# OLD LETTERS.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

As stated in a previous article, I take my letters as they come, without regard to dates or circumstances. The next that I find in my bundle was addressed to myself, and is signed "Eliza Allen Starr." It is a personal letter, and very much of its contents I cannot publish. But it contains, in the twelve full pages, some very interesting remarks on the subject of a History of Canada, and some most timely hints upon the question art and the study and teaching of drawing. When Miss Starr passed to her reward a few short years ago the "True Witness" contained a very complete biographical sketch of that wonderful lady. If I am not mistaken she was somewhere in the vicinity of seventy years when death removed her from the field of her usefulness and activity. She was a convert to Catholicity, and I think that I am not exaggerting when I say that she was one of the most erudite and exhaustive of contributors to Catholic American literature during the last half of the nineteenth century. The pages of the "Ave Maria" and similar publications are full of her magnificent articles on Catholic subjects, especially upon art. Not only was she a great student, but she was a wonderful teacher. Her home in Chicago was, for years, the focus to which converged the brightest rays of Catholic intellect in the United States. It will please many a reader of the "True Witness" to peruse these few lines from one whose name was so long familiar, and whose gifted pen will never again trace a beautiful thought, or give to the world an enabling sentiment. For obvious reasons I suppress a few personal allusions; but, with these insignificant exceptions, the letter remains entact.

"Chicago, Ill.,
St. Joseph's Cottage,
299 Huron street,
Aug. 20th, 1894.

"Mr Dear Mr.——

"That delightful letter received so long ago, and which made me feel that I had found a new and ideal world an ennobling sentiment. For the details of a life like mine, naffle not description, only, but industry. It is impossible to keep up with myself. I have followed carefully the articles marked in the papers you kindly sent me, and I will say, apart from all other considerations, that no matter how affairs press upon me, the "True Witness" always gets a careful looking over, and I always lay by some grains for my own garner.

"I have been glancing over the history of Canada of late, and I have asked myself frequently: 'why must we leave our young people to Parkman, etc.?' Will another generation give us a history of Canada, as bewitching as the story itself? I know one or two who could do it; but they have other work to usurp their hours.

"But there is another difficulty, far more remarkable than that of securing time to write, it is that of getting one's books published— properly published, and properly presented to the public. Few authors have any money to put into books; and when the book is launched, ten to one that the publisher fails—and where then is the book? And where is the author? and where is his royalty? I have cut this knot for myself, having been taught by sad experience; but here comes in another damaging circumstance. Even when I publish my own books, people will order them, in the majority of cases, from some prominent book concern which claims a large discount. While they, no doubt, receive a prompt payment, they defer to months and even years their payment to the author, illustrator, and finally publisher of the book, and then — oh! a change of hands only! but where is the one considered responsible for the large bill? You see the point! And is not this a dreadful sin to be at the door of a publishing house? We talk of Canadian History. Ah! everything in the way of nature, art, science, could and would be written for our young folk, if authors and publishers worked together fraternally. As it is, book making must be called one of the evils under the sun. In the face of all this, who will write that charming Canadian History, over which boys and girls, and their elders, will shed tears and dream dreams?

"The Summer School has come; but unlike the Columbian Exposition, has not gone. Above all, to us Catholics the educational impetus has not yet been spent, which was given at the Columbian Exposition, and now, again, at the Summer School. It is, indeed, a small consideration, perhaps one may think, but this summer, two great orders of teachers—teaching Sisters— have come to my studio with the express intention of learning the methods of artistic drawing, and now a third order has made arrangements. All these Sisters have been proficients as copyists, but they found, as they visited diligently, day after day, the Educational Art Exhibits, that something was woefully lacking in their most carefully prepared copies —and that was Life. Now they are taking hold of this matter of drawing the object from the life: and there is one consolation in our sisterhoods, and brotherhoods, they may be a little slow in coming to the front, but once there, they never go back. The religious conscience holds them to the artistic, literary, scientific conscience as well, and the gain of all this will tell in the generations.

"I must not allow myself to open this subject on paper; but I cannot help telling you that the feebleness of our educational art (not our mechanical drawing, which was superb), as a whole was pitiful. There were most honorable exceptions; but mostly all exhibitors were in the last stages of Byzantian degradation, whereas the Byzantian School was a noble school until it fell into the quagmire of the copyists. Your Canadian Educational Art Exhibit, was, to my mind, one of the glories of the Exposition. It is a little too long ago for me to be able to recall sharply, the points in which it excelled; but at the time, I told my sister, that I regarded it as one of the very best in the whole Exposition. I hope your schools in general are emulating this excellence of your convents, and I trust all the orders will come up fully to the 'measure of grace' in this matter."

