Reminiscence of the Emigrant Ship

We have received the following correspondence from our dear old friend, Agnes Burt, whose pen has done noble service in many a good cause. Miss Burt's energy and splendid intellectual powers have from time to time been made manifest in these columns and we have no hesitation in saying that this, her latest contribution will be interesting reading for our patrons and their families at this holy season of Christmas.

Hobart Town, Tasmania,

January 6th, 1895.

Dear Friend:

I promised to let you know of my arrival in Tasmania. Here I am, all right, in soul and body.

Now before any further preliminaries turn to Christmas Eve, 1894, when through your kindness I was present at the Midnight Mass, in the Church of Notre Dame, Montreal, and heard for the first time the glorious Music of "Noel." Recall my answer to your question of "How I liked the musical part of the service."

One part you named "Adeste Fideles," that grand anthem has haunted me ever since. Often I catch myself repeating words and melody, and fancy myself back in the densely crowded edifice---and joining in voice with choir, congregation and the army of white-robed clergy, and officiating priests around the altar. Now step over that interval until Christmas Eve, 1895. Ten days previous to it I had taken passage in the "Lorrain," a roomy comfortable vessel of the Australian line. We stopped at Londonderry to take on passengers and the Irish mail.

In the steerage (which was very little inferior to the cabin), I remarked a party of forty-five or fifty, seeming to be one family connection, from the fact of them keeping to themselves. Some relationship certainly existed between a few of them, but they were all known to each other, and principally from the same mountainous district in the North of Ireland.

Married men, with wives and daughters, youths and maidens, with grandparents crowned with the silver of years, whose appearance, although stepping off the stage of life, showed to observers how pure, holy and simple must have been their antecedents'

They had along with them, their beloved pastor. Well, now, he was without exception the finest specimen of a real old Irish gentleman it has been my good fortune to have met with.

I was most desirous to cultivate his acquaintance, but he seemed to have no time for anything, or any body, outside of his own people. One day at dinner an argument was started, concerning a poetical question in Latin, one gentleman claimed that it was translated from the original Spanish of "Lopez-De-Vega," another insisted that it was quoted from the Latin of "Cervantes," not one of the company could convince his neighbor, from the simple fact that we did not sufficiently understand the subject.

Gentlemen, I said, I think I can procure reliable authority, as to the authorship, and with the quotation in hand presented myself to the reverend gentleman.

The rich sonorous Spanish was music itself, flowing from his tongue, and then came the grand majestic Latin, simplicity unadorned, you should have heard him, I am unable to describe his exquisite rendering of the theme. He could not cut me off from his pleasant society, after that event.

Our vessel was now cleaving the watery high-way, and fair weather for the season was given us, until "Christmas Eve," then, all the elements seemed to be let loose, to think of it now takes my breath away; the oldest seamen on board declared "they had never experienced the like."

Ah! it was terrible to witness the wild despair of some of the passengers, I felt very helpless myself, but concealed my fears as best I could, from the terror stricken beings around me.

At last, unable to endure the crisis and tears that met me on all sides. I crept on deck, holding on to bolt and stay, while so doing, and stumbled in among the steerage passengers, (and now listen with all your soul). Kneeling around the priest, who held aloft a crucifix, was the little band of emigrants. They were meeting the common fate that awaited us all, with the heroic sublime greatness, with which the early Christian martyrs met their doom in the Colliseum.

I was about to offer an apology for my intrusion, when "Adeste Fideles" rose on the storm; simultaneous from every voice in the band, save the young children in their parents' encircling arms. Down on my knees, and as if I sang it from childhood, I sang it, strong in the faith that was first awakened in my soul on "Christmas Eve," in Notre Dame Church. Father Moran, I cried aloud. I too am a Roman Catholic, but only from this present moment, bless me as one of your flock.

There now, dear old friend, do you recall all the abusive names I delighted to heap on my former friends, that joined the Roman Church, "turncoats, idolaters, renegades," etc. My former coreligionists, can now heap on, with interest, the same abusive names, for I deserve the same measure I meted to others.

It matters little to me now what I may be called, thank God I am a Roman Catholic. Pray for me, dear old friend, that I may be a good one.

* * * * * * *

The following poem, "The Emigrant Ship" has for its basis a fragment of a letter from a friend in Hobart-town, Tasmania, ... which is given above:

THE EMIGRANT SHIP.

'Tis Christmas on mid ocean,
And beneath a storm charged sky,
Whose clouds by vivid lightning rent,
Tell of a danger nigh.

