

An Old Girl writes:

My first sight of Layton Hill was in September 1890, before any of the future wings had been added to the original structure. At the age of ten I well recall the long rooms on the ground floor, the children's refectory parallel with the cloister; above, Our Lady's Dormitory approached by the middle cloister door; higher still, St. Aloysius' entered at the top cloister door; jutting out at right angles to the refectory, was the School Hall, the Chapel above, over which was St. Joseph's dormitory.

I was brought to school by one of my aunts who stayed with me for a week in the Convent. Her sister, my S.H.C.J. aunt, Mother St. Gabriel was at that time a member of the Community. I had never been away from home before so I looked upon the prospect of this totally new experience with great excitement and delight. My mother had died only four years previously. She and her five sisters were educated with our nuns- two in the South, and four in the North, where Reverend Mother Foundress had opened a small boarding school in Blackpool at Queen's Square. Here among the twelve pupils were two of the Waltons, Reverend Mother Mary Theresa's relatives; and two of mine. Verysoon this nucleus moved on to Raikes Hall - in those days a nice private property walled in, and very suitable for the work - being secluded, surrounded with fields and in view of the sea. Legend has it that a green Lady haunted the place, etc..... When my mother was there at school she was very fond of Sister Gonzaga (Snow) who was one of the young nuns on the Staff. In 1890, she it was, who was the Local Superior at Layton Hill, and who so kindly received us within its hospitable walls. Looking back upon the years that have flown, the impression left upon me by Reverend Mother Gonzaga was of one who greatly loved the Society and was entirely devoted to its work. Even as a child at school I was struck by this characteristic. She especially loved and laboured for Layton Hill and for all its inmates and, at a time when funds were fewer than they are today, she left no stone unturned for its welfare. I have even seen her go into the children's refectory a minute or two before dinner time to examine the preparations made for the meal and see whether they met with her approval. Often during the course of the morning Reverend Mother was to be seen going round the grounds and the kitchen garden with Mother St. Gertrude (Dobson) to investigate.

Tanham was the head gardener. He had a small cottage down the road near Chadwick's, but his days were spent up at the Convent in rushed service, even coming up it is said in

the winter as late as after eleven o'clock at night to see that all was well with the furnace - a tall, bent, silent, reverent figure recalling to one's mind a picture of Saint Joseph. Tanham took great pride in his vine in the green-house and also in his eucalyptus plants, which on feast days were always to the fore as a background for decorations in the chapel, or in the School Hall upon occasions, which was on a bigger scale at that time. On Sundays and Holidays of Obligation the same bench on Our Lady's side at the back was always reserved for "Auntie" Dewhurst and for Tanham and his family, in Chapel.

Our school life was happy and full of incident. The studies were serious and for that period well planned and embracing a wide scope of subjects and accomplishments: Scripture, Doctrine, Ancient and Modern History, Classical Biography, Literature, Geography, Botany, Arithmetic, Grammar, Latin, French, German, Theory of Music, Pianoforte playing, Drawing, Needlework, Printing, Physical Culture and Gymnastics, Dancing and Singing.

Everyone learnt Music and there were two piano practices daily of half an hour each, and two lessons a week. The children also went in for public examinations - Elementary, Lower and Higher Division, or Intermediate. Very far back, pianos were dotted about the house - in the dormitories or elsewhere. One of Lizzie Boucher's duties was to watch Juniors' Practice Times. In most cases any Violin lessons were usually given by externs.

An orchestra has always been a characteristic feature of Layton Hill from its early days, and used to be held when I came to school in what was then the Seniors' School Hall, now below the Blessed Sacrament Dormitory. There, my own personal experience of it began by playing a big drum, with a score in real print all to myself, from which, in my fervour, vainly, I used to attempt at counting on the side of my tunic, the large number of silent bars intervening before my turn came to crash in with a beat. Mother Mary Wenceslaus with music pouring out of every inch of her was terribly strict, so we were by no means let off lightly....nevertheless children, parents and people in general were very devoted to her, and she was much loved and sought after.

One of my very earliest memories is of the care and devotion with which English Hymns were first taught us by her. Though so musical herself, Mother made us understand from the start, that the music was for the hymns, not the hymns for the music. Hymn is prayer and cannot be such

without consideration throughout of the words. Mother Mary Wenceslaus had devotion to the Sacred Heart I remember, which may possibly have been the secret spring of her powers of sympathy with and influence over others. Be that as it may, I pay my tiny tribute of thanks to her for those lessons which have helped me through life in its many vicissitudes. For learning to sing in parts, at sight, we had very good books of graded exercise in sol - fa which were doled out to each individual at the lessons. Every week there were lessons in Harmony given.

