

## Austin Notes

I know a pretty, quiet, little town some ninety miles from Winnipeg on the main line of the C.P.R. Its name is as ancient as Britain's great Apostle and several of its 250 inhabitants are sons of merry Old England. It is called Austin. A visit paid to it on Christmas eve, dear reader, would have enabled you to make the acquaintance of our worthy flourishing congregation. The little church offered an impressive scene. Quite a score of devoted spontaneous workers were at hand, planning the most effective use to be made of the decoration provided by our thoughtful committee that this Christmas might be exceptionally attractive and let us say it without fear of contradiction, success has crowned their zeal. Before sunset twigs of spruce, wreaths and flowers, transparencies in the windows, a simple, but devotional crib gave to the little chapel an air of fete and grandeur that could scarcely have been surpassed by the best organized altar societies. At four o'clock a final choir practice was held, and it was clear that the musical talent of the singers was not inferior to their taste for decorating.

Lady Moon soon made her appearance early in the night that proved an ideal night, fair bright silvery weather and good roads invited the flocks of joyous people to midnight Mass; the attendance could scarcely have been better. Punctually at midnight the solemn High Mass was celebrated by Rev. Father Decoene, Brandon, Redemptorist. After the gospel, the zealous missionary described how the whole Catholic world was worshipping the new-born Babe of Bethlehem, and begged the faithful to join by making their Christmas Communion the most fervent of their lives. He urged the Catholic parents to ask for their children, piety and religious vocations. The usual wishes of the season ended the substantial and impressive discourse. Mrs. A. Walker acted as leader of the choir and organist. Her skilful leadership and accompaniment only reassured us that the Austin church possesses in the late directress of the Hern Bay Catholic church (England) a more than ordinary talented musician. Under her guidance the ladies and gentleman of the choir did splendid execution of Bordek's Mass in F.

After the communion of the Priest a ceremony took place that gave a delightful and angelical feature to our Christmas service, the eldest son of Mr. John McFarlane, an energetic member of our committee, for the first time made of his breast a living tabernacle for the infant Jesus.

At noon the missionary was the guest of our esteemed station agent, Mr. Steel. Though comparatively recent members of our congregation, the families Steel and Crettie have distinguished themselves by their zeal and interest in the mission. After the nicest reception, Mrs. Steel and Mrs. Crettie presented their pastor with valuable Christmas gifts.

In the afternoon the usual service, comprising recitation of the Rosary and Benediction, brought a day of spiritual and material rejoicing to a pious close, while the faithful returned home like the shepherds of Bethlehem, praising and glorifying God for all they had seen and heard.

The Misses Violet McFarlane, Lucy Vavasour and Christina Speed, boarders of St. Michael's convent, Brandon, are at their parents enjoying Christmas holidays. Their very presence here is the best advertisement the sisters of our Lady of the Missions could wish for, since their excellent behaviour is a palpable proof to all, of the first-class training young ladies, both Catholic and of other denominations, receive in that up-to-date institution.—A Member of the congregation.

## Lethbridge Notes

Last Christmas eve was a very busy day for Rev. Father Paul Kulawy, O. M. I. In the morning and especially in the afternoon and evening until midnight the Rev. Father was hearing confessions, the number of which was on this day about 130. Most of these confessions were in English, but there were also a great many in Slavish and French and some in Italian, Hungarian, Polish and German. At mid-

night mass the church was crowded to the doors. The altar was resplendent with candles and natural flowers from Father Van Tighen's conservatory. The sermon was delivered by Rev. Father Kulawy in English, Slavish and Italian.

On the 26th, in the afternoon, there was a Christmas-tree entertainment for the school-children. The school consists of a mixture of all nationalities. The pupils are English, Slavish, French, Italians, Hungarian, Polish, Isthmian, German, Flemish and even a son of the Celestial Empire is there. We are fortunate to possess a first-class school-staff of experienced teachers called, "the Faithful Companions of Jesus." There are 160 pupils in the roll. There is also a boarding school for young ladies. Under the guidance of our teachers the children of the different foreign nationalities are acquiring the English language very quickly. Among those advanced last summer by the Board of Education at Regina for passing public-school leaving, was also a Slavish girl, 16 years old.

Jos. Murphy.