Danger upon the angry deep—
When the thunderbolts are hurled,
That wake unto strife the fathomless depths,
Of the unknown watery world.

And in this conflict, wild and grand,
'Tween the ocean and the sky,
A half wrecked vessel, 'neath bare poles,
Goes rushing madly by.

Like some hunted deer, of the forest glade,
With the hounds upon its trail
So bounds the ship,—like a thing of life,
Before the awful gale.

Now riding the crest of a towering wave,
Then shooting its watery side,
Ah! God protect, the emigrant ship,
'Tis the eve of "Christmas tide."

Three hundred souls she bears, all told,
And among these a sorrowing band,
Who has left their homes, in the Irish hills
For the far Australian land.

They have in their midst a royal guest,
Their "Soggarth" tried and true,
Who has cast his lot, with his chosen ones,
In the land they are journeying to.

They are kneeling now with their "Soggarth aroon,"
Mingling their prayers and tears,
The aged of his flock, and youth, and prime,
And childhood's tender years.

And hark! as their voices sweetly sing,
Borne aloft, on the wings of the storm,
The song that the "Herald Angels" sang,
On the night that "Christ" was born.

"Glory to God" from sorrowing hearts,
Rises superb and grand,
And the "Child Christ" they sang of, with faith sublime,
Brought the Emigrant Ship to land.

AGNES BURT.

Christmas Day, Dec. 25th, 1895.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

The universal feeling of gladness that fills Christian hearts throughout Christendom, on the approach of the holy festival of Christmas is surely supernatural and sublime in its origin. No matter what may have been the trials, struggles and vexations of the rest of the year, we seem to forget their bitterness; and by some mysterious prompting our hearts incline to the lenient mood in our judgments of men and of things generally. We feel that it would be a crime, as it were against charity to view matters harshly at a period of the year when the Christian world rejoices; and at the particular time when Holy Mother Church invites her children to partake of the feelings of forgiveness and peace and joy which the blissful season of Christmas rightly inspires. Although nineteen hundred years have passed away since the introduction of those beneficial moral codes they have come down through the ages in full force and vigor, and young and old of every rank and station have to-day to acknowledge their purifying and civilizing sway, and it will be the same as long as true Christianity endures to uplift and redeem fallen nature. But the measure of gladness growing out of Christmas merry-making will not be the same in all hearts, for the angelic messengers who first announced the "glad tidings of great joy" to the shepherds who were keeping the night watches over their flocks," of the birth of the new-born Saviour, sang "Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth Peace to men of good will." "Men of good will." This discriminating clause in the glorious announcement showed plainly that all men were not of that stamp and character.

The preparations preceding the birth of Christ foreshadowed the coming of some august personage possessing supreme power and supernatural influence. The Roman empire seemed to have gained universal conquest, and nations previously at war suddenly cooled down to conditions of peaceful repose. The heavens indicated the approach of some great and mysterious event, such as the world had not dreamt of before. A new star of extraordinary splendor appears in the east. St. John the Baptist, the forerunner and messenger of the Redeemer, makes his presence felt by the divine proclamation as of "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the path of the Lord." The earth is made a witness of those supernatural and sublime happenings, and the humble ears of poor shepherds are astounded by the entrancing voice of angelic choirs singing the praises of Him who was newly born in this world, and the same simple men are favored by an audience with the special messenger of heaven, who descended to announce the "glad tidings." The great central figure in all those startling doings is the Divine Babe in the manger-crib at Bethlehem. But what a seeming contradiction between the lowliness of the birthplace and its surroundings, and the heavenly prodigies and signs which foretold the birth itself. The apparent inconsistency in the wonderful events staggered the Jews and unbelievers then, and it does the same down to this day. But according to the decrees of a merciful Providence it was meet that the Redeemer of mankind should prove by his first acts upon earth that he was the friend and father of the poor, as He did afterwards by every act and deed of His earthly mission.

Contemplating the humility of this Divine infant, His blessed Mother and St. Joseph, it is no wonder that the humble Christians and the pure of heart should rejoice at the return of the great festival of Christmas, nor is it strange that innocent children should feel their youthful souls inspired with a joyous feeling of delight at the repetition of the thrilling story of the Divine Child who came so meekly that all might become familiar with Him, and who in the cause of His Divine mission made the grown people stand aside to make way for the little ones, one of whom he embraced, and setting him in the midst, He commanded that little children should be allowed to come unto Him; "Sufler little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." With such an example before them what wonder that innocent and joyful little hearts should flock around the Infant-Crib in the Catholic Churches at the holy season of Christmas, or that fond mothers should strive to instill into the tender souls the true meaning and significance of that event that caused a God-man to appear among men in the form of a helpless little child. This mysterious occurrence will ever remain fresh and inviting as a subject for serious thought to all Christian minds, as the more it is studied the deeper its significance becomes, and so it will be until the end of ages.