Drawing was also learnt by all. For some time it consisted mainly of Freehand copies both sides of which were to be drawn perfectly alike and these were of ever-increasing difficulty. At that stage we were in Mother Mary Christina's (Cardwell) class who used to prepare us for the South Kensington Examination which was held in the evening in the Town periodically. On these occasions we used to ask Mother beforehand for leave to stay up to practise at those unusual hours, having more in view the cocoa and biscuits with which we knew we would be regaled later, than the examination, I fear! Mother Mary Christina was Econome for several years and devoted to Layton Hill and its interests, where she made many good friends. The last years of her life were spent at St. Leonards, where almost to the end, she had the children's bazaar, - finding her way there when a cripple from arthritis - it took Mother an hour or so to do so.... Then followed shading of Plaster of Paris Plaques by means of stumps used with a black powder called sauce. There was also Model and Perspective, and finally Oil Painting and painting in sepia and water colours. This was taught by Mother de Britto who had the reputation of being an excellent teacher in Art and Literature. At the end of the School Year our productions were mounted and exhibited on the Prize Day, all beautifully arranged and set out with great care by the Community in the Chapel Cloister. Some years later Mother St. Agnes (Murphy) gave lessons in wood-carving to a selected few of the bigger girls. She had a room set apart for this art in the Music Room Passage, on the right hand side from the stairs. There also Mother herself used to make all sorts of properties needed for the different plays at which she was unusually gifted. The table used in the Sanctuary and the carved chest in the Hall are specimens of her handiwork in this respect, and there are others also, as well as of her Printing and Needlework, at Mayfield. At school we dappled also in Illumination, Gothic and Plain Printing and great attention was paid to handwriting.

Needlework in my time was prepared for us by our Mistress, who always came to the lesson carrying a medium-

sized, flat basket, in which were what looked like white nightdress cases, each bearing the name of a child, and her work enclosed within. During the lesson the actual sewing was supervised, during which time, a story book was often read. From Christmas to Easter a garment was made for oneself after the same method. From Easter to Midsummer we had each a piece of Fancy Work given us to do. It was a tradition to bring work for Poor Clothes after the Midsummer holidays. Garments were made during the following term for the poor, and presented, with toys, to Reverend Mother before going home for Christmas. Once a week we had what was known as Grade Work, when, during the course of the year all the different stitches in plain sewing were studied. On First Fridays an examination on one or other of these, worked in red or blue cotton upon small pieces of white calico carefully fixed beforehand, took place. Results were read out and exhibited at Cachets. We were taught to darn our stockings - a particularly unpopular occupation, I remember! Before leaving school for good some of the bigger girls were in possession of really beautiful, long samplers which must have been much treasured and invaluable to them later. Last but not least, Church work always found an honoured place at the Presentation for Reverend Mother's Feast.

The study of French and German was also a part of the curriculum in my time and we always had a resident Mademoiselle and a Fraulein who gave most of the classes. Generally these remained for one year only, so after the Midsummer holidays there were new arrivals. I fear the children did not always make their lot a bed of roses.

Mother Veronica (Fronduti) an old Italian S.H.C.J. also gave French lessons, as well as others among the nuns. It seems to me that we were each in possession of a good number of French Text books - a few of which I remember to this day. There were - La Grammaire de Larive et Fleury (in French); La Petite Causerie - which was rather big!; Exercises in French and English by Chardenal; with set books - Sans Famille, L'Abbe Constantin, etc. etc..... Nothing was ever allowed to interfere with the general Morning Study in the School Hall at nine to half-past nine, but from then on English "mornings" alternated with French when from then until eleven o'clock it was French Class and there was a penalty for speaking English. When Mother Veronica gave my class lessons downstairs in one of the groundfloor classrooms, on one occasion, an Italian Organ grinder appeared in the garden - he had a pet monkey - I remember. Mother immediately gave him a little P.C. in Italian and went off to find a badge of the Sacred Heart while we produced a few pennies - well pleased with him.

for this welcome diversion. French recitations were usually items of the programmes for the Concerts and I can recall taking the part of the small boy in a scene from Athalie as a child.

Our translations from German were concerned with the Feats of Hercules, I remember. When one Fraulein had corrected our written exercises, she invariably signed her name in each book - Jos. Lemens - to our amusement! Fraulein used also to sing German songs for us at the piano very occasionally, at our own invitation, in so unusual a voice that it was with difficulty we were able to keep straight faces.

In the school at my time we had two very charming girls from Vienna, Marianne and Grett Von Vessel, whom everybody liked. They were very fond of Layton Hill and used also to help a little with German Conversation.

Every week-day morning at 8.30 the Seniors had Calisthenics in the School Hall and twice a week drilling lessons were given by an extern. At one time these were given by an excellent Teacher - I think he came from Liverpool - a certain Colonel Poulton-Holmes, for physical Culture, who used always to illustrate any visible defects in one's deportment by means of quaint, tiny, skeleton figures which he very rapidly drew upon the blackboard. Even our fingers and thumbs he exercised I remember! In those days the Gym was situated at the end of the Music Room Passage at right angles to it - a long narrow room with good flooring and adequate apparatus. Each child had her navy blue costume edged with three rows of narrow white braid on the turned-down collar, waist-band, and end of short skirt, and white sand shoes, as they were called, were worn.

Dancing was not learnt by all, but at the last lesson of each of the two terms, everyone was invited to take part. Sport was milder in our day and not developed as yet to present proportions. Long walks were in vogue and the usual round games of cache-cache, paper chase and in Summer, Tennis, Croquet and Rounders. In the Summer evenings after Supper, the nun used to play with us in the fields and I remember often picking pink wild roses from the hedge and keeping them in my tooth-glass.

