward.

May 25, 1774, the conference was held in Philadelphia, and Kent circuit appeared upon the minutes for the first time. In 1777 Kent Circuit had appointments in Cecil, Kent Queen Anne's, Caroline and Talbot counties of Maryland, and in Kent and Sussex counties, Delaware. This circuit was

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By order of the Board of Commissioners.
n28-3t. W. H. LAMBERT, JR., CLERK.

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