Among the impressive ceremonies of the joyful season of Christmas one of the most teaching and sublime is the Midnight Mass, which is a distinct feature of the glorious celebration in the Catholic Churches throughout Ireland and Canada, and every country wherein the Catholic religion is free and untrammeled. Many circumstances combine to make the Mid-night celebration grand, inspiring and thrilling. The solemn stillness of the unusual hour, the pealing of bells, the flocking of ardent worshippers the unwonted grandeur of brilliantly lighted altars, the rich robes of officiating priests, the entrancing music of organ and choir, the presence of a vast congregation, the solemnity of the holy scene, a deep consciousness of the occasion that called it forth, and above all the deep spiritual joy and thankfulness that penetrates the inmost soul of each worshipper present, in the thrice blessed knowledge that heaven and earth have been brought closer together by the glorious event which they are there and then celebrating.

On the sacred soil of Ireland, the feeling of reverence on such an occasion is yet of a deeper tinge, for in that land of saints and martys the virtuous peasantry have intense love and veneration for their priests and church, and upon the warning of the church bells, thousands of devout peasant will flock to the midnight Mass, from hill and valley, and from districts miles away from the nearest parish church. And while on their way to assist at the holy sacrifice amidst the cheerful and yet solemn thoughts of the occasion, may not their minds turn backward to the dread times when the penal laws compelled their forefathers to brave the night storms, and even the bayonets of their persecutors, in order to reach their devoted priests, in their hidden retreats, to receive spiritual consolations at their hands. It would of course be a bitter memory to recall on a Christmas festival, but it would have its uplifting influence as well as its depressing thoughts, for it would force the lesson home that a religion that could sustain men under trials such as their ancestors endured, must be more than human and strong in this holy belief---they would cherish

Christian, holiness and religion, and its widespread influence is felt in every land and among every people who believe in the name of Christ, and have been made familiar with His miraculous works and the fruits of His Divine Mission here below.

WM. ELLISON.

SHIP FEVER VICTIMS BURIAL GROUND.

To the Editor of the "True Witness."

Dear Sir,— Will you kindly permit me space in your valuable columns to make a suggestion in reference to the memorial stone in memory of the victims of the ship fever, of which so much has been said of late. To my mind there is no more interesting or valuable memento of the early Irish settlers of Montreal, than this grim monolith which marks the saddest epoch in the history of Erin's exiled sons and daughters. It is a souvenir, not only of that terrible scourge in which so many perished but it is also a reminder of those persecutions which drove the unhappy people to seek a new home in far-off Canada. That big boulder should be treasured by our Irish citizens, be they Protestant or Catholic, for all were buried in ne common grave.

But enough of this, your space is limited, and I will therefore simply say this: Where the monument now stands it is out of the world, surrounded by tracks it is dangerous, even for an adult to visit, and children cannot go there in safety unescorted. No one sees it, year in and year out, except railway men and shunters. Even the memorial service held on the spot every year by the good priests of St. Ann's is not always held without difficulty. My suggestion is, therefore, let the stone be removed to St. Patrick's Square, or better still to that vacant lot of ground just east of Wellington bridge. There in the heart of St. Ann's Ward, in the greatest Irish Catholic Parish in all Canada, and almost immediately in front of noble St. Ann's, where so many survivors of the terrible scourge still worship, there let it stand as a constant reminder to the rising generation of what their fathers suffered for their faith and for their country. As matters now stand, very few see the monument, but once a year. If my suggestion is carried out, it will be one of the most striking memorials in all Montreal. I believe the G. T. R. would meet the proposition in a friendly spirit.

Yours truly,

E. C. M.

A RAILWAY CONFERENCE.

Western Officials Give an Unqualified Denial to the Report That They Had Charged the Grand Trunk With Disloyalty to Them.

An important conference of railway officials took place at the Windsor Hotel yesterday, when a number of railway men from the United States met the officials of the C. P. R. and Grand Trunk, for the purpose of adjusting a number of matters, some action in reference to which was necessitated by the recent re-arrangement regarding traffic by the G. T. R. and C. P. R. upon the termination of the rate troubles between those two lines. All the details dealt with were of a technical character and having been satisfactorily arranged most of the visiting railway men left for different points in the United States last night.