When we were at school, Layton Hill was our little world - and in spite of any tiny ups and downs or an occasional "Row" as school girls used to be fond of calling them, perhaps, even on account of them - a blissfully, happy world. Looking back now, one realises how very exclusive we were, how circumscribed, completely immersed in our own personal pursuits, but, to a certain extent that was the way, in those days, of

the bigger world beyond, in England. Only out of the evil and great suffering, universally experienced, of our two World Wars in the first half of this century was born a change of outlook, wider sympathies, co-operation with others, understanding of their crying needs and general greater unselfishness - but, this was not yet to be and meanwhile, our joie de vivre was the order of the day, and our lives were mostly de la couleur de rose. Nevertheless in our old school, at that epoch, there was along with all the zest and lighthearted gaiety, a unique and remarkable spirit of love and byalty which must have emanated from, and originated in, the teaching and training of Reverend Mother Foundress to her followers. For the Community was, in our day, always the centre of attraction; and the instinct, therefore, naturally was to give rather than to get. In the Nuns, without of course formulating the fact to ourselves in so many words, we saw beings as they truly were, set apart - "a Chosen People". Hence some of us had very exalted ideas about their lives with God; we revered them, they were the topic of our talk; we thought they were infallible. A little word from them, a letter in the holidays were treasures.

Not that the nuns used to spoil us, for in her training, Reverend Mother Foundress had instilled into them that the children were not as she said, "To be made milk sops of". She put into her Rules for the School - "by labour the body is strengthened, and by study the mind is improved." The discipline of the school was strict in that far-off time. Very much was expected from us on such points as reverence and deference, acting on principle, honour, courtesy and, in general, politeness and good manners, and also, many hours were spent in laboriously learning facts of information, as was the custom then, from memory. In individual personal matters however, we did very little for ourselves - our beds were always made for us, our shoes cleaned, and our Tunics or frocks repaired by Mrs. Dewhurst, the dress-makes - better known as "Auntie Dew" - a dear, though somewhat severe old lady, who always dressed in black and wore a dollman and tightly fitting bonnet out-of-doors, who was upon occasions called in for reserved cases when castigation had to be inflicted upon one or other of the Juniors for naughty behaviour and who firmly believed that there was no place on earth like Layton Hill. On one occasion at Reverend Mother General's (Tolhurst) invitation, Auntie paid a visit to Mayfield where, in all probability, she aired that view.

When Pope Gregory XVI sent Mother Foundress to England, to begin her great work in education there, she brought with her from Rome the centre of the Christian

World, the true, genuine spirit of Catholic life, which, as from its source, she had imbibed it during the years lived there. Truly, at such a time in England, this was a great gift, an inheritance, a stupendous legacy left by Reverend Mother Foundress to every single child of her own Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Therefore are we in no way surprised at the attractive form which her living Piety always took - "I have loved O Lord, the beauty of Thy House, and the Place where Thy Glory dwelleth"- nothing for the Chapel was extravagance, the best of vestments, beautiful linen, costly sacred vessels, and on feast days quantities of rare flowers. Reverend Mother Foundress taught and encouraged her children, very simply to live and love the Church as, year by year, the Cycle of her Liturgy with its seasons of rejoicing and mourning went round; each one was prepared for with devotion beforehand, and prayer in common, thus putting us in the right spirit for the festival at hand - whether it were for Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption, All Saints, All Souls, the Immaculate Conception. Normally, on Mondays - devotions and hymn to The Blessed Sacrament; Tuesdays to the Guardian Angel; Wednesdays to Saint Joseph; Thursdays - Benediction; Friday to the Sacred Heart and Saturday - Little Office and hymn to Our Lady and one to her every night after Night Prayers. There was nothing narrowing, rigid, forbidding or depressing in her attitude or approach to the Spiritual Life. Her children she wanted to be spontaneous, simple, straightforward in dealing, sincere and with the candour of a child of God in the Home of its Father. Is not this the spirit for which the Society at large clamours today? So it was that our days were happy and merry as well as busy.

Farces were acted at Shrovetide and on St. Patrick's and St. George's. (Trousers being worn for male characters being a thing unheard of - the best one could do was to have a short dark skirt and an overcoat - for which last two, days' preparations on an unprecedented scale were made. For weeks beforehand the sides were arranged, state secrets began, funds collected, important purchases made, the farce chosen, parts distributed and studied on the spot, rehearsals privately at night recreation, play clothes secured, real programmes printed in the Town, yards and yards of ribbon also bought to make bows - a magnificent one for Father Huson and for Reverend Mother (huge and looking somewhat like chest preservers) of four inch wide ribbon, then gradually descending in glory for the Prefect, Members of the Community and for all the children who were being feted to the last Juniors. When the School was asleep in the dormitories these were pinned on each one's curtain, for wearing in time for Mass on the Feast,

