

### Nature at Worship.

The harp at Nature's advent struck  
Has never ceased to play;  
The song the stars of morning sung  
Has never died away.

And prayer is made, and promise given  
By all things near and far  
The ocean looketh up to heaven  
And its errors every star.

Its waves are kneeling on the strand,  
As kneels the human knee,  
Their white locks bowing to the sand,  
The priesthood of the sea!

They pour their glittering treasure forth,  
Their gifts of pearl they bring,  
And all the listening hills of earth  
Take up the song they sing.

The green earth sends her incense up  
From many a mountain shrine  
From folded leaf and dewy cup  
She pours her sacred wine.

The blue sky is the temple's arch  
Its transept, earth and air,  
The music of its starry march  
The chorus of a prayer.

So nature keeps the reverent frame  
With which her years began,  
And all her signs and voices stam  
The prayerless heart of man.

J. O. Whittier

FOR THE CANADIAN MUTE.

### The Pharnorth "Lit." Society.

A very enjoyable evening was spent at the hospitable residence of Mr. F. H. Bridgen, on Ross Avenue, on Saturday, November 6th, in a debate on a chosen subject, participated in by most of those present. At first the spirit of the meeting was apparently dull, but as the debate progressed it brightened and became very warm, to say the least, as the dormant energies of our natures were aroused into animation. In a way a debate may be compared to fresh fuel being put on the embers of a fire nearly extinguished to renew it. The spirit once aroused will not return to its normal condition before several days; the dispute will go on from the platform to the bedside until the subject is finally disposed of. From the debaters it communicates energy to the auditors until it envelops them all in a flame of excitement. Debating is a valuable discipline to the intellect; it corrects, educates and enlightens it on the subject discussed.

The debate that evening recalls to mind vividly the good old times at the Pharnorth Deaf-mute Literary Society, Winnipeg. A brief review of the history of the society may not prove uninteresting to the CANADIAN MUTE readers. The term "Pharnorth" means far north in correct English; the society so designated is the farthest northerly of any deaf society in the literary world. It originated after persistent agitation to instruct and entertain the local deaf-mutes. Mr. Byrne and Mr. McIntosh were the leading spirits in the movement, Principal McDermid giving every encouragement thereto. The first meeting was held in a class-room in the deaf school on the evening of the sixth of December, 1890, when the society was formally organized. The proceedings in the way of christening were intensely interesting. The by-laws and regulations to govern the society were presented and adopted, and the following officers elected: President, Mr. McDermid; Vice-President, Mr. McIntosh; Secretary, Mr. Byrne. The society has continued to flourish from its inception, with the exception of being suspended by the fire for a year from October 27th, 1891. It meets every two weeks, the election of officers takes place every October and January. Mention may be made of Mr. John H. Byrne and Mr. M. O. Smith, two of the first members of the society. Mr. Byrne displayed great powers as a debater; some say that he is "a born fighter." Aware of this, his opponents have to summon more than usual courage to argue with him in public. Mr. Byrne is also a pleasing lecturer; in fact, he has never once failed to arouse the interest looked for. His delivery in signs is so distinct as to render unnecessary any repetition that might otherwise be demanded. His efforts were so much appreciated in the society that when he severed connection therewith, by returning home in Ontario, two years later, the loss was deplorable. Mr. Smith is especially remembered as a capital exponent of fairy lore. He has remarkable ability in depicting the various passions, such as joy, despair, fear, etc., by gestures and facial expression. His real name is Magnus Olafur Sigverson, being Icelandic. He was educated in Copenhagen, Denmark. He has more than

the average intelligence of deaf-mutes by being able to read Icelandic, Danish and Flemish well and English fairly.

How sublime is the idea of an educational organization with the object of diffusing truth to dispel error! Not only debates, but also lectures, stories and dialogues tend to illuminate the mind. Interest grows as the mental faculties of the members mature. As is the case with beginners, some of them at first are timid or nervous on the platform, but as time goes on they become experienced and valiant. From its inception the Pharnorth "Lit." has met regularly and increased steadily in membership. Mr. James Duncan, who arrived in Winnipeg from Ontario in the spring of 1891, was admitted soon after. His services were much appreciated in the way of forwarding the success of the society. He makes a good lecturer, his usual practice is to supplement his subjects with illustrations on the black board, such an arrangement as this is certain to intensify the interest of his auditors. He has also returned home. The first session of the society was closed in the following May (1891), but after the summer vacation the second session thereof opened some weeks after the school. Another Ontario boy, Mr. William Laddy, was admitted. His presence on the platform commands the admiration of the audience. He sways the critical mind with his remarkable debating powers, he is very well informed. As a lecturer he is simply splendid. A "full house" is assured every time he lectures. He has the wit and jovial disposition so characteristic in the people of the Emerald Isle—the land of orators, scholars, missionaries, etc. Mr. Charles E. F. Clarence, an English deaf-mute, was also admitted at the same time as Mr. Laddy. He shows to better advantage in football, hockey and tennis clubs than in the literary society, the meetings of which he attends irregularly, mostly on account of his insufficient acquaintance with the Canadian code of signs. This is a defect so noticeable in those coming over from the old countries, they use both the codes of English and Canadian signs when addressing an audience, with the inevitable result of rendering themselves unintelligible. Mr. Clarence is a fine specimen of English physique, and a favorite in social and athletic clubs.