Lethbridge, Alta. Dec. 30th 1904.

## THE OPENING OF THE CHURCH OF THE GUARDIAN ANGELS.

Sunday the 18th was the occasion of much rejoicing to the faithful of Oak Nook, Man., for on that date, they celebrated the opening of their neat little church, dedicated under the name of the Church of the Guardian Angels. Holy Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Father Houle, of Makinak who also preached a very appropriate sermon for the occasion. The origin of the building of this church may be of interest, as it illustrates what can be done by perseverance in a good cause, for it is the first church of any denomination in the settlement and therefore an object lesson to dissenters. Three years ago less than four families met in the house of one of their number for the privilege of hearing Mass and receiving the sacrament for the first time in the settlement. Before leaving for their homes realizing their need of spiritual instruction for their growing children and the dangers they were under of falling away from their faith and practices of Catholicity and being drawn into other churches by friends of other denominations, also their own spiritual needs, they determined to build a church, and run the risk of getting served with a priest at regular periods as time went on. There were many difficulties to encounter, for they were newly settled and all struggling financially. However, they made a start, went to the neighboring mountains cut logs, got them sawn into lumber, selected a site for their church and commenced building, their progress was slow but sure, and the outcome is the present neat little church, plastered walls and ceiled with pine, well-finished throughout. Almighty God was surely with them, for they received from time to time unexpected favors, to help along the good work and today the church is practically clear of debt.

Catholic farmers (English speaking) meditating making a home in the Dauphin district, might do well to locate in the Clear View district close to the Oak Nook church. There are a few good chances yet open, for good land near church, and they may be sure of a hearty welcome and every help to locate, by any of the Catholics of this district.

## St. Rose Notes.

Christmas has come and gone and our beautiful church was never more beautiful than at Midnight Mass, the choir also surpassed itself and had able assistance from the village band. There was general Communion as usual; we thought when later in the day we drove through the gathering shades of evening and watched the stars, singly and then in crowds, come out in the blue sky and around in the distance lay the snow-covered roofs of this privileged people, we thought what blessings would descend upon these homes, where the honored Guest was Our Divine Lord Himself reposing in the happy hearts of fathers, mothers and children.

But joy is only a bird of passage in this world, his nest is in heaven and the Glorias which heralded the birth of the Divine Infant have hardly ceased from ringing in our ears when already the shadow of the cross falls upon Him; no matter, at Christmas, at Easter, in all joyous times as in all sorrowful ones he is always there

upon the cross, He never comes down, He never seems to rest from suffering; each generation crucifies Him afresh.

Just before the last bells chimed for Midnight Mass two of our good Sisters were summoned to the deathbed of a poor exile from France, dying all alone in a strange land, with no friend nearer than the 8 miles which separated her from the convent; they cheerfully set out on their long cold drive, leaving the warmly lighted church and happy hope of Communion; in going thus, they were doing something for their dear Lord, serving Him in the person of His poor. Had they remained to pray, He would have been doing something for them but obedience is better than sacrifice. This put me in mind of "The Vision Beautiful" so tenderly described by Longfellow; you all know it—how our Saviour appeared once to a monk in his cell, came to visit him as it were, and just then the door-bell of the monastery rang and he was porter and he had to go, but a moment he paused, not liking to leave his Divine Lord, then swiftly went, following the call of duty. When he returned what was his delight to see our Lord still there Who smiled on him and said: "If thou hadst stayed I must have gone."

It is a source of edification in this place to see how self-sacrificing and devoted our "Sisters of the Missions" are in their attendance on the sick, the dying and the dead without any return but our gratitude; for many days they had gone to minister to this poor French lady by bitter cold and heavy roads, often trusting to the grain haulers to bring them home, when on their return from Makinak they passed near by the humble abode of poverty and abandonment. Not long since their kindly offices were gratefully received by the family of Mr. Prefontaine, who came from his home at St. Eustache to die amongst his dear ones here and was here interred, being followed to the grave by his two sons, Mr. J. Prefontaine, M. P. P., and Mr. B. Prefontaine, his sons-in-law Messrs H. and E. Houde and numerous friends, his gentle spirit passed away in the peace of the Lord, in which he had lived, beloved and lamented by all.

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One of the pictures is called

## "Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

## "Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

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