

conductorship of Mr. Bernard Page, sang with much expression the oratorio, 'Lauda Sion.'

The mission for the children of St. Anne's parish, conducted by the Marist Missionaries (the Rev. Fathers Taylor and McCarthy), concluded on Sunday afternoon, when the children renewed their Baptismal vows. The adults' mission commenced at the 10.30 o'clock Mass, when the Rev. Father McCarthy gave an impressive address. In the evening the church was packed to overflowing, when the Rev. Father Taylor preached a fine sermon, taking for his text, 'What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffers the loss of his own soul.' The order of services is as follows:—Masses at 6, 7, and 9 o'clock, the first Mass being followed by an instruction. In the evening the devotions consist of Rosary, sermon, and Benediction. The early Masses are well attended, and it is most edifying to see the large number of communicants. Each evening the church is packed to overflowing to hear the earnest exhortations of the zealous missionaries. On Thursday evening there were special devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when the occasional sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Taylor. The mission will conclude on Sunday, March 14, when missions will be opened at St. Patrick's (Kilbirnie), and St. Francis' (Island Bay).

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

CATHOLIC READERS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—It might be more to the point to give some account of the Readers, published by the Department of Education in the Catholic University of America, than endeavor to show the unsuitability of the Readers now in use in our Catholic schools, or that 'Delegates' reason for bringing under notice the need of Catholic Readers does not evidence that the Readers issued by the Catholic University are not suitable for the Catholic schools of this country. *Religion: First Book* is the first of a series of text books which embody in concrete form the teachings of Christ. The details and the concrete settings of the lessons have been adapted to the needs of the children of the present generation. As the title of the first book indicates, religion is the central and the dominant element of its teaching. Many of the fundamental truths of religion are here presented to the child in a form suitable to his capacity. He is taught to know and to love our Saviour, and through Him he is led to a knowledge and love of the Father. He is taught the 'Lord's Prayer,' not merely as so many words and phrases to be recited night and morning, but the meaning of several of its petitions is developed so as to reach his intelligence and control his actions. A large portion of the 'Apostles' Creed' is also taught to him in a way that cannot fail to cause the seeds of these sublime truths to take root and grow in his life. Later in this book the Nativity scene is presented, and the child's attention is turned towards our Saviour as the future model for his imitative activity.

Religion: First Book is not merely the child's first book in religion: it is at the same time his first reader, his first nature study book, and it unfolds the germ of his institutional life, and lays the foundation of his aesthetic development along three distinct lines, viz., form, color, and rhythm. The book is called *Religion*, not because it deals with religion alone, but because religion is the most important element which it contains, and because all the other elements are made subordinate to it, both in arrangement of material and in emphasis. Religion thus becomes the basis of the child's education, the germ from which all else is made to unfold. Briefly, then, *Religion: First Book*, in its capacity as the child's first book of religious instruction, contains five parables, in each of which a scene from bird-life is used to develop a corresponding scene in

human life, and to teach the child his corresponding duties. These two scenes are then used as the natural basis of supernatural truth and of supernatural virtues. The movement in each case is the same as that in our Lord's parables.

Some of the merits of *Religion: First Book* will appear obvious after perusal. The context is such as to hold the child's interest throughout. The stories told in the text are told with sufficient clearness in the series of pictures to render the interpretation of the text easy and pleasant to the child. There are very few words used in the book that may not be found in the spoken vocabulary of the average child of six, and the lessons are carefully graded so as to introduce only a limited number of new words in each successive story. Thus the child gets the full advantage of context work, which, taken together with the picture series, reduces the child's difficulty in reading to a minimum. A fair trial will convince any intelligent teacher of the superiority of this book over those in current use, when considered in its capacity as a Reader merely. On reflection it will be found that much of the superiority over the primary readers in present use here, claimed for *Religion: First Book*, is due to the facts that it is the child's first book on religion, that it deals with home instincts, and with the earliest home experiences of the child. The book is designed to fill the place of the child's first book in all the departments of his unfolding mental life.

Space will not permit any further detailed account, and from what has been said of the *First Book*, I think the value of the remainder of the series may be readily estimated. Innumerable are the testimonies received by the rev. authors in praise of these text books, and in conclusion let me quote one, Bishop Shahan, Rector of the Catholic University of America: 'I have followed with deep interest the development of your (the editor's) plan for teaching religion in accordance with sound educational principles. It is certainly gratifying to see that the example given by our Lord Himself is so closely followed in your series, and that the method embodied in the liturgical practice of the Church is now being applied to the instruction of our little children. To make religion the centre and the vitalizing principle of all education is a task worthy of any one who is familiar with recent developments of scientific thought, and with the actual needs of our schools. I, therefore, regard it as a favorable omen for the work of the Catholic University that the first publication emanating from our Department of Education should have for its purpose the presentation of religious truth in forms that cannot but appeal to the instincts and growing intelligence of the child. I sincerely trust that this series will not only prove helpful to our Catholic teachers, but will also point the way to wider applications of the fundamental ideas which are set forth in the several books.'—I am, etc.,

A. E. O'BRIEN.

Rennera, February 28

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

M.S., South Dunedin.—The composer of 'The Bonny Hills of Scotland' was George Linley, an Englishman, who was born at Leeds and died at Kensington, London. Linley composed both words and music. We are sorry that your inquiry, which came some time ago, was inadvertently mislaid.

J.C., Wellington.—The remarks in the *Free Lance*—not editorial, but the work of a scatter-brain correspondent—are, as you say, very uncalled for, and should certainly have been blue-pencilled when under sub-editorial scrutiny. The *Free Lance* has, however, so far as we have seen, an excellent record as being exceptionally free from any suspicion of bigotry in its management and editorial direction; and this being the first offence, and in view of the previous good character of the accused, we think the matter hardly calls for more serious notice.