I here break in upon this letter with a word of comment. It was our beloved Archbishop, Mgr. Bruchesi, now in Rome, who organized this convent educational exhibit, for the Columbian Exposition, or World's Fair, at Chicago; and it was he — then Canon Bruchesi of the late Archbishop Fabre's household— who personally superintended that exhibition of Canadian Catholic School work at Chicago.'

"Our public Art Institutes, Art Academies, are emphatically, pagan, and our Catholic youth have pagan models and pagan training; but here I come against another great question, that of environment. I wrote an article for the 'Catholic Review' upon 'The Ideal and its Environment.' Perhaps it set some people a-thinking. The Beuronese school is now illustrating principles which should guide not only our generation, but centuries to come. I shall incorporate my paper, prepared, for a club of Protestant ladies, last February, into my winter's course; but how many Catholics will nibble at my hook is hard to say. I always find, however, that things do come around after all. And if they do not come around in our time, they will in the future. Provided we do our best, and give to the cause of God's Church the little, or the much, that is in us, we may rest satisfied that He will do the remaining work in His own good time.

"Will you give my regards to that writer W.—— L.—— who is doing so much, under his soutane, to show what a priest can do, and believe me, yours faithfully, in our common cause,

ELIZA ALLEN STARR."

Surely this letter needs no comment, nor could any words of mine add to its value.

# The D'Youville Reading Club.

Ottawa, Nov. 22.

There was a large and enthusiastic meeting of the D'Youville Reading Circle in the Rideau street convent, last Tuesday evening, in spite of the pouring rain which did not in the least dampen the spirits of the members. As usual the first few moments were devoted to two works. The first one, "Oliver Horn," by Hopkinson Smith, was said to be, of its kind, healthy, pleasant reading, and like all of that writer's books it is simple, graceful and cheery. The digressions from the story are more interesting than the story itself. The more serious work is a little volume entitled "The Ideal Teacher," by Pere L. Laberthonniere. It was strongly urged upon the members to have one or these little books, each for herself, for home reading.

The great fact, perhaps, in Christian education is the sacredness of authority. This, Pere Laberthonniere is anxious to impress upon us, but we must understand authority. We are born free and ought to know how to govern ourselves. It was surmised that the vexed questions in these days could be solved without the interference of parliament were the homes ideal. The questions of the day were then enumerated. A special and searching study of the "Association's Law" in France was begun. The history of this strange law was given. Startling figures were mentioned as to the actual population in France and the governing minority. No comments were made, leaving it to the members as they proceed in study to draw their own conclusions as to the truth of history repeating itself. A special aspect of this question for the next meeting will be what is called "Authorization." The topic will be continued until it has been fully elaborated. The Reading Circle has a double course of study,—the Renaissance in England, with alternately, the representative poets of the 19th century, Tennyson, Browning, Coventry, Patmore and Aubrey de Vere. These four great poets were spoken of as leaders in a sort of Renaissance of what had been pronounced dead in the 16th century, namely, mediaevelism.

On this particular evening attention was centred on the great literary movements since the Renaissance, stress being laid on the fact that the Revolution at the close of the 18th century was not confined to government. The revolutionary poets of England, France and Germany were mentioned, particular note being taken of Wordsworth. The attention of the members was called to his enthusiasm as expressed in the "Prelude," and his disenchantment as shown in the "excursion." A short time was devoted to showing the distinction between the "classics" and the "Romantics." The main object of these comparative studies was to find Tennyson's place among the "reactioners." The members were requested to read "The Coming of Arthur," between this and the next talk on Tennyson. At a future meeting of the Circle note will be made of the great allegorical poems of the world in order to place the "Idylls of the King." During the evening an account was given of the delightful visit to Father Sheehan, at Doneraile, of three members of the Alumnae, the Misses Kate Smith, Mabel and Mary Poupore. It was their privilege to be entertained by the author of "My New Curate" while travelling in Ireland last summer. The next lecture in connection with the Reading Circle will be given on Tuesday, the twenty-fifth of November, by Sir James Grant, the subject being his recent visit to Europe. The meeting was closed with the reading of a little meditation from "Nova et Vetera" entitled "The Gift of Utterance," the conclusion seeming to be that much of divine beauty is manifested to us now if only we have "eyes to see."