by one or other of the bigger girls who stayed up till all hours decorating the refectory with one or two of the Community. To the strains of their National hymn the children were called in the morning. Father Huson used always to come out of the Parlour to admire the marvellous transformation and to say grace for them before breakfast. Then those playing the hosts sent the others at their expense for the day to St. Anne's and themselves prepared for the Play in their absence. The Feasters on their return bringing back sweets etc., galore for their friends. The farce over, after supper speeches were made. Then all who had been entertained took all into their own hands, not allowing the others so much as to lift a chair and not themselves retiring to bed before everything was left in apple-pie order for the morrow. At mid-Lent on Laetare Sunday, took place the distribution of badges and a concert for Reverend Mother and the Community. There was too a relaxation from Lenten fare for in our day, - I do not know if the Northern Custom still prevails - parents used to send from home several cakes to numbers of the children so there was a kind of universal tea-party of these very rich and delicious concoctions of which everyone in the Convent partook, special interest being taken by the school in the selection made for the Nuns. Our holidays at Easter and at Pentecost lasted only for three days and it was not considered "a good spirit" to expect to spend these at home, though a few of the children sometimes asked permission to do so. We never had class on Holydays of Obligation which were always regarded as feasts. On Ascension Thursday, it was a tradition for one of the Nuns to go with us for an early morning walk to Ascension Plain, taking with us a hamper of jam sandwiches for our lunch - this was a long way beyond Whinney Heys bearing away to the left. But, Reverend Mother's Feast was of course, a great high light in the School Year. It was kept on June 21st. On the eve, the Presentation and the Play in the evening took place. The School Hall was fully decorated for the occasion. The children wore white-black silk gloves and cachet shoes. When the presentation of gifts to Reverend Mother had been made, a small child carried the beautiful basket of choice flowers to her and yet another, the Spiritual Bouquet. Afterwards a bigger girl read an Address. These and the programmes for the Play being printed and painted in the Studio. When Reverend Mother had finished speaking, on behalf of the assembled School, it was the privilege of the Head Girl to beg Reverend Mother for three rather big predetermined special favours for the following year for the school, which were generally graciously granted. The Plays followed in

the evening. I remember taking the part of one of the Brothers in Milton's Comus - very long ago; of our having had, much later, Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" when Mother St. Agnes Murphy made a wonderful setting for it in the School Hall with woodland scene and bridge (across the room) and all complete - a veritable fairy-land. The Plays of Gilbert and Sullivan were acted in great number. It was fun one year when we were preparing for the Gondoliers. A good company was playing it at the Blackpool Theatre sometime beforehand, and Doctor and Mrs. Kelly (Kathleen's parents) invited Clare Murphy (Mrs. Kennedy) and me to spend the night with them, to take us to the performance running us up to the Convent for class next morning as though nothing had happened. But, we had seen how our part ought to be done. Others acted in my day were Pinafore, Mikado, Pirates of Penzance, Princess Ida and finally The Spectre Knight a very beautiful play, not belonging to that category. In this connection ought to be mentioned the labours of Mother Mary Francis (Bellassis) and Mother de Britto who co-operated in the teaching and dressing of the dramatis personae. On one occasion when I was quite a big girl, I remember feeling very shy when they sent for me to try on the garb of the Pilgrim for the Spectre Knight. I must have looked too plump and round for their taste - for they ordered me to remove my under-skirt, then my flannel petticoat (worn in those days!) and only when it was put on over my knickers did I meet with their approval. In the scene in which he appeared as the Knight, Mother Mary Francis copied in every detail the attire of Saint George as depicted in the stained glass window of Myers (Munich) in the chapel at that time. Mother Mary St. Thomas (Cusack) who was very artistic dressed the heroine and I can only recollect the high, pointed head-dress with flimsy, white gossamer silk floating round from its apex. Mother Mary Joseph (Loneragan) who was very stout and with florid complexion, came to Layton Hill, I think, from Winckley Square after her apostolate in the out-side schools was over. When the season of the Play began, Mother was given a room in Old Jerusalem where she toiled hard at making playclothes endlessly and where, at intervals, she would send us S.O.S. to go to be tried on and on the day of the performance itself, Mother, having perhaps dressed one of the more important characters, would hold on to the individual till the eleventh hour or even beyond, lest, as she explained the prisoner might ruin her finery. As a young Senior Mother Mary Joseph's devotional Doctrine Lesson at 4.30 p.m. impressed me. At different times during the eve of the feast, each class was taken by the Prefect to see the work of the nuns - this was always a great treat and big privilege: and standing upon a certain creaky board to be found in their Community Room when there, jokingly

contributed to the belief that one day one would become a nun, they were told. Reverend Mother's Feast day itself was one of course of general rejoicing beginning with special decoration of the Sanctuary and Singing usually of a new Mass learnt for the occasion and during the day the Society Hymn to Saint Aloysius Gonzaga with great fervour. Everyone spent most of the sunny day in the garden where we had our meals near our friends in selected spots out-of-doors. Reverend Mother herself used to bring out sweets to us and there were tennis and croquet and library story books and bazaar et.etc.

The Sodality and the School Picnic were always towards the end of the Summer Term before the Oxford Week began. The latter was a red-letter day for all. In three or four comfortable waggonettes drawn by horses - the large provisions of food carefully packed having already been stored away in the vehicles, the School set off from the Convent at 8.30 a.m., escorted by nine or ten of the Community - some of the Sisters were also of the party who were distributed among the children. Our destination was almost always Scorton, a lovely Lancashire village, one of its many attractions being Nicky Nook - a highland which the children used to love to climb. The long drive through the peaceful Fylde district at that time of the year was delightful and everyone enjoyed it. There was always permission given to halt at some of the villages which we passed en route, where we could visit the Blessed Sacrament in the little Catholic Church. The children could explore and try the quaint shops in the village for eards and other products, while the men water their horses. Having written beforehand, our arrival at Scorton was always expected and everything was in readiness at the Farm where the inmates looked forward with pleasure to seeing the School again and to welcoming the large party. After enjoying the unusually big, picnic dinner, the afternoon was passed as each set wished - some in climbing, some in meandering through the village making purchases, some in taking snapshots, others in making up prayers in the Church, until it was time for the Farm tea after which, very shortly, we had to begin to think of leaving. Then the journey home in the silent Summer evening came. Everyone was happy and full of their day, and talking their heads off for about an hour or two, but then, with no-one but ourselves to hear them, the children to while away the time, fell to singing their songs and hymns all the way home. Here, late as it was, there was always the traditional hot supper awaiting them of sausages and mashed potatoes before Night Prayers were said when nodding, and at heart thanking God for an unforgettably happy day spent in the open air, they trudged off to bed. It was always touching at such

times how very thoughtfully the bigger girls "looked after" the Community coming with all little requirements for their comfort in hand - soap-case, clean towel, etc. etc., in a tiny valise.