None who were present at the meeting held on October 21st, 1891, had a presentiment of a great misfortune soon to occur. All were happy and enthusiastic, perfectly unconscious of anything serious coming to pass. Three days later—October 27th—a fire destroyed the school building, thus necessitating the suspension of the society for an indefinite time. In consequence the school moved into a large brick mansion, known as "Bannatyno Castle," temporarily leased, and it was almost impossible to re-open the literary society under the circumstances then existing there. The castle stands at an inconvenient distance from the city, out of reach of car service. There a new deaf paper, entitled the *Silent Echo*, started just two months after the first appearance of its big contemporary, the CANADIAN MUTE. Henceforth the reports of the society have been published in the *Silent Echo*, its official organ. After the re-erection of the school building the classes were re-opened in the fall of 1892, and a month later the society resumed its third session in the enlarged chapel. The new board of officers for the ensuing term were as follows: President, Mr. McDermid; Vice-President, Mr. Byrne; Secretary, Mr. Laddy; Mr. McIntosh, Sergeant, Mr. Wilkie. From this on many lively scenes have taken place on the platform during the heated debates participated in by the ex-pupils from the Belleville deaf school. Harmony and good feeling always prevail, the decisions by judges are received with respect, with scarcely a murmur as is usual in other societies. Those winning feel exulted, but the losers do not get disheartened, on the contrary their defeat only stimulates them to make a better show at the next debate.

The list of members was further augmented by Miss L. A. Turrill and Mr. J. R. Cook being admitted in the spring of 1893. Miss Turrill ably filled the office of secretary at different times. The writer had not the pleasure of seeing her lecture as she had not yet mastered the sign language previous to his leaving the society. Mr. Cook makes a good impression on the platform. In a certain debate he is remembered as having made it very lively for his opponent.

The signs in which he expresses his ideas are clear and easy.

Some of the best subjects that had been discussed up to the beginning of the fourth session may be given here, viz: "Resolved that war causes more misery to the world than intemperance." Mr. Laddy, affirmative; Mr. Byrne, negative; "Which is the mightier, the pen or the sword?" Mr. McIntosh and Mr. Laddy for the pen, Mr. Byrne and Mr. Smith for the sword; "Resolved that man is wiser heroic than woman," Mr. Byrne and Mr. Laddy, aff.; Mr. McIntosh and Mr. Duncan, neg.; "Resolved that kindness exercises a more effectual influence than force," Mr. Cook and Mr. Duncan, aff.; Mr. Laddy and Mr. McIntosh, neg.; "Resolved that Canada should be annexed to the United States," Mr. McIntosh, aff.; Mr. Laddy, neg.; "Resolved that prohibition would be the best way to check the liquor traffic," Mr. Cook, aff.; Mr. McIntosh, neg.

To-day the Pharnorth "Lit." in its seventh session, is being officiated as follows: Hon. President, Mr. McDermid; President, Miss Eliza S. motto; Vice-President, Miss Vera Snider; Secretary, Herbert Lovsdale; Sergeant, Bertie Cartledge—A. A.

