

Educational.

St. Mary's School, Raleigh.

FOUNDED IN 1842.

John D. Whitford, Esq.:

MY DEAR SIR: It affords me pleasure to occupy the place which you so kindly offer me in your valued journal, with a brief account of St. Mary's School, Raleigh.

There is significance in its name. It is not an Institute, nor a Hall, nor a College. It is simply a school for discipline, for training, for good, honest, hard work.

Its title, "St. Mary's," designates it as an institution of the church, a school of Christ, whose chief desire and care are to instil into the minds of its pupils the wisdom that is from above, and to form in them habits of obedience, industry and piety that will make them blessed and a blessing here, and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light hereafter.

For this end, deeming the moral and religious education of a child to be as much more important than mere literary culture as the Heavens are higher than the earth, and fully persuaded that distinct, definite views of doctrine are essential to the inculcation of the morals and spirit of the Gospel, St. Mary's School owns and avows her allegiance to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States.

The honored names of the Bishops of the Diocese stand at the head of the circular of the school as its visitors. Its Rector and his assistant are clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Its daily religious services are taken exclusively from the Prayer Book, and celebrated in a Chapel which is a gem of architectural beauty, used only for sacred purposes.

Thus our flag is at the mast's head. Our trumpet gives no uncertain sound. Parents may be assured that the children entrusted to St. Mary's School will be trained in the "godly, righteous and sober" ways of the church.

At the same time, it is but fair to state that no special efforts at proselytism are ever made in the school; and that all pupils are treated with equal consideration, charity and kindness.

In this connection, as bearing upon the moral character and influence of St. Mary's School, it is due to it to say, that it discards all the machinery by which at the present day schools endeavor to stimulate the zeal of their pupils

and excite the notice and interest of the community. It has no public examinations, exhibitions, or commencements. It seeks to make no capital for itself by parading on the stage the readings, declamations, or performances of its pupils, at the expense of their simplicity, reserve, delicacy and modesty. It offers no medals, or prizes, or stimulants of any kind to rivalry and emulation. It expects and secures from its pupils zeal in their studies and order in their conduct, from motives of duty to their school, to themselves, to their parents, and to their God, thus endeavoring to train them in principles and habits in which they are to walk as christian women in all their future life.

Next to the sound mind, a sound body is important in the training of a woman. St. Mary's has been eminently favored in the health of its pupils. To this end, besides the rules and precepts, the instructions and exhortations of the school, its high and salubrious situation, its ample buildings, its well ventilated dormitories, and its extended grounds of twenty acres of oak grove, largely contribute.

The course of instruction embraces the studies of young children as well as those of pupils the most advanced. Special interest is felt in the structure and literature of the English language. The Latin, French and German are carefully taught. Music, Drawing and Painting have their full share of attention and pains. In the department of Music, four teachers are employed, skilled, patient and successful, trained specially for their business, and exclusively occupied in it. In arranging the studies of a pupil, care is taken not to exact of her more than she can do thoroughly; while in imparting instruction, the object aimed at is to fit the pupil to become, herself, a teacher.

Among the distinctive features of St. Mary's mention ought to be made of its large and elegant parlor, a room of fine proportions, of ample size to give space and verge for all the pupils, and accessible to them at all hours, when they are not engaged in school duties. It is believed that the facilities which the rooms affords for innocent recreation, social intercourse, and the cultivation of manners, have exerted a powerful influence in refining and "polishing" the daughters of St. Mary's.

All the teachers of St. Mary's reside in the institution; sit at the same board with the pupils; par-

take of the same domestic privileges and enjoyments; and contribute their best efforts towards promoting the cheerfulness and social improvement of the family.

The ladies to whom the charge of the dormitories is entrusted have special opportunity, which they faithfully improve of correcting the faults, and guarding and training the character of those committed to their oversight.

In the fall of 1841, the present Rector of St. Mary's met the Bishop of North Carolina in the City of New York, when the following colloquy ensued: "Bishop, what sort of place would Raleigh be for a school for girls?" "The best in the United States." "Why don't you open a school then?" "I am now looking out for a man." "Bishop, I am your man." "The very man I want."

In the month of May, 1842, the school was opened. Since that time, for thirty-three years, in peace and in war, its doors have never been closed. When the United States army took possession of Raleigh, in April 1865, Gen. Howard had his headquarters in our grove, which was filled with his troops. Yet the exercises of the school went on without interruption, and the term did not close until the day appointed in June.

You have asked me, Mr. Editor, to state some of the distinctive features of St. Mary's. I think I have done so. It may perhaps be mentioned as *distinctive*, that, though a "School of the Church," it has never applied for or received a contribution to its foundation or support, which it has not fairly earned by its labors; while it has been enabled to do much in the way of gratuitous board and education. Having come into the possession of admirable buildings at a moderate rent, the school from the first day was a success. The good people of North Carolina received it with open arms, and gave it a generous support. Soon sister States of the South became our friends; and the daughters of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas, in considerable numbers, were enrolled among our pupils. I cannot in the midst of a very busy week, find time, as you request, to ascertain the precise number of pupils which each of these States has furnished. But I have been able to satisfy myself that the whole number of pupils entered at St. Mary's since the opening of the School is about sixteen hundred.

It does not become a parent to

praise his own child, but he may be pardoned for repeating the kind sayings of others in regard to it.

If then, I have not trespassed too long upon your generously offered space, I beg to close my communication with the following extracts:

The first is from a late address of Bishop Atkinson to his convention:

"It gives me particular pleasure to witness the continued prosperity of that admirable institution, so well merited as it is by the unwearied labors, the singular tact and judgment, the firmness tempered by gentleness and affection, and the large hearted liberality of its distinguished principal, the Rev. Dr. Smedes."

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"While many excellent persons have labored for this end, and with gratifying success, he who, in my judgment at least, has accomplished the most, is the Principal of St. Mary's School, Raleigh; and I, therefore, feel it my duty, as I trust, dear brethren, you feel it to be yours, to extend as widely as possible these beneficial influences, by recommending to the attention of parents and others, who have charge of young girls, that school in which so many admirable women have heretofore been trained for usefulness in this life, and happiness in eternity."

The second is from the report of the Committee on the state of the Church:

"The Committee on the state of the Church call special attention to that part of the Bishop's address, in which he speaks so highly of the Diocesan School at Raleigh, under the care of the Revd. Dr. Smedes; and they do most heartily recommend this school to the patronage of every churchman in this State; being well assured that the children of the church can be as thoroughly educated there as at any schools in the United States."

The third is from an address to his convention by Bishop Young, of Florida, himself the energetic head of a school for girls in his Diocese. Speaking of a visit to St. Mary's, he says:

"I was glad to find on personal observation of the school and its management, that the high reputation and confidence of churchmen, which it has for so many years enjoyed, have been well won, and are abundantly deserved; and to any of our parents who are constrained by the consideration of the health of their daughters to place them at school in a colder climate than ours, I can and do most confidently recommend St. Mary's, Raleigh."

In conclusion, Mr. Editor, I can truly say that in the quality of its teachers and its pupils, and its ability to render faithful service in the cause of christian education, the condition of our school was never more satisfactory than it is now, at the close of its thirty-third year. S.