The Sodality Picnic was quite different being, perhaps, more in time in small groups and varying in scale and importance. In our day, the Innocents wore pale pink ribbon with their medals. They had always a tea-party on the 25th., and their annual Sodality picnic consisted of an outing to some nearby spot taking dinner and tea. The Aloysians wore green with their medals. They had also the half-day picnic - though going further afield and returning home by 6 p.m.

The Angels had pale blue ribbon for their medals. They had a whole day for their Sodality Picnic and went away at some distance though it was not etiquette to return as late as the E. de Ms. did in the evening who sometimes went as far as the Lakes for theirs. In every case however, it was the Sodalists' special privilege to spend the time alone with their own Mistress which meant much to them. In the course of the year too, there were also certain feast days for which in the evenings, a Tea-Party followed by the "evening off" was allowed, spent with their own Nun - which were occasions fraught with much good; for the few children got to know and love the Nuns more at such seasons and caught a tiny glimpse of their hidden life.

There were great preparations both in the Convent and in the School for the Prize-Day. The nuns finishing off the children's productions; papers, written fair, to be tied together each individual's set with baby ribbons arranged in the middle cloister to be exhibited to the guests - the Community refectory, (now the Boarders') prepared for what was known as the "Banquet" for Clergy, parents and friends; many arrivals and departures taking place - everyone agog. In the school there had been numerous dumb rehearsals with every movement and curtesy considered with care; extra practices of orchestra, of singing or of plays; the decoration of the school hall completed; the prizes brought down; the floral artificial wreaths arranged in readiness on stands (these were worn by prize winners and taken up to chapel when everything was over)

In the Michaelmas Term came the nuns' feast - Saint Teresa's, when in our day the Children of Mary, were allowed to wear the habit and to take the entire charge of the School - the Head as Reverend Mother and the next as Prefect - a room set apart for a Community Room and

each one's jobs assigned carefully to the would-be religious so that no disorder followed. Every one for that day was on her metal, the children being unwilling for any of the Community to go near the school on their one feast day Saint Teresa's, though welcoming them with open arms on the morrow. It was also customary to make new pin cushions for the members of the Community which, with great quantities of sweets, were sent as a present on the eve, from the School. Long ago Mother Mary Raphael (Cusack) used to sing a solo in Chapel at Adoration on St. Teresa's - which as children we greatly loved, "Oh! what a length does life appear..." All Saints was a lovely feast day in that term too with some of its fragrance even in old age lingering on, as does the Hymn that was sung to commemorate the feast - quite an old fashioned one and never heard now - "From your blissful thrones of glory", but how we used to delight in it then! In the course of the day there was apple-bobbing and ducking for apples in water in the Gym, and the hunt round the school; library books; bazaar and Mother de Britto's ghost story at night.

Sometimes on a holiday long ago we used to go to Poulton which could be conveniently reached either across the fields and through Froggy Lane or by the highroad. In the centre of its old world picturesque village square were to be seen the ancient stocks and nearby the Parish Church and Tower-one of the landmarks in the Fylde. Further down the road was the first small Catholic Church and School at which our nuns taught, as well as the cemetery where any of the Layton Hill Community who died in those days were buried - a very peaceful, quiet, romantic looking spot for God's Acre, under the trees.

What made Poulton popular to the children were the shops which even then were to be found there. A private morning visit to the Tower was now and again negotiated for us, through the kind offices of the famous Jim Walmsley, one of the Managers, and always a very good friend to the nuns. In this way the children were able to wander at will, and to enjoy to their heart's content its many treasures. For outings for a holiday falling in the Autumn Term it was possible to go to the sea--sometimes spending a day at sedate and lady-like Lytham where people in bathchairs were frequently met and the outskirts of which were so nicely wooded and just the thing for a picnic; or perhaps in the opposite direction to Cleveleys, Rossall, or even to Fleetwood. But in those days there was but one promenade which stopped short before Cleveleys, so one walked along the shore.

When the excursion was into the country for a day the choice was ample - sometimes we were taken in the direction of Longridge Fells, to Whalley, or on a very occasional visit to Stonyhurst to see the College and its many historical treasures; to walk along the banks of the Hodder; or to Whitewell to enjoy paddling in the river, or in the same fashion to beautiful little Brock, or to Claughton and so on endlessly.

Looking back today over a long period of more than sixty years, the memory of many of the Nuns stands out clearly. They were evidently such as Reverend Mother Foundress meant them to be when she exhorted them - as she still exhorts us, in her own words, to "Be yourself, but make that self what Our Lord wishes it to be." For among the nuns there was no such thing as only one pattern, or of all being of one mould - they were personalities, leaving their individuality indelibly impressed upon us - making for happiness both at School and in Religion - giving to life exhilaration and charm spiritually and otherwise, with wider apparent scope for the exercise of the "little virtues" en famille.

