

There is something quaintly, surprisingly old about them: their garb, that of aged poverty, their one irresistible charm, the peculiar simplicity of age. Yes, they are all somewhat "old womanly," even that slight, girlish creature standing near the door, with her spectacles and pale, sensitive face, whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.

Two of "our club" were playing some Irish airs. They gave rise to something unexpected. A Little Sister went to one old woman, whispered to her, then to another, and what did these two old bodies do but rise, come into the middle of the floor and begin to dance! They were a little shy and stopped soon. Then came another couple who held out longer and made more fancy steps, then another, and yet another pair of these droll yet pathetic dancers, who seemed really to enjoy the queer, old fashioned jig, and the hearty, laughing applause of their audience. The last was the champion set, danced by a tall bony woman with a square, serious face and a short little Irish woman with a neat foot and a determined expression. She had been a very good dancer in her day, and pretty too. There was an amusing look of satisfaction on her face, and her little feet tripped in and out as though she would never stop. Her mate made a move to return to her place, but her hand was caught and she was brought back to the floor, with never a word, and the dancing went on as if for dear life. At last however, there were two quaint little bobs, and now we had to do our part. The first item was the "Kerry Dancers," sung by a beautiful clear voice, full of feeling and music. There was a pretty contrast between the singer and her audience. One, quite unconscious of self, singing with her whole soul, her fair, mobile face, retaining still the beautiful light of childhood, that rare blending of candor with thoughtful intelligence, seen often in convent girls. The other faces so calm, almost rigid, reflecting another light, different, yet beautiful too, that of the peaceful sunset.

After the "Kerry Dancers" came Moore's "Minstrel Boy" and an amusing operette, a lover's quarrel, sung by two bright little girls. Then we saw that our old friend of the light heels was standing up, in her blue apron and red shawl, pulling Bonne Mere's sleeve. She wanted to dance again! Of course she did to her heart's content, and the intense delight of the onlookers. The songs having all been in English, another member of our club recited for the minority, Pere Delaporte's short, but beautiful poem on the "Miracle of Roses," and received her reward in the bright look of interest in a few faces. As she finished a little old woman (who probably understood nothing at all) came up exclaiming: "God bless you, Miss. That was lovely! God bless you, and give you health to do better another time!" She spoke from the abundance of her kind Irish heart, and the laughing orator took it as a great compliment.

Meanwhile several messages had come reminding us that the old men were growing impatient. So, having distributed the little presents and said good-bye to our grateful new friends who were showering blessings on our willing heads, we left the room. There were a few parcels left over. These must be brought to the sick before we could go to the old men's quarters.

The infirmary was as neat and bright as was compatible with extreme poverty; the old inmates, all sitting up, save one suffering from a cold, seemed well contented with their lot. A few were paralysed, one had a broken hip, the worst sickness of all was their extreme old age. They were pleased to see new faces, and to tell their ailments to a fresh audience. One told how much she had suffered from sore eyes. She had been sent from one hospital to another, in hope of obtaining relief. "I was five days at the Hotel Dieu, but I cried all the time. The priest there, a nice young priest he was, and kind to me, asked me why I was lonesome, and weren't the nuns kind to me? But I told him that sure the nuns were good but they were not my nuns,

I wanted to get back to my own nuns." We felt the poor old creature had struck the key-note. The old people there are in their own home. All things are arranged solely for their convenience and pleasure.

At last the little caravan wended its way down to the basement. Here, in a large room, with several doors opening upon the yard, in an atmosphere combined of sunshine and subdued smoke, were the male members of the poor old antiquity collection. The visitors were greeted with bursts of hearty applause. The reception was warm, but for a while the visit here bade fair to be less successful than it had been upstairs. Our first impression was that the burden of life had pressed more heavily upon the men than the women, or had they less recuperative energy? Heads were more bent, eyes more listless. Here and there a crutch, a wooden leg, or an empty sleeve that told of the fierceness of life's battles. Many were deaf, some blind. Because of the former, recitation seemed useless. We had come bent upon furnishing some amusement. What form could it take? There was some deliberation over the choice of a chorus, when again the entertainment came first from the audience. A fiddle was carefully taken down from its shelf, a chair was placed in the open space before us, and a pleasant faced Irishman slowly, tenderly led to it. He could certainly play, with great vim in a musical, if artless way. It was a familiar old air, and many of the ladies tried to sing it, but Paddy had taken his key too high.

"But, can't we do something for them?" "Let's dance!" There was a laugh. "Why not?" "A set of Lancers?—Good." But this was abandoned, as being too complicated, in favor of a good old Sir Roger de Coverly. So, you can picture to yourselves a group of well dressed girls, wearing hats and rubbers, and many of them heavy winter coats, dancing before and to the intense delight of, some seventy old wrecks of humanity, to the sharp music of a primitive fiddle. Seldom was a dance so thoroughly enjoyed. Was it the spirit of the place made us all like a lot of children?

As soon as we returned to our places, there stepped into the middle of the floor a little dried up old Canadian, with a short grey beard and apparently very shaky legs. He had only danced a few steps when we realized that he was a master in his own line. It was astonishing to see how supple those old legs were, how rapidly feet and ankles moved, flashing in and out, what quaint figures were cut by this dancer of a by-gone age. Suddenly a tall, lithe figure shot down the room, and fell into position opposite our old Canuck. Miss B. could not resist the fun of it, and joined in with certainly the queerest old partner she had ever met. She danced well and gracefully, amidst peals of laughter, till almost out of breath. Still the old fellow kept up, alone once more, then, at long last, actually staggered to his chair. He had received Extreme Unction a little more than a week before.

