

Is it not a glorious privilege for you to co-operate with the Consecrated Spouses of Christ in preparing those so dear to the Heart of Jesus Christ, to be worthy citizens of time and eternity? To impart to them the knowledge of God their Creator and last end, their supernatural destiny, the secrets of infinite Mercy, the mysteries of faith which it has pleased God to reveal concerning Himself, and which He requires us to know: 'for this,' He says, 'is life eternal that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent' (John xvii., 3). Not by their own, but by the strength of the Most High, can they attain to His end, which is far above the reach of their own natural power. They are here taught to pray, how to pray, and what to pray for. Here they are taught to familiarise themselves with the means of Divine Grace, the mysterious channels through which the Blood of Christ Jesus is poured out into our souls—the Sacraments of God's Church.

Help them to acquire this Knowledge. Then, indeed, you will co-operate with our Blessed Redeemer in the salvation of souls so dear to Him, and secure for yourselves the glorious reward promised to those who shall 'have instructed many unto justice' (Dan. xii., 3).

Let us exhort you, dearly beloved brethren and children in Jesus Christ, to stand by, uphold, and support this noble institution, which is the legitimate pride and glory of our diocese. Let not the blessings of heaven pass away from amongst you, or be lessened by your neglect or remissness. You will hand it down to those who come after you as the most glorious legacy you can bequeath to them and theirs. Let us, in conclusion, remind you that the dear little ones, having received within those hallowed walls the true knowledge of God and the things of God, will expand their minds, enlarge their faculties, become more efficient in whatever their calling in life. Thus placed on the road to honest independence, they will bless you as their benefactors, and breathe a fervent prayer for your temporal and spiritual welfare, the prayer of the grateful heart always heard in the highest heavens. How many of those dear children, kneeling round the altar of the God Who rejoiced their youth, whilst partaking of the Bread of the strong, will earnestly remember those generous souls, by whose bounty they were preserved from sin and taught to live justly and soberly and godly in this world, and to walk in the happy paths of innocence which lead to life everlasting.

Should they, which is not likely, ever forget to pray for you, their benefactors, then their guardian Angels, whose office you will have performed, will take their places and implore for you from the Almighty the reward promised to your charity.

Words fail us wherewith to express our indebtedness to these devoted Sisters. Whilst we had reason to rejoice at their labors—labors which have deservedly won for them the admiration of those who do not belong to our faith—we for a long time felt a great need in our diocese—that of Sisters to pour out their charitable love for the sick and dying.

After long negotiations, we at length obtained that the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, familiarly known as the Blue Sisters, would undertake to supply this want. Last year the Rev. Mother Xavier, who has made their House in Lewisham, New South Wales, the marvel of Australia, came over with the heroic band of nuns, who have since been at work in Bealey avenue, Christchurch.

By a strange coincidence, we were recently struck down by a trying sickness which necessitated our being advised to become an inmate of their hospital. Though unwilling at first, we at length yielded, and found ample opportunity to watch the self-sacrificing work of the Sisters not only during the day, but during the weary hours of night too. We can now understand why the medical staff are so loud in the praises of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary. With their seven years' training as medical nurses, their motherly affection for their patients, and close attention to all that the medical men prescribe, we now understand how every one who goes forth from their establishment is so gratefully devoted to them.

Though so well and favorably known and appreciated throughout Australia, they are still unknown to many in New Zealand. Hence it may not be out of place to say a few words of their Order and of its illustrious foundress, Mother Mary Potter, who died 18 months ago, just as she had sanctioned the Christchurch foundation. Seven and thirty years ago Mother Mary was a remarkable woman, gifted with indomitable courage, wonderful pluck, and perseverance, to whom the greatest difficulties were but so many stimulants to renewed efforts. Her motto was to do all for the glory of God and the good of immortal souls so dear to His Sacred Heart. Her mental endowments were of the highest order, and she was endowed with a wonderful power of initiative and organisation. A true lover of discipline, she possessed all those amiable qualities which made her a very mother to her spiritual daughters and an ideal nurse. God had long inspired her with the idea of founding an institute wherein she and her spiritual daughters would minister to our dear Lord in the person of the sick and suffering portion of humanity. It was in the year 1878 that Mother Mary and five earnest and skilful companions received their first habits from Dr. Bagshawe, then Bishop of Nottingham, under whose sanction the Order was founded. From that small beginning marvellous results now seen in the nursing world developed.

THE NURSING SISTERS IN ROME.

A little later, in 1885, Mother Mary and two companions left England for Rome.

They were most graciously received by Leo XIII., who gave his blessing to the undertaking and expressed his appreciation of Mother Mary's project and the rules of her community by inviting her to remain to carry on her admirable work in the Eternal City. The hospital she opened on the Celian Hill, close to the Coliseum, became the Mother-House of the Order, and the refuge of Romans and visitors overtaken by sickness in Italy. The thoughts of many travellers of every nationality and rank nursed back to health by the Blue Sisters linger fondly around the beautiful house on the Celian Hill. In 1886, with the approval of its Archbishop, a house was founded in the City of Florence. Another has been founded near the City of Fiesole, in the same neighborhood. On the hillside which rises sharply behind the famous Villa Medici, built on a small platform overlooking the House and grounds, stands this interesting Convent of San Girolamo, where the Nursing Sisters receive convalescents. It is on the old road to Fiesole, the venerable Etruscan City, and from the terrace on the extreme left of the convent there is one of the grandest views of the City of Florence.

DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA.

In 1885, six Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, now growing in numerical strength, with each member trained scientifically for the arduous work of nursing in all its branches, embarked for Australia. They set out under the fatherly protection of the late Cardinal Moran, who viewed their noble work with the greatest admiration and sympathy. Later on a hospital and convent were erected at Lewisham suitable for their needs. Ryde was the next place whither their energies were extended. There, at the request of the Cardinal and thanks to the munificence of the late Hon. Thos. Dalton, they were enabled to establish a hospital for the mentally afflicted. A third Australian branch of the Order was opened in Adelaide in 1890.

That Mother Mary's foundation has been appreciated in Australia, is evidenced by the rapid strides made by these three hospitals. Lewisham alone, which supplies the staff for the Christchurch home, amply justifies the hopes and expectations of the wondrous woman raised up by the Almighty to originate the work.

It is recognised by the medical faculty as one of the finest and best equipped hospitals in the world. Thousands and thousands of patients have passed through Lewisham Hospital; most of them have been cured, and those who have not been restored to health, have had their last moments soothed and softened by the kindly attention of the Sisters.