### TORONTO TOPICS.

From our own Correspondent

The quantity of hay at Mr. Bridgen's was held on Saturday, the 6th inst., and was well attended. The programme for the evening was a debate on the comparative value of the bicycle and the horse. The speakers were Messrs. Elliott and A. W. Mason for the affirmative, and Messrs. Slater and Fraser for the negative. Mr. Elliott opened with a good show on the score of immense growth of new business, of its use for health, amusement and travel, of its cheapness as compared with the horse and its portability everywhere, which he illustrated by having brought in his own and mounted it on a chair. Mr. Slater followed for the horse, condemning the bike as dangerous to the public life and contending for the utility of the horse in all seasons, that horses could be used for draught as well as riding, that good roads were essential for bikes, while horses could go anywhere, that bikes are simply for recreation and of no use in practical work. Mr. Mason for the bike urged its availability at any time as in rushing to a fire, its small risk of danger as compared with that of the horse, of its use to the poor man in saving of car fare and railway travel, of the ease with which it was learned, and its adaptability to all ages and both sexes. Owing to the unavoidable absence of Mr. Fraser, Mr. Bridgen willingly took his place, whose clear signing is always a treat. He put in an unimpeachable word for the horse, asking how the farmer would feel if he had to plough his land, cut his wheat and thrash it with his men and family on bikes, and how much butter, eggs, vegetables and hay he would get to market with a couple of them. He also suggested that in war the charge of a bike regiment with a ditch to get over would be very funny, and that if one of them went down sideways the rest would be apt to go, like a row of nine pins. He then gave a picture of a horse and biker in company starting north at the end of the fall, and after a very pleasant day in company, waking up next morning to find three inches of snow, the horseman going on his way grinning and the biker with the choice of 10 miles to a railway station or a week at the village hotel. The debate then went all round in a very lively style. Miss Munro favored the horse as being the only thing of real use, and that we would be at a sad loss if all horses disappeared. Miss O'Neil made the happy suggestion as to how funeral and marriage plectives would suit with bike steeds. Mrs. Smith brought a heavy charge against the bike on account of its temptations and expenses, the tear of clothes and the desertion of home by the men. Messrs. D. and F. Bridgen gave some happy suggestions at the end. Mr. F. Bridgen, remarking he would much rather do his courting on a rig, as there was a very cold distance between two bikes, you could never get close enough for real enjoyment. The debate was also participated in by Messrs. McIntosh, Murray and McGilivray. After a very animated discussion the debate was decided in favor of the horse, and the meeting separated with a vote of thanks to their entertainers.

### BRANTFORD BRIEFS.

From our own Correspondent

James Goodbrand has come back to the Telephone City to work again, after a month's holidays. Jim can ride miles in an hour and a half, and would like to see who can beat him. Can Andy?

We are losing two of our mates who are going to take up residence in Ambitious City. We wish them every success. Bob McPherson has made many friends here, and he was the generous-hearted fellow and seems to have been a born sportsman. Mr. Henry Gotlieb is the latest go out and is to be found at the "Perf. Laundry" in Hamilton.

There seems to be no special compensation for the Mr. S here and there why there are no notes from here. We have about the smartest mates in the city, though there is something about not sending the news.

Mr. A. E. Smith has again resumed his city shoe-shop, and from the amount of patronage he gets from the people and stores shows his work is well known, and he is working thirteen hours a day. He has also secured the contract of repairing the shoes for the Institution for the Blind. Keep moving your feet, Albert, and you'll get there. He takes seriously of going to Klondike in spring. Don't you, Albert, stick to your last.

Josh Lloyd runs a similar shop at Brant Ave. and has Jno. Melsaac in the work. He gets most of his custom from the Massey Harris Works.

James O'Neil has secured a job with the Massey Harris Co., as a painter. There are five married couples here and two unmarried ladies. A snapper would live mate who wants a wife.

The writer met Miss Annie Matheson one day, and had a pleasant chat which was longer. Suppose in time she will let us know who is here, we will be able to see her. The writer for his part, likes to see one from Belleville who has some connection with a school.

A. V. Smith is having his holidays and enjoying himself with his mates. Talk about deaf mates at crossings on the trolley, he says he has not met anything in the shape of accidents either.

Miss Foulds still works at her place. She has not met her ideal yet.

Nov. the 3rd was Mrs. A. E. Smith's birthday and she invited a number of her mate friends to an oyster supper, one that could not be surpassed here by any other mate. A pleasant evening was spent by all, and the party broke up after midnight, and many said they had eaten too much and would not be able to walk home. She expected Miss Nellie Cunningham to be present, but she did not come. Wish you had Nell.

The mates have been stuffing Mr. O'Neil with some stories here, and one is that the police are looking for him, so he applied to Mr. A. E. Smith for advice. Mr. Smith told him that if he would give the mates a treat to oyster he would help him out of the scrape. Poor fellow, he don't enjoy himself here as the mates tease him so much.

The writer thinks he is taking up too much space in the MUTE. He can write more, but will keep it for the next time he writes if it don't get dry.

### FLORENCE NEWS.

From our own Correspondent

For the first time this season snow fell here on the 31st inst.

John F. Fisher, of Chatham, returned home on the 10th inst., after spending a two weeks pleasant visit with his friend David A. Turrill, Jr.

David A. Turrill, a former pupil of the Belleville Institution, is working himself very hard on his farm. He is also a successful hunter.

Messrs. Kenneth and Roderick McKenzie visited David Turrill and John Fisher last Sunday. Both of Messrs. McKenzie are doing very well at present.

It is reported here that oil has been struck in many places around Florence. The dwelling-house, which is occupied by D. Turrill, is completed now. It is large and comfortable rooms. Roderick McKenzie and W. Pake built the house. The latter left here for Dawn, where he has a job at plastering. J. F. F.

Do not afraid of enthusiasm, you need it, you can do nothing effectually without it.