There was Mother Andrea, a tiny little nun, smaller than most of the Juniors, whose few duties in the school were with them. At times she used to instruct for First Confessions with great devotion and fervour and spoke in a rather deep voice always, which impressed the little ones easily. They went to Mother in what is now Mother Mary Felicitas' music room. Another of her offices was to take the Juniors for a short walk on the roads at 11.30 a.m., and if by ill-luck, Mother, who had a holy horror of cows, perceived cattle on the horizon when we were out, very speedily she would bustle us all behind a haystack, breathing out loud aspirations of - Sweet Jesus, Holy Mary, from one corner of it to the other till they had passed, when we were allowed to pursue our way. Young as we were even at that stage, I think we sensed Mother's virtue - that she was living a holy, humble and hidden life; knowing too by hearsay that her days in the Convent were mainly spent in the care of Ethel Hunt, an afflicted person who, for many years, having been entrusted to the nuns, in the South, by her brother Dr. Hunt, lived and died at Layton Hill, - after being for over forty years the object of the love and devotion of a lifetime in the service of the Holy Child, for Mother, knowing that she was not able to teach, had begged Him to send her some work to do for Him and Ethel was the response made by the Holy Child. Mother Andrea only survived her charge by a few months dying after two days only in bed, on the morning of Christmas Day, whilst the Masses were being offered. During life everyone in

need used to invoke the prayers of Mother Andrea.

Mother Regis I recall as assisting very vigorously every morning at Calisthenics in the School Hall at 8.30. After the march round and a few exercises done, she would form us into three long perpendicular lines, at some distance apart and then proceed to have what I can only call - a review - to make sure that in the personal appearance of any individual, at the beginning of the day, there was not any untidiness. Then, from the spot, there followed a few pilgrimages to be made to Mrs. Dewhurst - one to have her tunic mended; another to ask for a new belt; a third to have her house shoes cleaned the toes of, which Mother said were "white". In the midst of the many commodities stored in "Auntie's" room, was always to be found for these emergencies, a bottle of Kid reviver - I can see it now - the size of a medicine bottle, the cork with a tiny sponge pending from the end of a stick in the fluid blacking, was never lacking. I remember too that Mother Regis seemed to me a very kind and motherly nun, and in my eyes, at that date, looked old though she may not have been really so. She had a fine voice and sang in the Choir when the Chapel was in The Blessed Sacrament Dormitory.

Mother Mary Sebastian had a heart of gold and a quick temper and was universally loved both by the Community and the children to whom she found it difficult to refuse them anything. If one or other of the latter was out of sorts, or only perhaps wanting a little notice, or in trouble, among a few, the instinct was to run up to the back sacristy in the hope of finding Mother there. If so, immediately a little welcome was given, possibly even, allowing the truant to render her some tiny service or, more often telling her off gently - restoring the good spirits with timely sympathy. Mother could enter into the feelings of children having dealt with them for so long. Mother Mary Sebastian originally taught at the Parochial School at Talbot Road, where generations of her "boys" revered her memory, in this connection it was often said, jokingly, that she "had brought up half of the Town" - and certainly to her dying day she was remembered and Mother never lost her interest in them. But it was in the Convent that the children knew and loved her for as well as being the Sacristan, Mother also had charge of the Bazaar in those days - (well for us!) during which, little or nothing was ever heard either of wars, or of rumours of wars and when life in general was more comfortable, and in many small ways less restricted than now. Mother spared no trouble in providing for the needs and fancies of the children

and in every way was always so generous. One of the Old Girls I remember used regularly to procure the best eau-de-Cologne for her, to sponge the Altar in the Sanctuary with it, as she frequently loved to do. It was sometimes said of Mother Mary Sebastian, so long ago, that she was one of the best letter writers in the Society. She died at Cherwell Edge.

Mother Mary Christina was herself a Layton Hill Old Girl, and one is inclined to believe that beautiful as she was to look upon without - her face was lovely, even Madonna-like - still more beautiful was she within; for her life was one of cheerful giving morning noon and night, a continual running commentary on the motto of the Society "Actions not Words", in the office of Econome which she held for many years. In those days her room was where now is the Community Boot Room and below was that of the men. All Mother's interests were those of the House; - about which she knew most things; so that anyone in need of information on important matters of business sought her help; the children in the school found in her a sympathetic champion; and the domestic staff something more akin to a kind mother's care and solicitude. Many were the good friends she made in the Town, both high and low, and the shopkeepers were eager to please and oblige Mother even at inconvenience often to themselves. Her own loyalty was outstanding and when during the last years of her life at St. Leonards, for ten years Our Lord laid upon her the heavy trial of being a complete cripple from arthritis, by His grace, Mother Mary Christina was not found wanting - May she rest in peace.

Mother St. Raymond retained to the end of her life an affectionate interest in Layton Hill. When I was at school, she was our Prefect for a few years. Mother was always recollected, very prayerful, exact and somewhat silent - impressing us more by what she was than by anything that she said. Gentle, retiring and sensitive by nature, Mother St. Raymond was a model of piety, of order, and of discipline, to the children. Everything she did was well done and from them she expected the same fidelity in little things, tolerating nothing careless or slipshod. In all that appertained to conduct and work her standard was high, and her example gave the good-will to aim at the best. Mother was an excellent needle-woman and as long as she was in any of our schools invariably taught that subject with great skill and success.

Mother St. Gertrude (Dobson) as a child, had known Reverend Mother Foundress in the early days at St. Leonards, and remembered too, the Duchess of Leeds there. Her father was a very great benefactor to the Society at St.