We were about to leave, when a tall old man came up, and thanked us most politely for coming. Why was this man here? in an asylum? There was about him the unmistakable stamp of an educated, nay, of a college-bred man. What vicissitudes had brought him here, in such strange motley company? In his sad, pale face were no signs of intemperance. One arm was partly paralysed. The fortunes of life are strange as fiction.

To our surprise we found the good Little Sisters had prepared a most welcome refection of ginger beer and biscuits. We were all bubbling over with fun, teasing our hostesses, and shyly accusing one another of covert attractions, for

some of our erstwhile audience. Was there ever such a gay little unconventional meal? We went up at last in twos and threes to don our coats. "Will some of you girls stay here for good, and put on the little cap?" came from a group ahead. "Of course, I shall," laughed our pretty singer. "Mrs. D., will you bring my clothes back to my mother?" "Indeed I won't, life is too precious!"

The laughter died away as our group came to an open door, were tempted by the quiet look of the slender columned chapel, and passed in. Kneeling there, in the sudden calm, for a very few seconds, one felt the strangeness, the underlying mystery of the place, melt silently away. The Presence revealed by the sanctuary lamp, the memories evoked by yonder crib, told why age was dancing, and why young girls had become smiling old women, the motherly sisters of friendless sexagenarians. No, of course it is not strange, since the infinite, immutable God has become a tiny, wailing Infant. This sacrifice is the consequence and the continuation of that other. Love has done it all—the Divine love that became human there in the crib, the love of immortal souls. What are youth and age? What are the fickle changes of joy and sorrow, poverty and riches, in view of an ageless, irrevocable Eternity?

That visit has evoked many, many thoughts. One, that our first fleeting impression was, after all, correct. Have you not perceived, strenuous Christian teachers, what a march your little sisters are stealing upon you? You stand at the head of the rapids in the bright morning sunshine, and man your little boats for the City Beautiful. You fit them out with sails, oars, and rudder; you furnish compass and charts to guide them amidst the rocks, and then launch them upon the treacherous current. Yet how many come to grief on the sunken reefs, how many are lost in the tempest! You know only too well! But these Little Sisters stand in the evening, by the calm water, at the foot of the current. They catch your capsized wrecks, right them, and laughing at oars, sails and chart, just fasten the rudder, and let the swift current carry them safe into the harbor. Those wise Little Sisters! That big smiling convent is really a school. The Little Sisters, probably to avoid the visits of unwelcome school commissioners, do not give the place its true name. A school it is, with battered old scholars, but a school nevertheless, and a singularly successful school. Nearly all its scholars graduate. It teaches but one thing, there is its secret. It is the one thing we all began to learn long years ago, when our mothers joined our hands and made us lisp: "Please God, make me a good child." It is hard to be good "now," it is hard to join little hands that are eager for play. Mothers do not always succeed, teachers therefore, less often; but these wise little Sisters come when the long day of work and play is ended, pillow the tired heads to rest, join the weary, fluttering hands and, with a few tender words, turn the faded eyes upwards. Having waited till the long "now" is over, they are teaching these old children to be good at "the hour of death."

M. J. D.

TRUE VERSION OF A WITTICISM OF ARCHBISHOP RYAN.

From the Catholic Universe, Cleveland.

As some of our contemporaries have been publishing a witticism of Archbishop Ryan concerning the place of his birth and have got rather mixed on it we give the true version as we heard it a day or two ago from our Right Rev. Bishop.

The Northwest Review

JOB DEPARTMENT

Has special facilities for all kinds of

**CHURCH
PRINTING**

❖❖❖

BOOK, JOB & COMMERCIAL STATIONERY

Printed in Artistic and Catchy Style

P.O. BOX 617

Office of Publication:
219 McDermot Ave
Winnipeg, Man

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND IMMIGRATION.**

NOTICE TO FARMERS

There are now daily arriving in this Province, numbers of young men from Eastern Canada and Great Britain who desire employment on farms. Many of these are experienced farm hands and others are anxious to learn.

NOW IS THE TIME

to secure your farm help for the coming busy season.

IF YOU NEED A MAN

or two or three, write to the undersigned, giving full particulars of the kind of help you want, whether experienced or inexperienced, nationality and age preferred, and **Wages You are Prepared to Pay.**

Write at once and avoid disappointment.

ADDRESS,
J. J. GOLDEN,
Provincial Government Immigration Agent, 617 Main Street, WINNIPEG.

THE MOORE PRINTING CO., LTD.

Printers & Publishers

Manufacturers of Rubber Stamps

All Kinds of Book and Job Printing
for Country Merchants ❖❖❖❖

Statements, Bill Heads, Letter Heads, etc.

Mail Orders receive prompt attention. ❖

ADDRESS ALL ORDERS TO—
The Moore Printing Co., Ltd.
219 McDermot Ave. - - Winnipeg, Man

When Dr. Horstmann was chancellor to Archbishop Ryan, His Grace one day remarked: "I am perhaps one of the most remarkable men living." "Well, that's modest," said the chancellor. "Let me explain," said the Archbishop. "The home of my parents was at Ballytore. Just before my birth they went on a visit to friends at Thurles, and while there I was born. So you see I was born in the absence of my mother."

"We have operators, if you wish them to send a message for you," said the manager of the telephone office; "or we have booths if you wish to telephone myself." "No, I don't want to telephone myself," said the lady, "I want to telephone a friend of mine."

Blinded With Headache.

People often get blinding headaches that suffer from constipation. Simplest remedy is Dr. Hamilton's Pills of Mandrake and Butternut. They are mild, certain and safe. For headache and biliousness use only Dr. Hamilton's Pills. Price 25c.

