PRIEST AND ASTRONOMER—FATHER PERRY

NUMBER of priests have distinguished themselves by their services to the science of astronomy, for example : Copernicus the founder of the modern system, the learned Gassendi who first observed the transit of a planet

across the sun's disc, Clavius who did the astronomical work connected with the reformation of the calendar for Gregory XIII., and in more recent times Grimaldi, Mayer, Boscovitch and De Vico. Onr own age counts among its many eminent scientists Fathers Secchi and Perry whose names will be known and honored as long as astronomy is studied. An elegant article in the OwL a few months ago told of Father Secchi and his discoveries. Father Perry passed to a better life without perhaps leaving to the world as rich a legacy of scientific truths ashis confrere, yet he occupied a distinguished place in the foremost rank of great astronomers ; a brief sketch of his life may then be interesting to our readers.

Stephen Joseph Perry was born in London on the 25th of August, 1833. When he reached his tenth year he was sent to Gifford Hall where he studied for one year and a half and then entered college at Douay. Like many great scientists he did not, as a student, display dazzling talents but was resolute and persevering, and in the end always remarkably successful, especially in his mathematical studies. After seven years at Douay, feeling himself called to the sacred office of the priesthood, he left for the English College at Rome, where he began the study of philosophy. After a successful course in divinity he returned to England, and soon after entered the novitiate of the Jesuit Fathers. His superiors, perceiving in him great talents for astronomy and physical sciences, procured him considerable advantages tending to perfect him in those branches. He attended the lectures of Dr. Morgan in London, in 1858, and of Bertrar I, Lionville, Delannay, Cauchy and Serret in Paris, during the following years.

His natural aptitude for astronomy and the especial advantages he had enjoyed, well fitted Father Perry to take charge of the observatory at Stonyhurst, when it was entrusted to him on his return to England, in 1860. The scientific periodicals, at home and on the continent, soon after began to chronicle important data regarding terrestrial magnetism and solar physics obtained from skilfully recorded observations at Stonyhurst. Father Perry soon also gained an enviable reputation as a lecturer on scientific matters, both before popular audiences and learned societies. That reputation he sustained to the end of his life, steadily increasing with advancing years his rare and wonderful faculty of interesting both learned scientists and ordinary hearers; some of our readers were perhaps fortunate enough to attend one or more of the lectures he deliverin various places whilst visiting Canada and the United States with other members of the Royal Society of England a few years ago.

The routine work inaugurated and most carefully carried out at Stonyhurst for long years by Father Perry, did much, say those best qualified to judge, toward the development of the new science of solar physics. That work consisted in the daily drawing of the sun for the purpose of measuring the depth of the bright envelope which surrounds our great luminary, and of obtaining records of the heights, positions and directions of the streaks called faculæ, which at times rise from the envelope. Daily records were also made of the positions, &c., of such solar spots as were to be seen. Father Perry's aim, so he tells us himself, was: "Not to undertake any work that would be a mere repetition of what was being done better elsewhere." Hence he substituted the pencil for the camera, and instead of taking photographs of the solar surface, he secured drawings. The results obtained by work of this kind have made the drawing system a common feature in our observatrics to-day; the successful work done at Stonyhurst first commended it to general use. The process consists in taking the direct projection of the image