Several of the western officials gave an unqualified denial to the report that their lines had charged the Grand Trunk with disloyalty in connection with the recent resumption of traffic relations with the C. P. R. A "Star" reporter in the course of an interview with three of the leading Western officials, Messrs. P. S. Eustis, general passenger agent of the Burlington system; Mr. A. F. Merrill, assistant general ticket agent of the Milwaukee system, and Mr. J. W. Lee, representing Mr. Caldwell, the chairman of the Western Passenger Association, was informed that the recent newspaper reports that the Western lines were charging the Grand Trunk system with disloyalty, were entirely unfounded, that there was not now nor had been at any time any lack of confidence in the present relations heretofore existing between the Grand Trunk and the Western lines, and the amicable settlement of grievances between the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific had their full approbation.

The reports arose out of the fact that by the new arrangement with the C. P. R., considerable western traffic originating on the G. T. R. is now handed over to the C. P. R. at North Bay, instead of being handed over to the Western roads at Chicago.

The gentlemen present at yesterday's conference were Messrs. P. S. Eustis, G. P. A. Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway; A. F. Merrill, A. G. T. A., Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway; T. W. Lee, statistical bureau, Western Passenger Association, Chicago; L. W. Nutting, general eastern passenger agent, Southern Pacific Railway, New York; D. McNicoll, P. T. M., Canadian Pacific Railway; C. E. E. Usher, G. P. A., Canadian Pacific; W. E. Davis, G. P. A., Grand Trunk.—Montreal Daily Star, Dec. 14, 1898.

Certain morning papers have been trying to make it appear that the Grand Trunk has gone back on its Western connections in the agreement it has reached with the American roads. By their misrepresentations of the actual facts they have done the Grand Trunk a gross injustice, which none deplore more deeply than its Western connections. The arrangements made by the Grand Trunk with the Canadian Pacific is one which is considered entirely reasonable by its Chicago-St. Paul connections. It is one they expected it to make if any agreement with the Canadian Pacific was reached, and since it has been reached the Chicago-St. Paul lines have been congratulating themselves that there is now hope of them securing stable rates, which are of far more consequence to them than any business of which they may be deprived by the Grand Trunk-Canadian Pacific agreement. --- Chicago Evening Post, Nov. 30th. 1898.

VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

The priests of the Church are taken from the people to serve the people. God does not send his angels from heaven to be ministers of the Gospel. He takes men and sends them to preach, to offer sacrifice and to forgive sin. His priesthood is not a caste. It is not confined to one family or a single race. It is the priesthood of Melchisedec, who was without father or mother. The Church knows not family or condition. She asks merely for virtue and good will.

The priests of the Church are not to be strangers in the household of the faith. They must be children of the household. The man who stands at the altar must be taken from the people that worship round the altar. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that belong to God that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins, who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err because he himself also is compassed with infirmity."

This spirit of sympathy between the priest and the people, of which the epistle speaks, is ordinarily the result of human influences, race, education, family and social ties. Therefore the Church recruits her ministers from the locality in which they are to serve. Her diocesan clergy come from the diocese, and in the normal condition of the Church the diocese is every considerable town and the surrounding country. The diocesan clergy belong to the diocese and are not permitted to move freely from diocese to diocese. Some of the modern religious orders follow a different procedure, but even they have their provinces and districts within which their subjects are confined.

Hence in the mind of the Church each diocese must supply its own clergy. If a diocese does not supply its own clergy, something is wrong somewhere. Of course I speak of dioceses that are settled. Where a country is filling up with immigrants the immigration must do its share in supplying the clergy. The newcomers have a right to priests of their own flesh and blood.

But when a diocese is settled and the increase of the population is the natural increase of the excess of births over deaths, the diocese itself must supply the priests. Ultimately the solution of the priest supply depends on the people. If the people will not give their children to the service of the sanctuary, there can be no priests. The question, therefore, is, can the people be got to do their duty in this matter?

God is bound to have his own way. If he has not his way in this world, it is owing to neglect or perversity. It is his way to take his priests from his people. If he does not get them, the reason is either that the people don't know he wants them or they are not willing to give what he asks. The last reason may be put out of court. There is always a remnant in Israel. When Elias complained that the people had all forsaken the covenant of God and had destroyed his altars and had slain his prophets and that he alone was left, the Lord answered him, "I will leave me 7,000 men in Israel who have not bent the knee to Baal." That remnant is always sufficient to people the courts of the sanctuary. If they are few, they give generously.