Leonards and at Mayfield (the one remaining stained glass window in the Church, high above the Altar, of the Holy Child was his gift;) and at Layton Hill, that of the Crucifixion in the Sanctuary of the Chapel there, he gave, not to mention other of his benefactions to the Jesuit

Church of the Sacred Heart, in the Town at Talbot Road. After joining the Society Mother St. Gertrude lived during her long religious life in many houses; and for some years at Layton Hill. Wherever she was Mother manifested an invariably keen and lively interest in the school and in the children and always created a very happy, enthusiastic atmosphere doubtless diffusing among them something of her own wonderful spirit, zest, and energy all the more remarkable in her, since she was by no means physically robust. A true friend - lovable, and generous, original and outspoken. Mother greatly loved the Society and its welfare. She put her whole heart into whatever was given her to do, so it was that Mother made a formidable Mistress of Order, and it was quite the normal state of affairs to suffer from confession pains during the public, weekly disorders; never knowing what might not transpire. As Games Mistress, a post which she often held, Mother St. Gertrude was in every way delightful, and as the old Yorkshire farmer whose sheep she used to hire, to nibble down the grass of her playing fields once when inquiring after her health styled her "She's a grand old lady".

Mother Mary Wenceslaus was the Prefect of the Juniors when I first went to school in 1890. At that time children did not leave home early, as they do now. Her training was most thorough even then and for some natures, a little too strict I think - though at times she could be affectionate and motherly. Mother exercised a very powerful influence over us all and I recall how much we wanted to please her and all that was implied in a smile, a word of praise or encouragement - and even more in a word of blame from her. For Mother Mary Wenceslaus was a personality with wonderful gifts of mind and heart and her musical ability naturally made her temperamental. Whatever she put her hand to was a success and her power of sympathy drew all with whom she came into contact. Thus it was that she exercised a fascination over others. She had only to enter the school hall, the refectory, or elsewhere and every child was immediately conscious of her presence. The parents and friends of the house also sought her out. Mother Mary Wenceslaus prepared five of us, as Juniors, for our First Holy Communion with great devotion - we were her first and she used to call us her "Five Wounds" - (two became nuns and three were married). In preparation we had a retreat on Maundy Thursday,

Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Manuscript books and little holy photographs were procured for putting in our favourite prayers and acts for before and after Holy Communion. On the day itself all the school gave us pictures - these were tied up with white ribbon and put in each one's place in the parlour, at the First Holy Communion breakfast table with the gifts. To hear Mother Mary Wenceslaus in the Chapel at the Harmonium was prayer of another kind, and not easily forgotten. Later contacts made in the Senior School, with Mother were mainly connected with singing, plays, orchestra or private music lessons. At the age of seventy, she was still conducting - in none of which were there any half measures... It was touching to witness at the end of her life, as I was privileged so to do, at Winckley Square, to her silent fidelity to the spirit of simplicity, humility, obedience and charity of the Rule of the Holy Child which could only have been inspired by a deep personal love of the Sacred Heart - May she rest in peace.

Among the children, many years ago, there was about Mother de Britto an aroma of mystery, mingled with feelings of respect and awe, for somehow or other, it had reached our ears and the rumour had been passed on from mouth to mouth, that having heart trouble, at any moment Mother de Britto might drop down dead - evidently, quite forgetting the fact that they might themselves, if God so willed. This idea may have been strengthened by remarking that Mother walked with a measured step, had a quiet dignity peculiarly her own, spoke in a slow, low tone of voice. Then, too, her lessons were only given to the bigger girls among whom no one presumed to take any liberties. Mother de Britto was an excellent teacher and, as for examination purposes, text-books then in use, often left much to be desired, she used to take endless trouble in the compilation of good notes to pass on to her pupils. English Language and Literature she taught thoroughly well, and Mother was Mistress of the Studio. In all she did there was the stamp of efficiency and from her pupils she looked for the best of which they were capable. In manner, kindly and motherly, very occasionally she could be a bit sarcastic. A familiar figure at school was that of Mother de Britto taking a walk with Caesar, the big black and white dog - at times, a terror - in the fields or in the garden. She was a great lover of the beauties of nature and would often speak to us in class of the privilege of those whose work brought them nearest to God's creation. But when, in after years, she suffered a stroke with great courage and pertinacity she persevered until she could hold pen and brush. Mother became an insatiable reader always ready to peruse any amount of new books for the Prefect, inserting between the

pages of each a word of criticism. The large crucifix which hangs in the centre of the wall at the extremity of the Community Refectory was given in memory of Mother de Britto, by her niece - May she rest in peace.

Sister Alice reigned supreme in her department of the Clothing Room and of Our Lady's Dormitory, where she slept, and night and day looked after generations of Juniors with most devoted care, and attention to matters of cleanliness, neatness and order;--more than seventy years ago. Though somewhat Spartan in her methods, Sister had a good heart and a particularly sweet smile, I remember. The office of brushing and combing the hair, of cutting the nails, she claimed as her own, when at any visible sign of wincing, would exclaim: "Think of the martyrs dear, think of the martyrs"! In the Clothing Room Sister inspired great respect. On her being asked for something that was in one's square, her invariable reaction to the request was that you had not anything, until with patience, tact and considerable skill, you ventured to assert that you could see the commodity there, and off you went with care, triumphantly. In her last years of old age, Sister Alice occupied the room where now the nuns have their study. At the door there was a small mat and as she was going to fill her jug with water before supper, Sister slipped and in falling broke her hip. Providentially a few of the nuns were following a course in the Town for First Aid and so they knew how to set temporally her poor leg, but on the morrow, the Doctor declared that owing to her great age it would not "knit" and that Sister Alice would never walk again, so it was, and for the rest of her life she was a confirmed invalid. Mother Mary Agnese (Ross) was remarkably good and kind, and used to take in the chair to Chapel, Sister, as long as she was at Layton Hill and was devoted to her. May she rest in peace.