MARGARET.

# Missionary Work For Non-Catholics

The Passionist Fathers of Easton, Md., are giving a series of non-Catholic missions in the diocese of Wilmington, Del., under the auspices of the Missionary Union. Upon request Father Sutton lectured from November 2 to November 9 inclusive. Easton is as pretty and thriving a town as can be found on the eastern shore of Maryland. Its population numbers about 3,500. In religious matters they are split into several divisions. The Methodists are the most numerous, but they have three separate churches, the Northern Methodist, the Southern Methodist, and the Protestant Methodist. The town was first attended as a mission by the Redemptorist Fathers from Annapolis during the Civil War, and the late Archbishop Gross was one of the first who officiated regularly in the hall of the Odd Fellows' Building. When the diocese of Wilmington was formed in 1868 Easton was attended from the neighboring Jesuit Mission of St. Joseph until Rev. E. L. Brady, now at New Castle, Del., was appointed resident pastor in 1878. In 1890 the church was enlarged and improved under the direction of Rev. Edward Mickle. About thirty-three per cent. of the adult congregation are converts, and, with their children, form about one-half the total membership.

A non-Catholic mission was no novelty in this town. This field has been well worked by the zealous labors of Bishop Curtis, Father Mickle and Dr. Temple, the present pastor, and as the curious had been satisfied, it was feared that the attendance would be slight. Such, however, was not the case, as every evening the church was filled with an intelligent and appreciative audience. The mission had been well advertised by the pastor, Dr. Temple. A special invitation by mail had been sent to every non-Catholic in town, dodgers were scattered everywhere, notices of the mission were in the local papers. Every night there were in attendance some 75 or 100 good, honest non-Catholics. There were also some few known as bigots, but, strange to say, they were present every night. Can they remain bigots now? There was no hurrah, no crush, jam or great excitement over the mission. Was there no good done therefore? Surely it is well worth our labor to talk to 75 or 100 earnest-minded Protestants for a week on Catholic truths.

One hundred copies of "Clearing the Way" were distributed. The local papers gave space to full reports of the work, and as those papers circulated throughout the country districts, these reports are calculated to be far-reaching in their good results. The question box was fairly well patronized. None of the questions were insulting or silly; they were of the usual order received in these missions.

To all queries Father Sutton gave most satisfactory replies, but he laid special stress upon the following subject, which has perhaps been more widely misrepresented than any matter under discussion at the present day.

Q. "If the Catholic Church is the true Church, and the Catholic religion the only religion, why has it done so little to Christianize and elevate the Philippines?"

A. "Just because the Catholic Church is the true Church, she has done so much for the Philippines. A little over 300 years ago they were a wild, savage people without religion. Now they are civilized and educated members of the Catholic Church. This has been accomplished by our missionaries. Can Protestantism point to such a part of the world? Protestant missionaries cannot point to any nation upon earth which they have converted or civilized. General James Smith has written a pamphlet on the Philippines. Here is what he said about the work of the friars:

"'Spain's missionaries gathered the tribes into villages and towns, formed councils for their government (which, whatever might have been their deficiencies, had at least the merit of being actuated by some higher principle than mere brutal force), cut down the primeval forest, uprooted the impenetrable jungle and taught their charges to cultivate the soil and to make for themselves a permanent habitation and a home. Churches were built, Christian instruction imparted, and, when the desire to wander had given away to settled habits, schools were established and the simpler forms of education inculcated. The work of civilization was slow, necessarily so, but the progress was steady and healthy and all that could be expected until about the close of the eithteenth century. After the Spain began to experience the full effects of the reaction resulting from the stupendous national exertions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and failed, except in the larger towns and cities, to give the opportunities for the higher education which conditions justified and the thirst for further knowledge among the native peoples demanded. Universities, colleges and schools that would bear favorable comparison with other institutions of learning in the world had been established by the religious orders in Manila, Hoilo, Cebu and Zamboanga, but beyond these the facilities for acquiring the higher education were not many." * * *

Quite a number of non-Catholics have asked Father Sutton to remain another week, so much have they been pleased by his discourses. Several Protestants have announced their intention of returning to the faith "once given to the saints." Taken as a whole, these discourses have produced an excellent effect upon the citizens of the town and surrounding country.—Catholic Standard and Times.


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