Therefore, if there be a dearth of priests it arises from the fact that the people do not know their duty. In a settled Catholic land the customs of the country are an education in themselves. We are, however, dealing here with a community where all things are new. Hence there is need of frequent instruction on the duty of the people to supply priests for the altar. This duty must be impressed upon them again and again. They are willing, at least those of them who go to church, to do what is right, if they are only told.

To aid them in doing right comes the further fact that no one takes this honor to himself save he that is called even as Aaron was. God calls boys to the priesthood. This call means that God implants in their hearts a liking for the priestly state. Two things may stifle the liking---first, the parents' influence, conscious or unconscious; second, sin. Sin is the boys' own business, in families worthy of the name. In a decent home the child who sins sins of his own accord. The parents are not to be held responsible therefor, But it is otherwise with influence. The father may have others ideas for his son, the mother other dreams. They may be deaf to the angel voices and blind to the light from heaven. By keeping before the child the secular ambition of place and power and fortune they may stifle the liking of the things that are of God. In this are the parents guilty and therefore it is necessary to tell them of their duty and to warn them that they gain nothing by cheating God. God is a jealous God: if he does not get the soul he wants, he spoils it for any other use.

But if the matter is brought home properly to them few will be the Catholic parents to refuse a son to God. Their faith is too deep, the reward too great. Theirs is the honor when the beloved son... lifts up his hands in benediction on the people, theirs the reward when day by day the clean oblation is offered for them living, is offered for them dead.---San Francisco Monitor.

The dread and foreboding which almost invariably comes over a young wife, just ere the advent of the first little darling who shall call her mother, is one of the unnatural burdens which civilization has imposed upon the privilege of motherhood.

There ought not to be such an overwhelming sense of depression and weakness as a woman feels at this time and there would not be if she was in a perfectly strong and healthy condition. In thousands of cases motherhood has been divested of all its dangers and a large proportion of its pain by the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, which is the most marvelous remedy ever discovered for restoring complete organic health and strength to the delicate special structure involved in motherhood. Taken early during the prospective time it makes the mother strong, energetic and cheerful and carries her through the period of trial with comparative comfort and ease. It increases the baby's natural, constitutional vigor and adds to the joys of motherhood the supreme satisfaction of a strong, robust, lusty infant. "Favorite Prescription" is also the best supportive tonic for nursing mothers. Every expectant mother will appreciate what is said by Mrs. Fannie M. Harry, of Galesburg, Ills., (545 Churchill Ave.) In a letter to Dr. Pierce she writes:

"I have used your medicines in my family for a long time, and find them to be all that is claimed. I cannot recommend them too highly. My confinement was made easy, as I experienced none of the pains such as others have at that period, and the *first born* the one that mothers fear so much. Besides, the medicine has helped me in many other ways. I would recommend all afflicted women to try Dr. Pierce's valuable medicines, and thus become well and strong."

Dr. Adams' Toothache Gum is sold by all druggists; 10 cents a bottle.

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY SYSTEM

Holiday Rates.

TICKETS will be issued good going Dec 24th, 25th and 26th, valid returning from destination not later than Dec. 27th, 1898; also on Dec 31st, Jan. 1st and 2nd valid returning from destination not later than Jan 3rd, 1899, at

SINGLE FARE.

Going Dec. 23rd, 24th and 25th, valid returning from destination not later than Dec. 28th, 1898, also on Dec. 30th and 31st, and Jan. 1st, valid returning from destination not later than Jan. 4th, 1899.

FARE AND ONE-THIRD.

School Vacations.—To Teachers and Pupils of Schools and Colleges, on surrender of standard form of School Vacation Certificate, signed by Principal, Round Trip Tickets will be issued at ONE-WAY FIRST CLASS FARE AND ONE-THIRD, good going Dec. 10th to 31st, inclusive, and valid for return leaving destination not later than Jan 18th, '99.

Above Reduced Rates apply between all Stations in Canada. Stations in Canada to Detroit and Port Huron, Mich; Suspension Bridge, Niagara Falls, Black Rock and Buffalo, N.Y.

Commercial Travellers.—On presentation of Commercial Travellers' Railway Certificate, Round Trip Tickets will be issued between Stations in Canada only, at ONE-WAY FIRST-CLASS FARE (not Commercial Travellers' Fare), good going Dec 17th to 26th, inclusive, and valid for return leaving destination not later than Jan 4th, 1899.

For particulars as to reduced fares on other Canadian Lines, and all information, apply to Company's Agents.

City Ticket Offices, 137 St. James Street, and Bonaventure Station.