Sister Marion we only knew as children by sight noticing that she always worked out-of-doors - often with Alice, a girl in whom she took a great interest, whose job it was to see to the men, and clean their cottage for them and to take their meals at the right time. Sister had complete charge of the poultry. I have seen her pick up a tiny ailing chick, wrap it in a bit of flannel and pop it into a warm spot near the furnace to enliven it. She used also to breed ducks which were sold in the market regularly, to aid the exchequer - at that time down the road opposite Chadwick's. There was also a piggery belonging to the Nuns and Sister also had a finger in that pie.... During the years when Mother Mary Christina was Econome,

Sister Marion was Mother's right hand man. In after years when her work brought her indoors into the Convent, she took Sister Alice's place, and was given the charge of the little ones whom she loved dearly, and looked after with great care and devotion. Then more and more her whole interest was centred in the School upstairs, for which in every way, and everywhere, Sister Marion toiled ceaselessly - painting, machining, sewing, washing - saving the funds of the house no end, when already they had become low indeed - working on till the poor hands could do no more and Sister was struck down with a stroke. May she rest in peace.

Mother Mary Febronia (Pett) came from St. Leonards to Layton Hill in the last few years of the nineteenth century when Mother Mary Wenceslaus had left. She taught Music mainly, had the Choir, and played the organ. Never very strong, Mother was mortified, hard upon herself, worked unstintingly. We knew how much she loved St. Leonards but it was not very long before she admitted truly that Layton Hill "was the next best thing" to it - which pleased us very much for by her gentle, bright and cheerful spirit - she was something of a tease - and above all by her kindness, generosity and unselfishness Mother had endeared herself to the children. After an epidemic in the School they had been sent home on the day after the Immaculate Conception for the Christmas holidays. Dear Mother Mary Febronia was doing an act of kindness in taking to the doctor Mother Mary Sebastian who had sprained her wrist, when, in the tram, she suffered from a stroke, was brought back to the Convent unconscious and died very peacefully on the Octave day of that great Feast of Our Lady. May she rest in peace.

Mother Mary Vincent (Bishop) was for a time a member of the Staff and for a year the First Prefect, when I was at school. Usually she had Form IV and we took a great pride, I seem to remember, in our Mistress whom, in every way we found so very interesting. In the first place there was always the conviction that Mother understood us, and had sympathy with us, even at times when we were not perhaps on our best behaviour indeed; any occasion of that sort seemed only to bring out her virtues of patience and kindly indulgence; she was also cultured and made the lessons attractive. Young as we were, sometimes Mother would take us from the classroom to the Library to read round some subject about which she had been speaking. The lighter vein in Mother Mary Vincent's character as children we did not know - I mean her humour and self-assertion which in Community life endeared her to her sisters as a unique personality. To us she always appeared thoughtful,

serious and very spiritual. I remember to this day her insistence upon learning to act upon principle, and her own 'Attende Tibi!... May she rest in peace.

and looked after with great care and devotion. Then more and more our whole interest was centered in the school system, for which in every way, and everywhere, Sister Mary had labored ceaselessly - painting, washing, sewing, washing - having the funds of the household and when a new day had become for Sister - working on all the poor hands could do no more and Sister was struck down with a stroke. May she rest in peace.

Mother Mary Veronica (Pate) came from St. Barbara to Dayton Hill in the last years of the nineteenth century when Mother Mary Veronica had left. She taught their minds, and the Church and helped the women never very strong. Mother was mortified, and soon half self, worked ceaselessly. We know how much she loved St. Barbara but it was not very long before she admitted truly that Sister Hill "was the best thing" to it - which pleased us very much for our people, and our spiritual guide - who was something of a leader - and above all by her kindness, generosity and unselfishness Sister had endeavored herself to the children. After an epidemic in the school they had been sent home on the day after the Immaculate Conception for the Christmas holidays. When Mother Mary Veronica was doing as well of kindness in caring to the doctor Sister Mary Veronica who had returned her visit, when, in the year, she suffered from a stroke, was brought back to the convent unconnected and died very peacefully on the same day of that great feast of Our Lady. May she rest in peace.

Mother Mary Vincent (Wishop) was for a time a member of the staff, and for a year the first teacher when I was at school. Usually she had Sister IV and we took a great pride, I seem to remember, in our Sister whom, in every way we found so very interesting. In the first place there was always the conviction that Mother understood us, and had sympathy with us, even at times when we were not perhaps on our best behavior. Indeed, any occasion of that sort seemed only to bring out our virtues of patience and kindly indulgence; she was also cultured and made the lessons attractive. Young as we were, sometimes Mother would take us from the classroom to the library to read and some subject about which she had been speaking. The Sister vein in Mother Mary Vincent's character was evident as it is not known - I mean her human and self-sacrificing which in Community life entered her to her sisters as a guide personally. To us she always appeared thoughtful.